

25th ISOJ Building an agile newsroom to succeed in a rapidly changing future

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Becca Aaronson [00:00:01] Hi everyone. I'm Becca Aaronson, I'm a co-founder and the chief product officer at News Product Alliance, and we're really excited to sponsor ISOJ. This is one of my favorite conferences as a local Austinite. And it's really exciting to be in this room with all of you. I'm joined today by our board chair, Upasna.

Upasna Gautam [00:00:19] Good morning everyone. My name is Upasna Gautam. I am a senior product management leader at CNN, where I build the core technology platform that our journalists use to deliver breaking news to the world. I'm also our newly appointed chair of the Board of Directors at the News Product Alliance. I'm also a local Austinite. I've been here for the last ten years, and I'm very thrilled to be here for my first ISOJ. I was telling Becca yesterday, I'm very used to going to tech conferences, and this is actually my first in-person journalism conference and it's amazing the discussions, the level of depth in the conversations is something I haven't experienced in person before, so thank you.

Damon Kiesow [00:01:00] So apparently the only non Austin person in the room. I didn't realize that when I joined the panel. Damon Kiesow I'm the Knight chair in Journalism Innovation at Mizzou. Before that, I was director product at McClatchy and, also a co-founder of NPA.

Upasna Gautam [00:01:27] This is a very unique, special workshop we have for you guys today. So we're not going to actually save room for Q&A at the end because it's going to be very immersive and engaging throughout. But let's start with why we're here. So it's not breaking news to us that we know what the core problems are that we're trying to solve in journalism right now, degradation of trust and interest and also misinformation and The New York Times, as recently as earlier this year spelled it out pretty clearly for us, too. At the News Product Alliance, our goal is to solve these problems through problem solving and collaboration and sustainability and the way we do that is to not just understand the types of problems we need to solve, but why those problems are a problem in the first place and we do that through. Agile product development and building an agile newsroom. And what does that mean? I promise it's not just tech bro speak, it is an actual methodology that works to build innovative, sustainable, ethical products in a system that is desperately in need of not just innovation, but growth and scalability and thinking about the future and not just the short term. And so we need to learn how to efficiently build innovative products that deliver sustainable solutions to our most pressing problems through agile product development and this is how we do it. It's defining the right problems. And again, I always say this. It's not just here's the problem, but deeply understanding why that problem is a problem in the first place. And thinking big but starting

small. Keeping our eyes on the prize and marking on the goal, but being adaptable along the way, being iterative along the way, and shipping to learn. And I know, coming from tech into journalism, there is a little bit of an aversion to risk taking, but there is a way to adopt healthy risk taking and fast decision making in order to adopt this iterative approach to product development. And when you ship to learn, you open yourself up to getting more feedback, to being more curious and again, deeply understanding user needs. And that is really the problem we're trying to solve. We heard a lot yesterday in amazing forums and conversations about talking to our audiences, talking to our users to figure out what their pain points are, what pisses them off, what makes them happy. What is it that they actually need? Because someone in Hutto, Texas versus someone in Grand Rapids, Michigan have very different needs and so we cannot make assumptions about the user. We are not the user. We are merely proxies at best for the user. And so adopting this product methodology and being agile allows us to focus on understanding those pain points and solving those core problems for our users and that's how we actually deliver value. That's how we scale, that's how we grow and become sustainable, is to stay responsive and stay adaptable and to continuously improve with speed in mind because in breaking news for sure, whether you're a large or small newsroom: time is of the essence. And if you cannot make changes quickly and adapt to user needs quickly and anticipate them before they even arise, you're already behind. So this is the time to embrace these practices that have already been proven to work over and over and over again. And at the News Product Alliance, that is our goal. We're trying to offer you tools and resources to go and put these practices into application immediately, whether you're CNN or a local newsroom in Hutto, Texas. And with that, I'm going to hand it over to Becca to talk more about what we're going to dive into today.

