



Independent News Forum '23

Welcome to Bristol! We start at 9am



Welcome from Eliz Mizon

The Bristol Cable



Speed-dating



- 1. What's been your biggest success?**
- 2. What's been your biggest setback?**
- 3. What do you want to achieve by this time next year?**



Introduction to the day

Jonathan Heawood, PINF



Welcome!

- I'm Jonathan Heawood, Executive Director of the Public Interest News Foundation (PINF).
- I've worked as a journalist, a press freedom campaigner, a regulator, a human rights funder and an academic.
- I launched PINF in 2019 to address the crisis in public interest news in the UK.





What is PINF?

The Public Interest News Foundation (PINF) promotes citizenship by supporting the provision of public interest news, which we define as ethical and impartial journalism that informs the public about matters that are relevant to them as citizens.

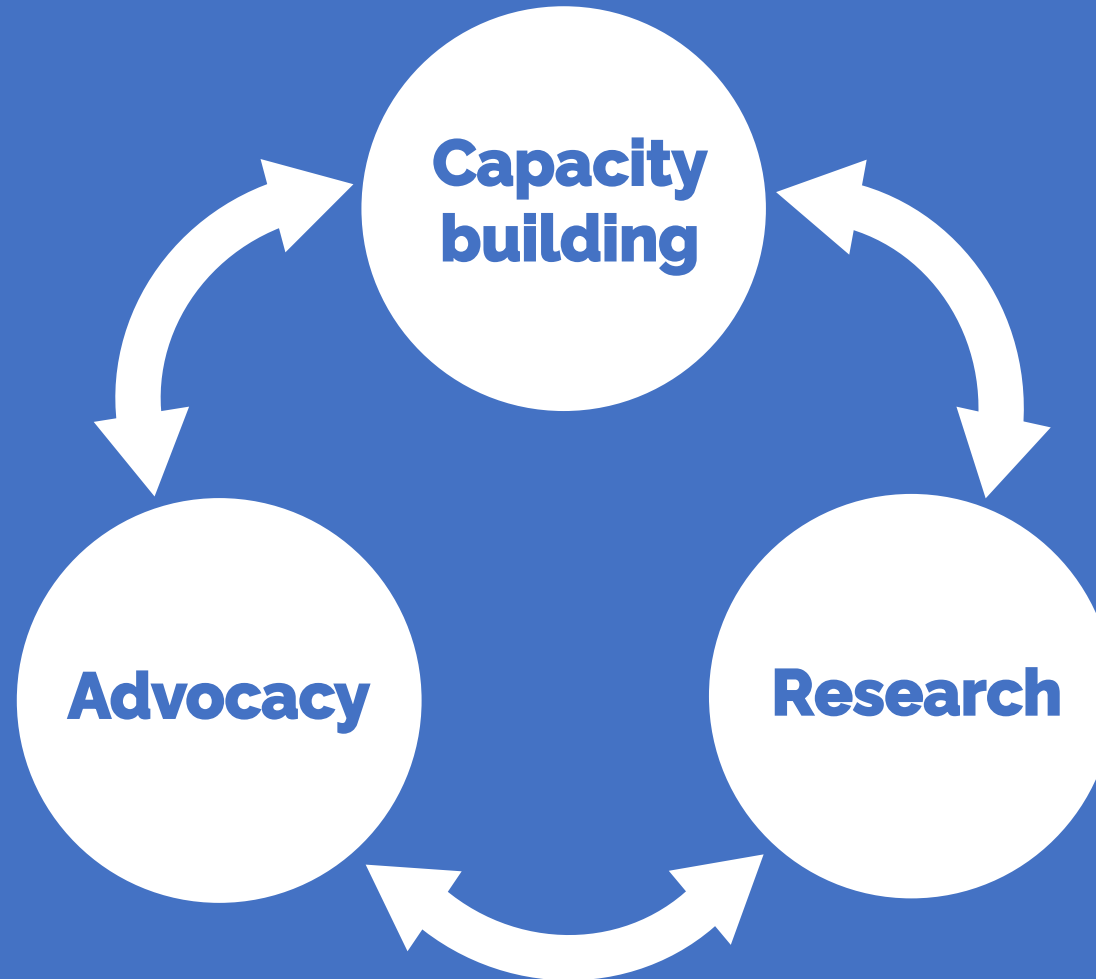
We believe that everyone in the United Kingdom should benefit from public interest news that speaks to them, for them and with them. We also believe that independent

publishers (those with turnover below £2m and which are independent of political or commercial interests) have a crucial role to play, reaching communities that have been poorly served by larger, commercial publishers, and developing new, ethical models of journalism.

