



Digital Skills for the Reader Revenue Era in Publishing

part of [NewsSpectrum's Digital News Accelerator](#) by [David Tvrdon](#) & [IPI](#)





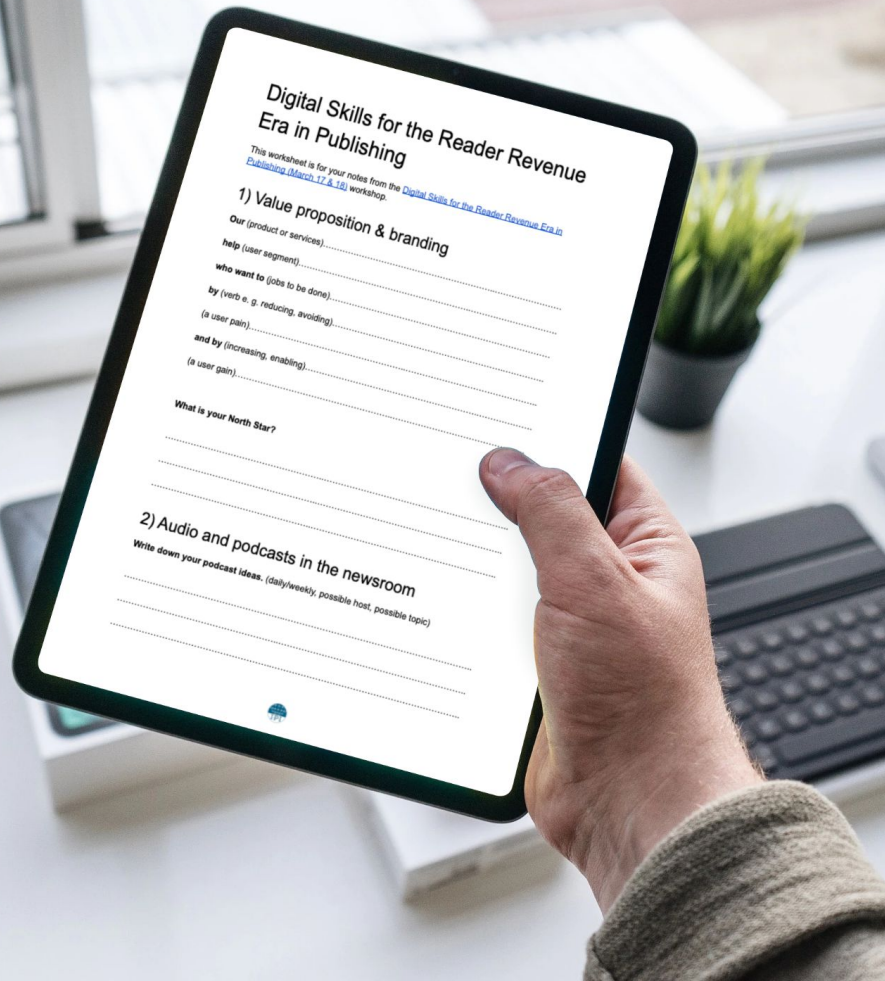
David Tvrdon

journalist / podcaster / strategist

[e-mail](#) / [web](#) / [twitter](#) / [linkedin](#)

- Digital marketing background
- First job in newsroom: Social media
- Second job: Data Journalism
- Current: **Subscription growth and retention specialist**
- Speciality: Audio, podcasting, newsletters, subscriptions
- [FWIW](#): A weekly newsletter, audio/tech/media digest
- The Fix: Columnist





You worksheet

- initial action points
- audience research is your best friend ([next workshop](#))
- revenue models and strategies will be discussed in [workshop no. 4](#)

T
H
U
R
S
D
A
Y

Value
proposition &
branding

Audio and
podcasts in
the newsroom

F
R
I
D
A
Y

Digital
newsroom
transformation

Newsletters



A reader revenue model is a business model in which some or all revenue comes from the direct financial support of readers.



POP-UP ADS WITHOUT BORDERS



Priorities

of a reader revenue focused
organisation

- 1) Reader needs & understanding
your audiences
- 2) Reader needs & understanding
your audiences
- 3) Reader needs & understanding
your audiences



Priorities

of a reader revenue focused
organisation

- 1) Understand your reader's needs
- 2) Build products around them
- 3) Communicate your value proposition (right audience, right time, tight place)
- 4) Make it easy to support you
- 5) Build habits (reinforcing relationships)
- 6) Set goals across organisation
- 7) Experiment, fail/succeed/, adapt

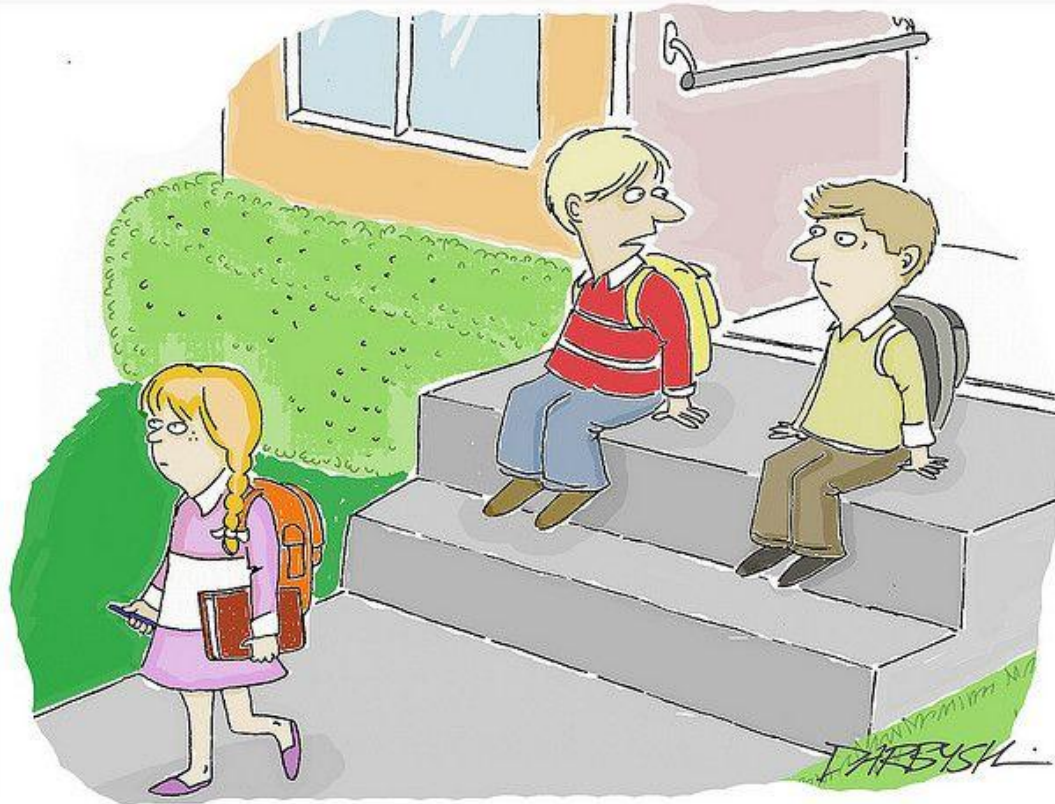


Value proposition & branding



One of the biggest
challenges of a reader
revenue model is to give
your audiences a clear
reason to support you.





"Everyone offers to carry her books - you
need a better value proposition."

A value proposition is
a statement of the value
a product or service creates
to address a particular user
need.



 Spotify: Unlimited music streaming

 Netflix: Entertainment for all tastes

 Prime: Online convenience, one-day delivery



What does a clear value proposition look like for a news outlet?

Great value propositions often focus on a limited number of pain relievers and gain creators and then deliver on those exceptionally well.

The Economist: “We sell the antidote to information overload — we sell a finite, finishable, very tightly curated bundle of content.”

The New York Times: “Newspaper of record”. “All the news that’s fit to print”.

Axios Local: “We want to bring smart, modern, trustworthy local news to every community in America.”

