

THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM IS COLLABORATIVE

# COLLABORATIVE JOURNALISM



## WORKBOOK

SECOND EDITION

A workbook for planning and managing the details and logistics of journalism collaborations.

# COLLABORATION IS HOW WE

DO THE WORK THAT WE LACK THE **RESOURCES** TO DO BY OURSELVES.

CREATE PATHWAYS FOR **PARTICIPATION** AND DO JOURNALISM **FOR & WITH** PEOPLE.

FOSTER **DIVERSITY** OF THOUGHT AND PERSPECTIVE.

OBTAIN AND PROVIDE **EXPERTISE** NEEDED TO EXPLORE AND UNDERSTAND COMPLEXITY AND NUANCE.

EXPAND THE **REACH** AND **IMPACT** OF VALUABLE WORK THAT IS NEEDED IN COMMUNITIES.

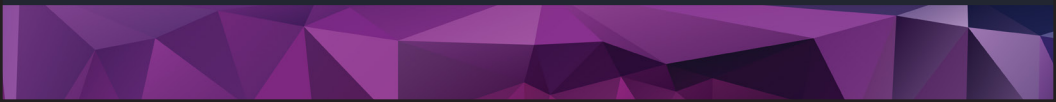
CREATE **ACCESS** TO NEW TOPICS, REGIONS AND SOURCES WITHOUT DUPLICATING EFFORTS.

MARSHALL **INFLUENCE** AND **POTENTIAL** THAT WE MIGHT NOT HAVE ALONE.

FOCUS **ATTENTION** ON CRITICAL EVENTS AND ISSUES.

SUSTAINABLY **INNOVATE** THROUGH SHARED LEARNING AND MUTUAL SUPPORT.

BUILD **TRUST** WITH OUR COMMUNITIES AND CREATE **ACCOUNTABILITY** FOR OURSELVES AND OUR ORGANIZATIONS AND OUR FIELD OF WORK.



## THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM IS COLLABORATIVE

When we talk about collaboration it's often through the lens of facilitating desired outcomes but there is a deeper and more meaningful reason to collaborate. If there is to be a future for journalism, a role to play in an informed, functioning society, it requires the work of journalists to be of service to communities.

But true service can neither be imposed or bestowed, it can only come through cooperation, partnership and inclusion. It requires reframing journalism from being about something or someone to being created for and with someone.

Collaboration won't solve all of your newsroom's problems overnight and it's not necessarily going to make your job easier. But what it will do is create the capacity and the ability to do things that you wouldn't have been able to do otherwise and to connect you with people who should be a part of the process.

It's important to keep in mind that the institutional culture change required to collaborate effectively is still happening and there's a lot to consider when approaching the idea of how you might manage your collaboration.

Some of the larger conversations in the space are on the nature of collaborative partnerships with the historical context of newsroom dynamics when it comes to the histories of national and local newsrooms, newsrooms of low diversity and newsrooms that better represent their audiences and communities, newsrooms of vastly different resources and capacities, not to mention the complexities of cross-border collaborations or newsrooms collaborating with non-news partners.

It's a very rare instance that you will be collaborating with a partner that operates exactly on the same playing field as your own organization. Those differences will require intentional planning and collective discussions of some of the questions in this workbook.

Collaborative partnerships must be true dialogues and partnerships, not an extractive dynamic or attempts at token representation. There is much progress left to be made on these fronts. As you move forward in your collaborations, embrace the work required to build quality professional relationships with the people that you want to

work with. More than workflows, technologies or the specific projects, collaborative endeavors rise and fall on the communication and trust between partners and the generosity that we can show each other.

There's no specific path to success in collaboration any more than there is a specific path to success in journalism at large. This is an ongoing process to be continually refined and improved. But collaboration is one of our best opportunities to succeed in our work in a time where every newsroom is under incredible pressure. We're underfunded, overworked, under fire, under staffed but we want to do our jobs well and the world needs us to. Collaboration is how we can do that.

With this workbook, hopefully you find yourself better equipped to address some of the big questions in considering, designing, managing and assessing a successful collaborative journalism project. More than anything else, I hope you acquire these essential components to effective collaboration: the necessary trust and relationships among your team and partners, an openness and clarity about your shared goals, and a clear direction that you can all move forward in together.

- Heather Bryant

The Future of Journalism Collaborative

## ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook is intended to help you and your partners organize and make decisions that will guide you in designing and engaging in effective, equitable and meaningful collaborative projects.

