



Journalism Impact Primer

Walton Family Foundation

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Summary

The Walton Family Foundation invests in journalism as one element in its high-impact social change strategies, especially in its environment and K–12 education programs. A process that included one-on-one interviews, group conversations and extensive review of grant materials has found that WFF journalism investments have a variety of impacts on individuals, networks, institutions and in media broadly. To inform continued grantmaking in this space, and to learn from past investments across issue areas and platforms, WFF sought to standardize terminology and align on impact measures across program areas.

This report puts forth a WFF Media Impact Framework and identifies key indicators and research methods that can be used to assess journalism investments across program areas, based on best practices in the field of media strategy and research. **The companion WFF Media Impact Toolkit provides a set of steps** for grantmakers to take to get from the decision to invest in media all the way to identifying the appropriate indicators, targets and baselines.

The information that follows is customized to reflect WFF goals, priorities and processes, but it is our hope that other partners can utilize the materials to become more effective communicators and grantmakers.

This report also provides **background information about the journalistic profession**, noting in particular its differences from social change and advocacy organizations. This context is especially important for framing what can be difficult conversations with journalism organizations, given their commitment to neutrality and the recent— and ongoing — upheaval in the industry. It also contains a **media glossary** with definitions for common terms in the media industry, including categories of media, different content platforms and analytics providers.

Recommendations

1

Use the Media Impact Framework to articulate theories of change specific to each media grant. Media impact is not a linear or unidirectional process. Instead, journalism exists in a complex ecosystem of change. The Media Impact Framework provides a path for staff and grantees to identify the priorities of a grant and articulate a theory of change specific to each organization's work.

2

Use the Media Impact Toolkit to identify few, but meaningful, impact indicators. The abundance of digital analytics can be both tempting and overwhelming. But, by starting with impact goals and using the Media Impact Toolkit, we can identify a handful of meaningful indicators that inform project progress and future investments.

3

Provide resources for paid social network advertising for grants that have social network audience growth and/or engagement goals. Paid advertising guarantees that Facebook posts and tweets will garner more impressions (reach), typically leading to increased engagement with content. Similarly, paid ads to promote Facebook fans and Twitter followers can increase the size of an organization's network. Organizations can run A/B tests to compare engagement rates for paid posts and tweets with those of unpaid (organic) content.

4

Create an audience survey template for grantees. Many of the media and journalism organizations in which WFF invests have specific goals for audience development, growth and maintenance. However, many of these small and nonprofit organizations lack the capacity and resources to conduct audience research. Consider developing a template to share with grantees that produces useful insights for all parties. The survey can include rigorously designed questions to gather demographic information, gauge audience trust, and understand broader media consumption habits, as well as provide topic specific questions about awareness, opinion and action.

5

Explore the possibility of offering a media clipping service to grantees. Resource-strapped organizations might have a Google News alert set up with their organization's name, but more frequently they're Googling their projects days, weeks and months after publication in order to track the spread of their work. There is an opportunity for foundations to provide access to powerful media clipping services so that grantee organizations can better understand how their work spreads throughout the broader media ecosystem. For example, products like Meltwater search not only digital news, but also print and closed captioned broadcast media.

6

Apply the Media Impact Framework to inform grantmaking in other areas, including policy and advocacy communication work. WFF grantees that do strategic communications engage directly with communities and audiences, while also using the media as a tool for their work. The Media Impact Framework provides an initial way for WFF and these grantee organizations to think about when an explicit media strategy is appropriate, based on project goals. The framework could also be expanded and extended to include the types of impact that organizations intend to have through their direct-to-audience strategic communications work, including measurement methods and indicators.

Background

CURRENT WFF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA GRANTS AND IMPACT MEASUREMENT PRACTICES

The Walton Family Foundation as a strategic philanthropy seeks to understand its impact in clear and measurable ways by developing performance measures for every investment to answer the questions: Who is doing what? How much? And how will we know? This orientation towards a prior statement of goals and what success looks like has been instructive for grantmaking across program areas. However, it has proven particularly challenging for program officers to establish meaningful and informative indicators of progress towards goals on investments that seek to “move the needle” on social change conversations, or maintain a “drumbeat” of coverage on an issue of interest.

Due to the unique nature of journalism organizations, the work they produce, and the multiple theories of change for media impact, this inquiry and its recommendations focus on WFF grants to journalism and media organizations.

WFF currently funds media and journalism organizations for two types of work: Content production and training and capacity building. For these grants, a significant proportion of deliverables focuses on outputs and reach. For example, journalism organizations are responsible for producing a minimum number of articles, blog posts or other content types in a given time period, often with minimum word counts. The reach of content is most frequently measured by page views and circulation. Impacts, or effects, such as increased public awareness about issues, new actions taken and increased influence of content are typically measured by proxies, such as digital analytics from websites, newsletters and social media platforms.

For training and capacity-building projects, organizations are responsible for a minimum number of events within a given time period. Measures of success rely heavily on attendance. Over time, WFF staff have identified indicators and methods that provide valuable insights and learning about the effectiveness of journalism grants to make a difference. This project brings together those with industry best practices to provide a unified framework that can be applied to journalism and media grants across WFF programmatic areas. WFF’s systematic application of this framework will create opportunities for increased cross-organizational learning and streamline grant-making and reporting processes between the foundation and grantee organizations.

Media Impact Framework

THE MEDIA AND JOURNALISM IMPACT FRAMEWORK

WFF makes grants to journalism and media organizations in order to reach new audiences with high-quality information, educate the public, empower groups working in specific issue areas, and ensure a fact-based conversation in the programmatic areas in which WFF works. This media impact framework reflects WFF's unique goals in supporting the work of journalism and best practices in the media and journalism space.

The report companion, **Journalism Impact Toolkit**, provides a template for program officers to work with grantee organizations to identify the theory of change and success indicators and targets for a particular grant.

The steps for this process include:

- Defining goals for the investment.
- Defining target audience(s) for the journalism content that will be produced, including specific characteristics, like geography(ies) and/or interests, for intended impact.
- Selecting appropriate output and/or partnership strategies.
- Selecting outcome indicators and measurement strategies, and setting baselines and targets.

The pathway from content creation to impact — on-the-ground, real world change — varies depending on the type of media organization, the topic area, target audiences and engagement and distribution strategies, among other factors. It is important that the pathways from journalism to impact are clearly identified and that there is

a shared understanding between WFF and the grantee organizations. There are seven different pathways for change identified in WFF grants to journalism and media organizations.

Seven Pathways for Change

ONE Trusted journalism causes people to think, believe and act differently.

TWO Journalism influences individuals who then take a discrete action based on the information they've accessed.

THREE Journalism influences individuals who then become active, engaged citizens in the political sphere.