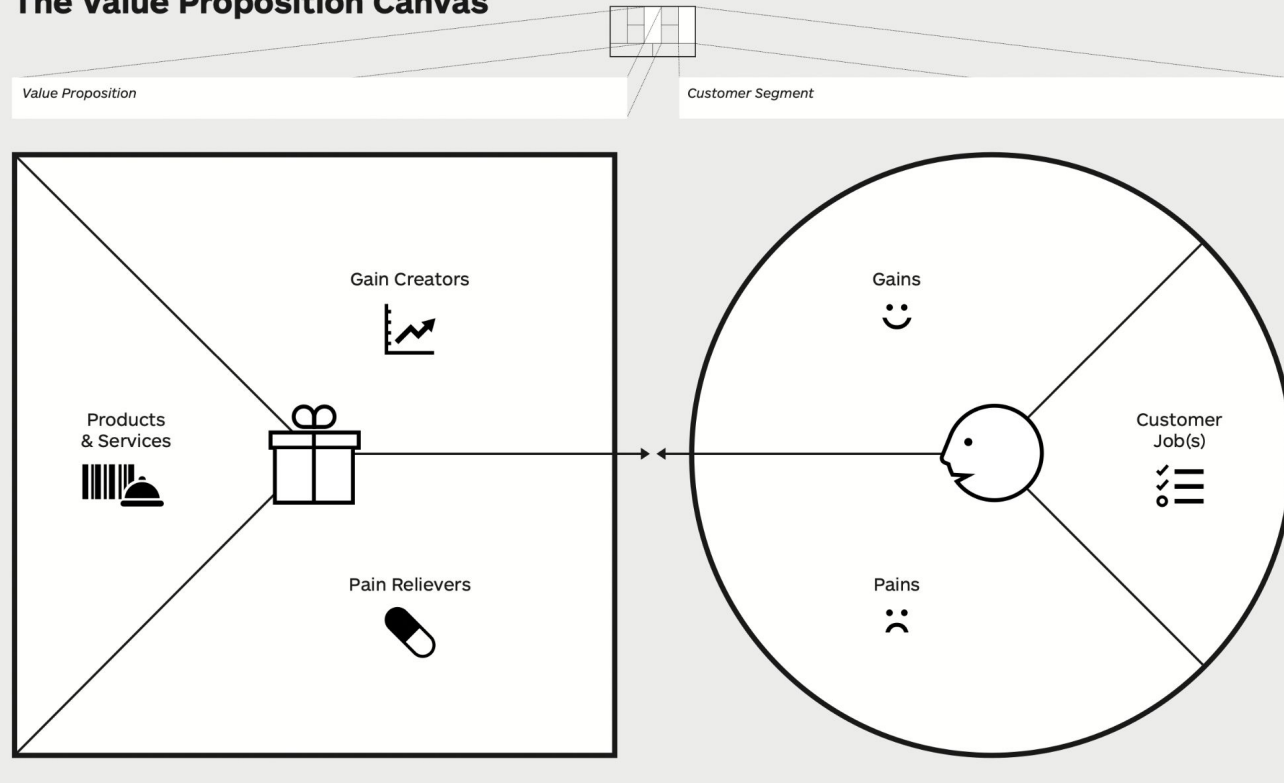


How to write a good value proposition?

- “First, Best, Only”
- Elements ([as MPP suggests](#))
 - what you make or do (products/services)
 - who you serve (user segments)
 - your user’s motivations (user jobs to be done)
 - and how it works (how you reduce pain and enable gain) – are what you need to figure out in order to create a value proposition



The Value Proposition Canvas



Category	What do your readers want?	What do you currently offer?	What's the gap?	How can you close the gap?
Product and content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Value added benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Marketing and positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
User experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

Our
products / services

help
user segment

who want to
jobs to be done

by
verb e.g. reducing, avoiding

.....
a user pain

and by
increasing, enabling

..... ●
a user gain

De Correspondent's value proposition

“Our journalism helps Dutch readers who want **an antidote to the daily news grind** by eschewing hot takes and by doing deeply researched reporting that articulates not just the problem, but what can be done about it.”



Local newspaper in US

“Our solutions-focused local journalism helps readers who want to understand the whole story of the community by eliminating the news fatigue caused by just covering what’s wrong and replacing it with a more holistic and nourishing local news experience that helps our city reach its full potential.”



Minority media X value proposition example

“Our (X-language) community-focused journalism helps (X-language) readers in (Y country) who want to read also about (X country) by providing reporting from that region and by reporting in (X-language). ”





**"I hired product managers, digital experts and data analysts.
Someone find out what those people do."**

Your North Star and metrics

- “Defining a single, shared objective across an organisation is one of the most powerful tools to align resources and accelerate growth. This objective becomes your company’s North Star Goal, setting the vision for the future and galvanising teams.”
- A North Star Goal should be **achievable, but also bold, aspirational and memorable**
- The North Star metric is **a single measure of how valuable a product is** for subscribers (examples: RFV, CLV, DAU, Quality Reads...)
- To read: [report by FT Strategies](#) & this [explainer on North Star metrics](#)

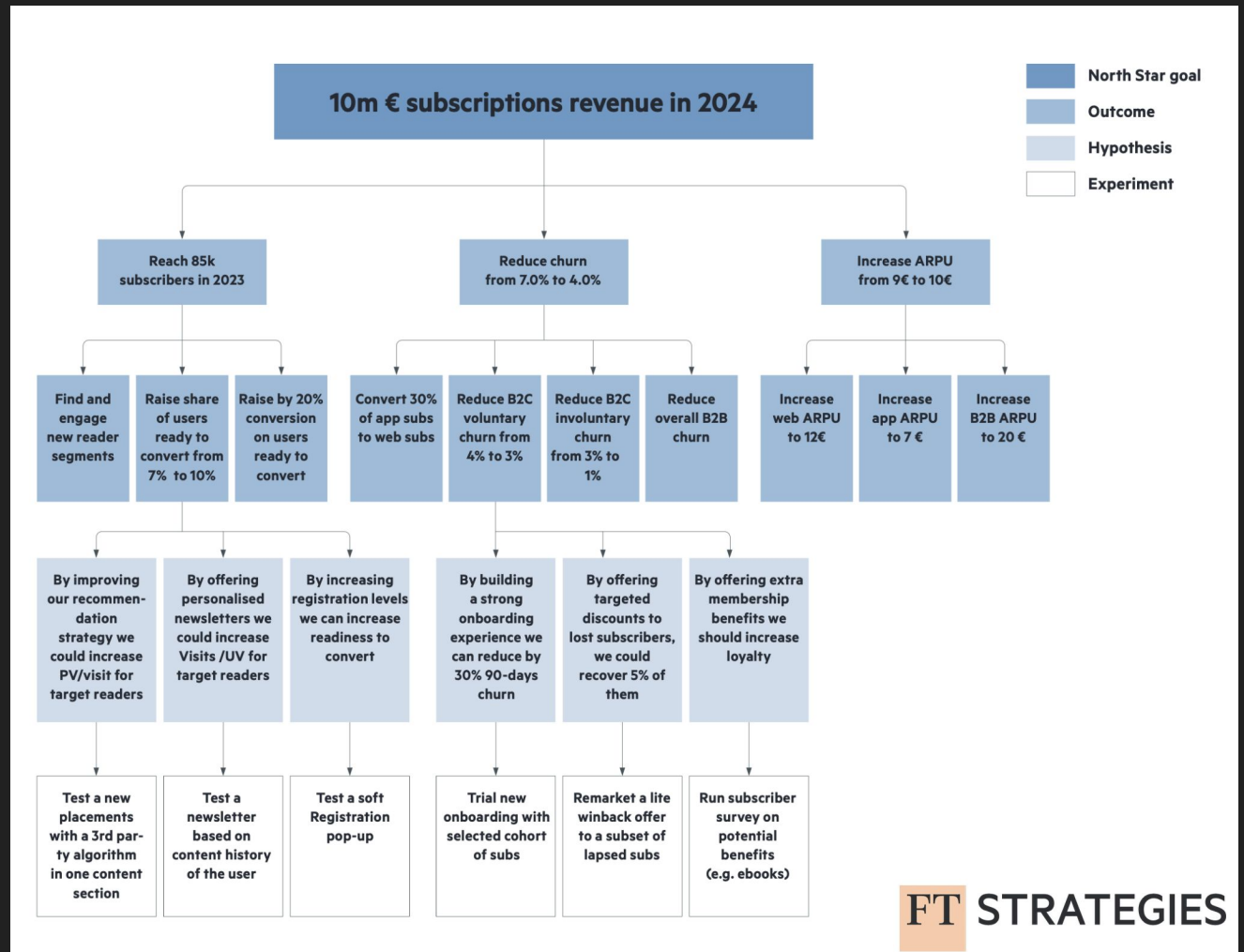


North Star goal →

Outcome →

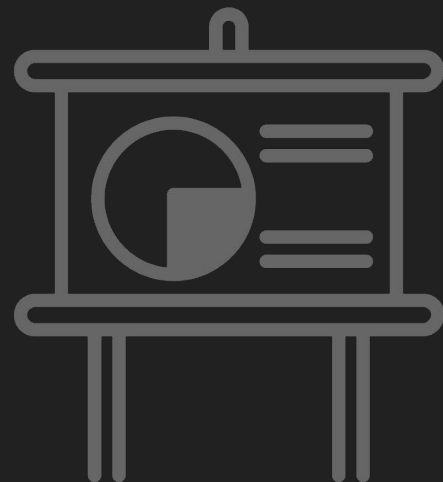
Hypothesis →

Experiment →



Next steps

- Audience research & data
- Align organisation to focus on reader revenue
- Community participation
- Craft/refine membership/subscription offer
- Define touchpoints with audiences (podcast, newsletter, app, events...)
- Balance acquisition & retention



Key takeaways

1. Your value proposition will be your guide, your North Star.
2. The better you define your value proposition internally, the better you can communicate your benefits to your audiences.
3. An important component of marketing and positioning your reader revenue model is clearly educating your consumers on the value you provide and why your news organization is worthy of your support. [🔗](#)



The term brand refers to a business and marketing concept that helps people identify a particular company, product, or individual.





