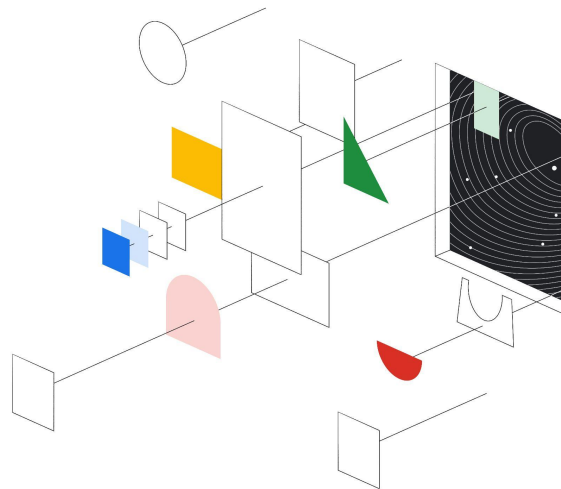


Google News Initiative

Kookaburra 2 Toolkit

Tools and tips to help you find digital pathways to
sustainable local publishing



1. How to use this toolkit
2. How digital-ready are you?
3. Digital steps menu
4. Basic financial reporting template and how-to video
5. Financial health checklist and how-to video
6. Additional resources guide



How to use this toolkit

1. Start with the quiz “[How digital ready are you?](#)”

It asks about you and your business across different areas. The results will help identify what you need to do to get ready to take a digital step. Honest answers will give a better result! Allow 20 minutes.

2. Go to the [Digital Steps Menu](#). This is a list of digital publishing projects that the Kookaburra publishers tried. Each includes an estimate of the investment required. The menu items are not mutually exclusive, they work together in a ‘pick & mix’ way. How many you take on and in what order, depends on your level of digital maturity revealed in the quiz.



3. There are two financial tools in this toolkit. They can be used at any time. The [Basic Financial Reporting Template](#) and [how-to video](#) will help you track your income and costs and see how these change as your operations change. Even if you have a good financial tracking system, you may like to take a look to compare this with what some Kookaburra publishers cover. This template is in Google Sheets and can be downloaded as an excel file if that's what you prefer.

The [Financial Health Checklist](#) is designed to help you understand how well your business is going from a profitability and cash flow point of view. It gives an instant snapshot of your financial health and lets you track trends over time and make adjustments if you need to (eg increase prices or change timing of payments to suppliers). We suggest using the checklist at regular intervals, say monthly, like a health checkup. The checklist is in a Google Sheets template and can be downloaded as an excel file. It comes with a [how-to video](#) too.

4. Finally, there is an [Additional Resources Guide](#) to help you continue your learning, connect with other publishers going through similar journeys and get started on your digital step

How digital-ready are you? A quiz

To what extent do you agree with these statements about you and your business? For each statement, jot down the letter that best applies.

There are five parts to the quiz. Please answer all five:

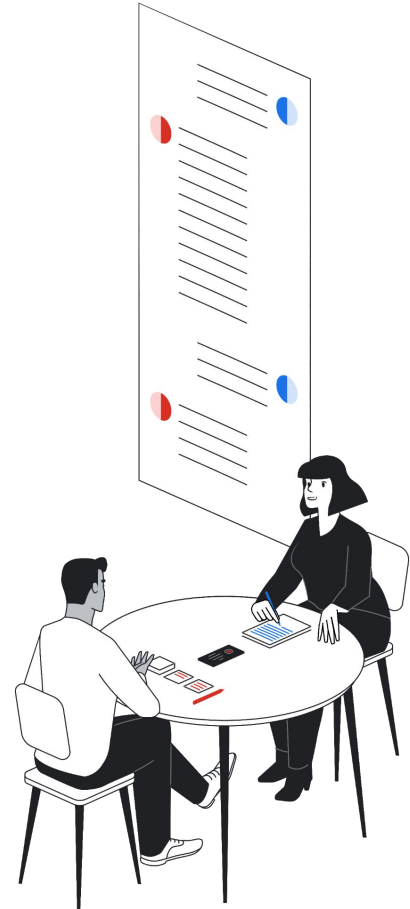
A. Strongly agree B. Agree C. Disagree D. Strongly Disagree

Part 1 Financial

I can quickly tell from reading my financial records if my business is profitable in any given month
I plan and provision for increased costs or business-related expenditure at least 3 months ahead
I actively pursue multiple revenue streams for my business

Part 2 Operational

The people who work in my business are well trained and understand what drives our success
The people who work in my business use systems and data to do their jobs well
The systems in my business (e.g. client and contact databases) are kept up to date and useful



How digital-ready are you? A quiz cont.

