DETROIT PBS

The Detroit PBS Data System

& Rollout Plan

A presentation walkthrough of how data moves through Detroit PBS today, the foundation and governance system we're building, and the phased roadmap that gets us there.

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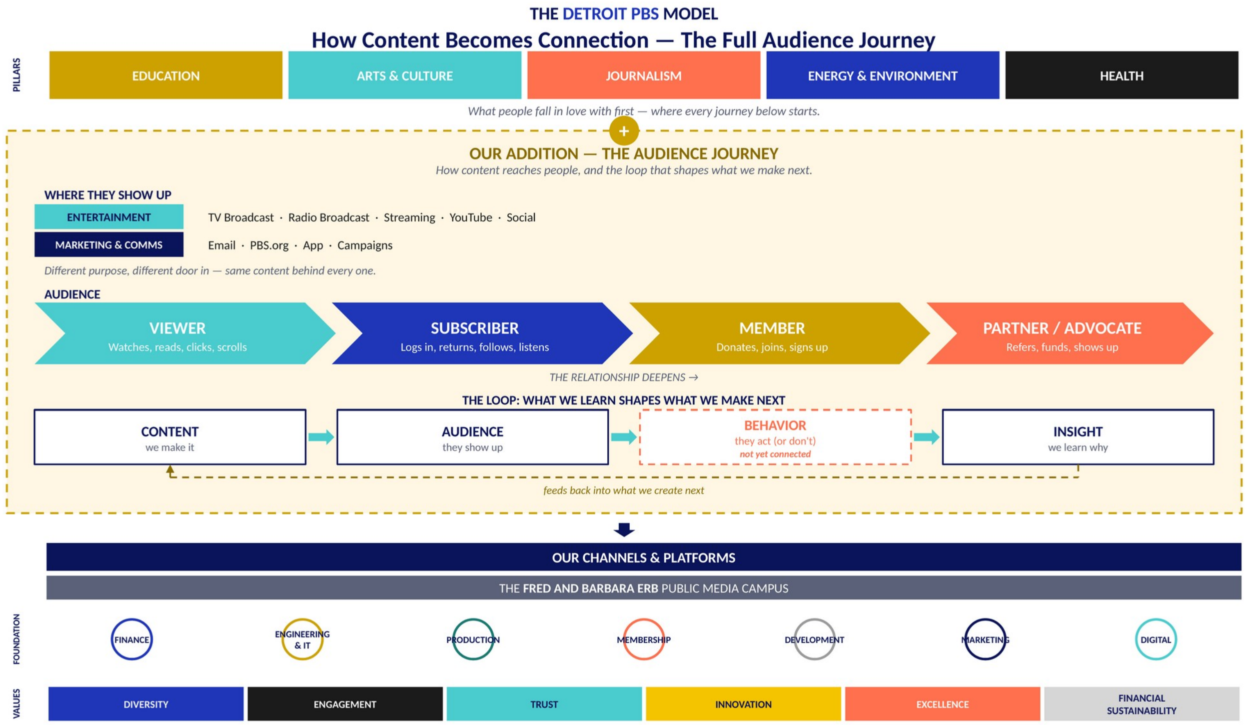
1. What Is “Data” at Detroit PBS?

Before we talk about foundation, governance, or roadmaps, it helps to agree on what we mean when we say the word “data.” It isn't an abstraction. It's already built into the model we use to run the organization. This is the Detroit PBS Model: our pillars, our channels, our foundational teams, and our values, with one addition layered on top.



The Detroit PBS Model, plus the audience layer we've added to it.

The new piece is the audience layer. It's what we're building the data system around. It shows how a person moves through our work, from first watching or scrolling as a Viewer, to logging in and following as a Subscriber, to donating and joining as a Member, to referring and funding as a Partner or Advocate. Underneath that movement runs a loop: we make Content, an Audience shows up for it, that audience takes some Behavior, and that behavior should generate Insight that shapes what we make next.