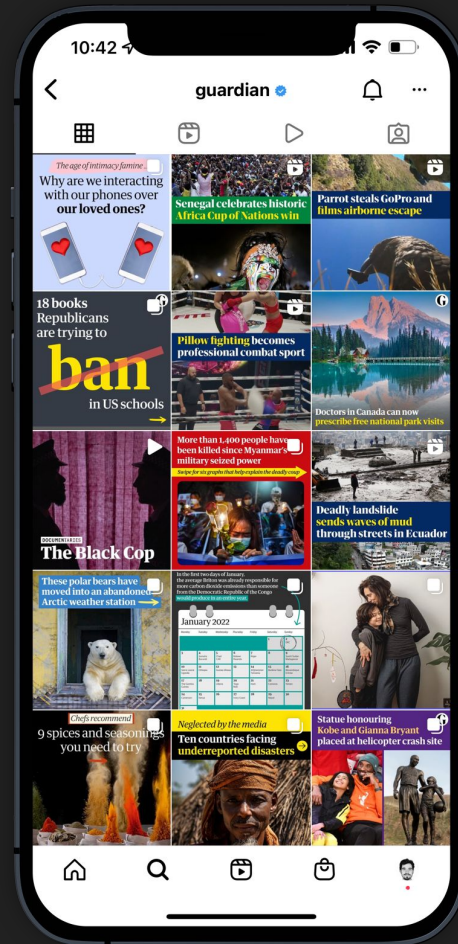
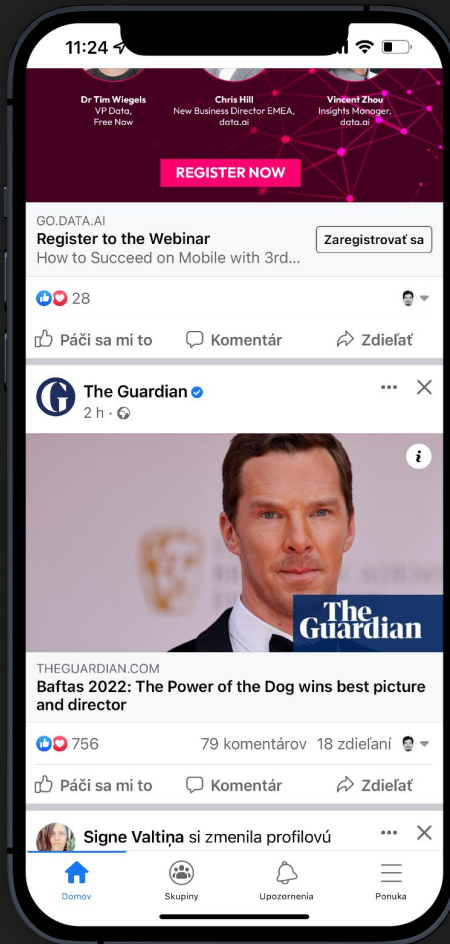
© marketoonist.com



What is branding and how to think about it?

- Brand is like a reputation
- Think of branding as the way you are (or want to be) perceived by audiences
- A brand is not a logo, even though the logo is useful
- The best thing to market for a news outlets is the news it produces and the journalists







Audiences should recognize you everywhere


- If you create any call to action campaign, they should reflect your brand
- Especially important is to craft the reader revenue funnel in a manner that is in line with your brand
- The visual style of everything you do should be aligned:
 - articles, homepage
 - newsletter, ads, podcast logo, social media thumbnails
 - conversion pages





 Home Design ▾ Templates Features ▾ Learn ▾ Plans ▾ ? Log in Sign up


What will you design?



For you



Presentations



Social media


Video



Print products


Marketing



Office


More


TRY




Play with Canva




Video




Presentation (16:9)



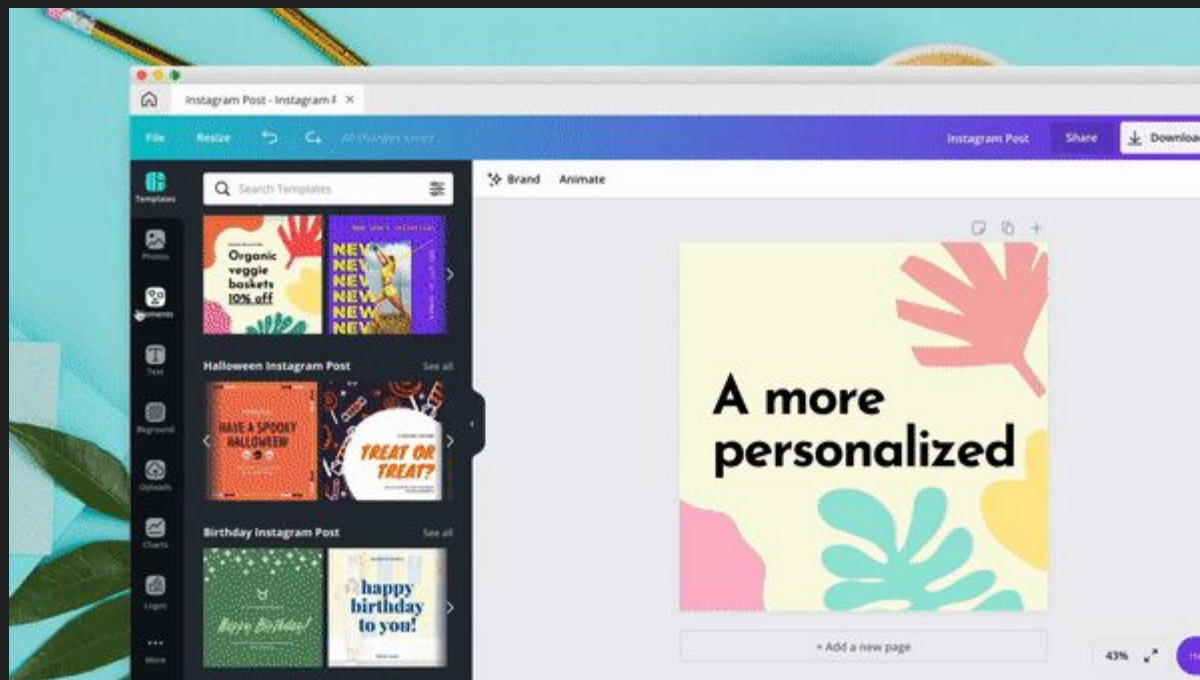
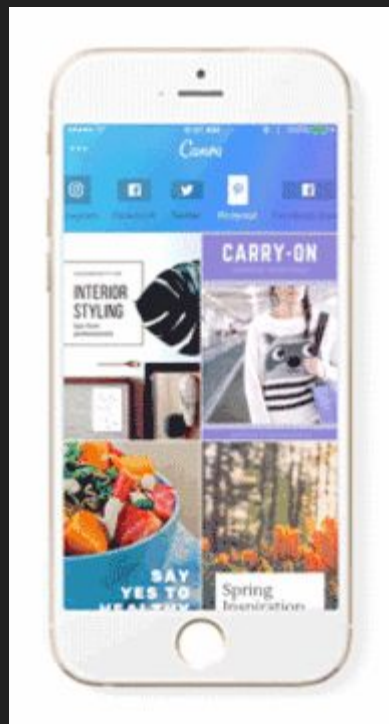
Instagram Post



Poster



Logo



Nielsen:

Trust is at the heart of any brand-consumer relationship, and is even more critical for new relationships.



