

The Washington Post

About The Washington Post:

The Washington Post is an award-winning news leader whose mission is to connect, inform, and enlighten local, national and global readers with trustworthy reporting, in-depth analysis and engaging opinions. It combines world-class journalism with the latest technology and tools so readers can interact with The Post anytime, anywhere. The Washington Post is also handling complex publisher and audience needs around the world through [Arc Publishing](#), the company's award-winning, state-of-the-art digital platform and suite of tools.

About Google News Initiative:

The Google News Initiative is our effort to bring everything we do in collaboration with the news industry – across products, partnerships, and programs – to help journalism thrive in the digital age. Learn more about how news organizations can partner with Google at g.co/newsinitiative.

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The Washington Post: Combining world-class journalism with the latest technology

As the winner of 65 Pulitzer Prizes, responsible for many seminal moments in American investigative journalism, The Washington Post has long been defined by its dedication to exceptional reporting. In recent years, it has also been defined by marrying this rigorous reporting with a dedication to digital innovation – and building the future of journalism.

Over the past few years, we've worked closely with The Washington Post to help build that future, providing new technologies to meet The Washington Post's business needs and experimenting with how journalism is created, distributed, and consumed. That partnership is a reflection of our shared commitment to building a more informed world, which is essential to both Google's mission – organizing the world's information and making it universally accessible and useful – and the success of our core businesses like Search. We cannot hope to fulfill our mission without ensuring that quality journalism – and the news organizations that produce it – thrive in the digital age. With the recent launch of the [Google News Initiative](#), our effort to build a stronger future for journalism, we looked to build on that commitment.

Our long-standing partnership with The Washington Post has been a great example of the spirit of collaboration we're looking to extend across the news ecosystem: technology companies and news organizations working closely together to drive value for their businesses. For instance, The Washington Post was a launch partner for [AMP](#), an open-source project designed to improve the performance of the web, and which now accounts for a large portion of The Post's mobile referral traffic. It was one of the first major news sites to turn its site into a Progressive Web App. The Post was also a founding member of [The Trust Project](#), a coalition focused on helping news organizations better signal trustworthy content for platforms.

We launched the GNI with three objectives in mind: elevating quality information and combating misinformation, evolving business models to support quality journalism, and empowering news organizations to use new technologies. In this case study, we want to highlight the industry leadership The Washington Post has provided in each of these areas and how we've worked closely together to further each objective.



The Washington Post became one of the first publishers to experiment with AMP Stories, to give readers a more visual entry point to The Washington Post's coverage.

[VIEW THE ENTIRE ARTICLE WALKTHROUGH BY CLICKING HERE](#)

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AMP is an example of a great collaborative effort between publishers and Google. Collaboration begins with trust and transparency, and the AMP team consists of not just great engineers but also great collaborators.

SHAILESH PRAKASH
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER, THE WASHINGTON POST

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RESULTS

Our partner-first approach with The Washington Post helped drive the following results in 2018:

- **Programmatic:** The Washington Post tested new products like exchange bidding and native advertising, strengthening the focus on premium programmatic ads – to drive an additional 7 figures in revenue. In the past year alone, The Washington Post has seen double-digit ad revenue growth.
- **Subscribe with Google:** As of November 2018, Washington Post is fully integrated with Subscribe with Google. When subscribers purchase their Washington Post subscription through SwG, they'll seamlessly access all their Washington Post content on Google surfaces, including on Google News and in Google search results.
- **YouTube:** The Washington Post surpassed 500K+ subscribers on YouTube, achieving 250%+ year over year growth.
- **Accelerated Mobile Pages:** AMP helped The Washington Post improve load time of AMP content by 88% (in comparison to traditional mobile content) and increased returning users from mobile search by 23%. The Washington Post created 200+ AMP Stories this year, and are founding members of the AMP Advisory Committee. The Washington Post co-presented with Google twice in 2018 at industry events to introduce developers to AMP stories.
- **Fighting Misinformation:** The Washington Post was an initial adopter of [ClaimReview markup](#) for fact check content and continues to set the standard for how to use it.

Evolving business models to support quality journalism

The rise of the internet has posed new challenges to the business models that have traditionally supported quality news content. We've worked closely with The Washington Post to address this in two ways: optimizing existing streams of advertising revenue and strengthening the pipeline for subscriptions.

At the center of our ad optimization strategy is Google Ad Manager (formerly known as Doubleclick for Publishers). In the past year, our partnerships teams have worked closely with The Washington Post to make a number of decisions – introducing new products like exchange bidding and native advertising, strengthening the focus on premium programmatic ads – to drive seven-figure additional revenue for The Washington Post. In the past year alone, The Washington Post has seen double-digit ad revenue growth.

Google Ad Manager continues to be core to our relationship in other ways, too. We've looked to extend Google Ad Manager even further across The Washington Post's surfaces, enabling Google Ad Manager cross-sell and Player for Publishers, which provides The Washington Post access for direct-sold ads on YouTube.

