

WAN-IFRA Report | December 2024

Best practice in innovation 2024

**Digital Media Awards Worldwide:
12 cases of excellence**



World Association
of News Publishers



World Association
of News Publishers

Awards Report 2024

Published by:

WAN-IFRA

Rotfeder-Ring 11
60327 Frankfurt, Germany
www.wan-ifra.org

CEO:

Vincent Peyrègne

COO:

Thomas Jacob

Director of Insights:

Dean Roper

Author:

Neha Gupta

Editing:

Dean Roper, Brian Veseling

Design:

Tamara Romčević, Ivan Čosić

Table of contents

About the report 4

Executive summary 5

CASE STUDIES

Best Use of AI in Revenue Strategy: Ekstra Bladet, Denmark..... 8

Best Use of AI in the Newsroom: Russmedia, Austria 12

Best Innovative Digital Product: Newslaundry, India 16

Best Digital Subscription Product: United Daily News, Taiwan 20

Best in Audience Engagement: The Hindu, India..... 24

Best Native Advertising Campaign: Bonnier News, Sweden 28

Best News Website: Amedia, Norway 32

Best Newsletter: The Guardian, USA..... 36

Best Use of Video: South China Morning Post, Hong Kong..... 40

Best Data Visualisation: Reuters, Global 44

Best Fact-Checking Project: Agence France-Presse, Global..... 48

Best Podcast: Food For Mzansi, South Africa..... 52

About the report

Sometimes we hear a bit of reluctance from smaller or local news organisations that are considering joining one of our numerous Digital Media Awards competitions. Their concern: “How can we realistically compete against such larger news organisations?”

Fair point.

But a closer look at this year’s Digital Media Awards Worldwide competition, and previous editions, will be encouraging to those debating joining: real innovation should be recognised – and rewarded! – no matter the size of a news org.

Consider Food for Mzansi, an agricultural news publication based in South Africa. Its Farmer’s Inside Track podcast that serves as a resource for newly commercialising farmers across Africa took home the Best Podcast award in the Worldwide Awards this past May.

“We honestly didn’t see it coming – we don’t have a podcast studio and most of our recordings are done via WhatsApp and Zoom,” said Ivor Price, co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of Food For Mzansi. “This award is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the entire team, who are passionate about sharing the stories of South Africa’s agricultural heroes.”

That level of passion comes across in every case featured in this report, a great source of inspiration and insight into innovations popping up all over the world.

Of the 12 cases featured, there are two clear common themes present in most products or initiatives: a focus on driving subscriptions or memberships and engagement, and often utilising AI and (smart) data to do so.

Russmedia in Austria won the Best Use of AI in the Newsroom award with its comprehensive AI initiative. A big factor in the success of the project were the comprehensive trainings conducted to ensure the newsroom staff was fully equipped to make the most of the new technologies.



“We wanted to build a workforce that was not only adept at using the latest digital tools but also forward-thinking and innovative, capable of pushing the boundaries of digital journalism with AI at the forefront,” Sutterlüty said.

Each case also includes the eventual outcomes, and crucially, lessons learned. This sometimes means the hard and honest work of acknowledging what went wrong or could have been done differently.

To mark its 120th anniversary, the Swedish Heart-Lung Foundation partnered with Bonnier News in Sweden to boost awareness and donations through Expressen’s broad reach. The project won the Best Native Advertising Campaign Award, and was a big success in garnering donations and brand awareness. However, Patrik Hermansson, Team Lead Native at Bonnier News, said a bit more constructive criticism would have proved to be even more impactful.

“A more self-critical approach throughout the campaign might have led to quicker conclusions and potentially even better results. However, as the saying goes, if at first you don’t succeed – try again.”

That’s the spirit.

A huge thanks to all those news organisations participating in our awards competitions. Everyone wins and learns by participating. Check out an [upcoming competition](#) in your region.

And another huge thanks to Neha Gupta for reporting on all this!

Executive Summary

Transforming newsrooms: Reshaping engagement, content, revenue strategies



The 12 case studies featured in our innovation report are winners of WAN-IFRA's prestigious annual [Digital Media Awards Worldwide](#), recognising outstanding achievements in digital media by the news industry. The winners were announced during the [World News Media Congress 2024](#), in Copenhagen in May.

The cases explored span the globe – from India to Taiwan, Hong Kong to Sweden, USA to South Africa.

Best Use of AI in Revenue Strategy: Ekstra Bladet, Denmark **Using AI to boost subscriptions**

Ekstra Bladet, part of JP/Politikens Media Group, used AI to enhance its news experience and boost subscriptions by 35 percent. Through its Platform Intelligence in News (PIN) project, AI-driven recommender systems, natural language processing, and generative AI tools were implemented to personalise content, connect related stories, and automate news generation. This resulted in increased readership, higher click-through rates, and improved subscription growth, solidifying AI's role in both editorial and business strategies.

Best Use of AI in the Newsroom: Russmedia, Austria

AI-powered innovation grow engagement

The “Russmedia meets AI” initiative leverages AI tools to boost newsroom efficiency, enhance content quality, and improve audience engagement while prioritising continuous learning and collaboration. Key innovations include AI-driven CMS upgrades, automated image search, and tailored content strategies.

Best Innovative Digital Product: Newslaundry, India

Innovation driving subscriptions

Newslaundry, India's first ad-free, crowdfunded news app, embodies a user-centric approach, driving subscriptions through features like accessibility tools, podcast integrations, and custom AI solutions. The app now has over 50,000 paying users and stands out in India's price-sensitive market.

Best Digital Subscription Product: United Daily News Group, Taiwan **Data fuels subscription growth**

United Daily News Group (Taiwan) achieved 280 percent subscription growth and 180 percent membership penetration through its Curate X program, which uses data-driven insights and audience segmentation. The initiative integrates data into newsroom workflows, optimising content strategies and enhancing subscriber conversion rates.

Best in Audience Engagement: **The Hindu, India** **Brand campaign with a heart**

The Hindu's *Made of Chennai* campaign celebrated the city's diversity and culture through interactive events and digital content, reaching over 20 million online and engaging 200,000 people in person. The campaign aimed to deepen brand loyalty and build a community connection with the audience.

Best Native Advertising Campaign: **Bonnier News, Sweden** **Redefining native advertising**

Bonnier News partnered with the Swedish Heart-Lung Foundation to create a record-breaking native advertising campaign that integrated a seamless donation feature within articles. The campaign exceeded all engagement benchmarks, generating over five times the expected page views, a 40 percent increase in reading time, and exceeded donation targets, making it the largest native advertising initiative in the organisation's history.

Best News Website: **Amedia, Norway** **Personalisation to improve subscriber experience**

Amedia's ALT service offers personalised news curation, with users selecting their preferred newspapers from a catalogue of 100+ titles. It has helped Amedia grow its +Alt subscription base to 60,000 weekly users and 400,000 total subscribers, generating around 100 new subscriptions and 30 conversions weekly. ALT's success is driven by constant user feedback and data insights, offering tailored feeds and easy navigation for subscribers, with a dedicated team continuously refining the service.

Best Newsletter: **The Guardian, USA** **Reclaim Your Brain – The Guardian's record-setting newsletter**

The Guardian's "Reclaim Your Brain" newsletter helps readers combat phone addiction and has become its fastest-growing newsletter, attracting 90,000 subscribers in its first month. It has achieved 5 million article views globally and driven significant subscriber engagement.

Best Use of Video: **South China Morning Post, Hong Kong** **Making local, long-form video resonate globally**

SCMP Films produces impactful, character-driven long-form videos that explore social, political, and environmental issues across Asia, with over 40 million views in 2023, covering countries like Singapore, India, North Korea, and Japan. The initiative emphasises personal storytelling, safety, and ethical journalism, while also fostering global recognition for the media outlet.

Best Data Visualisation: **Reuters, Global** **Data to design: Visualising the deadly scale of fentanyl in the US**

Reuters' graphic team visualized the deadly scale of fentanyl trafficking across the US-Mexico border, using 10 years of data on drug seizures. The team combined meticulous data analysis, in-depth reporting, and compelling visual storytelling to highlight fentanyl's potency and the impact on both nations, using animated visuals and charts to engage audiences.

Best Fact-Checking Project: **Agence France-Presse, Global** **Fact-check like a journalist with AFP's short videos**

AFP's "How to Verify Information Online" web series educates journalists and the public on fact-checking techniques using short, engaging videos. It covers topics like image verification, geolocation, and video analysis, attracting thousands of views across multiple languages. It combines practical tools with real-time investigations, empowering viewers to combat misinformation online. "The trick is to show in the blink of an eye what the problem is, sometimes highlighting just one detail," said Myriam Adam, who produces videos for the French playlist.

Best Podcast: **Food For Mzansi, South Africa** **Podcast boosts membership**

Food For Mzansi's Farmer's Inside Track podcast offers agricultural insights through interviews with experts and farmers. It has grown into a key resource for farmers across Africa, with over 400 episodes. The podcast also plays a significant role in boosting membership, now at 53,000.



Digital Media Awards Worldwide 2024

12 cases of excellence

The winners of each award displayed the level of innovation, passion, experimentation, communication, and execution necessary to not only thrive in this competition but to succeed in today's ever-challenging media landscape.

Best Use of AI in Revenue Strategy: Ekstra Bladet, Denmark

How Ekstra Bladet used AI (and PIN) to boost subscriptions by 35 percent



Kasper Lindskow, Head of AI, JP/Politikens Media Group.



JP/Politikens, one of the largest media groups in Denmark, began experimenting with AI in late 2019, well ahead of the current boom. The publisher established a project in October 2020 with a 17-person team around its AI efforts at Ekstra Bladet, one of its three national legacy news brands.

The purpose of this experiment was to use the technology to address reader pains in the existing news experience, and in particular, to start Ekstra Bladet's journey towards becoming AI-driven.

The project, titled Platform Intelligence in News (PIN), aimed to leverage AI to reach three strategic goals, said Kasper Lindskow, Head of AI, JP/Politikens Media Group.

- To increase editorial and commercial value creation by using AI to create a new product iteration of ekstrabladet.dk with a wider, deeper, and richer news experience.

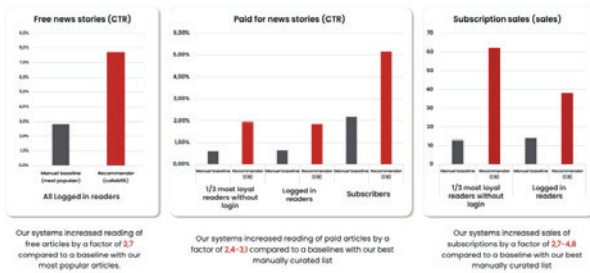
- Implement AI systems that align with editorial values, and maintain control over these technologies.
- Promote healthy norms for AI use in media by sharing their experiences and insights from achieving the first two goals.

“The aim was to use AI to strengthen editorial mission and business strategy. Our editorial mission would be strengthened by creating a wider, deeper and richer news experience where readers would get more relevant news in line with our editorial profile,” Lindskow said.

“And, our business strategy would be supported via increasing advertising revenues and a growing subscriber base resulting from increased traffic and subscriptions sales and reduced churn,” he added.



Extensive A/B testing – showing strong result on our strategic KPIs



Different recommender systems recommend personalised articles to different reader segments on the home page of the website.

AI enables a wholesome news experience

For this project, the team focussed on three types of AI to create a wider, deeper, and richer news experience.

- Wider news experience with recommender systems:** These systems were implemented to personalise aspects of the news flow, allowing the newsroom to present a broader array of content to readers.

This was accomplished by developing a blend of collaborative and content-based recommendation methods to address key challenges in the news domain, such as cold start, rapid item decay, and implicit user preferences.

The goal was to supplement manually curated news articles with personalised news flows that aligned with the brand's editorial values.

The recommender systems were implemented in six horizontal, or swipeable, sections on the home page of ekstrabladet.dk. This approach aimed to manage website space more effectively by complementing the universal news flow with six personalised news feeds, thereby exposing readers to more niche stories tailored to their specific interests.

At the top of the home page, they used collaborative filtering recommender systems, which extensive A/B testing revealed to effectively personalise popular, recently published news stories. In the lower sections, they implemented content-based recommender systems to create news flows finely tuned to individual readers' histories.

Impact: The result was a massive increase in reading of free articles (+110 percent), paid for articles (+38 percent), and subscriptions sales (+35 percent) compared to editorial baselines that did not use personalisation.

- Deeper news experience with natural language processing (NLP):** The team aimed to train algorithms to comprehend Danish news articles, enabling the connection of related articles and gaining deeper insights into news consumption patterns.

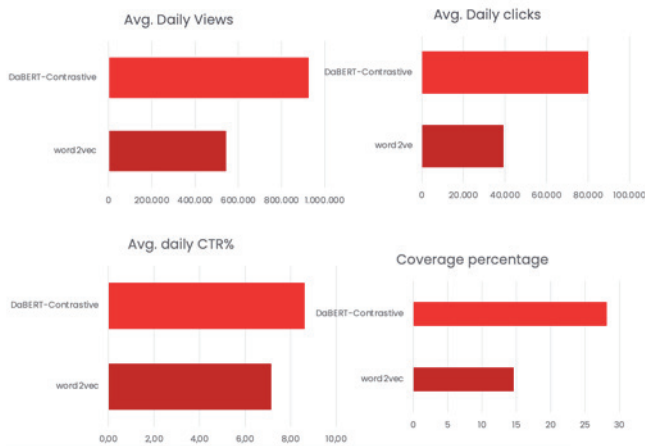
To achieve this, they built and trained various NLP systems on in-house articles, including Named Entity Recognition (NER), topic classification, sentiment analysis, and embedding models for text similarity search.

Impact: The related article lists, measured on Click Through Rate (CTR) performed well.

Related articles on ekstrabladet.dk's article page identified with text similarity models based on contrastive learning.

“Additionally, the algorithms developed by our industrial PhD student (based on contrastive fine tuning of a pre trained transformer) increased their ability to identify related news stories while at the same time increasing CTR from 7.15 percent to 8.61 percent resulting a massive increase in traffic from ‘read more’ lists on more than 120 percent,” Lindschow said.

Richer news experience with natural language generation:



1. First, they introduced an automated stream of local news on the home page of the website, which included a mix of human written news stories (automatically identified to cover local news using NER) and automatically generated news stories about local companies, house sales, and other news using rule-based methods.
2. Later, as generative AI matured, they used GPT3 to add explanatory boxes providing context to the generated stories. The boxes were produced automatically using abstractive summarisation of text data such as management reports in annual reports and public authorities’ sanitation reviews of restaurants.
3. Finally, when ChatGPT3.5 was launched in 2022, the team began developing editorial tools to assist journalists with tasks in their existing workflow to help them save time and enrich stories with new content elements.

Impact: Today, they have expanded their generative editorial toolbox ([MAGNA](#)) to include assistance with article drafts, blogging from live events, and Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG) of news story elements based on Ekstra Bladet’s vast news archive.

Building comprehensive AI systems in-house

To ensure value alignment, a core goal of PIN, the team developed its core machine learning technology in-house. They also established partnerships with universities, giving access to the competencies needed to develop and evaluate their AI systems holistically. Here’s how they went about it:

- While configuring the mix of recommender systems for large scale implementation in 2023, the team relied on insights from 50+ A/B tests of the effects of different systems on the news flow.

“These tests had, among other things, revealed that our collaborative filtering systems had a significant bias towards the most popular news stories, while our content-based recommenders had a low ability to surprise readers with new stories outside their usual reading diet – qualities that we sought to balance when implementing recommender systems at scale,” Lindschow said.

- When training and deploying NLP-models, they relied on knowledge from an evaluation framework developed on PIN that identified the effects of different training methods on the accuracy, efficiency and utility bias of the models.

“This allowed us to deploy NLP-models with a balanced tradeoff between accuracy and efficiency (costs and CO2 emissions) that were not biased against any specific group,” he said.

- Finally, when developing AI systems based on natural language generation, they employed a mix of manual and automated tests to minimise factual errors and hallucinations from entering the news flow.

Lindschow said insights from these tests prompted them to introduce a human-in-the-loop for all AI-generated explanatory boxes and to ensure that all generative editorial tools are anchored in external facts, like the article archive, rather than relying on the internal “knowledge” of GPT-4.

To achieve the goal of healthy norm-setting for AI in news, Ekstra Bladet openly shares its learnings from PIN.

In late 2024, the company published a freely available report detailing key learnings during the first 4-5 years of PIN. [Access it here.](#)

“We open sourced some of our NLP-algorithms, and in March this year, open sourced our basic recommendation algorithms, along with a training set for the development of responsible news recommenders,” he noted.

PIN’s implementation and execution timeline

Executing PIN required coordination across diverse disciplines (from journalism to machine learning) and institutions (from universities to a legacy publisher).

To bridge this gap, an organising committee was formed to align goals across industry and academia, as well as technical and social sciences.

They also set up an innovation team of two ML specialists and two industrial PhD students to connect university researchers with Ekstra Bladet’s data science team and collaborate with the engineering unit on infrastructure upgrades and implementation.

Lindskow said the roadmap for PIN comprised a startup phase, three project phases, and a concluding phase:

In the startup phase, Ekstra Bladet worked with the university partners to define a value compass intended to frame PIN’s roles and priorities.

The first phase of the project (2021), involved training initial machine learning models, and making extensive infrastructure upgrades to support NLP models and large-scale recommender system tests. The phase concluded with the deployment of basic NLP models and the first live tests of recommender systems.

In phase 2 (2022), recommender systems were adapted based on phase 1 insights, while an extended battery of NLP systems were trained on Ekstra Bladet’s annotated news articles. These systems were evaluated for bias with the University of Copenhagen’s framework, and recommender system effects on news flow were analyzed by researchers from the University of Copenhagen and Copenhagen Business School.

In the third phase (2023), they developed editorial tools based on generative AI, including an automated evaluation flow checking content for hallucinations, and live-tested different types of generative tools in the editorial room.

