

Getting going: the cross-border journalism story idea

*A Crossborder Journalism
Campus Lecture*



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"A good story"



“Good stories” in general

- Something new, not seen before
- A connection not made public before
- An element that was not known before
- Something fun, apaling, different, unexpected
- Something that is crucial to society
- Underreported or only superficially reported topic
- Understanding a paradox
- Reconstructing a case
- Understanding a structure

What cross-border stories often can add

- Digging deeper in large and/or complex matters
- Making complex and/or international matters relevant to more audiences

For inspiration: Where do ideas start



- Affordable housing – a problem across Europe: [The Cities for rent project](#)
- Affordable student housing – a problem across Europe: [The Urban Journalism network investigation on student housing](#)
- PFAS pollution on national level only? [The European map of PFAS sites](#)
- European legislation regulating in different national contexts: [The case of waste regulation](#)
- Bumpy rails? [An investigation into European rail infrastructure.](#)

Where to go looking for cross-border story ideas



- **At your front door**, on your local train, actuality stories – think across borders when relevant
- **Organisation stories** – stories relate to bodies like the EU, WTO, NATO, UN and UN bodies, WHO, World Bank, EIB...
- **Chain stories** – story covers something happening in a chain of countries – for example trade, trafficking...
- **Comparative stories** – similar stories occurring in several countries such as public transport, school reforms, tax avoidance, whitewashing and corruption...

The art of developing good questions



Story idea development process

- Generation of ideas – opening – creative, everything is allowed
- Evaluation of ideas – closing – operational, reality check
- Selection of ideas – editorial decisions

