

LINA

Introduction to
PRODUCT THINKING

10 November 2022



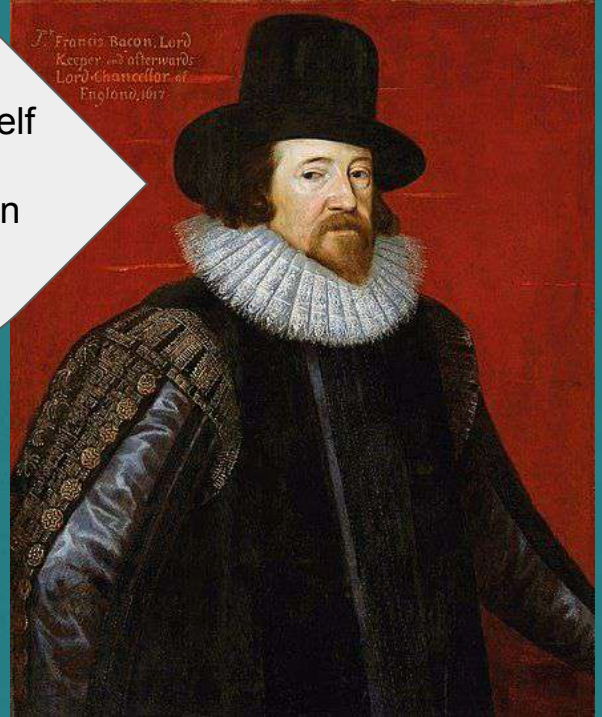
About me :-)

- Journalist 1992-2012
 - 1992-1995 – newspapers
 - BBC 1996-06 - radio
 - ABC 2007-12 – radio, TV, social
- Consultant & trainer since 2013
 - Training journalists & NGOs
 - Clients: BBC, Reuters, WAN-IFRA
 - Digital + Innovation
 - Innovation + Revenue
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 - Open DMs [Twitter](#)



WHAT IS 'PRODUCT THINKING'?

"Knowledge itself
is power"
Francis Bacon



Question Time

What do you like about this?

What don't you like about it?

Is there a situation where you'd buy this?

How much would you pay?

What would make you more likely to buy it?

Why?

Asking WHY captures

- Reasons for behaviours
- Problem pain points - drives behaviour
- Budget
- Opportunities to improve your products



Where does 'product thinking' come from?

Sectors that make, market, and sell products and services:

- Tech - UI/UX - user-interface, user-experience
- Retail
- Marketing
- Advertising

Why?

- These sectors HAVE to make money
- If customers can't use it / don't want it / don't understand it
 - They won't buy it
 - They won't use it
 - They will leave for another brand
 - They will give you bad reviews
 - You will go out of business

Follows a process: Consult / Design / Build / Pilot / Mass-Test / Iterate or Dump

Why?

- Need for agility in disrupted markets
- Building something new costs money
- Every dollar counts so don't build the wrong thing
- "It's easier to use an eraser than a wrecking ball"



So - what is 'product thinking'?

Aims to understand a consumer's PROBLEM and design a product or service that SOLVES that problem

- PROBLEM: I need avocados
- SOLUTION: We sell avocados

Non-prescriptive: Consumer RESEARCH informs product DESIGN

- Behaviour: "I buy avocados because"
- Pain points: "I would buy this if"
- Budget: "I would pay X for this"
- Preference: "I would be more likely to buy this if..."

Products are designed, tested, launched, maintained, discontinued DELIBERATELY

QUESTION:

How would your journalism be different if you did this with new platforms or web verticals:

- Consult / Design / Build / Pilot / Mass-Test / Iterate or Dump



Consumer research uses Human Centred Design

Human Centred Design

- Asking people what they need instead of
- Giving them what you think they want
- Building products people actually want

How it's done

- Consumer research - surveys, focus groups
- Asking WHY a lot to
 - Identify patterns, behaviours, pain points
- Design a pilot
- Test it on target consumers
- Establish 'proof of concept'
- Capture feedback
- Iterate the product - continuous improvement



QUESTION:

- Has your outlet ever run a pilot of a product or platform? How did it go?