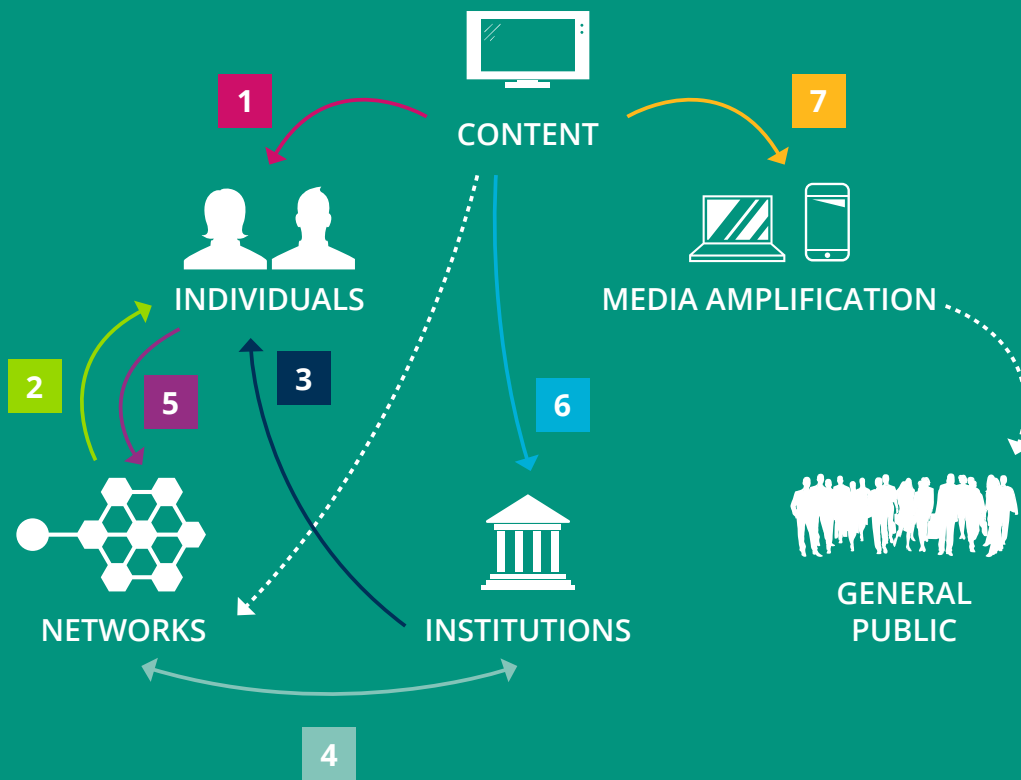
FOUR Journalism empowers organizations and networks to put pressure on publicly elected officials and institutions.

FIVE Journalism empowers organizations and networks to share information with their constituents, resulting in individuals thinking and/or acting differently.

SIX Journalism puts pressure on institutions to address wrongdoing or take action.

SEVEN Journalism can change the public discourse about an issue, or put an issue on the public agenda, resulting in greater awareness among the general public.

MEDIA IMPACT FRAMEWORK



- 1**

Trusted journalism causes people to think, believe and act differently.
- 2**

Journalism influences individuals who then take a discrete action based on the information they've accessed.
- 3**

Journalism influences individuals who then become active, engaged citizens in the political sphere.
- 4**

Journalism empowers organizations and networks to put pressure on publicly elected officials.
- 5**

Journalism empowers organizations and networks to share information with their constituents, resulting in individuals thinking and/or acting differently.
- 6**

Journalism puts pressure on institutions to address wrongdoing or take action.
- 7**

Journalism can change the public discourse about an issue, or put an issue on the public agenda, resulting in greater awareness among the general public.

There are four main types of impact included in WFF's media impact framework: individual, network, institution and media amplification. The WFF Media Impact Toolkit has tables with specific outcome variables, definitions, indicators and examples. The general definitions are provided below.

Impact on Individuals

Journalistic content can have direct effects on individual audience members. WFF and grantee organizations seek five main types of impact on individuals: increased awareness; increased interest; change in opinion; spur to action; and change in behavior.

These impacts are intended for specific, targeted audiences. The most common target audiences for WFF journalism grants are the general public, professionals, advocates and public officials. These audiences can be national, regional or local.

Impact on Networks

Journalism can impact networks — informal and/or formal groups or organizations, like professional associations, community groups and advocacy organizations. Organizations or groups can use the fact-based, nonpartisan information that journalism organizations produce in order to strengthen their position relative to other power-holders (e.g., elected officials). They can also use reporting to inform their members. In some cases, new networks even coalesce around content.

WFF grantee organizations most often are targeting local, geographically based networks, professional networks or interest groups. These networks can function at a local, state or national level.

Impact on Institutions

Journalism can influence institutions, both governmental and nongovernmental. Institutional impact as a direct result of journalism is the least common type of impact, and when it does happen, it is most commonly spurred by investigative reporting.

While explanatory reporting can also contribute to institutional change, it often first influences public and/or elite opinion and behavior, which pressures institutions from below.

Media Amplification

Journalism done by one organization can be amplified by coverage in other media, generating buzz about a topic, changing the broader conversation about an issue, and potentially reaching larger or specific target audiences.

As with the other types of impact, media amplification occurs among particular audiences and can happen at local, state, regional or national levels.

What is Journalism, Anyway?

WHAT IS JOURNALISM?

According to the American Press Institute, “Journalism is the activity of gathering, assessing, creating and presenting news and information. It is also the product of these activities.” **Journalistic professional norms, such as objectivity, neutrality and balance, separate journalism from other communications professions and activities.**

Historically, journalism in the United States has been nearly synonymous with newspapers. In the mid- to late twentieth century, while newspapers maintained prominence, broadcast media — especially network television — became American’s most commonly consulted source for news and information. More recently, the digital revolution has turned the news industry on its head.

With the rise of the Internet, citizens have taken advantage of the new opportunities to create content, tell their own stories and connect directly with others. This shift has essentially removed journalists and journalism organizations as inherent gatekeepers of information. News and information seekers can access digital content of any kind online, and for free. While some argue that this disruption is a democratization of knowledge creation and access to information, it has also created significant challenges for the journalism industry and U.S. news consumers, alike.

This section defines particular types of journalism and explores the current platforms through which audiences consume journalism. It then presents current trends in how and why different audiences access different types of news and information. Rather than delve into the many challenges facing the news industry, the focus is on opportunities and best practices. A full media glossary is available on page 22.

TYPES OF JOURNALISM

Journalism organizations conduct **national, regional, state, local** or **niche/issue specific** reporting, and typically have corresponding audiences. Journalism can be further broken down by type of reporting: **daily news, explanatory, investigative, editorial** and **blogging**.

- **Daily news** reporting focuses on current events.
- **Explanatory reporting** illuminates a significant and complex subject.
- **Investigative reporting** is systematic, in-depth and original research and reporting, often involving the unearthing of secrets.
- **Editorial writing** presents the opinions of the publisher, writer or editor.

- A **blog** is a regularly updated section of a website with a different — and simplified — editorial process than a hard news vertical. Non-journalism organizations may also have blogs for analysis and/or commentary; however, blogs from journalism organizations will still be produced using journalistic professional norms as guidelines.

A journalism organization will often publish a combination of these types of content. For example, Chalkbeat is a national and state (currently in five states) education-specific journalism organization that publishes daily education news and explanatory reporting.

JOURNALISM PLATFORMS

A platform is **the technology that enables information gathered through the journalistic reporting process to be distributed** to individuals who consume the news.

