

Syllabus - Product strategies for journalism: How to align editorial, audience, business and technology

Course Dates: August 23 – September 19, 2021

Instructor: [Adriana Lacy](#)

This MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) produced by the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, in partnership with Google News Initiative, seeks to help journalists. You will learn the necessary tools and concepts to create and maintain sustainable information products that generate value for the end user and for the organization, whether for existing initiatives or for new ideas.

Goal

In this course, you will learn what the product mindset is and possibly realize that it may already be a part of your routine. You will be introduced to ‘agile principles,’ which will help any new initiative to be implemented organically. You will understand that developing your vision and product strategy is as important as communicating both concepts to your newsroom. We’ll give you tips on how to create products that really matter to those who use it, while learning how to know your user. You will find that the

mindset of prototyping can help you correct the route with the product you are creating. Also, you will get some tips on how to be an internal influencer in your media organization, align different stakeholders and make things happen. Finally, you'll see that working with products is more about consistency and creating processes for continuous improvement, with short feedback loops, creating hypotheses, and measuring results.

Objectives

By the end of our MOOC, you will have learned to recognize ways to develop the product mindset in your routine. You will also have been introduced to product vision and strategy, and you will have learned how to develop a product from problem identification to in-depth audience knowledge, while learning how to look at evidence-based rapid delivery of value.

How the course works

First of all, note that this is an asynchronous course. That means there are no live events scheduled at specific times. You can log in to the course and complete activities throughout the week at your

own pace, at the times and on the days that are most convenient for you.

Despite its asynchronous nature, there are still structures in place for the duration of the course.

The material is organized into four weekly modules. Each module will be taught by (instructor's name) and will cover a different topic through videos, presentations, readings and discussion forums. There will be a quiz each week to test the knowledge you've gained through the course materials. The weekly quizzes, and weekly participation in the discussion forums, are the basic requirements for earning a certificate of participation at the end of the course.

This course is very flexible, and if you are behind with the materials, you have the entire length of the course to complete them. We do recommend you complete each of the following before the end of each week so you don't fall behind:

- Video lectures
- Readings and handouts/exercises
- Participation in the discussion forums

- Quizzes covering concepts from video lectures and/or readings

Tools/Applications Required

During this MOOC, we will need a computer with internet access.

Participants must be able to use Google Documents, Google Spreadsheets and Google Slides.

Course Syllabus

Module 1: What is a product?

(August 23 - 29, 2021)

We'll differentiate project development from product development and show that the product mindset and agile principles can be used in everyday newsroom activities.

In this module, you will learn:

- What is and what is not a product;
- Why product and project development require a completely different work approach;
- See the characteristics inherent to journalism that are fundamental in product development;

- Product Mindset: You may already have it and don't even know it;
- What are the agile principles and why, once you know it, you won't be able to live without it.
- Hear from Brittany Hite, a project manager at the Los Angeles Times on how to bring your project from conception to completion.

Module 2: From problem to solution —and never the other way around

(August 30 - September 5, 2021)

We will trace the paths of product discovery: identify the people and problems of those who will use (and pay) for the product, build hypotheses and design the solution.

In this module, you will learn:

- User space: define the persona and get to know it well through user research techniques;
- Problem space: discover, understand and validate the problem we are going to solve;
- Solution space: discover, understand and validate the solution we are going to propose to solve the problem;

- Completing the lean canvas;
- Hear from Nia Johnson, a product manager at Axios about her career path and life as a product manager.

Module 3: Vision, strategy and product roadmap

(September 6 - 12, 2021)

We'll show you how to create a vision, strategy, and roadmap for your products, and we'll address the importance of communicating them inside and outside your organization.

In this module, you will learn:

- What is the product vision and why defining it well is as important as communicating it properly;
- Stakeholders buy in: the importance of aligning product and company strategies and conquering allies;
- Exercising writing the product vision statement and filling out the product vision board;
- What is the product strategy and how does it differ from the product vision;
- The roadmap as a communication tool that shows where we are and where we want to go;

- Prioritization techniques to contain the urge to do everything at once;
- Hear from Genesis Ting, a user experience designer and former creative technologist at the Los Angeles Times

Module 4: Construction and feedback

(September 13 - 19, 2021)

With the persona known, the problem and solution clearly delineated, and the vision defined, we'll show you how to deliver the right product from a prototyping mindset and short feedback loops.

In this module, you will learn:

- The MVP
- The importance of focusing on delivering value in 'small pieces'
- Build, deliver, measure and improve: creating a constant feedback loop
- Experimentation examples

Certificate of Completion

A **certificate of completion** is available for those who meet all of the course requirements, and pay online an administrative fee of \$30 (thirty U.S. dollars), using a credit card. After confirmation of course requirements, the Knight Center will send a message with confirmation that you fulfilled the course requirements and qualify for the certificate. The message will also include all the steps and instructions to pay the certificate fee using a credit card. Once your payment has been confirmed you will receive an email with instructions on how to download the certificate.

To be eligible for a **certificate of completion**, you must:

- Watch the weekly video classes and read the weekly readings
- Complete weekly quizzes with a 70% minimum score. (You can retake the quizzes as many times as needed. Only the highest score will be recorded.)
- Create OR reply to at least one discussion forum each week

The **certificate of completion** is not required in order to take the course. Students can still take our free online course without purchasing the certificate. No formal course credit of any kind is associated with the certificate.

The certificate is awarded by the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas to attest to the participation in the online course.