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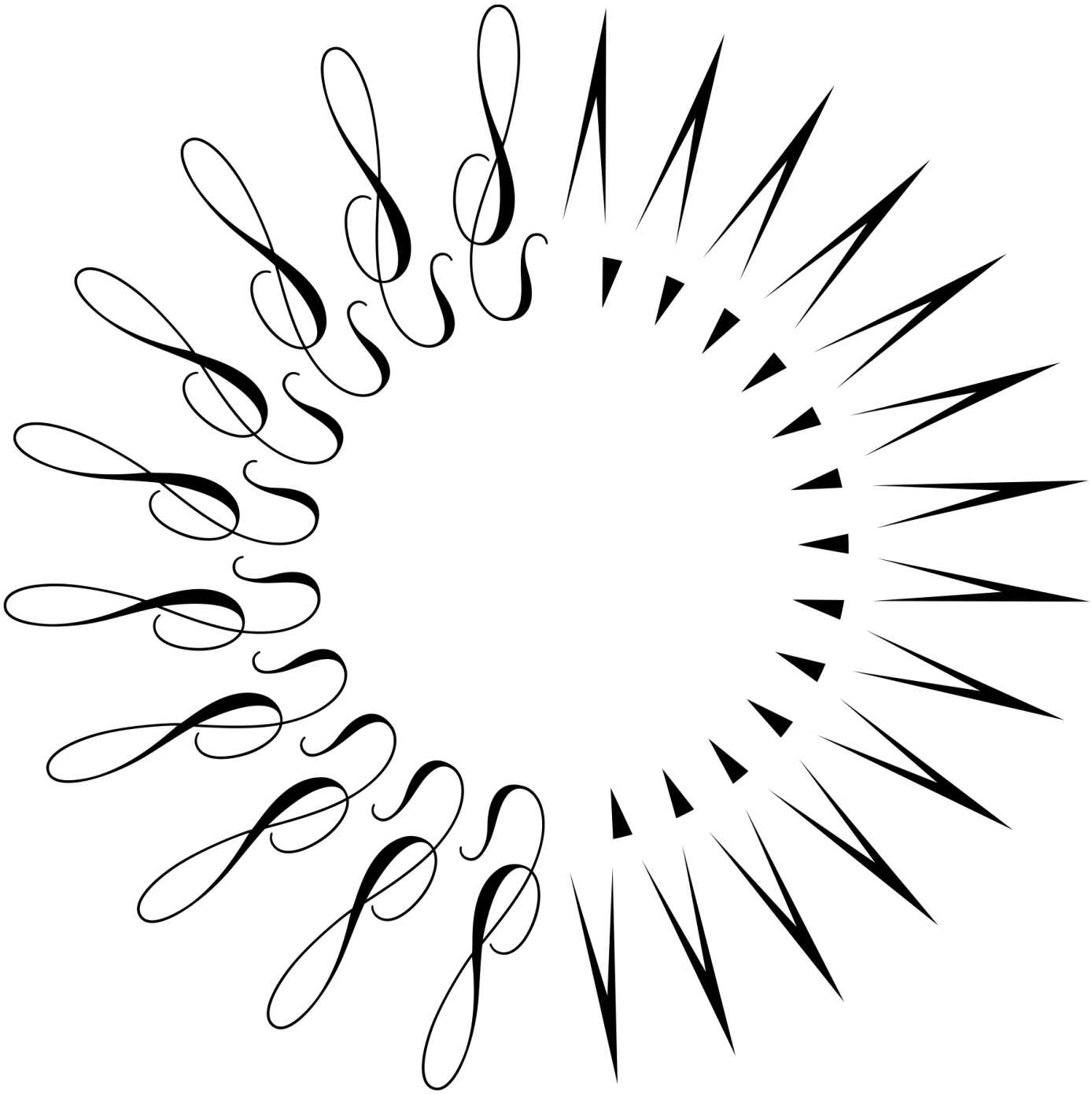

Evolving Pew's Story

A shift to serialized, human-first storytelling that deepens engagement and expands impact.

Evolving Pew's Story

This strategy builds on dozens of internal conversations across External Affairs and Program teams over the past year, combined with extensive research into successful storytelling models at other mission-focused organizations. By analyzing data-driven insights into audience engagement across today's digital landscape, we identified clear opportunities to strengthen Pew's role as a trusted source of research and analysis. We now have an opportunity to build upon our successes and evolve our approach to storytelling, ensuring that our content remains dynamic, impactful, and responsive to audience needs.

Through these discussions, several consistent themes emerged. Teams identified opportunities to refine processes, unlock the full potential of our talent, and strengthen collaboration across units. The existing system has created a strong foundation, ensuring that Pew's content remains rigorous, fact-based, and carefully crafted. To date, this work has led to significant policy influence and public engagement. This strategy builds on that momentum. It expands our reach, streamlines collaboration, and further elevates the impact of Pew's storytelling.

Many across the organization have expressed the need for a system that allows for more flexibility and speed, ensuring that we can respond effectively to a rapidly changing landscape. Teams seek to reduce workflow complexity, improve cross-team collaboration, and create more space for authentic, human-centered storytelling. Strengthening trust and respect across teams remains a critical part of this evolution. It is essential that all areas of expertise are valued and fully integrated into our approach. Embedded communicators remain essential partners in this work. Their subject matter expertise will help shape compelling, policy-relevant narratives that align with Pew's broader content strategy.

This shift will also empower individuals across teams to contribute ideas, collaborate in new ways, and see their work evolve in real time. By simplifying processes and encouraging shared ownership, we can create a more dynamic and rewarding environment where everyone's expertise is recognized, valued, and fully utilized.

At the same time, this transition will enable Pew to tell a broader and more connected story. It will link research, policy engagement, and partnerships into a unified narrative. This shift will give all audiences, whether policymakers, partners, or the public, a clearer understanding of how our work fits together, how it drives impact, and the people behind it.

This is not about fixing something broken. It is about expanding on a strong foundation to enhance Pew's impact. The work done so far has positioned Pew as a leader in research-driven storytelling. This next step will amplify that success. By moving toward a unified, serialized, and human-first storytelling model, we will create a system that is more agile, more collaborative, and more empowering. It will foster new ideas, allow our talent to thrive, and ensure that Pew's work reaches the right audiences at the right time and in the right formats. This strategy also acknowledges that our team structures are evolving. As we adapt to leadership transitions and new roles, we are aligning resources to better support proactive storytelling and integrated digital engagement.

People are 22 times more likely to remember information presented as a story compared to facts alone.

GoGlobe

22x

Unified Storytelling

Pew has built a reputation for rigorous, nonpartisan research and a communications team dedicated to producing clear, impactful content. Our storytelling supports research programs, engages key audiences, and translates complex ideas into accessible narratives. As the digital landscape evolves, we have an opportunity to build on that success by deepening audience engagement, strengthening connections between research and policy, and broadening the reach of our work.

This proposal shifts our model from a program-specific approach to a proactive, collaborative, and multi-platform strategy. Serialized, human-centered storytelling will complement our data-driven research, helping Pew's insights reach the right people in the right formats at the right time. Audience insights will guide personalization, making our work more relevant to diverse stakeholders. This does not replace what works. It enhances it to meet the demands of a rapidly changing media environment.

This strategy also reflects evolving team structures and leadership roles across communications. We are realigning resources to support a more proactive model while ensuring continuity, stability, and stronger integration across editorial, digital, and embedded teams.

As audiences gravitate toward serial, niche, and emotionally resonant storytelling, we will move beyond stand-alone content and develop an always-on production flywheel that fosters deeper engagement over time. The concept of Pew Stories provides a framework for this approach, applying universal themes to connect research across issue areas. By linking narratives across Pew's 40+ research projects, we will show how our work fits together. Our content will be informative, resonant, and reflective of the communities and issues we study. While Pew Stories provides a model, teams will collaborate to refine and implement it in a way that fits Pew's evolving strengths.

A centralized editorial calendar will keep content efforts strategic, coordinated, and aligned with institutional priorities. By integrating digital, editorial, creative, and program teams into a shared workflow, we will streamline production and foster collaboration. The Special Projects team will play a key role in testing formats, exploring platforms, and tracking shifts in audience behavior to keep our storytelling forward-looking. The evolution of Pew.org also plays a central role, transforming the site into a dynamic hub for serialized storytelling, personalized delivery, and cross-platform engagement.

At the core of this strategy is a commitment to people-first, data-driven storytelling. Our research already serves as a trusted source of information. By integrating human-centered narratives, we can make our stories more accessible, emotionally compelling, and connected to the real-world impact of Pew's work.

Recognizing Pew's culture and approach to change, this strategy follows a phased rollout over three years.

430K

After switching to an always-on serial content strategy, REI's mission-focused YouTube channel has grown from under 10K to over 400K subscribers and 153 million total views.
-VidIQ

The first phase focuses on pilot storytelling cycles and early adoption. The second will scale serialized storytelling, refine workflows, and integrate personalization tools. The final phase will embed this model as a core part of Pew's communications approach.

This content strategy is part of a larger ecosystem strategy that aligns platforms, storytelling, and digital infrastructure to deliver a seamless experience across channels. By embracing a proactive and iterative model, we will ensure Pew's work is not only seen but remembered, shared, and acted upon—amplifying our long-term impact in a fragmented digital landscape.

