Welcome to News Consumer Insights 2.0!

In 2018, we launched News Consumer Insights (NCI) to help news publishers make data-driven business decisions that increase profitability and build deeper relationships with their readers. We were thrilled with the reception that the tool received, quickly amassing tens of thousands of visits across 130 countries and an award nomination from the International News Media Association (INMA).

Given the high degree of usage, results generated and positive feedback from our partners, we endeavored to build upon the platform and put to work all of the knowledge and insights we gained from working with our publishers over the past two years.

In particular, we learned that:

1) While we tried to simplify the data presented in NCI, there was still a lot of data. We didn’t fully solve the “data tsunami” problem.
2) The NCI playbook had great feedback, but it’s a long read if you want to quickly act on insights.
3) We could do more to guide our news partners in making the most out of Google Analytics to help deliver deeper insights.
4) Most importantly, reader engagement is one of the most important areas to center on to grow ad revenue and reader revenue, and it’s largely unexplored in many of the analytics tools available today.

So, we’ve developed News Consumer Insights 2.0 by taking these lessons to heart. We’re delighted to introduce our new version of NCI, which features:

- **More personalized recommendations**
  We created a decision engine that delivers personalized and actionable recommendations based on your Google Analytics data, so you don’t have to spend time analyzing insights and data.

- **New insights on Reader Revenue and Video, thanks to News Tagging Guide**
  Our companion tool, News Tagging Guide, allows you to capture the metrics that matter most to understand reader engagement and video consumption. The new data will also amplify the insights generated in NCI 2.0.

- **New value metrics: Advertising Revenue and Average ARPU**
  We’ve crafted solutions for both Google Analytics 360 users and classic Google Analytics users to allow for insights around Advertising Revenue and Average Ad Revenue per User (ARPU), which better inform audience value.

With these improvements to NCI, we look forward to bringing increased value to news partners of all sizes around the world. While this tool is thoroughly revamped, our mission remains the same: We’re committed to helping news publishers direct their resources and adapt their digital strategies to drive loyalty and sustainability.

Sincerely,

Amy Adams Harding  
Director of Analytics and Revenue Optimization, News and Publishing, Google

Anntao Diaz  
Head of News Consumer Insights, Google
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Getting started with NCI 2.0
What is News Consumer Insights (NCI) 2.0?

We developed News Consumer Insights (NCI) to help publishers make data-driven business decisions that increase profitability and build deeper relationships with their readers. Through our data framework and decision engine designed exclusively for News Publishers, NCI provides key insights and actionable recommendations based on a publisher’s Google Analytics account to help grow Reader Engagement and Reader Revenue.

What’s new in News Consumer Insights 2.0:

- **Our Decision Engine to deliver personalized recommendations**
  We’ve built-in a decision engine that will deliver personalized actionable recommendations based on your Google Analytics data so you don’t have to spend time analyzing insights and data.

- **New insights to grow overall performance**
  Our Reader Revenue page provides deep insights to optimize the conversion rates or any Goal you might have in Google Analytics. Our “Video Insights” page will allow you to maximize video content consumption across your site and audience.

- **New value metrics : Advertising Revenue and Avg. Ad Revenue per User**
  If you have Google Analytics 360 connected to Ad Manager, we’ll populate your Advertising Revenue and Avg. Ad Revenue per User (ARPU) throughout the tool to better inform value. If you don’t have Google Analytics 360, you’ll have the option to enter Avg. CPMs/RPMs per device to allow us to show estimated Ad Revenue and estimated Avg. Ad Revenue per User (ARPU).
How to use News Consumer Insights 2.0

News Consumer Insights is completely free to use and has been designed with simplicity in mind. The only thing you’ll need to access the tool is an email address associated with your Google Analytics account.

1 - Authorize the tool to get access to your Google Analytics Data, connect your Google Analytics Account and visit the settings tab.

2 - The left navigation bar will take you through the insights pages covered by News Consumer Insights.

