Final Project: Introduction

Over the last 12 weeks, you have worked to develop skills in gathering and weighing information, writing short- and long-form messages and presenting them in text, audio, image, video and online. Now, you get to take those skills for a test drive. And you get to do it by thinking big as a lab.

As a final project, each lab will envision and create an online information product that it can market to specific audience. During our final exam time, you’ll pitch your lab’s idea and execution to a group of experts who will critique strategy, content, design and business models. Think of them as a group of “angel investors,” prepared to tell you whether your idea and implementation have entrepreneurial legs.

This project allows you to frame your own capstone experience to apply what you’ve learned this semester. This project can be among the most challenging assignments you’ve ever encountered but also among the most rewarding. Most students come away with a sense of accomplishment that makes being an instructor incredibly gratifying.

The most critical element of success, in my opinion, is teamwork. Each of you will be part of one of four small teams, and together you’ll form a large team. Effective collaboration and communication are critical skills in today’s networked information economy. These skills will be as important to you as writing a lead.

Don’t look at this as the final march toward a grade. It’s more than that. It’s one of those few times when the canvas is completely blank, and you have the opportunity to take a creative idea from first thought to final touches. These opportunities don’t present themselves often. Use that blank canvas to your advantage, and I guarantee you’ll feel all the better for having had this chance.

Team Responsibilities

The goal of this project is to generate an entrepreneurial idea for an information website (and possibly related mobile or social app) that somehow meets the needs of an audience that aren’t currently satisfied in our information environment. Your idea must be marketable in the local community but could be a franchise of something more national in scope.

The lab as a whole will narrow ideas you each submit and focus on a specific concept. From there, four smaller teams will take over, with each student in the lab serving on one team. Each team will have one student leader, who will work with the TA as a coordinator.

Strategy and Project Management Team

Three students on this team will:

- develop an overall strategy for the project
- write a 2- to 3-page strategy memo detailing audience, goals, revenue streams and timeline
- meet with Katy, Mitchell and/or TA for feedback on strategy and revise accordingly
- develop and deploy a market research survey to test and support your strategy and execution (for the survey, use Qualtrics, http://survey.wisc.edu/ and review questions with your TA, Katy or Mitchell)
- create and maintain all tools for project management, such as Google docs for deadlines, processes for submitting content, etc.
- gather feedback from other teams as their work develops and adjust the overall strategy accordingly

Platform Team

Four students on this team will:

- envision and create a WordPress site to hold all content created for the project, including architecture, navigation, design and usability
- consult with the Content Team to ensure plans for text, images, audio and video fit with platform plan
- envision and mock up other proposed platforms for your pitch (e.g., wireframe sketches of a mobile app to serve as a companion for your site)
- consult, as needed, with labmates on best approaches for multimedia content
- post all site content
Content Team
Four students on this team will:

• meet with each labmate to review and revise informative story and alternative story forms
• work with Platform Team to ensure content is sufficient for site
• meet with Pitch, Promotion and Revenue Team to develop a multimedia plan and assign students accordingly (the multimedia plan will be 15 total packages that cut across informative and persuasive print layouts, audio, video and slideshows)
• content edit all submissions for effective leads, transitions, sourcing, etc.
• copy edit all submissions for grammar and style
• write headlines and subheads
• consult with labmates on acquiring and captioning images
• copy edit and test site after content is posted

Pitch, Promotion and Revenue Team
Four students on this team will:

• work with the Strategy and Project Management Team’s revenue strategy
• consult with the Platform Team and develop a plan for advertising on the site
• develop a plan to promote the site to its target audience
• assign each student in the lab to one specific piece within these two plans (such as creating a banner ad for a specific business or writing a press release for the launch of the site)
• meet with Content Team to develop a multimedia plan and assign students accordingly (the multimedia plan will be 15 total packages that cut across informative and persuasive print layouts, audio, video and slideshows)
• write a three-page strategy memo detailing the revenue and promotion plan, using the Strategy and Project Management Team’s survey data
• design and deliver a 7-minute pitch live to our panel of angel investors during the final exam time, including a one-page advance backgrounder due on the last day of classes

