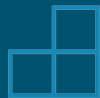




How to Build Collaborative Investigations

Tips and resources for news outlets
Bridget Thoreson and Dianna Hunt



Institute for
Nonprofit News

Plan for today



1) Defining collaboration

a) What type of collaboration makes sense for your outlet?

Plan for today



- 1) **Defining collaboration**
 - a) What type of collaboration makes sense for your outlet?
- 2) **Finding collaboration partners**
 - a) Where to look for partners
 - b) Identifying mutual interests
 - c) MOUs
 - d) What to do when (not if) there's trouble

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 - a) Collaboration roles
 - b) Project management

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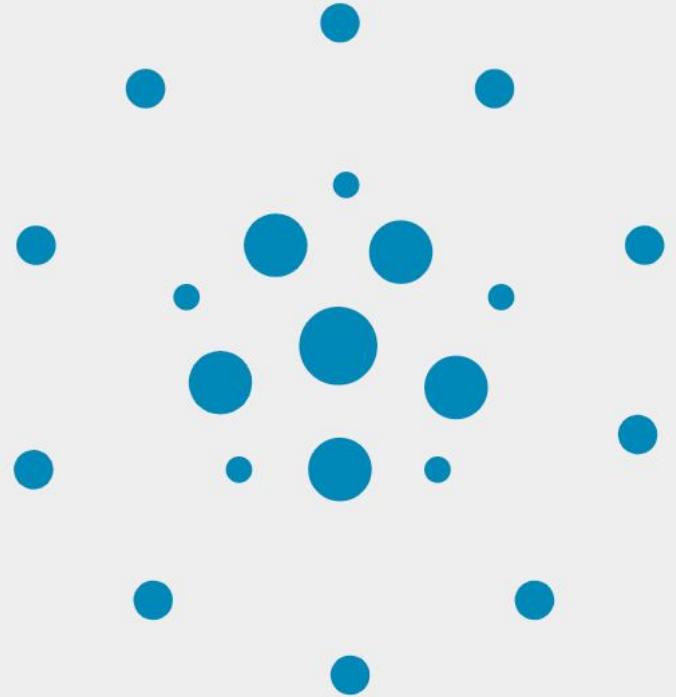


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- 4) **How do freelancers fit into this?**

What is collaboration?



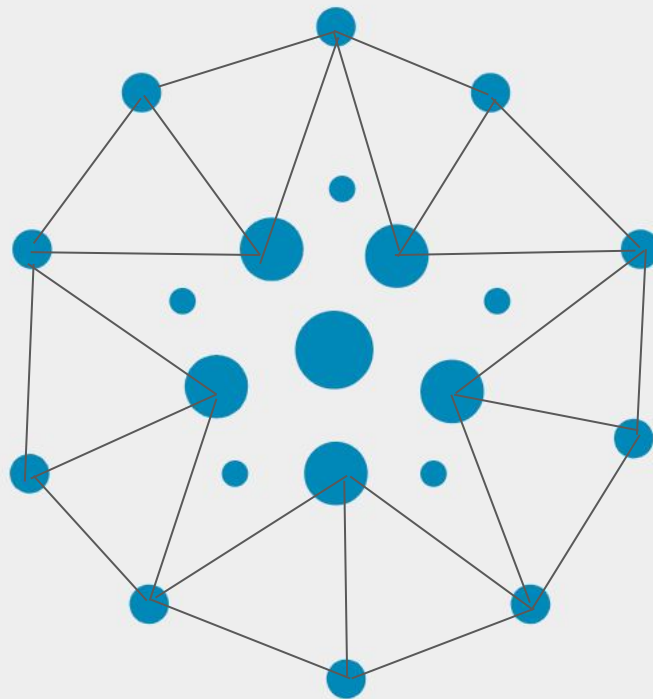
- Makes reporting possible



What is collaboration?