Becca Aaronson [00:05:41] Okay, so before we get into our exercise, I do just want to add a couple more things about kind of what we think of product. We chose very intentionally not to put product in the title of this, because we feel like sometimes that can be a word that throws people off. But really what we're talking about is this kind of evolution of digital technology in the news space. We all know about the, you know, cultural divide between editorial and business and kind of this church and state mentality that's traditionally been part of what we define as news business. But with the, you know, the coming of the internet and now even new emerging technologies like AI, technology has to be a big part of this equation. And with social media and the way in which we're directly having these new relationships with audiences, we also have to think about audience needs. And so the product is this operational capacity that sits in the middle of all of these very important disciplines for the business. That helps connect them collaboratively so that we can all work together and find solutions that are unique to the business that you're in or unique to the organization that you're in. We're actually coming to the end of our first news product management certification program, and one of my roles is to work with all the instructors on building the curriculum. And I've talked to CDOs and CPOs, and other like, director level people who work in product all across the news industry to come teach this course and something they almost all unanimously told me as well, I can teach these frameworks, but it's different in every business I've worked in, and I need to understand the context, and the people who I'm teaching need to understand the context of their organization and their audience and their community in order to figure out which frameworks we bring in and

how to apply them to solve problems in a unique way. You know, Dale England at the Press Forward panel yesterday was like, there is no one size fits all solution, or even at the foundation level of how to fund these communities. There's also no one size fits solution for any news organization. And so product development is the methodology and the operational capacity to find those solutions that are unique to your context and so that's what we want to talk about today is just like how challenging that can be, but also how rewarding and beautiful and how we really think there are ways to solve these giant challenges, that it laid out. And that's why at the MPA, we're building an army of news product thinkers. We have a community now of over 3000 news product professionals. It's the largest gathering globally of the people who are solving these problems and news. We do training and events monthly. And, we offer career support like the news product management certification program that I just mentioned. So if you or someone on your team is thinking about how to get better at these skills, our applications are currently open and you should check that program out. So the things we're going to be talking about today are kind of what this discipline looks like in action in newsrooms. It's a deep understanding of your community and their pain points. It is cross team collaboration working across the aisle. In journalism, we actually have a strong tradition of doing this, working with page layout designers or working with the ad sales team, or thinking about legal needs like we know how to work cross-functionally in a newsroom. It's just bringing in even more disciplines into that process, like engineering. We can do it. And then a quick adaptation. The world is constantly changing. Our markets are changing. User behaviors are changing. We can't just pick a solution and then run with it. We actually have to learn from our decisions and continue to iterate upon them. This can be hard in a business that likes to rely on certainty. And you do need to have a little bit of certainty, but you also need to be able to learn from your mistakes and keep growing so that we don't fall behind. So these are like the main phases that we see newsrooms doing when they're actually, applying product management operationally is you can do ideation and discovery where you think about your audience needs. You test and learn, you define things, you try it, you do experiments, you test it, you learn, and then you launch and iterate and keep going. Okay, I want to get to our exercise because I think this is the fun part. So today we're going to go through a little bit of a choose your own adventure and we're going to walk around the room and give you guys the mic. If you are joining us from Zoom, feel free to put your ideas into the chat. We do have people that are going to be monitoring the chat for us, so don't feel left out. This is our scenario. Imagine that you live in Hutto, Texas. It is a growing suburb about 40 minutes outside of Austin. Its population has doubled in the past decade to about 30,000 people. And you're a publisher who cares deeply about this community, and you want to start the publication. Howdy, Hutto. What else do you guys want to know about this scenario? To help us get started in thinking about what the news needs that we would need to maybe think about if we're launching a publication in this space. What are the demographics of Hutto? Great question. Who thought you would ask that? So, Damon, do you want to jump in here and give us some more insights to set up the scenario?

Damon Kiesow [00:11:19] Well, first, a quick raise of hands. Who in the room is already in a formal product roll? Okay, that's not bad. That's a couple. That's good. Some. Some are shy. They're not raising hands because we know you are. Here's what we find in MPA in my career history as well. I did this work for ten years before I realized it was a title, like literally. And it was,