Product thinking - the entrepreneur process

Define your business

- What problems do we want to solve? (USP)
- Who do we do this for? (Target Market)
- Why are we doing this (Vision)
- How are we doing this (Strategy)
- What do we want to achieve (Goals)
- How would we measure our success (Metrics)



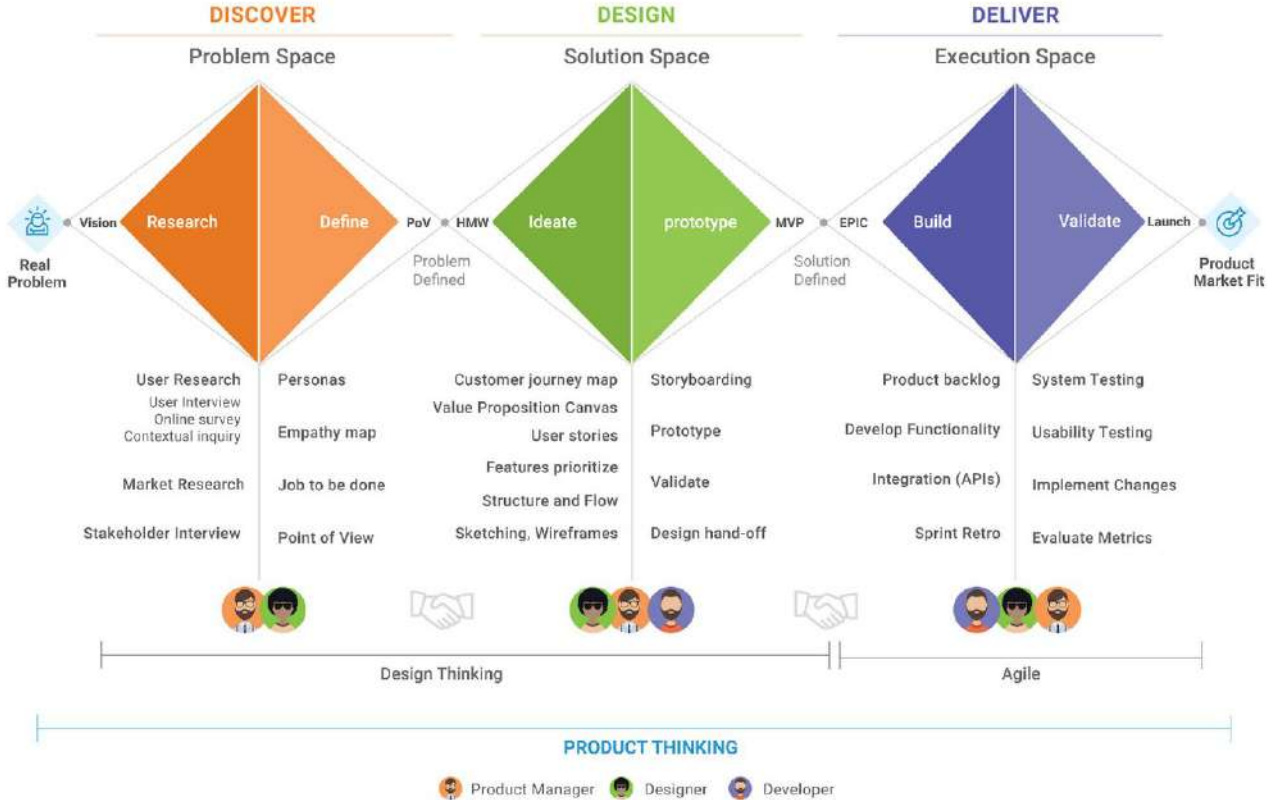
This isn't how we do it in journalism. We're already in a business.