The process concluded in 2023 with several recommender systems and NLP models running live on ekstrabladet.dk – recommending, ranking, and analysing content – and generative AI tools made widely available to journalists.

This year, they have launched a centralised AI unit at JP/Politikens Hus to make PIN’s technology accessible across all media brands in the group. They’re also setting new goals with a 3-year timeline for the AI unit, working in collaboration with these brands.

Editorial values and reader needs: Lessons learned

PIN has involved navigating in uncharted territory with lots of A/B testing. Lindskow shared a few of the team’s learnings:

- Testing methods from other media sectors often proves suboptimal for news publishing. For example, Netflix’s collaborative filtering struggles with “cold start” issues in fast-paced news environments. Instead, deep content-based recommender systems using detailed NLP signals from news articles generally perform better for news recommendations.
- AI systems are not neutral and their design choices greatly influence outcomes. For instance, while recommender systems may equally drive readership, they can impact news flow and reader demographics differently. They, therefore, use a mix of systems to align with their editorial values and address diverse reader needs.
- In late summer 2023, they discovered that generative AI, like ChatGPT, rarely hallucinates when anchored in external knowledge bases. Consequently, they ground their generative editorial tools in external facts.

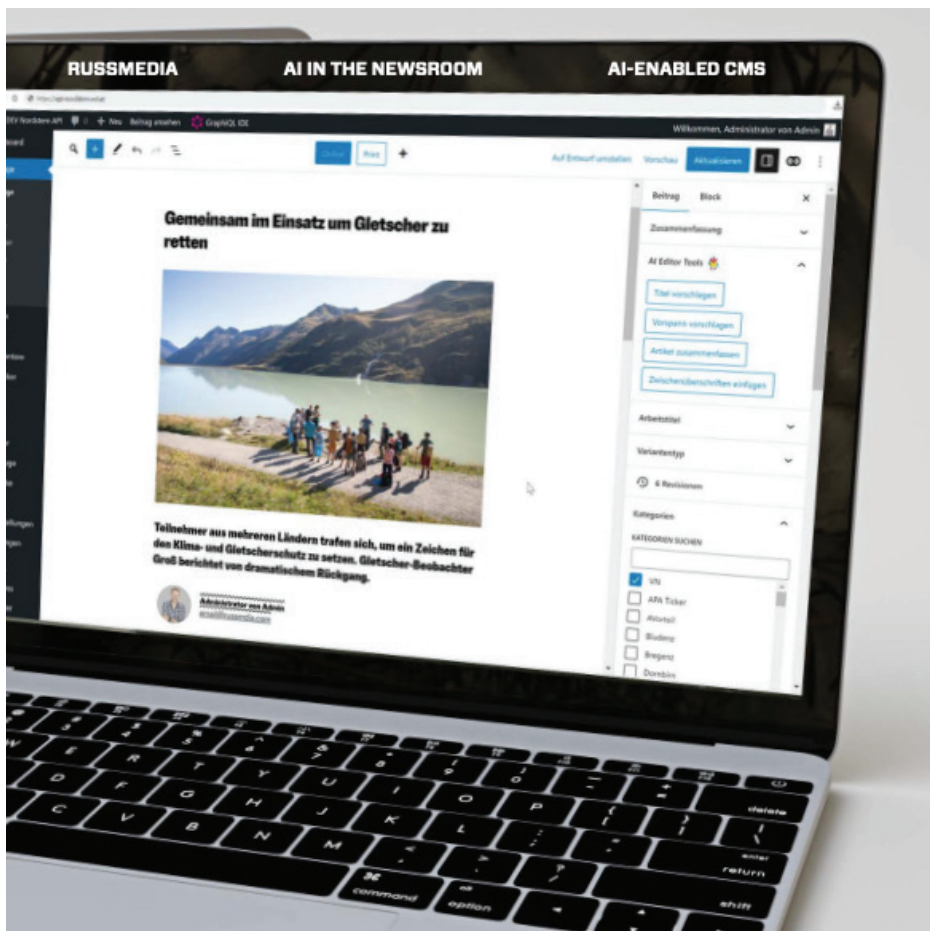
Ekstra Bladet was our winner for Best Use of AI in Revenue Strategy at WAN-IFRA’s Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

Read next: [How JP/Politikens leveraged early AI expertise to build centralised news products](#)

LOCATED:	Denmark
YEAR FOUNDED:	1904
J/P Politikens publications: Ekstra Bladet, Jyllands-Posten, Politiken, Saxo.com, Erritsø Tryk, Avis-Tryk, Finans, Watch Medier, Børneavisen, among others.	

Best Use of AI in the Newsroom: Russmedia, Austria

AI-powered innovation boosts efficiency and engagement at Russmedia



Stefan Sutterlüty, Head of Newsportals, Russmedia Digital.



Austria's Russmedia launched its "Russmedia meets AI" initiative in December 2023, with the goal of redefining digital journalism through the use of Artificial Intelligence, while addressing the needs of both the newsroom and their readers.

"Today, where information overload threatens content value, and audience engagement is paramount, we saw AI's transformative potential to enhance newsroom efficiency, content relevance, and audience interaction," said Stefan Sutterlüty, Head of Newsportals, Russmedia Digital.

"By integrating AI, we aimed to create a dynamic ecosystem where technology and human creativity work in tandem. AI's ability to handle routine tasks allows our editors to dedicate more time to in-depth interviews and thorough research, resulting in compelling stories that truly put people at the centre," Sutterlüty said.

Russmedia's AI innovations involved four key AI-driven phases, each designed to streamline the editorial workflow and enrich the user experience.

Integrating AI within the CMS

AI in the Russmedia newsroom started taking shape with the integration of AI within the content management system, which significantly enhanced the efficiency and quality of newsroom operations.

The development team has created a sophisticated interface that allows editors to adjust settings to suit their needs. In the background, a prompt is generated based on the settings chosen by the editors, which then returns the text results through the OpenAI API. The interface displays the original text alongside the AI-generated suggestions, allowing editors to easily choose the best option. Here's how the CMS uses AI:

Rewrite/shorten tool: This tool uses AI to improve the readability and engagement of articles by automatically refining the text to ensure clarity and conciseness, values instrumental in maintaining reader attention and interest.

Content categorisation: AI automatically sorts and organises articles, saving journalists' time, enhancing content discoverability, and ensuring readers are able to easily find articles that interest them.

Suggest headline: AI generates headlines, subheadlines, and section headings, significantly increasing the likelihood of reader engagement.

Article summary: This tool provides concise summaries of articles, allowing readers quick insights at a glance. "This is particularly useful for readers who are pressed for time but want to know the key points of an article," Sutterlüty said.

Custom AI image search tool

This transformative asset in the Russmedia newsroom has significantly helped to make the editorial process more efficient and improved the visual impact of their coverage.

The tool leverages the multimodal CLIP model for image content recognition, GPT-4.5-Turbo for optimising user prompts, Google's Open Source Facenet model for VIP face recognition, and the MTCNN model to detect and isolate faces in images, ensuring stable and accurate recognition through Facenet, Sutterlüty said.

"A key factor in this project were emerging transformer-based image models. While image recognition AI models have been around for a while now, all of them had one thing in common: They needed extensive training on the dataset which should be searched for," he said.

"We wanted to build a workforce that was not only adept at using the latest digital tools but also forward-thinking and innovative, capable of pushing the boundaries of digital journalism with AI at the forefront."

He further explained, "This training process was too expensive for us to consider, and limited the flexibility of our journalists. Adding new images, and especially adding new VIPs (Variable Importance Plots), should be as easy as a 10-second file upload. Our existing, internal knowledge about image transformer models – and their zero-shot-capabilities – was sort of the north star, which led the technical aspects of this project."

Extensive testing and user feedback resulted in a user-friendly interface and continuous improvements, achieving more than 90 percent accuracy in face recognition. The tool's self-learning mechanism allows for ongoing updates and refinement based on new data and feedback. It has four advantages:

- **Automated labelling:** By understanding the semantic content of images, this feature goes beyond traditional keyword-based searches, allowing images to be discovered through the context and meaning they convey, making the search process easier and more intuitive.
- **Editorial workflow integration:** The seamless integration of this tool into the existing editorial workflows has shown a significant improvement in operational efficiency and content quality. "Editors can now find the perfect images without leaving their work environment, optimising the article creation process from start to finish," Sutterlüty said.
- **Unlocking archive potential:** "By making previously under-utilised images easily accessible, it enriches our storytelling with a wider variety of visual content, ensuring that each article is complemented by the most relevant and engaging images," he said.
- **Increased efficiency and quality:** It also increases the productivity of editors by significantly reducing the time they spend searching for suitable images. "This efficiency gain allows our editorial team to focus more on researching and writing stories. In addition, the emphasis on high quality images ensures that our articles are not only informative but also visually appealing," Sutterlüty added.

Smaller AI offerings

In addition to these tools, Russmedia also introduced a horde of smaller AI features to meet the organisational need of continuous improvement across departments. Sutterlüty said AI integration has fundamentally changed how their newsroom connects with audiences. He listed a few of these products:

AI-powered quizzes and interactive elements have proven to be elemental in increasing engagement.

Tailored content recommendations are no longer a thing of the past, but a dynamic reality ensuring readers consistently find content aligned with their interests.

“By integrating AI, we aimed to create a dynamic ecosystem where technology and human creativity work in tandem. AI’s ability to handle routine tasks allows our editors to dedicate more time to in-depth interviews and thorough research, resulting in compelling stories that truly put people at the centre.”

The pace of publishing has accelerated with AI-powered transcription of video and live events, making it a seamless everyday task.

The digital space is cleaner and more respectful, thanks to automated moderation capabilities that carefully filter out hate speech and fraud for the brand.

Premium content, such as a carefully curated top 10 lists of local restaurants, draws on AI’s ability to synthesise reviews and ratings, providing readers with valuable insights.

SEO optimisation has become more precise, catapulting stories to the top of search results and increasing their reach.

Finally, **smart paywall** strategies are transforming content monetisation, with AI predicting subscription propensities and tailoring offers to reader profiles, ensuring the right content reaches the right audience at the optimal price point.

“All of our tools, features, projects and implementations were accompanied by a spirit of continuous education, and personal and skills development,” he said.



Russmedia conducted numerous trainings as part of its AI initiative, including Future Day featuring keynotes and workshops.

AI awareness in the newsroom

The “Russmedia meets AI” initiative was implemented in phases, beginning with essential upgrades to the CMS in April 2023, followed by the integration of more advanced AI-driven features, and culminating with the launch of the AI Image Search Tool in September 2023. Trainings helped to ensure the newsroom staff was fully equipped to make the most of the new technologies:

Future Day combines keynote talks with hands-on AI workshops and project showcases.

The **digital breakfast** provides regular, concise sessions on AI applications to encourage knowledge-sharing and boost productivity.

The **digital academy** offers a range of online and offline courses accessible to all departments, focusing on building AI skills and supporting personal and professional development.

“We wanted to build a workforce that was not only adept at using the latest digital tools but also forward-thinking and innovative, capable of pushing the boundaries of digital journalism with AI at the forefront,” Sutterlüty said.

Scalability, testing, feedback loops: Lessons learned

The development and implementation of the AI-based image search tool provided Sutterlüty’s team with technical and organisational insights:

- **Importance of cross-functional collaboration:** “Russmedia meets AI” underscored the need for easy collaboration between the technical and editorial teams. “Bridging the gap between these groups was essential for understanding the practical needs of the newsroom and ensuring the tool’s functionality aligned with those requirements,” he said.
- **Scalability and future-proofing:** As their image archive grows and AI evolves, ensuring their systems can adapt and scale is critical, Sutterlüty said.

“Building with flexibility in mind – in terms of hardware capacity and software architecture – allows for easier updates and integration of new functionalities over time. This foresight prevents bottlenecks and ensures our tools and features are capable of handling increasing data volumes and more complex AI tasks without significant overhauls,” he added.

- **There is more to AI** than just GPT and Stable Diffusion or Midjourney. Numerous AI models exist, each with unique capabilities and requirements.

Understanding these models and how to use them effectively has been crucial to the success of our products.

- **Continuous innovation and learning:** Sutterlüty said this approach keeps the newsroom agile, enabling quick adaptation to the media landscape shifts and ensuring the team consistently improves the tools and technologies used to serve their audience.
- **AI as academic assistant:** “While AI plays a crucial role in the advancement of the newsroom, it is clearer than ever that the primary responsibility for the content of articles lies with the editors,” he noted.

Reflecting on the AI journey, Sutterlüty listed a few aspects they could have approached differently:

- **Earlier stakeholder involvement:** Engaging editorial teams and stakeholders sooner could have provided insights to shape the tool’s development more effectively.
- **More extensive initial testing:** A broader and more diverse testing phase could have identified usability and functionality issues earlier, particularly with image metadata, reducing the need for later adjustments.
- **Stronger feedback and iteration post-deployment:** Although the team established mechanisms for collecting feedback and monitoring performance after deployment, they could have been more robust, Sutterlüty said.

“A more structured feedback loop involving regular focus groups, user surveys, and usage data analysis would enhance the tool’s effectiveness. Additionally, a dedicated team focused on continuous improvement would ensure the tool evolves with both technological advancements and user needs,” he said.

Russmedia won the Best Use of AI in the Newsroom at WAN-IFRA’s Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

Read next: [Achieving sustainability: Implementing a revised business strategy for a growing newsroom](#)

LOCATED:	Austria
YEAR FOUNDED:	1919
Russmedia publications: Vorarlberger Nachrichten, VOL.AT, erento.com, quoka.de, among others.	

Best Innovative Digital Product: Newslaundry, India

User-centric innovation drives subscriptions at Newslaundry



Tritanopia



Deuteranopia



Dark mode

Newslaundry, an independent and entirely digital newsroom, was one of the earliest players in India to test subscriptions. By placing user needs at the heart of product development, the team crafted a user-centric app that has become instrumental in driving its subscription success.

Launched in 2012, the company produces content across multiple formats including video, text, comics and podcast, and averages more than 20 million monthly social media impressions.

A core target for the company is to deliver user-centric news products. These efforts have culminated into a robust app offering, built on a business model to prioritise subscriber needs while ensuring accessibility. It registers more than 50,000 paying subscribers.

The Newslaundry app is now the seventh top-grossing app on Google Play Store, with over 60,000 downloads,

and has generated revenue of more than INR 1 crore (112,316 euros) since its release last year.

“As an ad-free website, we serve our readers, and not advertisers. This translates to building products that have not been tried in the Indian digital media ecosystem – from bundled subscriptions to accessibility tools,” said Chitranshu Tewari, Director, Product and Revenue.

Extensive beta testing to improve user experience

A three-person tech team beta-tested the app with a sample of 3,000 paying subscribers, whose feedback helped tweak it and fix bugs.

It was publicly released in April 2023 and allows subscribers to access podcasts, make payments, manage

subscriptions, engage with stories, and buy merchandise.

With limited financial resources, Newslaundry turned to its readers for support and was able to raise Rs 15 lakh (about 1.5 million euros) through a crowdfunding campaign. This made it India’s first ad-free, crowd-funded, independent news media app.

The team upped the ante with the product design, offering features such as custom notifications, playback speed control, the ability to delete user data, and custom payment options.

Additionally, the app integrated reader-controlled features for convenience. This included bookmarks, offline consumption, podcast downloads, languages, dark mode, playback features, saving and sharing, sleep control, offline consumption, and show notes.

“This app is evidence of how even a small newsroom can deliver an innovative product by constantly evolving, putting user needs at the forefront, and fostering a sense of community among our subscribers,” Tewari said.

“In India, you see several newsrooms turning to subscriptions since the ad revenue over the last five to six years has gotten smaller. Even now, India is a very price-sensitive market. And so we need a lot of advocacy and marketing to make people understand why they must pay for news,” he added.

Partnership pays off, helping to build brand

Notably, the success of the app extends beyond its user base. In October, Newslaundry launched a bundled subscription with The News Minute (an Indian digital news outlet), adding its podcasts on the app.

The News Minute collaboration was not merely a product strategy but also to build merit and brand. “We share a lot of values with them, especially by way of editorial coverage, ground reports and sharp, nuanced analysis,” he added.

Both the organisations leveraged each other’s strengths: Newslaundry with its strong subscription model and The News Minute with its comprehensive coverage of South India, focusing sharply on issues at the intersection of caste and gender.

Newslaundry is in the process of partnering with two more publishers.

“Journalism products are often notorious for offering a bad user experience. We don’t have that excuse. Funded by a community of more than 50,000 paying readers, we can’t afford to offer a bad product experience. If a user is paying anywhere between INR 3,000 to INR 10,000 (about 33 euros to 110 euros) every year for a Newslaundry subscription, they will unsubscribe if we don’t offer a good experience,” he said.

NL-TNM Joint Subscription

Game Changer Annual

19000 **₹15999**

₹ 3001 off

SUBSCRIBE NOW

- ✓ Paywall stories on both Newslaundry and The News Minute
- ✓ RSS feed of all paywall podcasts
- ✓ Stronger together merch – Fridge magnets, laptop stickers, mug
- ✓ Priority access to all meet ups and events, including The Media Rumble
- ✓ All subscriber-only interaction – NL Chatbox and monthly editorial call with the team

NL-TNM Joint Subscription

Disruptor Annual

6000 **₹4999**

₹ 1001 off

SUBSCRIBE NOW

- ✓ Paywall stories on both Newslaundry and The News Minute
- ✓ Stronger together merch – Fridge magnets and laptop stickers
- ✓ Priority access to all meet ups and events, including The Media Rumble
- ✓ All subscriber-only interaction – NL Chatbox and monthly editorial call with the team
- ✗ RSS-feed-of-all-paywall-podcasts

Enhancing privacy with custom infrastructure

The team began by surveying and understanding the frameworks and infrastructure best suited to deliver such a product, considering cross platforms such as React Native and Flutter, as well as native platforms such as Kotlin and Swift.

“We chose React Native over others to suit our small team; it makes it easier for us to push updates and use existing libraries for critical functions,” Tewari said.