Newspapers

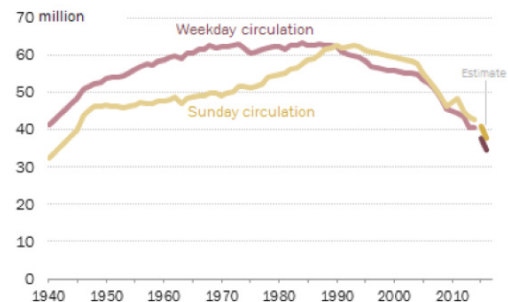
Circulation and readership of newspapers **has decreased steadily** since 1990. However, **papers of record** — major national or state newspapers that have a large circulation and whose editorial and news-gathering functions are generally considered professional and authoritative — **are still widely regarded as the official archives of events**. Papers of record continue to be influential in agenda setting and framing of public debates; their reporting trickles down, spreads out and wafts up. Furthermore, influential people and power holders still report papers of record to be main sources of information.

While national newspapers of record, especially *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, are currently experiencing growth in readership (largely through their digital platforms), local newspapers face something close to extinction due to lack of advertising revenue and continually decreasing subscription rates. Journalists, media critics, philanthropic foundations, researchers and others have called the lack of local journalism a crisis.

The **Alliance for Audited Media** collects and audits circulation data from newspapers across the U.S. AAM data is generally accepted as the most reliable for average circulation numbers; these data are available for purchase.

Newspaper circulation continues to fall

Total circulation for U.S. daily newspapers



Note: Break in line indicates switch to estimated circulation. No data for 1941-1944 and 2010. To determine totals for 2015 onward, researchers analyzed the year-over-year change in total weekday and Sunday circulation using AAM data and applied these percent changes to the previous year's total. Only those daily U.S. newspapers that report to AAM are included. Affiliated publications are not included in the analysis. Weekday circulation only includes those publications reporting a Monday-Friday average. For each year, the comparison is for all newspapers meeting these criteria for the three-month period ending Dec. 31 of the given year. Comparisons are between the three-month averages for the period ending Dec. 31 of the given year and the same period of the previous year. Source: Editor & Publisher (through 2014); estimation based on Pew Research Center analysis of Alliance for Audited Media data (2015-2016).

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Broadcast

Some news content is **produced directly for and consumed through broadcast television or radio**.

Television

Television news falls into two broad categories: network and cable. American broadcast networks are composed of national stations that produce content distributed to and broadcast by local affiliates. For example, NBC, ABC and CBS have morning and evening news and entertainment programming that is broadcast daily on local affiliate stations. Local affiliates often produce their own content, including news.

Cable television stations broadcast the same content across the United States and require a household to be a cable subscriber to access content.

Radio

Broadcast radio in the U.S. includes National Public Radio affiliates, community radio stations and commercial radio stations. NPR affiliate stations broadcast a mix of NPR programming, content produced by other affiliate stations (like WNYC), content produced by networks (such as PRX), content produced by the station in-house and music. Community radio stations broadcast content produced in-house or by their network, as well as music. And commercial stations broadcast their own content, music, and occasionally, content produced by a network (like the Univisión radio network).

Digital

Digital media refers to **any content produced for online consumption**, such as pictures, gifs, listicles, videos or text. In the late 1990s, newspapers approached websites as digital versions of their print products, making stories available online to readers, often for free.

Today, journalists and news organizations are creating innovative digital content to engage audiences on many levels.

Web Content

Digital content produced for a website is referred to as web content. Web content can be any type of journalism (daily news, explanatory, investigatory, opinion and/or blogging). While news organizations can build their own custom websites, many prefer to use existing content management systems, like Wordpress, or CMSes created by news organizations and made available to others (sometimes at a cost, sometimes for free), such as NPR's **Core Publisher CMS**.

Web content can be traditional text and/or image content, but news organizations can also create powerful data interactives, visualizations, audience engagement plug-ins and more.

Mobile

More than half of all web content is now consumed on mobile versions of websites. Mobile sites often contain the same information as websites designed primarily for desktops/laptops, but they are stripped of unnecessary (and heavy) content so that they load faster and are easier to consume on small screens. Organizations that are “mobile first” should also be considering how the ways in which an audience member consumes content on a mobile device is likely different than on a desktop/laptop. For example, for years the journalism industry assumed mobile readers would spend less time on long form text stories than desktop readers; however, research has shown that, in fact, readers are just as likely to read long text stories on mobile.

Mobile Apps

Some news organizations have developed their own mobile applications for use on mobile phones and/or tablets. News apps allow some data to load and be stored on devices, meaning that heavier digital content — like data applications, high resolution images and other interactive elements — load more quickly than they do on websites. Apps also allow organizations to track user data and behavior and send push notifications. Some apps require paid subscriptions, while others are free. News organizations have had mixed success with mobile apps, and because of the high cost to develop apps, most small organizations and nonprofits choose not to invest in a mobile app.

In-Person Community Engagement

As journalism organizations struggle with the shifting media environment, the fragmented digital space and the audience's reported low levels of trust in media, they're trying new strategies for audience engagement. In particular, **news organizations have been experimenting with in-person events**. From large, national journalism organizations like *The Atlantic* to geographically specific organizations like the *Texas Tribune*, organizations are trying festivals, theater productions, comedy shows, community round tables, and listening sessions to connect directly, share news and information, and create new reporting models and methods that put audiences at the center.

Audiences

Journalism organizations' instinct tends to be to want the largest audience possible. However, given the fractured nature of the digital space and the ability of individuals to easily pick and choose where to get their news and information, **media organizations are being forced to get to better know their current and desired audiences in order to maintain and grow their reach**.

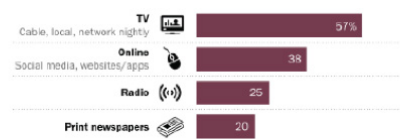
Audiences can be segmented by many factors. For example, some media organizations target audiences based on demographic information such as age, geographic location or gender. Others target audiences based on profession or interest group affiliation.

Podcasts

News produced for audio consumption, namely, the radio, is nothing new. However, since 2014, digital audio consumption has skyrocketed in the U.S. The selection of news podcasts is staggering, from niche, single-issue podcasts to daily news and investigative reporting. Podcasts are consumed on-demand through mobile devices, computers, car entertainment systems and home assistants, like Alexa and Google Home. They can be downloaded and listened to off line, or streamed directly over the Internet. There are an ever-growing number of apps through which one can access podcasts: iTunes, Stitcher, Overcast, Google Play and more.

About four-in-ten Americans often get news online

About four-in-ten Americans often get news online
% of U.S. adults who often get news on each platform



% of each age group who often get news on each platform

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
TV	27%	45%	72%	85%
Online	50	49	29	20
Radio	14	27	29	24
Print newspapers	5	10	23	48

Note: Just 1% said they never got news on any platform (not shown).
Source: Survey conducted Jan. 12-Feb. 8, 2016.
"The Modern News Consumer"

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There are striking trends in news consumption among demographic groups. For example, in [Pew's research](#), 82% of people over the age of 65 said they “most often” get their news from television, while more than half of respondents age 18–29 said they get their news online. These trends have implications for journalism organizations when making strategic decisions about content distribution and audience engagement.

Some journalism organizations suggest that it is a challenge to balance identifying and targeting audiences while maintaining the integrity of the journalism. There is a perceived risk that specifically targeting audiences could result in content that is pandering to the whims and desires of that audience. Some organizations have created positions like Directors of Audience and Audience Engagement Editors to bridge the gap between journalists and audience.