- **Actionable Recommendations**
  - Recommendations to improve Reader Engagement and Revenue, identified by our NCI Decision Engine
  - Insights on your Readers’ performance compared to our benchmarks
  - Conversion rate optimization insights to improve Reader Revenue
  - Insights on your Video content consumption across your site

- **Top Insights**
  - Top Insights card that will help you digest the insights throughout the tool
How to use News Consumer Insights 2.0

Actionable Recommendations

The section where you’ll find all the actionable recommendations that we’ve identified through our built-in decision engine that focuses on how to grow Reader Engagement and Reader Revenue as well as capture better data.

You will also find your readers segmented through our NCI Reader Funnel across the last 30 days: Casual Readers (only 1 visit), Loyal Readers (between 2 and 14 visits), Brand Lovers (at least 15 visits). This funnel will repeat throughout our tool and you can always hover your mouse over the tooltip assigned to each reader segment to see the definition and even upload them to your own Google Analytics.

Our recommendations are split in 3 categories: Reader Engagement, Reader Revenue and Better Data. You only need to click on one of the recommendations to discover the steps you’ll need to follow in order to act on the optimization.

8 Recommendations to help you improve Reader Engagement:

You need more Visits:

1. You’re missing “NewsArticle” structured data which can impact your search discoverability.
Reader Engagement

This page will deliver insights on your Readers’ Engagement performance by deep-diving on the metrics that inform visit depth and visit frequency. You will find our NCI Reader Funnel applied to your audience which will allow you to quickly identify engagement gaps.

Your traffic sources are also a key area of optimization and we’ve created our own segmentation to help you identify the best performing ones, organized by % of traffic and Pages Read per User (or est. ARPU/ARPU if we have access to Ad Revenue).

- Direct Traffic (see footnote)
- Dark Traffic (see footnote)
- Google Search
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Other Social (other social networks)
- Other Search (other search engines)
- Newsletters
- Notifications (Web Push Notifications)

You will also be able to analyze the performance of your NCI Reader segments by comparing their respective key engagement metrics with the ones from thousands of news publishers included in our NCI Benchmarks.

We’ve also created our Reader Engagement Score (RES) which serves as a reference point so you can easily identify performance gaps as compared to our NCI benchmarks.

Comments/Observation

- What is Dark Traffic?
  Some users are wrongly assigned as “Direct traffic” when Google Analytics can’t identify the visit source (apps, SMS...). We identify them in NCI as users who came to your site directly but didn’t land on your homepage (ie a user who came from Whatsapp from an article shared by a contact). NCI’s Direct traffic only refers to users who landed on your homepage.
Overview of Reader Engagement Score

We created a custom metric called “Reader Engagement Score” (RES) in News Consumer Insights to help you understand how much readers engage with your content compared to other news organizations.

Our RES consists of 4 user metrics per audience segment, measured over the last 30 days:

- **Visits per Reader (sessions per user)**
  How many times does a reader visit your site?
- **Pages Read per Visit (pageviews per session)**
  How many articles does a user read per visit?
- **Visit Length (avg. session duration)**
  How long does a reader stay on your site?
- **Total Pages Read per User (pageviews per user)**
  How many articles does a user read on average across all visits?

For each audience segment, these four metrics will be measured against our industry benchmarks to create a dynamic score between 0 and 100.

For example, let’s define the Reader Engagement Score for the Loyal Readers of Site X:

\[
\frac{\left( \frac{\text{Page views per user}}{\text{Page view per user}} + 2 \right) + \left( \frac{\text{Avg Session Duration}}{\text{Avg Session Duration}} \right) + \left( \frac{\text{Sessions per User}}{\text{Sessions per User}} \right) + \left( \frac{\text{Pageviews per Session}}{\text{Pageviews per Session}} \right) / 3 }{3} / 3
\]

You’ll notice we apply more weight (a multiple of two) to Pageviews per User. This tells us how Site X’s loyal readers are behaving compared to the benchmarks. We call it “Performance %” and it does not appear in your report. In order to get the Reader Engagement Score: \[30 \times \ln(\text{“Performance %”}) + 50\]

If Site’s X Loyal Readers metrics are equal to the benchmark, the Performance % would be equal to “1” and the Reader Engagement Score to 50 (as \(\ln(1) = 0\)).
How to use News Consumer Insights 2.0

Reader Revenue

This page populates based on your selection of a [Google Analytics Goal](https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1477929) in your settings tab:

This could be any type of Goal that allows you to track what you define as a conversion on your site such as: new subscription, new contribution / donation, click on an affiliate link, newsletter sign-up, adblock whitelisted. It can also be a pure reader engagement Goal like: User who have read more than 5 articles or 5 videos.