The team set up a new server to store the user database. “While most publishers rely on a range of SAAS products for management and processing user data as it’s often cheaper, easier and prevents maintenance issues,” he explained, “We chose to build our own server to enhance privacy controls and gain control of user data.”

During the past few months, the team has also moved the Newslaundry website to this server.

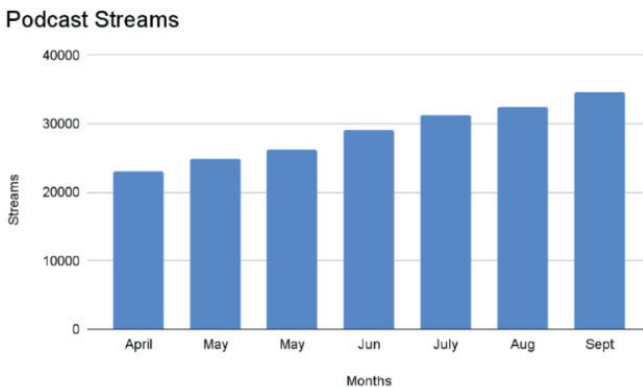
Outcomes and learnings

The app enabled the team to effectively monitor podcast analytics for paywalled content, a capability they previously lacked and one that ended their reliance on third-party tools.

It not only boosted engagement rates but also increased the podcast completion rate. It has also helped drive user engagement and time spent, tripling the number of podcast downloads.

Tewari said the biggest lesson they’ve learned was the significance of listening to and involving subscribers in the development process.

Looking back, he said they could have done two things differently on the tech side:



Monthly streams have steadily increased since the launch.

- **Library usage:** As part of the React Native framework, they used various libraries for app functions. While big newsrooms have the bandwidth to design their own libraries, this was not an option for their small team with limited resources. “However, we could have picked a few critical functions to develop in-house. The downside of using libraries set up by others is that you’re often dependent on them for updates,” he said.
- During the app’s design phase, they overlooked accessibility for people with disabilities. With a significant population of 25 million people with disabilities in India relying on assistive technology to use the internet, this was a critical need they failed to address in the initial product build.

Making news accessible

That said, Newslaundry went back to the drawing board to research accessibility best practices. After nearly six months of development and testing, they rolled out a bunch of features that made the app and website more accessible to users with disabilities.

In the testing phase, Tewari established a direct line of contact with Newslaundry users and gave them his phone number. More than 80 users reached out to him via WhatsApp voice notes to share their thoughts on what they liked, what didn’t work, and what could be improved.

Here’s what the newsroom implemented:

Screen reader compatibility: “Users with visual impairments rely on screen reader software to navigate apps. This feature makes our website and app compatible with screen readers in iOS, Windows, MacOS, and Android, as well as leading screen reader software such as JAWS and NVDA,” he said.

They also have semantic HTML and ARIA labels, hints and roles that help visually disabled users with additional context.

Colour filters and contrast themes: Users can choose between high-contrast and low-contrast designs to tweak the contrast between text and background for better readability.

Dyslexia font to make text more readable for dyslexic users, and motion control to help users with ADHD.

Transcripts and subtitles: An in-built, one-click transcript for podcasts, and a read-aloud functionality for all text stories. Plus, closed captions for all videos.

Voice search with just a tap, with filters for authors, sections and tags

Reader mode: This enhances the reader experience by eliminating all distractions in the form of sidebars and banners, presenting stories in a clean format optimised for reading.

“We have always tried to create a clean, no-distraction design. It helps that we don’t have any ads. After all, we all hate pop-ups, banners and ads in the middle of a story page,” Tewari said.

Since the launch, screen reader compatibility has been the most used feature, followed by podcast transcriptions. Around 8,500 unique users are trying out the new features. The team is also planning to use GenAI for use cases around accessibility.

“More than 15K unique users already use accessibility settings and controls across the website and the app,” he said.

How is Newslaundry looking at AI?

Newslaundry has been actively exploring AI’s potential through capacity-building sessions designed to integrate AI into everyday operations. These sessions cover practical applications such as form transcriptions, headline writing, and training chatbots using research document PDFs.

On a broader scale, the organisation has focused on equipping its tech and product teams with skills in prompt engineering and generative AI journalism tools. They’ve also drawn insights from global examples to inform their strategies.

Currently, Newslaundry is developing custom AI tools aimed at automating subscription support outreach, enhancing internal training, and generating alt text for images and data visualisations using a tailored GPT model. Proofs of concept for these initiatives are already in place, with a full launch planned for the second week of October.

Newslaundry was initially sceptical of AI, viewing it as a tool that often fuels high-volume, SEO-driven content in India’s ad-centric news market. Prioritising in-depth, long-form journalism, the newsroom saw limited direct use for AI. Still, it recognised AI’s potential and chose to integrate it into workflows to boost efficiency, focusing on subscriptions and accessibility rather than SEO-driven content.

It identified repetitive tasks across teams and introduced AI to streamline workflows—such as transcription, subtitling, social media copy generation, and meta-tagging.

Beyond these, it developed two custom solutions:

1. A custom GPT chatbot that helps desk editors write alt-text descriptions for images and infographics
2. An LLM-powered app for the subscription team that automates technical troubleshooting and onboarding processes for new joiners. This app includes a chatbot that answers and troubleshoots technical queries and complaints by subscribers and facilitates knowledge transfer on our tech and product stack. It does so as the LLM is trained on the technology and product stack, including all the products it uses for its subscription management.

Previously, senior developers had to spend several hours weekly resolving issues. The AI solution has significantly reduced this workload and helped save senior resource hours for the organisation, noted Tewari.

“As an independent newsroom, we focused on identifying pain points – especially tedious, repetitive tasks – and using AI to address them. Instead of retrofitting generic AI tools, we tailored solutions to our specific needs, ensuring meaningful impact,” he added.



Newslaundry won the Best Innovative Digital Product at WAN-IFRA’s Digital Media Awards Worldwide. Chitranshu Tewari (R) accepted the award in Bengaluru in July during WAN-IFRA’s AI Summit from K.N. Shanth Kumar, Director, The Printers (Mysore) Pvt. Ltd and Member of the WAN-IFRA Board.

LOCATED:	India
YEAR FOUNDED:	2012
TOTAL SUBSCRIBERS:	50,000+
BASIC MODEL:	Subscription
Fast fact::	Newslaundry is India’s first ad-free, crowdfunded, independent news media app.

Best Digital Subscription Product: United Daily News Group, Taiwan

Data drives 280 percent subscription growth at United Daily News



Lin Yi Lin, Data Development Department Manager, UDN, at WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Asia 2024.

United Daily News Group (UDN) in Taiwan has significantly reshaped its subscription growth through a home-grown data-driven curation program called “Curate X.”

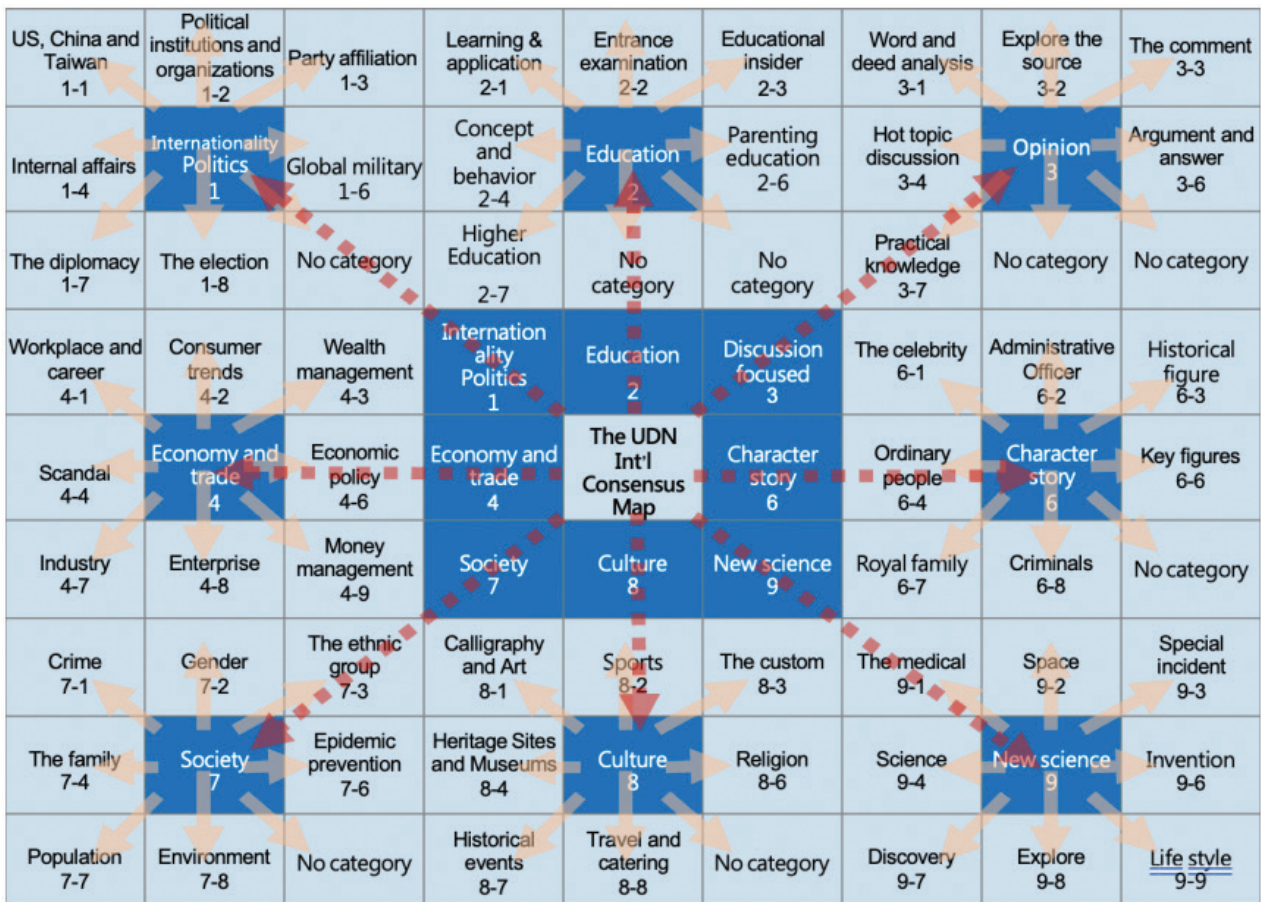
UDN's Data Development Department (DDD) established the program in 2021 to integrate data into the newsroom workflow and has been elemental in driving effective content monetisation and user-centric approaches.

The newsroom has the largest first-party data reserves among Taiwanese news publications, said Lin Yi Lin, the Data Development Department Manager.

UDN has more than 7.3 million registered members and over 16 million monthly unique visitors. In 2023, UDN had subscription growth of more than 280 percent, alongside a membership penetration growth exceeding 180 percent.

Three key strategies that helped UDN align its goals and outcomes are:

- **Re-imagining the value of news content:** This includes a deep understanding of audience needs and restructuring story development to encourage a broader scope.
- **Rebuild newsroom transformation:** This is done by fostering a culture of cross-functional collaboration and optimising workflows through data-driven insights.
- **Content development for different business needs:** The team is committed to content development tailored to different business needs, which involves behavioural segmentation of first-party users and the data-driven development of key topics to better meet user needs.



United Daily News' Consensus Map

Consensus Map provides a guideline for journalists

An initiative that leverages data in the Curate X program is UDN's International Consensus Map, which helps journalists in content creation. It acts as a guideline for them to deliver precise content effectively by tailoring topics in accordance with the map.

The map features 36 dynamic data models applied across various sectors within UDN, focusing on different content areas and audience engagement strategies.

These include 18 data models focusing on editorial and newsroom, seven data models tailored to business services, three for digital news channels, two for video and audio programs, and six aimed at course programs.

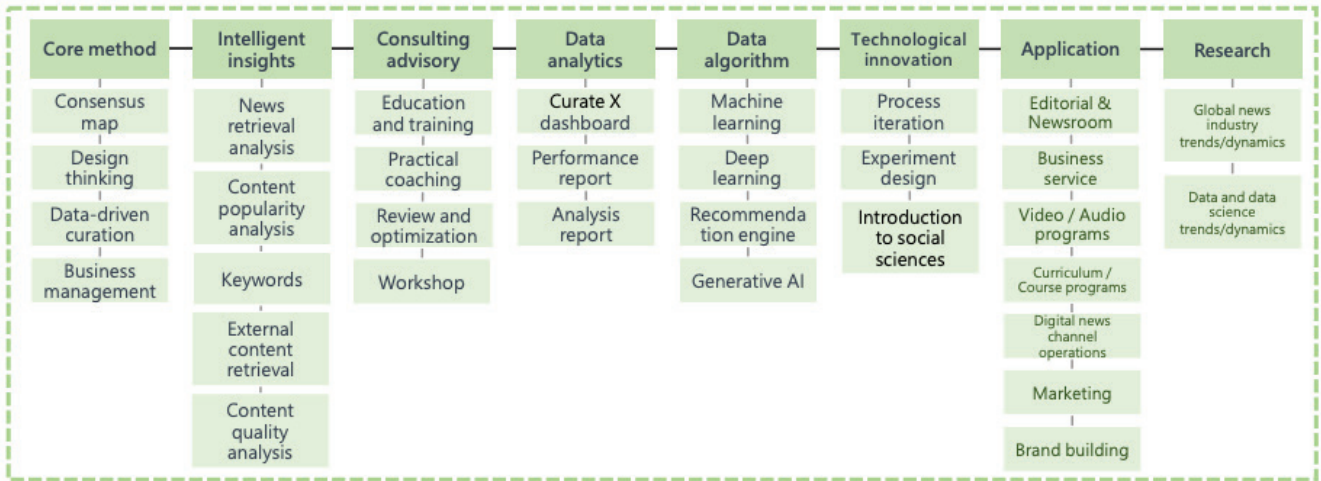
"This dynamic model is updated daily through our central data system, and is aligned with breaking news. This approach helps in formulating precise content development strategies by continuously adjusting subtopics and content according to data insights," said Lin. "We also conduct meetings to review the topics in the map over time."

These meetings help the team to brainstorm for more compelling content that aligns with user interests and needs.

The Curate X framework

The Curate X Framework provides a detailed approach to implementing the program across various departments within UDN:

- **Newsroom:** Consensus maps are used to categorise news content, assess audience interest, and collaborate with reporters on content curation and data training.
- **Business Service:** The framework uses consensus maps to systematically categorise commercial content, ensuring that articles with specific keywords align with the defined content characteristics.
- **Curriculum:** The framework identifies audiences interested in specific content, categorises and analyses them using consensus maps, and explores which course features are most appealing.
- **Delivery:** This aspect focuses on identifying audiences on vertical news platforms, assessing their content interests, and prioritising content operations and development accordingly.



Curate X service models and portfolio

- **Multimedia:** Intelligent retrieval is used to categorise program scripts and interviews, aligning audience interest with program planning and behavioural characteristics.
- **Brand Building:** The Curate X program leverages data-driven collaboration for content brand development, identifying audience behavioural traits within specific content and brands, and implementing segmented strategies.

Fostering communication about audience engagement

The process of building a newsroom communication and collaboration bridge is centred on the Curate X approach.

“This involves managing initiatives to develop new editorial verticals, identifying key metrics for daily insights, and fostering communication about audience engagement,” said Lin.

She explained three processes:

- **Newsroom process**

The newsroom editorial workflow emphasises gathering input from field journalists, managing assignments, and providing strategic direction. Using a vertical topic consensus map and the Curate X dashboard, the process focuses on intelligent content curation, aligning news with audience interests for more relevant coverage.

- **Sales and marketing process**

Curate X integrates data-driven strategies into sales and marketing, starting with industry insights and business content curation, followed by data monitoring and optimisation. Collaboration workflows and consensus mapping ensure effective alignment with business goals and audience behaviour.

- **Video/audio programs process**

In video and audio production, Curate X optimises content through data integration and audience analysis. The process involves pre-interview planning, script optimisation, and continuous performance tracking, ensuring that content strategies meet audience expectations and engagement targets.

Identifying topics that convert subscribers

The DDD has published more than 5,000 articles and developed over 25 consensus map topics.

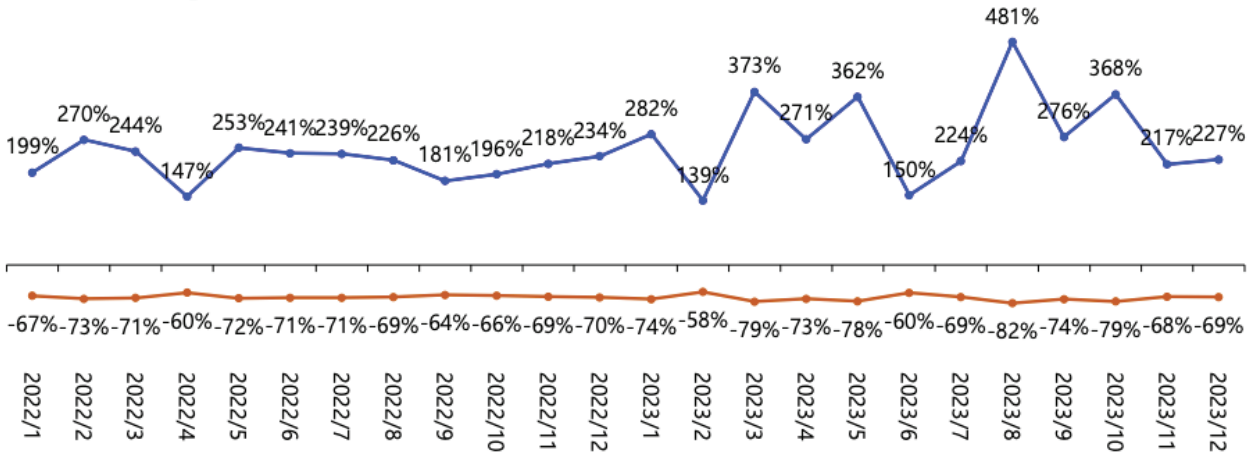
In the third quarter of 2021, non-member visits to the news site fell for topics under weapons and intelligence.