Individual Responsibilities
In addition to team responsibilities, each individual will be responsible for:

• a three- to four-page informative, multisourced story (proposal reviewed and revised with Content Team)
• one piece of strategic content (assigned by the Pitch, Promotion and Revenue Team)
• an alternative story form (reviewed and revised with Content Team)
• two small group multimedia packages (assigned by Content Team and Pitch, Promotion and Revenue Team from these options)
• two-page persuasive print layout (e.g., a magazine spread print ad to promote the website locally)
• two-page informative print layout (e.g., a daily briefing sent out to subscribers)
• 30- to 60-second persuasive audio package (e.g., a radio spot for your site launch)
• two-minute informative audio package (e.g., a profile story)
• 60-second persuasive video package (e.g., a viral video to be shared by your audience)
• two-minute informative video package (e.g., a feature package)
• 90-second to two-minute audio slideshow (e.g., a companion to another story on the site)

Final Project: Idea Pitches
To get the project rolling, each of you will bring one idea for an entrepreneurial information-based website to Week 12, Lab 1.

Each student will pitch his or her idea, and the group will discuss strengths and weaknesses, focusing squarely on which ideas will work best in terms of strategy, revenue, content and platform. From there, you will narrow to one idea and move forward. Your TA will help in this discussion, but it will be led by the Strategy and Project Management Team.

Remember, your idea must be narrow enough to complete in a short window here in the Madison community but also broad enough to support 15 informative text stories and alternative story forms,
strategic content and 15 multimedia packages. Some groups will create stand-alone ideas while others might propose a sub-site for something bigger. You also may choose to make your idea a “franchise” of something that would grow nationally from an initial pilot here.

To prepare, you will create a pitch memo and submit it to your TA in the Week 12 lecture. This memo counts toward your final project participation grade. The memo must contain all the elements in this sample:

Sample Pitch Memo: Organ Donation

Idea summary: Create a campaign to increase pledges for organ donation by students and build a website to share information, stimulate students to pledge and enable online pledging.

Target audience: UW-Madison students as an initial pilot, with a plan to build this into a national campaign, with campus-specific sites.

Why this idea is novel, needed and a fit for this audience: A recent survey indicated that 80 percent of college students think favorably about organ donation but only about 10 percent have registered as donors. No campaign or website currently targets students specifically, so this effort fills a gap.

Three informative story ideas:

- legal issues in organ sharing
- feature story contrasting patient who received a donated organ vs. patient who is still waiting
- personality profile of Hans Sollinger, MD, UW Medical School transplant surgeon

Three ideas for strategic content:

- banner ads from medical centers that do transplantation
- flier detailing need for organ donation with pledge card to be handed out on Library Mall and Bascom Hill
- fundraising campaign to defray medical costs for transplant patients

One alternative story form idea:

- organ donation by the numbers

One multimedia idea:

- video ad with recipients thanking donors’ families

Final Project: Job Descriptions

Individual Assignments

Informative Story

- write a three- to four-page informative story
- submit a story proposal and meet with the Content Team to review and revise it
- amass at least the following sources for your story, even if all do not appear in the final draft
  - 3 live interviews
  - 3 documents
  - 3 previously published pieces
  - 1 observation opportunity
- alert your live sources to the fact that your story will be published on the Web
- write your story in either inverted pyramid or narrative style
- write objectively, without inserting your opinion
- attach a list of live sources, their titles and their phone numbers to your story before you turn it in, plus descriptions of your documentary sources and citations for the previously published pieces
- supply your story in hard copy to your TA and submit it electronically according to the process developed by the Strategy and Project Management Team