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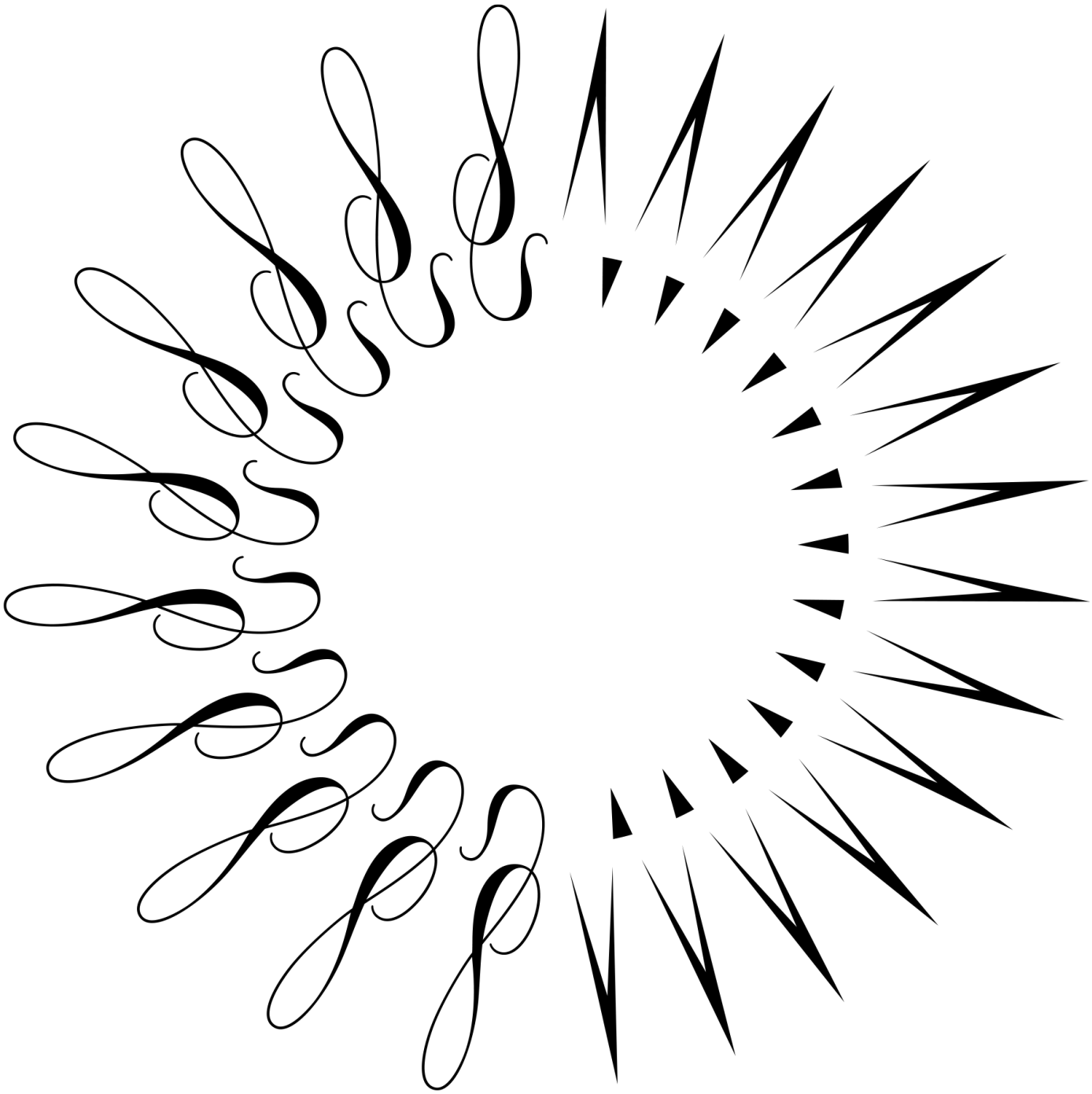


Setting the stage

Evolving to reach fragmented audiences, build trust, and maximize impact in a shifting media landscape

A Shifting Landscape

Pew's communications efforts have long supported decision-makers and public audiences by translating research into accessible, trustworthy content. But as the media environment continues to evolve, we have new opportunities to expand our impact and strengthen our relevance.

Trust in traditional media has declined sharply. As of 2023, only 34 percent of Americans said they trust newspapers and television news. Daily newspaper circulation has dropped 32 percent over five years. At the same time, more than 80 percent of Americans now get their news from digital platforms. Among younger adults, the shift is even more pronounced. Most under 35 rely on YouTube, TikTok, and podcasts over traditional outlets. In fact, the share of Americans regularly getting news from TikTok has grown fivefold since 2020.

While mainstream outlets remain influential, digital-first platforms increasingly shape public discourse. Podcasts, YouTube channels, and social-first video formats offer long-form, personality-driven content that builds sustained engagement. Platforms like The Joe Rogan Experience, Breaking Points, and other long-form shows have become influential spaces for civic discussion, reaching millions of Americans who may no longer engage with traditional news sources. In the lead-up to the 2024 U.S. presidential election, Rogan's interview with former President Donald Trump drew widespread attention and dominated coverage across platforms. Traditional outlets operate within editorial constraints, while independent platforms often allow for extended, unfiltered conversations. These formats appeal to audiences who distrust conventional media and seek out deeper context.

A growing body of research suggests that media platforms shape not only how people think about issues, but whether they think about them at all. A study by the Poverty Action Lab found that media exposure plays a significant role in shaping public knowledge, attitudes, and engagement. Podcasts and social platforms increasingly determine which issues gain traction, especially in elections and moments of public debate.

By building on our strong foundation, we can take advantage of these shifts to amplify our research and broaden our reach. Expanding our storytelling approach to include serialized, multi-platform content will strengthen our ability to sustain engagement and build deeper connections with key audiences.

Serialized Storytelling Builds Trust and Community

Research from Anna De Fina, professor of linguistics at Georgetown University, shows that social media storytelling encourages audiences to shift from passive consumers to active participants. Serialized storytelling in particular fosters connection and community. Audiences return for updates, follow evolving narratives, and contribute their own perspectives.

Rather than releasing a single report and moving on, we can build long-term narrative arcs that reflect ongoing policy debates, social challenges, and lived experience. This creates a stronger sense of

The share of Americans who regularly get news from TikTok has grown five fold since 2020

5x

continuity and relevance. It also positions Pew not just as a source of information, but as part of an ongoing public conversation.

Engaging the 'Builder' Audience and Influencing Policymakers

One of our greatest opportunities for long-term impact lies with the Builder audience, a group defined by the Stanford Social Innovation Review as proactive problem-solvers who cut across professions and political identities. Builders seek research-backed insights they can use to drive change in their communities, policymaking spaces, or philanthropic efforts.

Unlike passive content consumers, Builders actively look for credible tools and data. They value content that evolves over time and tracks broader context. They are also likely to share what they find. Serialized storytelling with clear takeaways, visual explainers, and real-world case studies can help Builders stay engaged and apply what they learn.

Rather than treating content as discrete reports, we will build evolving stories that connect across research areas. Reports will remain important. But they will be supported by infographics, explainer videos, photojournalistic essays, social-first summaries, and expert commentary. This will allow different audiences to access the same insights in the formats they prefer.

Navigating Audience Fragmentation While Maintaining Nonpartisanship

Today's media ecosystem is fragmented and increasingly personalized. Algorithm-driven platforms now play a central role in shaping what people see, share, and trust. While this presents challenges, it also creates opportunities. Individuals within these fragmented spaces are often highly engaged and motivated to act.

This is especially true among younger audiences. Pew Research reports that 40 percent of TikTok users now consume news on the app, and 34 percent of adults under 30 use podcasts as a regular news source. Traditional news audiences are aging, while digital-first platforms are increasingly driving public opinion and policy narratives.

Pew's reputation for nonpartisan, research-based storytelling gives us a distinct advantage. By pairing that credibility with more flexible, audience-driven storytelling formats, we can bridge ideological divides and increase our influence. Our voice can be a trusted resource in fragmented environments, as long as we meet audiences where they are and speak in formats that resonate.

Language matters. Research from the Stanford Social Innovation Review shows that people are more likely to engage with content that emphasizes agency, progress, and shared goals rather than polarization or crisis. Framing our storytelling around constructive solutions can unlock new support and bring more people into the conversation, including those who might otherwise tune out.

A Content Flywheel That Reinforces Pew's Impact Over Time

Rather than allowing content to be consumed once and forgotten, we will embed our research into multi-platform storytelling arcs that keep issues top of mind. Serialized storytelling helps us reinforce insights across channels and formats, giving our audiences more ways to discover, return to, and share our work.

This strategy ensures that our content does not exist in silos. It moves between them, sparking engagement across platforms, networks, and communities. Over time, this sustained approach will deepen trust, increase understanding, and position Pew for long-term influence in a dynamic media landscape.

A vital audience for Pew

Builders

Reframing issues around progress, empowerment, and shared values can unlock new support for our programs.

By shifting to solution-driven people-first narratives, we can mobilizing their commitment to solutions that cross ideological lines.

39M

39 million Americans spanning all races, genders, regions, and political identities.

Builders vote, volunteer, donate, and support social goals like racial equality, justice, and fairness.

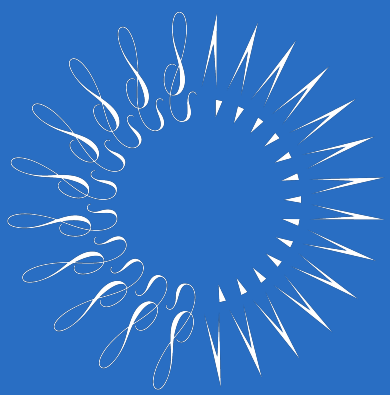
51% are Democrats, 22% Independents, and 20% Republicans, making them a cross-partisan audience.

59% don't have a college degree

57% earn $60,000 or less per year

58% White, 19% Black, 12% Latino

53% in the North, 47% in the South.

