

# the policy innovation lab **playbook**

Version 1 - Fall 2020 Draft

*This Playbook is a work in progress, and gets better with your feedback. See something you think should be here but isn't? Tell us about it at [cgoranso@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:cgoranso@andrew.cmu.edu)!*

**Carnegie  
Mellon  
University**

# welcome



## the nutshell

- 1 the user comes first.
- 2 understand the problem.
- 3 strive for impact.
- 4 manage your time.
- 5 expect more.
- 6 communicate early and often.
- 7 trust the process.
- 8 be willing to walk away.



# 02 understand the problem



Skyler is trying to understand,  
be like Skyler.

## 02 understand the problem

Once you've developed a better understanding of the users of a product or service, **try to determine the real, underlying problem or challenge faced by these users.**

Use your **user-centric framing**<sup>8</sup> of the problem to get on the same page as your partner and team, and put you in a stronger position towards **developing a highly impactful Minimum Viable Product (MVP)**<sup>9</sup>.

If your solution doesn't fix the core problem you've identified, then the work you do won't be as impactful for the partner, nor will it benefit the end users as much as it could.

### Tips & Tricks

Try using a [Current Reality Tree](#)<sup>10</sup> to better understand how problems and outcomes are intertwined. Or, try creating a [customer journey map](#)<sup>11</sup> or [service blueprint](#)<sup>12</sup> with your partner to understand their perspective on how users interact with a current product or service.

### Notes:

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# 03 strive for impact\*



\* The good kind, unlike the meteor in this graphic

## 03 strive for impact

While you want to be realistic about what can be completed in the time you have, **you also want to leave your partner with the highest-impact solution you can.** Keep this in mind when choosing where to focus the efforts of yourself, the team and your partner.

Use **rapid prototypes<sup>13</sup>** and **user research** to quickly assess what ideas hold the most promise. Prototypes can also lead to richer discussions and further idea generation as it provides something for people to respond to. Use insights gained to further improve your work, while keeping you nimble and focused on the end user experience.

### Tips & Tricks

A **brainstorming / ideation exercise<sup>14</sup>** can help you prioritize your best, feasible ideas first. Make sure you have a clear understanding of why you're choosing one direction over another.

### Notes:

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# the tech index

communication



**Slack**  
Use **Slack** to communicate informally with your teammates and partners. Make use of the 'channels' function to create different topics of discussion - i.e. 'project, learning, random stuff'. The 'public' and 'private' functions can also help you regulate who has access to certain channels.

**Gmail**  
Use **Gmail** to communicate formally with your teammates and partners. Emails should be well structured, clear and concise. Often, over communicating will work in your favor.

**Notion**  
Use **Notion** for effective project management and task delegation/monitoring. Notion has a lot of handy in built tools such as Kanban Boards and several templates for meeting minutes, note taking and daily stand-up meetings. You can also use the plug-ins to link Google Drive, Figma and other third party software into Noton.

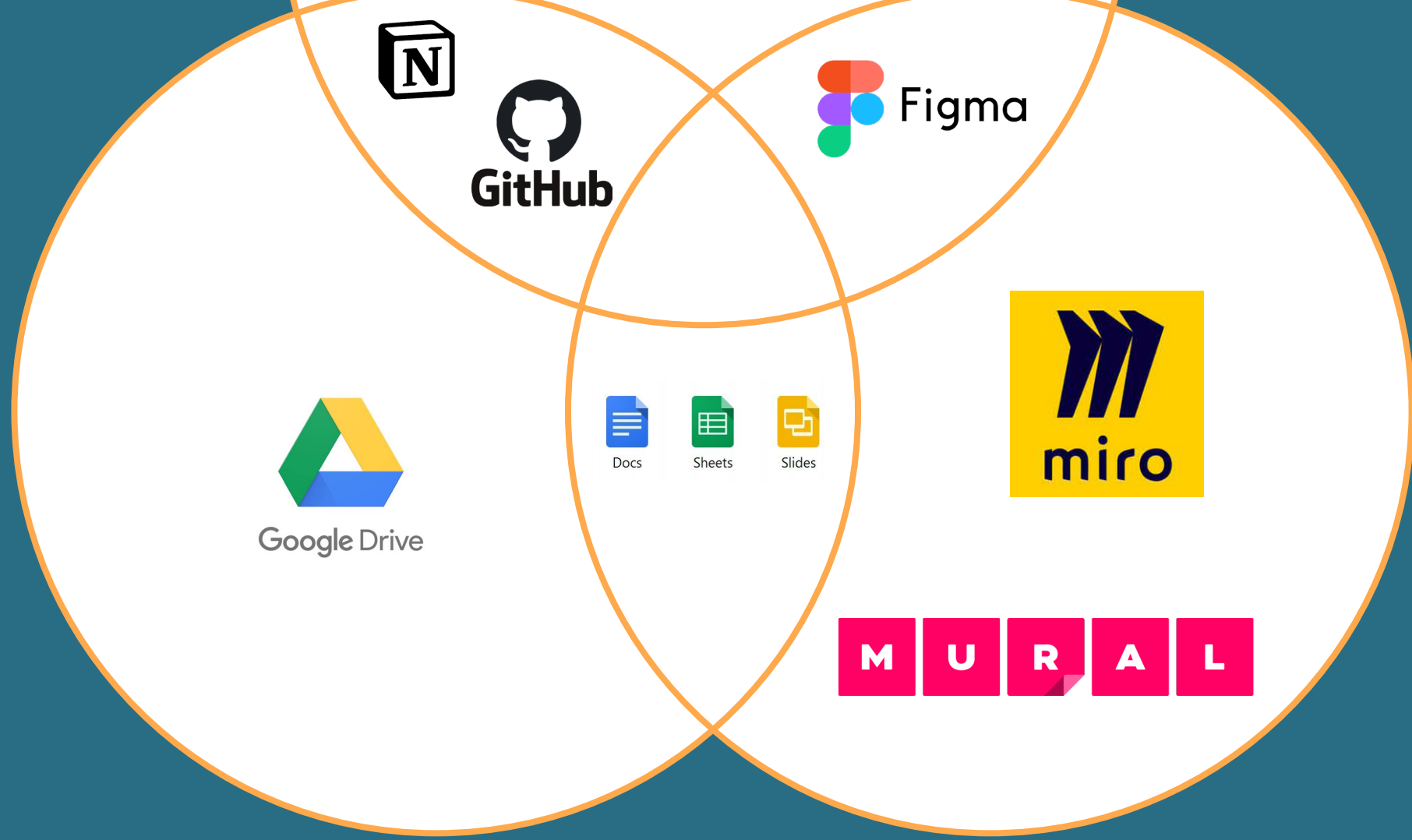
**GitHub**  
Use **GitHub** for open source project management and development tools such as Kanban boards. GitHub also serves as a popular software coding repository.

**Figma**  
Use **Figma** for the rapid prototyping of apps, websites and other visual platforms. It is a tool that can be operated directly out of your website browser and does not require a dedicated software. This makes prototypes easier to share with partners for demonstration and feedback.

**Miro / Mural**  
Use **Miro / Mural** for interactive and real-time brainstorming, workshops, dot voting and ideation. They have several templates which are quick and easy to use.

**Google Docs / Sheets / Slides**  
Use **Google Docs / Sheets / Slides** for easier collaboration and file sharing.

**Google Drive**  
Use **Google Drive** to for file sharing and management. You can edit permissions and create separate folders for team and partner access.



organization

collaboration & creation

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