

Evolution of a Digital Producer



HOW TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL JOURNALISTS INTERPRET COLLABORATION IN LOCAL NEWSROOMS



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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research project set out to learn how traditional and digital journalists in traditional local newsrooms perceive the role of and work with digital producers to ideate, create, publish and distribute news that keeps their communities informed. Collaboration was measured by focusing on these core concepts:

- ★ **Function:** How do traditional and digital journalist define the role of digital producers? How does each type of journalist collaborates with the other to publish content online?
- ★ **Cooperation:** Where does traditional and digital journalist work intersect? How is collaboration perceived on both sides?
- ★ **Audience:** What goals and key performance indicators do traditional and digital journalists work to achieve? Are the goals the same? How do these goals help or hinder collaboration across a newsroom?



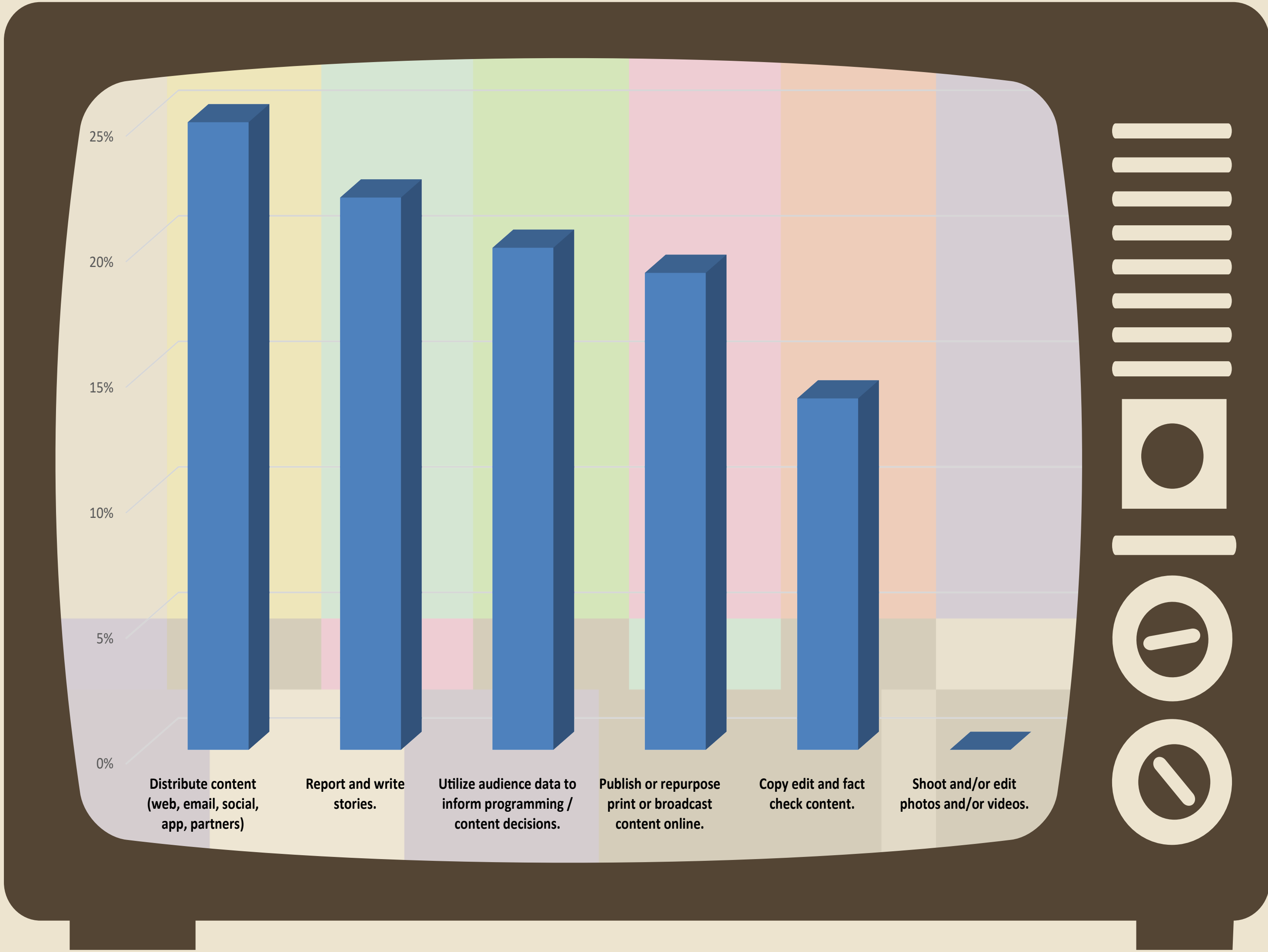
MIXED METHODS APPROACH

- ★ **Online Survey**
- ★ **Semi-Structured Interviews**

Acknowledgments

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WHAT DOES A DIGITAL PRODUCER DO?