But we might have products that:

- Are prescriptive rather than consumer-driven
- Try to solve a problem that doesn't exist
- Are designed or priced in a way that doesn't suit our target audience
- Miss out on opportunities to make something different / better



Product thinking - the tech / software process



Product thinking - a journalism process

Empathise

- Research your consumers' needs
 - What problems do they have?
 - What products might address those problems?
 - Why? Behaviours / Patterns / Pain Points

Define

- State your users' needs and problems

Ideate

- Challenge assumptions, develop ideas for products
- Define what 'good' looks like
- Set benchmarks & choose metrics to monitor progress

Prototype

- Start to create products that meet consumer needs

Test

- Try your solutions out

Repeat



Where does 'thinking' fit in product thinking?

Developing a product MINDSET helps you

- Segment target market
 - Identify differences between consumers
 - Asks what products different consumers need
 - Asks why - patterns, behaviours, pain points
 - Asks if they would pay for it - and what they'd pay
- Reimagines outlet* outputs as products for specific consumers eg
 - Physical newspaper / magazine
 - Podcasts
 - Subscription and membership programs
 - Streaming service
 - Courses, events
 - Merchandise
 - Sponsored products and services
 - Ad products
 - Non-media products e.g. travel deals, wine clubs

An advertisement for an Index Trading Rally Webinar. The background is a city skyline at night. The text reads: **INDEX TRADING RALLY**
LEARN INDEX TRADING USING DAILY LEVERAGE CERTIFICATES (DLC)
5 SEP - 30 SEP
PARTICIPATE & WIN UP TO \$5,000 WORTH PRIZES!
WEEK 2: STRAITS TIMES INDEX TRADING WEBINAR
PRESENTED BY:
DAN CHANG
PROFESSIONAL TRADER
VETERAN TRADING REPRESENTATIVE
A circular portrait of Dan Chang is shown. At the bottom, it says **12 SEP MONDAY 12PM** with YouTube and Stream logos.

JOINTLY ORGANISED BY
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THIS ADVERTISEMENT HAS NOT BEEN REVIEWED BY THE MONETARY AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE.
THE DLCs ARE FOR SPECIFIED INVESTMENT PRODUCTS (SP) QUALIFIED INVESTORS ONLY.

Changing how you think about what you do

Once you have a product mindset, you can't help yourself. You'll start asking product questions:

- Why are we doing it like this?
- Who are we doing it for?
- Did we ask them if they wanted it?
- Did we ask them if they want improvements?
- Did we ask them if they wanted something else entirely?
- Did we ask them if they would pay for this?
- Would they like to pay for something else?
- Is there a partner or sponsorship opportunity?
- Does this thing need to be free?
- How could we fund this free thing?
- Could this free thing help us sell other things?
- Did we define 'good', set benchmarks & choose metrics?
- What don't we know?
- How can we find out?



Changing how you think about what you make

Product thinking encourages us to create journalism products for different types of people

IT COULD BE THIS



BUT IT COULD ALSO BE THIS



Changing how you think about who you make it for

Product thinking asks us to find new words for 'audience' because not all our consumers will be readers/viewers/listeners

FROM THIS



TO THIS



Instead of 'audience', think 'consumers'

CONSUMERS is a great umbrella term. Under it sit - and overlap:

Customers (for products) and **Clients** (for services)