- Makes reporting possible
- By connecting newsrooms **to each other**



Defining collaborations





	 One-time/finite	 Ongoing/open-ended
Participants...		
Create content separately	Temporary & separate	Ongoing & separate

Credit: "Comparing Models of Collaborative Journalism," www.collaborativejournalism.org

Defining collaborations





Participants...	 One-time/finite	 Ongoing/open-ended
Create content separately	Temporary & separate	Ongoing & separate
Work together to create content	Temporary & co-creating	Ongoing & co-creating

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Defining collaborations





 One-time/finite	 Ongoing/open-ended
Participants...	
Create content separately	Temporary & separate vs Ongoing & separate
Work together to create content	Temporary & co-creating vs Ongoing & co-creating
Share content, data, resources at org level	Temporary & integrated vs Ongoing & integrated

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Defining collaborations





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Create content separately	Temporary & separate <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First-time collaborators; small outlets; high-interest topics	Ongoing & separate
Work together to create content	Temporary & co-creating <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigative, time-sensitive projects; pairing unique skills	Ongoing & co-creating
Share content, data, resources at org level	Temporary & integrated <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large data projects; experienced collaborators; org-wide buy-in	Ongoing & integrated

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Create content separately	Temporary & separate <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First-time collaborators; small outlets; high-interest topics	Ongoing & separate <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater reach/more content; topics requiring multi-org expertise
Work together to create content	Temporary & co-creating <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigative, time-sensitive projects; pairing unique skills	Ongoing & co-creating <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similar audiences; supplementing resources; collab manager hire
Share content, data, resources at org level	Temporary & integrated <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large data projects; experienced collaborators; org-wide buy-in	Ongoing & integrated <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Back-office support; supplemental content; give away some ops control

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“

Don't collaborate just to collaborate, think clearly about where you have strengths that then would be accentuated by somebody else.

”

– Sara Hebel, co-founder and editor-in-chief of Open Campus



Before you collaborate, ask...

Should we collaborate?



- What are your **organization's goals for this project?**

Should we collaborate?



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- What would **collaboration achieve that would not be possible on your own?**

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Should we collaborate?



- What are your **organization's goals for this project?**
- What would **collaboration achieve that would not be possible on your own?**
- What **unique strengths would each participating outlet bring** to this project?
- **What concerns do you have** about participating, and **what guardrails need to be in place?**

Defining collaborations



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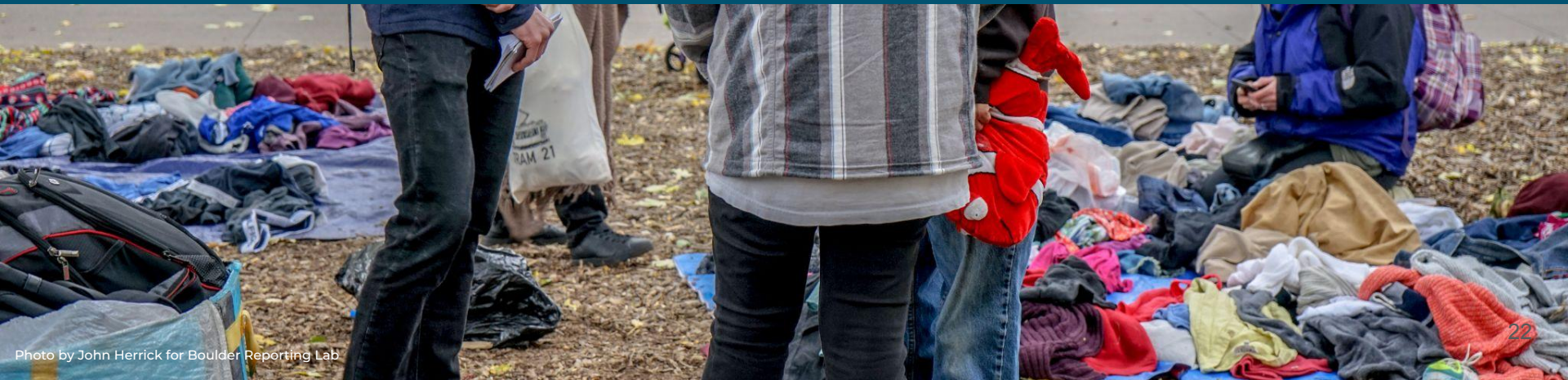
Use these workbooks and guides!



collaborativejournalism.org/guides



Finding collaboration partners





Finding partners

- [Center for Cooperative Media collaboration database](#)
- Journalism membership organizations
- Investigative reporting:
 - [Reveal's Reporting Network](#)
 - [ProPublica's Local Reporting Network](#)
- INN : Find nonprofit newsrooms in our [member directory](#) or email collaborations@inn.org to find relevant collaborative partners.