a revelation at the time. So what we heard in the introduction. 100% true. Every community has a different challenge. The processes, the way we solve problems. It's all the same conflicts. It's all, do we have enough information? What do we know about the audience? How do we solve the internal sort of political conflict? Right. So we want to walk through that today in this exercise, we have just over half hour. So we're not going to get we're not going to solve any world shattering problems here, but we're going to sort of walk through and have some fun with it. So you, all in organizations, you may have been an organization where we go we had a great question. What are the demographics? Great. What do we want to know next? We want to move from information, demographics or information. Yep. Right. If we're designing the website for broadband. Or video. How good is that? What else do we want to know before we. I should probably cover up, like, what's the solution? Don't read that bottom line yet. I'll just stand right in front of it if I can. What else do we want to know? Oh so psychographics, where are they in their life sort of cycle? You know. Oh. What? Wow. So what matters to the actual people are trying to solve problems for. These are all great questions. What else do we have? Anything else that we want to throw in? Where? So, what are the needs? And then what are those gaps, or how are they filling those gaps? Currently, however, they're solving a problem currently is a great indicator for what our opportunity is. We got lots of questions here. These are great. Yeah. Good one. We don't. Who said podcast? Oh my goodness. Yeah. I'm sorry. I'm not repeating. For the Zoom, appropriately enough. How do people know podcast is the idea which. If you're on Zoom you're seeing on the screen as well. We don't know. It's the right idea, but we don't know yet. So, we're moving from information, demographics, habits, this kind of stuff. Well, that's data then. We're trying to move to information, which is how do we make sense of that data in some way? And then we're trying to move to insights, right? And inside of something you can take action on. It's a very interactive display. So one insight we come up with when we started doing this research, what are their habits? That kind of thing is, well, a lot of them commute. So of course, you all individually, as the publisher have said, and the founders said, well, I like podcasts. We're going to do a podcast, because I think that would be a great way to reach people who are commuting in the morning with our news. I see some skeptical looks in the room. That's fine. Trust the process. So we're going to, just at tables. How long do we have? Ten minutes. Five. Ten minutes. Five minutes a table. Just talk amongst yourself. We want to attack those questions. We've been tasked with a podcast. We want to ask those same questions. What's the business model? Do we have the skills? Who's the audience? All these things on the board. So just briefly talk amongst us. We'll call in a couple tables and sort of get that feedback. If we're going to build this podcast, what's the effort, what's it going to cost us? What's the impact, what's the value going to be to the community, and how do we know we really want to know? We really want to hear from you, we'll call tables. How do you know that? Right? What makes you make that decision? What information or insights are you basing that on and why? So we'll do five minutes, we'll time it and then we'll make some quick rounds of the tables and then we'll move on. Good. Excellent interactivity.

Becca Aaronson [00:20:32] All right, guys, we're getting close to sharing.

Damon Kiesow [00:20:41] Okay, I'll read a couple of questions from Zoom while we're wrapping up. First question from Kat is I don't think the audience or needs for this product have been

clearly identified yet. A skeptic. And Margaret says, have we done any user research in the community who would listen to this? That might be a place to start to make sure they really need and want to podcast very rational people on Zoom today.

Becca Aaronson [00:21:11] I do want to give a shout out to Community Impact who's in the room. It is actually one of the new sources that we have competing with in Hutto. And so they do actually have a monthly published paper that they get delivered for free with lots of local events, about business openings and things like that, as well as local politics. So they do have some news sources there already.

Damon Kiesow [00:21:34] They do. So what, what do we have in the room? We're not going to get everyone. We got a couple of minutes, but who's got some thoughts they want to add to the. We'll bring you a mic first.

Volunteer [00:21:46] Okay. So we were talking. And you know, we have a lot of these filled out. But I think the one I wanted to talk about the most is the challenges. I have produced podcasts. It's really labor intensive. It's hard to get discovery. The market's not big enough. It'd be impossible to monetize. You'd be lucky if you had, like, 60 people listening to it, and you'd spend hours and hours working on it. An email newsletter is so much better.

Damon Kiesow [00:22:11] Okay, so I, as publisher, might be wrong about this. Is that David in the back? That never happens. The executives are always right.

Volunteer [00:22:20] So I'm going to riff off of that and say that we didn't actually talk about it directly, but we were talking about doing quizzes instead of podcasts. And just like a news quiz is, I know, but not really just talking about that quiz product, but just riffing off. that like you're starting with an expensive product that is hard to sell. What are the things that are less expensive and less hard to sell and that maybe fit with your advertising? So a quiz is one thing, but other things that are, I guess, revenue first rather than product first, you know what I mean? So starting from that concept of what's the easiest thing I could turn into a product that connects to existing monetization in some way and then maybe build up built in there.