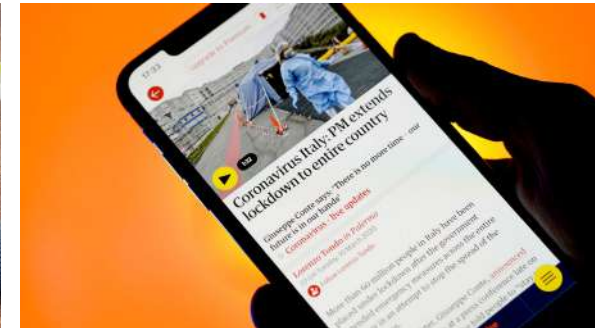
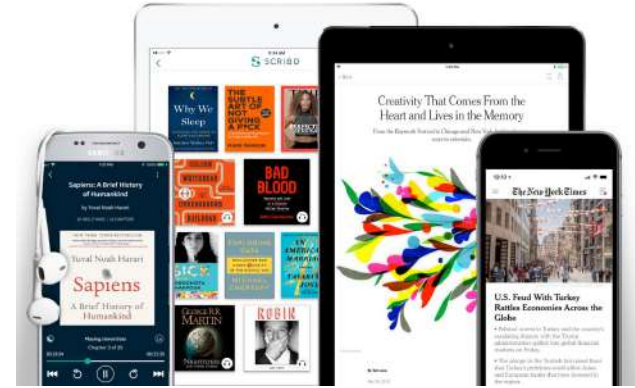
- Subscription products
- Real-life products - books & magazines, merch
- Courses
- Paid-for services - research, expert speakers etc
- Free services - Facebook Groups on weather / public transport

Communities

- Free / front-of-paywall journalism products
- Public interest journalism products
 - Ad funded
 - Donor funded
 - Membership funded
 - Philanthropically funded

NOTE:

- Even a free product is a product



Customers, clients, and communities are diverse!

What outlet* PRODUCTS and SERVICES might someone want if they are:

- 18-25
- Live in a city
- Internet access, smartphone owner
- Female
- How would this change if they were also indigenous?

What about someone who is:

- 70-80
- Lives in the country
- Internet access, laptop owner
- Male
- How would this change if they were also an ESL speaker?



QUESTIONS:

- Why do I say 'outlet', not 'journalism'?
- How much do you know about your Customers / Clients / Community?
- How could you find out?

Consumer research methods

QUANTITATIVE - how many / how much

- Surveys - online / phone / social media

QUALITATIVE - who / what / when / where / how / why

- Surveys
- User interviews / user-testing
- Focus groups
- Field studies - [example](#)
- User testing
- Diary studies

This will help you design measurable benchmarks:

- What would 'good' look like
- What metrics tools you might need
- How often you need to review your progress



Tech Stack - tools to build / market / sell / monitor



What is a tech stack?

A technology stack, or tech stack, is the collection of tools, platforms, apps, and pieces of software that a company uses to build its products, carry out its business operations, and monitor its performance metrics. A tech stack can also include coding languages.

How to choose one

- What is it - see below
- What products / services do I have
- What types of tech tools would support that
- Ask around - what tools do others use
- Check exit processes if you need to switch
- Build / buy
- If you build, you might even [sell it as a product](#)

Choosing a Tech Stack

- [Tech Stack: Definition and 9 examples from the world's top brands](#) (HubSpot, 2022)
- [How to choose your membership tech stack](#) (Splice Beta, 2020)
 - Lots of specific case studies for small publishers / start-ups on [Splice YouTube channel](#) (2020-2022)
- [Digital Media Tech Stacks](#) - what big publishers use (Stackshare open source site, 2022)
- [The ultimate marketing tech stack for 2022](#) (Intercom, 2022)
- [How to choose a tech stack for publishers](#) (Anysoft, 2022)
- [How the tech support today encourages independent journalism](#) (QuinType, 2022)

Case study: Boom Radio

Consumer research found:

"(R)adio is still the most popular medium for the Boomer generation, yet the majority feel that the industry is geared more towards younger people. We see Boom Radio filling that gap"

What is it?