Planning (or negotiating) collaborations



Issues

- Identify the aspects of the project you want to discuss with potential partner(s)

Positions

- Agree internally about what you want the outcome of each issue to be

Interests

- Identify the reasons behind your positions (need, opportunity, concern)

Rank issues

- Assign a numeric score to each issue in order of importance

Assess partner(s)

- Start with best guess at partner positions/ interests and refine as you talk

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It's OK to walk away!



Example planning grid

Issue	Self	Self interest rank	Partner	Partner interest rank
Issue #1	Interest: Position:	#	Interest: Position:	#
Issue #2	Interest: Position:	#	Interest: Position:	#
Issue #3	Interest: Position:	#	Interest: Position:	#

Use these MOU examples!



Memorandum of Understanding Your Voice Ohio / Ohio Media Project

This memorandum is intended to guide and support collaboration among Your Voice Ohio / Ohio Media Project (OMP) members. This memorandum is not intended to compel legal or any other binding obligations upon OMP members.

Purpose

The Ohio Media Project, through Your Voice Ohio, seeks to:

- Produce quality journalism on the issues that matter most to Ohioans.
- Rebuild relationships of mutual trust between Ohioans and Ohio media.
- Connect Ohioans across the state through shared discussions and shared understanding of important issues.
- Engage and support communities across Ohio, especially those underserved by traditional news media, including communities of color, rural communities, and low-income communities.
- Conduct experiments and pilot projects related to audience engagement, revenue generation, digital innovation, journalistic approaches, and more, and disseminate results throughout the collaborative.
- Explore the culture of journalism and reinvigorate the traditional roles of journalists in service to citizens.

Outcomes

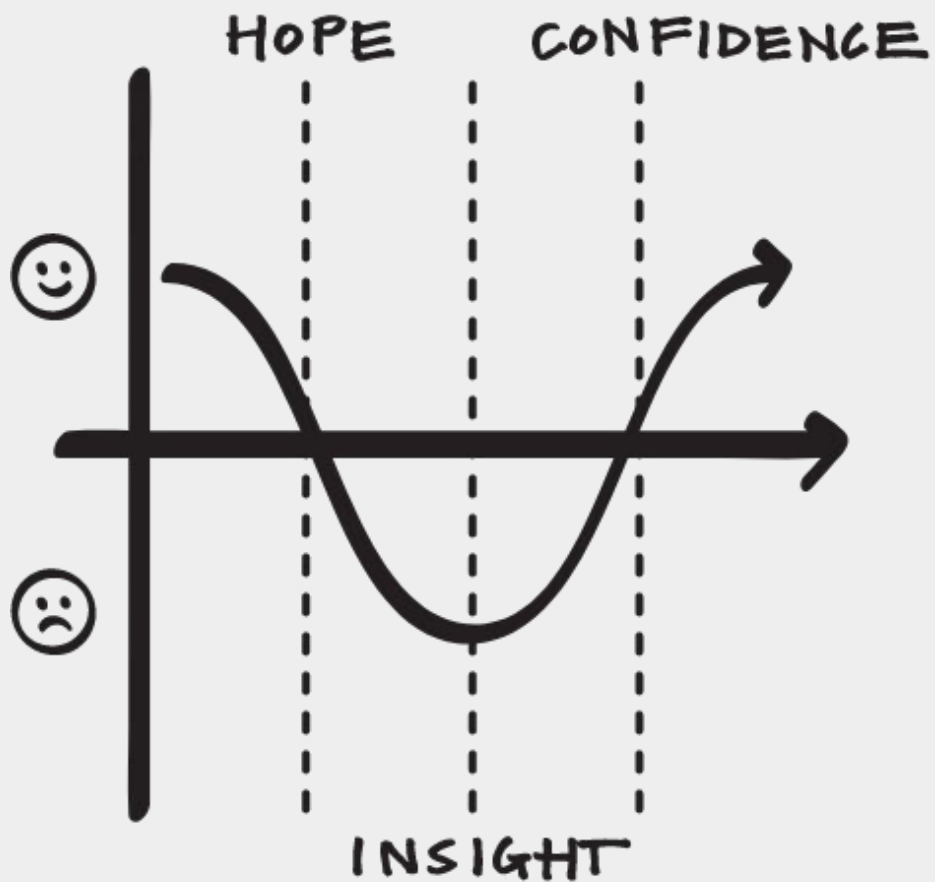
Ohioans will:

- Have higher levels of trust in their local media outlets.
- Be better informed about local and state issues, and understand how issues in their communities relate to similar issues elsewhere.
- Be more civically engaged, with more Ohioans working to address challenges or otherwise be involved in their communities.
- Feel greater connection to others around the state.
- Be better able to differentiate local media from the national press.
- Protect and preserve their interests in and through local news media.