The Three Kinds of Data Behind That Loop

Every step of that journey produces data, but not all of it is the same kind, and not all of it is in the same shape today. Three datasets make up the full picture:

1. Content Performance

What we make, and how it performs: views, downloads, plays, watch time, and reach across every pillar and channel. It answers one question: is the content working, and where? This data already exists, but nothing cleans, standardizes, or maintains it consistently. That's the gap this rollout closes.

2. Audience Data

Who engages, and how far they move through the model: logins, subscriptions, donations, memberships, referrals. Development, led by Ryan, already collects and manages this data as part of their ongoing work. It answers who's converting, and how far they're moving in the relationship.

3. Audience Behavior

The connector between the two: which piece of content led to which login, gift, or referral. This is the piece we don't have yet. It's the “not yet connected” step in the loop above. Without it, we can't yet see a full picture of any one person's journey.

Where this leads: Content Performance is where this rollout starts. Audience Behavior is where it's headed. It's the connective tissue that, combined with Content Performance and Audience Data, gets us to personalization. More on that in Section 3.

2. The Challenges We Need to Solve

Before we can build any of that, we have to be honest about where we're starting from. Right now, data at Detroit PBS is reactionary rather than strategic. It's the Wild West. Every request pulls a data expert off strategic work for a number that gets used once and is never revisited. Six specific gaps are driving that:

No reporting timeline

Even the reports we know we need, like impact reports and funder reports, aren't on a schedule. They get built ad hoc instead of planned in advance.

Too many requests, no workflow

Every request lands on Jordan and marketing with no workflow to route it, so volume outpaces what a small team can field one at a time.

No standardized KPIs

Our strategic KPIs are an org-wide health check. They're built to track overall progress, not to guide the content or campaign decisions made week to week.

No campaign goals before launch

Content and initiatives launch without a target to aim for, so there's no defined measure of success and no metric to report on later.

A data literacy gap

We lack a data culture and the maturity to use it. Reports are built one-off from raw data, without a shared read on what it means or how it adds up to one narrative.

Two audiences, no system for either

Senior leadership needs one kind of reporting structure; project and initiative leads need another. We don't have either yet, let alone the capacity to build one that does both.

> **Bottom line**
>
> Every request pulls a data expert off strategic work for a number that's used once and never revisited.

3. What Do We Need? A Data Foundation and Governance

The fix isn't a single tool or a single report. It's a system, built in stages, that moves us through the three datasets from Section 1 one at a time.

1. Data Foundation

The systems and habits that make Content Performance trustworthy. Platform health tracked by initiative, on a schedule, so the numbers everyone works from are numbers everyone trusts. This is where we start.

2. Data Governance

The shared rules for how we plan and report on our work. Every campaign gets SMART goals, defined once and reported the same way everywhere, so a number means the same thing no matter who pulls it.

3. Personalization

The full picture: who someone is (Audience Data), what they're interested in (Content Performance), and how their behavior trends over time (Audience Behavior). Personalization is what becomes possible once all three datasets are standardized and connected. It means tailoring content and outreach to the individual, not just the audience as a whole.

> **Key term: Data Warehouse**
>
> A single system that imports Content Performance and Audience Data and connects the conversions between them. This lets us finally see which piece of content led to which login, gift, or referral, and build the Audience Behavior dataset. This is a large-scale, long-term goal, years down the road, and the direction our AAP work is aimed at.

4. How Do We Do This?

The first thing to understand is where the break in our data estate actually sits, and what our plan does and doesn't do about it in the near term.

> **Key term: Data Estate**
>
> The full collection of data an organization owns and manages: every platform, spreadsheet, database, and report that holds our numbers, and how they connect (or don't) to each other.

Let's go back to our data model to see exactly where that break is.

Where we stand today: content performance and audience are tracked separately, with one connection between them we haven't built yet.

The Break: Content Performance → Audience

Development already collects and manages Audience Data as part of their ongoing work. Content Performance data exists too, but nothing cleans, standardizes, or maintains it. That's the system and the data team this rollout builds. What's still missing is Audience Behavior, the connector between the two, which won't exist until we invest in the data warehouse described in Section 3.