There are a million possible details to account for when it comes to designing, managing and learning from a collaboration. This workbook is structured to walk you through the big decisions that will set you on the right path and introduce you to ideas and examples for ways you can collaborate. Every collaboration looks different, the goal is to help you figure out what will work best for you and your partners.

The following pages are designed such that you have space to use this book in planning your next collaborative project. The sections are structured to encompass the four significant phases of a collaborative endeavor.

## **CONSIDER**

WHEN COLLABORATION IS THE RIGHT PATH

## **DESIGN**

TO CREATE THE ENVIRONMENT FOR SUCCESS

## **MANAGE**

FOR EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE WORK

## **ASSESS**

TO LEARN AND IMPROVE THE PROCESS AND EXPERIENCE

I hope you find this workbook useful and welcome any feedback for improvements or additions that you would find helpful in your collaborative process.

# CONSIDERING COLLABORATION



Collaboration exists in many forms with a wide range of goals. It can be a formal arrangement with the paperwork to back it up or an impromptu phone call that turns into years of helping one another out. There is no one right way to do it and the only wrong way is to never consider it at all.

Collaboration isn't necessarily the right option for every project, but it's certainly one that's always worth discussing. Much like any other format or approach to reporting, collaboration is a tool that can elevate the quality and impact of a story.

## WHEN COLLABORATION IS THE RIGHT OPTION

### **DO YOU HAVE A PROJECT YOU WANT TO COLLABORATE ON?**

It's easier to start with a project or goal and then evaluate whether it's right for collaboration or not. Every story can be collaborative but not every story necessarily needs to be and it's important to figure out what you have the bandwidth for and when collaboration will help you achieve something you and your organization can't do on your own.

### **DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA OF WHO THE STAKEHOLDERS ARE FOR THE SUBJECT YOU ARE CONSIDERING FOR YOUR COLLABORATION?**

What opportunities do you have to include these stakeholders in shaping and possibly participating in your collaboration?

**HOW WILL COLLABORATION SPECIFICALLY HELP WITH YOUR GOALS?**

**DOES COLLABORATION MAKE SENSE FOR WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE? WHY?**

**IS THERE ADEQUATE BUY-IN FROM YOUR TEAM AND YOUR ORGANIZATION?**

Are the people who will be doing the day to day work of reporting, managing, editing and participating as engaged and onboard as the people who made the decision to collaborate?

## ESTABLISHING PARTNERS

The true power of collaboration comes from the people involved. Being truly collaborative means putting in the work to build and maintain good relationships. It's not only about finding partners you would benefit from working with but also ensuring that a partnership with you is beneficial to your partners.

**DO YOU HAVE EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE OR ORGANIZATIONS THAT MIGHT BE A GOOD FIT FOR THE PROJECT YOU WANT TO WORK ON?**

Who are they?

**ARE THERE PEOPLE FROM YOUR LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS THAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN THE WORK?**

**WHAT WORK DO YOU NEED TO DO TO HELP YOUR POTENTIAL PARTNERS UNDERSTAND THE WORK THAT YOU DO AND ANY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OR UNIQUE TRAITS ABOUT YOUR WORK OR ORGANIZATION?**

It's easy to overlook factors about your organization or process that you are deeply familiar with that may not be apparent to someone with an outside perspective.



## **DO YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE THE CAPACITY TO BE A GOOD PARTNER?**

This is both a question of culture and actual capacity. Being prepared to respect the value and contributions of your partners and to view them as equals is as much, if not more, important than just considering whether you have the money or hours of labor to contribute. List out your potential roadblocks are to being a good partner. List out what qualities will help you be a good partner.

## **ARE YOU ABLE TO ALLOCATE THE TIME AND RESOURCES TO PARTICIPATE AND DELIVER ON YOUR COMMITMENT?**

## **ARE YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION AWARE OF THE POWER DYNAMICS THAT MIGHT BE IN PLAY IN YOUR COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND PREPARED TO BE THOUGHTFUL PARTNERS WILLING TO SHARE POWER, EMBRACE TRANSPARENCY AND WORK OPENLY WITH YOUR PARTNERS?**

## **WHAT ARE THE SHARED VALUES OF THE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS?**

## **WHAT ARE THE GOALS EACH PARTNER IS TRYING TO ACHIEVE WITH THIS COLLABORATION?**

If you have a project in mind, an awareness of your potential partners, a clear sense of your goals, realistic expectations for how collaboration will contribute to your success and the requisite capacity and buy-in, you're on the right track to pursue a collaborative project.