The insights you will find are primarily focused on a **conversion rate optimization approach**. The goal of this report is to allow you to quickly identify where you should focus your resources in order to grow traffic sources that have an above average conversion rate and improve the performance on the ones that are driving the most volume of Goal completions.

Pay particular attention to the experience on your primary landing pages as they are vital to improve reader revenue performance.
How to use News Consumer Insights 2.0

Video Insights

This page requires the News Tagging Guide Video Insights component which will allow you to transfer your video player’s data to Google Analytics for us to analyze in News Consumer Insights. Once the video consumption data is available, you will be able to analyze how your audience segments interact with your videos: video starts, videos completed, avg. watch time and overall video recirculation.

Our framework focuses on highlighting the insights that will allow you to maximize video starts and video completions which are critical to grow reader loyalty and ad revenue.

How can I get my Readers to start more Videos?

Only 10% of your readers have started a video across their visits on your site.

Video Player Presence
Only 20% of your readers saw a player load across their visits.

Video Player Location
Only 20% of your readers scrolled passed 50% of your pages, is your video player ATF?

65% of your video users have completed a video across their visits on your site.

Video consumption behavior can vastly differ per device and per traffic source. Take a look at video completion rates below and focus on closing the gaps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRAFFIC SOURCE</th>
<th>VIDEO STARTS</th>
<th>COMPLETION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Goog. Search</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Dark Traffic</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Newsletters</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Referrals</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Other Search</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Facebook</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Twitter</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Other Social</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Direct</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Paid Search</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avg. Watch Time (Mobile): 25%
Avg. Watch Time (Desktop & Tablet): 55%
Google Analytics for News Publishers

We’ve heard from multiple news organizations around the world that it can be complex to identify the right metrics to collect in Google Analytics or even ensure the right technical implementation.

We created News Tagging Guide (NTG) to highlight the right news and publishing metrics to measure in Google Analytics, simplify tagging and amplify the recommendations and insights found in News Consumer Insights and Realtime Content Insights.

These are the data components covered in NTG:

- **Video Analytics**
  Discover how your readers are consuming videos on your site and unlock growth opportunities

- **User Engagement**
  Measure user engagement with your marketing channels to grow loyalty on your site

- **Reader Revenue**
  Implement conversion measuring to maximize Reader Revenue

We strongly recommend using News Tagging Guide to improve your data collection in Google Analytics as a News publisher.

**Comments/Observation**

- If data seems to be missing from your Traffic Sources in NCI, Google Analytics might be not identifying your referral URLs correctly. Make sure you have the right UTM parameters on your URLs or add the relevant ones (newsletters = email, push notifications = notifications...).
# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Does News Consumer Insights (NCI) work with the free version of Google Analytics?</strong></td>
<td>NCI works with all versions of Google Analytics. Publishers with Google Analytics 360 will get access to additional advertising metrics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is News Consumer Insights (NCI) relevant for publishers outside the News industry?</strong></td>
<td>As long as you’re publishing content, NCI is relevant for all publishers both within and outside of the news industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do I need to implement any Google Analytics tags on my site to use News Consumer Insights (NCI)?</strong></td>
<td>You can use NCI by simply connecting your Google Analytics account. To maximize the value of NCI and receive additional insights and recommendations, you should implement certain <a href="#">News Tagging Guide</a> (NTG) tags. See your Data collection recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why does my data look different than what I was expecting?</strong></td>
<td>Take a closer look at your Google Analytics implementation and data collection as there might be errors. <a href="#">The Tag Assistant extension</a> for Google Chrome can help. Our “<a href="#">Google Analytics for News Publishers</a>” page can also provide guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why is Pageviews per User given more weight in the Reader Engagement Score (RES)?</strong></td>
<td>A key assumption in our framework is that we can infer both loyalty and potential ad revenue from the pageview metric. To simplify, we assume that an audience segment with more pageviews per user than the average is potentially more loyal and has generated more ad revenue. Keep in mind that specific content sections (like photo galleries that create a new pageview on each photo) or site features (content auto-refresh) might render our score less effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the data sampled?</td>
<td>Yes, part of the data might be sampled (read more about <a href="#">Google Analytics sampling</a>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are you using benchmark data and is it updated?</td>
<td>The benchmark data helps define industry averages for the key engagement metrics used in our Reader Engagement Score. They are reference points for you to analyze your reader performance against your peers and identify potential gaps. The data is updated on the first day of each month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who’s included in the benchmarks and can I apply a filter?</td>
<td>Each news site in our benchmarks has been manually recruited and we’ve made sure to add publishers from different locations (Americas, Europe, Asia) and with different coverage (local news, national and international news, magazines). Only publishers with hard paywalls have been excluded from our database due to their impact on reader engagement. The data aims to be directional only and we do not offer a way to filter at the moment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reader Engagement