In the meantime, this rollout stands up Content Performance, cleaned, standardized, and maintained by a new data team, to run alongside Development's ongoing Audience Data collection. Together, those two datasets give us at least a partial picture of how our audience interacts with the station, while we build toward the fully connected, personalized system.

5. The Roadmap: High-Level Overview

Here's that plan at a glance: a multi-year build, one phase at a time.

Phase	What Happens
Phase 1: Q2 to Q4 *Data Foundation & Governance for Content Performance*	Stand up the reporting infrastructure and team workflows needed to make content-performance data trustworthy, timely, and consistent. This is where we are starting.
Phase 2: 2028 *Evolve the Foundation + Begin AAP Work*	Mature the reports we've already built, deepen data literacy across the organization, and open the first conversations about decision-making cadence and monthly reporting needs with initiative and project leads.

Phase	What Happens
Phase 3: 2029 *AAP Continues + Custom Dashboards*	Use what we've learned about decision-making cadence to invest in custom, in-house dashboards. This reduces manual reporting and moves us toward a connected, real-time view.

6. Phase 1: In-Depth Rollout

Phase 1 is where we are starting: Data Foundation and Data Governance for Content Performance. Below is the full breakdown of what that includes.

Data Foundation

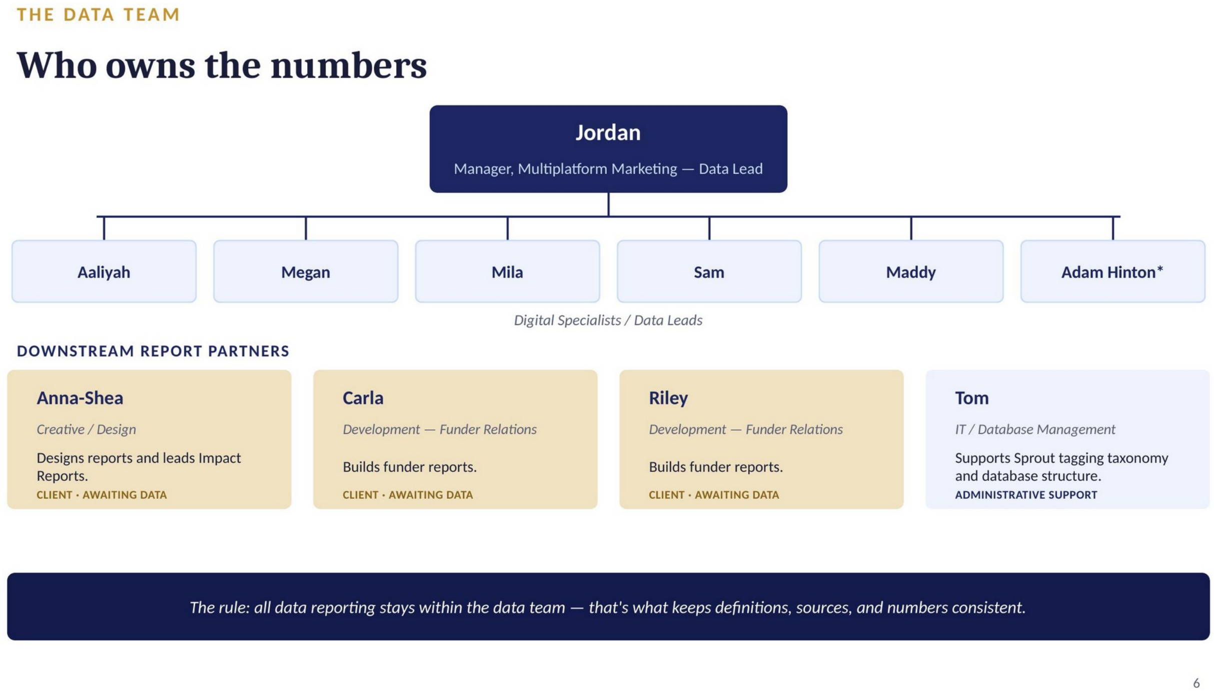
- Train Digital Specialists on the reporting process end to end.
- Set up QC workflows: Sprout tagging, a tutorials archive, and a SharePoint report archive.
- Establish a dedicated Teams channel and bi-weekly meetings to review data requests and timeline.
- Implement the data collection spreadsheet and reports: POP, Quarterly, and Annual Reports.