Alternative Story Form

- produce an ASF either as a companion to your informative story or as a stand-alone
- submit an ASF proposal and meet with the Content Team to review and revise it
- Possible story forms:
  - Storify: draw together relevant social media content on your topic – minimum 20 entries
  - Infographic: two charts or graphics illustrating important points or data related to your topic
  - Timeline: plot key dates or developments on a timeline, emphasizing growth or change of an issue over time – minimum of 10 entries
  - How-to: if your topic involves something readers can do, provide a step-by-step instruction set – minimum of five steps
• Map: plot locations of events related to your issue – minimum of 10
• By-the-numbers: list of essential or illuminating statistics – minimum of 10
• if you would like to use a form not in this list, it must be approved by the Content Team and your TA
• supply your story in hard copy to your TA and submit it electronically according to the process developed by the Strategy and Project Management Team

**Strategic Content**

• produce a piece of content as assigned by the Pitch, Promotion and Revenue Team (because the business models for topics will differ so widely, some teams may have more advertising content while others develop more for other kinds of promotion)
• this content will be “real” – an ad must be for an actual product or service, a press release must be for an actual organization, etc.
• act as if you’re working for a strategic communications agency that is trying to land an account, and you’re developing materials for the pitch session – in other words, you do not need to get client approval for your piece, but your piece needs to be real enough to be approved by that client
• for instance, assume the topic is our example of organ donation and the persuasive idea is a flier detailing the need for organ donation and a pledge card – you do not need to get UW Health’s approval to produce your flier – you simply have to produce a flier in keeping with their goals and the audience, with the idea that you’ll be pitching your product to them later and trying to get them to hire you
• if you are assigned any sort of visual approach (such as an ad, direct mail piece or flier), you must lay out the piece
• if you do a press release, specify the organization, the date and the audience
• supply your content in hard copy to your TA and submit it electronically according to the process developed by the Strategy and Project Management Team

**Small Group Assignments**

Each of these assignments will come out of the multimedia plan developed by the Content Team and the Pitch, Promotion and Revenue Team. Each lab will have 15 multimedia packages, with each student working in two pairs to complete two packages. Your TA will assign the pairings.

**Informative or Persuasive Print Layout**

• use InDesign to create
• must be a minimum of two pages (such as a magazine story spread or two separate full-page ads)
• supply your content in hard copy to your TA and submit it electronically according to the process developed by the Strategy and Project Management Team

**Informative or Persuasive Audio Package**

• use Audacity to create
• for informative packages, maximum length of two minutes
• for ad spots, run time of 30 or 60 seconds
• supply your script in hard copy to your TA and submit package electronically according to the process developed by the Strategy and Project Management Team

**Informative or Persuasive Video Package**

• use iMovie to create
• for informative packages, maximum length of two minutes unless approved by TA
• for ad spots, run time of 30 or 60 seconds
• supply your script in hard copy to your TA and submit package electronically according to the process developed by the Strategy and Project Management Team

**Informative or Persuasive Audio Slideshow**

• use Soundslides to create
• maximum length of two minutes unless approved by TA
• supply your script in hard copy to your TA and submit package electronically according to the process developed by the Strategy and Project Management Team
Final Project: Story Proposal Format

Please use the format below (unless your Content Team asks for another format).

Informative Story Proposal
Informative story idea: I would like to write a feature story contrasting a patient who received a donated organ vs. a patient who is still waiting (use this space to boil your idea down to one specific sentence telling us what you propose to do).

Minimum Required Sources
3 live interviews (list name, contact information and what you hope to learn from them):
1. Don Moss, coordinator of UW Hospital’s Organ Procurement Organization, 608-263-5555, to learn about donors and recipients and try to find two patients to contrast for my story
2. Family of Judy Zima, Marshfield, 715-555-5555, organs donated when Judy died saved three lives and the family can give me perspective on how they decided to consent to donation – this will apply to the section in my story about scarcity of organs
3. Jan Michelis and family, 414-555-5555, donated heart saved her life, so she can provide information on how it feels from the patient perspective

3 documents
1. annual report of the UW Hospital Organ Procurement Organization
3. press release from UW Hospital, July 10, 2012, provides data on local transplant program

3 previously published pieces
1. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article on decrease in donations, Jan. 12, 2009
2. Newsweek story on growing number of people on waiting list for various transplants, March 3, 2011

1 observation opportunity

1. follow Jan Michelis for a day to observe all the “simple” things she gets to do but would have missed without the heart transplant

Final Project: Troubleshooting

The teaching assistants and I collect notes while watching students work through the final project. Here are some things you’ll want to watch out for in creating both your individual and group projects.