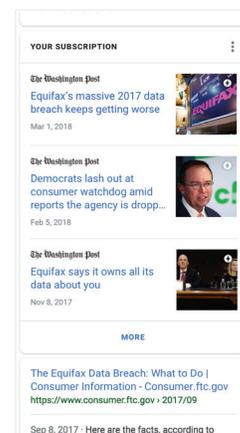
Given the increasing willingness for consumers to subscribe to quality news content online, we've also been working alongside The Washington Post to make it easier for its users to subscribe online. In the fall of 2017, The Post surpassed one million subscribers and its digital subscriptions have continued to grow substantially in the last year. As a platform, we wanted to do more to help news organizations like The Washington Post convert readers into subscribers.

Earlier this year, we built on our work to help publishers increase subscriptions when we launched [Subscribe with Google](#), a suite of products that helps news publishers increase subscription conversion and improve user retention. The Washington Post has been an integral partner in the launch of Subscribe with Google. As of November 2018, The Washington Post is fully integrated with Subscribe with Google. When subscribers purchase their Washington Post subscription through Subscribe with Google, they can seamlessly access all their Washington Post content on Google surfaces, including on Google News and in Google search results.

The Washington Post was also one of the first news organizations to come on as Trusted Tester for Propensity to Subscribe, a machine learning model designed to help publishers recognize potential subscribers. Using this system, The Washington Post is testing ways to differentiate experiences for users with different levels of propensity to become subscribers.

Empowering news organizations with new technologies

The Washington Post has also been an industry leader in embracing new technologies that help tell stories in new ways and across new formats.



Subscribers who have linked their Washington Post subscription to their Google account can seamlessly access the Washington Post across Google apps and services, including Google News and Search.

The Washington Post has been an enthusiastic early adopter of AMP, having extended the open source format across all of their articles and [continue to see strong results](#). The Washington Post improved load time of AMP content by 88% (in comparison to traditional mobile content) and increased returning users from mobile search by 23%.

That spirit of innovation continued earlier this year when The Washington Post became one of the first publishers to experiment with AMP Stories, to give readers a more visual entry point to The Washington Post's coverage. As Greg Manifold, Design Director at The Post, explained, "Some of the most highly engaging stories are the most visually compelling, and this format allows us to showcase our journalism when there are multiple elements we want to bring together. We're transforming the storytelling experience to delight readers who are increasingly visually-oriented when consuming information." The Washington Post continues to be a strong collaborator by becoming one of the first news organizations to join the AMP Advisory Council, a model that will involve organizations outside of Google in the ongoing evolution of AMP. Additionally, Washington Post co-presented with Google twice in 2018 at industry events to introduce developers to AMP stories. "We are excited to continue pushing the AMP format forward and building new capabilities that help all publishers," said Dave Merrell, Director of Product Partnerships at The Post and member of the AMP Advisory Council.

For The Washington Post, innovation in storytelling has also meant strengthening its presence on video. It recently [retooled its video strategy](#) to more effectively reach its audience and doubled the size of the video news team to make it happen. In the past year, it has tripled its YouTube subscribers and watch time on YouTube has grown 280%. Nadine Akaja, Senior Producer of Video Platforms at The Washington Post, described the significance of YouTube in the Post's video strategy: "That's why platforms like YouTube, where people come specifically to watch videos, are really important for us. The way to grow your audience is to go out and meet them where they are. People on YouTube come with a video-watching mindset, which makes it ideal for longer form, documentary-style storytelling." The Post has gone on to conduct more experiments on YouTube, including hosting an [Oscars livestream](#), which received more than a million views, and [launching a science show for kids](#).

The Washington Post continues to experiment with not only how it tell stories but where they're delivered. The Post was a launch partner for the Google Home narrative news experience with its daily politics podcast, now called "The Daily 202's Big Idea." This year it added two new daily audio shows with the history-focused Retropod and the local Capital Weather Gang. For instance, consumers can say, "OK, Google. Play Washington Post news" to trigger "The Daily 202's Big Idea" and "Play Washington Post Retropod" to trigger "Retropod." New episodes are available every weekday.

"We love using Google's assistive experiences to deliver audio that fits seamlessly into our user's lives," said Senior Product Manager Joseph Price. "We're continuing to invest in daily audio programming and the Google Assistant is key to building relationships between users and our audio."

Elevating quality journalism and fighting misinformation

What's powerful about the internet is that anyone anywhere can produce content that can be consumed by readers across the world. That's important to preserve. But while that has contributed to the richness of the open web, it has also made it more difficult to ensure that people are guided to accurate information they can trust.

Over the past few years, we've worked with publishers to elevate quality content from quality news publishers and stem the flow of misinformation and disinformation. The Washington Post has been an important and essential partner in this effort. The Washington Post has been a founding member of The Trust Project, a coalition we support comprised of more than 80 news organizations focused on better indicating the trustworthiness of content across platforms. Last year, the Trust Project [released eight trust indicators](#) that news organizations could add to their content to better signal its trustworthiness. The Washington Post was also an initial adopter of [ClaimReview markup](#) for fact check content and continues to set the standard for how to use it — and is also one of five publishers to collaborate with the [Data Commons project](#), an initiative for the open sharing of data, to release the first fact check corpus to help academia and practitioners to study misinformation.

What's Ahead

The Washington Post often prides itself on being a "140 year old start-up" dedicated to creating "ambitious impactful, and consequential journalism" and making "rapid digital progress." We've been excited to partner alongside to help it push along both of these objectives, especially when given the stakes of The Washington Post's work to building a more informed world.

Learn more about how you can partner with Google at g.co/newsinitiative.