> **Note**
> POPs are campaign reports. Quarterly and Annual Reports are channel health updates.

Data Governance

Implement the Data Team

Governance starts with a clear owner for every number. Below is the team structure: who owns the data, and who the downstream report partners are who depend on it.



The Data Team: who owns the numbers, and who receives it downstream.

> **Note**
> Jordan is the team lead for this group, not the manager of these individuals. Each person still reports to their own manager. Jordan works alongside those managers to train, facilitate, and support the data work.

DDMs

Purpose and what to expect: *to be determined.*

Standardize Metrics: What Are We Measuring?

Success and value are measured differently depending on scope: audience growth and the actions that audience takes drive initiative performance, while impressions and reach power proposals, marketing, corporate support, and development conversations. Our strategic KPIs count the true audience we can influence. Each one counted once is a deliberate choice to connect, not something an algorithm hands us.

Category	Metric	What It Counts
Audience (Core Strategic KPIs)	Subscribers	Opted in to receive content directly: newsletter, YouTube
	Followers	Chose to follow a social profile
	Users	Chose to visit or open a platform we own
	Listeners	Chose to tune into radio, broadcast, or streaming (WRCJ)

	Viewers	Watched broadcast TV (P2+)
Engagement (Actions, Per Platform)	Engagements	Likes, comments, shares, saves, clicks, or replies
	Video Views	Video content watched for at least 3 seconds
	Streams	A single instance of content played (VOD/streaming)
Visibility Metrics (excluded from KPIs)	*Impressions*	*The total number of times content was shown. A passive, algorithm-driven metric, not counted toward our KPIs.*
	Reach	*The unique number of people who saw the content. Same exclusion applies.*

These KPIs count people at the Viewer and Subscriber stages of the Detroit PBS Model (Section 1). Membership and Development pick up the story at Member and Partner/Advocate.

The Data Request Checklist

Before a data request goes to the team, we ask:

1. Is there a decision, action, or deliverable attached? Not just "we'd like to know." A request should change what someone does next.
2. Has enough time passed to tell a real story? A single week or post rarely means anything. Trends need a month or a quarter to accrue.
3. Does it map to a strategic KPI we already track? If it's not tied to Subscribers, Followers, Users, Listeners, or Viewers, question why.
4. Is it actually important, or just urgent? Urgency without strategic weight is a distraction from the standing calendar, not an exception to it.
5. Could this wait for the next scheduled report? If yes, it waits. The calendar exists so the team isn't rebuilding it every time someone asks.
6. How does this request serve Development? Not required like the rest, but worth asking. It keeps fundraising and stewardship in view.

> **Built on a simple filter**
>
> Urgency and importance, crossed against our strategic KPIs. Not every request that feels pressing is one the data warrants.

Campaign Goals & Reporting Timeline

- Assign SMART goals to every campaign before it launches.
- Define what counts as a "campaign," what gets reported on it, and the other mechanics of the data collection and reporting process.
- Develop the first iteration of the data tracking and reporting timeline.

Lunch & Learn Sessions

A required piece of Phase 1: Jordan will host live lunch-and-learn sessions for staff. Open Q&A paired with a walkthrough of our reports, so the organization sees not just the numbers but how to read and question them.

- Live Q&A: an open forum for staff to ask what a report means, how a number was pulled, and why it matters.
- Report review: a walkthrough of the reports we're producing in Phase 1. What they track, and how to use them.

Setting the standard

These sessions set the format for Phase 2 lunch and learns, which build on this foundation to grow data literacy across the organization.

Data is more than numbers.

There's meaning and value behind every number we report, and upholding that takes time and process. We're building something here, and it will take all of us to make it successful.