List of Actionable Recommendations

You need more visits

- Newsletters: User Acquisition Strategy
- Get your readers to subscribe to Web Push Notifications
- Optimize news content discoverability with structured data
- Amplify your social strategy

You need longer visits

- Recirculation strategy
- Is your mobile site fast enough?
- How can I get my users to start more Videos?
- How can I get my users to complete more Videos?
Newsletters: User Acquisition Strategy

WHY IT MATTERS

Reason 1: Readers coming from newsletters have higher visit frequency and depth than other sources of traffic.

Reason 2: Readers from The Boston Globe are 10 times more likely to become subscribers after they subscribe to The Globe e-newsletters.

Reason 3: Publishers are betting on newsletters as a reliable way to reach loyal readers and deepen their connection to their audiences.

Best Practices

Maximize the chances of converting Readers into newsletter subscribers

WHERE TO FOCUS

1. Visibility & Position
   Sign-up box should be easily discoverable, across articles and above the fold. Focus on inline for desktop and/or anchored formats for mobile.

2. Reduce # of fields & use 1 click sign-up
   Focus on one field, email, to remove sign-up friction. Enable Autofill for the email field to populate previously saved email addresses within the browser.

3. Look & Feel
   Use contrasting color(s) for the background of the sign-up box and main “Call To Action”.

4. Personalize the message
   Highlight why a user should subscribe in the sign-up box headline. If possible, customize this message based on the content.

Comments/Observations

- Make sure you’re measuring the performance of your Newsletters signup modules with News Tagging Guide and you’re correctly tracking your newsletters readers in Google Analytics with the right UTM tags.
- Don’t forget to send a “Thank you” or “Welcome” email once your readers sign up.
- Facebook Instant Articles allow you to easily implement an email sign-up box.
Certain implementations, like a full screen take-over or anchor format, have higher sign-up rates but can present a user experience cost.

... And by focusing on newsletter subscription, we think we can move the needle and grow our loyal audience, which will substantially grow our traffic.

+15% newsletter subscribers

"... And by focusing on newsletter subscription, we think we can move the needle and grow our loyal audience, which will substantially grow our traffic.”

Read Case Study
Implement Web Push Notifications

WHY IT MATTERS

Reason 1: “As compared to an email newsletter where the average subscription rate is 2%, the Web Push Notification opt-in rate is around 5%-15%” (Source)

Reason 2: When targeted, Web Push Notifications for news articles can have up to a 25% click-rate (Source).

Best Practices

Maximizing chances of getting your Readers to subscribe to Web Push Notifications

WHERE TO FOCUS

1. **Build your own or work with a 3rd party**
   Building your own Web Push Notifications gives you a full ownership on the channel but might require many tech resources (https, PWA). 3rd parties can be a good solution but do have a cost and transitioning away from vendors can cause subscriber losses.

