Collective Work: Best Practices for Collaborative Investigative Reporting

1. Consider the following when planning investigative collaborations:
   • What is the scope of the collaboration?
   • What are the anticipated contributions of each organization?
   • What is the plan for working together throughout the process?
   • How do collaborators prefer to communicate?
   • How will the project be managed?
   • How will information and findings be shared?
   • How will content be shared?
   • What are the anticipated obstacles? And how might they be resolved?
   • How will the editorial, fact-checking, legal review and publication processes work?
   • How will the consistency of information and key facts be insured?
   • How will the collaboration be branded and publicized?
   • Who will follow up on breaking news related to the story, post-publication?
   • How will the project be submitted and credited for awards?
   • How will revenues (if you’re lucky enough to have any) be shared?

2. Put agreements in writing, including:
   • The goal(s) of the partnership.
   • The reporting/publication plan.
   • Assigned tasks and deadlines.
• Agreements about resources.
• Agreements reached throughout the process.

3. **Assign a project manager**, distinct from an editor, who manages the organizational aspects of the collaboration. This manager sets up a group email, arranges meetings and agendas, tracks the activities of each organization and stays on top of tasks.

4. **Determine a process for sharing information**: sources, documents, data.

5. **Discuss how you will work with sources**:
   • How will you keep track of who has talked to whom?
   • How will you represent the project and the news organizations involved?
   • Who is the primary contact for each source?
   • How will you coordinate interviews?
   • How will you handle off-the-record sources and information?

6. **Understand the mediums that your partners are working in and what they require to produce their story**.

7. **Understand your partners’ organizational culture, structure and publishing requirements/limitations**.

8. **Focus on teambuilding and fostering communication and leadership skills within your organization**.

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