Steps to take

- Content and distribution: **Less is more**. Focus on what audiences recognize you for
- It's all about **building habits**
- Use tools like **Canva** to create templates for your team
- Upgrade your **About us** page, brand and trust work together



Key takeaways

1. Once you established your value proposition, you need to start working on bringing your brand up to speed.
2. Your best product should be your content (news, reporting) and you can build on that via social media.
3. Brand is also about connecting with your audiences.



Audio and podcasts in the newsroom

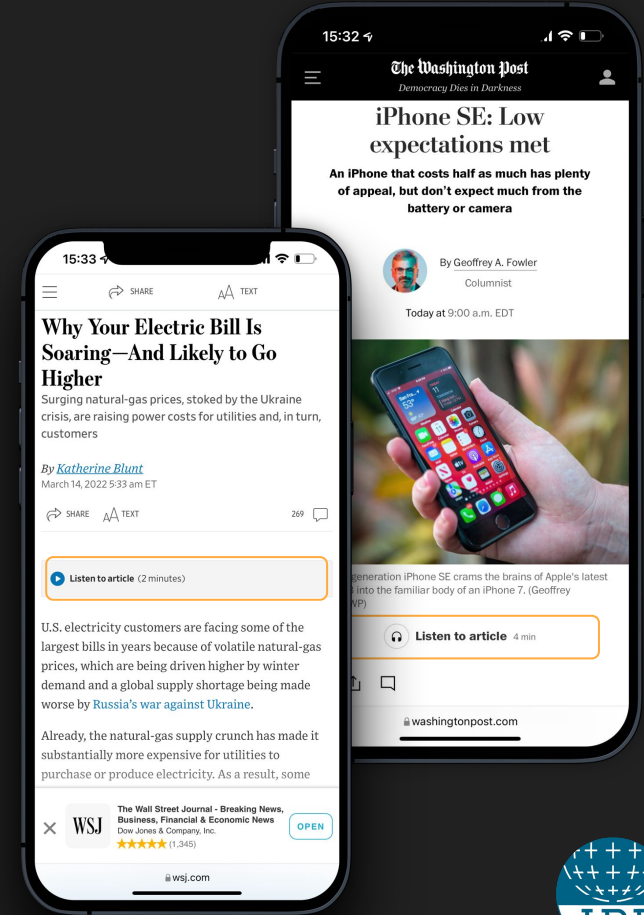


Podcasts drive
memberships, subscriptions,
help subscriber retention,
and help with overall
audience loyalty.



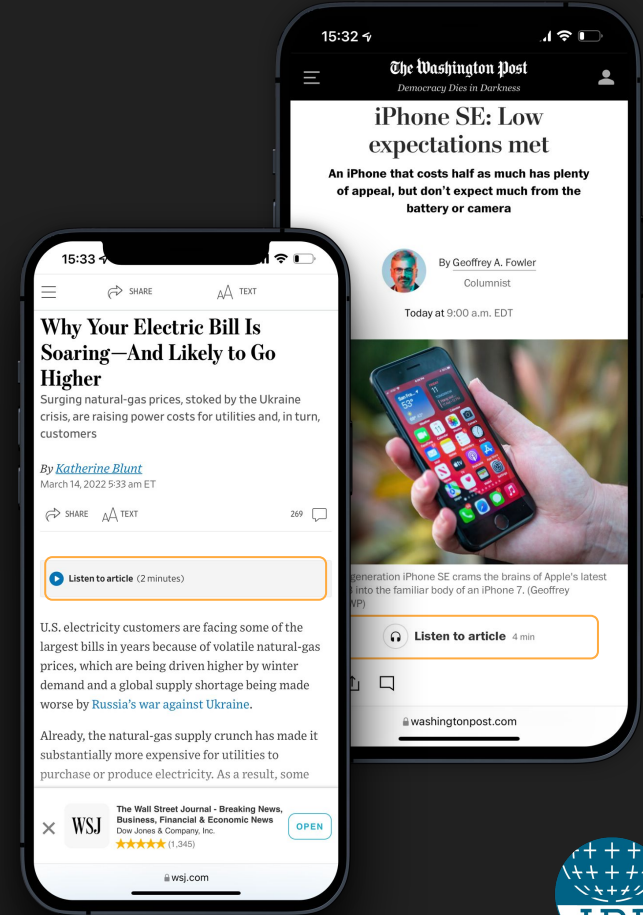
How to craft an overall audio strategy

- Why do you think big publishers are including a audio version of the articles on their websites?



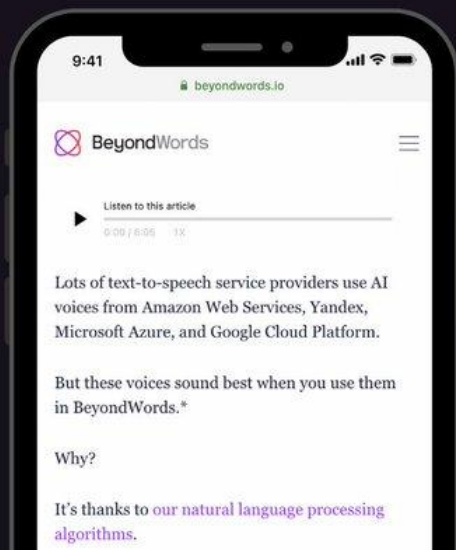
How to craft an overall audio strategy

- Why do you think big publishers are including a audio version of the articles on their websites?
- Tests have showed them **readers spend more time on the website and return more often**. It is true for audiences of all ages.
- It's also part of the habit building strategies publishers employ to drive more supporters (members, subscribers)