2. **Sign up prompts: pay attention to when and where**
   A positive UX is critical to maintaining an effective Notification opt-in flow. Wait until they have begun consuming content on your site. You should consider number of articles read, time on site, and scroll depth as potential signals to trigger the signup prompt.

3. **Choose when to push native prompts vs custom prompts**
   Native prompts shall lead to more opt-ins because of their single step sign up process but custom prompts with a two-step sign up process provide more value in the long term as they tend to have higher retention rate thanks to a clearer value proposition for those who sign up. Find the right balance!

4. **Look & feel of custom prompts**
   Highlight why your readers should subscribe to your web push notifications. If possible, customize messaging based on the content they’re reading. Images drive more engagement and will help you communicate on your brand. Maximize visibility for your sign up prompts but don’t hinder content consumption on your pages.

Comments/Observations

- Make sure you’re measuring the performance of your Web Push Notifications sign up campaigns with News Tagging Guide.
You need more visits

**Best in Class examples**

Inline sign up experience as a first step in the opt-in flow

**Callouts**

- With Custom Prompts, publishers can use in-line sign up widgets as a first step in the opt-in flow on all their articles.
- Use controls such as “Time on Page” and “Pages Visited Count” to present the opt-in flow once visitors are engaged with content.

**Case Studies**

**The Dallas Morning News**

How The Dallas Morning News Uses Push Notifications to Grow Audience

[Read Case study](#)

+20% reader visits.

1st party Web Push Notifications implemented to get their readers to come back

[Read Case Study](#)
Optimize content discoverability with structured data

WHY IT MATTERS

**Reason 1:** Markup your articles, reviews, videos, and more with structured data using the standards found at Schema.org. This will provide your site with further context for all search engines.

**Reason 2:** By accurately implementing structured data on your site, your content is more likely to appear in enriched search results listings.

Best Practices

Improve news content discoverability with [Structured Data](#)

WHERE TO FOCUS

1. **Use the Structured Data Testing tool**
   Test each type of page on your site, including your homepage. Do not limit the test to only one article page and test your AMP pages too.

2. **Check errors and warnings**
   Look out for any errors and warnings that appear and fix them as they might limit your ability to appear in rich results.

3. **Have you deployed all markups?**
   For articles, use [Article](#) or [NewsArticle](#). For video content, use [VideoObject](#). For paywalls, use [IsAccessibleForFree](#). On homepage, use [Website/Organization](#). Don’t forget about [breadcrumbs](#) either!

4. **Monitor the impact in Search Console**
   Track the impact of your structured data strategy in [Search Console](#)

Comments/Observations

- Optimizing your structured data won’t always get your content to appear in rich results (some publications even get enhanced search results without any markup on their pages), but you will increase your chances.
- How to track the impact of your structured data set up in Search Console?
  - Open your Search Console account
  - In “Performance” tab > “Search Results” > “Search Appearances” > “Rich results”
- If you have duplicate pages for the same content, we recommend placing the same structured data on all page duplicates, not just on the canonical page. For more information on placement, see the [Structured Data General Guidelines](#).
Callout

Marking up your video with VideoObject will maximize your chances to appear in rich results (such as LIVE badge). Videos can appear in Google Search results, video search results, Google Images, and Google Discover.

Case Study

+10.43% Organic Search Visits

"... (NCI) has allowed us to generate quick, actionable solutions that had an immediate increase in organic search traffic."

Read Case Study
Amplify your social strategy

WHY IT MATTERS

Reason 1: Optimizing social buttons placement and design across your site can lead to significant visit growth (Source)
Reason 2: Only 28% of content sharing happens through the big social networks. The other 72% is shared through “Dark Traffic” primarily email and apps. (Source)

Best Practices

Maximizing chances of getting your readers to share on social

WHERE TO FOCUS

1. **Position**
   Your social buttons should be visible throughout the article. On mobile, you should create an anchor format or place in the sticky header.

2. **Be Relevant**
   Make sure you’re displaying all the relevant social buttons to your audience. Prioritize share buttons and the order you display them based on what your audience is using (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Linkedin).

