‘Stronger together’ or ‘Hell is other people’?
How to plan and launch collaborative investigations

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This session

1. To collaborate or not to collaborate — that’s the question
2. What type of collaboration? — there are quite a few
3. Designing a collaborative investigation — setting up the foundations
4. Managing a collaborative investigation — the workflow
5. Interdisciplinary collaborations — even stronger or more hellish?
6. Collaborative investigations — in three lines
7. Online resources — about collaborative investigations

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1. To collaborate or not to collaborate — that’s the question

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• Collaborating is the answer _ sometimes
• First, what topic _ and then what kind of collaboration
• Advantages and benefits _ against risks and costs
• Capacity to launch or join a collaborative investigation?
• Do I have enough support from my team or organisation?
• Then try to think of anything else
2. What type of collaboration?_
there are quite a few

• Sharing data, information or other resources
• Sharing and distributing each other’s content
• Sharing editing and fact-checking and other skills and expertise
• Contributing an article / outcome to a particular project
• Coordinating the publication of articles / outcomes on the same topic
• Launching or joining a collaborative investigation
• ...

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3. Designing a collaborative investigation: setting up the foundations

- Vision, description, scope and goals and the right partners
- Preliminary calendar research, analysis, coding, writing... publishing
- If external funding or support is needed who is in charge of getting it?
- Who is going to coordinate one person, a core team?
- Managing expectations and being aware of capacities
- Online collaborative environment and communication what software?
- How to respond to the obstacles that you will encounter?
- Governance documents MoU, workflow, calendar, others?

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4. Managing a collaborative investigation_ the workflow

• Communications_ meetings, calls, internal newsletters…
• Decision-making_ quorum, majorities…
• Using the collaborative software_ what do we do with it and how?
• Centralisation and cleaning up the data_ who is in charge?
• Documenting the project_ who is in charge?
• Promoting the outcomes of the investigation_ who is in charge?
• ‘Post-mortem’ analysis_ who is in charge?
• Is there anything else?
5. Interdisciplinary collaborations—
even stronger or more hellish?

- Different languages—are we talking about the same thing?
- Different visions—are we informing the public or changing the world?
- Different pace of work—can we agree on the calendar?
- Different independence norms—risk of research being compromised?
- Different publication standards—can we publish each other’s work?

► Huge potential benefits—and huge potential for trouble
► Likely need for particular governance points or whole documents
► Possible need for an (independent) facilitator / mediator

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6. Collaborative investigations_ in three lines

• Trust and transparency between all partners
• Expectations and goals clearly defined since the beginning
• Realistic workload and good coordination

• Collaborative investigations_ in three words
  • Planning
  • Planning
  • Planning

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7. Online resources about collaborative investigations

- Tactical Tech & Exposing the Invisible
- Arena for Journalism in Europe & Dataharvest conference
- SEEK Initiative
- Center for Cooperative Media
- Project Facet
- Global Investigative Journalism Network Help Desk
- The Bureau Local’s Open Resources
- ProPublica’s Collaborative Data Journalism Guide

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Now go and start planning a collaborative investigation!

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Thank you for your time and attention!

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