## WHAT YOUR COLLABORATION COULD LOOK LIKE

If you're just getting started or you're thinking of expanding your current collaborative efforts, it can be helpful to think about how collaboration might play a role in your reporting. Here are a few examples of how collaborations are unfolding in newsrooms.

### CONTENT SHARING

Sharing photos, audio, video or some other piece of content.

This commonly takes the form of a newsroom sharing a photo or other piece of content with another newsroom to integrate into their own coverage. The content should always be used in a mutually agreed fashion regarding attribution and linking back.

### CONTENT DISTRIBUTION

Presenting content from a partner to your audience and vice versa. One of the most potentially powerful forms of collaboration with the least amount of extra effort is sharing content with another newsroom to publish on their platforms. For small and local publishers, this is a way to put stories in front of a bigger audience. Depending on the level of coordination that exists, this can also help with more strategic use of resources.

### COORDINATED COVERAGE

Strategically covering a large story so that resources are well deployed. We're working in an age of big stories with increasing amounts of data and complexity. It's getting harder for any one newsroom to be capable of sufficiently covering a complex story by itself. Coordinating coverage across newsrooms for thorough expert coverage that preserves local perspective is a high-impact form of collaboration.

### CONTRIBUTION TO A LARGER PRODUCT

Contributing individual reporting to a larger project not possible independently. Most commonly seen in the public media space, contribution to a larger project is another form of collaborative journalism.

### PEER REVIEW

Getting feedback and review on complicated reporting such as complex data sets. Traditional fact checking is hard to apply to data-driven stories. As is commonly the case, small newsrooms often don't have enough people with the skills to vet the methodologies and data.

### PARALLEL REPORTING

Each partner contributing to a story uniquely. A little less work intensive than joint reporting, this is separate because while the partners are working on the same story, they are working on different outputs. This form of collaboration is most beneficial to newsrooms that have different core platforms such as a radio station and a newspaper.

### JOINT REPORTING

Reporters from different newsrooms working together on the same final product. This is distinct from Parallel Reporting in that this is the direct collaboration by reporters working on the same piece of content. This one can be harder. It's meshing partners with potentially different editorial processes, editing standards and approaches to reporting. But it leads to stories reflecting a greater depth of knowledge and a wider, more diverse set of sources contributed by each reporter..

### SOURCE REFERRAL

Referring partners to people with expertise needed for a story. Every reporter has their go-to people for policy expertise, context and reality checks. Helping out fellow reporters with connecting them to quality sources is a low-cost form of collaboration.

### **SHARED REPORTER**

Combining resources to fund the cost of a reporter for a specific topic or location.

Few small newsrooms can afford their own correspondent in another location, or a reporter focused on a topic that's important to an audience but perhaps is only important at certain times. When newsrooms need a reporting presence but for whatever reason cannot afford or justify that additional position, joining together with another newsroom to support that position and share their content can be a viable solution.

### **NEWSROOM EMBEDS**

Putting a reporter into a partner newsroom either to learn or for better access to a story.

A change of scenery is always helpful and newsroom embeds are a way to accomplish this. This can either be a mechanism to gain a different kind of access for a story that a reporter is already doing or a method of giving a reporter a chance to work on stories for their host newsroom and learn from their colleagues.

### **BACK END RESOURCE CONSOLIDATION**

Optimizing resources in the back end in order to more fully support or fund the news operation.

This is similar to a shared reporter collaboration, however it is a more complex and long term partnership. Back end resource consolidation is a way to strategically use resources. It is more cost-effective to hire a couple of people to take care of the needs for multiple small newsrooms than for each newsroom to hire someone for each of these positions.

### **JOINT EVENT HOSTING**

Multiple newsrooms planning and managing a news event.

This is an area where different media operations in the same community especially have a chance to shine by uniting to provide an enhanced level of coverage for their audiences through creating news events in the community.

### **ICE DISTRIBUTION**

Serving as a safety or backup to newsrooms/reporters in areas/situations where they cannot publish or cannot publish safely.

This involves the most trust and communication of all the partnerships but can have major impact, especially for small newsrooms.

### **COORDINATED FOIA/LAWSUITS**

Newsrooms supporting each other/freelancers in information requests. Governments and companies are working harder than ever to limit access to information. Supporting each other in ensuring access is a no-brainer for collaborations that matter.