Part 3 Technology

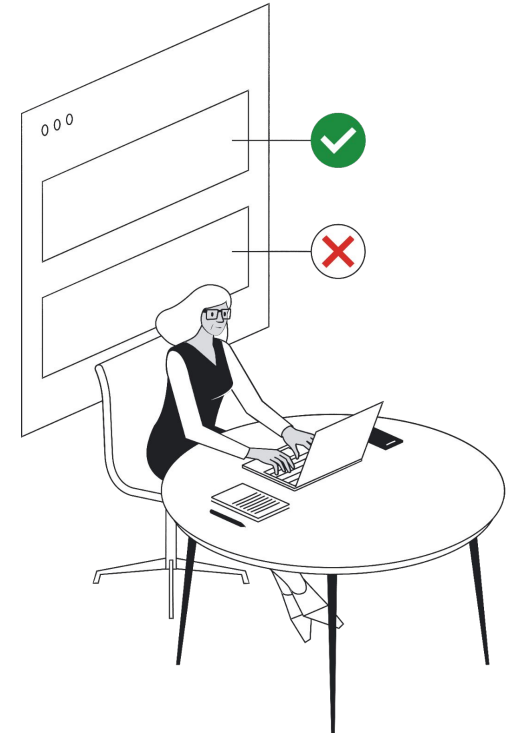
I and my staff have access to technology that allows us to do our jobs well
I and my staff receive regular training about updated or new technology
I and my staff feel comfortable helping readers and advertisers try technology that may be new to them

Part 4 Mindset

I actively seek to try new things in my business if I can see a payoff in the future
I see myself as very ambitious for the success of my business
I regularly note milestones and beat records I have set for myself that show I'm improving my business

Part 5 Community engagement

I take on roles within my local community outside of my day job that give me some profile
I regularly receive positive feedback that my masthead/s are a trusted source of independent news
I actively encourage the people who work in my business to build strong relationships within the local community



Digital-ready quiz: how to get the answers

What letter appeared most often in your answers? Look at the advice and recommendations below that match to that letter.

Did you score mostly 'A's?

Well done. You are very well placed to progress the digital future of your business.

Next steps:

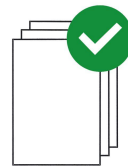
Take a look at the [Kookaburra Digital Menu](#) in this toolkit to work out what digital step is logical for you to take next. Some of these steps you have probably already started and so a logical next step may be to redouble your efforts in that area *and* add a new digital project.

Learning is an ongoing process and so you may wish to review the [Kookaburra Resources Guide](#) in this toolkit to find some free refresher training. We would recommend the [GNI Digital Workshop series](#).

Once you have chosen your next digital step you need to write an action plan. If you remember our advice from Kookaburra 1, we suggest using the [SMART](#) test-and-learn program. Your action plan will have the following headings and answer the following questions...(see next slide)

Note: If you have scored high in community engagement and are a free publication, you may wish to consider a 'reader support' model. This is where readers give voluntary financial contributions to you on a one-off or regular basis via your website to support your publication's journalism.

This model is becoming increasingly popular around the world, a famous example of it is The Guardian. Technology providers such as "Press Patron" provide the technology needed for reader contributions. See the [Kookaburra Resources Guide](#) in this toolkit for more information.



S



SPECIFIC

What exactly are we going to do?

Who is involved?

When are we doing it?

Why is this important?

M



MEASURABLE

How will we set quantifiable metrics?

What specific data will we track?

How will we know we've succeeded?

What is the key success metric?

A



ATTAINABLE

What tasks do we need to complete?

Do we have the resources we need?

If not, how will we get them?

Do we need any specific training? Tech?

Who is responsible for each task?

R



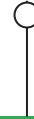
RELEVANT

Does the plan fit with key goals?

Will insights help drive business forward?

Is it a worthwhile use of team time?

T



TIMELY

What are the key milestones?

When do we need to get them done?

Digital-ready quiz: how to get the answers

Did you score mostly 'B's?

You are nearly ready to take the next step to your digital future. It's easy to be delayed however if one or two parts of your business are under-prepared.

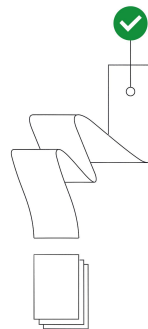
Next steps:

Have a look at your quiz scores and identify the areas where you are underdeveloped. These are the areas you need to bring up to speed. How you address those areas depends on what they are. For example, if your staff are underdeveloped in their use of systems and data, prepare a simple learning and development plan for each of them, in collaboration with them of course.

The next step is to have a look at the systems that are important to your business and ask for each of them 'how could this be improved?'. Ask your staff for their feedback and suggestions. This could be done via a short survey if you have more than a few staff.

Once you have addressed your underdeveloped areas, do the Kookaburra quiz again to see how much you've improved, then follow the recommendations for respondents who scored mostly As.

Note: Survey Monkey surveymonkey.com is a free digital tool where you can design and distribute online surveys. See the [Additional Resources Guide](#) in this toolkit for more tips.



Digital-ready quiz: how to get the answers

Did you score mostly 'C's?

You are on your way to your digital future but to increase your chance of success you should improve in a few areas first.

Next steps:

Look at the areas in the quiz where you scored low. These are the areas you need to bring up to speed. How you improve them depends on what they are. For example, if the quiz revealed you have a very risk-averse mindset and yet you still wish to create a digital future for your business, identify ways to reduce or mitigate the risk of trying new things.