3. **Less is better**
   The more buttons you display, the more you risk a ‘paradox of choice’ situation for the reader: “the more options you provide users, the less likely they are to convert”

4. **Look and Feel**
   Try to preserve the original icon color of each social network to drive more clicks.

Comments/Observations:

- Make sure you’re measuring the performance of your social buttons with News Tagging Guide.
- The browser share option is great but the social icons within an article serve as a reminder to share content that they are truly interested in.
- If you’re grouping your social buttons under one icon, try the universally recognized share button.
You need more visits

Best in Class examples

- Sticky footer while maintaining brand colors
- Expandable behind a 'share button'.
- Anchor format with an expandable

Sticky widget in the left column on desktop
Recirculation Strategy

WHY IT MATTERS

**Reason 1:** Your readers’ visit depth is a key indicator of engagement and user loyalty. Loyal readers are more likely to drive consumer revenue.

**Reason 2:** Attention span on mobile is limited. Make sure you’re maximizing your chances to get your readers to read the next article.

Best Practices

Push your users to read more articles during their visits

WHERE TO FOCUS

1. **Maximize visibility**
   Recirculation articles should be easily discoverable across and at the end of your articles. On desktop & tablet, sticky recirculation formats in the right (or left) navigation bar can perform great for long form articles. Leverage recommendation engines but ensure a healthy balance between external and internal article recommendations.

2. **Look and Feel**
   Images drive more engagement and should be displayed on the left. You should test ranking your articles (“1, 2, 3…”... to allow readers to process information faster. Less is better. Try to limit the number of articles in your recirculation units to avoid decision fatigue.

3. **Sticky header is key**
   Make your header sticky and your site logo provides a great opportunity for your readers to visit your homepage, especially on mobile

4. **Unlock advanced formats**
   Advanced recirculation formats like anchor perform great on mobile especially for long form articles or when readers scroll up.

Comments/Observations

- You should A/B test one article with image vs multiple articles with text only for recirculation units within your articles
- Adding estimated reading time below the title can unlock more user engagement (MarketingLand)
- You should test different content prioritization strategies: Trending vs Related Articles
You need longer visits

Best in Class examples on mobile

Callout

Make sure images are responsive and compressed (file size is important and could have latency impact).

Case Study

+37.4% Pageviews generated

Improving the recirculation of their readers by optimizing suggested article call to actions within the article, at the end or one of the side bars.

Read Case Study
You need longer visits

Best in Class examples on desktop & tablet

Callouts

- Images of people, best if they’re at a medium zoom (shoulders up or closer) drive better CTRs than things (objects, landscapes...)
- Generic wording (e.g. “Related Stories” or “Most Popular”) earns slightly more clicks than more complex wording (e.g. “What Else People Can Read on This Topic”) (Source)

Sticky recirculation widget on right nav bar

Leverage images to maximize CTR

Test the ranking of your articles! 1, 2, 3...

Images with people at a medium zoom
Is your mobile site fast enough?

Why it matters

**Reason 1:** Casual readers are less likely to be patient and wait for a site to load. 50% of all readers will leave a page if it takes 3 seconds or longer to load. ([source](#)).

**Reason 2:** Page speed is a ranking factor for mobile searches and can potentially impact your search rankings ([source](#)).

Best Practices

Use [Google Lighthouse](#) to identify page speed optimization opportunities.

Where to focus

1. **Use Google Lighthouse**
   - [Lighthouse](#) is an open-source, automated tool for improving the quality of web pages. Use it to determine what is loading in the background of your site and how to optimize further.

2. **Remove resources that are unnecessary**
   - Evaluate all of the javascript tags and CSS that is being used. Are these elements necessary to create the best experience for your user? If not, remove them and try to eliminate tags that are unnecessary.

3. **Optimize your images**
   - Ensure that none of your images are larger than 100 KB and that most are within 50 KB. Using image standards like JPEG 2000, JPEG XR, and WebP to support stronger compression and smaller images sizes.

4. **Don’t let resources block rendering**
   - Ensure elements that necessary are loading first and are not blocking the user from interacting with the page. A great way to do this is by making all non essential javascript, asynchronous.