- DAB / Online / App-based radio station
- Launched Feb 2021
- Built for listeners born 1946-1964 - male and female
- High-profile retired presenters 'part of the product'
- Low-cost - Presenters record shows at home
- 443,000 listeners in 2022

Business model:

- Commercial / ad-funded online radio
- New products:
 - Partnership with a dating app for older singles
 - Sponsorship of a travel show & podcast by companies targeting older travellers



Journalism outlets can sell non-journalism products

Case study: Sunday Times UK

- Newspaper products
 - The actual paper
 - App versions
 - Paywalled subscriptions
 - Ads in the paper
 - Ads online
- Book publishing
- Radio platform products
 - Online streaming
 - Ads
 - Podcasts
 - Ads / Sponsorships
- Partnership products
 - Wine Club
 - Book Club

THE  TIMES
BOOKS



Journalism outlets can have non-journalism products

Case study: New York Times

- Newspaper products
 - The actual paper
 - App versions
 - Paywalled subscriptions
 - Gifted subscriptions and articles
 - Ads in the paper / online
- Other products
 - Games and Crosswords
 - Cooking and Recipes
 - Podcasts
 - Ads / Sponsorships



Where can I learn more?

[News Product Alliance](#)

- START HERE
- Global alliance of product thinkers
 - Friendly, supportive, aware that they don't always teach this in j-school!
- Resources, kit, free [Slack](#)
- Tips on hiring for product roles / build / buy
- Tips on building product skills for small outlets

Connect with NPA on Slack

Welcome to our community of support and practice for news product thinkers!

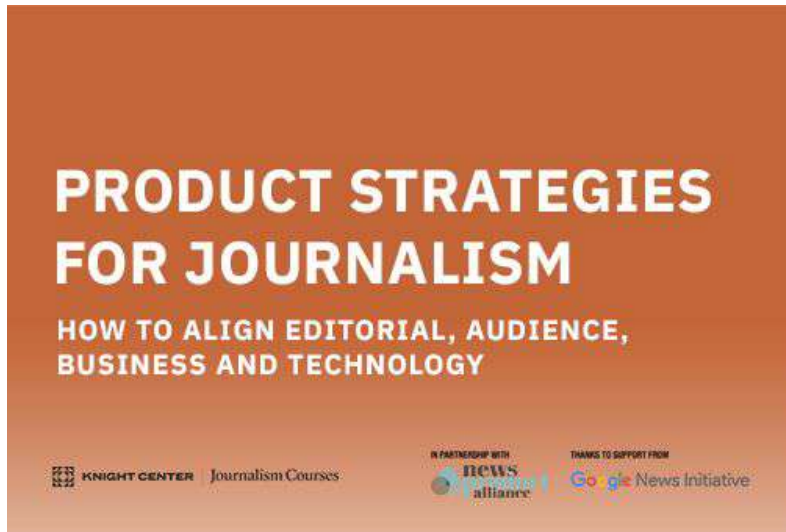
Join us on Slack!



Where can I learn more?

[KnightLab](#)

- Collective of universities, students, practitioners
- Donor-funded resources and occasional MOOCs
- Self-directed [course](#) on 'product strategies'
- Great [blog](#) to get you thinking



Where can I learn more?

[Splice Newsroom](#)

- Singapore-based start-up supporting media innovation
- Terrific YouTube channel - Splice Beta
- Annual conference
- Telegram channel



Where can I learn more?

[Google News Initiative](#)

- Google Tools for businesses
- Business resources
 - Reader and ad revenue
 - Advice for big outlets & start-ups
 - Online courses / training programs

Everyone, everywhere, benefits
from a healthy news industry.

The Google News Initiative works side-by-side with
publishers and journalists to build a more sustainable,
diverse and innovative news ecosystem.

Get started

Get the newsletter

Where can I learn more?

[Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism](#)

- Based at Oxford University UK
- Publishes DNR (with an Australian edition) and Trends and Predictions (Global)
- Regular research into how people consume news on / offline
- Fellowship program



Where can I learn more?