Deadlines
• Past students would advise you to begin work on your individual pieces right away. Do not underestimate the time it will take you to find live and documentary sources. You should begin searching for information and setting up interviews the day you get your story ideas finalized.
• Deadlines are unforgiving when it comes to technical problems. Plan technical errors into your scheduling, so you don’t get caught off guard.
• Plan for your partner to let you down. Almost all students have great working relationships, but those few who didn’t have 100 percent effort from their partners were often left scrambling at the last minute.
• You will not get any extensions for stories, even if you have a final exam the same day. You’ve got enough lead time to plan around that.

Sources
• Sources are available at their convenience, not yours. Contact them immediately and plan time in case you need to go back to them for more information.
• Get the source’s contact information, including name, title, phone and email address. You must include this with your story, so your TA can fact check.
• Don’t just stick to a fixed set of questions developed in advance. Do your homework and come to the interview prepared, but also let the interview flow, inserting follow-up and new questions where necessary.
• With interviews for audio stories, remember that you have to listen to make sure you’re getting useful soundbites. If not, find more creative, succinct ways to ask the questions.
• Visit us during office hours to discuss interview questions if you’re unsure about your approach.
• Remember that your sourcing factors into your grades as much as your writing. A piece can be beautifully written, but if it lacks important or interesting information, it fails in its ultimate goal.
• Turn to us for sourcing suggestions, as we know this community and this market better than you do in many cases. Use your labmates to help you find potential sources if you’re stuck. Also, remember that University Communications offers a comprehensive database of experts at www.news.wisc.edu.

Audio Stories
• Make sure the interviewee is speaking loudly.
• Bring extra batteries with you in case the recorder dies midstream.
• The Journalism Reading Room checks out recorders. Be sure you know how to use it before the interview. Always clear the memory card before beginning and bring extra batteries.
• Do a sound check before beginning any interviews.
• Be aware of the noise around you when you’re recording your voiceovers.
• Record voiceovers in separate chunks, rather than one long shot, as it’ll save you the step of splitting them up to fix mistakes.

File Formats
• All your stories, scripts, etc., must be saved as MS Word files.
• Any graphics you’ll include in an InDesign file must be eps or tif format. Any audio stories must be compressed and saved as mp3s.
• If you’re supplying your alt story form as an image, it must be gif or jpeg format.

Open Lab Hours
• Various locations on campus check out laptops for your use (http://laptop.library.wisc.edu/). The campus InfoLabs also have most of our software. The regular J202 labs are never available for open lab time.

Reaching Each Other
• Each lab has an email distribution list that goes to all members of the lab, your TA and me.

• These lists are named as journ202-sectionnumber-f12@lists.wisc.edu example: journ202-307-s12@lists.wisc.edu to reach section 307.
• Use these to stay in touch with each other as you work on the project. The Strategy and Project Management Team should set up a shared doc with everyone’s name, email address and phone number, so you can reach each other individually.

Final Project: Checking Out Still Cameras and Recorders

If you need still pictures for your final project or a recorder for audio, you may need to check out equipment from the Journalism Reading Room. When doing so, please remember the following rules supplied by the JRR:

1. Equipment is expensive, so you will sign a contract agreeing to pay for any damage, loss or theft.
2. Do not check out items in your name and loan them to someone else, as you are still personally responsible for any costs.
3. You must be a registered J202 student and bring your student ID to check out.
4. Cameras and recorders are for use in the campus area only and may not be taken elsewhere.
5. The Journalism Reading Room hours can be found at http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/name/journalism.
6. Cameras checked out on Friday must be returned Monday morning (Friday checkouts are popular, so be prepared to have demand exceed supply).
7. You may renew a checkout if you come to the Reading Room and no one else is waiting, but you may not renew a checkout over the phone.
8. If you return equipment late, your grade on your individual informative assignment will be lowered one full letter grade.
9. Equipment is checked out first come, first served, with no possibility of reservations or waitlists. If you do not need any checkout for the full period, please return it early.
Final Project: Grade Breakdown