Damon Kiesow [00:23:05] So I just want to point out that it was product thinking without even using the post-its. Right. So that's impressive. We got time for a couple more, I think. You, sir, in the front.

Volunteer [00:23:18] I think we took a somewhat contrarian approach, which is the folks who have worked on podcasts in the industry. We deliver a certain type of aesthetic and production value, which is super labor intensive, right? And then out there in the world are people who just turn on the microphone on their computer and start talking. Also if you drive through certain parts of the country and you have your radio on, there are people on the airwaves who are just talking. So we didn't get all the way through this, but part of the sort of exploration was, what is the lowest effort? Yeah. You know, how can we get that access down as low as possible to create something that is possibly done in a couple of hours a day, possibly essentially offloading

some of the production, some of the skills that are still required to someone who is outside of Hutto, who's maybe doing that for a bunch of other podcasts that aren't journalism related. To see if you can actually put something out there and then on the needed piece of it, punch that and I don't know this town at all, but most towns, there's like, something going on, right? Whether we're talking about Minneapolis and rideshare pulling out or the town I live in, the school system is of high interest to many people. And so is it about sort of focusing on that, giving that a good ride for a period of time and maybe even setting it up as a like, we're not going to say we're doing this forever, but we're going to follow this topic as long as it's interesting and see if you build an audience off of that. If you have that, just be as low effort as possible and then do something with that audience, which is probably not a podcast.

Damon Kiesow [00:24:47] Yeah. So that's fascinating. So when you said that, somebody yesterday was speaking about Twitch streams as being popular with some audience, like, are we thinking about it the wrong way? It has to be a high value NPR type. Maybe it doesn't.

Volunteer [00:25:01] Also, that type of really true iterative approach. Yeah. Low effort. I am not and we build upon it.

Damon Kiesow [00:25:17] So we're going to hand in fodder. Yeah. Okay.

Becca Aaronson [00:25:20] All right. Yeah. So, imagine you're going down this path and actually you encounter some challenges. Surprise! So you actually all kind of hit on some of these things that we wanted to introduce is the curve balls, which is one your audience is actually quite small. Even though there are a lot of commuters, they already have their habits formed. And discovery of podcasts is really hard. Nobody is listening to your podcast. And it's a huge amount of work, even if you took the low effort approach you're still having to learn new skills like how to produce audio and get rid of the background noise and things like that. And like, you know, it's hard. And you forgot about the things that people actually care about, like youth sports. Hutto is a Texas town, which means they care about football. And the high school football team is where it's at and for some reason, you haven't talked about that at all. So this is really just to reinforce the importance of understanding your audience and your community and their unique context. And so you get into a situation where you're like, okay, well, how do I respond to challenges? The other thing that we're going to enter in this scenario is a jackpot. You are the lucky recipient of \$250,000. Press Forward has come to your town, but with this money comes both opportunity and its challenge of its own right. We have to think about how do I invest this for long term sustainability? It's not just spending the money now. It's thinking about how do I build a team and build a product that's going to be able to sustain itself when this money runs out, because it will trust me. I guess I should pause there actually for a moment, and I want to throw it back out to all of you. What do you do in this situation now? Now that you have some audience feedback, you know your idea isn't working, but you do potentially have an opportunity to keep working on this. You can go to the back.

Volunteer [00:27:32] So regardless of where the organization is in the, you know, in its in its life, whether it's whether it is actually a startup or whether it's an existing entity, and you get an

injection of capital like that, you have to look at that, at that capital as startup funds. You may be startup funds all over again, but it has to be looked at from the point of view of. Begin with the end in mind. Like what is the ultimate result that you want to have from this money, and then set an actual timeline for what that for what that end looks like? And then what is the sustainability to use this like startup funds so that it gets you to a sustainable result, knowing that you're not going to get this jackpot over and over again and you can't be you can't be relying on it. So think about it like the precious, precious seed money that it is and how is that going to get you to that end point?

Becca Aaronson [00:28:33] Yeah, I'm going to put Amy on the spot because I heard her say something.

Volunteer [00:28:39] Time to pivot to a newsletter.

Becca Aaronson [00:28:43] Why, why do you think a newsletter?

Volunteer [00:28:45] It's because, cheaper, faster, you can get circulated? Better people can do it. I mean, you can listen to a podcast asynchronously, but the idea is you can only probably do it in your car, so I like newsletters.