Using the Consensus Map as a guiding framework, the team experimented with different approaches, using special articles on prominent events such as the Airshow China 2021 and the Singapore Airshow 2022 to increase non-member visits. These efforts paid off with increases in non-member visits.

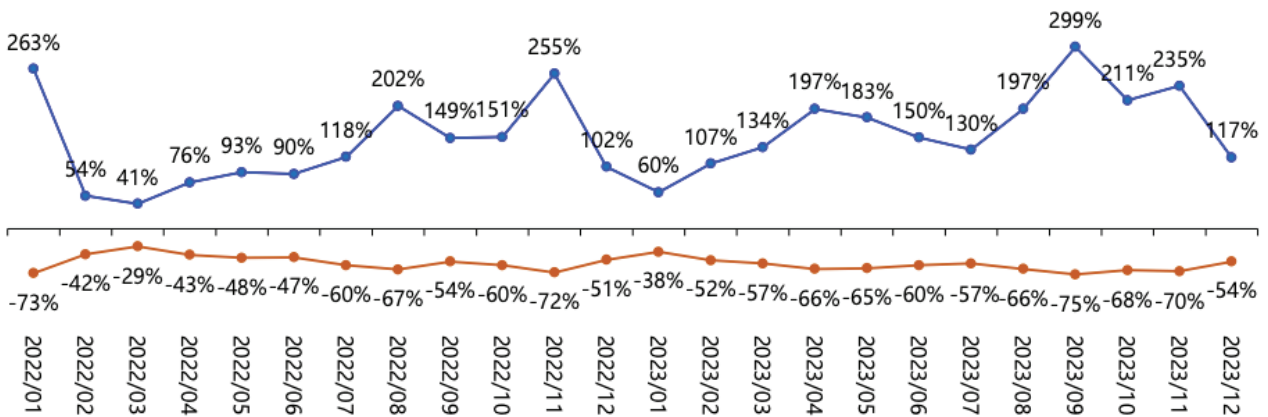
A thorough analysis of the consensus map revealed that the subscriber conversion rates for the specific topics such as education, opinion, society and culture remain consistently high, prompting the newsroom to continue writing real life stories in relation to those subtopics, according to Lin.

This approach yielded positive results, with a rise in conversion rate for real life content in the fourth quarter of 2022.

“Journalists need content design strategies and tools to help them with content creation,” she said. “The establishment of cross-functional teams that set clear goals and have a shared culture is also essential for effective collaboration.”



United Daily News' VIP.udn.com



Economic Daily News' money.udn.com

Outcomes and results

Lin cited two cases where Curate X has helped boost subscriptions and member penetration (above).

The first case is of United Daily News' VIP.udn.com, where, over a 24 month period, articles introduced with Curate X experienced a threefold increase in order conversions (blue line) compared to those without.

The second case is of Economic Daily News money.udn.com, where, over 2 years, the member penetration rate for individual articles with the implementation of Curate X is 3-4 times (blue line) higher than of those without.

Lin also listed a few lessons they've learned:

- The team developed a deeper understanding of audience behaviour and needs, leading to more effective story curation.
- It improved its skills in data-driven journalism, integrating user behaviour data with content development.

- This allowed them to tailor their story more effectively to audience interests, resulting in increased subscription and membership rates.
- Additionally, the project enhanced the newsroom's digital literacy and technology adoption, marking a significant transformation in their approach to story and management.

United Daily News Group won the Best Subscription Product at WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

LOCATED:	Taiwan
YEAR FOUNDED:	1951
REGISTERED MEMBERS:	7.3 million
UNIQUE MONTHLY VISITORS:	16 million
MEMBERSHIP PENETRATION GROWTH:	180%

Best in Audience Engagement: The Hindu, India

The Hindu's brand campaign with a heart: Made of Chennai



The Hindu, one of India's largest English dailies, launched a brand campaign in 2023 called "Made of Chennai" (MoC), to celebrate the spirit of the South Indian city and its residents.

Spanning 45 days, it was launched during the Madras Day celebrations – the city's 384th birthday, in August. The objective was to boost audience engagement, increase brand visibility, foster deeper connections with the community, and drive the growth of a loyal readership.

"The Hindu was founded in Chennai in 1878. Our goal was to strengthen brand-consumer relationships and bolster consumer loyalty through a unique audience engagement campaign fostering meaningful connections and community empowerment," said Karthik Nagappan, Head of Brand, The Hindu.

The campaign was marketed through print ads, social media, radio, and OOH advertisements. A team of 10 executed the strategy by leveraging interactive content, influencer collaborations, and a blend of virtual and

on-ground activities. Consistent audience engagement across these platforms effectively drove traffic back to The Hindu's website.

The campaign ultimately reached over 20 million digitally, engaged 200,000 people on the ground, and grew an Instagram following of 15,000 in just 45 days.

Redefining brand loyalty through community

MoC was rooted in The Hindu's desire to "transcend conventional brand-consumer relationships and elevate audience loyalty through a unique and engaging campaign," noted Nagappan.

He listed the initiative's successes:

- **Authentic brand-consumer relationship:** A key driver was to reinforce The Hindu's connection with its place of origin and showcase the human side of the brand.



Celeb collabs

- **Building community:** It did this by fostering a deeper connection and building emotional bonds with the audience.
- **Inclusivity:** The campaign highlighted the city’s cultural diversity, including cinema, beaches, food, and music, appealing to diverse generations and communities.
- **Empowerment and innovative engagement strategies:** “MoC offered a platform for public participation, positioning the brand as a catalyst of positive change and personal growth,” Nagappan said. It featured on-ground experiences and user-generated challenges to involve people directly in the celebration.

Implementation and execution

The campaign was rolled out in two phases:

Phase 1: On launch day, a detailed message celebrated Chennai’s unique diversity and encouraged people to share their stories. The “Made of Chennai” song, and collaborations with more than 50 celebrities, vividly portrayed the city’s essence, blending its past and present.

Phase 2: The Hindu used its editorial expertise and collaborated with city experts, historians, and civic bodies, including the Greater Chennai Corporation, Chennai Police, and Chennai Metro Rail, to ensure seamless execution.

The activities included:

- **User-generated challenges:** This included trivia quizzes, photo contests, tagline challenges, etc.
- **Chennai-a-Maze:** 14 cryptic crosswords on the city’s heritage and history had to be solved by participants who discovered the answers on Instagram reels.
- **Music on Wheels:** A musical experience with 15 artists on a double-decker bus engaged with audiences as they went, making stops at IT Parks, beaches, malls, etc., covering a wide stretch of Chennai.
- **Public concerts:** Thirteen concerts were organised across metro stations, parks, hangout spots, etc., where local bands from the city performed.
- **The Hindu walkthrough:** A curated archival exhibition with photographs from The Hindu’s photo library was organised at the Ripon Building (head-





quarters of the Greater Chennai Corporation of the Tamil Nadu Government), office premises of The Hindu Group and seven metro stations.

- Moonlight cinema:** For the first time, local city-themed blockbuster hits were screened at two beaches in the city on two weekends.
- Grand celebration at the Ripon building:** Madras Day was celebrated in a grand fashion graced by the honourable Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and other key leaders.
- “Made of Chennai” run:** A 5K and 10K heritage run was organised with the route set through some of the city’s iconic spots and monuments.
- Heritage walks and food trails:** Three locations were hand-picked by experts who also served as guides on these walks for city enthusiasts.
- Food and music festival:** A two-day food and music gala over a weekend brought the city’s eclectic mix of flavours and rhythms under one open-air festival. There were more than 40 food stalls and 45 music performances.





From reach to resonance: Lessons learned

In addition to a digital reach of over 20 million, and high engagement, the food, music, and movie events registered 55,000 people.

Around 40,000 people visited the archival photo exhibit. The campaign also attracted an Instagram community of 15,000 followers, demonstrating that, “The Hindu didn’t just create a campaign; it built a community,” Nagappan said.

He listed the lessons his team learned:

- **Community-centric approach** will help in creating a lasting impact and forging meaningful connections.
- **Leveraging historic relevance** can be a powerful strategy.
- **Strategic timing:** The campaign aligned with the city’s birthday creating a sense of significance and resonance among the audience.
- **A comprehensive multimedia promotion** coupled with extensive outreach ensured a wider audience reach for the campaign.

During the campaign, The Hindu also published a 20-page special supplement in the newspaper, and four special features in Metroplus – the lifestyle tabloid. These were curated by city historians and experts and delved into Chennai’s rich history, heritage and culture. It was available in print and e-paper.

Furthermore, the Chief Minister launched three city-based special publications by The Hindu Group.

The Hindu was the Best in Audience Engagement at WAN-IFRA’s Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

Read next: [Trust and value: The Hindu Group’s digital evolution](#)

[How The Hindu is using AI to help boost engagement](#)

LOCATED:	India
YEAR FOUNDED:	1878
CAMPAIGN DIGITAL REACH:	20 million+
GROUND ENGAGEMENT:	0.2 million
REGISTRATIONS:	40,000

The Hindu Group publications:

The Hindu, Business Line, Sportstar, Frontline, among others.


Best Native Advertising Campaign: Bonnier News, Sweden

Bonnier News redefines native advertising with record-breaking campaign



Stöd i så fall forskningen.

Det tar mindre än en minut att swisha. 50 kronor är en vanlig gåva men du väljer säkert själv vad du vill bidra med.

Skriv ditt telefonnummer 



Hjärt-Lungfonden är en insamlingsorganisation med 90-konto som kontrolleras av Svensk Insamlingskontroll. Vi behandlar dina uppgifter enligt vår [dataskyddspolicy](#).

To mark its 120th anniversary, the Swedish Heart-Lung Foundation partnered with Bonnier News to boost awareness and donations through Expressen's broad reach.

As Bonnier's largest brand, Expressen was a natural choice, offering an extensive audience to highlight the foundation's crucial role in advancing science and public health, both in Sweden and internationally.

Bonnier's other brands such as Dagens Nyheter (DN), Amelia, and Mama targeted key demographics within the foundation's audience.

Central to the campaign was an innovative conversion tool for donations aimed at showcasing the foundation's century-long impact on tackling some of Sweden's most prevalent diseases.

The partnership is unique both in terms of size and design. "It represents a milestone for Bonnier News' commercial content, combining creativity, innovation and direct benefit to the customer," said Patrik Hermansson, Team Lead Native.

Multi-channel engagement strategies

The campaign features "high-impact native articles and emotional television features" that drive audience engagement with the customer's brand, noted Hermansson.

Complementing this are targeted social media posts, innovative print formats, and precision-focused performance ads designed for direct conversions.

At its core is a cutting-edge conversion widget, developed by Execute Media using Swish technology, enabling seamless donations with just a few clicks. Strategically embedded in native articles and display ads, the widget has proven to be a highly effective tool for driving conversions.

So far, the campaign has exceeded all engagement benchmarks, with every published piece delivering record-breaking results, compared to past campaigns.

"From science-focused articles to emotionally compelling stories about disease victims, our audience has actively clicked, engaged, and contributed," Hermansson said.

**”Vi vill ju hjälpa människor att kunna
leva ett friskt liv länge.”**

– Kristina Sparreljung

"We want to help people to be able to live a long healthy life."

The Swedish Heart-Lung Foundation relies solely on individual donations, and Bonnier News made this clear from the outset. “Allow yourself to be captivated by an intriguing, heartbreaking or hopeful article, but in the end we want you to do one thing - donate.”

The overwhelming success has prompted the Swedish Heart-Lung Foundation to expand the campaign several

times, underscoring its impact – not only in achieving high page views but also in generating substantial donations.

“A key factor behind the campaign’s success was the dedicated editorial team that managed all content, paired with the client’s own committed resources,” he added.

Vill du också att fler ska kunna överleva ett hjärtstopp?

Stöd i så fall forskningen. Det tar bara någon minut att swisha. 50 kronor är en vanlig gåva men du väljer såklart själv vad du vill bidra med.

Skriv ditt telefonnummer swish[®]

Annat belopp
Swisha 50 kr



Hjärt-Lungfonden är en insamlingsorganisation med 90-konto som kontrolleras av Svensk Insamlingskontroll. Vi behandlar dina uppgifter enligt vår [dataskyddspolicy](#).



Donation pop-up within an article

Breaking new ground in native advertising

There were three driving forces behind this project – innovation, strategy and business.

On the innovation front, the campaign marked uncharted territory for Bonnier News and, to the best of its knowledge, for any media outlet engaged in native advertising.

Using the popular Swish payment system – developed by Sweden’s leading banks – the newsroom integrated a seamless donation feature directly within the articles. This allowed readers to contribute to the cause without leaving the content, eliminating barriers and minimising drop-off rates.

“From science-focused articles to emotionally compelling stories about disease victims, our audience has actively clicked, engaged, and contributed.”

Donation pop-up within an article

Strategically, the campaign opened new opportunities for the company. “This partnership has proven not only that it was possible but that it worked – both technically and in terms of results,” said Hermansson.

Through the client’s “curiosity and commitment,” the 25-member team was able to continuously A/B test, refining the balance between engaging content and donors’ willingness to contribute.

In business terms, this campaign stands as the largest native advertising initiative in Bonnier News’ history, said Hermansson.

“The partnership has proven mutually beneficial, with the raised money spent driving both awareness and direct donations, effectively recouping a significant portion of the investment,” he added.

EXPRESSEN

ANNONS | INNEHÅLL FRÅN HJÄRT-LUNGFONDEN



Elsa, 28, har fått över 50 hjärtstopp

28-åriga Elsa Lundin levde livet som vilken ung tjej som helst tills hon var 17 år gammal. Sedan dess har hennes hjärta stannat fler än 50 gånger.

– Jag var 17 år, jättefrisk, ung och sportig. Om det här hände mig kan det hända vem som helst.

“Ultimately, it’s all about the numbers. Converting high volumes of page views and time spent into donations was the campaign’s core challenge. Testing, learning, and refining strategies throughout the campaign were essential to its success.”

Linking metrics to outcomes

The main KPIs for this campaign were page views, time spent, and actual donations.

Page views and time spent were closely linked and have long been key metrics for the company’s native campaigns. However, optimising these KPIs was crucial to the success of this campaign, as its outcome ultimately relied on a numbers-driven approach.

Achieving the campaign’s targets required attention to content, presentation and the conveyed sentiment.

“The Swedish Heart-Lung Foundation’s reputation for trust and reliability had to be upheld, making clickbait tactics both inappropriate and damaging. As a result, we focused on building genuine engagement with readers,” Hermansson said.

“Ultimately, it’s all about the numbers,” he said, adding, “Converting high volumes of page views and time spent into donations was the campaign’s core challenge. Testing, learning, and refining strategies throughout the campaign were essential to its success.”

Extended engagement – reading time sets new record

By way of results, the campaign achieved over five times the expected page views week after week.

Additionally, the average reading time exceeded benchmarks by 40 percent. “While not a record on its own, combined with the exceptionally high page views, it underscores the campaign’s uniqueness,” he said.

The crucial KPI of donations has also performed exceptionally well, thanks in large part to the high volume of engaged readers.

Continuous testing and an open-minded approach helped the team refine its strategies, learning from both successes and setbacks to boost conversion rates.

Clicks don’t equal contributions: Lessons learned

This campaign marked a new challenge for Bonnier News, focused on a novel KPI – donations. Ongoing learning and regular evaluation with the client were crucial to refining the approach.

Hermansson listed a few learnings:

- High click-through rates don’t always translate into donations
- Celebrity-driven content, despite Expressen’s audience interest, didn’t perform well in terms of donations. “Our hypothesis is that people tend to feel more empathy for everyday individuals than celebrities, even when the issue affects both equally. For celebrity content to drive donations, it requires more authentic engagement and passion from the celebrity,” he said.
- The campaign required a shift in content strategy, moving beyond standard best practices. Flexibility, open-mindedness, and a willingness to reassess content were key to achieving success.

“Despite the campaign’s overall success, there were moments where an internal perspective dominated, which could have been minimised,” he remarked.

“A more self-critical approach throughout the campaign might have led to quicker conclusions and potentially even better results. However, as the saying goes, if at first you don’t succeed – try again,” he added.

Bonnier News had the Best Native Advertising Campaign Engagement at WAN-IFRA’s Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

Read next: [Driving loyalty through streaming live local elite sports at Bonnier News](#)

LOCATED:	Sweden
YEAR FOUNDED:	1804
Publications:	Bonnier News controls over 50 percent of Sweden’s newspaper market, including Dagens Nyheter, Expressen, Dagens Industri, 47 local papers, 20 magazines, and 15 B2B brands.
Fast fact:	The consumer side contributes 70-75 percent of revenue, with business media making up the rest.

Best news website: Amedia, Norway

ALT news service helps to personalise subscribers' experience, get new readers

Norwegian publisher Amedia has more than 100 newspapers across the country, and launched its digital subscription model +Alt in 2020. In April 2023, it introduced the ALT news service, a personalised platform that curates a tailored content mix to suit reader preferences.