[Project Kookaburra](#)




- Walkley Foundation 6-month program in 2020
- ‘Testing new business models for regional publishers’
- Series of webinars featuring 5 outlets selected for deep-dive innovations
- [Essentials pack](#) to help other publishers innovate



Where can I learn more?

[iAB Australia - Interactive Advertising Bureau](#)

- Peak trade association for online advertising in Australia
- One of nearly 50 Bureaus worldwide
- Research, resources, webinars, conferences, courses
- Great place to learn about advertising including metrics

 <p>microcredential. programmatic advertising and trading (busy-side) and new iab.</p>	 <p>the ad attention measurement landscape iab. september 2022</p>	 <p>online advertising expenditure report financial year and nine quarter 2022 pwc iab.</p>
<p>IAB partners with Deakin University to launch digital advertising microcredential courses</p>	<p>Industry first review finds ad attention metrics valuable but not a silver bullet</p>	<p>Digital advertising expenditure reaches \$13.9bn for FY22 but shows signs of softening growth</p>
<p>Sydney – 11 October 2022: IAB Australia has partnered with Deakin University to deliver a series of co-designed microcredentials...</p>	<p>Sydney – 27 September 2022: Developments in the attention economy are providing marketers with additional insights on their advertising...</p>	<p>Tuesday 6th September 2022: The local Australian online advertising market recorded a 22% increase year-on-year to reach \$13.9 billion...</p>

Where can I learn more?

[ASBAS - Australian Small Business Advisory Service](#)

- Digital Solutions training and webinars - free
 - Social media, web design, content creation
 - Marketing, sales, advertising
- Free consultations with business advisors
- Funded by the Australian govt

EXPERTISE & ADVICE

Digital Solutions - Australian Small Business Advisory Services

Last Updated: 29 September 2022

Looking for tailored advice for your small business? The Digital Solutions program works with you to adopt digital tools to save you time and money, and to help grow your business.

Where can I learn more?

[Ideo Free Human Centred Design resources](#)

- Basics of HCD
- Helps you say 'what do you want' instead of 'get what you're given'
- Helps you ask 'why' to understand consumer behaviours



Where can I learn more?

Free UI/UX courses

- Understanding the principles of user-interface / user experience
- Helps you think about back-end / tech stack decisions
 - Build in-house OR
 - Buy from 3rd party OR
 - Bit of both (e.g. BBC uses Chartbeat, SocialBakers, and an in-house metrics tool)



Job Details



Data Analyst | ABC's Digital News Products

Where can I learn more?

Organisations / individuals to follow on Twitter
and subscribe to their newsletters:

- [What's New in Publishing](#)
- [LION Publishers](#)
- [Digiday](#)
- [Splice](#)
- [Nieman Lab](#)
- [Reuters Institute](#)
- [WANIFRA](#)
- [Media Voices Podcast](#)
- [James Cridland](#)
- [IAB Australia](#)
- [Lenfest Institute](#)
- [International Journalism Festival](#)
- [Mather Economics](#)
- [FIPP World](#)
- [The Fix](#)
- [Craig Newmark Centre for Community Media](#)



6 things for your summer to-do list

- Start with the News Product Alliance blog and slack
- Reimagine journalism as a 'service' and 'product'
- Begin segmenting your 'audience' into current / potential consumers:
 - Communities
 - Customers
 - Clients
- Ask them what problems do they have? What 'services' and 'products' would solve those?
 - A physical item e.g. newspaper
 - A digital item e.g. an app
 - Real life products e.g. events
- Start thinking about other products to help drive revenue
 - Ad products
 - Subscription / membership products
 - Donation products
- Be kind to yourself
 - If monetising journalism was easy, we wouldn't be talking about it!



Discussion time!

2020-21 - monthly meet-ups - useful to restart?

Questions & perspective sharing?



Aug 02

Networking for Australian Media Product Thinkers

Live Q&A with Jane Mahoney, Head of Reader Revenue, Crikey

Sales Ended

Details

♡



THANK YOU!