So, our mission is to help ensure the sustainability of independent publishers of public interest news in communities across the UK.



How does PINF work?



What is today all about?

- **Networking** – Meeting old and new friends and colleagues from across the UK to strengthen your relationships.
- **Sharing** – Comparing successes and challenges to find out what works best in independent news publishing.
- **Brainstorming** – Finding new ways to serve the public with independent public interest news.





Networking update

Jaldeep Katwala, PINF

Hello!

- **Jaldeep Katwala, network manager at PINF**
- **I've been a journalist, I've trained journalists, and worked in media development**
- **I joined PINF in July this year...**



- **Face to face**
- **WhatsApp: 60 members, 500 posts, average 100 per week**
- **Members now initiating conversations**
- **Range of subjects discussed**
- **206 publishers reached by regional organisers**
- **Plans for outreach to inclusive media (publications in other languages, those targeting diverse audiences)**
- **Training and mentoring**



Advocacy update

Hani Barghouthi, PINF

Hello!

- **Hani Barghouthi, Campaigns Manager at PINF.**
- **Have worked as a journalist and in advocacy in Jordan and the United States.**
- **Moved to London last October and joined PINF a week later!**





News for All Campaign

- Detailed policy briefs on the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill.
- Direct engagement with policymakers and officials.
- Op-eds in local, national and international publications.
- Conferences to build local and international solidarity.

Regional/National Campaign Organisers

- **Building relationships with publishers up and down the UK to:**
 - **Campaign involvement.**
 - **Consultation.**
 - **Growing community of indie publishers.**





What's next?

- **Public notice and central government advertising reform.**
- **Local News Commission.**
- **PR campaign for indie news?**

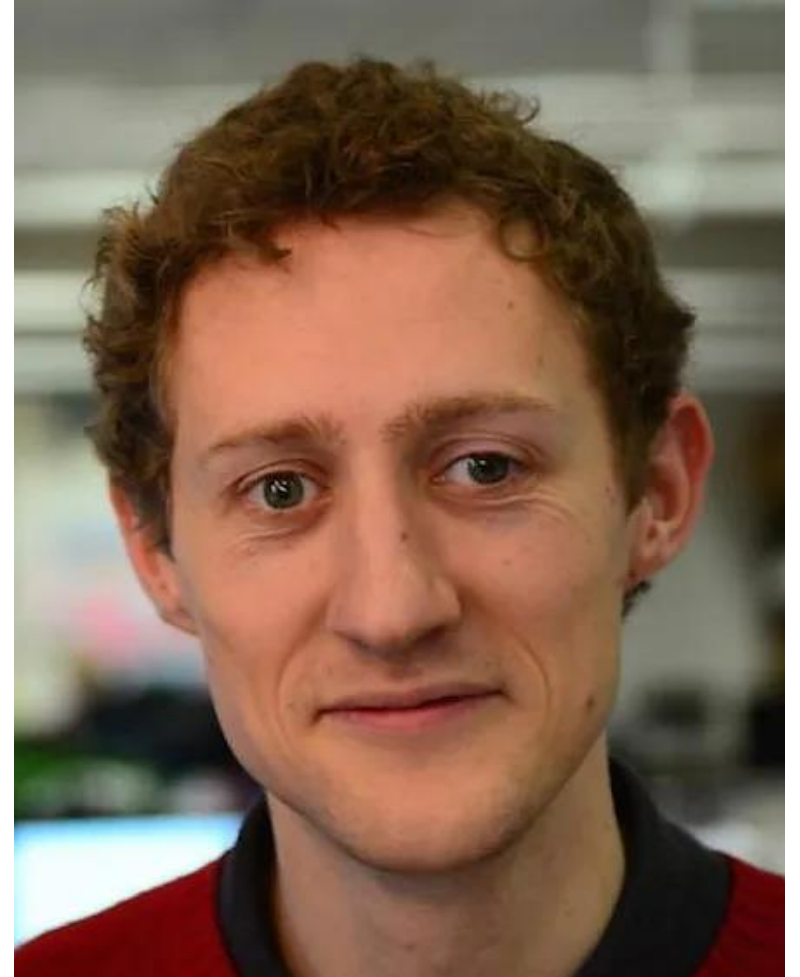


Research update

Joe Mitchell, PINF

Hello!