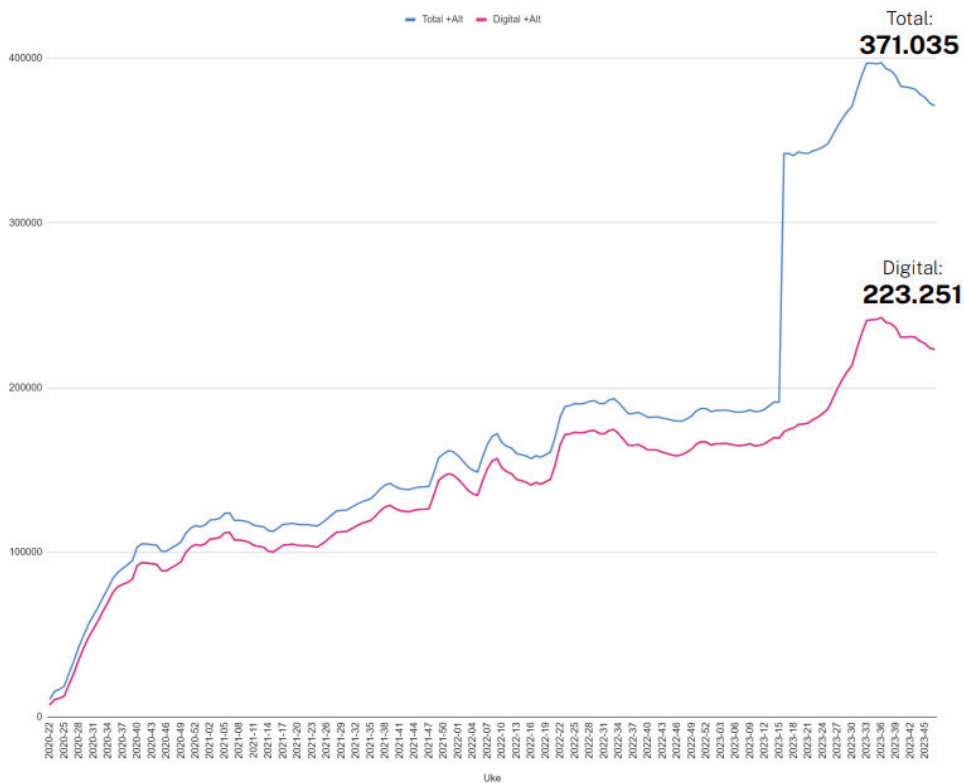
With almost 1000 articles published daily, it is key for Amedia to put users in control of the news experience. And that's exactly what the news organisation set out to achieve with ALT service – a website that gives the reader the best of what they want, based on their preferences.

The Norwegian word “ALT” translates to “everything” in English, and the ALT service “really gives you everything,” said Mathias Høibakk Bergquist, Product Owner, ALT service.

Data shows that +Alt subscribers using ALT are more loyal than those who don't, “although it's hard to say which drives the other,” he said.

As of February this year, +Alt, the premium subscription bundle, has grown to 60,000 unique weekly users. It has nearly 400,000 paying users, which is around 60 percent of the total subscription base.

Each week, ALT helps generate around 100 new subscriptions and 30 upgrades to +Alt. The incremental revenue and subscriptions generated stay with the individual newspapers, supporting local journalism.



Amedia has just under 400,000 +Alt subscribers.

Customising news with ALT: Tailored feeds, smooth navigation

Bergquist said Amedia’s goals with the creation of ALT were personalisation, seamless navigation, and added value.

“In essence, the objective was to create a sanctuary within the digital sphere, where curiosity is kindled, and the joy of discovery is a daily experience. ALT was to be more than a service; it was to be a companion in the daily lives of our subscribers, making the vast world of news accessible, engaging, and, above all, personal,” he said.

Amedia built its ALT news service in-house, with some external assistance during the early design phase to create the distinctive look and feel of alt.no. However, all implementation, development, and innovation has been handled entirely by Amedia’s employees.

When it comes to the tech stack and CMS, however, ALT does not have its own dedicated CMS. Instead, it relies on the content published across the 100+ newspapers included in the service. These newspapers use *CUE*, a CMS developed by Danish company *Stibo DX*.

On the front pages of those newspapers included in the +Alt/ALT collaboration, Amedia has automated a random article reference to alt.no. This comes from the top 10 articles of a newspaper that a user follows and appears when the user visits that specific newspaper’s site.

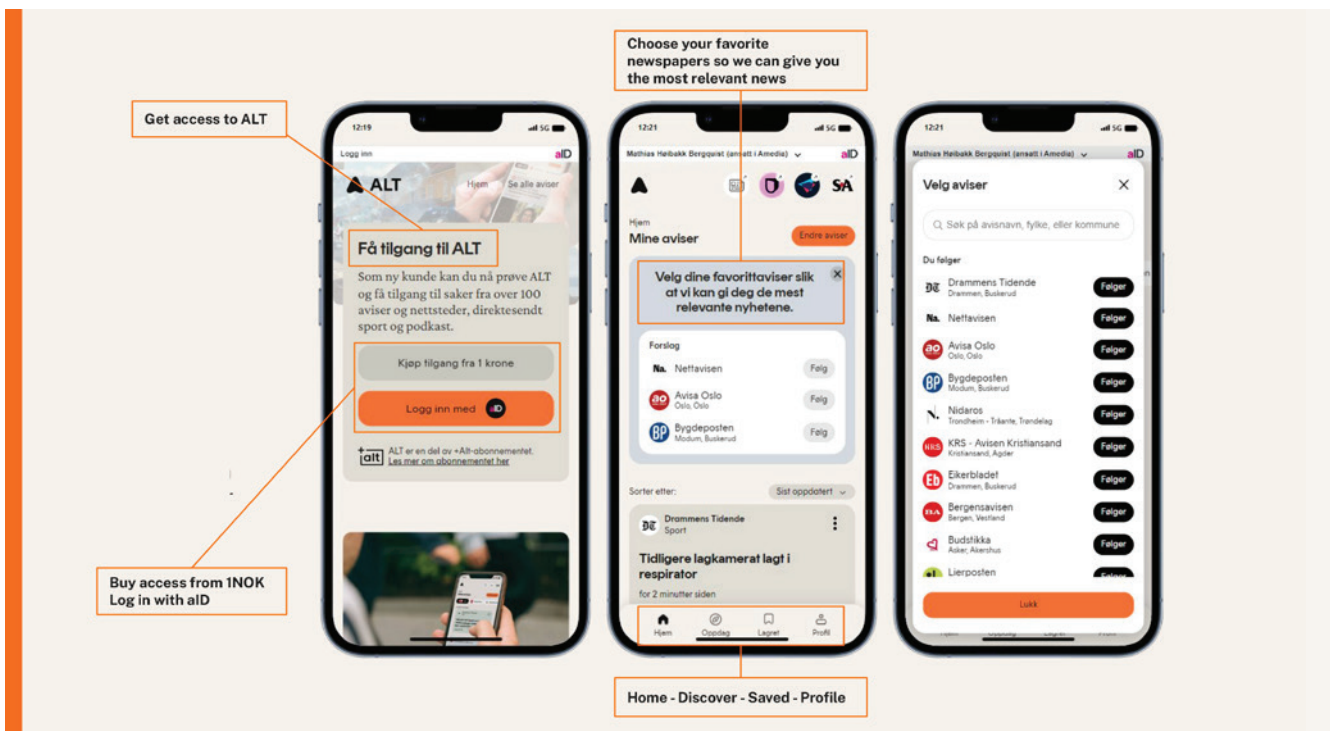
For an ALT reference to appear for a subscriber, the following conditions must be met:

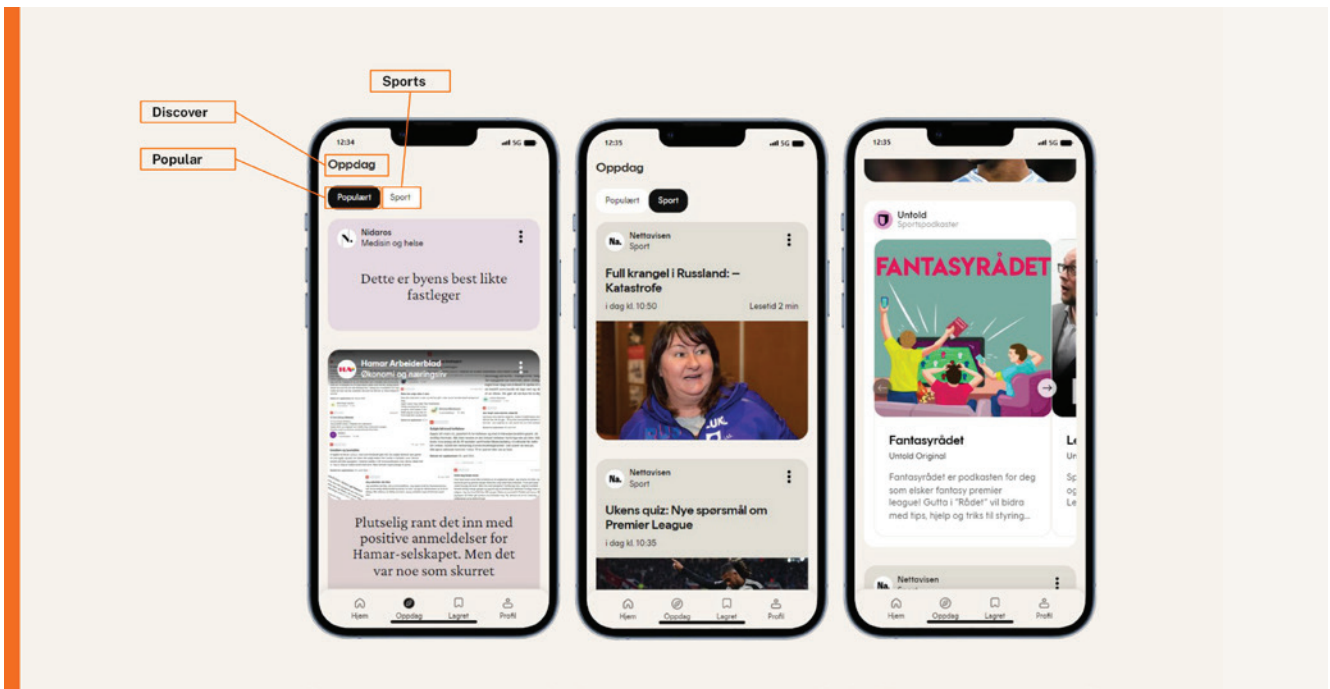
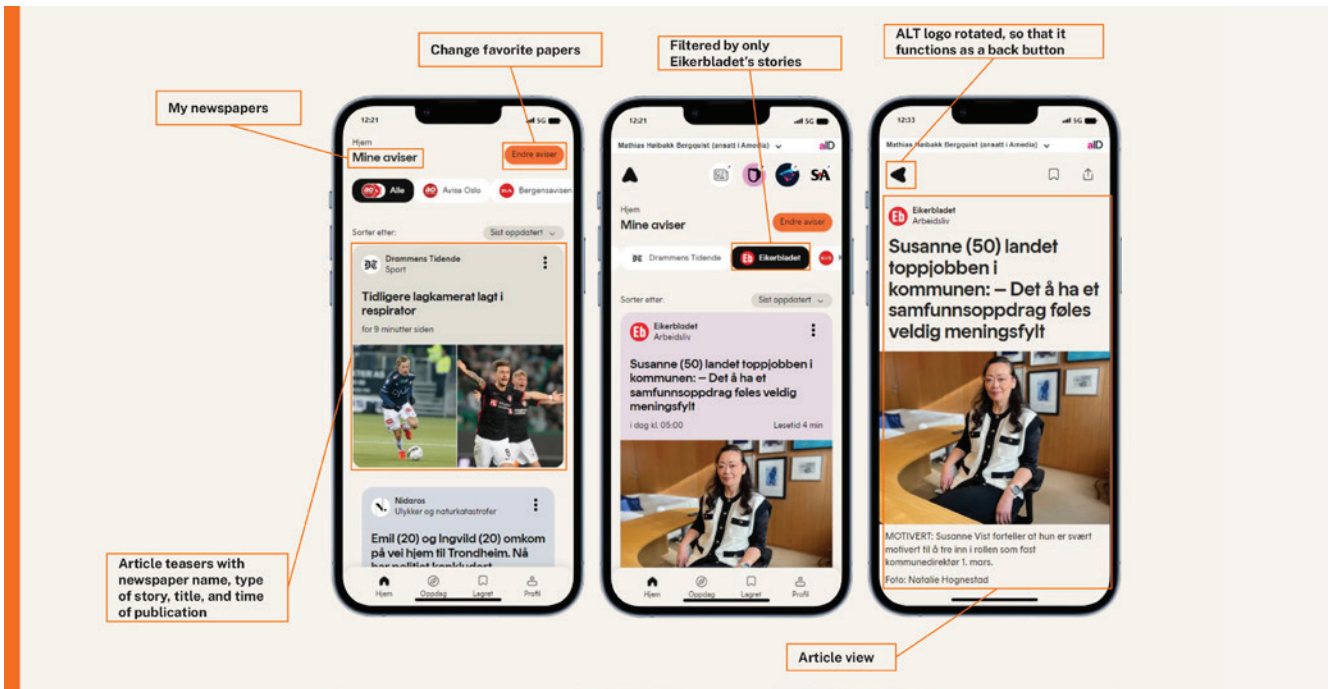
- The subscriber must have access to +Alt and, therefore, all their newspapers.
- The subscriber must have previously visited the ALT service.
- The subscriber must have selected which newspapers they are interested in within the ALT service.

Inside the ALT service itself, the inclusion of widely read content from across the country is also automated. Again, while these processes are automated, they do not rely on AI technology.

At the heart of ALT is the home feed, where subscribers can handpick their favourite newspapers from the catalogue of titles. This allows them to tailor their news feed by selecting individual newspapers or a combined stream, organised either by publication time or the front page front-page hierarchy – putting the reader in the driver’s seat. It also gives subscribers access to Direktesport’s streaming service, and to Untold – one of Norway’s biggest premium podcast services.

ALT presents subscribers multiple ways to explore the content universe. The “Discover” option is a dual-component offering that enhances content discovery. The “Popular” feed is powered by an algorithm that curates “top-tier, universal content that users might not encounter otherwise,” said Bergquist.





“The sports feed” highlights upcoming matches on Direktesport, sports podcasts, tables, and live streaming of audio from Premier League matches, alongside sports journalism from Nettavisen – an online paper owned by Amedia.

With access to around a 1000 articles everyday, several +Alt subscribers found it difficult to navigate the large volume of content, noted Bergquist.

“Through ALT, we envisioned a seamless integration of local and national narratives, enabling our subscribers

to immerse themselves in a bespoke news experience, tailored to their unique interests and connections across Norway,” he said.

But why stop at simplifying the consumption of news?

“Thus, the journey of ALT began, not merely as a project but as a mission to redefine the way Norwegians interact with news – making it more accessible, personalised, and engaging,” he added.

Building ALT: Data and feedback loops drive success

For the creation of ALT, Amedia set up a cross-functional team comprising developers, designers, analysts, and UX experts, steered by a product manager, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the user experience.

ALT’s development was characterised by rapid iterations, constant feedback loops, and an openness to pivot based on user insights. This approach allowed the 15-member team to adapt swiftly, ensuring that ALT remained responsive to the evolving user needs. “Our mantra was simple: listen, learn, and iterate,” Bergquist said.

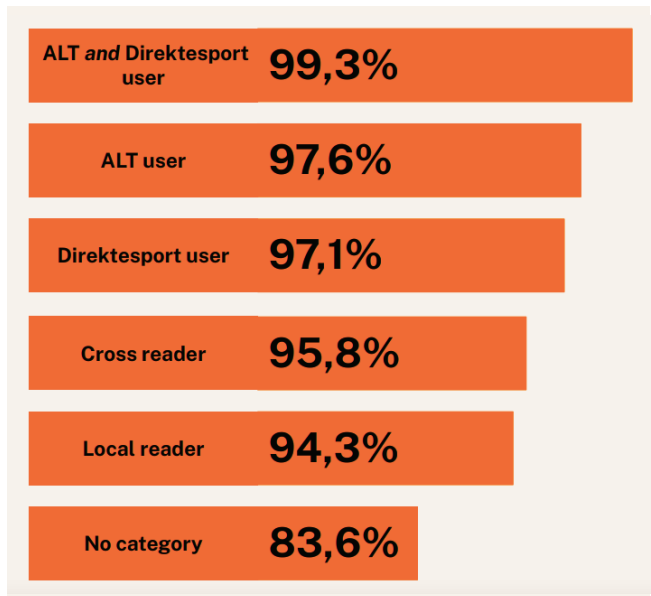
Today, a dedicated team of 10 continues to develop ALT, keeping it at the forefront of digital news aggregation.

Throughout ALT’s development and launch, the team relied on user feedback and data insights. “This approach ensured ALT became a personalised, intuitive, and enriching news service that truly resonated with users,” he said.

Earlier engagement, closer collaboration: Lessons learnt

Amedia grouped its +Alt subscribers into six buckets, based on their consumption pattern in May and June, 2023. Upon checking the retention rate at the end of October, the numbers suggested that the subscribers who used one or more of Amedia’s premium services, such as ALT, were more loyal than those who did not.

Bergquist also reiterated the importance of pivoting, based on user feedback. “ALT was conceived as a “supersmart” service, leveraging available data to curate content without active user choices,” he said.



“User testing revealed that people felt confused and wanted more control. In response, we changed course, allowing users to customise their home feeds.”

In hindsight, Bergquist admitted that closer collaboration with their +Alt partner newspapers from the start would have helped.

“Their content is central to ALT, and their subscribers are our users. The service relies on the newspapers’ promotion to boost traffic and engagement. A more integrated approach with our partners early on could have accelerated our growth,” he said.

Amedia was the Best news website at WAN-IFRA’s Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

Read next: [Norway’s Amedia finds success with bold experiment focusing only on young readers](#)

ALT and Direktesport user	Visits on at least 10 unique days on ALT and at least 10 unique days on Direktesport
ALT user	Visits on at least 10 unique days on ALT
Direktesport user	Visits on at least 10 unique days on Direktesport
Cross reader	At least 20 unique days on newspapers other than the one you subscribe to
Local reader	At least 20 unique days on the newspaper you subscribe to
No category	Not qualifying for any of the above

LOCATED:	Norway
YEAR FOUNDED:	Berlingske, founded in 1749, is Amedia’s oldest newspaper.
UNIQUE WEEKLY USERS:	60,000
TOTAL SUBSCRIBERS:	400,000 as of February this year
Publications:	Amedia owns 107 newspapers in Norway, partners with 20 more, and co-owns 65 Swedish titles through Bonnier News Local.