### **DOMAIN EXPERTISE TRAINING**

Sharing expertise of a newsroom via training opportunities with others.

Newsrooms often cultivate people and teams with excellent skills in specific areas. Hosting training workshops to help spread those skills to other newsrooms is how we elevate the quality of stories coming from more newsrooms.

### **ALTERNATIVE FORMS**

Making the most use of the unique aspect of partners.

Newsrooms often see journalism through a limited sense of what the end result will look like and how audiences will access it. Working with different partners creates an opportunity to bring new ideas about what forms journalism can take and how it can be distributed in different and more accessible or engaging ways..

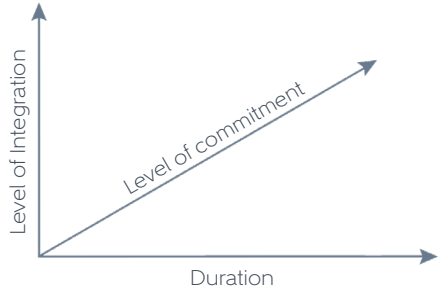
# WHAT LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT MAKES SENSE FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

In research from the Center for Cooperative Media, Sarah Stonbely identifies two parameters that she considers the two biggest factors in how collaborations are organized:

“We have identified two of what we think are the most important elements by which collaborations are organized: duration of time, and degree of integration among partner organizations.

As both of these increase, the level of commitment required to make the collaboration work also increases. Using these two variables, we have identified six different models of collaborative journalism.”

The variables of collaborative models



	One-Time   Finite	Ongoing   Open-Ended
Partners create content separately and share it	Temporary and Separate	Ongoing and Separate
Partners work together to create content	Temporary and Co-creating	Ongoing and Co-creating
Partners share content/ data/resources at the organizational level	Temporary and Integrated	Ongoing and Integrated

Models of Collaboration Matrix. Courtesy Center for Cooperative Media, Montclair State University.

These two components, and resulting models, can help you assess the overall complexity of a collaborative project.

For more on this research, visit [collaborativejournalism.org](http://collaborativejournalism.org)

# NOTES

A space for your consideration notes...

# DESIGNING A COLLABORATION



Like any endeavor made up of multiple people with their own demands and responsibilities, any decisions you can make in advance of working together reduces the number of decisions you'll have to make in the moment. This prior planning makes it easier for everyone to share an understanding of what's going on and what the workflow is. An efficient and effective collaboration is one where partners have come together to make decisions about how they will work together and to learn about each other so that the work comes from a place of mutual understanding.

## SCOPE

**WHAT IS THE DEFINED NATURE OF THE PROJECT?**

**WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF COVERAGE OR ACTIONS?**

**WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR THE OVERALL PROJECT?**

**WHAT CHECK-IN INTERVAL MAKES THE MOST SENSE FOR REGULARLY EVALUATING THE STATUS OF THE COLLABORATION TO DECIDE ON ADJUSTMENTS, CONTINUATION OR CONCLUSION?**

**WHAT ARE THE BENCHMARKS AND METRICS THAT WILL BE TRACKED FOR THIS PROJECT?**

**WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPILING METRICS AND DISTRIBUTING THEM TO PARTNERS?**

## STRUCTURE

**WHAT LEVEL OF FORMALITY OF PARTNERSHIP IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE FOR THE COLLABORATION?**

Do you need an MOU? A line-item financial budget? A story budget that indicates specific areas of coverage?

## LEADERSHIP

**WILL YOU HAVE A LEAD EDITOR, A TEAM OF EDITORS AND/OR A PROJECT MANAGER?**



**WILL THIS PERSON/THESE PEOPLE COME FROM THE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS OR WILL A SPECIAL HIRE BE MADE?**

**WHO WILL THIS PERSON REPORT TO?**

**WHICH INDIVIDUALS FROM EACH PARTNER ORGANIZATION WILL PARTICIPATE?**

**WHAT IS THE EXPECTED CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION FROM INDIVIDUALS TO LEADS?**

## OUTLAYS

**IS THE PROJECT TIED TO SPECIFIC FISCAL OUTLAY EITHER FROM OUTSIDE PARTIES OR FROM PARTNERS THEMSELVES (beyond staff time)?**

**IF YES TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION REQUIRED?**

**TO WHAT EXTENT CAN YOU CREATE A LINE-ITEM DOCUMENT OUTLINING HOW EACH EXPENDITURE RELATED TO THE COLLABORATION WILL BE COVERED AND WHICH PARTNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE?**

**IF EXPENDITURES ARE MADE ON ITEMS THAT OUTLAST THE DURATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP, WHO ASSUMES OWNERSHIP OF THOSE ITEMS?**

If equipment is purchased, who or what owns that equipment after the collaboration has concluded?