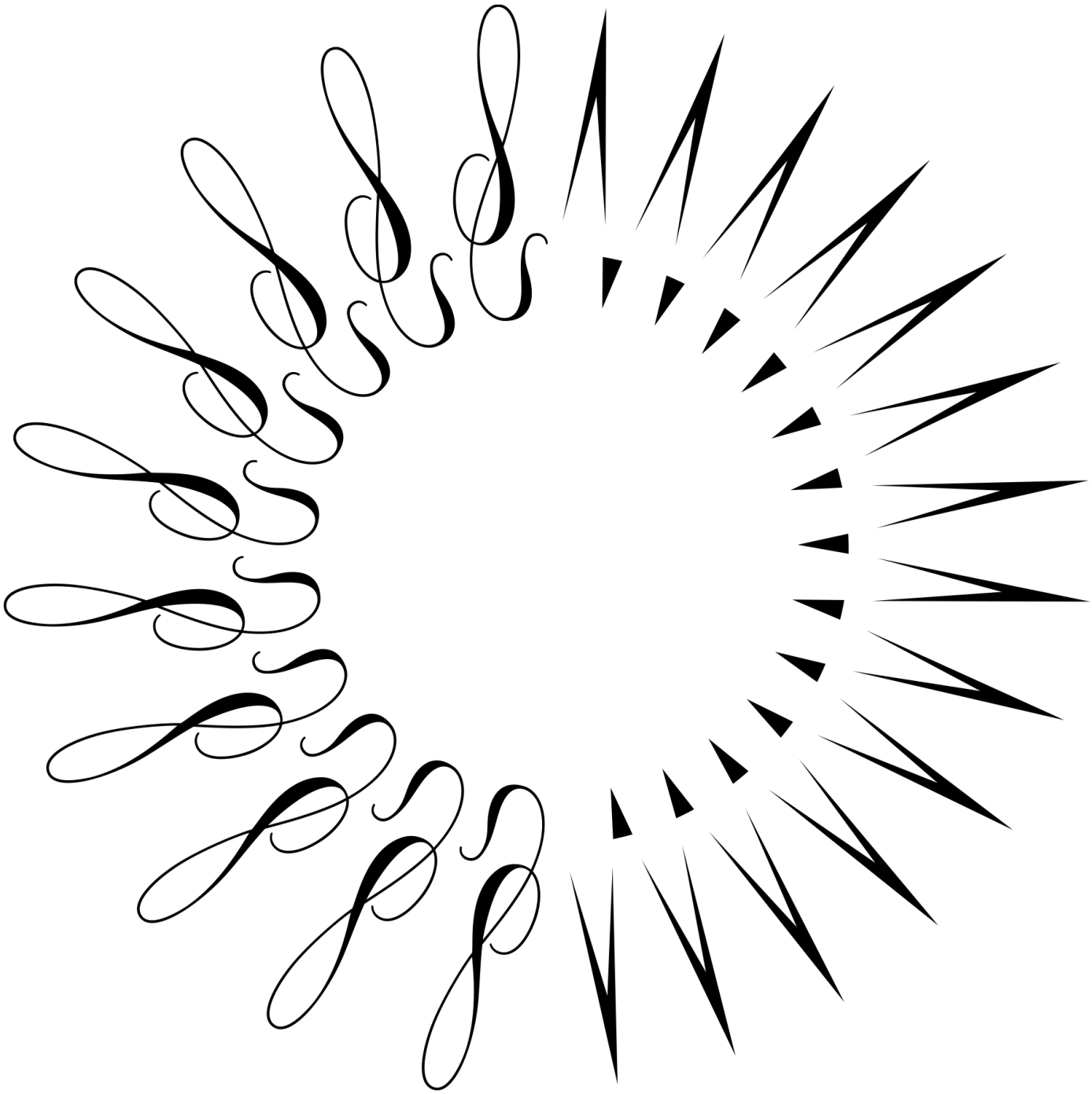


Language that paints systems as broken or communities as victims doesn't resonate.

They don't identify as activists, but they are active problem-solvers in their communities.

Reframing issues to focus on empowerment and shared goals can engage a broader audience without polarizing them.

① Pew



A Proactive Content Flywheel Approach

Creating a content flywheel through Pew Stories to continuously deliver research-driven storytelling across platforms, and ensure sustained engagement.

A Proactive Content Flywheel

Creating a Content Flywheel

Pew has long been a leader in producing trusted, research-driven content that informs key audiences and shapes policy discussions. For decades, we have developed high-impact reports and analyses that contribute to public understanding and decision-making. As the media landscape shifts, there is an opportunity to build on this success by adopting a content strategy that sustains engagement over time.

Historically, our publishing model has relied on one-time releases of individual reports. These are often supported by brief bursts of promotional content, then archived or replaced by the next project. While this approach ensures accuracy and focus, it limits the long-term visibility and usability of our research. A flywheel model changes that. It treats content as part of an ongoing story, keeping it active in public conversations and visible across platforms long after its original release.

A content flywheel distributes storytelling in a way that builds momentum and invites audiences to return. It allows us to surface the same research insight in multiple ways—through data visualizations, social clips, podcast episodes, or email series—while reinforcing a central narrative. Each piece strengthens the next.

Several mission-driven organizations have already transitioned to this model. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Goalkeepers initiative tracks progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals through storytelling and data that unfold across years. By reinforcing key themes consistently, the initiative keeps global health and development top of mind.

The Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center adopted a newsroom-style model in 2012, embedding communications within research teams and framing findings in the context of ongoing narratives. This helped the center maintain visibility in the research and health sectors. As Jennifer Sizemore, former editor-in-chief at Fred Hutch, noted, "Messages delivered as stories can be 20 percent more memorable than just the facts. For the people you need to care about your cause, remembering leads to caring, caring leads to action."

The World Economic Forum's Strategic Intelligence platform offers continuously updated visual insights on global trends. Rather than relying on static publications, it uses interactive storytelling to maintain relevance and deepen understanding over time.

Pew has also begun moving toward this approach. Pilot initiatives such as "Ocean, People, Planet" and "People of the Boreal," along with experiments from our creative, editorial, and multimedia teams, have shown how sustained, cross-platform storytelling can drive higher engagement. We have also seen early success from podcast-editorial collaborations, including After the Fact, which often serves as the narrative entry point for more complex research topics. These internal prototypes have helped validate the flywheel's potential within Pew's structure.

This transition does not replace the depth and rigor of Pew's work. It enhances visibility, accessibility, and continuity. A flywheel approach will allow our insights to stay active across platforms, build awareness, and extend impact over time.

86% of Americans obtain their news from online sources, including social media, niche platforms, and independent publishers

- Pew Research Center

86%

Why a Content Flywheel?

A content flywheel creates a self-sustaining cycle of engagement. Instead of pushing content out once and moving on, we circulate it in a way that encourages reentry—across time, across platforms, and through multiple formats.

Research shows that policymakers and other decision-makers interact more deeply with research when it remains part of ongoing conversation. A Brookings Institution analysis found that sustained integration of research into policymaking improves uptake and influence. Their Collaboration Conversations series further demonstrates how ongoing engagement helps translate findings into real-world outcomes.

Serialized storytelling also increases audience retention. CineSalon reports that episodic formats strengthen viewer investment and drive return visits. Loomly confirms that serialized content improves brand visibility and message reinforcement across platforms.

As Gabriel London, a Shorenstein Center fellow, put it, "I saw the engaging power of a story that refuses to end. In doing so, I connected to a narrative approach that works for audiences across the political spectrum."

By reinforcing insights across formats and timeframes, we can keep Pew's research relevant, discoverable, and influential. This ensures that our work informs not just understanding, but action.

From Flywheel to Serialized Storytelling

A flywheel is most effective when paired with strong narrative structure. Serialized storytelling helps audiences follow evolving issues, engage with updates, and return to content over time. It also allows us to guide users through complex topics gradually, layering in context and insight as stories develop.

Rather than treating each publication as a one-time event, we will use it as a launch point. Updates, explainers, infographics, videos, and interviews will continue to build around core research, keeping it top of mind. This layered approach supports both learning and connection. It encourages deeper audience investment while extending the relevance and reach of our work.

Leveraging Algorithmic Distribution for Impact

Algorithm-driven feeds play a major role in content discovery. To stay visible, our content must meet audiences where they are and in formats that encourage sharing and recirculation.

We will continue producing long-form reports and analyses for deep thinkers and policy experts. At the same time, we will increase production of digital-first storytelling. This includes social video, human-centered narratives, short explainers, and visuals designed for platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.

> "Messages delivered as stories can be 20% more memorable than just the facts. For the people you need to care about your cause, remembering leads to caring, caring leads to action."
>
> - Jennifer Sizemore
>
> Founder Matter - Storytelling for Good
> Former Editor and Chief at Fred Hutch

Serialized formats help ensure that each piece builds on what came before. Over time, this layered strategy supports stronger visibility, smarter personalization, and more consistent brand recognition across channels.

Expanding Content Repurposing and Adaptability

Organizations that repurpose content across multiple formats consistently reach wider audiences than those that rely on a single type of output. By translating the same insight into a short video, infographic, podcast segment, and web article, we can meet different audience needs without duplicating effort.

Harvard Business Review successfully employs this strategy, integrating in-depth writing, podcasts, and video explainers to reach varied audiences. Although their internal metrics are not public, research supports the value of multi-format repurposing in audience growth and retention.

We have already begun applying this approach. Editorial and multimedia teams are working together more often to ensure field content is captured in flexible formats. Story packages are increasingly designed for reuse, remixing, and cross-platform adaptation.

This layering of formats allows us to extend the life and reach of Pew's work. It makes our content more accessible, more engaging, and more likely to be shared—while still maintaining clarity, rigor, and audience relevance.

> "I saw the engaging power of a story that refuses to end, and in so doing, connected to a narrative approach that works for audiences across the political spectrum."
>
> - Gabriel London
> Shorenstein Center Fellow

Pew Stories: A Use Case for Serialized, Thematic Storytelling

Pew Stories will serve as a cross-platform storytelling initiative designed to span multiple content types, including editorial series, research reports, multimedia features, podcasts, social-first visuals, illustrations, and data visualizations. Rather than confining our work to a single publication or moment in time, Pew Stories will expand upon key findings and take audiences along for the journey as issues evolve.

Research from the Reuters Institute emphasizes that younger audiences increasingly prefer interactive, personalized, and ongoing narratives over static formats. This aligns with broader research showing that serialized, multi-format storytelling increases engagement and retention. A study in SAGE Open found that digital storytelling across multiple formats enhances both knowledge retention and information transfer over time.

This approach is supported by research from Henry Jenkins on transmedia storytelling, which shows that audiences engage more deeply when content is distributed across platforms in a coordinated, immersive way. It is also reinforced by findings from the Shorenstein Center, which notes that serialized journalism encourages civic participation by building a habit of return and fostering emotional connection to unfolding issues.

By using Pew Stories as a flexible narrative engine, we can create serialized arcs that reflect long-term topics while allowing for real-time updates, story evolution, and platform-specific adaptation.

Balancing Fixed Strategy & Adaptability

To succeed, Pew Stories must balance consistency with adaptability. Core themes, serial structures, and distribution plans will anchor our work. At the same time, the system must leave room for evolving topics, emerging audience behavior, and new content formats.

This structure allows us to maintain a clear editorial focus while staying responsive. Our teams will collaborate across editorial, creative, digital strategy, and program communications to co-create story arcs that advance institutional goals while reaching audiences in formats they prefer.