Opening and closing



Opening - associating

All thoughts and associations are welcome

Do not rank your ideas

Do not judge or evaluate your ideas

Think big – across borders and audiences

Closing – analysing

Select the best ideas

Weigh the pros and cons

Check whether an idea is realistic to carry out

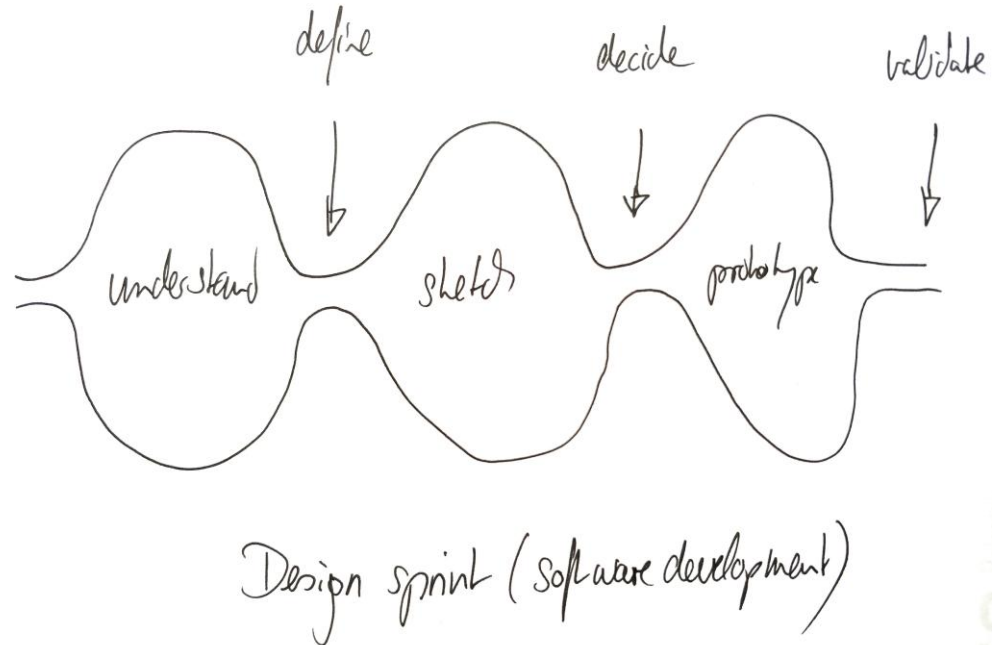
Consider the time frame

Consider costs

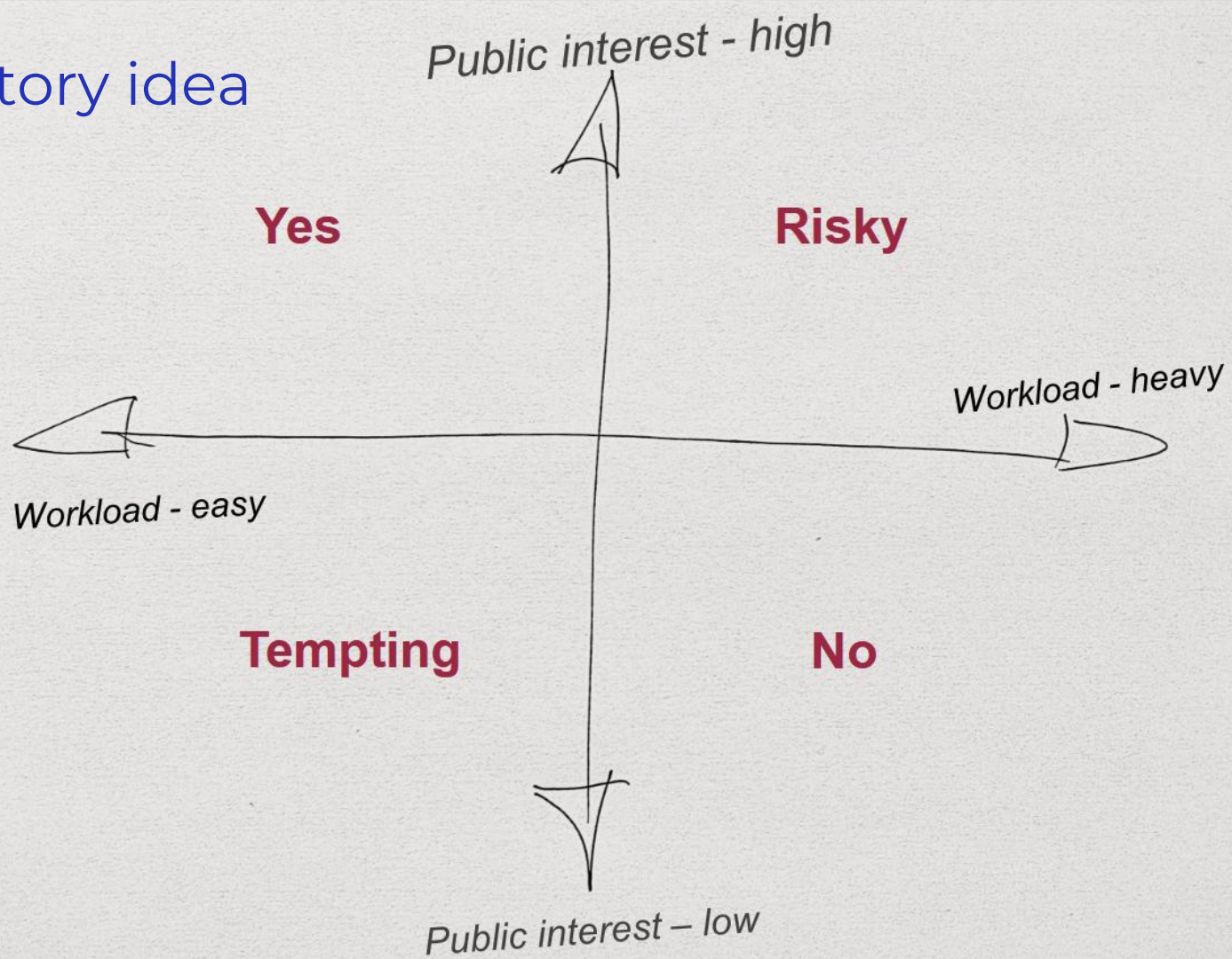
Is the project important enough to justify the extra costs of a cross-border collaboration?

Inspired by design sprints

Some like the
design sprint
process
description for the
idea development
and selection
processes



Selecting a story idea



Credit:
Hanson, Nils
(2010). *Grävande
journalistik.*
Ordfront,
Stockholm.

Support the process with pitches to your audiences



Hook – a catchy headline

Body – description of the idea

Selling point – what is unique with this idea

Summary – that's it in short

For a cross-border story, remember pitches to all your target groups:

- National target groups for each of your team members
- Transnational target group for your summary and/or transnational story

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For more material and teaching instructions
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