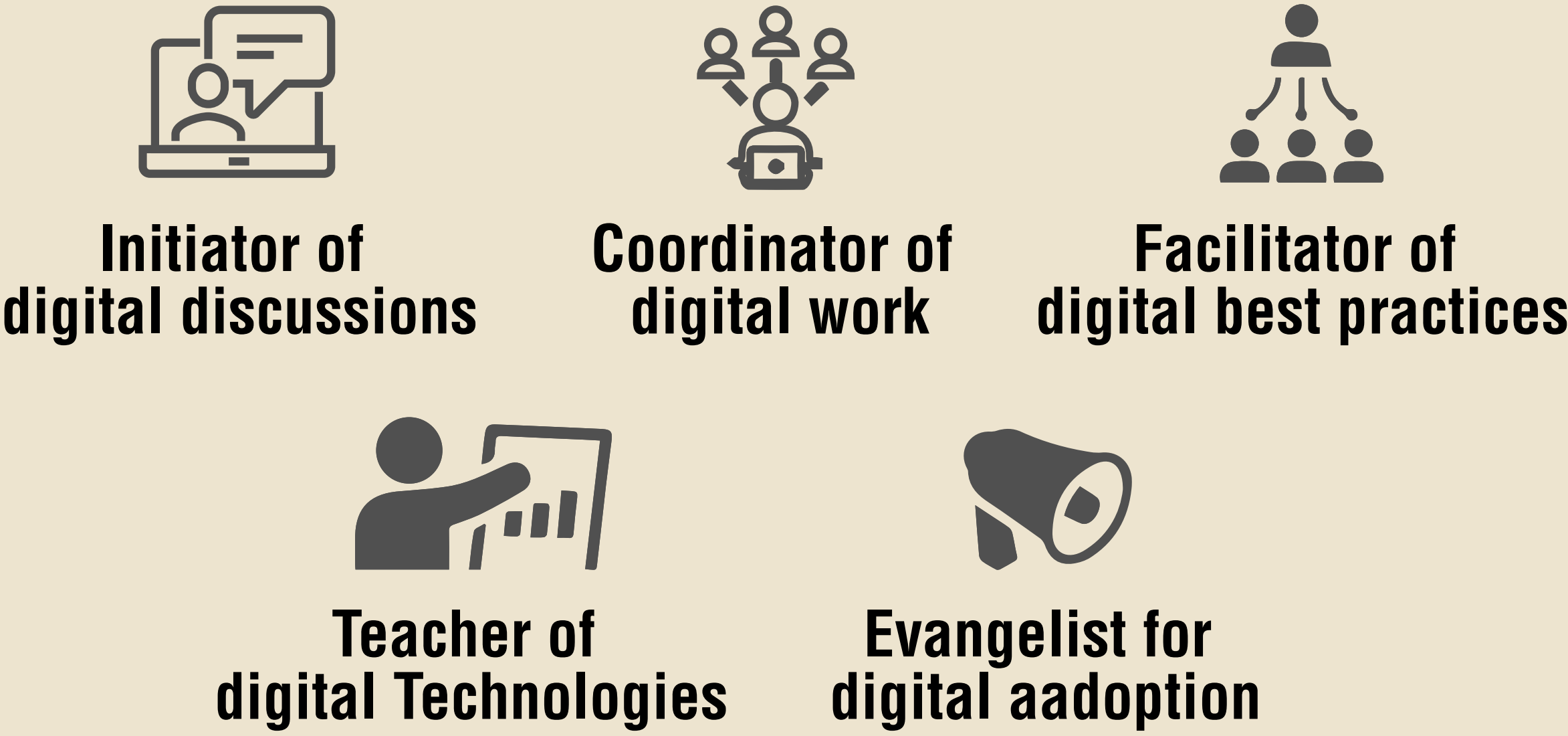


The primary tasks for the digital producer role can be summed up in three categories: repurposing, packaging and original content creation.

Survey results indicate the primary tasks of a digital producer are focused on digital-first tasks while semi-structured interview results indicated a large amount of time is spent publishing and repurposing traditional media online.