Media Impact Measurement

MEDIA IMPACT MEASUREMENT: DATA SOURCES, METHODS AND INDICATORS

Media companies, stakeholders that support media, and audiences alike are looking for ways to understand the impact of journalism. Influenced by marketing and advertising, **quantitative metrics have dominated the conversation about media impact measurement**. More recently, **qualitative research methods have been introduced into the space**, shedding light on the role of journalism in complex social change processes.

DATA SOURCES: DIGITAL ANALYTICS

When organizations talk about media impact, they are often implicitly referring to reach, as measured by “eyeballs on a page.” This association is due to the fact that historically, journalistic success has been based on reach, both for advertising dollars and journalistic pride. The more people who read a story (or at least are subscribed to a newspaper or load the web page on their device), the more the organization can sell advertising. Furthermore, journalists and organizations have assumed that reach is equivalent to content consumption, and thus to increased awareness or knowledge among audiences. Unfortunately, this latter point has not necessarily borne out in research.

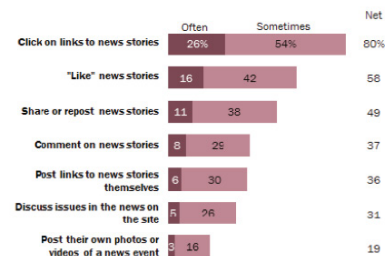
Journalism organizations also turn to reach analytics because they are readily available. Together with the growth in the digital media space, there has been a proliferation of digital analytics — page views, unique page views, impressions, likes, shares, and the list goes on. Because numbers are available, organizations feel compelled to use them. And, these data points feel relatively straightforward and easy to gather.

However, just because something can be measured does not necessarily mean it provides useful information. And beyond that, if an organization is truly interested in impact — that is, a change in the status quo — reach numbers might not be the best proxy.

On social media, the level of engagement declines as the input required from the individual increases

On social media, the level of engagement declines as the input required from the individual increases

% of social media news consumers who ...



Source: Survey conducted Jan. 12-Feb. 8, 2016.
"The Modern News Consumer"
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Journalism organizations are now using more complex website analytics, such as time on page and session level data, in order to better understand audience behavior and content consumption patterns. Rather than counting how many times a web page loads, we can actually know the average time people spend on a page, how they navigate through content across a website, how they find content, and what page “bounces” them from the site.

Social media platforms provide additional analytics to better understand audience behavior around content. It is worth noting, however, that overall the percentage of social media news consumers who actively engage with content in social networks is low.

Facebook provides aggregate data about the total number of fans, individuals who have liked an organization’s page, thereby opting in to seeing their posts in their Facebook feeds (dependent upon the Facebook algorithm). Facebook also provides aggregate data about the total number of impressions, although like page views or circulation numbers, impressions tells us only how many individual feeds in which a post has appeared, not whether someone has actually consumed the content. Facebook insights provides post-level data for shares and comments.

Like Facebook, Twitter provides aggregate data about the total number of followers of an account as well as the total number of impressions. More useful is Twitter’s unique analytic: Engagement rate, which is calculated by dividing the number of engagements by impressions.

Paid Promotions

Both Facebook and Twitter allow organizations to pay to promote their content in order to reach larger and relevant audiences. **On Facebook, an organization can pay to “boost” a particular post or the organization’s page, in general.** To boost a post, the organization selects the audience to which the post should be promoted based upon demographic and other characteristics, including whether or not the audience should already like the organization’s page. Based on budget, Facebook’s algorithm will show this post as an ad in the feeds of individuals who match the selected demographic characteristics. This will increase the total impressions – or reach – of the post, and often increases engagement. Similarly, an organization can “boost” their page by paying Facebook to create an ad that will display in individuals’ feeds inviting them to like the organization’s page. This is a way to grow audience (fans/likes).

On Twitter, organizations can pay to promote particular tweets. A promoted tweet will display in users’ time lines as an ad. Twitter uses an algorithm to determine which users might be interested in a post, then displays the post in their feeds. Promoted tweets can result in broader reach for content. An organization can also pay to promote its account. Based on Twitter’s algorithm, ads will display in the feeds of users who might be interested in the organization and its content.

Promoted content and accounts can result in increased reach for organizations. However, total impressions and followers do not tell us about the quality of the interactions, and organizations should closely track engagement metrics for boosted posts and trends over time to ensure that the investment in audience growth is resulting in increased engagement.

Newsletters also provide information about audiences. **Because it requires an individual to take an action to subscribe to a newsletter, the number of subscribers tell us about increased interest in an organization and its content.** And, the open rate tells us about subscribers' active interest in consuming the content within a newsletter.

Podcasting is arguably the newest form of digital content creation, and as such, there is less consensus on analytics across podcast platforms. In general, platforms like iTunes and Stitcher provide download information, meaning the number of times an episode is actually downloaded onto a device. Most platforms also provide the number of listens for each episode, meaning the number of times that a user pressed play on a downloaded podcast. Some platforms provide more granular data about the listen time or the percentage of listens that stuck with a podcast until the end, but these data are not yet uniform across platforms.

A digital analytics glossary can be found in the Journalism Impact Toolkit.

METHODS

Surveys

Some digital analytics help us understand what audiences find to be of interest and worth sharing, and we can use them as a proxy for increased awareness or knowledge about an issue. However, they don't tell us much about what someone thinks about a topic, if they've changed their opinion as a result of the content, or if they plan to take an action or change a behavior. Furthermore, digital analytics don't allow for the long time horizon that is often necessary to understand the effects of media on individuals or organizations.

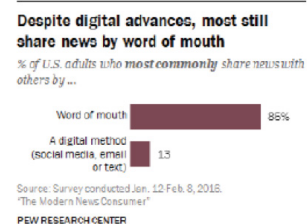
Even when considering the ripple effects of journalism, the vast majority of people say that they share news with others by word of mouth, not online. And, one of the only ways to know whether people are talking about content in their daily lives is to ask them directly.

Surveys are another tool that can be used in order to better understand who makes up a journalism organization's audience, how the content is affecting these individuals, and what they're doing with the content out in the real world. They are particularly useful for understanding the individual and network impact of journalism and media.

While large media companies conduct extensive audience research, including surveys, small news organizations and nonprofits often don't have the capacity, resources or expertise to conduct or analyze audience surveys. It is important to have well-designed survey questions and distribution strategies in order to get the most reliable results possible.

Funders could develop and provide a question bank of standard audience development questions to gather demographic information, gauge levels of trust in the media outlet and identify audience members' media consumption habits. Standard topical questions (e.g., in education and the environment) could also be provided.

Despite digital advances, most still share news by word of mouth



Content Analysis

Content analysis is the most appropriate research method to understand whether a news organization is trying to change the conversation or create buzz (Media Amplification). Content analysis is a broad term for research methods that use text as data sources to analyze discourse.

For organizations that aim to generate buzz or increase conversation around an issue, simple analysis that includes frequency of terms mentioned or frequency of citations of their work will suffice. A baseline can be set for the number of times a term and/or organization was mentioned during a six- to twelve-month period prior to the

kickoff of a project, and using a news clipping service, every mention or citation during and after the project's execution can be documented. It's important to define the universe of the "conversation." For example, is the conversation national? Is it local? Is the organization trying to generate buzz within a professional network? The data sources will vary depending upon the answers to these questions.