First, complete the [Financial Health Checklist](#) to see where you are exposed. Then, ask yourself if any of the following risk reduction approaches work for you:

- Could you elevate a trusted employee to be a partner in your business to share the ups and downs?
- Try a staged approach to taking a digital step, perhaps start with an inexpensive or free version of a digital tool
- Spend some time watching free on-demand webinars and reading free resources about going digital to build your knowledge

Once you have addressed your underdeveloped areas, do the Kookaburra quiz again to see how much you've improved, then follow the recommendations for respondents who scored mostly As.

Note: See the [Additional Resources Guide](#) in this toolkit for links to free and low-cost resources such as online training and webinars



Digital-ready quiz: how to get the answers

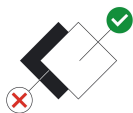
Did you score mostly 'D's?

I'm sure you know this is not a great score but congratulations on being honest with yourself. That is the first step to a digital future.

Next steps:

Look at the categories where you had better scores – these are your stronger areas – and start by leveraging those strengths. Perhaps you have strong community engagement but score low on technology. Look for some free training to upskill your weaker areas – perhaps start with the [Additional Resources Guide](#) in this toolkit.

If you are keen for your business to have a digital future you will need to work through improving all your weaker areas – you can use the quiz questions as a guide to what to do. For example, if the quiz revealed that your financial record keeping doesn't give you a clear view of the health of the business, ask your accountant for advice or use the [Basic Financial Reporting Template](#) in this toolkit to improve the way you track and understand your financials.



Note: Another useful approach to your digital future is to partner up. Look for a person who has strengths in the areas you don't. Don't forget some of the younger people who work in your business.

One of our best Kookaburra case studies is a owner/publisher who offered two of her most trusted staff members - a journalist and a graphic designer – a stake in her business. Now, as partners, they share the highs and the lows; it has certainly eased her burden!

Project Kookaburra: Digital steps menu

Digital Step	Price range	Typical price structure	Common suppliers
1. Monetisable website	<p>Basic site (no paywall): \$70-\$250 per month</p> <p>Medium functionality (includes paywall and advertising): \$300-\$500 per month</p> <p>High functionality (incl paywall, advertising, other e-commerce and multi-site capacity): \$1000 per month</p>	<p>Price varies depending on level of functionality and your digital revenue ambitions</p> <p>Set up costs (securing domain name, site hosting) and then a monthly fee.</p> <p>Site hosting and domain name 'renting' often come from a separate provider</p>	<p>Pagemasters Publish Potent Newspack Wordpress Squarespace Custom web builders</p> <p>NB: some providers require "plug-ins" to add features that allow you to monetise a basic website</p>
2. Print/ digital media kit	<p>In-house – free, a time cost only</p> <p>External graphic designer - \$200-\$500 (time cost)</p> <p>Printing costs</p>	<p>Hourly rate if using an external graphic designer</p>	<p>External – Designcrowd.com.au Upwork.com Pagemasters.com.au</p> <p>agda.com.au (Australian Graphic Design Assoc)</p>
3. Email newsletter	<p>Time cost plus subscription ranging from free to \$40 per month, depending on functions and size of your reader database</p>	<p>Monthly subscription to an email platform</p>	<p>Mailchimp Flodesk.com Hubspot</p>
4. Online business directory	<p>Approx \$250 per month</p>	<p>Usually an optional extra from your website provider for an additional monthly fee</p>	<p>Pagemasters' Publish Brilliant Directories Custom directory builders</p>
5. Reader support model (crowdfunding)	<p>5%-8% of reader contributions</p>	<p>Service provider usually charges fees for: a) 'Success' ie a portion of the reader's contribution b) Payment processing c) Bank transfer to your account</p>	<p>Press Patron Subscribe with Google (SwG) Pagemasters</p>

Kookaburra 2 Additional Resources Guide

Apart from this toolkit, you may find the following links helpful...



Google Digital Training

On demand videos for SME publishers covering news business fundamentals including:

- Fundamentals of news publishing on the web, including optimising your website to increase traffic to your news coverage
- Strategies to identify, grow and engage your digital audience
 - Getting started in digital advertising
- Building and strengthening your digital subscriptions or contributions revenue
- Developing your overall digital strategy



Industry Associations

Country Press Australia (CPA)
Links to state organisations
<https://countrypressaustralia.com.au/>

Local and Independent News Assoc (LINA)
<https://lina.org.au/>

Interactive Advertising Bureau Australia (IAB)
<https://iabaustralia.com.au/>

Public Interest Journalism Initiative (PIJI) Newsroom Mapping Project
<https://piji.com.au/>



Useful Links

Mailchimp (for newsletters)
[Mailchimp.com](https://mailchimp.com)

Survey Monkey (survey tool)
[Surveymonkey.com](https://surveymonkey.com)

Wordpress (websites)
<https://wordpress.com/>

Publish (websites)
<https://publish.pagemasters.com/>

Press Patron (reader contributions)
<https://www.presspatron.com/>

ACMA (Research resources)
<https://www.acma.gov.au/>



Kookaburra 1 materials

Kookaburra Essentials Pack
Kookaburra Publisher on demand videos

The Walkley Foundation
<https://www.walkleys.com/valuing-journalism/community-and-regional/>