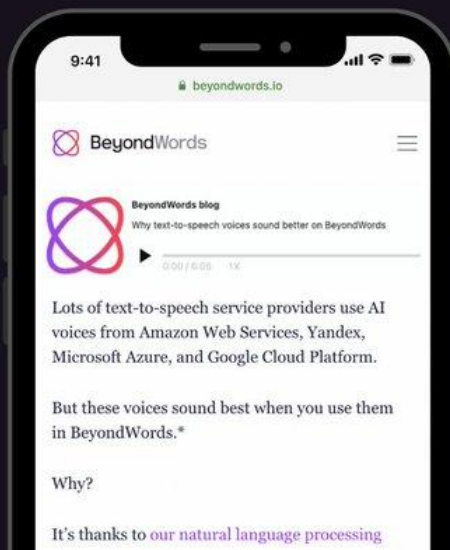


BeyondWords

Small Player




Medium Player



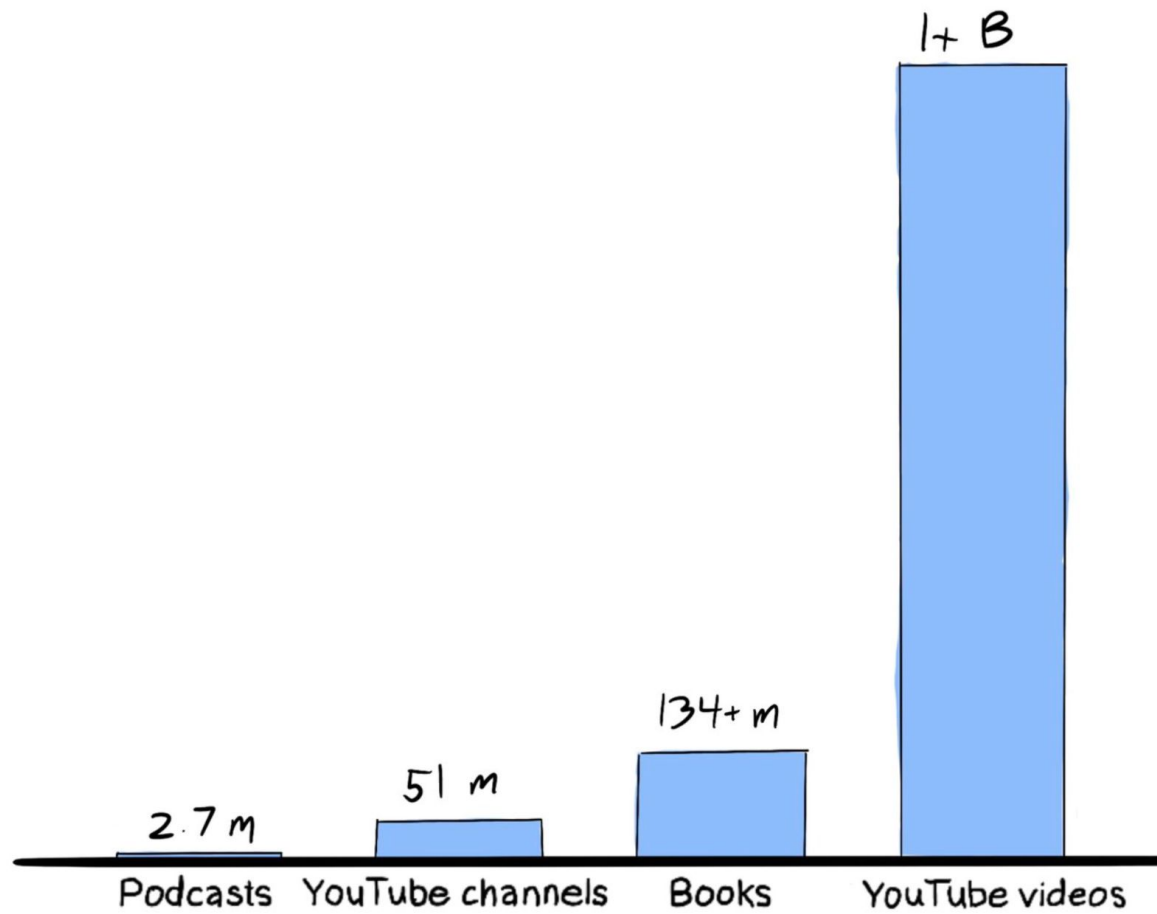
Large Player



How to craft an overall audio strategy

- Your options: podcasts, audio articles, live audio, smart speaker skills
- The very basic: **Audio articles - create audio from plain text** 
- What audiences love: **Podcasts**
- Qs to ask:
 - What are you trying to achieve with audio?
 - What is your ROI and KPIs?
 - How many resources can you dedicate?





Why should your newsroom start a podcast now

- Not just because it is a trend in the industry, it really works in driving audience loyalty
- How? **Spoken word is a powerful tool** and for minority language media even more powerful. For audiences podcasts feel like the reporters are talking directly to them (>90% listen via earphones)
- Also, you can start a podcast in a few steps and see for yourself, there are countless free options to do that



What does data say about podcasts?

- Podcast listening is on the rise worldwide
- Podcasts help attract younger audiences
- Podcast help build a lasting relationship with your listeners (who are more likely to become subscribers, supporters)




Starting a podcast

1. Choose a topic, frequency (daily or weekly) and form
2. Do a test run, use your colleagues and your most loyal readers
3. Set up a podcast (Anchor.fm), start publishing
4. A podcast can be also text, video and images



Anchor.fm





Anchor.
by Spotify

[Features](#) [Switch to Anchor](#) [Ads by Anchor](#) [Blog](#) [Sign in](#) [Get started](#)





Built-in uploading, recording, and editing tools so you can easily create and publish episodes.


[See all creation features](#)



 Athena Calderone records "More Than One Thing" from home.







← → ↻  <https://anchor.fm/dashboard/episode/new> ...   


 **Anchor®** DASHBOARD EPISODES MONEY

Create your episode

Add some audio to get started!

 **Record** Capture audio right from your browser  Click

 **Messages** Add listener voice messages to your episode 

 **Library** Reuse your previously uploaded audio Choose a tool on



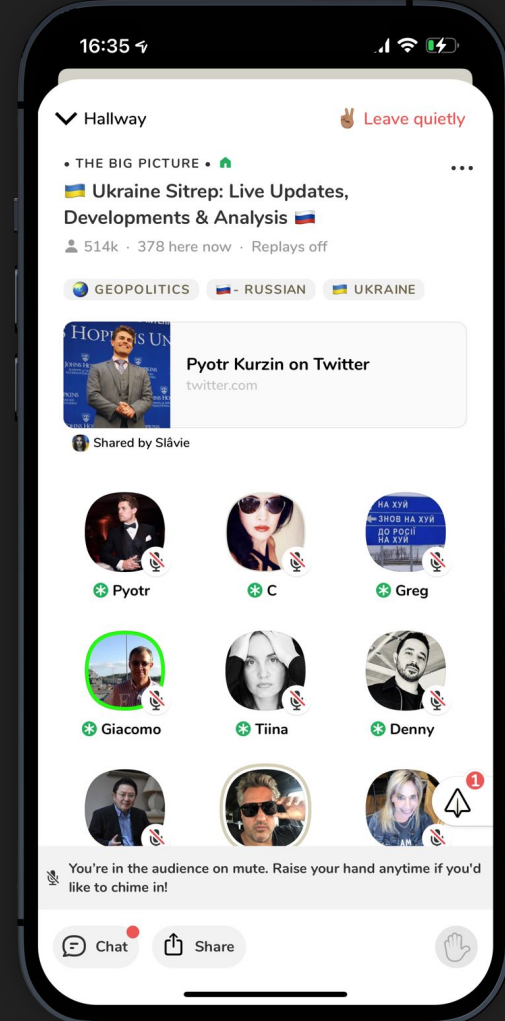
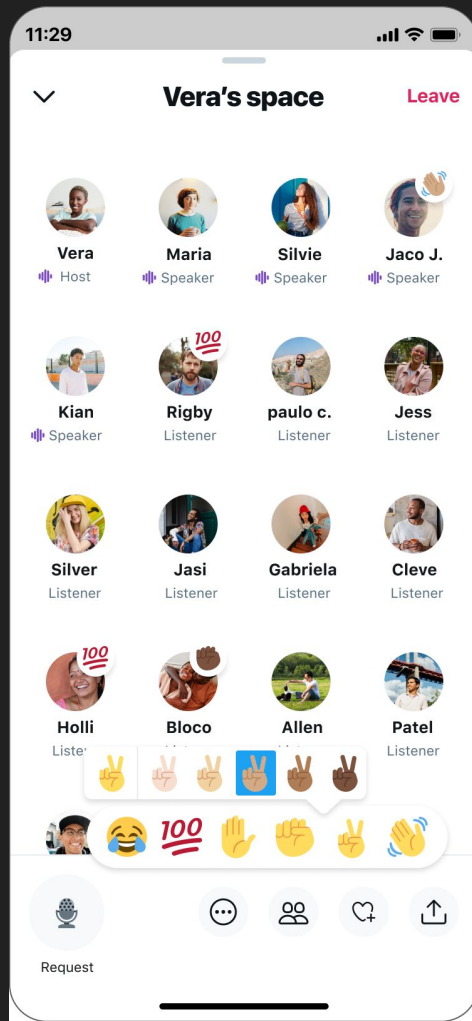
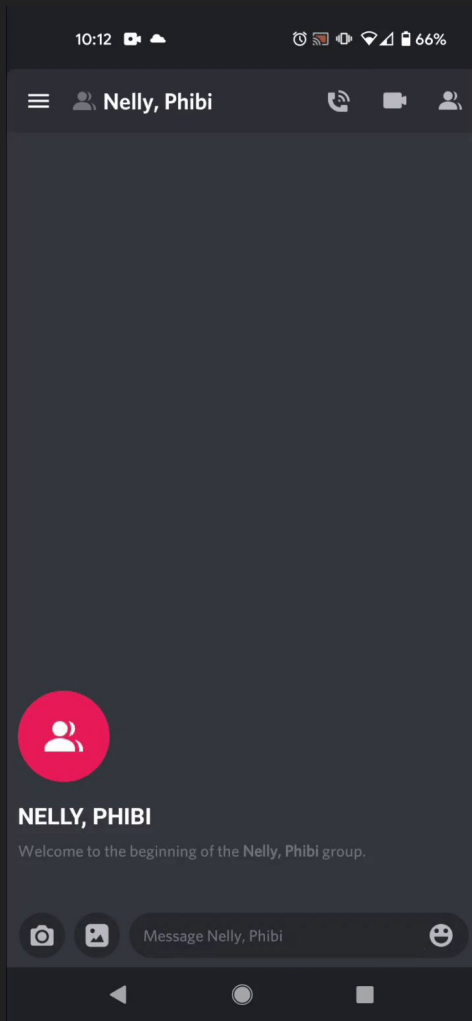
Mark Thompson (ex-NYT):
Subscriptions seldom
happen because of one
story. It's about a
relationship.