If the purchase is related to information such as a dataset or other intangible but lasting product, who retains that item? Is a copy made for all partners?

**IF THERE IS A POT OF FUNDING AVAILABLE ON A REQUEST BASIS, WHAT PROCESS CAN BE CLEARLY AND TRANSPARENTLY PUT IN PLACE REGARDING FAIR AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THOSE FUNDS?**

Are there any mechanisms to be put in place to ensure that “likelihood of successful outcome” is not the primary determining factor of who gets money? Keep in mind that such judgments are often tied to perceived or real resource levels and tend to favor the larger organizations.

## **EMPOWERING PARTNERS**

**WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS THAT APPLY TO EVERY PARTNER ORGANIZATION?**

(Think about communication, time, staffing, attention, etc.)

**WHAT IS THE CAPACITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS?**

(List the partners and a few bullet points on their level of contribution)

**WHAT ARE THE UNIQUE EXPECTATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS?**

(List the partners and a few bullet points summarizing their contribution)

## **WHAT ARE THE TIMELINES FOR EACH PARTNER'S CONTRIBUTION?**

(List the partners and a few bullet points on their individual deadlines if any)

### **THIS DESIGN PHASE SHOULD ACCOMPLISH MULTIPLE THINGS:**

- Establishing the scope of the project and the goal of the collaboration.
- Avoiding misunderstood or misaligned incentives.
- Collectively identifying the distinct strengths, capacity and needs of each partner and what each partner can contribute.
- Collectively agreeing on reasonable timelines that make sense for the capacity of the partners in balance with the needs of the project.
- Establishing how leadership of the project will be handled and how those people will support the teams and projects.
- Ensuring the work done has appropriate benchmarks and metrics that will help partners evaluate the success of the collaboration.
- Determining whether additional support is needed if it's a formal (or contractual collaboration) or whether shared clarity on the scope and details is all that's needed.

Each of these questions can be explored further depending on how much detail your organization needs to establish for the project. However, even short answers to these questions can help shape the direction of the project.

# NOTES

A space for your design notes...

# MANAGING A COLLABORATION



If you're at the point where you have a project, partners and a rough idea of how to proceed, it's time to think about the day-to-day logistics of working collaboratively.

## CONTENT

### **DO YOU NEED A PROCESS FOR COMMUNICATING THE SPECIFIC ASPECT OF WORK BEING DONE BY EACH PARTNER?**

For example, if working on a co-creating project focused on a topic, how will each partner be aware of the angle and coverage of each other so as to avoid unbeneficial duplication.

### **WHAT SHARED LANGUAGE AND ASSETS NEED TO BE AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE?**

Details about which logos each partner would like to be used, the tagline that identifies the project and how partners will be identified are straightforward decisions that should be made before publishing starts. It's also important for it to be an equitable recognition of all the partner efforts. Creating a style guide for logos, tagline and links will give everyone the assets to work with and will ensure consistency in branding for audiences

## COMMUNITY

### **IF YOUR PROJECT HAS A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMPONENT, WHAT PLANNING AND MESSAGING NEEDS TO BE IN PLACE TO CLEARLY COMMUNICATE THE NATURE OF THE COLLABORATION AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROJECT WILL PROCEED?**

If, as part of the work being done, you bring together a group of people from stakeholder groups or from the community being served, it's essential to be as clear and upfront about the nature of the project, expected duration and how the project is planned. You don't want to accidentally and suddenly abandon a highly engaged community because your project has concluded and there isn't a plan in place to hand off facilitation or implement a meaningful conclusion.

### **IN THE EVENT THAT YOU ARE WORKING ON A TOPIC OR COVERAGE AREA WHERE THE IMPACT OF THE REPORTING PROCESS IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR, HOW WILL YOU ACCOUNT FOR HARM PREVENTION FOR YOUR SOURCES ACROSS THE PARTNERS?**

Do you need a repository of sources to avoid having multiple reporters contacting people as potential sources? Is there an opportunity to adopt guidelines or participate in specific training to help all of the partners be on the same page in how to approach the reporting process?