For more complex goals, such as changing the framing of an issue, content coding and/or computational content analysis allow for deeper analysis. These methods require methodological expertise.

BUILDING QUALITATIVE DATA SETS

Many journalists and journalism organizations take note when they receive audience feedback on stories, when they hear a publicly elected official mention their work, or when they see a professional network or an institution citing a story or project. However, there is rarely a systematic effort to track these occurrences over time. Depending on an organization's goals, turning these anecdotes into qualitative data sets can help us understand how an organization is reaching their goals.

Audience Feedback

Journalists often receive feedback from people who consume their stories. People may say that they learned about an issue, that they plan to take an action, or that they completely changed their opinion about a topic. Networks and organizations will also write to journalists to ask for more information, invite them to participate in events, and notify them about innovative ways the organization is using the content in their own work and for their own purposes.

Depending on the goals of an organization and/or project, these instances can be recorded every time they happen, moving from anecdote to qualitative data. Over time, these qualitative data sets might reveal patterns that would otherwise

go unnoticed. For example, an organization might find that their monthly explanatory, long-form content consistently generates large waves of audience feedback, while investigative projects are frequently used by advocacy organizations.

Public Records

If an organization's goal is to generate institutional change, it must first identify which institutions and develop systems to track these institutions. Government officials, agencies and departments produce text content (press releases, agenda minutes, etc.) that can be tracked for mentions or citations to an organization's content. The same is true for corporate entities or private institutions.

OUTCOME INDICATORS

Outcome indicators for an investment are based on its specific goals (as mapped to WFF Media Impact Framework logic statements, target audiences and platforms). The WFF Media Impact Toolkit walks one through the process for selecting outcome indicators and targets.

The following outcome indicators tables provide definitions for the indicators and guidance for setting targets for this investment.

Note that for some targets, baselines are the total change over the previous 12 months. For example, target increases for Facebook fans should be based on the increase in fans for an organization's Facebook page over the previous 12 months.

Other targets are based on the previous year's monthly averages. For example, target unique page views are based upon the average monthly unique page views over the previous 12 month period.

Targets are suggestions based on sector data from Google¹, Twitter, **Facebook**, **Mailchimp**, and **M+R Benchmarks**, as well as from experience working directly with a diverse group of media companies, both commercial and nonprofit. Depending on the baselines (i.e., the change in each indicator over the course of the previous year), you might adjust targets to be more conservative or more ambitious.

¹ Google has **additional resources** for organizations to set benchmarks specific to their audience analytics.

Outcome Indicators

Data source	Analytic	Definition	What does it measure?	Sample target
Facebook	Fans	The number of fans a page has. This information is available by demographics (age, location, gender, language)	Interest	1.15 x previous 12 month growth (15%)
	Shares	The number of shares of an individual post	Engagement	1.1 x previous 12 month average shares/post (10%)
	Comments	The number of comments on an individual post	Engagement	1.1 x previous 12 month average shares/post (10%)
	Video views	The number of total video views on an individual post	Interest/engagement	1.1 x average views/video (10%)
Twitter	Followers	Total number of users who have followed your handle	Interest	1.15 x previous 12 month growth (15%)
	Engagement rate	Number of engagements divided by impressions	Engagement	1.1 x previous 12 month average shares/post (10%)
Google Analytics	Unique page views	A unique page view represents the number of sessions during which that page was viewed one or more times	Interest	1.05 x previous 12 month monthly average (5%)
	Time on page	The total duration of a user's time on a page from entry to exit or timing out (set at 30 minutes)	Interest/engagement	1.02 x previous 12 month monthly average (2%)
	Average session duration	Total duration of all sessions (in seconds) / number of sessions	Interest/engagement	1.02 x previous 12 month monthly average (2%)
Newsletter	Subscribers	Total number of email accounts subscribed to a newsletter	Engagement	1.05 x previous 12 month growth (5%)
	Open rate	The ratio of opened newsletters to total subscribers	Engagement	Industry average: 20%<

Outcome Indicators, Continued

Data source	Analytic	Definition	What does it measure?	Sample target
Podcast (Podtrac, iTunes, Stitcher, etc.)	Downloads	The number of times a podcast is downloaded	Interest	1.05 x previous 12 month monthly average (5%)
	Listens	The number of times a podcast is listened to	Engagement/ awareness	1.05 x previous 12 month monthly average (5%)
YouTube	Subscribers	Total number of YouTube accounts subscribed to a channel	Interest	1.05 x previous 12 month monthly grown (5%)
	Views	The number of legitimate views for your channels or videos	Interest/ awareness	1.05 x previous 12 month monthly average (5%)
	Watch time	The amount of time that a viewer has watched a video. This gives you a sense of what content viewers actually watch (as opposed to videos that they click on and then abandon)	Engagement/ awareness	1.05 x previous 12 month monthly average (5%)
Alliance for Associated Media	Print circulation	The total number of distributed copies of a publication at a specified time	Reach/ awareness	Remain constant
News clipping service	Citation/ mention	A piece of content is directly referenced, including attribution to the originating organization	Changing the conversation/ generating buzz	Dependent upon goals: identify specific outlets
	Localization	Content and/or data produced by the organization is used by another organization as the starting point for an independent project	Changing the conversation	Dependent upon goals: Identify specific outlets
Public records	Citation/ mention	An organization directly cites a piece of content, including attribution to the originating organization	Reaching influentials	Dependent upon goals: Identify specific outlets

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Media Glossary

Arbitron ratings

Ratings of broadcast radio based on panel research. (Owned by Nielsen.)

Blog

A type of web content, a blog is a regularly updated section of a website. In the context of journalism organizations, blogs often have different editorial processes than hard news verticals, but still follow journalistic norms and practices. For non-journalism organizations, blogs do not necessarily follow journalistic practices and are more often commentary, analysis and/or opinion.

Broadcast

Content produced for and consumed through broadcast television or radio.

Cable TV

TV programming that is delivered by coaxial cable rather than over the air for the purposes of improved reception and delivery of additional program choices beyond the local stations.

Circulation

The total number of distributed copies of a publication at a specified time.

Citation/mention

A piece of content is directly referenced, including attribution to the originating organization.

Content diffusion

A piece of content is directly referenced, without attribution to the originating organization. For example, an organization may break an investigation that is then covered in other media across a region or the country; as the story spreads, media companies may not cite the original piece of content.

Coverage area

The specific geography where a media vehicle has its coverage. In broadcast, coverage usually describes the area to which the station's signal extends. In print, coverage usually means the circulation area.

Cume (broadcast)

Another way of expressing reach. The total number of different people or households exposed to advertising at least once during the media schedule. This number is measured by various audience measurement companies, such as Nielsen and Arbitron.

Daily news

Reporting that illuminates a significant and complex subject, demonstrating mastery of the subject, lucid writing and clear presentation.

Digital/web content

Any content produced for online consumption, such as pictures, gifs, listicles, videos or text. Any kind of journalism — explanatory, investigatory, daily news, editorials and blogs — can be produced as web content.

DMA (designated market area)

Nielsen's term for geographical areas made up of exclusive counties based on which home market stations receive the predominant share of viewing.

Drive time

The day parts used in radio to signify primary listening being done in cars. Generally considered to be Monday through Friday, 6:00 to 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 to 7:0 p.m.

