

Oops, we broke the article machine

#ONA13, #articlemachine, @AmPress

INSTRUCTIONS

Momentarily you will work in assigned groups. Each group has a hypothetical story scenario. We want you to brainstorm as freely as possible new ways to cover the story, or present your reporting, that opens up coverage—that sees alternative storytelling not as a bell or whistle, but each form having its own different strengths. Appoint a note-taker for each group. One of us will help facilitate and/or keep you on track for time. You'll present your best ideas briefly at the end of the session.

Remember, for this session, you may not use the traditional news story as a solution to storytelling. The article machine is broken.

SCENARIO 2: Institutional long-term beat

You spend more of your newsroom resources covering government than any other topic. But your analytics tell you that fewer people on average read your government coverage than almost any other topic and they spend less time per article than on most topics. Your surveys show people say they care about politics—in part because they think their elected officials are lousy, but even more because they are worried about the health of the community. They think local government is broken. You have been really struck by the question posed to you recently by a sociologist who you met, which seemed to connect to so many of the comments you saw in the comments of people in the community: “If people think the government is broken, how would you determine that? How would you track that? How would one go about measuring or answering whether the local government was doing what it was supposed to be doing?”

Curious where to start? Look at the back of this sheet for some questions to think about.

Questions to think about

Consider the challenges of your audience in this scenario:

What information tells the story? What data would measure the health of the community and the effectiveness of government, or whether the government was doing its job?

What is it about the city that people care about? How can you track those?

Imagine how different groups are affected: Who are the players here? What can each of them bring to the storytelling? What does each need from the storytelling?

Some of your storytelling decisions:

Beyond writing news stories, how could you invite people into coverage about their city government that would answer these questions and engage people who are not engaging with your content now?

How could you use multimedia to deliver aspects of this coverage? What combinations of video, audio, images, etc.?

How could you use data and visualization, like maps, charts, infographics?

What can you do through social media engagement?

Story levels: *Good stories are more than just facts -- How do you serve all three levels?*

How will you deliver the facts about what's happening in this story as it develops?

How will you deliver analysis and sensemaking?

How will you capture the emotional impact and human reaction and tell that story?