Journalists will:

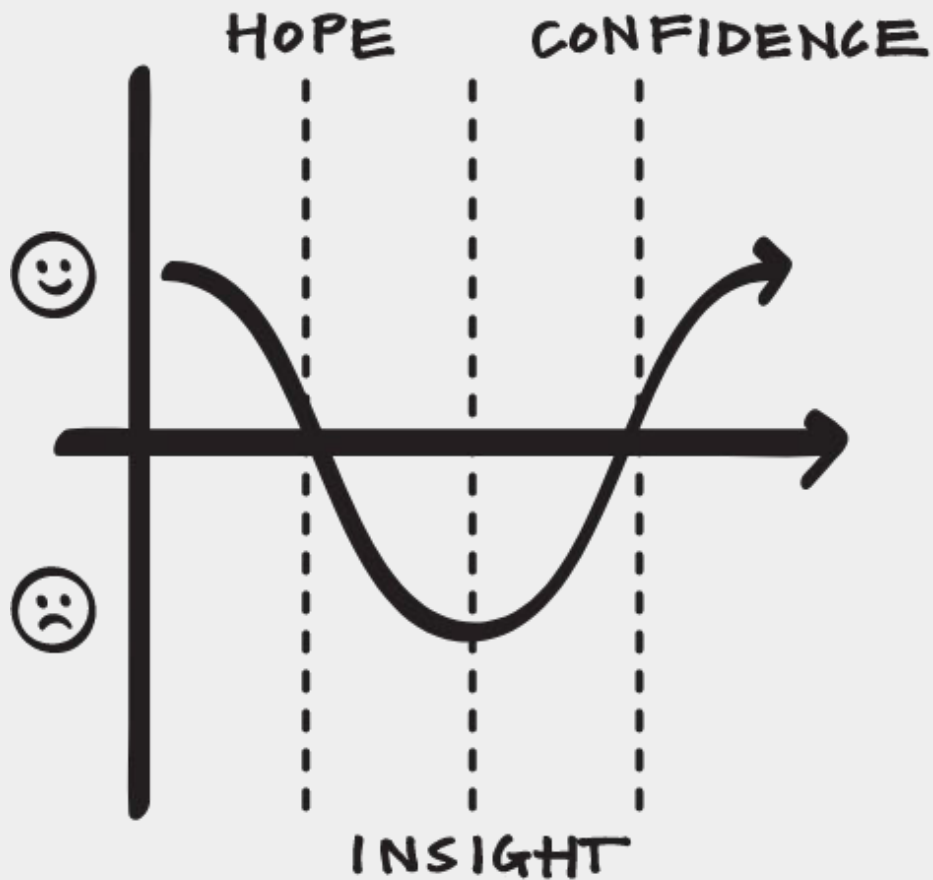
- Have better tools and information to deliver more sophisticated reporting about their communities.
- Have better information about what approaches best serve audiences and promote financial sustainability.
- Better understand the lives of people in their community.
- Be more engaged with and connected to their audiences.

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How the journey of a project feels

