Those of you who attended this session…..Have any suggestions for details to add to this? Contact MaryJo Webster, maryjo.webster@startribune.com

Goal: Ideal workflow for digital product that goes with daily or quick turn story.

Team A:
This group decided to focus on a data-driven interactive.

- Reporter gets data set and schema
- Reporter gives set to digital team and editor is cc'ed
- Interactives team cleans/builds
- Communication= open
- Interactives person sends to editors involved and reporter
- Is it functional? Is it accurate?

If ok'ed by all involved via email….. then:
- Publish
- Post-mortem: How'd it do?/How is it doing?, social media analytics/journalistic value
- Does this/did this teach someone something?
- Can we re-purpose this? Add this to list of tools? or list of templates?

Team B:
This group decided to focus on digital elements to go with a breaking news story, i.e. a house fire

Phase 1 - Data gathering, by reporter and assignment editor
Phase 2 - Decide to cover, assignment editor
Phase 3 - Scrum -- create a Google doc that defines scope and constraints, lists who does what, lists what to publish first, lists deadline(s), and check-in time(s)
Phase 4 - Prototype -- developer and designer build prototype, shares with rest of team
Phase 5 - Evaluate prototype. If not sufficient, go back to Phase 4 and adjust as necessary. If sufficient, move to Phase 6.
Phase 6 - Launch

An Ideal Digital Workflow for a Standalone Product:

1. Inception - the identification of a need/problem
2. ID Skill Sets
   a. identify skill sets prior to identifying actual people that need to be involved

      b. see if there is a way to combine resources identified (ex. front-end designer/developer)
3. Brainstorm
4. Mission Statement
      a. this is important to document and ensure that everyone is on board with
      b. go back and review this statement throughout the project to ensure that you are achieving your main objective
5. Hypothesis
      a. this should be a proposed solution for the need/problem
      b. how are you going to test this?
6. Define Scope/Goal
      a. these do not need to be highly technical (ex. what tools are being used) but should act as a general outline of components or milestones that will be addressed
      b. include items that are OUT of scope (ex. eradicate old software)
7. High-level sign off
      a. discuss idea and plan, make sure everyone is on the same page
8. Lo-fi Prototype + Design
      a. preferably this should be a collaboration of design/UX skills and technical or development skills
      b. note: this may be the same person!
      c. don't be afraid to show the low-fi prototype around even if it is rough!
9. User Testing
      a. this could be formal or informal
      b. this could be external or internal
      c. experiment with different methods (ex. survey, interview, focus groups, etc.)
10. Feedback
      a. compile feedback from user testing and share with the team and stakeholders
      b. determine tangible next steps/improvements
11. Iterate (repeat user testing, feedback and revisions if necessary)
12. Minimum Viable Product
      a. the simplest version of product that meets minimum requirements. Can add features later.
13. Develop plan for promotion/Content Strategy
14. Launch
15. Iterate!
16. Post-Mortem
      a. what worked? what didn't? what can be done better next time?
17. Templatize (Can we reuse and recycle code?)

Ideal workflow for a digital product(s) that will accompany an enterprise story:

We structured our workflow around a project management concept known as "RASCI" - Responsible, Accountable, Supporting, Consulted and Informed.

The idea is that you assign people to these roles for the project as a whole, and for specific pieces of the project. For example, the writer of the story will be "responsible" for the story, their assignment editor would likely be "accountable" and perhaps a higher-level editor might be "consulted". Others like a data editor or data viz designer or photographer, etc., might be "informed" or "supporting."

We liked this concept because we thought it might help solve one of the big problems we identified -- that too often people don't know what they are responsible for or who is supposed to be doing what. Or that people are brought in very late in the game and then they don't like what's been built. In other words, too often there isn't enough thought put into the "team" and making sure the right people are in the loop from the get-go.

Some other key points we raised in our discussion:
● All information should be available to everyone in the RASCI chain at all times (that includes the story available to the digital designer and the digital design available to the reporter, etc)
● Would be useful to have an archived team conversation by using a tool such as Slack so that there's a trail of conversation but the less involved members (i.e. the "informed" group) don't have to keep up with every little thing. They could look back at the archived conversation to catch up.
● Be sure to get your legal department involved in the digital product, as well.
● Get the text of the digital product(s) edited before the product is finished; and then again after any changes
● Do a rough prototype -- even a sketch on paper -- to show all team members before building anything. This would not only ensure that everyone is on the same page before significant effort is put into the digital product, but it would also help the non-technical people see how the process works
● Also do a "package" prototype with all the elements -- story, graphics, interactive, photos, etc -- and run that through the same process as you do for each element
● Develop a checklist for non-technical team members about what they should be looking for when reviewing prototypes and finished products

Workflow:
1) Set an objective for the project (all elements of the project should meet that objective; if later it's obvious that a particular element doesn't meet the objective, you might want to kill that element)
2) Determine the RASCI members for the project as a whole and individual elements
3) Set up the team's communication plan and tool (i.e. Slack channel) and make sure everyone knows what this is and is tuned in.

4) Schedule a review plan -- with deadlines
5) Build a fast, rough prototype of digital element(s) and the package as a whole. Reporter should also develop a rough draft for designer/developer to see. All members of team should review and come to consensus about whether it's ready to move forward. This is also the time to consider "ejecting" an idea, if necessary.
6) Keep repeating step 5 -- build out the element more, then have team review. Build it out more, then review, etc. Be sure text is being copy edited and all members of the team provide feedback during this.
7) User testing. Get some fresh eyes on the prototype -- even if that is just someone from within the news organization.
8) Editing, polishing, fact-checking
9) Publish
10) Collect analytics
11) Post-mortem/retrospective meeting to discuss what worked, what didn't -- both in terms of content and the process