The Special Projects team will play a key role in this process. They will test new storytelling formats, support A/B experimentation, and surface emerging narrative opportunities through close collaboration with embedded communicators and research teams. These tests will help refine formats before scaling and ensure we remain audience-responsive and innovation-driven.

Multi-Platform Execution and Content Interconnectivity

Each Pew Stories arc will be developed for multi-platform distribution. Long-form reports and web content will provide opportunities for in-depth exploration. Longer videos, podcasts, and expert interviews will add depth and narrative context. Short-form video, infographics, and visual stories will offer quick, high-impact entry points tailored for social platforms.

This ecosystem allows us to serve a range of audience needs without sacrificing clarity or cohesion. To make that ecosystem more responsive, we will also expand the use of personalization tools, particularly through DataMart, our behavioral analytics and targeting platform. This system will help us dynamically deliver content based on user interests, platform usage, and cross-site behavior.

For example, someone who frequently engages with our conservation content may see ocean- or climate-related research elevated in their newsletters, social feeds, or suggested stories on Pew.org. A policymaker following fiscal governance work may be guided to related case studies and short explainers aligned to their specific areas of interest. Over time, these pathways can evolve based on their demonstrated engagement patterns.

This adaptive structure ensures that our storytelling remains relevant. It also supports return visits and long-term engagement by delivering content that feels timely and personalized, while maintaining editorial consistency and nonpartisan credibility.

Universal Themes & Pew Stories: A Narrative Guide

Pew Stories will be guided by a set of universal themes—narrative scaffolds that reflect recurring ideas across our research. These themes help us build cross-topic connections while creating space for real-world stories.

Each theme is platform-agnostic. It can unfold through reports, videos, podcasts, infographics, or social storytelling. This ensures consistency while allowing content teams to tailor production to audience and platform needs.

For example:

- A policymaker may engage with the theme “The Right to Thrive” through a detailed research report on sentencing disparities or housing instability.
- A member of the public may connect with the same theme through a photo essay or 90-second video clip about someone overcoming those same challenges.

By aligning content to these themes, we can create coherent storytelling arcs that span across projects and channels. Themes also enable smarter audience segmentation and message testing, making our storytelling more strategic and scalable over time.

This approach gives us a framework for serializing content without confining it to a single voice or format. It helps us reflect the complexity of our work while making it more accessible and emotionally resonant.

Flexibility in execution

Universal themes

Universal themes can act as strategic tools for connecting our research to real-world applications. These themes naturally intersect, reinforcing the interconnected nature of Pew's work. For example, economic mobility links to education access, environmental resilience ties to scientific progress, and social bonds contribute to public health and community stability.

The following are examples of key themes, each with its corresponding initiatives and a connected narrative arc.

Theme: Overcoming Adversity & Adapting to Change (Survival & Resilience)

Pew Initiatives Connected
- Climate Resilience & Environmental Conservation - Coastal communities adapting to rising seas.
- Public Health & Mental Well-being - People overcoming trauma, addiction, and systemic barriers.
- Economic & Housing Policy - Individuals and families finding stability amid financial uncertainty.

Pew Stories Narrative Arc: "The Adaptation Generation"
Following individuals and communities adapting to rapid change (environmental, economic, social).

Theme: The Struggle for Fairness & Equity (Justice & Injustice)

Pew Initiatives Connected
- Criminal Justice Reform - Addressing disparities in sentencing, mental health in the justice system.
- Environmental Policy & Public Health - How environmental hazards disproportionately affect marginalized communities.
- Economic Mobility & Financial Policy - How systemic barriers impact access to wealth, housing, and security.

Pew Stories Narrative Arc: "The Right to Thrive"
Exploring solutions in access to justice, health, and economic security.

Theme: The Battle Between Ethics & Influence (Power & Corruption)

Pew Initiatives Connected:
- State Fiscal Policy - How tax structures, budgets, and lobbying impact policy outcomes.
- Public Lands & Conservation - How corporate and political interests shape land use and climate policies.
- Consumer Finance & Retirement Security - How financial regulations protect (or fail to protect) individuals

Pew Stories Narrative Arc: "The Tipping Point"
Unveiling the behind-the-scenes forces shaping policies and people's lives.

Theme: Human Innovation & Scientific Progress (Advancement & Discovery)

Pew Initiatives Connected:
- Biomedical Research - The future of medicine and disease prevention.
- Ocean Science & Exploration - The role of deep-sea discoveries in climate and biodiversity protection.
- Technology Policy - Ethical considerations of AI, cybersecurity, and digital privacy.

Pew Stories Narrative Arc: "The Future We Build"
Examining how science and innovation shape human progress.

Theme: The Balance of Nature & Society (Environmental Stewardship)

Pew Initiatives Connected:
- Sustainable Fisheries - Protecting ocean resources while supporting economies.
- Land & Wildlife Conservation - Preserving biodiversity through policy and sustainable land use.
- Plastic Pollution Reduction - Addressing waste and environmental degradation.

Pew Stories Narrative Arc: "(Dis)Harmony"
Investigating how communities balance growth with environmental preservation.

Theme: The Strength of Communities (Social Bonds & Civic Engagement)

Pew Initiatives Connected:
- Voting Access & Election Integrity - Strengthening democratic participation.
- Urban Planning & Smart Cities - Creating livable, sustainable cities.
- Community Health Initiatives - Local efforts improving well-being and equity.

Pew Stories Narrative Arc: "United We Stand"
How communities work together to shape their collective future.

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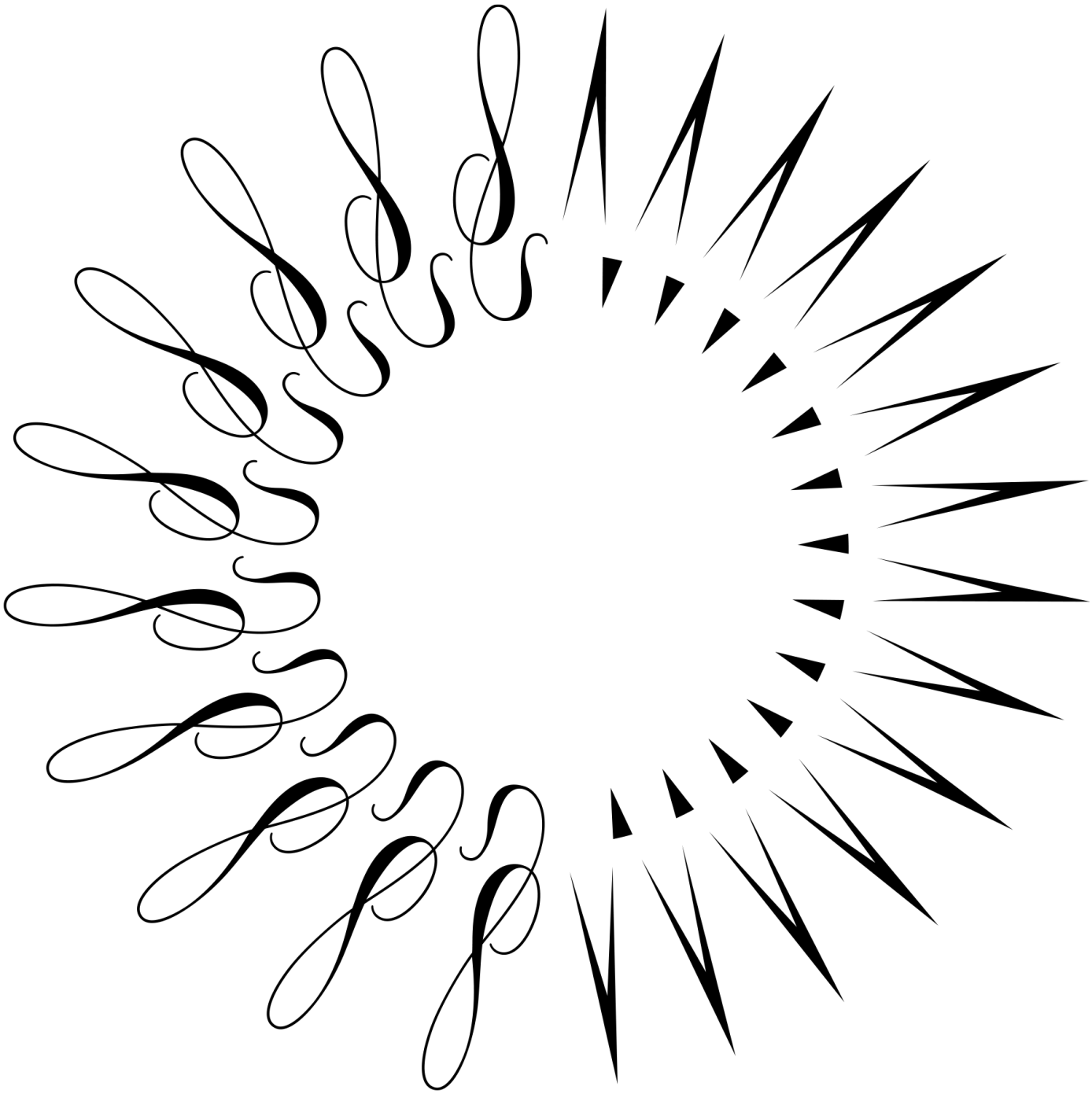


How Pew Stories Becomes a Reality

Shifting to a proactive, hybrid-newsroom model that integrates cross-team collaboration, serialized storytelling, and data-driven engagement for greater impact.

Implementation: How Pew Stories Becomes a Reality

For Pew Stories to succeed, we must fully embed it into a “One Pew” production ecosystem, breaking away from a reactive model and shifting to an always-on content machine. This requires a mindset that prioritizes cross-team collaboration, flexible storytelling formats, and staff empowerment at every level, without compromising our commitment to accuracy, nonpartisanship, or academic rigor. The goal is to empower staff across Pew, including field researchers, policy experts, and program specialists, to contribute meaningfully to the broader content ecosystem while still delivering the data-specific reports and formats that programs need.

Shifting from a Reactive to a Proactive Model

ew has long produced high-quality, research-driven storytelling. However, much of our content development has historically responded to immediate program needs and stakeholder requests rather than following a long-term strategic framework. As a result, our content often operates in isolated moments, which limits sustained engagement and leads to narrative fragmentation and production bottlenecks.