IDEO

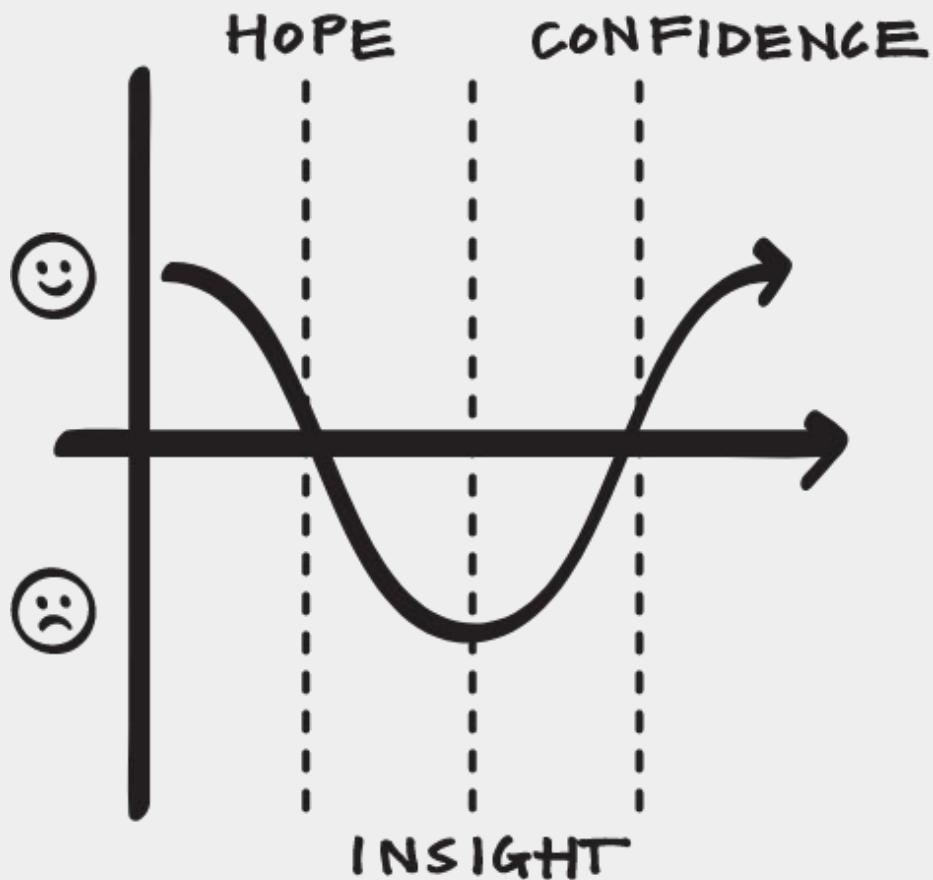


Plan for problems:

- Who will ultimately be responsible for ensuring the project meets its deadlines and deliverables for each team?