The final project constitutes 30 percent of your final grade for the course. Your final project grade will break down into the following weighted elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Project Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Informative Story</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Strategic Content</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Alternative Story Form</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group Project 1</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Group Project 2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Participation Grade (given by your teammates)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Participation Grade (given by your TA)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project Grade (awarded to full section)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Overall Participation Grade assigned by the TA will evaluate the following:
• attending all final project meetings and classes
• meeting deadlines
• work within project team, small groups and large group
• displaying a professional and collaborative attitude and maintaining excellent effort

Please note: you will receive a zero instead of the group grade for the project if you do not attend the final pitch during the exam period or fully participate in the final project as a whole.

Final Project: Deadlines

All deadlines are final. No work will be accepted if submitted after the deadline. Note that your Strategy and Project Management Team may set deadlines earlier than those set out below and supply additional deadlines. Acronyms below refer to teams: Strategy and Project Management (SPM), Content (CT), Platform (PT), Pitch, Promotion and Revenue (PPR).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week and Lab</th>
<th>Due at Start of Lab</th>
<th>Due by End of Lab</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Team preferences due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab 1</td>
<td>Topic idea due</td>
<td>Individual informative idea from group brainstorm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lab picks idea and generates story ideas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lab 2</td>
<td>No lab – gobble, gobble</td>
<td>SPM: post market research survey to Qualtrics, send link to Katy and circulate to respondents in target audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>No lecture – SPM, CT, PT, PPR use lecture time to meet as teams and work on plans</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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| Lab 1 | All: individual story proposals due (see required format) – **bring two copies**  
Review proposal with CT during lab  
SPM: present deadline calendar and submission process | CT/PPR: Multimedia plan due and assignments given to small groups |
| Lab 2 | PT: review platform ideas and architecture as a large group | All: Staff bios due – in whatever form requested by PT  
PT: site architecture finalized  
PT: submit art requests (e.g., site logo)  
SPM: strategy memo due to Katy and TA via email by 5 p.m. Friday |
| **Week 14** | | |
| Lecture | No lecture – SPM meet with Katy and TA during lecture time to present and revise strategy | |
| Lab 1 | PT: brief presentation of shell design to lab for feedback  
PPR: advertising and promotion plan complete, meet with labmates to assign strategic content  
All: Alternative Story Form due | PT: overall site design complete, homepage up |
| Lab 2 | All: completed first drafts of informative story due to TA – mandatory 15-minute meeting during lab and office hours  
CT: ASFs edited, work with labmates to complete revisions and ready for posting | PT: site map posted, staff bios posted  
All: strategic content due  
PPR: review and revise strategic content and ready for posting |
| **Week 15** | | |
| Lecture | All: Pitch run-throughs | |
| Lab 1 | Work time | PT: shell pages posted for all content in the correct files  
All: revised informative story due |
| Lab 2 | CT: informative stories edited and ready for posting | CT: headlines added to all shell pages in consultation with PT  
PPR: strategy memo covering revenue and promotion  
All: both small group multimedia packages |
| **Friday, Dec. 14, by 5 p.m.** | PT: all content posted  
CT: all content copy edited  
PPR: pitch practice and changes requested, one-page pitch backgrounder sent to Katy for circulation to panel  
SPM: document to Katy detailing any | Journalism Reading Room will be available for open lab |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>social media accounts set up with login and password information (in case account is compromised in the future)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finals Week</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, Dec. 20, 12:25 p.m., 2195 Vilas</td>
<td>Final Exam Presentation – <strong>Attendance Mandatory</strong></td>
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