Getting People to Our Data

NNIP Camp, Session 2

Date: Sept 24, 2024

Leader: Jay Der

Notetaker: Lizzy Ferrara

Attendees: Nick Occhipinti, Hayley Raetz, Noah Urban, Geethika Fernando, Jill Walsh, Meg Norris, Sean Coté, Liz Mok, Cheryl Knott, Katie Zager

Jay opened up with a Mad Libs style prompt to help frame the discussion...

Name, organization in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we tried \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we worked with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

our audiences was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and we would (do this again / not do this again)

**NNIP Examples**

1. **Baltimore**: In 2020, during a period of downtime, we decided to create dashboards. We secured funding and developed multiple dashboards (COVID, crime, 9-11, 3-11, 2-11). We presented at an NNIP showcase, but did anyone else actually see that? Are the refreshes mine? What was the impact? Who was using it? Was it relevant or meaningful? We wouldn’t undertake this project again unless there was a clear strategy for dissemination.

1. **Urban Research to Action Lab:** Developed upward mobility dashboards using a human-centered design firm, which was very time-consuming.

1. **MAPC:** As a data storyteller, led the first posting of the data portal, which included downloadable profiles for town halls. Someone suggested creating a physical data table for people to interact with the data rather than using online versions. This idea was adopted by the community engagement team for their events. We would do this again, but it wouldn't be part of the organization.

1. **Furman Center:** We brought in a data fellow focused on data visualizations. Simple prompts were created to help users navigate their dashboards. We also release annual papers to highlight key takeaways, making them more concise and impactful. This approach serves as a good substitute for an executive summary, and we would do it again.

1. **CT Data:** Developed a community resource map that followed a human-centered design process, including a feedback tool. We would undertake this again, although it is very time-intensive. Our audience includes community providers and residents, and we engaged the community effectively, avoiding redundancy through partnerships with local organizations. The tool will go live in three days and will be updated quarterly. We are also training staff on how to use the tool effectively.

1. **3D:** We allocate resources for awareness-raising, but how do we move beyond this into the action space?

1. We used to track pro bono requests, but there has been a significant drop in community interest and outreach. Has our audience changed? Is data literacy improving? It is challenging to assess this. We are focusing on strategic planning and considering projects instead of community training. Sometimes we put data out there, but we lack information about who is accessing it, and we are still very interested in the people we aren't reaching.

1. We discovered that a foundation (which does not provide us with funding) requires its grantees to use our data for their evaluative work—and we were unaware of this!

1. **UI Charlotte:** Held an open house with grad students where we featured large touch screens for an interactive experience.

1. **Furman:** Conducted sessions with city council aides to walk them through our work (funded by them as well). We organized scavenger hunts for surface-level awareness. There is a lot of turnover among aides, which means we can assist with onboarding in January when they start fresh.

1. **WPRDC:** Collaborated with library partners for a zine camp, which explored various topics. Conducted data trivia to analyze patterns within 3-11 charts and discuss trends.

1. **BINA:** Created neighborhood trivia, but we are concerned about incorporating data without getting sidetracked. Engaged in Khoot/Menti interactions.

1. **Swag Giveaways:** Distributed MAPC calendars featuring a visual map for each month. The response was positive, with many fans present.

1. **UI Charlotte:** Launched "Mystery Map Mondays" on Twitter, although we are somewhat limited in the amount of information we can convey.

**Strategic Insights**

1. Use a bite, snack, meal process for introducing your work. Start with a "bite" to gauge interest, then offer a "snack," and if they like it, provide a "meal."

1. Content without convening is ineffective. Involving the audience from the beginning with intentionality is crucial.

1. Shift focus to the ideation of “what’s the point/so what” before creating a dashboard.

1. Many expressed a need to develop a digital strategy and marketing plan, as there are challenges in communicating impact.

1. There is a need for face-to-face and base-building efforts, as well as latent repositioning.

1. How do we connect our work with policymakers to enact change?
* Engaging with community colleges can be an effective way to connect with community members who are likely to stay longer than those in traditional university settings.

1. Balance open data with potential adverse uses**.**

1. Organize data walks where everyone is invited to view projects and coach community members on reporting out.

**Takeaways:**

1. Document what you have learned through these processes! Jay is available to assist with this.