- **Joe Mitchell, deputy director of PINF**
- **Background in comms and advocacy for better governance**
- **Joined PINF in 2021 to save local democracy!**

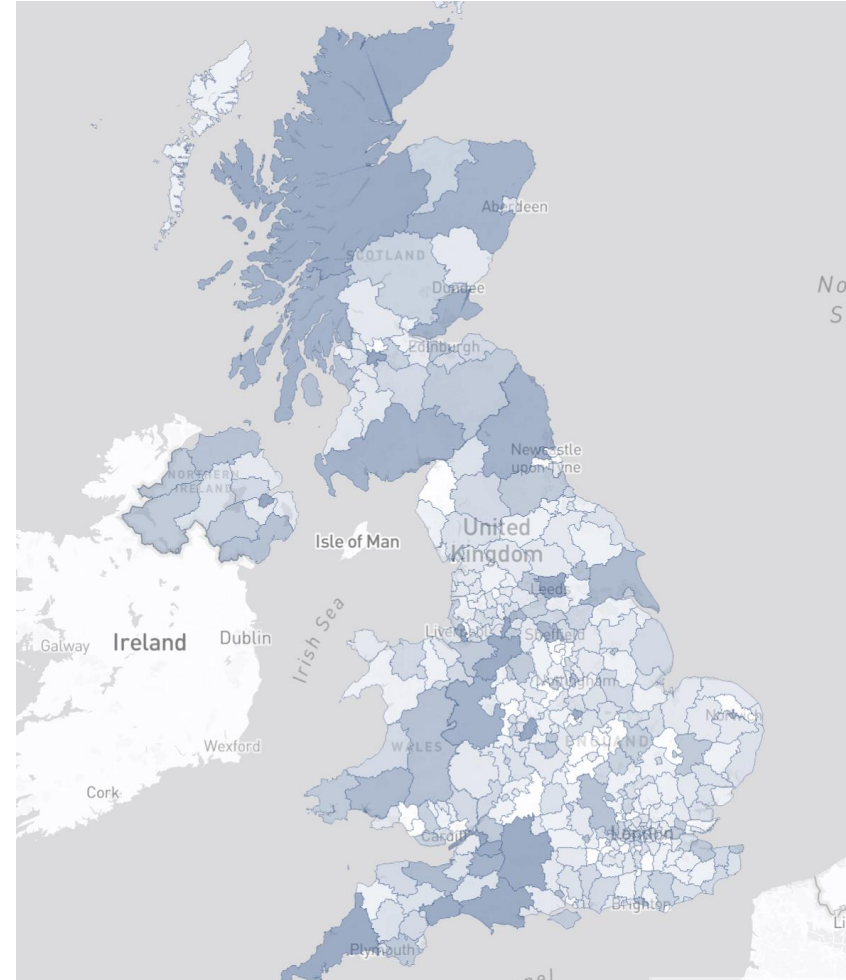


The Index of Independent News Publishing in the UK

2024 survey coming soon!



Mapping local news outlets



Disinformation dynamics





Impact and Community Engagement – learning together

Jaldeep, PINF | Wendy, The Bridge

- **Guides created on community engagement and impact measurement**
- **Attempt to share the guides in an interactive way through discussion and engagement in a trial run**
- **5 consecutive weeks, one and a half hours each time**
- **Lessons learned: good to share experiences; too many sessions; difficult to commit to all the sessions**
- **Show of hands on how to proceed**



Messaging

Hani Barghouthi, PINF

Previously, on the Independent News Forum...