Live audio

- **Twitter Spaces** (you can sell tickets to exclusive shows)
- **Create a Discord channel** (a super easy for live event coverage)
- **Clubhouse** (in some parts of the world still popular)
- **Audio rooms** on Facebook







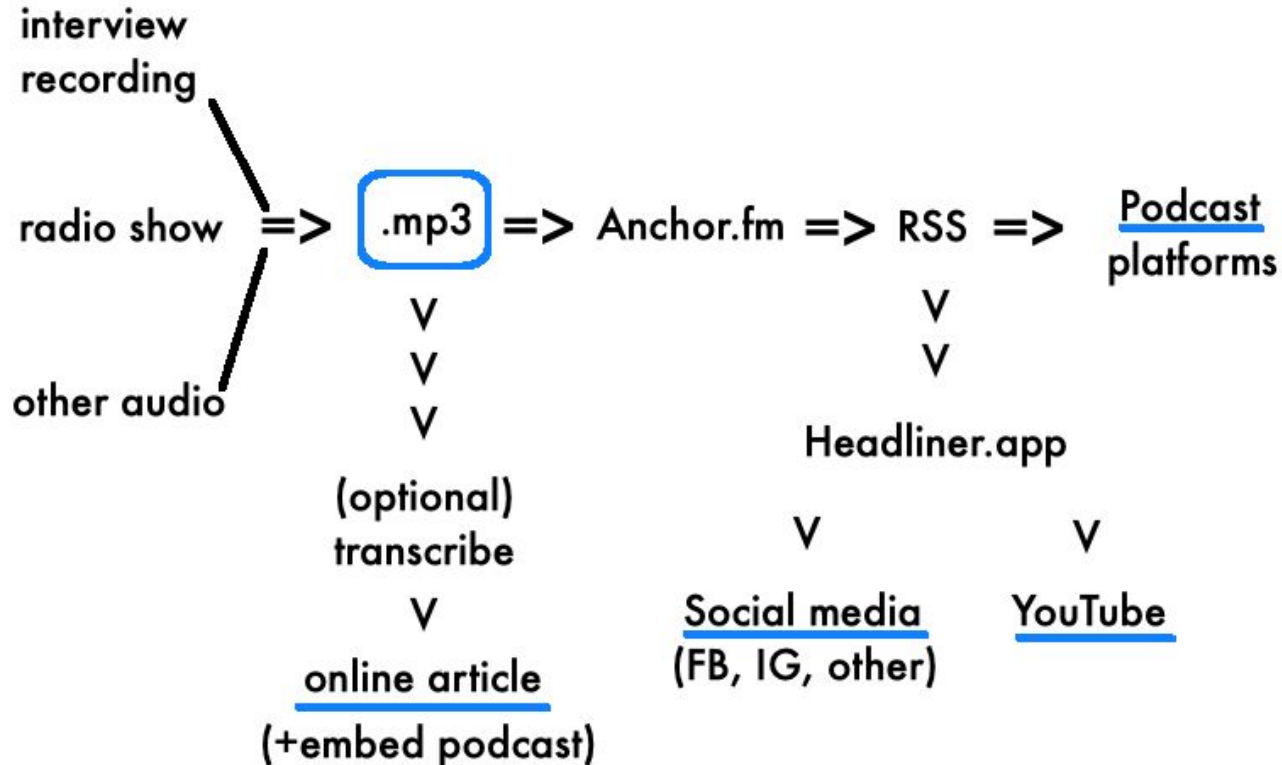
"I think I know why you're hearing voices – it's called a podcast."

What else should you know?


- **Paid podcasting is on the rise in Europe.** Publishers are experimenting with putting an ad-free version of the podcast behind a hard paywall
- Some publishers are having success with getting their **reporters to read their own stories**
- YouTube is one of the biggest drivers of listeners for podcasts. **Your podcast should be on YouTube** (as should your reporting)




Audio digital circulation scheme



Headliner.app












[Features](#) [Gallery](#) [Pricing](#) [API](#) [Learn](#) [Disco](#) | [Login](#) [Sign Up](#)




Automatically Turn Podcasts Into Shareable Videos

GET STARTED NOW

No risk. Free unlimited videos!





1

2

3

4

Select AudioClip AudioChoose Aspect RatioCustomize

Let's promote your podcast!


PODCASTS


UPLOAD


Enter a podcast name, RSS feed, or Descript link

CANCEL

LISTEN NOTES



Search for a
podcast by name


Enter in a
RSS feed link


Paste in a
Descript link

Choose aspect ratio







TRANSCRIPTMEDIASTYLE

FAQs

Show

A

00:00.020competition and international trade00:02.920

00:03.880domestic and international competition and international00:09.680

00:09:76 / 00:10:03

EXPORT

+ ADD TRACK

05s10s

TEXT 1

TEXT 2

MEDIA

AUDIO



Tools

- [BeyondWords](#) - text-to-speech publishing in 64 languages
- [Anchor.fm](#) - free and simple podcast host (also for paid podcasts)
- [Headliner.app](#) - audio to video



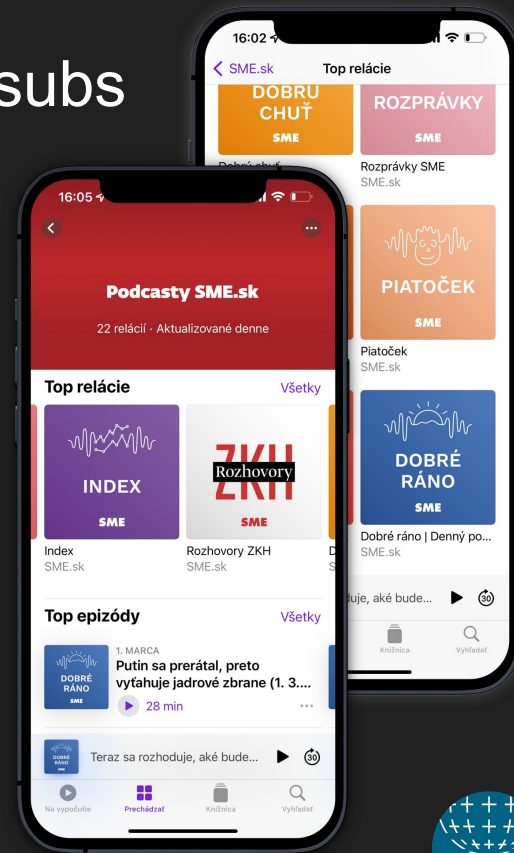
Your audio project

- Daily/weekly?
- One season pilot?
- Possible host/hosts?
- Topics?
- Format (interview, host-read..)?
- Distribution?
- Promotion?



Case study: SME.sk & young audiences & subs

- Started with a daily news podcast in 2017
- Average website reader: **50+ yrs, 20 mins/week**
- Average podcast listener: **35 yrs, 6 hrs/week**
- More than 50% of subscribers are podcast listeners
- 16% said would pay more for podcasts with no ads





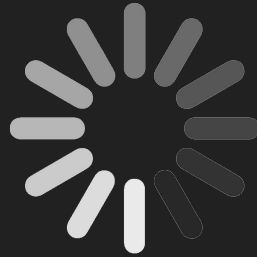
Jana Mat'ková

head of the podcast and video
department at SME.sk

- Started as a video reporter
- Worked for public radio in Slovakia
 - covered daily news
 - was an evening news show host
- Podcast editor
- Podcast host



Connecting



T
H
U
R
S
D
A
Y

Value
proposition &
branding

Audio and
podcasts in
the newsroom

F
R
I
D
A
Y

Digital
newsroom
transformation

Newsletters



Digital newsroom transformation

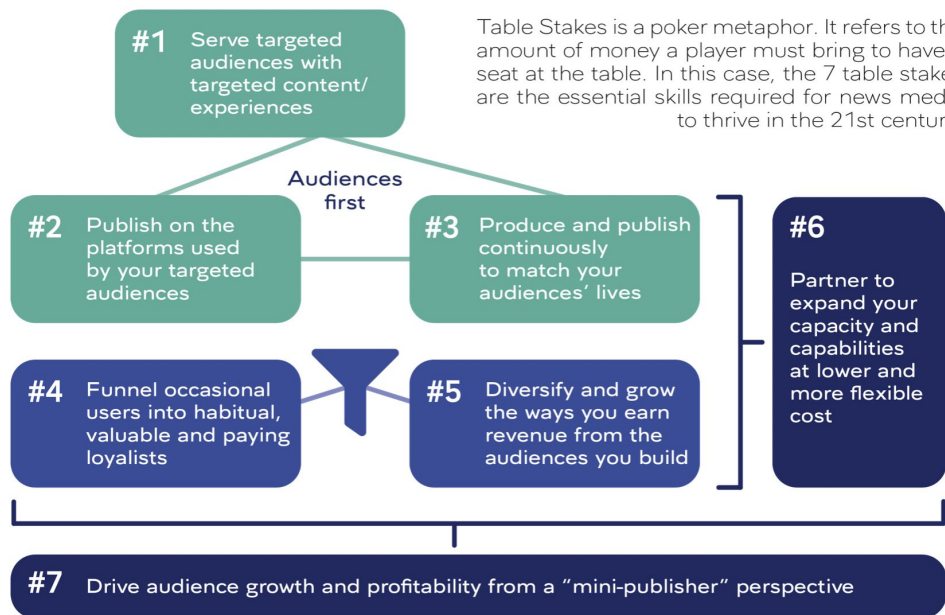


Transformation starts with
the idea of the newsroom as
a profit centre, as opposed
to a cost that needs to be
trimmed.