How the journey of a project feels

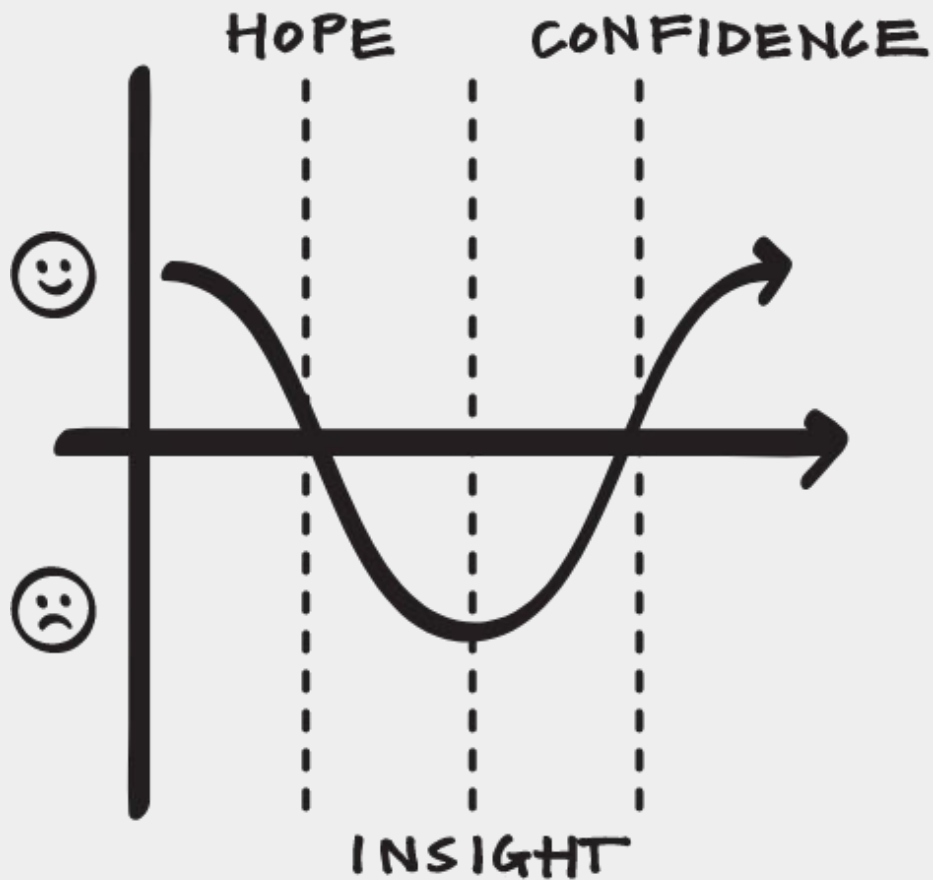
IDEO



Plan for problems:

- Who will ultimately be responsible for ensuring the project meets its deadlines and deliverables for each team?
- How will you communicate?

How the journey of a project feels

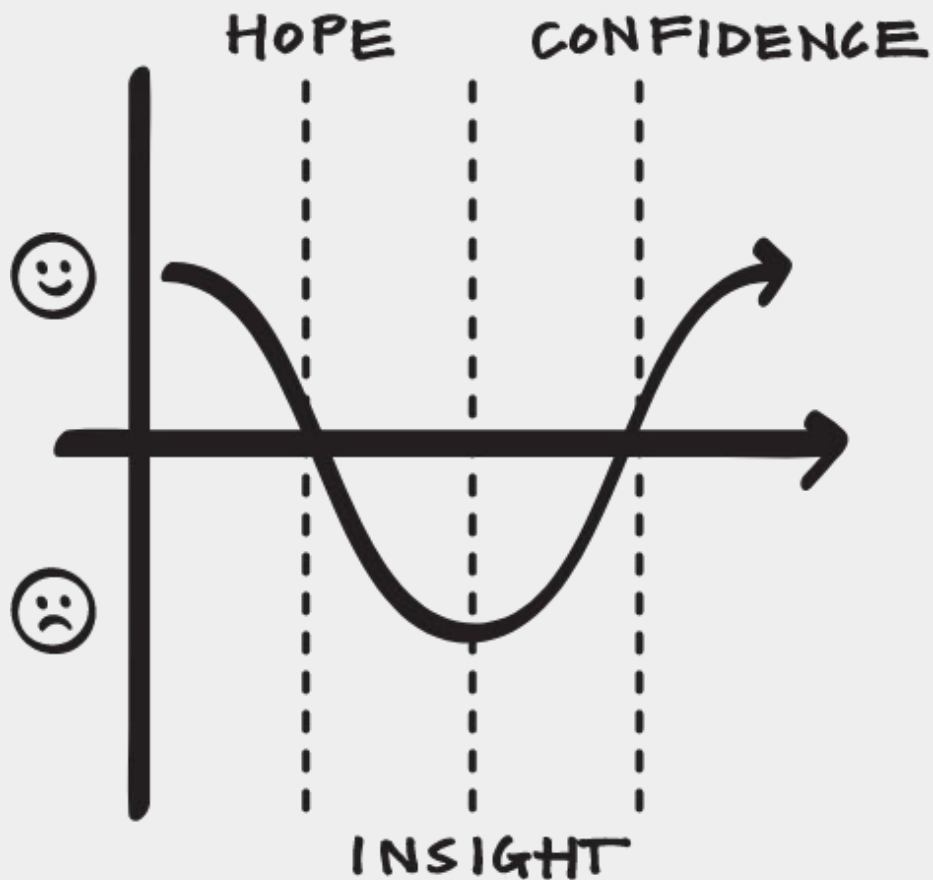


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- Who will arbitrate in the event of disagreements and how?



