

# Product Timeline

Products aren't always used as intended. Upon release and throughout its lifecycle the use of a product may change or include outcomes that were not necessarily intended due to its nature of being a part of a larger social ecosystem. As builders of this technology it is our responsibility to monitor & understand how a product is *actually* used in the real world, and not just assume the outcome of our original intent. By asking ourselves, 'How do we intend for this product to be used throughout its lifetime?' we can gain collective understanding of when we may cross a line. Whether we are the original creator of the product or joined the team at a later point in time, there should be a responsibility to knowing and being connected to our creation's true uses.

## When to do this exercise:

Either before or after product has been built and released to users to help a team ideate and understand implications beyond just the present moment. Every product or feature will have an end and will be eventually sunset - by connecting with those potential outcomes early in the process teams can more easily and quickly identify collective indicators of when and how that should happen.

## Grid for Whiteboarding

<b>Today or Upon Release</b>	What will it do? How will people interact with it? By what methods? How will we know our intent is successful?
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<b>One Year After Launch</b>	What will it do? How will people interact with it? By what methods? How will we know our intent is successful?
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<b>Five Years After Launch</b>	What will it do? How will people interact with it? By what methods? How will we know our intent is successful?
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**Upon the Product's Death/Sunset**      *When* will this die? How will it die? Will it be replaced or will it be no longer needed?

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## How:

1. Draw a 2x4 grid on a large whiteboard.
2. Down the left side, write from top to bottom: Today or Upon Release, One Year After Launch, Five Years After Launch, and Upon the Product's Death/Sunset.
3. Designate a facilitator. As a balanced or cross-functional team, begin at the top section, allowing 5 minutes for ideation and individual reflection of the coordinating questions. Have every individual write silently on their own, one idea per sticky note.
4. Next, have the facilitator gather and [affinity](#) stickies at the board within the section. Discuss as a group. Time box the discussion to 10 minutes before moving on. Let the conversation evolve to ensure that *all* voices and opinions are heard.
5. Move on to the next section below, repeating the steps above. The exercise is complete when

## Materials List:

1. Various colors of Post-It notes. One small stack, per person.
2. Sharpie Pens, thick. Best for viewing handwriting from far away.
3. Large white board and dry erase markers or large white paper and pens that will be easily legible from far away.
4. A stopwatch or cell phone for timing ideating and time boxing discussions.