By shifting to a proactive model, we can plan content around key themes, evolving policy discussions, and audience engagement trends. This approach allows us to anticipate audience needs rather than react to external events, ensuring that our storytelling is cohesive and strategically aligned. Pew Stories will carry arcs forward over time, keeping research relevant, actionable, and visible across multiple platforms. Reports, videos, social media posts, and podcasts will no longer exist in isolation—each will contribute to a larger, integrated narrative that reinforces our mission and maximizes impact.

Building an Always-On Storytelling Model

Pew Stories narratives will not operate on a fixed timeline with a clear start and end. Instead, we will develop long-term, concurrent storytelling arcs that evolve in tandem with research findings, policy developments, and audience engagement. This always-on approach allows us to adapt quickly to new information and shifting priorities while maintaining consistency in how we tell our stories.

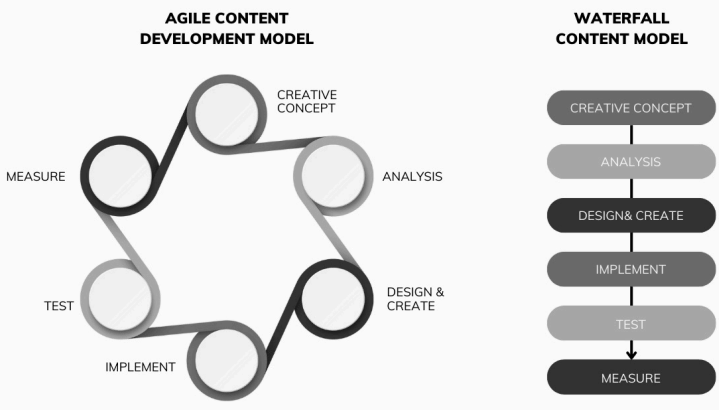
The proactive model integrates editorial planning, digital innovation, and cross-functional collaboration into a single content ecosystem. Editorial, creative, and digital strategy teams will work in lockstep with program communicators to keep our storytelling connected to real-time policy conversations. This shift builds naturally on Pew’s legacy of research integrity while expanding our ability to reach new audiences in a rapidly changing media environment.

Cross-Team Collaboration & Editorial Integration

Content developed within Pew Stories must align with the organization’s broader mission, ensuring that research is not only engaging but also strategically aligned with Pew’s long-term goals and values. Many members of our editorial and embedded communications teams are veteran storytellers with deep experience crafting compelling narratives. By tapping their expertise to guide this hybrid approach, we can ensure that stories remain nonpartisan, rigorous, and cohesive, while still allowing room for creative flexibility and innovation.

"Agile content strategy ensures you're creating and delivering the right content at the right time, rather than spending months planning something that might be outdated by the time it launches."

- Kristina Halvorson
Founder of Brain Traffic and
Author of Content Strategy for the Web



This model will require deeper collaboration across all of External Affairs. Regular cross-team strategy sessions will align storytelling efforts between Programs, Partnerships, and Government Relations. These conversations will bring valuable audience insights into the planning process, helping us tailor content effectively for policymakers, funders, and public audiences.

To surface new story ideas, a structured but open submission process will allow field researchers, policy experts, and program specialists to contribute. These insights can feed into a shared content pipeline that supports long-term arcs and multi-platform distribution.

A central editorial calendar will be essential to this system. This cross-External Affairs tool will track and coordinate production schedules, align deliverables, and ensure visibility into what's happening across teams. It will allow us to plan around key research releases, amplify institutional messages, and ensure content is distributed effectively. A well-maintained calendar also gives us the agility to shift priorities in response to news moments or strategic opportunities without disrupting workflows.

Cross-Team Storytelling Pods: A Collaborative Approach

To break down silos and foster true collaboration, we will create dotted-line storytelling pods that bring together program experts, writers, video producers, designers, and digital strategists. These pods will co-develop stories from the ground up, ensuring that content is not created in isolated handoffs, but rather through iterative, multidisciplinary planning.

These are not permanent team restructures. The overall reporting structure remains intact. Instead, pods will function as virtual, collaborative teams that form around major content initiatives, thematic series, or priority research areas. By embedding subject-matter experts into the creative process, we ensure that content is not only accurate and policy-relevant but also audience-centered and platform-ready.

Editorial and embedded communicators will help refine messaging and develop serialized narrative arcs. Multimedia, creative, and editorial team members will collaborate to build visually compelling, cross-platform story packages. Digital strategists will shape audience engagement strategies and support distribution across appropriate channels.

For example, a research report could be accompanied by:

- An interactive data visualization
- A short-form explainer video
- A podcast episode featuring expert commentary
- A series of social graphics or stat cards
- A refreshed narrative page or modular layout on Pew.org

Each of these pieces can live within its own format track or channel, while contributing to a broader, unified storytelling arc.

The pod structure will be closely integrated with the editorial calendar, allowing for proactive planning and efficient coordination. This visibility ensures that efforts stay aligned with Pew's mission while maintaining the flexibility to adapt when policy shifts, new data becomes available, or audience behavior changes.

> "Cross-functional content teams allow for rapid iteration and deeper collaboration, breaking down silos between writers, editors, designers, and strategists. This leads to stronger storytelling and a more responsive approach to audience needs."
>
> - Amy O'Leary
> Former Editorial Director at Upworthy & NYT Journalist

Because pods are designed for agility, they can pivot as needed—making real-time decisions and delivering more timely, cohesive, and strategic storytelling. By embedding cross-functional collaboration into every stage of content development, we can better serve both program needs and audience expectations.

How Pods Prioritize Content

With multiple storytelling arcs developing in parallel, a structured prioritization process is essential to ensure that the most strategic, high-impact content moves forward efficiently.

Each pod will be led by an editorial lead who collaborates closely with program experts, digital strategists, and multimedia team members to assess content opportunities and allocate resources accordingly. A central editorial calendar will guide this process, helping teams identify the most effective publication moments based on policy developments, major research milestones, and external events.

Prioritization decisions will be grounded in data. Audience analytics and engagement trends will inform which stories should move forward and when. By combining structured planning with flexibility, pods can adapt to real-time developments while maintaining focus on long-term goals. This model helps prevent duplication across teams, sharpens our ability to respond to legislative or cultural shifts, and ensures that our most important content receives the visibility and attention it deserves.

> In agile-speak, POD stands for "product-oriented delivery". An Agile POD is a highly cross-functional, tight-knit group of self-governing professionals. You can have many small pods working simultaneously within a larger project; each tightly focused on a specific task
>
> - Dreamix.

When applied consistently, this process will strengthen coordination, reduce content bottlenecks, and help us sequence storytelling in a way that reinforces our mission, meets audience needs, and protects Pew's voice and reputation.

Multi-Platform Storytelling

Pew Stories is designed for a multi-platform distribution strategy that ensures research is not only published, but actively engaged with across formats and audiences. Rather than treating each channel as a silo, this model connects content types in ways that deepen engagement, encourage discovery, and reinforce key narratives.

For example, a podcast episode might be supported by a written feature, while short-form video introduces findings from a longer report. Interactive infographics and stat-based visuals can enhance key takeaways on social media. Together, these formats create multiple entry points, allowing audiences to explore an issue from different angles and return to it over time.

A refreshed Pew.org will serve as a unified content hub. Its modular structure will highlight serialized storytelling across Pew's core topic areas and house ongoing campaigns, publications like Trust and Trend, and features such as After the Fact. Over time, this system will evolve into a single branded digital publication that updates regularly, supports thematic content, and encourages repeat visits through habitual engagement.

Personalization will further refine the experience. Using tools like DataMart, the site can dynamically serve content based on user behavior. A policymaker tracking fiscal issues might be directed to governance explainers and case studies, while a visitor exploring environmental topics could receive more ocean or conservation content. This ensures our work reaches the right audiences with the most relevant stories.

Always-on storytelling will allow researchers, field staff, and program teams to submit insights in real time using pre-approved templates. Case studies and other narratives will evolve across arcs, tracking progress and impact rather than starting from scratch each time.

Finally, the model will prioritize inclusive, accessible formats by amplifying diverse voices in podcasts and features, using community-informed approaches in social content, and designing interactive and visual stories that work across literacy levels, devices, and accessibility needs. This ensures that our content connects across demographics, engagement styles, and platforms.

Data-Driven Audience Engagement

The proactive storytelling model relies on real-time data to shape content strategy and optimize engagement. Audience segmentation and content personalization will ensure that policymakers, donors, and the public receive stories in formats that best suit their needs. Engagement metrics will help guide editorial themes, sharpen messaging, and refine distribution strategies.

To measure success, Pew will track three key areas: audience engagement, reach and growth, and real-world influence. Metrics such as return visits, content shares, and time spent will show how well content retains audience attention. Growth will be measured by newsletter signups, social media interaction, and expansion into new demographic segments. Impact will be assessed by citations in policy settings, media mentions, and references in legislative or academic environments.

This data will not only help us assess content performance but also guide future decisions. When used effectively, these insights ensure we are creating work that is relevant, resonant, and tied to real-world outcomes.

From Insights to Action: Making Data Operational

Tracking success and experimenting with content only matter if they lead to real improvements in how we plan and deliver stories. Pew Stories will integrate audience insights, performance data, and prototyping results directly into the content development process, ensuring that our storytelling evolves based on what works.

Pew will also adapt its content strategy to stay discoverable in an AI-driven media environment. As generative search tools reshape how audiences find information, we will implement structured data, metadata standards, and AI-friendly tagging to help surface our research across new digital platforms. These optimization strategies will be embedded into the production workflow and evolve as search behaviors continue to shift.

To make insights actionable, regular performance reviews will be built into editorial cycles. Instead of relying solely on static monthly reports, teams will use real-time data to refine formats, sharpen messaging, and adjust distribution strategies. This allows for continuous iteration during a storytelling arc, not just after it ends.

The Digital Strategy team will take the lead in developing a robust measurement framework. Before full implementation, a baseline set of metrics will be established to evaluate the success of Pew Stories arcs across teams and platforms. These benchmarks will track not only how content performs, but how it supports broader institutional goals.

Quarterly performance reviews will assess multiple dimensions of impact:

- Audience reach and engagement across themes, formats, and platforms, tracking how serialized content holds attention and deepens return visits.
- Program team satisfaction and effectiveness, ensuring pods are streamlining production while still serving strategic needs.
- Workflow coordination and turnaround times, measuring whether pod structures improve efficiency without sacrificing quality.