# WORKFLOW

## **HOW WILL ALL RELEVANT PEOPLE AND PARTIES COMMUNICATE AND WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS FOR FREQUENCY AND LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION?**

Communication is the linchpin of every collaboration and ensuring there's a plan, platform and expectations set around how the team communicates is an important component to keeping the project moving forward.

## **HOW WILL YOU DOCUMENT THE PROJECT SO THAT EVERYONE IS LOOPED IN ON SPECIFICS?**

Things to consider documenting:

- Tools and how to use them
- Workflows and any specific processes
- Important links
- The people involved and what they do/are responsible for
- Attribution and links for attribution
- Social media language and hashtags
- Any shared branding materials



# TOOLS

Putting a plan in place for where you will work and what the steps are in the workflow is a vital part of collaborating. The workflow is largely dependent on the style of collaboration. Keep in mind that the complexity of your reporting should guide the level of complexity of your workflow and tool set.

**Co-creating:** When partners are actively creating content together, co-producing stories and everyone needs to be informed about the status of the content. This requires being able to communicate about the editing process, final reviews and publishing.

**Coordinated:** This is a bit simpler as your editing process is likely more contained within your team and your responsibilities to your partners are more about communicating what you're doing and your timeline.

A helpful framing for thinking about workflow and tools is to consider the needs that your collaboration may have.

**Core needs of all projects:**

1. Communication
2. Documentation
3. Editing/Review/Preview
4. Asset Management

**Common needs for many projects:**

5. Task Management
6. Schedule Management

**Possible needs, most common for longer, more integrated projects:**

7. Joint Marketing Management
8. Audience Engagement
9. Metrics Tracking
10. Impact Tracking
11. Analytics

**WHAT IS THE MINIMUM SET OF TOOLS REQUIRED TO FACILITATE THE COLLABORATION'S NEEDS?**

## INTEGRATING PARTNERS

### **HOW WILL YOU ACCOUNT FOR POSSIBLE TURNOVER WITHIN THE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS?**

It's important to think about the roles that are essential to keeping the collaboration moving forward and what you can do to document things so that a project's momentum is not derailed by an exiting team member.

### **WHAT DOES YOUR ON-RAMP AND OFF-RAMP LOOK IF THE PROJECT GAINS NEW PARTNERS OR AS PARTNERS MAY NEED TO EXIT?**

## **HOW CAN YOU PLAN FOR BREAKING NEWS INTERRUPTING ONE OR MORE PARTNERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT?**

News is always happening, and there's no telling when something could happen – from hurricanes to a public tragedy – that will divert teams from a collaborative project. Is your project time-sensitive, requiring contingency plans to keep it going or is it flexible enough that partner participation can ebb and flow?

## **WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR HANDLING THE SITUATION IF A PARTNER GOES ROGUE?**

Even with the best of intentions, whether it's a mistake, miscommunication or just misbehavior sometimes partners will violate previously agreed upon rules. Having mutually established parameters for the partnership make it easier to identify and talk about such missteps and can also help when talking about whether an action means a partner leaving a project.

# NOTES

A space for your management notes...

# ASSESSING A COLLABORATION



When you're at the point of assessing the status of your collaboration, it's an opportunity to really think about what's worked and what hasn't and turn that information into actionable lessons. Here are a few questions to guide the process of either a post-project evaluation or a check-in during the project.

## LEARN AND IMPROVE

### **DID A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH HELP YOU ACHIEVE THE IMPACT YOU SET OUT TO MAKE?**

It's important to think about which parts of the project were absolutely dependent on the collaboration so you can figure out when and how collaboration works best for your organization.

### **WERE GOALS MET?**

Taking a look at the original set of goals established for the project and think about what worked and what didn't and which things occurred that you might not have previously thought to measure but turned out to be important.

## **WHAT WERE THE SURPRISES?**

It's impossible to plan for everything making it important to track the things that were never on paper. This is great information for post-collaboration documentation and valuable lessons to share with other newsrooms.

## **WHAT ABOUT YOUR DESIGN OR MANAGEMENT COULD BE IMPROVED OR REFINED IN FUTURE COLLABORATIONS?**

## **WHAT PARTS OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN WORKED OR DIDN'T WORK?**

Whether it was the frequency, redundancy, the engagement of the team or platform, improving communication is important, making this assessment point a critical part of a post-project evaluation (or regular check-in if the project is ongoing.)