Becca Aaronson [00:29:00] Who doesn't love a newsletter.

Damon Kiesow [00:29:01] On Zoom Kat says, I discussed what news, products and subject matter might be a better fit.

Becca Aaronson [00:29:08] Yeah, exactly. And what do you think about building your team or allocating these funds? Who do you hire? Cindy, says product manager. A product manager from Texas State University.

Becca Aaronson [00:29:32] Great. You could partner with a university class. What do you do in terms of thinking about your long term revenue strategy, knowing the demographics of this community? Do you go toward a subscription or membership model or do you think more about local advertising? Anyone have thoughts? Or other revenue.

Volunteer [00:29:59] Yeah. We discussed sponsorship. Like finding somebody who actually just thinks it's important to have this and try to get a sponsorship instead of trying to do it off some kind of ad revenue, because the analytics probably won't be there for serious ad dollars.

Becca Aaronson [00:30:13] And I want to point out that the challenge of using this as an imaginary exercise is that none of us actually know the context of this community and this market well enough to make these decisions. And so I think that really reinforces the point that if you're going to be making these calls and actually in an informed way, you have to be really connected to the community and the market and understand the landscape, which is why I do think Cindy's right that the person that you need is a product manager. We have another

comment from chat, which is that we don't often look at the product from our journalistic or business perspective rather than audience. Oh, don't we often look at the product from our journalistic or business perspective rather than audience needs? Which is true. Yes.

Upasna Gautam [00:30:57] Something about this that we uncovered at CNN during some user research we did. So we also wanted this when I first started at CNN. I worked on the e-commerce team, and we wanted to, of course, like everyone else, distribute a newsletter for daily deals. And through our user research, we found that when we asked the question to certain communities, would you like a newsletter of daily deals? There was a couple of users who said, what's a newsletter? And we completely redid how we constructed the questions, and that's something that we really, and it was reiterated a lot yesterday, is deeply understanding your audience. It's learning to converse in the language of the listener. And so we transformed that question into how would that feel? Or how would you like to receive information about the best deals on beauty? And, you know, our beauty products in Hutto, Texas, right? In your email every single morning at 8 a.m., you know, being hyper specific is understanding nuance and getting to the core of those user problems. So that was just a very enlightening moment for us when it was an elder woman that we were doing this user testing with or this user interview with rather. And, it definitely shot a lot of light onto, you know our current market and also where we wanted to expand into by asking better, smarter questions.

Becca Aaronson [00:32:27] All right. And now we're going to do something exciting. Is this a blocker or an opportunity for our adventure?

Upasna Gautam [00:32:35] So you get an email from your board chair.

Becca Aaronson [00:32:38] Thanks, Upasna.

Upasna Gautam [00:32:40] I saw this at South by Southwest you guys. Micro is a new goal. Launched a pocket AI that's sweeping the nation. And everyone wants to have this Tamagotchi like robot in their pocket. It's a multi-purpose gadget and it's changing the way users receive news and information. So do you evolve your product to take advantage of this new distribution channel? How do you respond to me? How do you respond to that email?

Becca Aaronson [00:33:09] Because we've all had it land on our desk, right? What do you do when something like this comes in and just, like, completely disrupts your strategy? Immediately create a block for that word.

Volunteer [00:33:27] But it does bring up something I was going to mention, which I think one of the ways to start your process with the 250,000, or any product process is what I would call build, partner, buy. So this is not directly there, but it's sort of like, you know, are you going to build something completely yourself and spend the whole 250,000. Are you going to allocate some of it to maybe partnering or this would be kind of under this category of like, you know, spend some of it into something that is existing and that you can lean into and then, you know, buy, are you just going to buy a technology that just solves the problem for you, that you don't build anything? And I'd say in this middle, one sort of partnering. And, you know, obviously

everyone has been burned over the years with partnerships with tech companies and leaning too much into a particular thing. And I think going back to what Eli said, you know, unless it fits with your end goal, just put a block on that word and move on. But if a partnership comes along, that is like, actually that's exactly in line with what we were going to do and the organized laziness part of my brain says, I can get where I'm going faster with this partnership then. Yes. So no, I would not say necessarily blockers because if it is a partnership, probably not that one, not with that name, but if it is a partnership that is actually, oh, I can get there faster by just doing this then maybe.