Best newsletter: The Guardian, USA

Reclaim Your Brain – The Guardian’s newsletter to fight mobile dependency

Reclaim Your Brain, a newsletter by The Guardian, is for anyone who wants to spend less time on their phones.

It was launched in January this year and has quickly become the British media giant’s fastest growing newsletter ever, registering 90,000 subscribers in the first month alone.

With 60 percent unique subscribers, the newsletter has successfully engaged many readers who had not previously subscribed to any of The Guardian’s other offerings. This presented as a valuable opportunity to connect the audience with the brand’s broader content ecosystem and upcoming products, like *Well Actually*, a wellness newsletter, launched in March this year.

Reclaim Your Brain is co-written by Max Benwell, Audience Engagement Editor, The Guardian, USA, and Catherine Price, science journalist, author and speaker.

It provides a five-week coaching plan with expert advice and evidence-based assignments to improve mobile phone habits. It’s an asynchronous newsletter, which means readers can sign up to it whenever they want and receive the same five-week series of emails from that point.

“Our aim was to challenge the overuse of phones, and provide access to some of the latest reporting and research on phone addiction,” said Benwell. “We wanted people to feel happier about their screen time, fostering deeper connections with themselves and the world around them.”

Another key objective was to create a shame-free space where people could address their phone habits at their own pace. Subscribers were encouraged to revisit previous weeks if needed, without guilt, even if they had experienced setbacks in their progress.

“Our aim was to challenge the overuse of phones, and provide access to some of the latest reporting and research on phone addiction. We wanted people to feel happier about their screen time, fostering deeper connections with themselves and the world around them.”

Reclaim Your Mind offerings

Each week the newsletter guides readers through the different stages of Price’s program, beginning with self-reflection to pinpoint what’s causing their dissatisfaction with phone use. It then introduces exercises designed to gradually reduce screen time.

In later editions, the newsletter offers tasks aimed at improving readers’ attention spans and rediscovering joy beyond screens, with sections focused on meditation, reading, and what Price refers to as a “delight practice.”

Reclaim Your Brain also includes a weekly diary from Guardian writer Rhik Samadder, tracking his rollercoaster journey to get off his phone. “Hilarious, and at times emotional, it provides an amusing and relatable accompaniment to Price’s coaching plan,” Benwell said.

For the newsletter’s launch, The Guardian also published a series of 30 articles over six weeks, all focused on phone addiction and how to combat it. This content not only raised awareness about the issue but also helped boost newsletter subscriptions.

So far, these articles have received 5 million views globally. Highlights include a reported feature on a school in Massachusetts that banned phones, a Q&A with five leading global experts on phone addiction, an interactive quiz to determine readers’ phone personalities, and a guide for outlining four essential phone-use rules for couples in 2024. The coverage also featured op-eds, exclusive news stories, a podcast episode, and reader-submitted insights.

Creating a supportive space for readers

The idea for the project originated with Benwell, who pitched it to his editor after numerous conversations with people expressing frustration over their phone use and inability to cut back.

“As someone who has struggled with phone addiction myself, I noticed it wasn’t a topic people openly discussed – perhaps because we all felt so hooked and helpless,” he said.

His resolve to pursue the project deepened after The Guardian published a callout asking readers how they felt about their screen time. Hundreds responded, with an overwhelming majority expressing significant dissatisfaction.

With this feedback in mind, The Guardian set out to create a space where readers could recognise they’re not alone and find proven strategies to reset their relationship with their phones.



‘Thief of my life!’ Rhik embarks on his battle to stop scrolling so much. Can he do it?

After experiencing complications from surgery, breaking up with his girlfriend, and becoming a recluse, Guardian writer Rhik Samadder found himself trapped in his phone, losing hours to it every day.

Every week we’ll be following his quitting journey, starting with an unorthodox strategy.



Monday

Something has to change. I keep zombie-scrolling for hours before throwing my phone across the room, shrieking: “Thief of my life, Thief of my joy!” and falling asleep again.

I’d read that a month of limiting screen time can build a habit, but my phone addiction has led me to expect instant results.

I want an on-demand detox, and I’ve come up with an idea of how to get it.

I am going to *complete* my phone. By which I mean, spend a week on it – as much as I can. This will be an extreme form of aversion therapy: like fathers who force their delinquent sons to smoke a whole box of Camels until they’re sick.

Implementation and execution

As editor, Benwell conducted extensive research on phone addiction while developing the project, identifying key experts and writers to collaborate with. This led him to select Catherine Price, author of *How to Break Up With Your Phone*, widely regarded as the definitive guide on the topic, to lead the newsletter’s coaching plan.

After commissioning Price, Benwell worked with her to distil the content into five emails, incorporating Rhik Samadder’s diary. He then teamed up with Marcus Peabody, Head of Visuals, and Caroline Phinney, Senior Producer, Newsletters, to bring the project to life.

Simultaneously, Benwell collaborated with his co-editor, Jessica Reed, to commission and edit stories for The Guardian’s website that would draw readers in and direct them to the newsletter signup page. These articles were strategically spaced out over the newsletter’s initial five-week run to maximise opportunities for subscriptions.

To further engage the audience, they designed a custom phone wallpaper that illustrated how many days per year users spend on their phones, based on daily screen time averages. The wallpaper, shared on Instagram, went viral, driving thousands of sign-ups. Additional Instagram posts and a street interview video embedded in articles helped further promote the project.

“As someone who has struggled with phone addiction myself, I noticed it wasn’t a topic people openly discussed – perhaps because we all felt so hooked and helpless.”

Asynchronous newsletter equals increased subscriptions: Lessons learnt

This was the first asynchronous newsletter produced by Guardian US, and it proved to be a significant learning experience, Benwell noted.

“The process of finalising all the emails ahead of the deadline required considerable time, effort, and meticulous organisation,” he said.

The project also highlighted the effectiveness of newsletters that tackle specific, relatable issues, revealing a strong demand among Guardian readers for limited-run, asynchronous formats. The success of this initiative has shaped their approach, and they plan to incorporate these insights into future newsletter launches.

“This was easily the best project I’ve worked on in terms of teamwork, meeting deadlines, and achieving results,” Benwell said. Reflecting on areas for improvement, he added, “A live event would have been a valuable addition, as it’s an effective way to attract more engaged subscribers.”

“I also would have liked to collaborate with a wider range of illustrators and photographers, but overall, I was pleased with the visuals we produced across the project,” he concluded.

The Guardian won Best Newsletter at WAN-IFRA’s Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

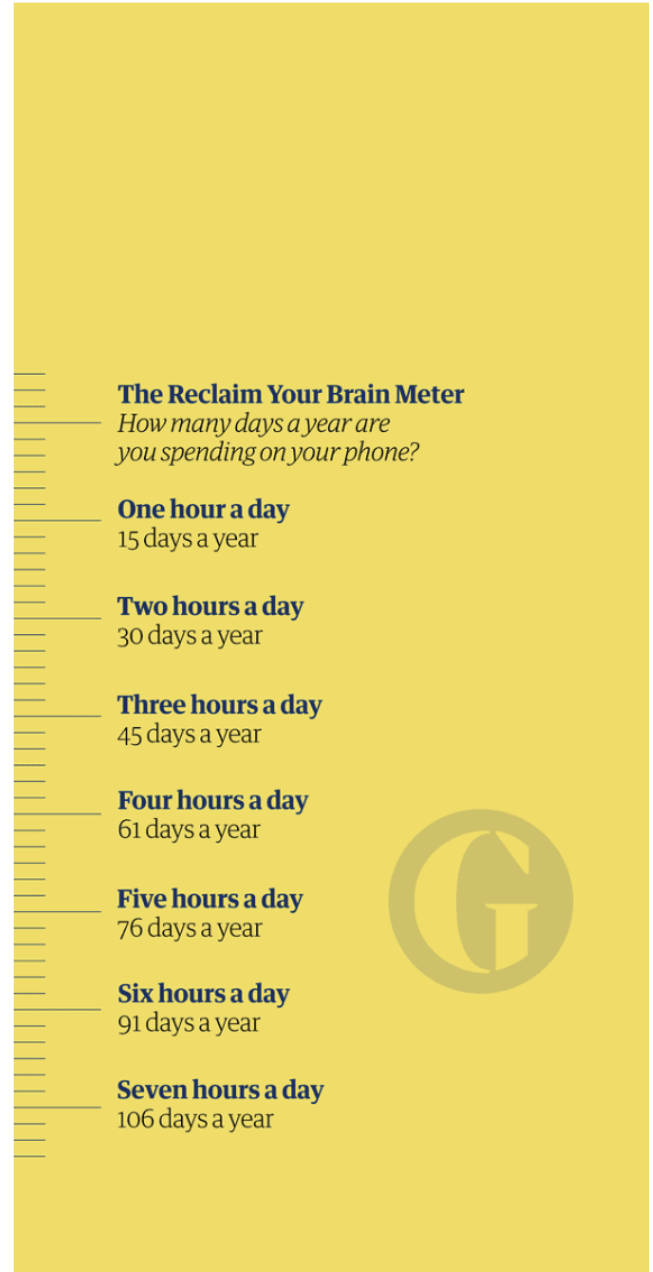
Read next: [How The Guardian continues to drive print revenues through subscriptions](#)

“For the newsletter’s launch, we also published a series of 30 articles over six weeks, all focused on phone addiction and how to combat it. This content not only raised awareness about the issue but also helped boost newsletter subscriptions.”

Think twice before you scroll with this wallpaper

We’ve designed this special Reclaim your brain phone wallpaper to show you how much your daily screen time adds up over a year.

It works best without lock screen widgets (which can be a distraction anyway), and pairs nicely with a physical “speed bump” – such as an elastic band wrapped around your phone.



LOCATED:	London
YEAR FOUNDED:	1821
TOTAL PEOPLE BEHIND RECLAIM YOUR BRAIN:	4
TOTAL NEWSLETTERS PRODUCED:	61

WAN-IFRA Newsletters

Sign up for our free newsletters leading the way in publishing on <https://wan-ifra.org/newsletters/>

Executive News Newsletter

The most important news of the news publishing industry from our Knowledge Partner, McKinsey & Company

Newsroom Summit
21-23 October, 2024 | Zurich

Join our Newsroom Summit 2024 to explore the crucial issues facing newsrooms globally!

Visit our website

ENGLISH

- News Corp earnings beat as Dow Jones, real estate list (Reuters)
- Fastest-growing news publishers on Tiktok since start of year (Gazette)
- Canada: Court approves Postmedia bid for insolvent AT (CBC)
- Learn what your readers want by paying attention to user research (Association)
- Generative AI in healthcare: Adoption trends and what's next (McKinsey)
- Media analyst Thomas Baekdal: 'News publishers must embrace AI' (Journalism Co UK)
- Building operational tools for independent news organizations (Institute)

McKinsey's unique insights in the palm of your hand

You choose the topics. We deliver an unlimited personalized experience.

Content from our Knowledge Partner **McKinsey & Company**. **Generative AI (gen AI) is rapidly evolving**, and it's about to reshape the not-too-distant future, gen-AI-enabled "agents" could eat up and open-ended use cases by acting as skilled virtual coworkers for humans in a seamless and natural manner, write McKinsey's experts in a [new article](#).

DEUTSCH

- Google will Werblocker endgültig zu Fall bringen (Der Spiegel)
- Market Landscape zu Podcasts veröffentlicht (BVDW)
- Aus Medienhaus Aachen wird Mediahuis Aachen (kress)
- Nach Madsack-Übernahme: Stellenkürzungen bei DDV (kress)
- DAAD erhält Spendengelder für Ukraine-Projekte - 200.000 Euro (DAAD)
- TIPP: Dieser Link führt Sie zu unseren internationalen Experten (Association)
- Ströer meldet Umsatz- und Gewinn-Wachstum (turi2)
- Schweiz: Nau media AG übernimmt Mehrheit bei Travel (turi2)

Video Content on the Rise

Strategy & Leadership Newsletter

In collaboration with our Knowledge Partner, McKinsey & Company

Welcome to WAN-IFRA's Strategy & Leadership newsletter, featuring insights and issues facing top executives at news media companies.

Assessing AI's impact on media through a futurist-oriented lens – Q&A with media futurist



"The juxtaposition of man and machine is yesterday's thinking that is likely increasingly dissolve. Digital will become more human-like. Hence our understanding of what is 'real', 'true' and 'trustworthy' is changing."

That is from Sofie Hvited, Futurist and Head of Media at the **Futures Studies**. Hvited will join a panel discussion at our **Congress** in Copenhagen to discuss how news publishers can embrace AI.

Ahead of Congress, Hvited shares her thoughts on why publishers should move beyond short-term thinking and how the news media compares to other industries.

[Read more](#)

For more discussions about the impact of AI on the news industry, join our **World News Media Congress**. Our flagship event takes place on **29 May**, and includes three summits, two study tours, workshops, and **international experts and case studies**.

McKinsey's unique insights in the palm of your hand

You choose the topics. We deliver an unlimited personalized experience.

'Try fast and kill faster,' CEO of Brazil's largest media group on staying relevant, growing reach and

LEADERS

Asociación Mundial de Editores de Noticias

Paulo Samia

Reader Revenue Newsletter

Insicive news about digital subscriptions and other reader revenue initiatives

Thank you for subscribing. If you like what you read, please share it.



SCMP's 3-part innovation process to grow audience

The South China Morning Post (SCMP) reaches **tens of millions of users a month** around the world. They've accomplished this by implementing three innovation steps within the organisation.

- Innovation in presenting information
- Innovation in newsroom analytics
- Innovation in practices

"If you display your expertise in interesting and novel ways, **you can both serve readers and tempt them to subscribe**," said Shea Driscoll, SCMP's digital editor, during Digital Media Asia 2024 in Kuala Lumpur.

[Read more](#)



Take our 7-question survey: AI's role with news media (available in English, French, German, Spanish)

Most publishers have at least experimented with some form of Artificial Intelligence thus far. We wanted to ask just a few questions about **how news executives think AI will impact their business and journalism** within the next few years.

The responses from this 3-minute survey will be collected anonymously and presented (in aggregate) in our upcoming **"AI in Action"** report.

Best Use of Video: South China Morning Post, Hong Kong

SCMP Films' lens into making long-form video resonate globally

SCMP FILMS

Respectful farewells for Hong Kong elderly who die alone

SCMP FILMS

DEATH AND GRIEVING
In a city where many elderly die alone, Hong Kong funeral director organises respectful farewells
Kayla Chan

UP NEXT

AUTO PLAY OFF

EUROPE
9 killed in Serbia school shooting
02:07

RELATED STORY

CHINESE TRADITIONS
Business is back for Hong Kong joss-paper shop
03:09

DEATH AND GRIEVING
Rattan coffins from Indonesia becoming...

“The primary goal is to produce unflinching journalism that highlights inspiring people, in addition to enhancing SCMP’s global recognition.”

That is from Chieu Luu, Director of Video at South China Morning Post News, on the news organisation’s SCMP Films initiative. Produced by the digital video team, the series focuses on political, social, and environmental reporting across Asia. It highlights original, character-driven reporting and narratives from countries in the region.

SCMP Films started four years ago, making a few character-driven feature stories that resonated with its audience, but lacked distinctive looks or qualities, according to Luu.

Since then, it has steadily grown, with 2023 marking a particularly diverse year in storytelling, amassing more than 40 million views across all of SCMP’s platforms.

The team has covered impactful personal stories across Singapore, India, Cambodia, South Korea, North Korea, Japan, and Indonesia, exploring a wide range of themes despite a “challenging operating environment and a modest budget.”

“We wanted to create a strand to showcase longer-form videos within the SCMP brand and create a space for medium- and long-form video journalism in the digital space,” Luu said. “We created SCMP Films to showcase not only the work of our in-house video producers but also independent filmmakers from around Asia.”

Since its inception, SCMP Films has showcased stories from Hong Kong, mainland China, Taiwan, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Cambodia, Japan, South Korea and the US.



Chieu Luu (centre)
at our Digital
Media Awards
Asia 2024 in Kuala
Lumpur.

“All the stories have used strong characters whose situations are a micro example of a macro issue. We wanted to shine a light on those issues through the strong narratives of the people we interviewed and have been successful at doing so,” he said.

Navigating complex political and social frameworks

Luu noted that SCMP Films aims to cover a balanced range of topics, including human rights, environmental issues, and social challenges such as loneliness, adoption trauma, homelessness, and the complexities of arranged marriages.

He emphasised the importance of reaching diverse audiences and creating synergies with SCMP’s broader multimedia initiatives, aligning the series with the outlet’s overarching goals.

Over the last year, SCMP Films has expanded its storytelling, featuring long-form reports like Larissa Ong’s investigation into arranged marriages between middle-class Singaporean men and low-income women from Vietnam, published in *This Week In Asia* – a supplement in the Saturday edition of the *South China Morning Post*.

Balancing the coverage of politically sensitive topics while ensuring the safety and integrity of its filmmakers and subjects is a priority for SCMP. The challenges of working within complex political or social frameworks in the region “need to be met head-on,” noted Luu.

During China’s zero-Covid lockdown in Shanghai, for instance, SCMP reporter Thomas Yau documented his months-long confinement in a small apartment – a documentary that became one of SCMP Films’ most viewed.

On legally complex issues, SCMP Films collaborates closely with desk editors and specialised correspondents across the newsroom to ensure nuanced, informed storytelling.

Luu also noted that the safety of their teams in the field are of the utmost importance. Before commissioning any story, the team ensures the filmmakers get what they need in the safest way. In cases where filmmakers pitch completed films seeking a publisher, SCMP works with them to refine content to meet brand standards.

“We recognise that every story has multiple sides, and we make every effort to give all parties a chance to speak,” Luu noted, adding that if some decline on-camera interviews or issue statements via email – or don’t respond at all – SCMP remains transparent about these responses in its reporting.

On costs, Luu said, “It is a mix of in-house productions and commissions from freelancers, which comes out of a budget I’m allotted every fiscal year for contributors. The budgets are carefully managed and must fit within our means to produce films as well as our other projects.”