A PR campaign for independent news - Independent News Forum series (2/5)

In the second in a series of posts on ideas coming out of the Independent News Forum, Joe Mitchell writes up notes on a project to create a shared publicity campaign for independent news providers.





Since then, we've worked with the:

Harrison Agency

to develop:

- **Campaign messaging**
- **Toolkit for indie publishers**



NO NEWS IS BAD NEWS

NO NEWS IS BAD NEWS

Bad news: Independent community news providers are struggling to generate enough revenue to keep their doors open.

Good news: You can make a big difference to your independent community news provider by making a small monthly donation.

Even better news: This will help them cover their costs to keep reporting the issues affecting your community.

The best news of all: A well-informed community is more able to act together to shape its own future.

Where do we go now?

- **Least involved:**
 - **Make messaging available for use by independent publishers**
 - **Publish toolkit on our website, share it through our normal channels**
- **Most involved:**
 - **Commission visuals to go along**
 - **Coordinated umbrella campaign**
 - **Advocacy + revenue drives**
 - **Action learning sets on the toolkit**



Hot beverage break

We'll be back at 11.25!



Letter from America

Rhiannon Davies, Greater Govanhill Magazine



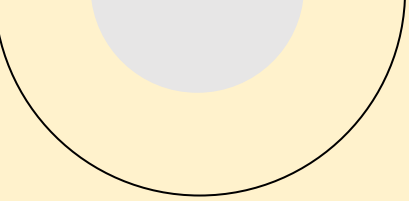
A.I. for indie publishers



Madalina Ciobanu

A new guide covering...

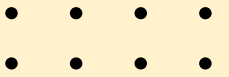
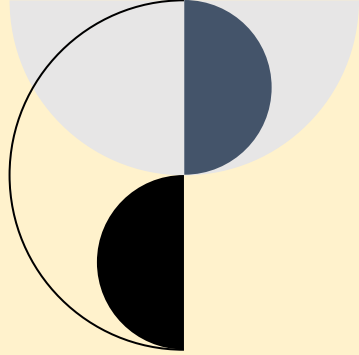
- What is artificial intelligence and why should you care?
- Potential applications of AI in news and journalism
- Risks, challenges and considerations about the use of AI
- AI in the news - key updates and resources



What is AI? A useful definition.

Artificial intelligence is a collection of ideas, technologies, and techniques that relate to a computer system's capacity to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence.

Think of AI *not* as a tool or a technology, but as a **scientific discipline**, like mathematics or biology.



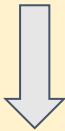
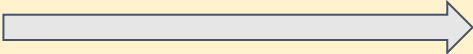
The use of AI in journalism isn't new...

Some newsrooms have already been using AI technologies (such as machine learning and Natural Language Processing (NLP)) for a number of years, to perform social media scraping, comb through large amounts of documents, and even to improve and speed up the process of fact-checking.