Pods will have access to these insights throughout the production cycle. This allows teams to pivot early when a format underperforms or double down when a specific tactic is working. Over time, data will become an essential feedback loop, shaping how we tell stories, who we reach, and how we adapt to audience behavior in real time.

By embedding performance tracking directly into the content production system, we will build a living storytelling model that is informed by data, and optimized for long-term impact.

The Special Projects Team: Driving Innovation

The Special Projects team plays a critical role in evolving Pew Stories by leading rapid prototyping, testing new storytelling formats, and exploring emerging platforms. While currently operating as a standalone unit within the communications structure, this small team is designed to be nimble and collaborative, supporting innovation across editorial, digital, and program teams.

Working closely with Digital Strategy, editorial leadership, and program communicators, the team

develops proof-of-concept content, pilots cross-platform formats, and tests new audience engagement tactics. These early-stage efforts allow us to identify promising ideas, reduce risk, and determine what's worth scaling before committing larger production resources.

Projects may include:

- Shortform series tailored to specific platforms or demographics
- Interactive features or modular content templates
- Prototypes for AI-informed production or content tagging
- Pilot podcasts or multimedia experiences that complement program research
- Case studies that evolve over time and span multiple storytelling touchpoints

A lightweight prototyping process provides a structure for submitting and vetting new ideas. With the support of a small innovation fund, teams from across Pew can pitch pilots, collaborate with Special Projects to test formats, and bring ideas into production based on real audience insights.

In the future, we may consider housing this team within Digital Strategy to strengthen alignment with institutional goals around personalization, data-informed storytelling, and cross-platform optimization. Such a shift would deepen integration with platform planning, audience analysis, and tool development, helping the team better serve its role as an innovation engine.

For now, success depends on strong partnerships across teams. Special Projects will continue to rely on program staff, communications partners, and digital leads to identify needs, propose pilots, and share lessons learned. The team's role is not to own storytelling innovation in isolation, but to create space for creative experimentation that supports Pew's long-term impact and mission.

Cross-Pod Collaboration: Strengthening Alignment Across Storytelling Teams

As the pod system takes hold, collaboration across teams will be critical to ensuring our storytelling remains strategic, consistent, and connected. While each pod will focus on a specific content initiative, regular cross-pod coordination will help prevent duplication, share lessons learned, and strengthen alignment across formats and platforms.

We will establish recurring coordination meetings led by senior editorial, digital, and creative leaders. These meetings will provide space for teams to assess content performance, share examples of what's working, and flag opportunities for better integration across channels. As more serialized arcs unfold in parallel, this cross-pod visibility will ensure that stories reinforce each other, build on shared themes, and avoid unnecessary overlap.

In addition to real-time coordination, we will introduce quarterly storytelling retrospectives. These sessions will allow teams to reflect on how specific content arcs performed, what engagement strategies proved most effective, and where processes could improve. Retrospectives will also be a chance to refine formats and campaign structures before launching the next phase of storytelling.

By treating this collaboration as an ongoing practice rather than an afterthought, we can ensure that the pod model evolves into a system that not only supports content creation, but continuously improves it. This process will build stronger connections between program teams, communications staff, and content producers, helping us grow as a single, networked storytelling organization.over time.

To achieve this regular coordination meetings and work shares will be established led by senior leaders in each department. The leadership team will assess content performance, share best practices, and identify opportunities for greater alignment between serialized storytelling themes. Quarterly storytelling retrospectives will be introduced to assess content performance and refine storytelling approaches based on audience engagement data.

Buy-In: Communicating the Evolution of Pew's Storytelling Model

Successfully implementing this shift will require clear communication, ongoing collaboration, and support at all levels. To bring the new model to life, we will need to articulate how it builds on existing strengths rather than replacing what already works.

Internally, a structured communications plan will help staff across Pew understand why this transition matters and how it will improve content strategy, workflow efficiency, and storytelling impact. An internal explainer series will outline the goals of the new model, the role of each team, and how the pod structure will function in practice. This will be supported by a set of process guides and submission tools that help program teams engage with the new system easily and consistently.

In addition to written materials, we will host small-group briefings, Q&A sessions, and town halls to offer opportunities for dialogue, transparency, and feedback. These touchpoints will help ensure that all teams feel informed, heard, and supported throughout the transition. By reinforcing that this is an evolution of our existing approach, rather than a complete reinvention, we can create space for innovation while honoring the work already in place.

Externally, we will develop messaging to explain how Pew Stories enhances the organization's ability to inform decision-makers, engage broader audiences, and extend the reach of research through more accessible and human-centered formats. The public narrative will emphasize Pew's commitment to trusted, nonpartisan research and the importance of ensuring that insights are not only published, but remembered and acted upon.

By investing in communication and alignment at every level, we can make this transition a shared effort. This will empower staff, strengthen relationships, and reinforce Pew's role as a source of credible information and thoughtful storytelling.

Bringing One Pew to Life

This shift does not seek to replace what already works. Instead, it builds on Pew's strongest storytelling traditions to create a more integrated, responsive, and impactful content strategy. By emphasizing serialized, multi-platform storytelling, we can expand the reach of our research and ensure key findings are delivered to the right audiences in the right format at the right time.

Through this approach, we will improve audience retention by keeping our work top of mind over time and take policymakers, funders, and the public along with us as the impact of our research unfolds. The proposed strategy is designed to increase relevance, accessibility, and influence—ensuring that Pew's insights remain credible, compelling, and useful in a crowded information landscape.

By embracing a proactive content model, we will foster a culture of collaboration where teams work across disciplines to create cohesive, high-impact narratives. Integrating real-time analytics into our editorial planning will allow us to continuously refine our approach based on audience behavior and feedback.

This is how we bring One Pew to life. It is how we will inform, engage, and influence decision-makers more effectively, while creating a storytelling model that grows stronger with every story we tell.

Team Roles and Responsibilities in the Pod System

This section outlines a broad-stroke view of how responsibilities could be shared across teams within the pod system. It is not a detailed org chart or a comprehensive list of every responsibility currently in place. Instead, it serves as a collaborative framework that highlights how our teams might work together more strategically in a serialized storytelling model. As we move forward, roles will continue to evolve based on skillsets, resourcing, and lessons learned. Many individuals have overlapping capabilities, and we aim to leverage that range of talent wherever possible.

Multimedia (Video, Animation, Motion Graphics)

The multimedia team currently produces standalone videos and motion graphics based on program requests. Much of this work is reactive, with limited involvement in storytelling strategy beyond execution.

Within the pod system, multimedia specialists will be embedded in planning and development from the start. They will collaborate with editorial, program communications, and digital strategy to co-create serialized, cross-platform content. Rather than one-off videos, they will produce ongoing story arcs, such as explainers, interviews, animations, and social-first clips. Their early involvement will help integrate visual storytelling into our content strategy more intentionally and consistently.

Creative (Graphic Design & Visual Content)

The creative team currently develops infographics, illustrations, and charts—typically in response to specific design requests. Their work is often siloed from broader storytelling planning.

In the pod model, creative specialists will help shape storytelling from the beginning, working closely with editorial, multimedia, and program teams to develop unified visual approaches for episodic content. Their work will extend beyond static graphics to include motion and interactive elements that reflect a more strategic and connected visual identity across platforms.

Photo (Photography & Visual Documentation)

The photo team manages Pew's image database, oversees licensing, and provides photography services for reports, digital content, and publications. Much of this work is documentation-based rather than narrative-driven.

Under the pod model, the photo team will shift toward proactive, story-centered photography. They will work with program communicators, multimedia, and editorial to capture compelling visuals aligned with ongoing storytelling arcs. Photojournalistic approaches, including character-driven essays and impact-focused shoots, will become a larger part of their role while maintaining oversight of licensing, editing, and database management.

Project Management (Workflow & Training Oversight)

Project managers currently oversee production timelines across more than 40 programs, helping ensure content is delivered on time and aligned with institutional standards.

As part of the pod system, project managers will serve as operational leads, helping coordinate workflows across teams. They will support long-term planning for serialized storytelling and work closely with team leads to anticipate production needs. Project managers will also lead training and upskilling efforts by identifying team needs and developing tailored support programs in collaboration with editorial and digital staff.

Digital Strategy (Audience Research & Growth)

The digital strategy team currently oversees platform strategy, social media execution, and audience engagement. Much of this work is reactive or event-driven, with limited integration into early-stage content planning.

In the new model, digital strategists will serve as audience leads embedded within pods. They will bring insights from analytics and user behavior into content planning, helping shape stories with greater precision and purpose. Their responsibilities will include real-time content optimization, personalized storytelling strategies, and collaboration on platform

storytelling strategies, and collaboration on platform selection and launch timing. They will also partner closely with Special Projects to test emerging platforms and new engagement techniques.

Special Projects (Innovation, Prototyping, and Podcast Production)

The Special Projects team currently pilots new formats and produces the After the Fact podcast. It functions independently, with a focus on experimental storytelling and platform testing.

Moving forward, Special Projects will work more closely with pods and core teams, serving as an innovation lab for testing new storytelling formats, piloting audience engagement models, and developing AI-supported workflows. Podcast production will remain part of the team's core focus, but with a deeper integration into serialized content arcs. The team will also help manage prototyping processes that allow teams across Pew to test ideas in a low-risk environment before scaling them.

With limited staffing, this team's success will depend on strong partnerships across editorial, multimedia, digital, and program teams. Their work is a shared resource that supports innovation across the entire storytelling ecosystem.

Editorial (Content Strategy & Story Development, Trust & Trend Magazines)

Editorial staff currently spend significant time editing research reports, adapting materials for digital audiences, and producing the Trust and Trend magazines. Their capacity to guide proactive storytelling is often limited by the demands of reactive production.

Under the pod model, editorial leads will play a central role in shaping storytelling strategy. They will guide episodic planning, support serialized content development, and ensure that narratives are optimized for platform, audience, and tone. Editors will partner closely with multimedia, creative, and digital teams to develop cross-format packages that serve both program and audience needs. The team will also continue leading content for Trust and Trend, with a growing emphasis on digital-first storytelling and integration into a unified online publication.