## **HOW CAN YOU SHARE ANY OF WHAT YOU LEARNED SO THAT FUTURE COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS CAN LEARN FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

If you have an incredibly successful project or one that falls apart, if a few years pass and churn has folks moving on, it would be really unfortunate if your organization repeats the same mistakes or misses out on the keys to your previous success.

## ACKNOWLEDGING PARTNERS

### **WOULD YOU WORK WITH THOSE PARTNERS AGAIN?**

Reflect on which partners were part of a good working experience and which ones may need improvement or are just not compatible with your organization when it comes to future projects. Consider if there is any part of this that would be possible to pass along as constructive feedback.

### **WOULD YOUR PARTNERS BE WILLING TO WORK WITH YOU AGAIN?**

Think about where your team shines and what are the things you'll need to pay special attention to next time so that organizations will want to continue to work with yours.

### **HOW DID INDIVIDUAL TEAM MEMBERS FEEL ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE? IS THERE FEEDBACK THAT YOU COULD COLLECT?**

Surveying participants on the production side will help you collect feedback about what worked, what didn't, what was hard and what made sense.

# NOTES

A space for your assessment notes...



# NOTES

# NOTES

# NOTES

# NOTES

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The information in this workbook is the product of years of conversations and learning from some of the smartest and hardest-working people seeking to help newsrooms collaborate better. A collaboration is as only good as the people working on it and the same is true for learning about collaboration. And in this community, I've been very fortunate to interact with so many who've been incredibly generous with their time and collaborative experiences.

A special thank you to Stefanie Murray who has worked tirelessly alongside her team, Joe Amditis and Sarah Stonbely, to make collaborative journalism into a practice that is truly benefitting newsrooms and communities.

A special thank you to the advisory board for Project Facet: Tim Olson, Dustin Bleizeffer, Katherine Rowlands, Stefanie Murray, Melody Joy Kramer and Marcia Parker.

Thank you also to the Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair State University, the John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships, the Lenfest Institute for Journalism and the Knight Foundation Prototype Fund for their support of Facet and newsroom collaboration.

## RESOURCES

Join the community of journalists talking about collaborating journalism  
[bit.ly/collaborativeslack](https://bit.ly/collaborativeslack)

More guides and resources:

[www.collaborativejournalismhandbook.org](https://www.collaborativejournalismhandbook.org)

[www.collaborativejournalism.org](https://www.collaborativejournalism.org)

(Managed by the Center for Cooperative Media)

## FEEDBACK

Much like collaboration, this workbook is a living process that can be constantly evaluated, refined and updated. If you have any feedback, ideas or comments on the content of this workbook or ideas for how it could be even better, please tell us about it.

[www.projectfacet.org/workbookfeedback](https://www.projectfacet.org/workbookfeedback)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hi, I'm Heather Bryant, the founder of Project Facet. I started in journalism in Alaska where I learned firsthand the incredible power and value in newsroom collaboration. I'm a journalist, software developer, and designer and I am completely fascinated by the processes that underpin our work and how we not only make them better but also make them truly can make them better in order to serve our communities and live up to the ideals of quality journalism.

I've been studying and consulting on editorial collaborations for most of my career. As a 2016-2017 John S. Knight Journalism Fellow at Stanford, I researched how to make collaboration more effective, equitable and inclusive. My work is now branching into public facing and community inclusive collaborations facilitating the participation of the public in editorial conversations. I've worked with the Membership Puzzle Project studying how newsrooms can create responsive and inclusive dynamics with low and no income audiences. I also work closely with the Center for Cooperative Media to create resources for journalists and news organizations interested in collaborative journalism, including running the Collaborative News Slack and writing guides and giving training and workshops about tools, workflow, design, partner dynamics and other aspects of collaboration.

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# P R O J E C T F A C E T

FACET is the infrastructure of collaborative journalism.

Our work is supporting effective, meaningful editorial collaboration with an open source ecosystem that helps journalists and news organizations manage the multifaceted challenge of planning and executing collaborative projects across different platforms with various kinds of partners both in and outside of journalism.

Facet helps partners manage the logistics of creating, editing and distributing content; managing projects, facilitating collaborative relationships and supporting the ecosystem of collaborative partners.





# THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM IS **COLLABORATIVE**

PROJECT  
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