

Worksheet: Inviting audience participation in your story

The American Press Institute developed this worksheet as a guide to help you to identify ways in which you can invite the community to participate, and to be transparent about your work. Before starting, be sure you've read the accompanying Strategy Study: [The best ways for publishers to build credibility through transparency](https://bit.ly/apicred) (bit.ly/apicred).

Consider sitting down with a few creative collaborators from across your organization to tackle these questions together.

1. Define the target participants

Who are the people you want to contribute to this story? In answering this, think about who you can connect with at your organization to access analytics or other data to help better define the target group.

Where do these people gather and connect, both online and off? How can you reach these people using existing platforms where you and your organization are active? List options below.

2. Identify opportunities for participation

Do any of these some specific opportunities for collaboration fit your story (check all that apply and write your own ideas):

- Could the community help you at the start of your work by suggesting sources to speak to? Or by pointing you to background and research?
- Can the community help provide context to what you have and are gathering?
- Are there places you can't access where the community can be your eyes and ears?
- Do you need to track down specific people or information?
- Would personal stories and reactions from people be of value to your work?
- Are there any specific tasks that a large number of people could help with in order to gather or process data?
- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Evaluate Risks and Establish a Verification Process

Will participation put any members of the community at risk? Do they risk losing their job by sharing internal information? Would someone be put in harm's way by participating and sharing content via social media? Could their privacy be invaded? Identify any risks below.

It's important to think about how you'll test and verify what the community provides. What process will you use to evaluate what you receive to ensure that you only use accurate information?

4. What's the Value/Reward?

In order to spark participation, you need to have a clear value proposition for the community. What value will they receive from participating? This could include crediting them in the final work, helping solve a problem for them, enabling them to learn more about their community etc. List ideas below.

How will you recognize and reward participation when your story is published?

5. Participation thesis

Fill in the blanks below to create a thesis statement for your participation project.

This story will invite people from the _____ community(ies) to contribute by _____. They will be motivated to participate because _____.

The resulting content/information/data will be incorporated in the reporting in the following ways: _____ and participants will be recognized by _____.

The outreach and call for participation will be done using _____, and will involve these people/resources _____.

We would appreciate hearing about how you use this process and what comes as a result. If you try this, please send us a note at hello@pressinstitute.org to share your experience.