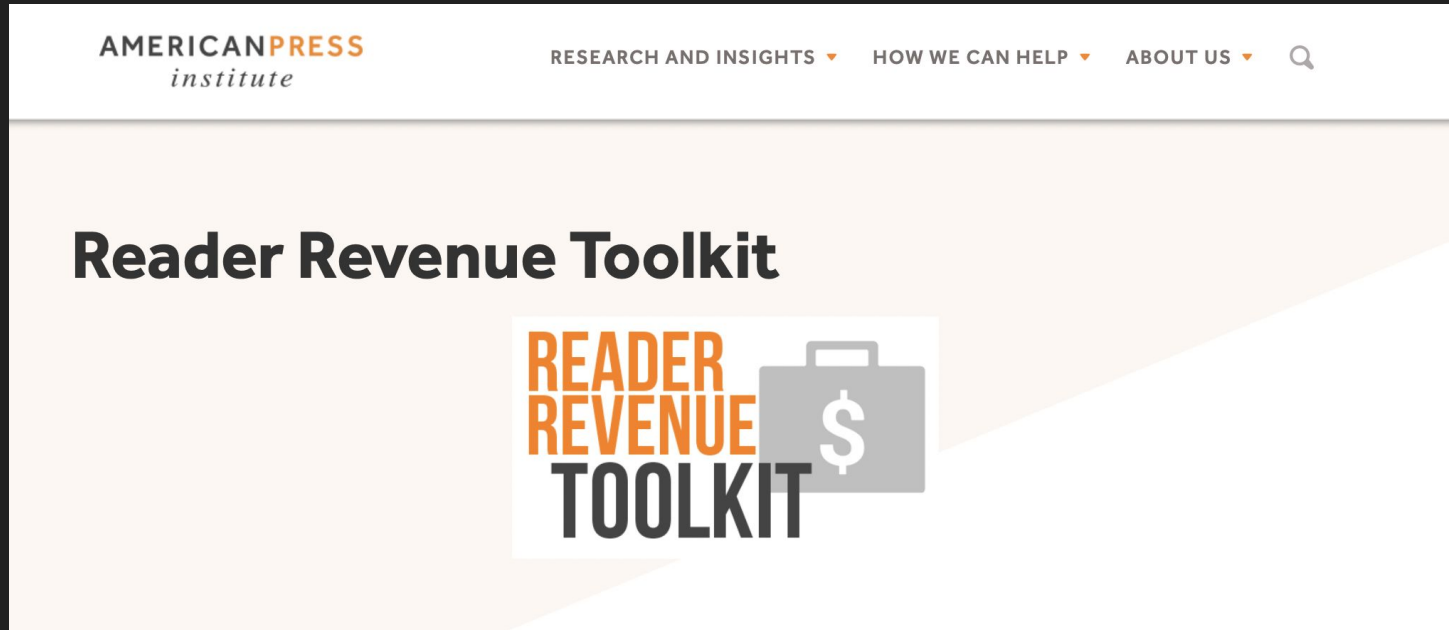


Table Stakes

The 7 Table Stakes to Be in The Game



Reader Revenue Toolkit (API)

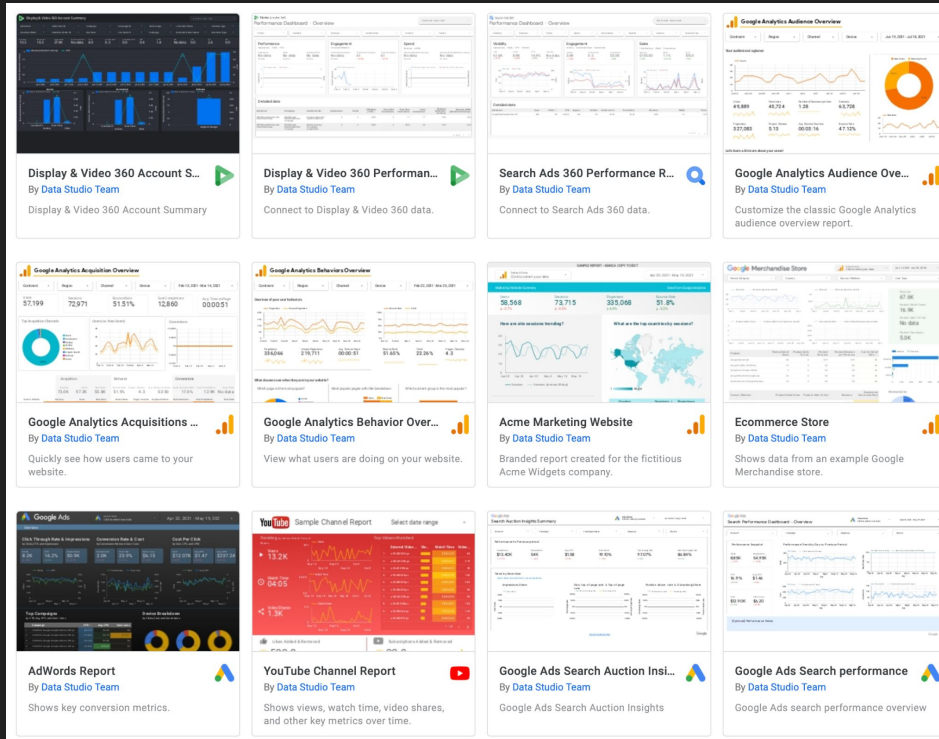


Key ideas to think about in terms of digital newsroom transformation

- What you (presumably) have after the first session:
 - A clear value proposition
 - Supporter benefits
 - Everyone is briefed on your North Star
- The best organisations are like a seamless organism (no silos between editorial, tech, biz)
- Create a data-inspired organisation



Data Studio Report Gallery



Shift from traditional to digital business

- The big mistake many managers do: ~~add more work~~
- Better: **Stop doing things**
- Thinking more about the audiences, **where they consume your content & when**
- Digital means **constant change** (yesterday Instagram, tomorrow TikTok...)



What steps should you take first

- Set up a **pilot program**, change is never easy and is better done in small steps. Plus you build your own proof of concept
- Does everyone in the organisation know **what is your goal with the transformation?** (i.e. “we need to hit 20,000 paying members to become sustainable”)
- **Data democratization**
- Do you have **all the skill you need to succeed?** (i.e. hiring a data analyst)





Create habits

- Engaged readers don't churn
- Newsletters
- Podcasts
- Games (puzzles)
- Recipes
- Premium: Extra subscription





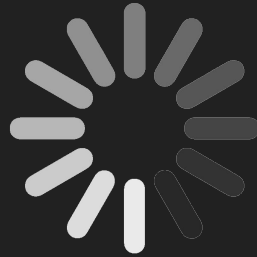
Gwyn Nissen

editor-in-chief of
Der Nordschleswiger (since 2013)

- Director of the transport-media organization Dansk Transportforlag (2008-2013)
- Spent 21 years at JydskeVestkysten (1987-2008)
- Had an initial stint at Der Nordschleswiger (1983-1987)



Connecting



Newsletters



Newsletters allow you to build a relationship with your readers. **Smaller, local newsrooms should start with a daily newsletter.**



Why do you need newsletter(s)

- It's one of the oldest non-algorithm driven ways of digital communication. **Everyone reads and writes newsletters**
- Newsletters are one of the **best habit building tools**.
- Today, you can operate your whole content distribution **only on newsletters** and earn millions (Substack, Ghost; Axios Local, Puck.News)
- Newsletter subscribers are the **most likely to become paying supporters**



How to start a newsletter

- Daily or weekly?
- Design it as a content of its own (a subscriber gets the gist of the information and doesn't have to click through)
- Choose a platform: MailChimp, Substack, Ghost, Newspack
- Build in supporter funnels



Tools & NL platforms

- [Substack](#)
- [Ghost](#)
- [Revue](#)
- [MailChimp](#)
- [REMP](#)
- [Newspack](#)



How to get newsletter subscribers (on-site)

- Sign-up widgets
 - On the homepage, in articles, pop-ups, bottom boxes, alerts, banners
- Main newsletter sign-up page
- Link in header or nav bar
- Registration wall
- Quizzes, surveys, contests

From [25 Ways to Sign Someone Up For Your Newsletter](#)

