



Red Line Project Case Study

Client Profile

The Red Line Project is an award-winning educational journalism platform founded by Mike Reilley in 2011 at DePaul University. Now at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), the site is updated by UIC communication students who cover Chicago neighborhood news through data reporting and multimedia. With 65+ awards, it serves as both a teaching laboratory and newsroom through courses like AI Journalism and Data Journalism, equipping students with emerging technology skills alongside core journalistic principles, regardless of their prior AI experience.

Challenge

The Red Line Project faced several key challenges in preparing journalism students for the modern media environment:

- 1. Student Technology Adoption:** Teaching undergraduate students with minimal AI and LLM exposure how to effectively integrate new tools into their journalism workflow.
- 2. Deadline Pressure Management:** Helping students efficiently produce multimedia content under tight academic deadlines while maintaining quality standards.
- 3. Practical Application:** Bridging the gap between theoretical journalism education and real-world digital publishing demands.
- 4. Resource Efficiency:** Maximizing limited class time and preparation resources while introducing complex new technologies.
- 5. Platform Integration:** Finding tools that could seamlessly integrate with existing content management systems used in professional newsrooms.

The Red Line Project needed educational technology solutions that were intuitive enough for students to master quickly while being sophisticated enough to provide genuine professional value in their journalism careers.

Solution

The Red Line Project implemented Nota's AI-powered tools as core components of their journalism curriculum:

VID Pro

Deployed as the primary social media video creation tool, allowing students to quickly transform written articles into engaging social media content for their final projects.

SUM

Utilized through WordPress integration to provide students with hands-on experience in SEO optimization, headline generation, and content summarization.

WordPress Plugin

Integrated Nota's WordPress plugin with the Block Editor for RedLineProject.news, providing real-world publishing experience with AI-assisted content optimization.

“Nota is such a great tool to teach undergraduates. The intuitive interface was useful on deadline, and some students used it for the first time 4-5 weeks after it was introduced to them, with no issues. My class prep time was minimal as I had been so well-trained on it. We'll continue to use Nota in the spring semester and explore a few more tools. The social media video tool was a big hit with students.

Mike Reilley, Founder of The Red Line Project

Summary

The Red Line Project successfully integrated Nota's AI tools to prepare students for digital journalism while maintaining pedagogical effectiveness. The intuitive design allowed students to focus on storytelling rather than wrestling with technical barriers. AI-enhanced social media video creation demonstrated how these tools enhance traditional journalism skills, giving students professional-grade capabilities for content distribution and audience engagement.

The seamless integration with deadline-driven projects proved their practical value in real newsroom workflows. This approach bridged academic learning and professional practice, equipping students with both the technical skills and editorial judgment needed for modern journalism careers.

Outcomes

The implementation of Nota's tools produced significant positive results for journalism education:

1. Seamless User Experience

The platform demonstrated exceptional usability, with students requiring minimal instructor support and demonstrating independent problem-solving capabilities and creative exploration.

2. Advanced Multimedia Capabilities

Social media video creation proved highly effective, with students consistently utilizing it as a final production step to generate professional-quality promotional content for their projects.

3. Operational Excellence

Students achieved proficiency within 4-5 weeks of introduction, experiencing zero technical issues and confirming the platform's accessibility and reliability.

4. Strategic Content Optimization

The WordPress plugin integration delivered comprehensive headline recommendations, SEO enhancement, and content refinement for student publications, supporting real-world editorial workflows.

5. Program Scalability

Consistent adoption across multiple academic terms has enabled expansion planning to additional curriculum areas, including Digital Journalism coursework.