Domestic 'helpers' battle two-week rule to stay in Hong Kong

South China Morning Post • 85K views • 1 month ago



India's 'village of widows'

South China Morning Post • 31K views • 3 months ago



Finding a future in Fukushima after Japan's worst nuclear accident

South China Morning Post • 18K views • 3 months ago



US-bound with risks and dreams, the 'border crossers' from China

South China Morning Post • 102K views • 5 months ago

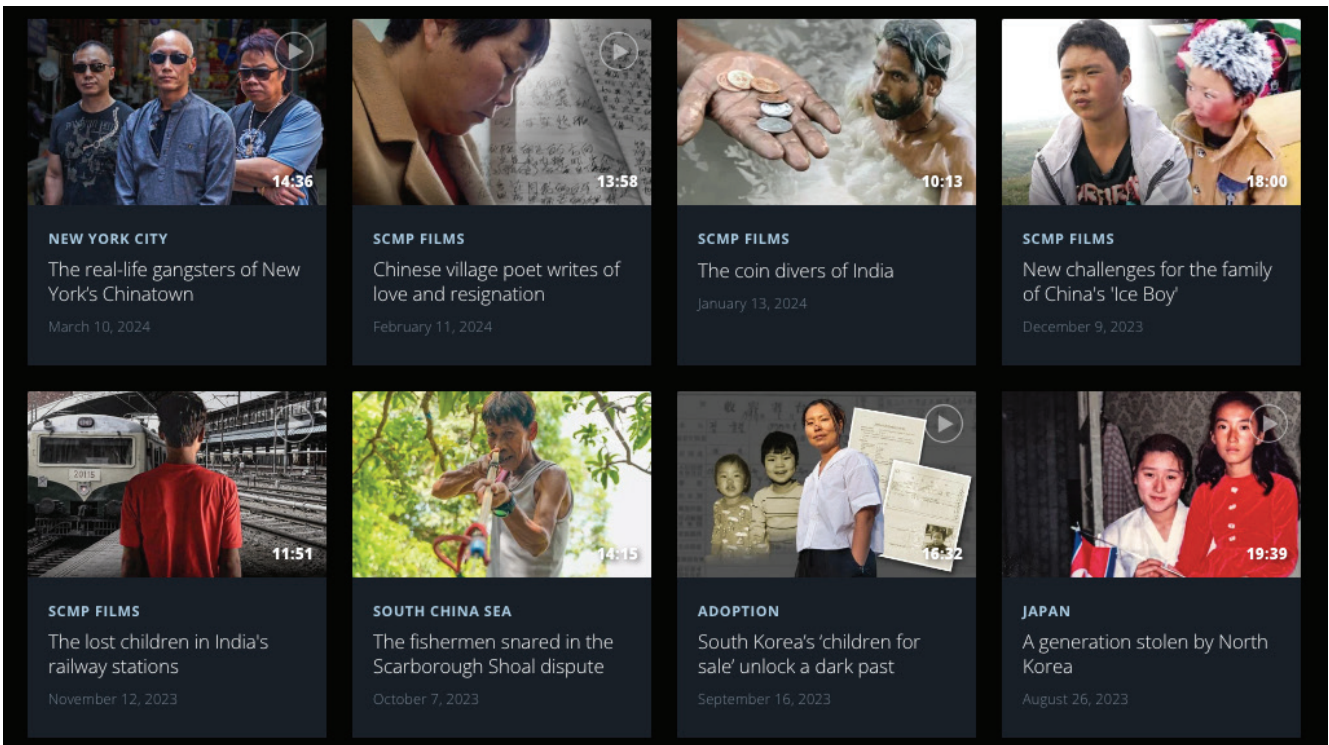
SCMP Films' approach to compelling storytelling

A crucial aspect of commissioning for SCMP Films lies in identifying filmmakers who bring both a unique style and the ability to meet SCMP's editorial standards.

The selection process focuses on filmmakers who can present strong characters with compelling stories and have ongoing access to these subjects.

Rather than relying solely on sit-down interviews, filmmakers are expected to capture subjects in their daily routines – whether working, training, cooking, or spending time with family – offering viewers a deeper, more authentic narrative.

It's all about being able to get intimate access so the audience can get to know the character and hopefully feel some kind of connection or interest in their story, said Luu.



“The character’s story needs to be part of a bigger societal issue that SCMP can shed light on. When it comes to working with filmmakers for the first time, we obviously want to see examples of their previous works to make sure they can take on a project like this,” he added.

The SCMP Films concept grows naturally from the overall ethos of the organisation’s video department, which excels in finding personal angles and narratives to tell complex stories of a political or social nature to viewers.

The team aims to establish SCMP as a competitive platform in global media by leveraging deep contacts and expertise in Asia-Pacific – a region not always sufficiently served by English-language media, Luu noted.

Defying trends: Lessons learned

In the face of growing competition in digital video journalism, SCMP Films sees opportunity for expansion and innovation in storytelling, focusing on more in-depth reporting and highlighting underreported issues. “I welcome the competition,” Luu said, adding, “It drives us to work harder and find fresh ways to connect with audiences.”

“I think SCMP Films will expand to do more in-depth reporting and bring issues that are under reported or not reported on, at all, to light. We make these films because we want to do impactful journalism that will hopefully make a difference,” he said.

“All the stories have used strong characters whose situations are a micro example of a macro issue. We wanted to shine a light on those issues through the strong narratives of the people we interviewed and have been successful at doing so.”

Luu has two learnings from handling SCMP Films:

- There is a place for medium- and long-form video journalism in the digital space despite what we hear about people having short attention spans and the need to keep videos to 1 minute in length, and
- If you do good journalism, people will watch.

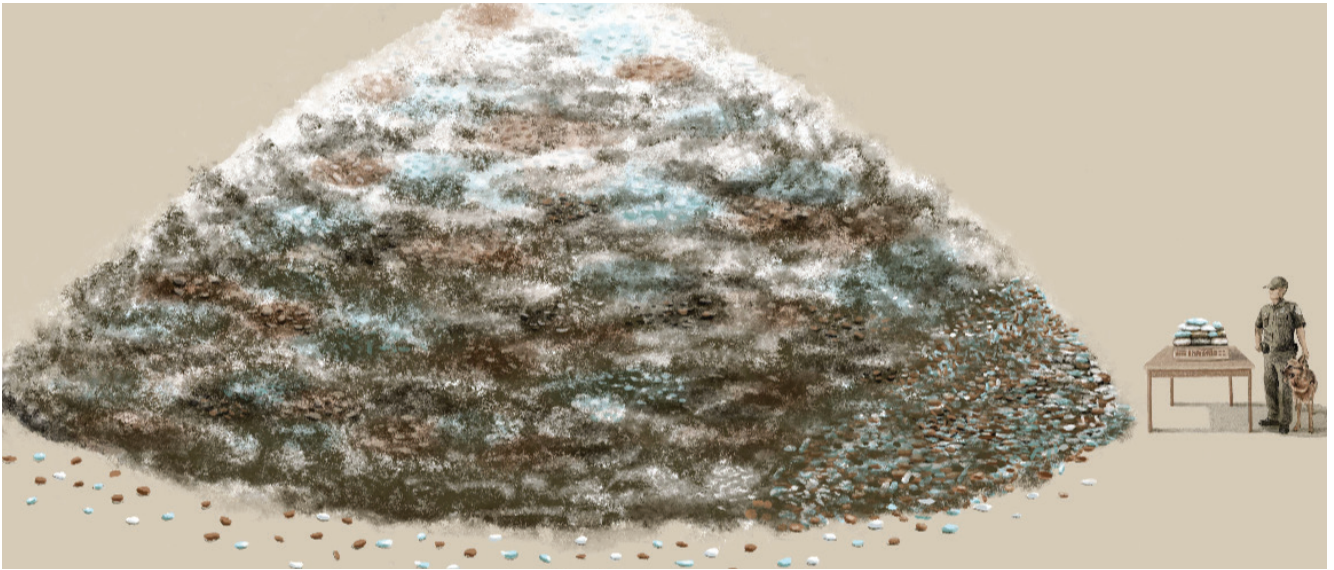
South China Morning Post won the Best Use of Video at WAN-IFRA’s Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

Read next: [South China Morning Post finds revenue success by focusing on core](#)

LOCATED:	Hong Kong
YEAR FOUNDED:	1903
YOUTUBE SUBSCRIBERS:	4.05 million
Publications:	Alongside its flagship South China Morning Post, SCMP is Asia’s leading magazine publisher, owning titles like Cosmopolitan, ELLE, Esquire, and Harper’s BAZAAR.

Best Data Visualisation: Reuters, Global

Data to design: How Reuters visualised fentanyl's deadly scale in the US



Reuters obtained and analysed 10 year's worth of data on drugs seized by US Customs and Border Protection agents at ports of entry along the southern border.

The team consulted more than a dozen researchers and current and former Mexican and US government officials. The data analysis and reporting paint a picture of Mexican drug trafficking organisations inundating the US with ultrapotent synthetic drugs, with fatal results for American users.

The shift has also caused upheaval in Mexico. Cheap, easy-to-produce fentanyl has largely displaced heroin.

Remote poppy fields in the country's mountain ranges, once tended by poor farmers for heroin production, have given way to small fentanyl labs in urban settings, lowering business risks and boosting cartel profits.

Reuters' graphics team published an animated explainer in August 2023, which uses that data to show the devastating scale of the fentanyl trade across Mexico and the US.

In the US, the switch to fentanyl has been devastating. For every American who has fatally overdosed from heroin with no synthetic opioid present, seven more people have died from an overdose involving a synthetic opioid since 2015, a total of more than 325,000, according to US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data analysed by Reuters.

In an ambitious multimedia project, Reuters combined striking data visualisation and meticulous reporting to document how fentanyl has rapidly supplanted heroin in America's drug trade. Published in English and Spanish, the animated explainer delivers a vivid narrative that highlights the scale, potency, and dangers of the synthetic opioid, leveraging data obtained through a months-long investigation.

"The incredible data that the team compiled on seizures led to some very dramatic and telling charts that helped show the data, and worked hand-in-hand with the illustration ideas to build a compelling visual page," said Travis Hartman, Data Visualisation Developer.



Design meets data: Seamlessly blending visual elements

The project began with Jackie Bott, Latin America Data Correspondent, securing nearly a decade's worth of border drug seizure data from US Customs and Border Protection through multiple Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and appeals.

After identifying key trends in the data, she collaborated with Travis Hartman, Data Visualisation Developer, and Catherine Tai, Senior Designer, Digital, to shape a visual narrative.

“Once I started learning about how fentanyl was produced and saw an actual photograph – a handout image from the FBI, I think – that showed a two-milligram lethal dose of Fentanyl next to a penny, it really started to crystallise the ideas in my mind about how this drug was so, so potent,” said Hartman.

That image sparked the idea to center the animation around scale: a tiny – almost imperceptible – yet deadly dose juxtaposed with the enormity of production and trafficking operations.

From there, the project evolved organically, incorporating various facets of the drug – its production process, costs, spatial requirements, the number of precursors, and the ease of concealment.

These elements took shape through a series of rough, hand-sketched storyboards by Hartman, which served as a foundation for communicating ideas to Botts and the team.

He guided the visual storytelling, ensuring a seamless blend of data and illustrations. Catherine Tai built upon these concepts, using Hartman's drafts and source images to accurately depict scale. Her visuals, characterised by a mix of realism and impressionism, employed a carefully chosen palette and rough edges to underscore the grim reality of the drug trade.

“The incredible data that the team compiled on seizures led to some very dramatic and telling charts that helped show the data, and worked hand-in-hand with the illustration ideas to build a compelling visual page,” said Hartman.

Tai said her part was pretty straightforward, thanks to the clear brief provided to her by Hartman. “The visual reference that struck me most was the cooking of Fentanyl. Further research revealed that this process takes place outdoors in remote areas of Mexico due to its high toxicity,” she said.

“You can almost feel the heat, the dryness and the intensity in the air. That atmosphere became my inspiration and the essence I aimed to convey through the illustrations,” she added.



Leveraging tech tools and on-ground reporting

Bott's reporting involved interviewing over a dozen law enforcement officials and researchers from the US and Mexico. Her groundwork uncovered insights into fentanyl production, trafficking patterns, and enforcement challenges. This meticulous investigation provided a solid foundation for the graphics team to transform complex data into an accessible and impactful narrative.

On the technical front, the project relied on a suite of tools to merge technical precision with artistic creativity.

- Botts used R programming (tidyverse, dplyr, ggplot2) for data analysis, while
- Hartman employed Datawrapper and Adobe After Effects for charts and animations.
- Tai used Procreate on an iPad to craft her illustrations, which were animated to enhance the narrative.

The animation employed a gradual zoom to reveal the scale of fentanyl, beginning with a lethal dose filling the screen and pulling back to show its minuscule size next to a penny.

Hartman described this approach as a way to present the image of an innocuous-looking powder and then



"The visual reference that struck me most was the cooking of Fentanyl. Further research revealed that this process takes place outdoors in remote areas of Mexico due to its high toxicity," Catherine Tai, Senior Designer, Digital.



emphasise its potency. “Revealing something as familiar – and small – as a penny beside the dose creates a quick shift in perspective, almost like a visual punchline, to drive the point home,” he explained.

Presenting the entire visual at once would have been effective, but the gradual reveal was intended for lasting and stronger impact on the viewer.

“Additionally, repeating this concept throughout the page created continuity, drawing the reader in and sustaining their interest as they anticipate the next visual surprise,” he added.

One challenge, Botts pointed out, was adapting illustrations for the Spanish version of the project, which required careful planning and coordination.

Reuters won Best Data Visualisation at WAN-IFRA’s Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

Seamless cross-collaboration: Lessons learned

All three team members emphasised the smooth collaboration process, rooted in mutual trust and respect.

“Based on initial findings and mock charts, Hartman created a storyboard illustrating fentanyl’s scale, from a lethal dose’s tiny size to its detection challenge among thousands of vehicles at the border, while Tai brought these concepts to life with striking illustrations,” Botts said.

Collaboration with the data team enabled the publication of both English and Spanish versions of the story, reaching audiences both in the US and Mexico.

Hartman praised the luxury of working with a robust dataset and a compelling story, while Tai described the project as an “illustrator’s dream job.”

“It was a privilege to work with such a compelling story and dataset, which the team spent months acquiring. I feel fortunate to be part of a larger effort to uncover valuable information and have the opportunity to present it in an engaging way,” Hartman said.

Best fact-checking project: Agence France-Presse, Global

Fact-check like a journalist: AFP's short videos that teach you how



“AFP Fact Check: How to verify information online” is a web series that shares tips and examples from Agence France-Presse’s digital investigation team with other journalists – and the public – on its YouTube channel and other social networks.

As AFP’s global fact-checking team has grown to be the largest in the world, with more than 140 people working in 26 languages, “the videos are just one way we’ve experimented with new formats to respond to misinformation directly where it is found online,” said Sophie Nicholson, Deputy Chief Editor, Digital Investigations.

Launched in October 2022, new episodes of the series are published weekly on YouTube in English, French, and Spanish.

The French playlist “AFP Fact Check: Vrai ou faux? Comment vérifier une info”, and the Spanish version “AFP Fact Check: ¿Cómo verificar lo que es verdadero o falso?”

have enjoyed a steadily growing audience, especially since embracing the YouTube Shorts format in 2023.

Now, with each release, across the three languages, the series attracts thousands of views within the first day of publication, with numbers continuing to climb as the videos gain traction across AFP’s channels.

“As agency journalists, AFP reporters generally communicate through our subscribers, but the “How to Verify...” series takes a different approach, with digital investigation journalists speaking directly to the viewer. They speak to you from their desks, explaining in simple terms the work they do each day to verify content they see online. — Sophie Nicholson, Deputy Chief Editor, Digital Investigations



Putting viewers face-to-face with digital investigators

AFP launched this initiative to broaden the impact of its verification efforts, targeting audiences where misinformation is most prevalent, and in the process, identifying video as the most effective tool for engagement.

“As agency journalists, AFP reporters generally communicate through our subscribers, but the “How to Verify...” series takes a different approach, with digital investigation journalists speaking directly to the viewer,” said Nicholson. “They speak to you from their desks, explaining in simple terms the work they do each day to verify content they see online.”

The series aims to educate both journalists and the public about the risks of false information, while providing them tools and techniques for simple online verification.

Smartphones to screens: AFP’s fact-checking techniques

To ensure the videos are accessible to both online audiences and AFP teams worldwide, journalists are equipped with smartphones and user-friendly “influencer” tools, mirroring the widespread video trends seen across the internet.

Crucial visuals, such as screen recordings and screenshots, are then edited and animated by a team of three editors based in Paris, enhancing clarity.

The primary challenge lies in efficiently demonstrating to viewers the exact steps journalists take – where they click, how they search, and what evidence they seek – when verifying information online.

For instance, in one recent video, an AFP journalist investigated a viral post purportedly showing Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy belly dancing. But using reverse-image search he traced the original footage to a professional belly dancer.