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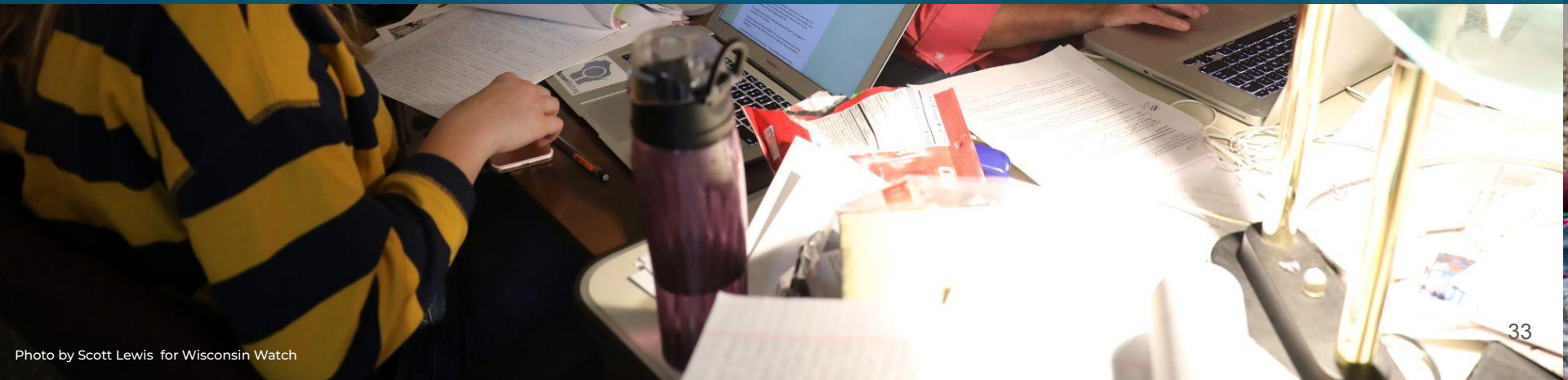
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Plan for problems:

- Who will ultimately be responsible for ensuring the project meets its deadlines and deliverables for each team?
- How will you communicate?
- Who will arbitrate in the event of disagreements and how?
- What processes (editing, publishing, permissions) need to be discussed and when?



Managing the collaboration process





- **Project manager:** Wrangles calls, deadlines and reporting

Collaboration roles



- **Project manager:** Wrangles calls, deadlines and reporting
- **Editorial lead:** Coordinates coverage



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- **Newsroom point person:** Communicates with project manager and editorial lead; brings in staff to production as needed



Collaboration roles

- **Project manager:** Wrangles calls, deadlines and reporting
- **Editorial lead:** Coordinates coverage
- **Newsroom point person:** Communicates with project manager and editorial lead; brings in staff to production as needed
- **Shared resources** can include product, revenue, impact, community engagement, data, visualization and back-end office functions

Use this playbook!



PROJECT MANAGER PLAYBOOK

FOR COLLABORATIVE JOURNALISM

FALL 2021

BY CAROLINE PORTER

CENTER FOR COOPERATIVE MEDIA
AT MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

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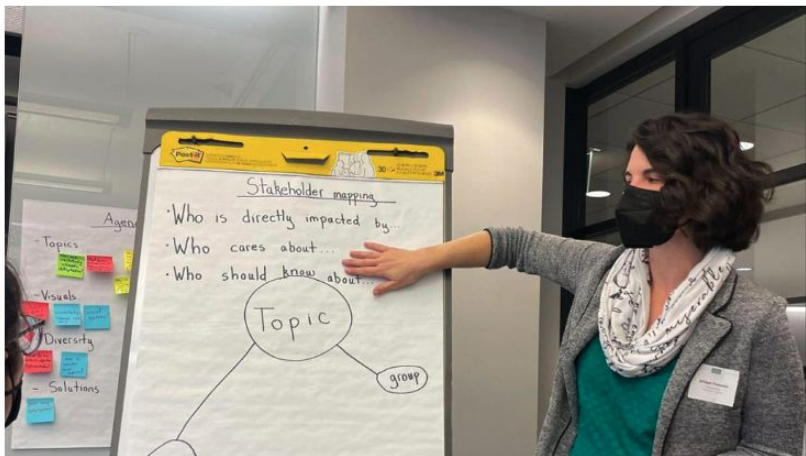


- Framing and funding
- Project management
- Impact reporting



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> From finite to ongoing



INN Director of Collaborations Bridget Thoreson leads a discussion on stakeholder mapping at a collaborative session in Chicago. Photo: INN

Interviews in progress for our next ongoing collaboration

FEBRUARY 9, 2023

RJI PARTNERSHIPS

INNOVATION

NEWS

Keeping the collaborative drive alive



Bridget Thoreson



INN and RJI partner to examine how newsrooms can build sustained topical collaborations



Contact: bridget@inn.org