Government Relations & Partnerships (Policy Engagement & Content Strategy Support)

Government Relations and Partnerships teams currently have limited involvement in shaping content development. In the pod model, they will serve as strategic advisors, helping ensure that storytelling supports policy impact, funder engagement, and reputational goals.

They will work with editorial and digital teams to ensure that content is framed for policy relevance and external influence, while remaining consistent with Pew's commitment to objectivity and nonpartisanship. Their insights into how content is used in policymaking and philanthropy will help guide prioritization, timing, and message framing.

Embedded Communicators' Expanded Role

Embedded communicators have long been essential in ensuring that Pew's research is translated effectively for external audiences. Their expertise in subject matter, program priorities, and audience engagement has made them invaluable liaisons between research teams and content creators.

In the new pod system, their role will evolve to become more active in shaping storytelling strategy and production. Wherever possible, their full range of skills, writing, editing, video production, audio production, strategy development, and audience engagement, should be leveraged to enhance Pew's content.

They will become integrated storytelling partners, working directly within pods to surface compelling narratives, help shape serialized story arcs, and help determine the best formats and platforms for each initiative. Their insights into program goals and policy environments will help ensure stories are factually accurate, strategically aligned, and positioned to reach key audiences.

Embed Key Responsibilities

Embedded communicators will actively mine for stories within their assigned programs by continuously tracking research developments and identifying opportunities for storytelling. They will shape content strategy in collaboration with pod members, aligning program needs with broader thematic priorities.

Their individual skill sets—whether in writing, editing, video or audio production, or digital strategy—will be put to direct use wherever possible. Rather than handing off content requests, they will help develop and produce them alongside cross-functional teams.

They will also serve as subject matter advisors, helping refine messages and ensure clarity, and will support accuracy through fact-checking and alignment with program priorities.

Collaboration Points

Embedded communicators will work within pods to connect program-specific goals with Pew's overarching content strategy. They will partner with editorial teams to refine story structure and messaging, collaborate with digital strategists to shape audience engagement tactics, and support multimedia and creative teams in developing visual and audio assets.

They will also coordinate with Government Relations to ensure that program research is framed appropriately for policy audiences, maintaining the balance between strategic relevance and nonpartisan integrity.

By fully integrating embedded communicators into the content development process, and encouraging the use of their complete skill sets, the pod model will become more agile, efficient, and impactful. Their leadership within pods will help ensure that program needs are met while elevating the storytelling model to serve broader institutional goals.

Team	Role in Pod
Multimedia	• Embedded in pods to create serialized, multi-platform content. • Works in sync with editorial and digital teams. • Moves from one-off video projects to recurring content arcs.
Creative	• Integrated into storytelling pods to develop episodic visual assets. • Works alongside editorial, digital, and multimedia teams. • Expands into interactive storytelling.
Photo	• Captures proactive, multi-platform visual narratives. • Works closely with multimedia and editorial teams. • Uses photojournalistic storytelling to enhance serialized content.
Project Management	• Becomes the operational backbone of pods, ensuring workflow coordination and training development. • Expands into resource management and strategic planning.
Digital Strategy	• Owns audience research and engagement strategy for all pods. • Tracks audience insights in real time to optimize content performance. • Ensures data-driven storytelling.
Special Projects	• Serves as Pew's content innovation hub. • Tests AI-driven storytelling tools and new content formats. • Leads podcast production with a focus on serialized storytelling.
Editorial	• Leads storytelling efforts in pods, ensuring content is engaging and serialized. • Moves into strategic content development. • Expands original writing capacity for Trust and Trend.
Government Relations and Partnerships	• Ensures serialized storytelling aligns with policy influence. • Advises pods on policy and advocacy integration. • Tracks external influence of Pew content.
Embedded Program Communicators	• Serve as story architects within their programs, identifying and shaping compelling research narratives. • Work within pods to align program content with Pew Stories themes and determine the most effective formats and platforms for distribution. • Leverage their individual skills—whether in writing, editing, video production, audio production, or audience strategy—to contribute to storytelling where applicable. • Provide audience insights based on their deep knowledge of how policymakers, funders, and the public engage with Pew's research. • Continue to ensure research clarity and integrity while becoming more involved in shaping content strategy.

Next Steps: A Collaborative Approach to Pew's Content Evolution

This proposal is a starting point, a strategic framework designed to spark discussion, explore new possibilities, and build on the strengths of Pew's existing content model. It is not a rigid blueprint. Instead, it offers a foundation for collaborative planning as we shape the next phase of our storytelling system together.

The intent is to improve efficiency, strengthen cross-team collaboration, and enhance the reach and resonance of our work. But the precise structure of that system will be refined over time through active dialogue, testing, and learning. Some ideas in this proposal will move forward as outlined. Others may evolve, shift direction, or be replaced entirely based on team input and organizational needs.

The shift to a pod-based storytelling model is one potential approach, not a mandate. The next step is to explore it together, working across Editorial, Digital Strategy, Multimedia, Project Management, Special Projects, Government Relations, Embedded Communicators, and Program teams. This proposal offers a shared vision that can be shaped and improved by the people who will bring it to life.

In doing so, we remain grounded in Pew's core values. We will prioritize equity by intentionally integrating diverse perspectives and underrepresented voices into our storytelling. We will act with humility, recognizing that our strongest work comes from collaboration and shared expertise. Our focus on impact will guide us to keep research in circulation, reaching the right audiences in the right moments. We will champion inclusion by ensuring that our content reflects the lived experiences and challenges of the communities we serve. Through innovation, we will build an agile, proactive production model that keeps our work discoverable and timely. We will uphold integrity in everything we produce, ensuring that our stories meet the highest standards of accuracy and transparency. And above all, we will maintain our commitment to non-partisanship, producing fact-based content that informs public discourse across the political spectrum.

Pew's content model has always been grounded in collaboration, adaptability, and a deep commitment to high-quality, research-driven storytelling. That foundation remains strong. As we chart a course forward, our greatest strength will continue to be the expertise and creativity of our teams working together to build something new.

Supporting Pew's Core Values

Equity: Integrate diverse perspectives and underrepresented voices into Pew Stories, ensuring inclusive and accessible research.

Humility: Foster collaboration across teams, recognizing that the best storytelling comes from collective expertise.

Impact: Deploy serialized, multi-platform storytelling to keep Pew's research in circulation, driving real-world influence.

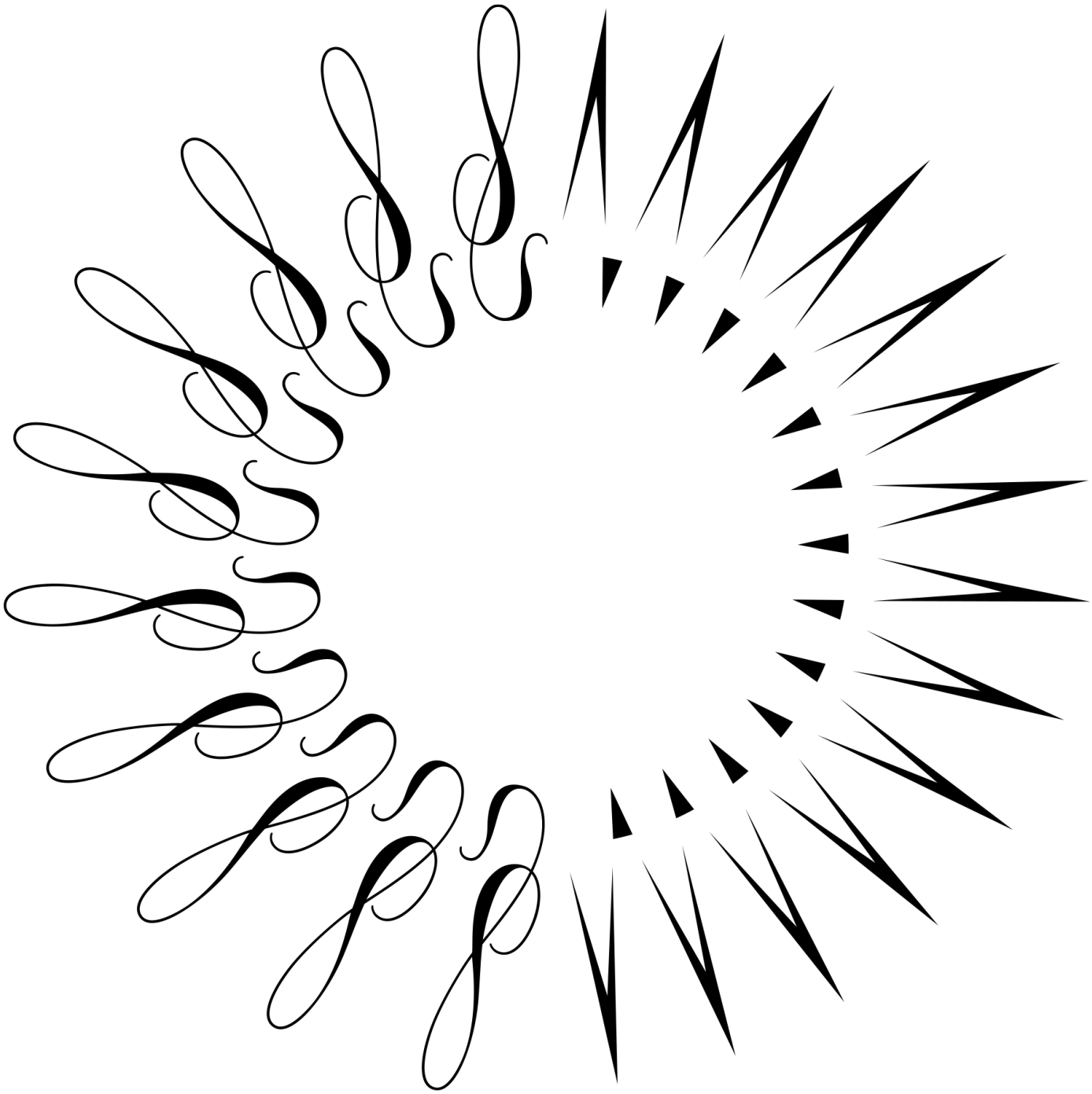
Inclusion: Prioritize diverse voices in our storytelling, ensuring our content reflects the experiences, challenges, and perspectives of the communities we serve.

Innovation: Adopt a proactive production model and agile workflow to keep Pew's research discoverable and impactful.