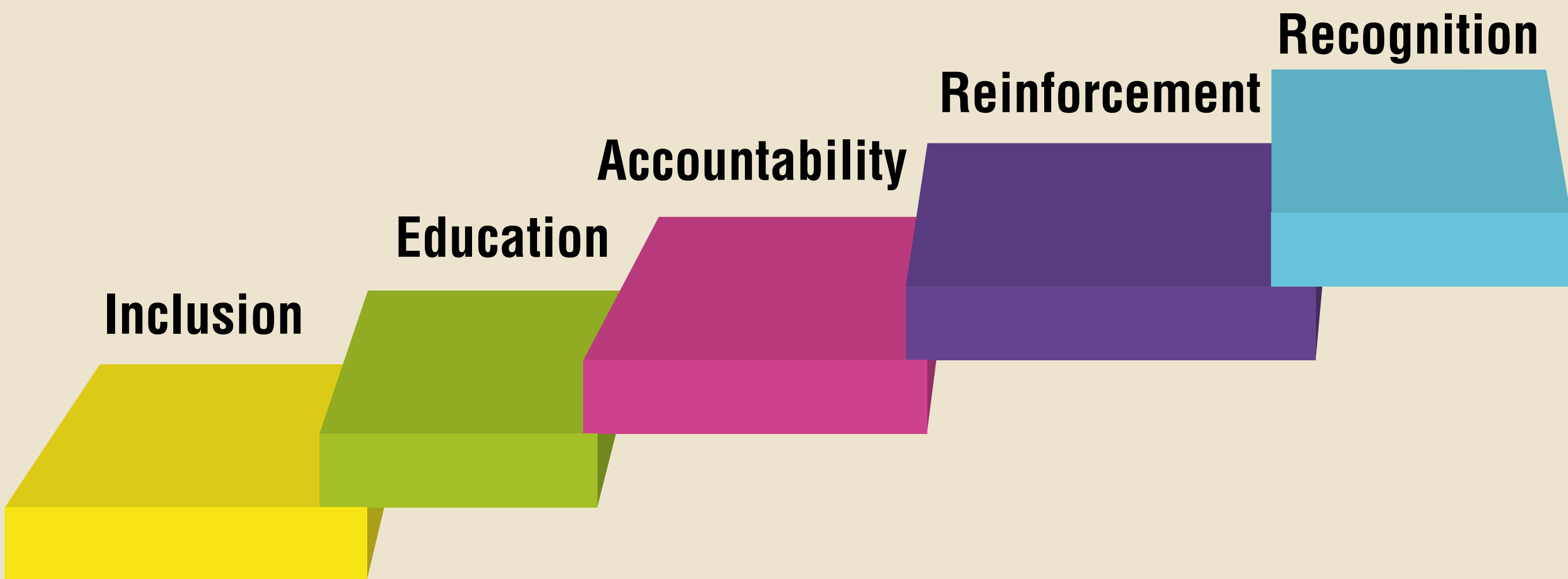
DIGITAL PRODUCER ROLES IN TRADITIONAL NEWSROOMS

Newsrooms can augment roles and processes to boost collaboration focusing on these aspects of work:



BOOSTING TRADITIONAL & DIGITAL JOURNALIST COLLABORATION

Recommendations for how newsrooms can augment roles and processes to boost collaboration focus on inclusion, education, accountability, reinforcement and recognition.



INTERESTING FINDINGS

This research project set out to learn how traditional and digital journalists in traditional local newsrooms perceive the role of and work with digital producers to ideate, create, publish and distribute news that keeps their communities informed. Collaboration was measured by focusing on these core concepts:

- Unawareness of Digital Team’s Responsibilities**
“I never really considered how big of a role the digital team plays until this interview.”
-- Traditional Print Journalist
- Digital Producer as an ‘Umbrella Term’**
“Unfortunately, that term (digital producer) has become this sort of catch all bucket, and I think that’s a problem because if people knew specifically what [each person on the team] was doing ... people would be able to figure out what this person does .”
-- Digital Journalist, TV Newsroom
- Accountability Starts at the Top**
“You’re not going to be able to find someone who’s an expert or highly proficient at all these different roles all at once. And, if you do, the hard reality is burnout is real. This is just a sad reality of so many of these organizations is that they expect you to come in and be this Swiss Army journalist.”
-- Digital Journalist, Print Newsroom

- Accountability Starts at the Top**
“If you don’t have your top level of management bought in, you’re always going to have issues.”
-- Digital Journalist , Print Newsroom
- Accountability Starts at the Top**
“Why are you doing it if nobody’s going to read it. I love asking that question: ‘Why are we doing this?’”
-- Digital Journalist , Print Newsroom

CONCLUSION

As news consumption growth on digital channels continues to rise, all journalists must consider digital aspects of their work as primary aspects of their work as their will become a time when traditional and digital responsibilities are no longer separate roles, but part of all journalists’ responsibilities when creating, publishing and distributing news that keeps their communities informed.