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Approaches to address sustainability

So we've been thinking about the sustainability of Ozioma since pretty early on in the project when it became clear that the newspapers were using the service. And while a center like ours could conceivably sustain this over time with funding, that funding would have to come from some place, but it actually seemed to us that the more logical home for an Ozioma would be within some agency whose mission it was to communicate broadly about cancer related issues. And we thought that that organization might be a major national health related agency, like the National Cancer Institute, like the American Cancer Society, like CDC. So we actually spent a lot of time in discussions with all of those entities about how they might use Ozioma within – because all of them have – they all have media relations operations as it is. You could envision Ozioma as a sort of a – one of the offerings that they might have there that would expand their reach into different media settings and also deliver more customized information. And I would say that the interest in that, from those and other agencies, has been variable. I think they like the concept, but they're also very set and established in their way of doing things, and Ozioma would represent a different way of doing these things. So that hasn't to date panned out in the way we thought it might.

But one of the ideas that came from that was Ozioma Online. That maybe there's a way that we can provide the resources necessary to customize stories or to create local information, but do it without having a news service that actually generates the stories. So Ozioma Online may in fact help the Ozioma news service live on. I still think it's entirely possible that there is some sort of partner out there that has an interest in this topic and in the populations that we're serving, that may want to partner with us, or somebody else to continue the Ozioma News Service. And we're constantly looking.

Ozioma is heavily branded. So Ozioma has a visual identity that's very constant, it has a perspective or an approach, "Good News," right that we're going to focus on "good news." It has a consistency in delivery that it comes out at regular intervals. I think all of those things are attributes of effective products and services, whether they're health interventions or anything else. And that's been important to us. And it helps, we think, the – it helps the journalists, or the black newspapers think about us in a certain way, find us if they need to online, so we have this sort of name and this service means something to them, not just – it isn't just a research project somewhere, and I think that has value.

We involved, early on, a core group of experienced professionals from these minority serving media. And they were really instrumental in helping us to understand the approaches that

we ought to take to maximize the likelihood that our Ozioma stories were noticed and paid attention to. So we listened very carefully to what they said. Now because it's a research study, we couldn't be too cozy with each of the newspapers, because that's not what we're testing. We're not testing, can we make friends with you so you like us and use this? We're testing do you value – if we put this, make this service available to you, do you take it? So I would say we relied on what we observed in the uptake and we relied on what experts from the – that community, key informants told us.

I would say Ozioma has been constantly evolving. It's been a really dynamic project and I think that's worked to our advantage. So we've tried to watch closely what the newspapers are interested in and respond accordingly. We have adapted the approach so that we can make it even more localized than we were able to initially. We have created an online version that extends its reach to more people. So Ozioma isn't one thing, Ozioma has been this evolving thing. And if we're having this conversation a year from now, I'm convinced Ozioma will be something beyond what we have considered yet. And that's pretty real world. I mean, that's how it works. You pay attention to feedback from users and how the environment is changing and what new opportunities are there, and you adapt. And so we've been able to do that well I think.

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