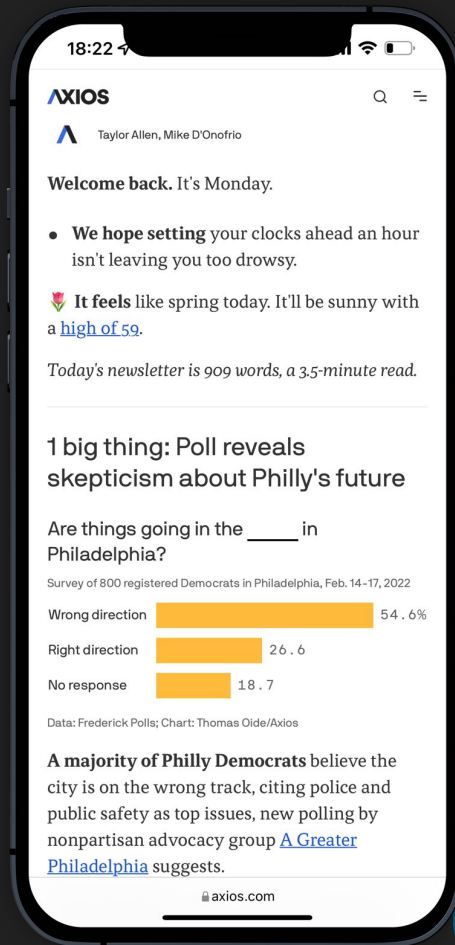
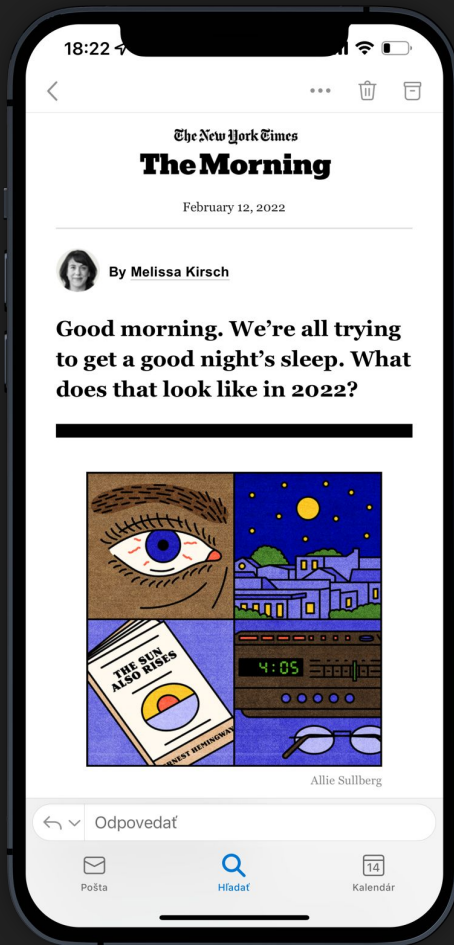
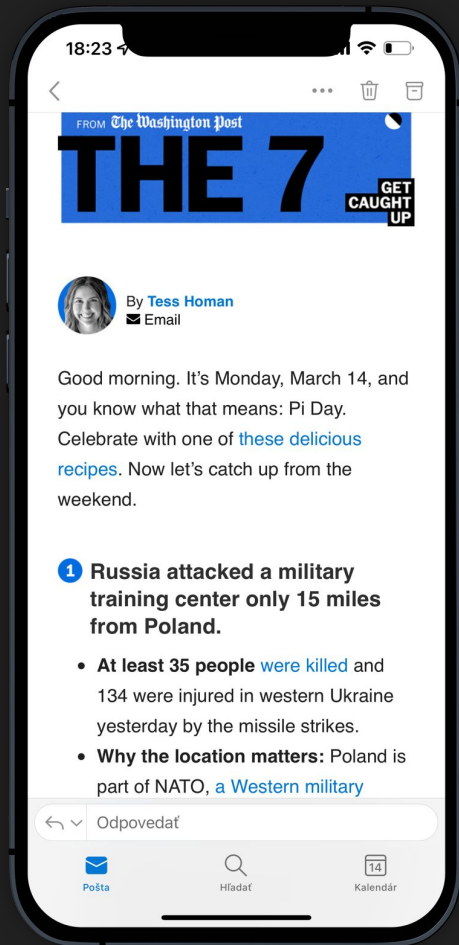


How to get newsletter subscribers (off-site)

- Social media
- Search
- Events
- Referral programs
- Forward to a friend
- Cross promotion with other publishers, creators, influencers
- Paid acquisition

From [25 Ways to Sign Someone Up For Your Newsletter](#)





Make your newsletter more interactive

- Community-featured content (top photo, quote)
- Quizzes / Polls (use [HandyPolls](#))
- Threads (Substack feature)
- [Discord](#) / Facebook or Telegram groups / Twitter
- Encourage replies



What else should you know?

- Paid newsletters
- How publishers are **using newsletters to grow subs**:
 - Extra content for paying subscribers (Sunday edition, special Q&A)
 - Paying subscribers get access to a subs-only community
 - EAAS – email as a service (full articles straight into inbox)



Key metrics

- Subscriber count
- Open rate
- CTR
- Conversion rate
- CLV of newsletter subscribers
- Daily unsubscribers (if many, somewhere is a problem)





Filtrovať podľa názvu NL

Info k aktualizácii dát

Aktuálne info k reportu

18. 2. 2022 - 17. 3. 2022

Nove registrácie do NL

2 tis.

↑ 44.4%

Celkový počet odberateľov

159,4 tis.

0.0%

AVG CLV NL

[redacted] €

0.0%

AVG CLV SME.sk

[redacted]

↓ -0.8%

Miera otvorení

36,5 %

↓ -5.7%

Miera prekliku

6,1 %

↓ -1.7%

Odoslania

1,1 mil.

↑ 2.9%

Kliky

64 tis.

↑ 1.2%

Priame konverzie

13

↑ 225.0%

Konverzie clanky

0

↓ -100.0%

Suma predajov cez clanky

Žiadne údaje

Žiadne údaje

KPI podľa newsletterov

nazov NL	predplatiteľov	odoslania	miera otvorení	miera prekliku	konverzie priame	konverzie clanky	AVG CLV
1. Víkendový výber	[redacted]	2 73 513	47,89 %	2,28 %	0	0	[redacted] €
2. Ranný briefing SME	[redacted]	4 221 475	45,11 %	6,78 %	1	0	[redacted] €
3. Odber článkov autora	[redacted]	0 110 145	41,33 %	5,72 %	1	0	[redacted] €
4. Výber šéfredaktorky	[redacted]	2 16 516	42,63 %	2,95 %	0	0	[redacted] €
5. Dole vodou so Samom Marcom	[redacted]	6 12 724	49,25 %	2,52 %	2	0	[redacted] €
6. Klik newsletter	[redacted]	3 19 769	49,58 %	2,91 %	0	0	[redacted] €
7. Veci verejné Mikloša a Beblavého	[redacted]	4 7 661	42,5 %	2,1 %	0	0	[redacted] €
8. Kritický pohľad Michala Havrana	[redacted]	6 7 417	42,68 %	1,92 %	0	0	[redacted] €
9. Týždeň Petra Schutza	[redacted]	3 6 651	40,38 %	1,01 %	0	0	[redacted] €
10. Výber rozhovorov	[redacted]	4 5 465	32,37 %	4,01 %	0	0	[redacted] €

1 - 57 / 57

nazov NL	odberateľov	odoslania	dorucenia	otvorenia
1. Víkendový výber	[redacted]	73 513	73 457	35 180
2. Ranný briefing SME	[redacted]	221 475	221 352	99 852
3. Updates and Special O...	[redacted]	9 398	9 293	1 469

nazov NL	suma predajov cez clanky	predaje cez clanky
Žiadne údaje		





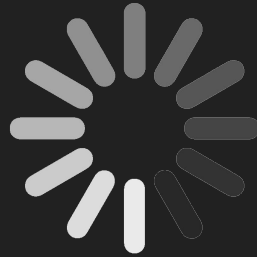
Vicent Partal

director of VilaWeb

- Worked at El Temps, El Punt, Diari de Barcelona, Catalunya Ràdio, La Vanguardia and TVE...
- Considered one of the pioneers of the internet in the Catalan Countries
- Founded the first electronic newspaper in Catalan, VilaWeb
- Writes once a week in Berria and Nós Diario



Connecting





David Tvrdon

journalist / podcaster / strategist

[e-mail](#) / [web](#) / [twitter](#) / [linkedin](#)

Thank you.

