The quick and dirty way to start up an Innovation Lab
How it started

• In December 2014, I organised a business trip to Waterloo University (near Toronto) to check out their Communitech Innovation Lab

• The whole executive team came with me, plus our chairman David Thomson, who is also chairman of Thomson Reuters (TR)

• Tom Jenkins, a TR board member; chairman of Open Text, a digital pioneer; and Chancellor of Waterloo University, encouraged The Globe to “give it a go”

• So we created Lab351
What is LAB 351?

- A dedicated space in our new building to enable innovation, experimentation and learning
- A way to develop new Intellectual Property from the base of The Globe and Mail
Now...
What it’s not, to start with

WE ARE **NOT** A VENTURE CAPITAL BUSINESS

WE ARE **NOT** HUNTING UNICORNS

We launched with

- **NO** dedicated staff or new hires
- **NO** extra space
- **NO** investment dollars
- **NO** separate budget

But we are committing to $500,000 budget in fiscal year 2017 for when we move in to our new building
We are building an engine for transformation

Culture

Innovators

Innovators

Innovation

LAB351

New Frontiers

New Products/
Markets

Existing (core)

Founding principles

- No one works in the Lab; we want people who can build teams internally
- You get 90 days to show what you can do
- The core of the Lab’s culture? “Say what you can do. Do what you say.”
We are learning how to unlock more value

Data Science
• NLP is used to identify thousands of individual interests that are predictive
• Used today in Ad Sales where clients are consistently impressed

Virtual Reality
• High impact VR experience of solitary confinement
• The team was showcased at Toronto HotDocs Festival

Joint Ventures
• Employer quality of life award and event business
• Perfect example of an idea that was “dying on the vine”

Strategic Partnerships
• Built a prototype on Washington Post’s Arc CMS platform
• Signed partnership in June to replatform digital business
The Globe and Mail becomes largest North American media outlet to use The Washington Post’s Technology Platform

By WashPostPR  June 1

Today, The Globe and Mail announces that they will become the largest North American media outlet to adopt The Washington Post’s Arc Publishing technology, with efforts to transition The Globe to the new platform starting immediately. Designed and built by The Washington Post, Arc Publishing is a flexible technology platform specifically built for digital storytelling that handles stories, rich media, apps, video and personalization, optimizing them for deployment to different channels – including desktop, large or small tablets, mobile phones and distributed social platforms.

“This partnership reflects the future of publishing – one that harnesses technology and analytics to enable audience-focused storytelling based on data science,” said Phillip Crawley, Publisher & CEO of The Globe and Mail. “In The Washington Post we’ve found a partner that not only shares our vision, but has emerged as a world leader in supporting modern publishers through digital innovation.”

The Post’s Arc Publishing system will enable The Globe and Mail to create, deploy and track its content more quickly and efficiently, and focus its own technological innovation on digital storytelling and data gathering, areas where it is an international leader. Over the past year, the two organizations have worked closely to test and refine the new platform at Lab 354, The Globe and Mail’s business innovation incubator named after its future headquarters at 351 King Street East in Toronto.
We know innovation can power journalism

Data Visualization

• Built an award winning platform for print, mobile and web charts

Interactive Storytelling

• Using an in house tool for digital layout
• 5 SND Awards of Excellence in 2016

Predictive Modelling

• Our multiplatform election simulator was an SND Award winner
• One of the launch projects for Lab351
The Statistical Society of Canada's Excellence in Data Journalism Award, 2016

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### The headlines

With a margin of 42 seats, The Liberal Party win the election and will attempt to form a minority government. Support for The Liberal Party is particularly strong in Ontario where they take 68 per cent of the seats. The Conservative Party will likely form the official opposition.
What’s next?

One-to-one customer relationships
• We reach an affluent and influential audience of 18-million people a month
• We are looking to improve customer experience management

Upgrade relationships with agencies and advertisers
• We’ve developed one of Canada’s most sophisticated digital advertising platforms
• We want to show advertisers and agencies where technology will take them next

Create relationships with other leading publications through Globe Alliance
• We represent Canadian inventory for many of the world’s leading publications
• This network provides a crucible to test and prove new technologies
Our priorities in 2016 - 17

• Better user experience for digital subscribers

• Apply data science to storytelling and selling

• Journalism that makes a difference
How does the Lab help?

- 2,000 sq ft of dedicated space instead of 1,800 sq ft now
- Training of staff (and potentially the public) in innovation skills
- First commercialization launch next week
The Big Wins:

- Liberation of thinking
- Increased appetite for risk
- Empowerment of talent

THE BIGGEST DIVIDEND SO FAR IS NOT BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT, OR SMARTER STORYTELLING, BUT A SHIFT IN THE MINDSET OF STAFF