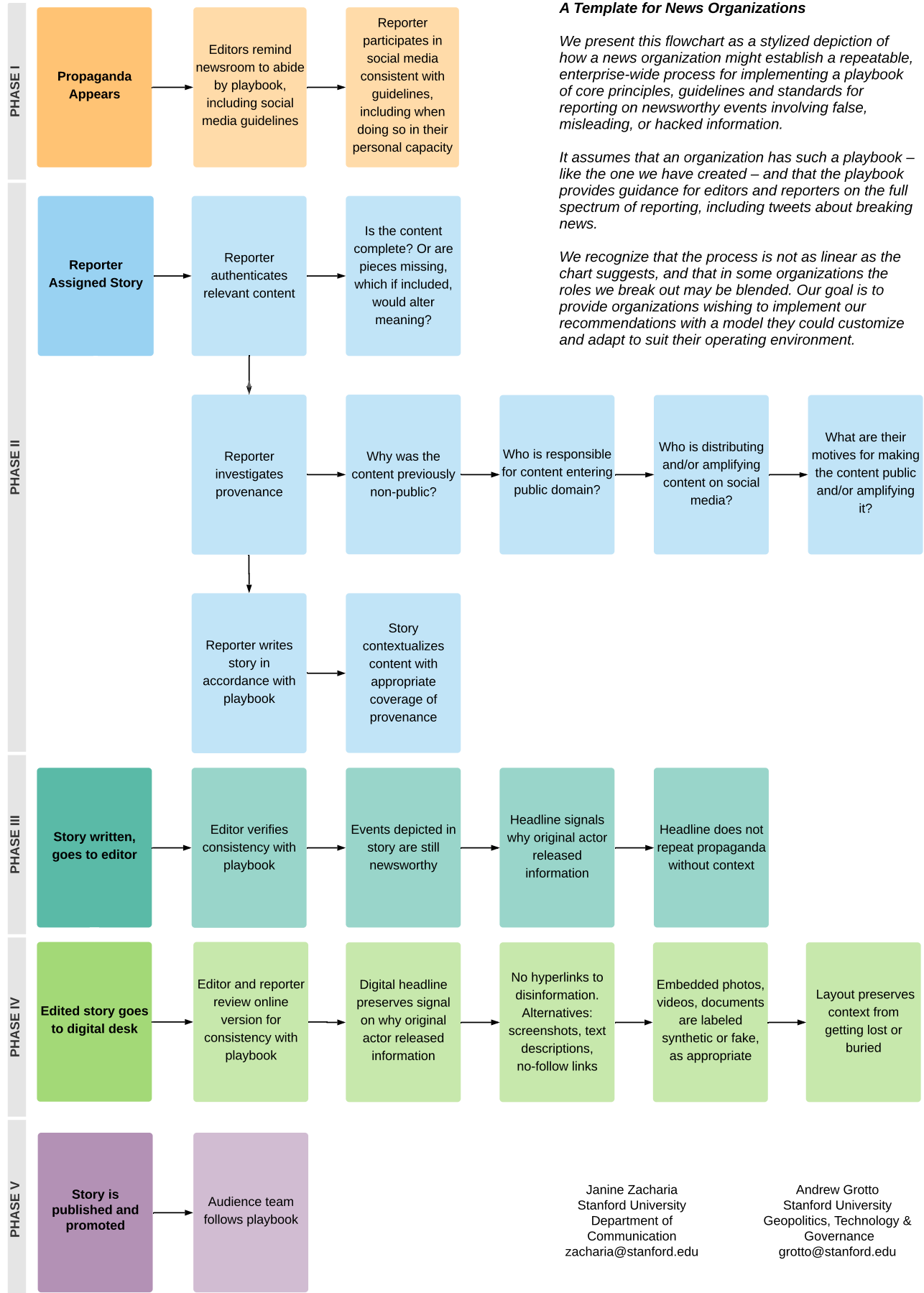# IMPLEMENTING THE PLAYBOOK

A Template for News Organizations

We present this flowchart as a stylized depiction of how a news organization might establish a repeatable, enterprise-wide process for implementing a playbook of core principles, guidelines and standards for reporting on newsworthy events involving false, misleading, or hacked information.

It assumes that an organization has such a playbook – like the one we have created – and that the playbook provides guidance for editors and reporters on the full spectrum of reporting, including tweets about breaking news.

We recognize that the process is not as linear as the chart suggests, and that in some organizations the roles we break out may be blended. Our goal is to provide organizations wishing to implement our recommendations with a model they could customize and adapt to suit their operating environment.

PHASE I

Propaganda Appears → Editors remind newsroom to abide by playbook, including social media guidelines → Reporter participates in social media consistent with guidelines, including when doing so in their personal capacity

PHASE II

Reporter Assigned Story → Reporter authenticates relevant content → Is the content complete? Or are pieces missing, which if included, would alter meaning?

Reporter investigates provenance → Why was the content previously non-public? → Who is responsible for content entering public domain? → Who is distributing and/or amplifying content on social media? → What are their motives for making the content public and/or amplifying it?

Reporter writes story in accordance with playbook → Story contextualizes content with appropriate coverage of provenance

PHASE III

Story written, goes to editor → Editor verifies consistency with playbook → Events depicted in story are still newsworthy → Headline signals why original actor released information → Headline does not repeat propaganda without context

PHASE IV

Edited story goes to digital desk → Editor and reporter review online version for consistency with playbook → Digital headline preserves signal on why original actor released information → No hyperlinks to disinformation. Alternatives: screenshots, text descriptions, no-follow links → Embedded photos, videos, documents are labeled synthetic or fake, as appropriate → Layout preserves context from getting lost or buried

PHASE V

Story is published and promoted → Audience team follows playbook

Janine Zacharia
Stanford University
Department of Communication
zacharia@stanford.edu

Andrew Grotto
Stanford University
Geopolitics, Technology & Governance
grotto@stanford.edu