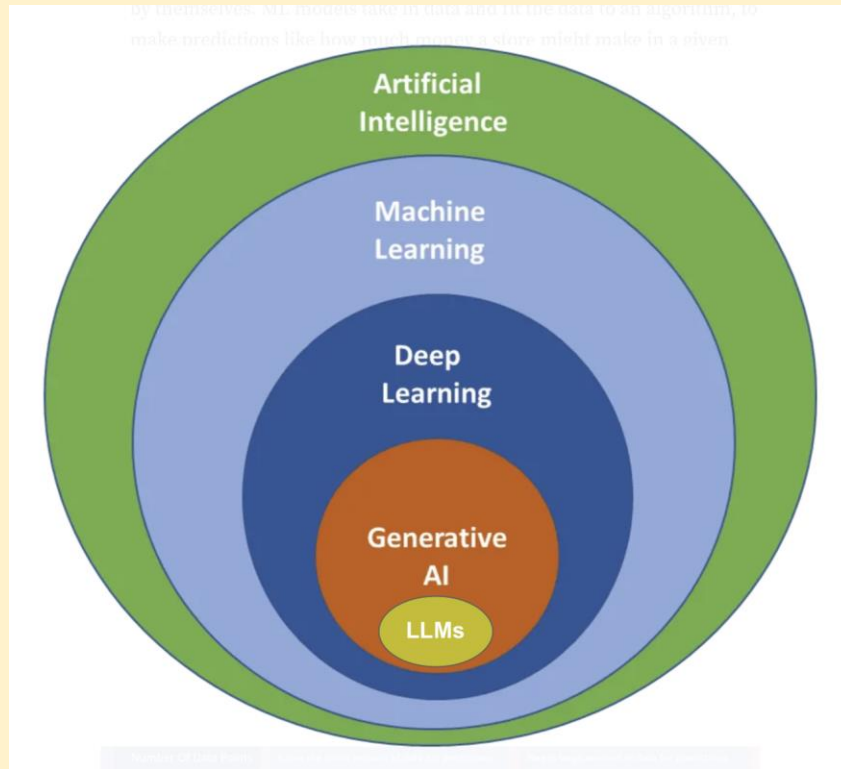


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But the hype began in summer of 2022...

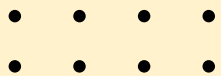


There are many types or sub-fields of AI. Generative AI (genAI) is one of them.



GenAI **creates** new **content** (text, images, audio, video, code) by running algorithms on massive data sets.

GenAI systems **respond** to inputs and questions from the **end user**, but have **no** conceptual **understanding** of the contents of the data sets they learn from, or whether the **outputs** they provide are **true or correct**.



Newsrooms are using AI technologies to gather, produce and distribute news.

- Automation of interview transcription;
- Discovery of trending topics and news events by sifting through large amounts of data;
- Collecting, verifying and cross-checking facts and claims;
- Writing headlines and article summaries;
- Proofreading and editing;
- Writing code;
- Developing personalisation and recommendation systems to match content with audiences at scale, or tailoring specific content to niche groups;
- Adapting written text to other formats and mediums, such as audio, using voice-to-text;
- Scheduling and optimising social media content.

Source: JournalismAI 'Generating change' report, Sept 2023

teyit 

A weekly newsletter with automatically-generated summaries of claims and events (previously verified by a human).

ARLnow

An AI-generated morning newsletter featuring an AI-written introduction and summaries of journalist-written stories.

The Marshall Project

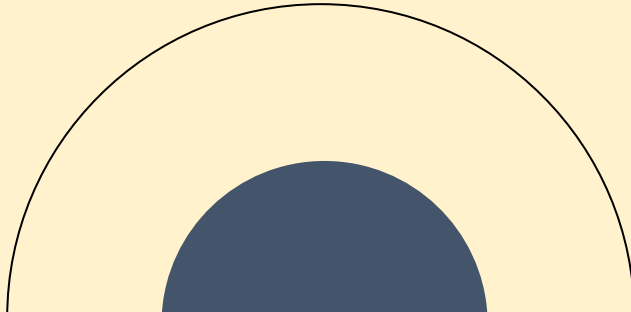
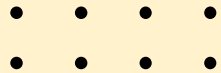
Summaries of state corrections department policies generated by ChatGPT.

NottinghamshireLive

AI-written bullet point summaries at the top of longer articles (always reviewed by an editor).

BR & mdr

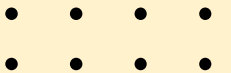
Collaboratively built a tool to analyse published content and audience comments in order to identify feedback for the newsroom & find potentially underreported topics.



What about the challenges and risks of using generative AI?

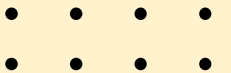


- Maintaining editorial quality;
- Lack of accuracy;
- Increased potential for misinformation;
- Exploitation of underpaid workers to train AI systems;
- Replication of harmful biases such as racism and sexism;
- Issues of plagiarism or copyright infringement....



....plus challenges surrounding (smaller) newsrooms' technical competency and sustainability

- Maintaining at least a basic updated **level of AI literacy** requires time, training and resources, and local newsrooms are already **thinly stretched and underfunded**;
- **AI tools** don't produce the same results using the same processes everytime, so they require **more human oversight** than traditional software;
- Principles or guidelines for the use of AI (and genAI in particular) are necessary for **internal accountability**, and to **inform the wider public** – which now has the same level of access to generative AI tools and interfaces that journalists and newsrooms do;
- For-profit **technology companies** are the ones **driving AI innovation**, and their values aren't aligned with public interest journalism. Can journalists find a 'collective voice on AI' and use it to **critique, reject or re-shape genAI systems** that don't meet the standards of journalistic work?