Integrity: Uphold the highest standards of accuracy and transparency in our storytelling.

Non-Partisanship: We remain committed to fact-based, objective storytelling that informs rather than persuades, ensuring that our content serves as a trusted resource across the political spectrum.

① Pew



Detailed View of Rollout Strategy

Detailed 3.5-Year Rollout Plan for Proposed Digital Content Strategy

This rollout plan accounts for Pew's culture and the need for gradual implementation, piloting, leadership buy-in, training, staffing adjustments, and proof of concept.

Phase 1: Pilot and Early Adoption (Months 1-12)

- **Goals**
  - Pilot Pew Stories using serialized, cross-platform content arcs developed by cross-functional pods
  - Establish a centralized editorial calendar that supports proactive planning and shared visibility
  - Secure leadership buy-in across departments and build trust in the new storytelling model
  - Align staffing and workload distribution with current constraints while preparing for future needs
  - Launch a clear internal communications and change management plan to support culture shift
  - Set up early performance tracking and feedback loops for learning and refinement

- **Key Actions**
  - Pilot Pew Stories (First Story Arc)
    - Identify 3–5 existing projects or research campaigns that align with cross-TOP themes or the website's topic-based taxonomy
    - Assign pods with editorial, digital, multimedia, and creative participation to co-develop serialized storytelling arcs
    - Produce multi-format packages for each arc, including text stories, video, social graphics, and podcast or audio elements
    - Track platform-level engagement to assess the effectiveness of different formats and combinations
    - Use pilot arcs to test collaboration with embedded communicators and assess pod-level coordination

  - Launch the Centralized Editorial Calendar
    - Finalize a unified editorial calendar shared across digital, editorial, multimedia, and creative teams
    - Use existing platforms such as Workfront, Airtable, or SharePoint to provide real-time visibility into production schedules
    - Require program teams to log major content requests at least three to six months in advance when possible
    - Integrate content planning and digital strategy earlier in the intake process to ensure digital-first alignment

  - Restructure Editorial Workflows (Initial Changes)
    - Launch an Editorial Triage system to prioritize incoming content and assign pod-level leads
    - Pilot a beat-style model that assigns editors to specific pods or content areas for sustained engagement
    - Begin testing AI-powered tools for first-pass editing, jargon cleanup, and formatting aligned to the Content Playbook

  - Leadership Buy-in and Change Management
    - Share monthly briefings with department heads tracking progress of pilot arcs and cross-functional pods
    - Deliver quarterly reports to senior leadership with audience data, collaboration highlights, and early success stories
    - Provide talking points and internal messaging templates to help leadership explain the value of this shift

  - Internal Communications Strategy
    - Launch monthly internal updates that highlight success stories, creative experimentation, and process improvements
    - Share "Pew Stories in Action" case studies to showcase how serialized storytelling is evolving across teams
    - Hold listening sessions in Months 3 and 9 to gather feedback, address concerns, and surface team-driven ideas

- Resistance and Crisis Management
  - Offer one-on-one support and coaching for program teams unfamiliar with serialized storytelling
  - Host monthly "Open Office" hours with pod leads or content strategists to answer questions and resolve friction points
  - Use early pilot data and creative outputs to demonstrate the value of the new model and shift team mindset

- Develop Training Framework
  - Launch Training the Trainers program for program communication liaisons
  - Train staff on serialized storytelling approaches and cross-platform adaptation
  - Standardize pre-submission reviews for cleaner first drafts and fewer revision cycles

- Introduce Adaptive Feedback Loop for Ongoing Refinement
  - Conduct internal staff surveys every six months to assess workflow improvements
  - Establish a quarterly working group to adjust storytelling approaches based on engagement data
  - Track emerging audience trends and refine Pew Stories strategy accordingly

Milestone Checkpoints
- Month 3: Complete planning and production of at least one serialized story arc
- Month 6: Evaluate pilot performance and team feedback; refine pod structures and editorial workflow
- Month 9: Expand to a second pilot arc; conduct mid-year retrospective and internal presentation
- Month 12: Present full pilot findings to leadership; recommend adjustments for Phase 2 and beyond

Phase 2: Scaling Serialized Storytelling and Workflow Optimization (Months 13-24)

- **Goals**
  - Expand Pew Stories arcs and pods to include more programs and topic areas
  - Optimize editorial and production workflows for serialized, cross-platform content
  - Strengthen coordination across Editorial, Digital Strategy, Multimedia, and Creative teams
  - Build external visibility and credibility around Pew's storytelling evolution
  - Continue data-driven performance measurement and refine formats accordingly
  - Adjust staffing and team structures as needed to support sustained execution

- **Key Actions**
  - Expand Pew Stories and Serialized Content
    - Identify 5–7 new long-term story arcs aligned with institutional priorities, policy windows, or ongoing research areas
    - Build pod capacity by introducing rotating contributors and subject matter specialists from embedded commnicators and program staff
    - Integrate Government Relations and Partnerships into arc planning where relevant, using their audience expertise to shape policy-focused narratives
    - Continue developing packages with layered formats across platforms (Pew.org, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, newsletters, podcasts, etc.)
    - Ensure that arcs are refreshed with new episodes regularly, using creative templates and content guidelines from Phase 1

- Optimize Editorial and Production Workflows
  - Finalize and codify the Editorial Beat system, assigning editors to topics, platforms, or recurring arcs to balance workloads
  - Expand real-time workload visibility through shared editorial dashboards or calendars
  - Streamline revision processes to reduce production delays, aiming for a maximum of two internal review cycles
  - Revisit use of AI-supported tools for consistency, personalization, metadata, and structure alignment across serialized content

- Integrate Editorial into Digital and Creative Strategy
  - Assign "story architects" from the editorial team to partner with digital strategists and creative leads during early planning
  - Build clearer pre-production workflows that align storytelling goals with audience segmentation, format strategy, and publishing cadence
  - Introduce collaborative pre-mortems or creative sprints to address production challenges and unify cross-team expectations before launch

- Strengthen External Visibility and Messaging
  - Publish quarterly leadership updates that spotlight serialized storytelling successes, new formats, and audience insights
- Develop public-facing messaging that introduces Pew Stories as part of a broader evolution in research storytelling
- Coordinate with Public Affairs and Government Relations to shape a public-facing media strategy around serialized storytelling and its policy relevance
- Begin presenting this approach at industry events, journalism and research conferences, and through op-eds or digital showcases

Milestone Checkpoints
- Month 15: Launch at least three concurrent Pew Stories arcs representing different research areas
- Month 18: Review team workloads and engagement metrics; make necessary workflow adjustments
- Month 21: Expand pod training or support systems based on feedback from embedded communicators and field teams
- Month 24: Deliver a comprehensive midpoint report to leadership on storytelling strategy impact and operational efficiency

Phase 3: Full Rollout and Institutional Integration (Months 25-36)

- **Goals**
  - Institutionalize serialized storytelling as the core approach to content development at Pew
  - Fully implement the pod-based, hybrid newsroom model across all content-producing teams
  - Align digital, editorial, multimedia, and creative workflows with program and organizational priorities
  - Reinforce strategic content planning and audience-centered storytelling at scale
  - Ensure long-term visibility, discoverability, and engagement for Pew's research and insights

- **Key Actions**
  - Make Pew Stories the Standard Content Approach
    - Formalize Pew Stories as the default method for major research storytelling across the organization
    - Ensure all new content—reports, podcasts, videos, social, and editorial—is developed within a serialized, multi-format framework
    - Launch a dedicated Pew Stories section on Pew.org, featuring serialized arcs and rotating thematic features
    - Use the updated modular website design to highlight content by topic, arc, and audience relevance
    -

Activate Evergreen and Retrospective Content Strategy
- Audit past research, visuals, and multimedia to identify opportunities for integration into current arcs or evergreen narratives
- Develop a rolling refresh system to update and repackage previously published content within new storytelling structures
- Create a searchable internal inventory of Pew Stories episodes, visuals, and reusable components that can support future arcs
- Reinforce Organizational Buy-in and Leadership Support
- Hold leadership town halls that showcase impact metrics, audience success stories, and storytelling innovations
- Equip managers across External Affairs with guidance on serialized strategy, platform expectations, and cross-team planning
- Provide training and resources for senior staff to speak confidently about the strategy in external settings and with program partners
- Develop internal awards or recognition systems for serialized storytelling excellence across teams

Milestone Checkpoints
- Month 27: Pew Stories homepage module and taxonomy integration launched on Pew.org
- Month 30: Hybrid newsroom model fully adopted by all core content teams
- Month 33: Pew Stories integration completed across digital, editorial, and multimedia pipelines
- Month 36: Evaluate institutional impact, content engagement, and program alignment; recommend long-term adjustments if needed

Phase 4: Full Rollout and Institutional Integration (Months 25-36)

Goals
- Optimize Pew Stories production for evolving audience behaviors, new platforms, and emerging formats
- Strengthen long-term performance tracking and content refinement systems
- Expand use of AI and automation to support scale, without compromising editorial integrity
- Institutionalize processes that ensure the model remains adaptable, mission-aligned, and future-ready

Key Actions

Sustain Content Agility and Prevent Fatigue
- Monitor story arc longevity, engagement patterns, and audience drop-off points to refine arc duration and cadence
- Use real-time analytics to adjust pacing, platform delivery, and creative packaging based on how audiences respond
- Introduce mid-arc checkpoints to evaluate whether content should be extended, paused, or concluded
- Ensure serialized storytelling maintains variety in tone, voice, and visual identity to avoid sameness across arcs

Institutionalize the Proactive Model
- Finalize long-term staffing, resource-sharing, and ownership structures for the pod model
- Maintain integrated calendars and workflows across editorial, creative, multimedia, and digital strategy teams
- Offer quarterly training refreshers to keep teams up to date on best practices for cross-platform planning, serialized structure, and emerging formats
- Embed the storytelling strategy into onboarding materials for new hires across External Affairs

Advance AI and Automation Integration
- Use AI tools for structured content tagging, personalization, search optimization, and performance diagnostics
- Pilot AI-assisted templating for recurring storytelling formats such as quick-turn data stories or FAQs
- Expand use of metadata and structured publishing tools to future-proof content for evolving search and AI discovery models
- Continue testing AI content generation in controlled environments with strong human oversight