Becca Aaronson [00:34:51] Yeah. I think once again you need to think about maybe this is sweeping the nation, but has it actually come to huddle like is this something that's in my community that's affecting the way that my users behave? Maybe not today, but maybe it will in five years. So how do I long term think about how that fits into my roadmap for my product without disrupting what I'm doing today? And you also might think a little bit about like. You know, how do I manage my communication with my board chair so that they understand that I'm listening to them and I hear them, and I've thought about this, but I'm also kind of bringing it back to the strategy for our organization, because to me, \$50,000 is not actually that much money. And as a small news organization, we have very limited resources, and we can't just divide ourselves up into too many directions, right? So reinforcing that is the core strategy that you're working on. We have another comment from chat, from Margaret. So what's the value proposition of pocket AI? Who are the audiences for it, and do those audiences have money they might spend with us? Is there a danger of spending some of our \$250,000 on getting locked into a platform? That's just a fad? Yeah, exactly; evaluating risk. This is definitely like a risk management situation, which there are lots of frameworks and tools that product managers often use, just like financial analysts do, you know, consider risk.

Upasna Gautam [00:36:20] That comment that we just received was a great example of asking really smart questions. Push back. Ask why? That is the essence of product management and agile product development is in order to deeply understand our user and their needs, we have to ask why and you have to be that annoying person as a product manager. We do it. I am, that is my label at CNN. I am that annoying person who is constantly asking our stakeholders and pushing back and saying no. Because if we want to prioritize this, guess what? Other things have to fall off. Ruthless prioritization and smart question asking is key. If everything is a priority, nothing is a priority.

Becca Aaronson [00:37:02] Yeah. Being agile and being able to adapt to your market in your context doesn't necessarily mean constantly changing directions, so that's important to note too. So let's just as a room decide what we do given our scenario? Do you want to keep your podcast and just kind of tweak your coverage topics, or double down on your discovery and marketing tactics? Do you want to scrap your podcast and start a newsletter? Who knew that would be an option? Do you want to pivot into this emerging tech strategy, or do you have other ideas like how would you respond to this situation? There's no wrong answer. I mean, there are, but. Yeah, but we won't judge you.

Damon Kiesow [00:37:47] Wild card. No ideas. We had revenue ideas, which is the hard part. No, no.

Volunteer [00:38:01] I think again. You have to go back into the wants, needs assessment of your community. And if it doesn't? Whatever. You know, whichever one of these four directions that you're considering, you've got to reconcile that against the wants and needs of your, of your community. And if you don't have enough, want that someone is willing to pay for and enough needs, again, that someone is, is going to pay for, is going to have to, then, you know, you got to pivot in whatever direction that leads you.

Volunteer [00:38:40] I'm also thinking, if you're going to start a newsletter, you need to start thinking about partnerships. So you're not starting with, you know, trying to build an email list from scratch. But who in your community? How do you become essential to your community and who already own some of those relationships?

Becca Aaronson [00:39:00] Right. Cool. So we did want to give you at least one tool from this workshop. So if you're not familiar with a SWOT analysis, it's something that you can use to help you and give an analysis like a risk assessment and things like that. But it helps you put it into a unique, your unique context in any context of your business and your users. So thinking about what are the strengths of your organization, what do you do? Well, how can you capitalize on these strengths? What are your weaknesses, areas that you can improve, but things it's like, you know, I don't actually have any audio production capabilities. Why am I trying to build a podcast? Are there opportunities that are available to you in your market that are unique that you should capitalize on, or are there threats? Are there already kinds of existing competitors? Or, you know, maybe it's a low income community and the subscription model is just never going to work there. Like, what are the things you need to be taking into account when you start to analyze how to respond to a challenge? And this is where you can kind of use this as a tool to help you just kind of analyze the situation and then bring that as a, you know, a way to help you make decisions. So we're at the end, but we have a few more minutes if anybody wants to add any additional thoughts. If you're not a part of the News Packed Alliance Slack community, I highly encourage you to join. We have. Almost like. To that will. We have over 2000 people, but we have one of the highest active user rates of any product of any Slack community in journalism. People are actually there and talking to each other, which is great. And you see things like, actually, there was a question recently about quizzes and games, like, "I want to launch a games thing. What tools are people using? Is it actually working for your users?" Talking about that kind of stuff. "Hey, my newsletter. I'm having this problem with my, like, block DNS thing. Very highly technical problem. Has anyone encountered this? Can you give me help with this issue?" We even have people asking for help with their careers. Like "I was recently laid off. Can anyone talk to me about my resume?" Or do we have people who just offer their time and say, I have a few hours of mentorship available if anybody wants to sign up? So it really is a great resource where you can find people who really understand the needs of this community and want to help each other. So, please join us. Other resources that you can find from the News Product Alliance include our product kit. This is really an introduction to a lot of these ideas and concepts. So if you are bringing these ideas back to your team, the product kit