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We want to hear from you - what are your **questions, thoughts or concerns** about the potential use of **AI technologies in local news?**



Thanks!

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Illustrations by [Storyset](#).



Open Space pitches

Jonathan Heawood, PINF



Lunch + Voting on open space pitches

We'll be back at 1.30pm



The Beacon is lit

Juliana Penha, The Scottish Beacon

**THE
SCOTTISH**  **BEACON**

Collaborating to Strengthen Scottish Independent News

Introduction

The Scottish Beacon is collaborative project with two main strands:

1. A Scotland-wide network, connecting independently-run local and hyperlocal newsrooms serving urban and rural communities.
2. A new digital platform that brings together the best stories published by Scotland's independent media into a curated news product.



How it started

- To coincide with COP26, Greater Govanhill produced a pilot collaborative print publication with eight other independent news publishers.
- The idea was developed following research done during time at the UCLAN Journalism Innovation and Leadership course.
- We got funding from Google News Initiative Innovation Challenge fund to develop the network, collaborative infrastructure, impact tracking systems and launch our new website and newsletter.



How it's going

THE SCOTTISH BEACON

About Us Stories Our Projects Have Your Say Contact Us

Subscribe to our newsletter

Support independent journalism - become a member

SEE ALL NEWS LOCAL DEMOCRACY COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT SOCIAL EQUALITY SOLUTIONS ENVIRONMENT SPORTS & CULTURE

COMMUNITY VOICES

FEATURED

partners map



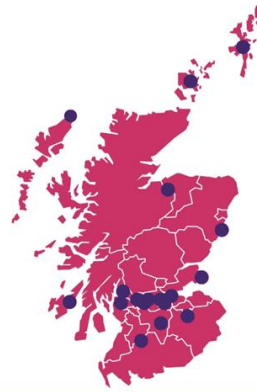
The devastating impact of the cost of living on unpaid carers

October 19, 2023

A new report published by Carers Scotland lays bare the financial impact of caring and paints a bleak picture for Scotland's 800,000 unpaid carers. Even more concerning, the number of unpaid carers on Carer's Allowance cutting back ...

Fiona Grahame, The Orkney News

Read full story



Independent Journalism from across Scotland.

Scottish Beacon is a collaborative network of independent local and hyperlocal newsrooms serving urban and rural communities.

Together we're working to strengthen the voice of the community-based media sector and bring to light real stories from Scotland's communities.

Our Mission



Concern over lack of consultation on council tax freeze

OCTOBER 19, 2023

Yousaf pledged on Tuesday at the SNP's conference in Aberdeen, saying council tax bills would ...

By Chris Cope, Shetland News

Read full story



Let them eat (gluten-free) cake: Shetland's alternative honesty boxes

OCTOBER 18, 2023

Cutting gluten out of their diet is not a choice or trend for many folks. ...

By Freya Deyell, Shetland News

Read full story



Islay: A Quantum magnetometer at Finlaggan

OCTOBER 17, 2023

The device will continuously measure tiny changes in the Earth's magnetic field, reporting this data ...

By Brian Palmer, The Ilach

Read full story



<https://www.scottishbeacon.com/news/local-democracy/islay-a-quantum-magnetometer-at-finlaggan/>

