

**Collaborative Meeting 1**  
**“Database Systems” and “Race, Gender and the News”**  
**Due: February 3 by end of class**

**Student Names:**

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Name	TCNJ Email Id
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**Objective:**

The objective of this exercise is for students in the two classes to get to know each other, develop a shared understanding of the goals of the Civic Story project, and begin to brainstorm ideas for the redesign of the database at the backend of the Civic Story website. Here is what we know about Civic Story’s goals:

- They would like their website to be able to accommodate and highlight its growing media archive. This archive includes:
  - Video news reports that reflect its brand of solutions journalism.
  - Audio and video recordings of forums on the state of the media.
- They would like to better understand the information needs of their audience and potential audiences.
- They want to provide appropriate access to what they hope will be a growing number of donors, supporters, volunteers, and media partners.
- They are interested in accommodating new kinds of content related to the state of New Jersey media, the need for the kind of the work they are doing, and the impact of their work. This might include such items as GIS data and interactive databases.

For the computer science class, these priorities might lead to questions about the kinds of users the database will need to accommodate, the level of access each type of user will need, the workflow that the database will need to facilitate, and the level of security that will be required. The journalism class will want to consider how to get the information that Civic Story and the database designers need.

**Instructions:**

You will work on this exercise in groups of six students. Each group will have four CSC students and two JPW students.

1. Using a browser such as Chrome, Safari, or Firefox, navigate to <https://www.civicstory.org>. Explore the site as thoroughly as possible.

2. Identify the functionality currently provided by Civic Story. List the functions and be as specific as possible. For each function or module, note whether it works as expected and any errors obtained.
3. Brainstorm ideas for how Civic Story can be organized to meet the needs of its range of stakeholders. As you discuss and brainstorm, jot down notes, ideas and responsibilities on this sheet.

### **Deliverables:**

#### Database Design

- Via Canvas, submit responses to the questions above in a .doc or .docx or .pdf file. One submission is required per group.

#### Race, Gender and the News

- Via Canvas, submit responses to the questions above in a .doc or .docx or .pdf file. One submission is required per group.

### **Purpose of the Project:**

CivicStory's goal is to extend the reach of local news stories promoting community without the traditional feel of a news site.

### **Functionality Currently Available:**

*(Also note whether it works as expected, any errors obtained, whether the functionality you see is hosted on the site or embedded from elsewhere. For example, is media content hosted on site or on a site such as YouTube or Soundcloud? If the latter, does this pose concerns about persistence?)*

Navigability with a menu bar atop the page

Goes to new tab, not drop down search and no search options/filters

Ability to search all content on the site

Podcast audio is on site, but all videos are linked from YouTube

All functions work but a lot of them could be better utilized

Blog System, but just links to articles and podcasts

Like and Social Media System present on each article.

Forum not a social platform dorm discussion, just links

**What do you infer about the database schema? What functions should a database like this include, as a rule?**

On the surface, the site seems to attempt to display their content like a news publication with various other media; in other words, being a news site without being a news room. The execution of this falls short, as the home page is disorganized and arbitrary in its presentation. The intended scheme was likely to provide users with access to everything they have in a basic fashion, but there is room to improve. There are missing functions that any site has; for example, a search bar that stays in the same spot on each page rather than a search portion of the menu bar that opens another tab to a search bar.

Has tag system, able to store links to videos, text articles, audio podcasts. No profile system other than perhaps admin/maintenance. Rudimentary, stores basic information for each article. Says there is a log-in system when commenting, yet cannot find where to log in on the website. Need to try and post in order to create an account or log in. Can log in using facebook, twitter, square-space, or google. Comments need to be approved before accepted as a post, need a moderator to approve.

**Resources / Skills Needed:**

Since the overall goal of the company is to promote stories from across the state and beyond, the most important resource is writers. There are countless stories to tell, and filling the website with all kinds of pieces can only help CivicStory.

Database and implementation need work. Need to create a method of analyzing content growth and views to see what the people are viewing most in order to draw more attention and growth.

**Next Steps and Responsibilities:**

The first and likely easiest step for the CivicStory site is just basic reorganization. There is certainly the correct type and amount of content, the issue is how it's shown to the user. After this, incorporating more writers from a wide array of places would really lead to that connected community that CivicStory is trying to create.

Incorporate analysis system to allow CivicStory to analyze different sets of data and information that will allow them to see what their users want, and how to best provide that.

Jacob: Project Manager, Data Analyst, Database Manager - Keep everything on track, create data analysis structures and algorithms, Create/Maintain DB

Daniel: Debugging and Integration, Database Manager - Create/Maintain DB, Debug and Combine created code into one working program

Kevin: QA, Tester and Data-Provider - Provide data and testing for implemented database

Jordan: Database Manager - Create and Maintain Database Structure/System

**Additional Comments / Questions:**

CivicStory seems to pride itself on a diversity of stories, so perhaps there could be some visual connection between the topic/origin/nature of the piece rather than keeping the same green and black theme throughout the website.

Is there anything specific that CivicStory has planned both for developing their site and expanding in general?

Is there specific data that Civic Story is looking to collect or analyze?

How large of a DB is Civic Story looking to maintain?