is a great place to start. Or if you yourself are new to the discipline of product management and just kind of want a general primer, I highly recommend just going to our website and under resources you'll find the product kit. These are written by experts across the news community. And they're a really, really great place to start. We also have a resource library with hundreds of resources, including case studies and training materials, some of which we've written ourselves, so you can get ideas. And we have events. So our virtual summit is going to be in October, October 11th of this year. This is an event that's global. We have roughly 500 attendees. And this year we're going to be doing a lot more training and learning, but also idea sharing and knowledge sharing and applications are open currently for our News Product Management Certification Program. This is a three and a half month long cohort based program where you really get to get deep. It's designed for people who are in that mid to senior leadership position and want to move more into product leadership, so we help you develop your technical skills, and your change management skills, which is really key for people who are trying to move into this space. There's three modules. In the beginning, we learn about audience discovery and, how to analyze your market and kind of think about the unique needs of your community in your business. The second module is all about developing your product strategy, how to work with designers, how to work with engineers, how to work with people on the revenue side of your organization, and then bring that into a cohesive strategy and actually lead your team, to follow a roadmap, build and follow a roadmap. And then lastly, we end with a lot of leadership training. And we had Julia Bazer from Bloomberg last week talking about stakeholder management. And we had Pat Downsholder, talking about creating your vision and presenting that to executive stakeholders. So we really do a lot at the end to kind of help you bring your case forward. So if you if that sounds interesting, please apply. Any questions? Oh yeah. Mark asks when do actual applications close? May 2nd? I think. Cindy. For those online. Cindy Royal had a call to action for academics out there that we really need to bring these topics into our academic training for young journalists. Damon actually wrote a textbook on this, which someone in the room, Robert is going to be using, in one of his, oh and Jake. So everybody, you didn't. Okay, I'm going to pull this back up just so that everyone can join us on Slack. If you didn't get this QR code. Volunteer [00:44:43] With, like, it's a, in that effort, academics being able to take the certificate might be useful. Okay. First time I didn't think we could. So it said journalists.

Becca Aaronson [00:45:04] You can take it. It's open to everyone. Yeah.

Volunteer [00:45:11] Probably don't need the mic, but. Just one thing. We were negging on, podcasts there, and I think that's probably accurate, but at the same time, there are some really interesting things happening with turning articles into audio now, which is much more efficient than it used to be. Still human in the loop checking isn't that kind of thing, but, I see a lot of people nodding their head. So audio is still potentially a low cost solution, even if it isn't a podcast. And I would also say that text versus email is also something that's a lot of news local news entities are leaning into doesn't work for everybody. But in some markets, text can be a better way than an or an additional way than email and newsletters.

Damon Kiesow [00:45:52] I was convinced Mark's table was going to suggest AI audio. Lowering the cost.

Becca Aaronson [00:46:01] Yeah. We actually just edited a case study that we're going to publish in our newsletter soon about news Vérifier Africa and some accessibility things that they did using AI to do, audio and, signing for people who are deaf, to translate their content. So. Volunteer [00:46:18] Hi Paris Brown with The Baltimore Times. And we actually created technology around AI and, not only listening to summaries, but also, you know, our voices. Right? So it's it's we have had a trusted brand in Baltimore for 30 years. 40 years, excuse me. And we took our voices, meaning black voices. And what we're finding is they are engaging more in the voice as well as looking at the summaries.

Becca Aaronson [00:46:48] We should follow up and do a case study on you guys.

Damon Kiesow [00:46:51] I think we're out of time.

Becca Aaronson [00:46:52] Yeah. All right. Thank you so much, everyone, for joining us today.