**Session Title: The Data Story Process**

**Session 2: Wednesday 10/22/2014, 3:15pm-4:00pm**

**Location: Oxford Theater**

**Organizer: Rebecca Lee (Providence Plan)**

**Primary Notetaker: Leah Hendey (Urban Institute)**

 [See the RI DataHUB website at: <http://ridatahub.org/datastories/>]

Rebecca –Typically starts with a funder who has an idea for a really broad topic. Not having a question in mind with IDS – let the practitioners and other stakeholders identify their priorities.

The process is long and we’ve tried to shorten it – takes 6 to 12 months. The logistics of scheduling meetings and getting as many people to attend as possible. The goals of having the story are about process than it’s worth it, but if you are trying to get results out the door, you’d want to shrink the group to get things done more quickly.

Typically - 8-12 stakeholders in a group.

Data Story look s like a glorified PowerPoint some interactivity and story flow.

There is some overall structure that doesn’t change a whole lot - having experience on the team (with stakeholders who have participated before is helpful.

Data analysts take the first draft of the writing and interpretation and then take in stakeholders perspectives and bring in a copy writer.

Work with teams to id a potential audience at the start of the process, audiences may shift over time –they to try to come to consensus about who the primary and secondary audiences.

Funding: First few were more of concept and then parlay into other funding. Federal pass through from state agencies – RIDE (Rhode Island Department of Education) and AECF funded the integration of child welfare data. And work on data stories.

Data HUB first funded Safe and Drug Free schools grant through RIDE.

Audience Q & A and discussion– how does it inform how you write and analyze?

Stakeholders are really critical – take a couple of tries at how to portray the data to get it right.

Devin Keithley (Columbus) - time – writing often takes place at the end and don’t have much time or money left. How do you handle bad news/press? Or when there are little increases and stakeholders want to highlight them?

Peter Tatian (Washington, DC)– Our Changing City [<http://datatools.urban.org/features/OurChangingCity/>] - Product is similar but process is different I’m telling the story, based on what data say and my experience in the communities, a lot of value though to having the community involved. Maybe some times the stories it’s better for you to do. OCC takes about 6 months –it would be a capacity issue to get done faster. First one started out with – going around DC giving a presentation on changing demographics. Made changes to the story overtime. 2nd and third chapter struggled a little more about how to do that story telling. We had to think a little more carefully about how to tell the story because we didn’t have it vetted. Internal investment funded the work so far. Initially had a thought that this would be a good fundable thing. It seemed simpler in the short term to use internal funds.

Denise Groesbeck (Pinellas) I live in a political world. Struggle with the second question that Devin raised. Tried to put data in context. We are both government and funder. Have to look at feeding our board data that’s in context so they get the whole picture and not part of it.

Devin – we’ve done a good job with the mayor but you can’t tell him something that he doesn’t want to hear. Show them a draft and they have a lot of comments. Education data and test scores.

Rebecca – lucky enough to get people at the table building the stories that they have enough ownership and feel comfortable with it that they can take it back and explain to bosses. Have avoided some of the topics/questions that there isn’t political will to answer.

Sharon Kandris (Indianapolis): Working on a Weave implementation capability for publishing products out of weave – data story gallery - incorporate weave instance and users’ own visualizations. Are we going down a bad road with not providing a framework a or process that you might control?

John Killeen (Durham)– We have a portal for indicators for Durham to do bits of data reporting - I was requested to put together unemployment data from ACS at census tracts. For handouts for meeting – then had to correct bad interpretation.

Sharon – we can’t spend that much time on every issue that comes up but how to do that in a way that provides the support.

Katie B. (Woodstock Institute): moderate submissions.

Sharon: They will go through it us - but hadn’t been thought about it as a misinterpretation issue (more inappropriate content)

Sarah Duda (DePaul University) – lot of room for misinterpretation

Steve King (Oakland) We have to do the official report. And have started blogging a lot more – drill down a little more and have leeway to speak freely on our interpretation and how the indicator should be read

Piton’s floodlight project –allows you to build stories and export it: <http://www.floodlightproject.org/en/>

Peter – issue of who would be able to use the tools. The media coverage was interesting for Our Changing City – they don’t represent the in the diversity of opinion – but then millennials thought we were talking about their affordable housing problem.

Meg Merrick (Portland) - expectations that people are going to use tools to stories is overblown. Best you can do is the caveats that are really clear. If there are data quality issues, etc. Advanced users want databases. We held 350 workshops in two years around mapping capabilities and didn’t really get them used.

Sharon – We are building in simplifications.

Meg- We learned a lot about our audience – expert users just download – others might want maps.

Meg – OCC is simple and elegant. City of Portland I has asked us to create something similar, not sure we can do it. That’s the direction that we are going.

Laura Simmons (Charlotte) – starting to use Tableau – next version will have a story component it. Just started using Tableau – there is a free version and paid version. Create stories in Tableau and let people interact and then they can export the data. Couple thousand for license - $200K for enterprise license.

ESRI story maps – Kristen Murray (Minneapolis) using these.

Devin – stories that data can tell – suggest to the client – they might be responsible for writing that. Really excited about the stories they’ve written but then they don’t fit in with the other stories in the report.

Steve King – what tools are being used in the process?

Rebecca – I can share materials.

Sharon – is the data story the end point?

Rebecca: Try to get the stakeholders to commit to specific actions. Sometimes its just getting it out there to different audiences. Working at the end of step with KIDSCOUNT –convened an event – talked about what they were doing in districts to reduce chronic absenteeism.

Sharon – great approach – with strive model – could be a good fit – getting them to compile the story of what they’d need to be working on to get to their action plans.

Rebecca: Working on a more modern version (hope to release in the next 6 months)

Peter- question of what happens after is important – not sure about what happens after Our Changing City. Lasting impact is an interesting question.

John K.– once you have got the message out and trying to show the impact – you have awareness – what’s the results – did an action that come out I of it.

Denise – relationship between media and data producers .

John – using some of the neighborhood compass in the media.

Devin – Greater Milwaukee foundation study – benchmark report – foundation negotiated with the newspaper. – so they could be clued into the schedule and wrote editorials – including them early on was a good strategy.