Rodale

Upper East Side
Meet Rodale

- **Native American, 29, PHX**
- **Level of trust in news?** “The best you can expect is 60%”: Believes reporter’s perspective, motive, and experience all drive credibility, as well as human error
- **News journey is mobile only**
- **ABC News**: preferred source; has built trust (?)
- **Facebook**: Gets news from family and friends
  - Reads FB comments to assess agenda behind article
- **Seeks out varying opinions**: appreciates coverage of undercovered topics (e.g. via NPR)
- **Believes in news’ ability to compel action and doesn’t believe it should just reflect the “center” of two extremes**
- **Thinks news is overly sensationalized**: “News should just tell the story, so that you are aware”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insight or need</th>
<th>Impact on our approach</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approaches all news believing it’s biased or flawed in some way</td>
<td>Achieving his buy-in on standards of trust could influence news consumption patterns and his views on a piece of content’s trustworthiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumes news only via phone or tablet</td>
<td>Focus on a mobile design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seems to have some already trusted sources (ABC News, NPR, 20/20), so willing to buy into trust at publisher level</td>
<td>Focus on mechanisms for conveying publisher-level trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>All news discovery apparently happening only via Facebook</td>
<td>Design a flow that’s usable in a Facebook news feed context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzer / Seeks diversity and opposing views</td>
<td>Prototype experiences that provide alternatives</td>
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**Trust signal focuses:** Bio (conflict/history/expertise/affiliation), Original reporting (geo ref, reporter at scene)
Solution sketch

- Provide Rodale with easier ways to evaluate publisher trust in the flow of reading content
- Design a way to convey trust at publisher lever or article level via discovery platforms like Facebook
- Build trust through conveyance of signals:

  **Site-wide**
  - Conflict of interest policy disclosure
  - Ethics policy disclosure
  - Company ownership and funding sources disclosure

  **Article-level**
  - Original reporting (e.g. on-location reporter, eyewitness)
  - Reporting methodology
  - Reporter bio (expertise, conflicts, history, affiliation)
  - Article type (news/opinion/analysis)
Inspirations

NOT CNN’s code of ethics

Time Warner’s business code of conduct, but not code of ethics

NYT’s policy pages are difficult to discover from single location and are only linked from corporate site, not news site

Many news organizations don’t appear to have publicly available codes of ethics
Inspirations

US nutrition labels

- Get the basics visible
- Standardized set of information

But...

- Are these truly useful to people?
- Do you think differently about eating some food if it doesn’t have a label?

Creative Commons

- Simple Icons

ONA Ethics Project

- Templates for Publishers

This project aims to provide journalists and news organizations with the ownership and flexibility in creating an ethics code that meets their needs in our widely varied profession.
Circle of Trust

**Trust Essentials**

Site/Publisher-level

“Minimum price of admission”

"Trust Badges"

Requirement vary by level of badge, but include:

- Comprehensive Code of Ethics
- Provision of forms to request corrections and links to email reporters and editors about stories

**High-ROI Platform Markup** (optional; examples)

- Enterprise reporting (standout)
- Reporter bio information (expertise)
- Geolocation tagging (hyperlocal)
- Eyewitness tagging
- Article updates and edit history (fresh content accepted as fresh)
- Article type (news/analysis/opinion)

**Article-Level**

Markup and content to support Trust Essentials (non-exhaustive examples)

- Reporter bios and conflict disclosure
- Corrections links and updates

**Markup implementation options:**

- Schema.org
- OpenGraph
- TrustTags?? (something new)
Prototype Demo

Link

Facebook-based

Google-based
Testing and evaluating MVP

Concept testing: Show a user wireframes and/or clickable prototype

Interview user to assess the following relating to experience in the distribution platform:

- Does the user notice trust badges that appear in distribution platform (e.g. Facebook, Google)?
- Does the user understand trust badges in distribution platform? Does the user understand how trust badges end up being displayed?
- Does the user think that the trust badge would help her choose news to read?
- Does the user think that the distribution platform is doing anything differently because the badges are being shown (other than showing the badge)?

Interview user to assess the following relating to the experience on the publisher article or site:

- Does the user notice trust badges appearing in an article? How do they perceive that? Does it alter her trust in the content?
- Does the user learn through the trust badges and additional trust-related content on the page (e.g. dateline, reporter bio, etc.) about how to evaluate content for trust.
Preserving Trust: Validation Mechanisms

Critical problem to solve, but many stakeholders in determining solution.

Here’s some ideas:

- **Being called out publicly**
  - Article and social media content written about non-compliance → embarrassing
  - Promotes awareness and triggers post hoc audits

- **Platforms supporting Trust Project could provide publisher dashboards**
  - Enable the platform’s users to submit reports
  - Algorithmically find and surface issues; send emails to publisher about them
  - Hire teams to manually check things; find, surface, and email about these
  - Summarize compliance via a “report card”
  - Revoke acceptance of signals and/or ranking demotion for bad behavior
Value to media organizations

- Increased user transparency on trust practices
  - Better practices: External commitments augment internal practices
  - Many of the most trustworthy organizations already do this; benefit is greater than cost
  - Elevate users’ trust in overall industry through participation and successful outcome
  - Convert new users into habitual users via trust

- More signal to platforms → More and better traffic
  - Ranking benefit: Signals correlated with good user experience employed in boosting content exhibiting those signals
    - Trust results in better visibility and, therefore, traffic
    - With new usable and trustable signals, improve ranking and personalization on platforms
  - Experience benefit: Attract users using UI that highlights interesting article properties
    - On the scene reporting
    - Enterprise reporting
    - Type (news/opinion/analysis)
### Value to distribution platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currently used markup</th>
<th>New markup</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Better coverage and accuracy</td>
<td>● Enable new approaches for platforms to rank and personalize content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Marginally more trusted by platforms if publisher is participating in broader</td>
<td>● Present differentiation in content to users to aid them in their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust Project ecosystem</td>
<td>consumption choices</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### EXAMPLES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking signals</th>
<th>New markup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Timestamp</td>
<td>● Geolocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Article analytics, e.g. time spent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Article sharing activity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UI enhancements</th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>● Featured image</td>
<td>● On the scene reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Publisher logo</td>
<td>● Enterprise reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Type (news/opinion/analysis)</td>
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Appendix
Single-user prototype testing insights

Conducted during session at NYC Trust Project workshop, March 18-19.

- Didn’t notice additions to Google search results page
  - Trust (T) icon easily confused/missed for NYT logo
  - Gray text for eyewitness badging on article overlooked because it was too faint
- Needs more investigation: Do users perceive Trust Project badging as self-promotion by publisher (i.e. NYT is claiming it’s a trusted source on its own rather than an industry-standard designation)
- The Trust project page describing the trust signals and offering links was useful and interesting to user
- Too much jumping around between reading article and reading Trust Project detail relating to badging