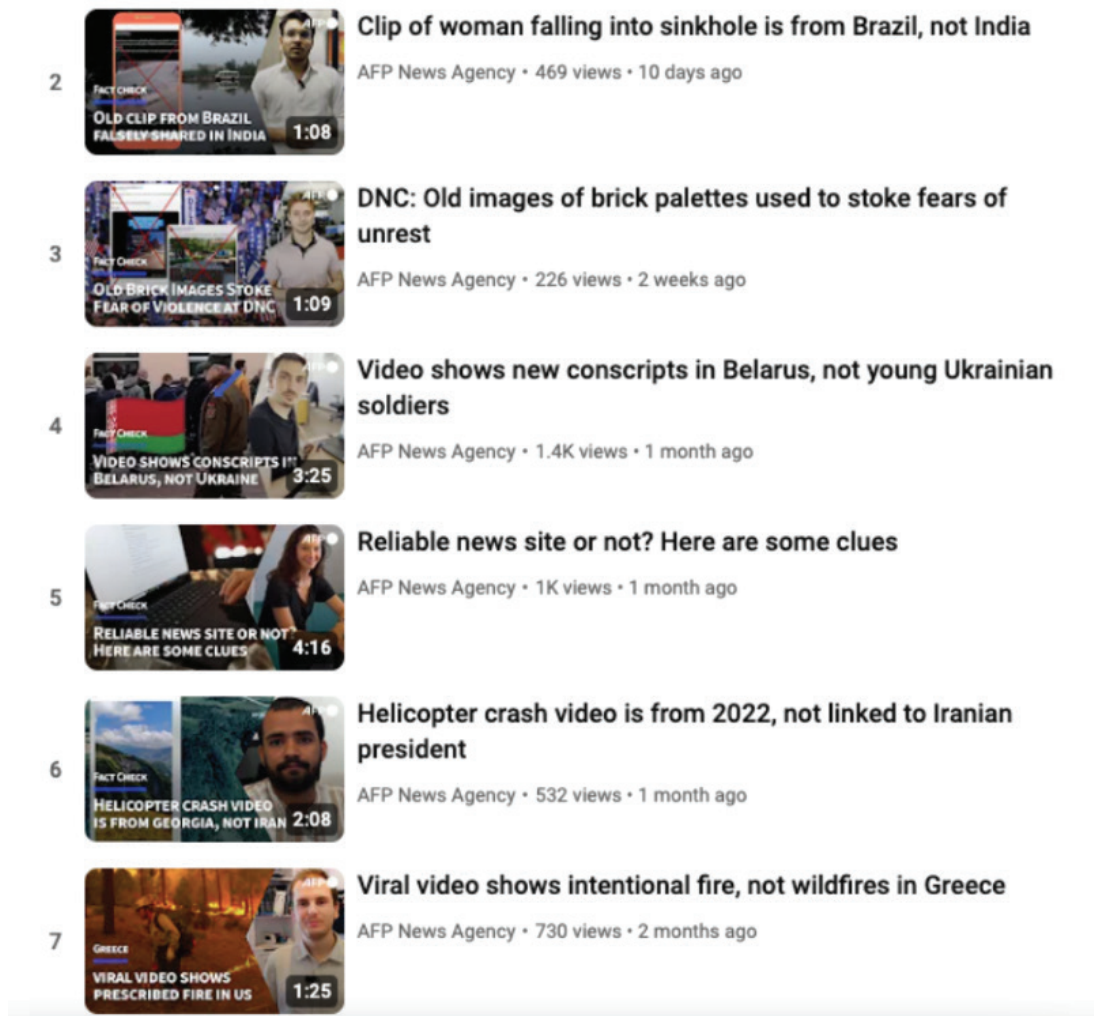
“In our video, he demonstrated through a frame-by-frame comparison that the viral clip had likely been digitally altered to include Zelenskyy’s face,” said Nicholson.

Debunking memes to real-time news: Outcomes and results

By January 2024, AFP had published 141 videos (50 in English, 53 in French and 38 in Spanish), covering topics such as geolocation, video verification, translation tools and image search techniques.

The series has tackled sensitive debunks, including long-format case studies on misinformation, such as a recurring meme falsely linked to images from the Syrian war, and an investigation into how AFP journalists in Bucha debunked claims that the massacre there was staged.

The recent focus on the YouTube Shorts format has enabled the team to produce timely, news-driven content on multiple occasions. Since the team deals with the “how”



aspect of online verification, all of the videos remain relevant beyond the news cycle.

Some of the most popular videos are the tutorials on the InVid-WeVerify tool, co-developed by AFP, available in French, Spanish, and English, with tens of thousands of views.

In a process coordinated from Paris, journalists at their desks in Warsaw, Dakar, Bangkok, or Washington, D.C., write and shoot brief scripts to complement their in-depth written investigations.

For most journalists, it's the first time they've appeared on screen, and Cristina Abellan-Matamoros, who writes and produces the videos in Spanish, says it's a priority for her to establish a good relationship with them.

“As they're an ocean away, I contact them quickly in the process and try to reassure them in case they have doubts or questions,” she said. “I try to be as open and available as possible and so far, it's worked. Everyone is happy after making a video for the playlist.”

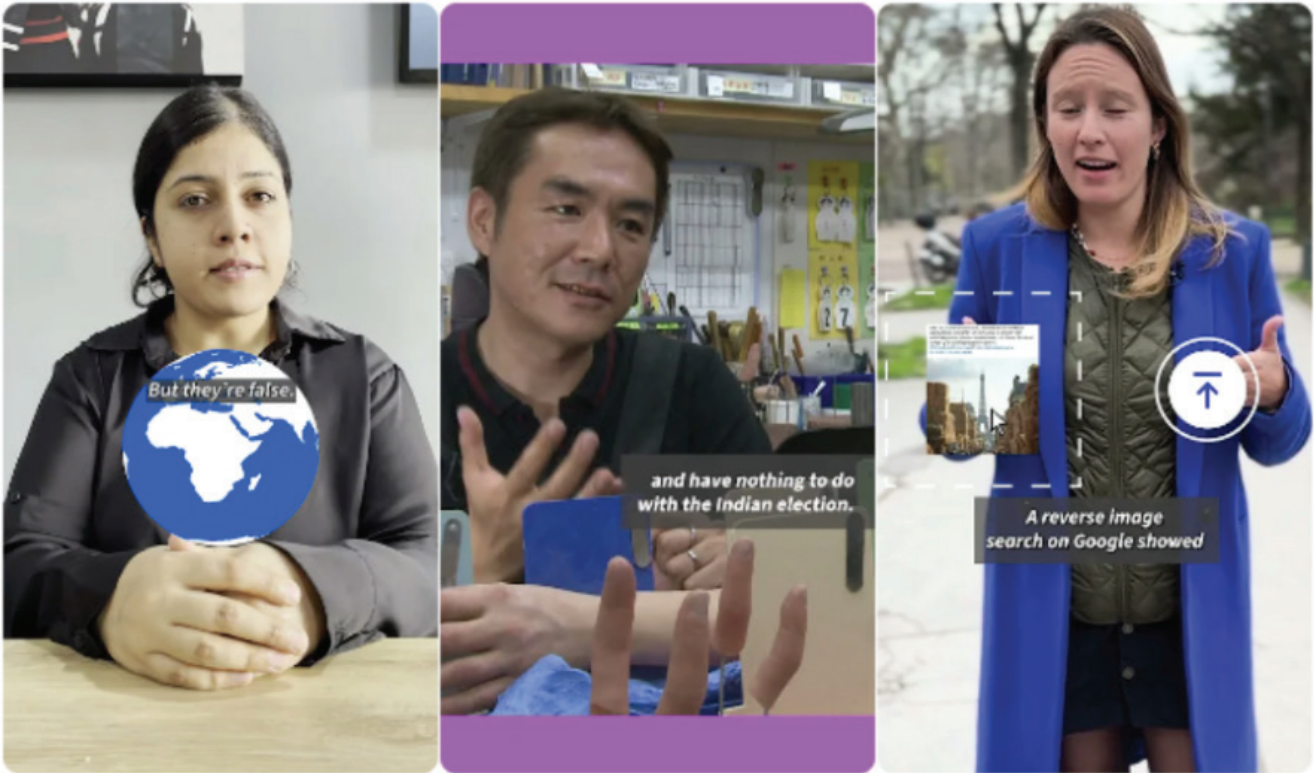
Tutorials on reverse-image search, a widely used technique in several case studies, are also among the top-performing content across all three languages.

“The trick is to show in the blink of an eye what the problem is, sometimes highlighting just one detail,” said Myriam Adam, who produces videos for the French playlist. “Everything has to look simple, pleasing, and be crystal clear.”

The case studies, in both long and short formats, demonstrate how these techniques have been applied to uncover the truth behind viral posts. Occasionally, techniques are combined – for instance, when an AFP journalist in Slovakia used reverse-image search and geolocation to reveal that a viral video of a tank was actually from Sweden, not from the Poland-Ukraine border.

All the videos complement AFP's in-depth online digital investigation training platform, designed for journalists and journalism students.

To date, videos have been filmed in 20 AFP bureaus, with more locations planned. “By making our journalists



AFP Fact Check on YouTube Shorts

ambassadors of online sleuthing, we aim to empower viewers to independently identify reliable information amid the vast expanse of the internet,” said Nicholson.

In addition to their video series, AFP has launched an online training platform at <https://digitalcourses.afp.com/> and conducts in-person workshops to further support professional development in the field.

Agence France-Presse was the Best fact-checking project at WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

“The trick is to show in the blink of an eye what the problem is, sometimes highlighting just one detail,” said Myriam Adam, who produces videos for the French playlist. “Everything has to look simple, pleasing, and be crystal clear.”

Flexibility and adaptation: Lessons learned

Nicholson said that many of the lessons from AFP’s video project aligned with the team’s initial expectations.

“The department, eager to share its expertise through video, established a low-pressure environment where staff could develop new skills. This approach fostered a safe space for learning, leading to a rewarding outcome for all involved,” she said.

As the team grows more accustomed to the video format, their on-screen confidence and creativity in generating new ideas have increased. Additionally, AFP has learned the importance of remaining flexible and willing to revisit and revise formats that initially fail to meet expectations.

Nicholson acknowledged that investing in higher-quality sound equipment could have significantly improved this initiative.

“Professional-grade microphones compatible with iPhones, though costly, offer the best solution for capturing clear audio in noisy environments. Ensuring optimal sound quality remains a challenge, especially for solo shooters or small teams without specialised training,” she said.

Best Podcast: Food For Mzansi, South Africa

Farmer's Inside Track: Podcast reverberates with Food For Mzansi members

EPISODE 167:
**FUTURE FOCUSED FARMING:
HOW TO INNOVATE WHILE
FOSTERING OUR HERITAGE!**

**FARMER'S
INSIDE
TRACK**
PODCAST
PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY FOOD FOR MZANSI

THREE EPISODES WEEKLY!
Listen on Google Podcasts, Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

“We don't have a podcast studio and most of our recordings are done via WhatsApp and Zoom.”

That's Ivor Price, co-founder and Editor-in-Chief, on Food For Mzansi's *Farmer's Inside Track* – a podcast that serves as a resource for newly commercialising farmers across Africa.

Food For Mzansi, a South African agricultural news platform, won **Best Podcast** at WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Awards Worldwide 2024.

With an audience not just in South Africa, but in more than 90 other countries, the podcast acts as a medium to deliver insights into agriculture through interviews with farmers, industry experts, and agripreneurs.

Presently, it offers three different editions each week.

The podcast team comprises Price, Dawn Noemdoe and Duncan Masiwa – the hosts, Meagan van der Vent, the technical producer, and Kobus Louwrens, who is instrumental in the strategic planning and growth of the podcast.

“By sharing the stories and insights of experienced agricultural professionals, we aim to empower these farmers with the knowledge and confidence they need to succeed,” Louwrens said.

Noemdoe, who was originally the only Farmer's Inside Track host when the podcast launched, added, “Farming is a relentless journey to gain knowledge and better farming practices to succeed. South African farmers, in fact, all farmers globally, continuously search for ways to do better, failing forward to succeed.”



Now, with Farmer's Inside Track's more than 400 episodes, she noted, "I'm happy to play a part in enriching farmers' knowledge and abilities through our weekly podcasts. We recognise there is an abundance of information, innovation, and agricultural practices available, and all we strive to do is bridge this gap for our local farmers."

Podcast as a membership driver

The podcast also acts as a driver of membership.

The company organised an event – Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba – in 2023 that attracted over 1,100 young farmers eager to network, learn, and explore the latest advancements through masterclasses, exhibitions, and investment opportunities.

This two-day event served as a strategic platform for the launch of its new membership club – an exclusive platform for new entrants into the agriculture business.

It attracted more than 540 new sign-ups, exceeding half the attendee count. The momentum continued after the event, with an additional 500 sign-ups.

For the past five years, the publication has provided agricultural news and insights to over two million South Africans.

Members gain access to exclusive video content, including training sessions, event coverage, and in-depth farming articles, along with the Farmer's Inside Track podcast episodes.

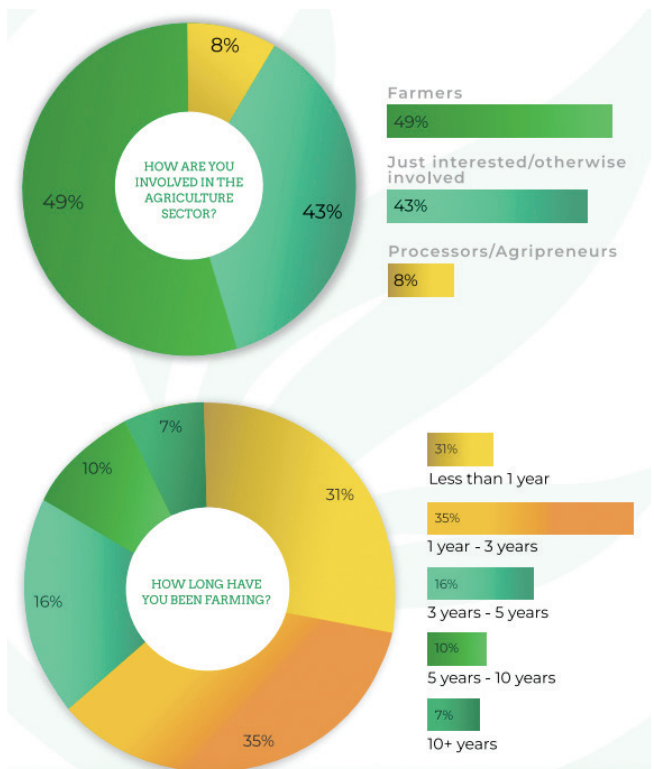
"The membership launch is not just about extending the brand's reach; it's about cultivating a deeper connection with its 53,000 members," said Price.

Exceeding membership goals through strategic engagement

To kickstart the membership club and ensure its long-term success, the Food For Mzansi set two initial goals.

First, they aimed to convert 250 of its most loyal readers, identified by their consistent engagement, into founding members. By collecting their email addresses and WhatsApp details, the team could establish a direct communication channel and foster a sense of exclusivity.

Next, they engaged these 250 founding members in a comprehensive readership survey to glean deeper audience insights. With over 760 responses, it helped them gather data on demographics, their content preferences, event interests, and pain points within the agricultural sector.



“By understanding their needs at this initial stage, we hoped to tailor our membership offerings to maximise value and attract a wider audience in the future,” said Price.

Data-driven segmentation boosts membership

Price noted that insights from members shape future content, events, and offerings, ensuring they meet the specific needs of the community.

He also underscored the thriving online network, where members connect, share experiences, and support each other, creating a valuable resource for young farmers.

Food For Mzansi has developed a membership strategy that utilises data-driven audience segmentation to enhance relevance and engagement.

The platform tailors content to resonate with specific segments of its audience, particularly targeting the young farmer demographic, represented by its core user persona, Mbali – an actual audience avatar at the publication.



MBALI

Mbali is a first-generation farmer who breaks barriers for black women in the sector. She hustles hard for opportunities to grow her agribusiness.

Age: 30 – 35

Race: Black

Job: Farmer who understands the value of niche crops and partnerships with commercial-scale farmers and commodity organisations.

Education: Diploma or degree, not necessarily in agriculture although she has completed practical training courses in farming. She doesn't say no for an opportunity to shine, learn and take up space.



While focusing on this group, the strategy also accommodates diverse audience needs. According to Price, this approach not only enriches the platform's database but also creates significant potential for future monetisation opportunities through its membership model.

Launch offers, personal interactions drive engagement

Food For Mzansi brought the event to life with several key strategies to drive membership engagement:

Interactive displays allowed attendees to explore exclusive content, upcoming events, and experience the platform directly.

Team members were on hand to answer questions and explain the membership's value proposition.

To encourage immediate sign-ups, special launch offers, including giveaways, were available at the event.



The revival of the former Estina dairy farm in the Free State into Phumelela Dairy represents a triumph of resilience and renewal. Thanks to the strategic support of the Milk Producers' Organisation (MPO) and the leadership of Terrence Maila, this rebirth has given the Free State community fresh hope.

By focusing on transparency, targeted skill-building, and sustainable management, Phumelela Dairy has already doubled milk production, providing a beacon of economic empowerment and job creation.

The MPO's commitment to training, particularly through initiatives led by Ronald Rapholo, has laid a solid foundation for long-term success. Together, they are transforming a once-troubled legacy into a sustainable future for local dairy production and community upliftment.



Ivor Price | Co-founder & Editor-in-Chief: Food For Mzansi | info@foodformzansi.co.za

Post-event, the team maintained momentum through targeted Farmer's Inside Track newsletter campaigns aimed at attendees who showed interest.

New members received a comprehensive welcome email series, to ensure they were informed of and engaged with the membership journey. Farmer's Inside Track newsletters are sent out every Thursday and Saturday.

From segmentation to adaptability: Lessons Learned

Price outlined five key lessons his team learned while launching the membership club:

Data-driven insights: Audience research and surveys provided valuable insights into readers' content preferences, agricultural needs, and competitor offerings, shaping membership benefits and content strategy.

Audience segmentation: Tailoring content and communication to different audience segments, such as the "Mwali" archetype, enhanced engagement and member satisfaction.

Community building: Beyond content, fostering connections and collaboration among members was essential for cultivating a sense of belonging.

Adaptability: Continuous learning and adapting to member feedback ensures the program stays relevant and valuable.

Food For Mzansi won Best Podcast at WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

LOCATED:	South Africa
YEAR FOUNDED:	2018
MEMBERS:	53,000
TOTAL PODCAST EPISODES:	400+
Platforms served on: Apple Podcasts, Spotify, YouTube, Google Podcasts	

WAN-IFRA Report | December 2024

Best practice in innovation 2024

**Digital Media Awards Worldwide:
12 cases of excellence**



World Association
of News Publishers