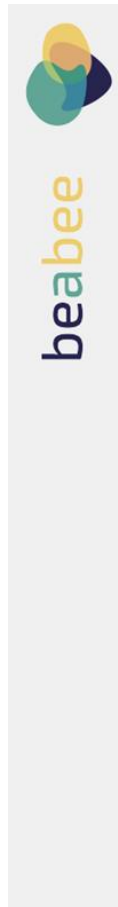


Newsroom partners on board

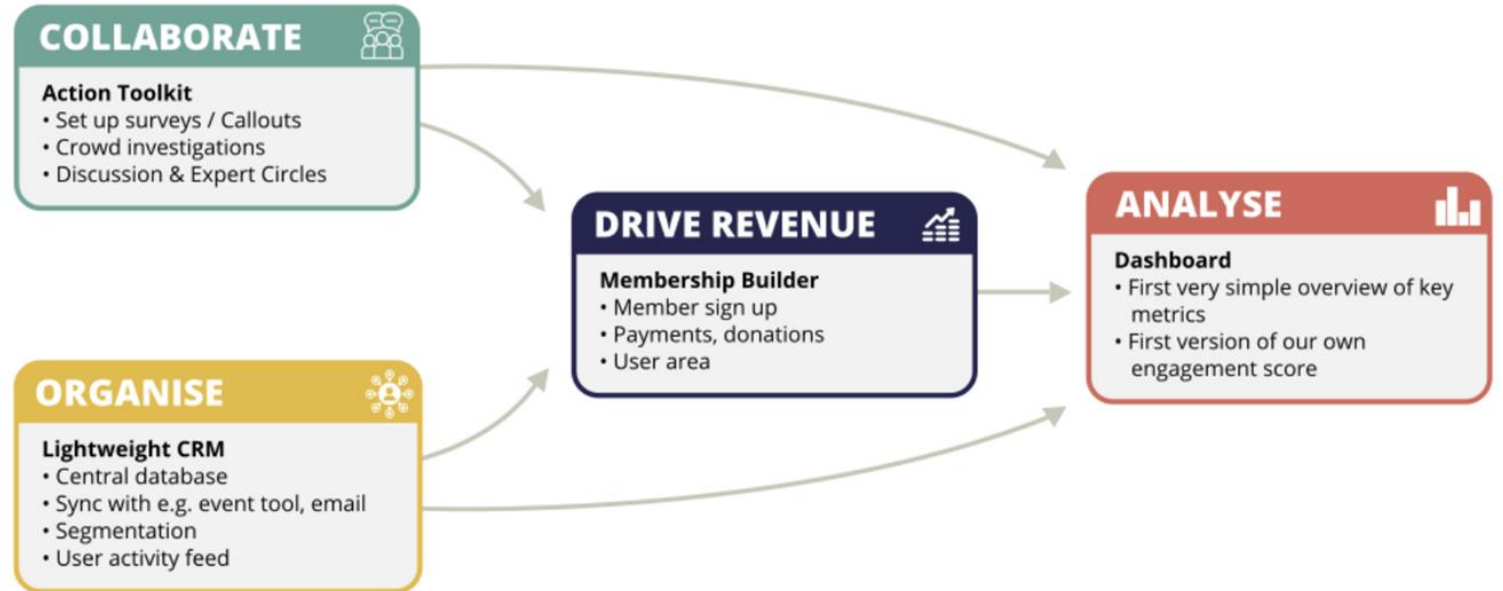


Membership platform

Working with team at Correctiv and The Bristol Cable, we have set up a membership platform, which will also allow for interactive processes.



One platform to work with your community*



What we have done

1- Network & Collaborative Scaffolding Building

2- Product Development

3- Impact Tracking

Impact

Scottish Beacon strengthens the voice of community-based media and supports the sustainability of the sector. Through this work it brings greater cohesion to communities and contributes to them becoming more democratic and engaged.

Our understanding of impact

Our **approach** is based upon **Contribution Analysis**.

It acknowledges that key outcomes are often determined, at least in part, by outside influences and that people-based change is not driven by direct cause and effect.

This is a 'theory of change' approach, which aims to uncover not only if, but also how your intervention or initiative makes a difference.

4. Scottish Beacon Impact Tracking Pathway progress



Next Steps

- Hire an investigative journalist to lead our collaborative investigations.
- Generate revenue through our membership model, advertising, syndication, grant funding and partnerships.
- One of the key aims of the Scottish Beacon is to help to make our local partners more sustainable, and so income will be distributed to members.







Open Space: S1

Please finish by 2pm



Open Space: S3

Please finish by 2.55pm



More hot beverages

We'll be back at 3.40pm



Open Space review

Jonathan, PINF



What next?

**Eliz Mizon, The Bristol Cable
& Jonathan Heawood, PINF**

Scan me!



Quick survey



Resources



Thank you!

Suggested pub: Left-Handed Giant (over the bendy bridge on the way back to Temple Meads)