Editorial

An article in a newspaper or other periodical or on a website presenting the opinion of the publisher, writer or editor.

Explanatory reporting

Reporting that illuminates a significant and complex subject, demonstrating mastery of the subject, lucid writing and clear presentation.

Interest group publication

A publication aimed at a specific audience, often a social sector and/or organization, that presents current news, issues and trends, often using specialized language. For example: The Seattle teachers' union, the Seattle Education Association, publishes a member newsletter for members; the AARP publishes a magazine targeted toward senior citizens. These publications focus on resources, trends and news for their audiences, but they also have advocacy or policy goals.

Investigative reporting

Systematic, in-depth and original research and reporting, often involving the unearthing of secrets.

Local outlet

Journalistic organization with a local focus.

Localization

Content and/or data produced by the organization is used by another organization as the starting point for an independent project.

Nielsen

Audience measurement company that determines the audience size and composition for television (and now radio) programming in the U.S. using audience panels.

Nielsen rating

Ratings (1 to 10) of viewing of broadcast television that represents 1% of total households.

National outlet

Journalistic organization with a national focus and national audience with circulation/audience size of more than 400,000.

Op-ed

A newspaper page devoted to signed articles by commentators, essayists, humorists, etc., of varying viewpoints who are generally not affiliated with the newspaper.

Paper of record

National or state major newspaper that has a large circulation and whose editorial and news-gathering functions are generally considered professional and authoritative.

Podcast

Audio content distributed digitally for on-demand listening.

Print

Text-based content produced for print media, such as a newspaper or magazine.

Professional publication

A publication aimed at a specific audience, often in business and/or industry that presents current news, issues and trends, often usually specialized language. For example: The Chronicle of Philanthropy provides news, information and resources to those working in the philanthropic sector; The National Education Association publishes a magazine, *neaToday*, for education professionals. These publications focus on professional development, resources, trends and news, and do not typically have advocacy or policy goals.

State outlet

Journalistic organization with a state focus.

Sweeps

The four 4-week periods when all TV markets are measured by Nielsen and Arbitron for station viewing and demographic information. Sweep months are February, May, July and November.

Acknowledgements

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Journalism Impact Toolkit

Walton Family Foundation

WFF Journalism Impact Toolkit

You've decided to make an investment in journalism. **This toolkit will guide you through the following steps:**

- 1** Defining **big-picture strategy** for the investment.
- 2** Defining **target audience(s) for the journalism content that will be produced**, including specific characteristics, like geography(ies) and/or interests, for intended impact.
- 3** Selecting appropriate **output and/or partnership strategies**.
- 4** Selecting **outcome indicators and measurement strategies**, and setting baselines and targets.

Step One

DEFINE A BIG-PICTURE STRATEGY FOR THE INVESTMENT IN JOURNALISM.

Goals for an investment in a journalistic organization are fundamentally different than those for advocacy and policy organizations. Journalistic norms of objectivity and neutrality mean that journalism organizations will not commit to highly specific reporting, issue framing or theories of change.

However, journalism organizations are interested in their work holding the powerful to account, contributing to public debate, and informing and empowering groups and individuals.

Questions to ask yourself and your grantee:

What will this journalism project achieve?

Why is this project important?

How will we know if the project is successful?

Outputs

Use the media glossary on the next page to identify the types of outputs that your grantee produces and select those that you will support based on their alignment with your strategy. **Record the outputs this investment will support here:**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

MEDIA GLOSSARY

Blog

A type of web content, a blog is a regularly updated section of a website. In the context of journalism organizations, blogs often have different editorial processes than hard news verticals, but still follow journalistic norms and practices. For non-journalism organizations, blogs do not necessarily follow journalistic practices and are more often commentary, analysis and/or opinion.

Broadcast

Content produced for and consumed through broadcast television or radio.

Cable television

TV programming that is delivered by coaxial cable rather than over the air for the purposes of improved reception and delivery of additional program choices beyond the local stations.

Daily news

Reporting that illuminates a significant and complex subject, demonstrating mastery of the subject, lucid writing and clear presentation.

Digital/web content

Any content produced for online consumption, such as pictures, gifs, listicles, videos or text. Any kind of journalism – explanatory, investigatory, daily news, editorials and blogs – can be produced as web content.

Editorial

An article in a newspaper or other periodical or on a website presenting the opinion of the publisher, writer or editor.

Explanatory reporting

Reporting that illuminates a significant and complex subject, demonstrating mastery of the subject, lucid writing and clear presentation.

Investigative reporting

Systematic, in-depth and original research and reporting, often involving the unearthing of secrets.

Local outlet

Journalistic organization with a local focus.

Podcast

Audio content distributed digitally for on-demand listening.

Print

Text-based content produced for print media, such as a newspaper or magazine.

State outlet

Journalistic organization with a state focus.

Sweeps

The four 4-week periods when all TV markets are measured by Nielsen and Arbitron for station viewing and demographic information. Sweep months are February, May, July and November.

Next, together with your grantee, **select one or more of the logic statements that best describes why you're making this investment:**

Seven Pathways for Change

ONE Trusted journalism causes people to think, believe and act differently.

TWO Journalism influences individuals who then take a discrete action based on the information they've accessed.

THREE Journalism influences individuals who then become active, engaged citizens in the political sphere.

FOUR Journalism empowers organizations and networks to put pressure on publicly elected officials.

FIVE Journalism empowers organizations and networks to put pressure on public officials.

SIX Journalism puts pressure on institutions to address wrongdoing or take action.

SEVEN Journalism can change the public discourse about an issue, or put an issue on the public agenda, resulting in greater awareness among the general public.

On the WFF Media Impact Model graphic, **find the numbered path that matches each of your logic statements to identify the categories of impact for the investment.** Make note of the type or types of impact you intend your investment to have:

Individual: Journalistic content can have direct effects on individual audience members. WFF and grantee organizations seek five main types of impact on individuals: increased awareness; increased interest; change in opinion; spur to action; and change in behavior.

Network: Journalism can impact networks - informal and/or formal groups or organizations, like professional associations, community groups and advocacy organizations. Organizations or groups can use the fact-based, nonpartisan information that journalism organizations produce in order to strengthen their position relative to other power-holders (e.g., elected officials). They can also use reporting to inform their members. In some cases, new networks even coalesce around content.

Institution: Journalism can influence institutions, both governmental and nongovernmental. Institutional impact as a direct result of journalism is the least common type of impact, and when it does happen, it is most commonly spurred by investigative reporting.

Media Amplification: Journalism done by one organization can be amplified by coverage in other media, generating buzz about a topic, changing the broader conversation about an issue, and potentially reaching larger or specific target audiences.

Step Two

DEFINE TARGET AUDIENCE(S) FOR THE JOURNALISM CONTENT THAT WILL BE PRODUCED.

To define target audiences, ask:

- What individuals, networks or institutions are most affected by the information presented in this project?
- What individuals, networks or institutions have power to make a change?
- What individuals, networks or institutions have an incentive to take action?

Then, define specific characteristics, like geography and/or interests, for the intended audience. **To get specific, for each of your target audiences, ask:**

- Is the target audience geographically bound?
- Is the target audience bound by something else, such as a shared identity, profession or life experience?

What are the specific target audiences for this investment? Note if it is an audience of individuals, a network, an institution or other media.

