

Grantee Name
National New Play Network
Project Title
To support work by a consortium of the field to create an online tool, the New Play Exchange, to revolutionize the way playwrights and theaters connect in the nonprofit arena
Project Progress and Successes
<p>National New Play Network (NNPN) and its Core Development Committee (CDC) of leaders from Playwrights Foundation, Chicago Dramatists, The Playwrights' Center, and Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas met this summer in San Francisco and Chicago to begin brainstorming on the New Play Exchange (NPE). Representatives for the group have led additional discussions in Philadelphia, Miami, and Dallas. All events have included information and feedback sessions with potential users, including playwrights, producers, literary managers, artistic directors, academics, and students. With the assistance of our newly hired Project Director, and using the information gathered from these meetings, we have developed the criteria for usage, set priorities regarding the sequencing of specific modules of the project, finalized the requirements for the product, and created sample user stories.</p> <p>We also spent a great deal of time looking at other similar products, delving into their successes and limitations to understand more about how we might better serve the field, and avoid a duplication of services.</p> <p>Late last month NNPN contracted with a developer who will begin to build the New Play Exchange database. Our next informational session is in Washington, DC, in October, and in mid-November the CDC and other potential users will see the results of the first sprint of product development at a convening in Minneapolis. We are on track to begin beta testing with the CDC and their constituents in early 2014.</p>
Challenges / Obstacles / Failures Encountered in the Project
<p>We embraced resistance and encouraged challenges from potential users early on in our discussions. This was extremely helpful in the development of the scope of the New Play Exchange. Questions about the responsibilities of users, protection of proprietary work, and levels of agency involvement from writers helped us shape the information that we will be handing off to the developers. Concerns from the administrative and artistic personnel at theatres led to a refinement of the recommendation process and a decision for greater inclusion of social media-inspired capabilities.</p> <p>The potential scope and size of the product has been occasionally daunting: setting priorities regarding the development of specific services - knowing that not all of the users' needs will be met in the first iteration - has been a responsibility that has weighed heavily on the committee.</p>
What was learned from these that might be of benefit to others?
The decision to visit with as many potential users as possible has been invaluable to the product's development. Our choice to hear from the field regarding their concerns and needs of the product prior to beginning the tool's development will save immeasurable time and money, allowing the funding we have received to go further and the product to be more productive to the field as soon as it is launched in 2015.
Links to relevant website(s) and/or project publications, reports, etc.
The New Play Exchange Product Definition document -

<http://www.ddcf.org/Global/Arts/NPE%20Product%20Definition.pdf>

If someone wishes to speak with your organization further about your project, would there be a willing contact? Y/N

If yes, please provide contact name and information for preferred method of contact (email, phone, etc).

Y

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