Step Three

SELECT APPROPRIATE OUTPUT AND/OR PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES.

In order to effectively reach a target audience with reporting, we need to know what news sources the audience trusts and how they access this information. We can use research to design content and partnership strategies in order to reach particular demographic groups, networks and institutions.

When research does not yet exist, journalistic organizations might survey their audiences to determine who they are reaching with different types of content.

The chart that follows provides examples of target audiences and their news and information consumption habits (based on research, largely from **Pew**). This exercise can be done for any target audience, using existing data and research or by conducting primary research, possibly through surveys.

In some cases, the platform can be further refined. For example, “The Presidency” pays attention to large, national media outlets, while “Congresspeople” get news and information from a combination of national media outlets and local papers of record.

Questions to ask to determine the most effective outputs and/or partners to reach your target audience(s):

- What sources of news and information does each target audience trust?
- How does your target audience access news and information?

Example: news and information platforms for target audience

Sample: Target Audiences and Platforms

		PLATFORMS											
		Facebook	Live events	Magazines	Mobile apps	Mobile content	Newsletter	Newspapers	Podcasts	Radio	Television	Twitter	Web content
TARGET AUDIENCES	Individuals												
	18–29				X	X			X				X
	30–49	X			X		X			X	X		X
	50–64	X				X	X	X		X	X		X
	65+	X				X	X			X	X		X
	Hispanics and Latino/as	X	X			X				X	X		
	College+ educated			X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X
	Policymakers			X				X		X	X		X
	Networks												
	N/A												
	Institutions												
	Fortune 500 companies			X				X		X	X		X

Target Audiences and Platforms

On this table, **fill in your target audiences (identified on page 8) and select the appropriate platforms to reach each audience.** Keep in mind that if the organization you are funding does not have its own platform for reaching the given target audience(s), the organization might need to make partnerships and/or obtain coverage in other media in order to reach the audience.

		PLATFORMS												
		Facebook	Live events	Magazines	Mobile apps	Mobile content	Newsletter	Newspapers	Podcasts	Radio	Television	Twitter	Web content	
TARGET AUDIENCES	Individuals													
	Networks													
Institutions														

Step Four

SELECT APPROPRIATE OUTCOME INDICATORS AND/OR MEASUREMENT STRATEGIES, AND SET BASELINES AND TARGETS.

Success indicators and measurement strategies for journalistic content dependent on a combination of the goals of the work and the platforms through which the work is distributed. Both quantitative and qualitative data can be appropriate.

Possible data sources:

- Broadcast analytics
- Digital analytics
- Direct audience feedback
- Other text sources (for content analysis)
- Print analytics
- Social media analytics
- Surveys

Quantitative Data

Print and Digital Analytics have long served as the standard for media measurement, largely due to the fact that circulation, reach and engagement are the indicators used by advertising companies, and thus have been the key to revenue for journalistic organizations. For impact measurement, we use new metrics, like session-level data and depth of engagement, in order to better approximate audience members' levels of interest and learning. This is true on websites and social networks¹, alike.

Use the following Impact tables to identify the outcome variables for your investment.

Qualitative Data

Surveys can be used in order to better understand who makes up a journalism organization's audience, how the content is affecting these individuals, and what they're doing with content out in the real world. Surveys are particularly useful for understanding the Individual and Network Impact of journalism.

¹ Paid promotions on social networks, like Twitter and Facebook, allow organizations to pay to promote their content in order to reach a larger and relevant audience. Promoted content and accounts can result in increased reach for organizations. However, total impressions and followers do not tell us about the quality of the interactions, and organizations should closely track engagement metrics for boosted posts and trends over time to ensure that the investment in audience growth is resulting in increased engagement.

Content analysis is an option for organizations that aim to generate buzz or increase conversation around an issue. For a simple analysis, a baseline can be set for the number of times a term and/or organization was mentioned during a six to twelve month period prior to the kickoff of a project. Using a news clipping service, the organization can then document every mention or citation during and after the project's execution. It's important to define the universe of the "conversation." For example, is the conversation national? Is it local? Is the organization trying to generate buzz within a professional network? The data sources will vary depending upon the answers to these questions.

For more complex goals, such as changing the framing of an issue, content coding and/or computational content analysis allow for deeper analysis. These methods require methodological expertise.

Direct audience feedback is a way that journalists themselves often gauge the impact of their work. If an organization identifies a specific type of feedback that indicates success and documents this systematically, every time it occurs, we can move from anecdotes to qualitative data sets that, together with other analytics, can provide a more holistic view of journalistic impact.

Over time, these qualitative data sets might reveal patterns that would otherwise go unnoticed. For example, an organization might find that their monthly explanatory, long form content consistently generates large waves of audience feedback, while investigative projects are frequently used by advocacy organizations.

INDIVIDUAL IMPACT: VARIABLES, DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS

Logic statement	Outcome variable (ascending magnitude of impact)	Variable definition	Example for ONE piece of content: Chalkbeat publishes an article about a successful school in Detroit...	Methods and/or indicators applied to one piece of content (ascending order of magnitude)
1. Trusted journalism causes people to think, believe, and act differently.	Increased awareness	Individuals have a new and/or deepened awareness of an issue.	Readers learn about the charter school system.	Unique page views; Time on page; Average session duration; Facebook Fans; Twitter followers; Newsletter subscribers; Podcast downloads; Survey results
	Increased interest	Individuals have a new and/or deepened interest in an issue.	Readers spend time reading the story and, due to increased interest, share it with others in their network.	Facebook comments; Facebook shares; Facebook video views; Twitter engagement rate; Newsletter open rate; Podcast listens; Survey results
	Change in opinion	Individuals change their opinion about an issue or topic.	Readers who previously were anti-charter schools change their opinion.	Survey results; Direct audience feedback
2. Journalism influences individuals who then take an action based on the information they've accessed.	Spur to action	Individuals take a one time or finite action.	Readers decide to look into their local charter school system.	Survey results; Direct audience feedback
3. Journalism influences individuals who then become active, engaged citizens, including voting and putting pressure on publicly elected officials.	Behavior change	Individuals change a behavior.	Readers use the information they've gleaned when making decisions to vote and/or attend a public meeting.	Survey results; Direct audience feedback

NETWORK IMPACT: VARIABLES, DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS

Logic statement	Outcome variable (ascending magnitude of impact)	Variable definition	Example for ONE piece of content: Chalkbeat publishes an article about a successful school in Detroit...	Methods and/or indicators applied to one piece of content (ascending order of magnitude)
<p>4. Journalism empowers organizations and networks, which then put pressure on publicly elected officials.</p> <p>5. Journalism empowers organizations and networks to share information with their constituents, resulting in individuals thinking and/or acting differently.</p>	New organizations and/or networks formed	New organizations and/or networks self-organize.	Parents in Detroit use the article as a focal point for an organizing meeting.	Survey results; Direct audience feedback; Citations (in content produced, newsletters, etc.)
	Existing organizations and/or networks strengthened	Existing organizations and/or networks are able to strengthen their own institutions.	A Detroit PTA uses the article to make demands of the city government in a public meeting.	Survey results; Direct audience feedback; Citations (in content produced, newsletters, etc.)
	Contribute to organizations and/or networks' work	Contribute to organizations and/or networks' work	A Detroit PTA shares the article through their newsletter in order to inform their members.	Survey results; Direct audience feedback; Citations (in content produced, newsletters, etc.)

INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT: VARIABLES, DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS

Logic statement	Outcome variable (ascending magnitude of impact)	Variable definition	Example for ONE piece of content: Chalkbeat publishes an article about a successful school in Detroit...	Methods and/or indicators applied to one piece of content (ascending order of magnitude)
6. Journalism puts pressure on institutions to address wrongdoing or take action.	Policy introduced	A new policy or regulation is introduced in an institution (governmental, corporate, etc.)	The city government introduces a policy related to charter schools and cites this story.	Public records; Public statements
	Policy passed	A new policy or regulation is passed by an institution (governmental, corporate, etc.)	The city government passes a policy related to charter schools and cites this story.	Public records; Public statements
	Institutional change	An institution initiates a change (governmental, corporate, etc.)	City council passes a new policy based on the story.	Public records; Public statements

MEDIA AMPLIFICATION: VARIABLES, DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS

Logic statement	Outcome variable (ascending magnitude of impact)	Variable definition	Example for ONE piece of content: Chalkbeat publishes an article about a successful school in Detroit...	Methods and/or indicators applied to one piece of content (ascending order of magnitude)
7. Journalism can change the public discourse about an issue, or put an issue on the public agenda, resulting in greater awareness among the general public.	Amplification of content/ message	A particular perspective, piece of information, or message is amplified in the greater media ecosystem.	The story is mentioned in national media outlets.	Media mentions (news clipping service)
	Change in discourse	A pre-existing public conversation is altered.	The story is mentioned in national media outlets.	Content analysis
	Generate buzz	A new topic or issue is introduced into the greater media ecosystem.	The story is mentioned in national media outlets.	Content analysis using Media mentions (news clipping service)

Outcome

Based on your logic statements, target audiences, platforms and outcome variables for your investment, **use the table in Appendix A to identify appropriate outcome indicators.**

A Note on Media Amplification

When an organization’s goals include media amplification, the organization will need to specify qualifiers for the kind of media mentions that “count” as success, based on the target audience or audiences they have identified. For example, if the target audience access news and information through national newspapers, “amplification of content” indicators should be mentions in national newspapers. If the target audience is geographically based, indicators might be mentions in all local media outlets, regardless of platform (i.e., websites, social media, blogs and newspapers).

The most widely accepted data for reach and circulation numbers for media in the United States is the **Alliance for Audited Media**, a subscription service.

What are the specific outcome variables you identified for this investment?

Outcome variable 1: _____

Outcome variable 2: _____

Outcome variable 3: _____

Outcome variable 4: _____

Outcome variable 5: _____

Outcome variable 6: _____

Outcome variable 7: _____

Outcome variable 8: _____

Outcome variable 9: _____

Outcome variable 10: _____

The following outcome indicators tables provide definitions for the indicators you’ve selected and guidance for setting targets for this investment.

Note that for some targets, baselines are the total change over the previous 12 months. For example, target increases for Facebook fans should be based on the increase in fans for an organization’s Facebook page over the previous 12 months.

Other targets are based on the previous year's monthly averages. For example, target unique page views are based upon the average monthly unique page views over the previous 12 month period.

Targets are suggestions based on sector data from Google², Twitter, **Facebook**, **Mailchimp**, and **M+R Benchmarks**, as well as from experience working directly with a diverse group of media companies, both commercial and nonprofit. Depending on the baselines (i.e., the change in each indicator over the course of the previous year), you might adjust targets to be more conservative or more ambitious.

¹ Google has **additional resources** for organizations to set benchmarks specific to their audience analytics.

Outcome Indicators

Data source	Analytic	Definition	What does it measure?	Sample target
Facebook	Fans	The number of fans a page has. This information is available by demographics (age, location, gender, language)	Interest	1.15 x previous 12 month growth (15%)
	Shares	The number of shares of an individual post	Engagement	1.1 x previous 12 month average shares/post (10%)
	Comments	The number of comments on an individual post	Engagement	1.1 x previous 12 month average shares/post (10%)
	Video views	The number of total video views on an individual post	Interest/engagement	1.1 x average views/video (10%)
Twitter	Followers	Total number of users who have followed your handle	Interest	1.15 x previous 12 month growth (15%)
	Engagement rate	Number of engagements divided by impressions	Engagement	1.1 x previous 12 month average shares/post (10%)
Google Analytics	Unique page views	A unique page view represents the number of sessions during which that page was viewed one or more times	Interest	1.05 x previous 12 month monthly average (5%)
	Time on page	The total duration of a user's time on a page from entry to exit or timing out (set at 30 minutes)	Interest/engagement	1.02 x previous 12 month monthly average (2%)
	Average session duration	Total duration of all sessions (in seconds) / number of sessions	Interest/engagement	1.02 x previous 12 month monthly average (2%)
Newsletter	Subscribers	Total number of email accounts subscribed to a newsletter	Engagement	1.05 x previous 12 month growth (5%)
	Open rate	The ratio of opened newsletters to total subscribers	Engagement	Industry average: 20%<

Outcome Indicators, Continued

Data source	Analytic	Definition	What does it measure?	Sample target
Podcast (Podtrac, iTunes, Stitcher, etc.)	Downloads	The number of times a podcast is downloaded	Interest	1.05 x previous 12 month monthly average (5%)
	Listens	The number of times a podcast is listened to	Engagement/ awareness	1.05 x previous 12 month monthly average (5%)
YouTube	Subscribers	Total number of YouTube accounts subscribed to a channel	Interest	1.05 x previous 12 month monthly grown (5%)
	Views	The number of legitimate views for your channels or videos	Interest/ awareness	1.05 x previous 12 month monthly average (5%)
	Watch time	The amount of time that a viewer has watched a video. This gives you a sense of what content viewers actually watch (as opposed to videos that they click on and then abandon)	Engagement/ awareness	1.05 x previous 12 month monthly average (5%)
Alliance for Associated Media	Print circulation	The total number of distributed copies of a publication at a specified time	Reach/ awareness	Remain constant
News clipping service	Citation/ mention	A piece of content is directly referenced, including attribution to the originating organization	Changing the conversation/ generating buzz	Dependent upon goals: identify specific outlets
	Localization	Content and/or data produced by the organization is used by another organization as the starting point for an independent project	Changing the conversation	Dependent upon goals: Identify specific outlets
Public records	Citation/ mention	An organization directly cites a piece of content, including attribution to the originating organization	Reaching influentials	Dependent upon goals: Identify specific outlets

What are the specific outcome indicators and targets for this investment? Record the indicator baseline, if appropriate.

Outcome indicator baseline & target 1: _____

Outcome indicator baseline & target 2: _____

Outcome indicator baseline & target 3: _____

Outcome indicator baseline & target 4: _____

Outcome indicator baseline & target 5: _____

Outcome indicator baseline & target 6: _____

Outcome indicator baseline & target 7: _____

Outcome indicator baseline & target 8: _____

Outcome indicator baseline & target 9: _____

Outcome indicator baseline & target 10: _____

Congratulations — you made it!

Now you're ready to structure a conversation with current or potential future grantees to come to agreement about the goals for an investment in journalism, as well as how the organization and you will measure success for the investment.

Acknowledgements

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