5. **Are you Lazy Loading?**
   - Not all readers will scroll to the end of your pages so don’t load all of your elements right away. Load content as a user scrolls.

Case Study

+19% in visits, +4% pages per visit
By reducing the page load time from 6 seconds down to 3 seconds,

[Read Case Study](#)
You need longer visits

How can I get my users to start more Videos?

WHY IT MATTERS

Reason 1: “In essence, video brings together two things that catch our attention like nothing else: movement and noise. Both these features play a significant role in conveying an efficient message”  
(Source).

Reason 2: “Users spend 88% more time on a website that has video.”  (Source).

Best Practices

Getting your users to start more Videos on your site

WHERE TO FOCUS

1. **Grow the video player presence**
   For text-only articles, make sure you’re distributing related video content at the bottom of your content. You should also consider establishing a home for your video content by creating a video section in your navigation menu for better discovery.

2. **Make the video player the primary focus of the page**
   Look at your average scroll rate. You should make sure the article’s video content is above the fold. Large video players have significantly higher viewability than smaller ones.

3. **Optimize your Autoplay set up**
   According to the Better Ads Standard, autoplaying video ads with sound can be disruptive to the user and lead them to close the website immediately. Configure the video player to autoplay when the player is in the viewport, otherwise, set it to click-to-play. You should mute your autoplay content by default. Be sure your implementation is in line with the Chrome autoplay policy.

4. **Unlock recirculation opportunities within your videos**
   Unlock related video content snippets when viewers pause or finish videos. Surfacing other videos will help you keep audiences watching content on your owned properties.

Comments/Observations

- Make sure you’re measuring video consumption behavior with News Tagging Guide.
You need longer visits

Best in Class examples

Callout

When users reach the end of your videos, you should present interactive features like an “Up Next” widget, autoplay countdown or a video thumbnail.

“Up Next” widget when users are about to complete the video

Surface more of your videos when viewers pause/finish videos

Callouts

- Chrome autoplay policies always allow “Muted Autoplay” videos and there are some situations where “Autoplay with Sound” is allowed.
- To get “Autoplay with Sound” right, you can attempt to stream your videos with sound and if Chrome restricts it, automatically mute your videos.

Related video after short form articles
**Best Practices**

Getting your users to complete more Videos on your site

**WHERE TO FOCUS**

1. **Make your video players sticky**
   - Implement “sticky behavior” for your video player so that readers can keep watching videos while scrolling. Make sure you’re complying with [Ad Exchange video implementation policy](https://example.com). You can also implement [Picture-in-Picture (PiP)](https://example.com) which allows users to watch videos in a floating window (always on top of other windows).

2. **Keep your videos short**
   - Most online news videos being consumed are short format. Maximise your chance to have your video completed by keeping your videos under 120 seconds, as they perform best.

3. **Optimize your acquisition channels for Video**
   - Optimize your traffic sources for Video. For search, you can implement structured data markup to improve video content discoverability. For newsletters, highlight video content in subject lines, descriptions or include play icons.

4. **Improve speed**
   - Improve your page speed to help video content and ads load more quickly. Prioritize your video player by leveraging lazy loading and reduce latency by minimizing passbacks.

**Comments/Observations**

- Make sure you’re measuring video consumption behavior with [News Tagging Guide](https://example.com).
- Minimize passbacks: the fewer passbacks that happen, the faster ads can load, which can increase viewability rates.
You need longer visits

Best in Class examples

Implement Picture-in-Picture (PiP)

Callout

With Picture-in-Picture (PiP) your users can keep an eye on what they’re watching while interacting with other sites, or applications.

Improve your page speed to help video content load more quickly
Reader Revenue
Reader Revenue

List of Actionable Recommendations

Collect free readers’ feedback with Google Surveys

Optimize your Reader Revenue funnel

- Your marketing messages
- Your landing page on mobile
- Your landing page on desktop & tablet
- Your checkout flow

Ad Blockers: Reclaim Ad Revenue
Collect readers’ feedback with Google Surveys

WHY IT MATTERS

**Reason 1**: Gather near real-time feedback from all types of readers on your site to optimize key components of your Reader Revenue strategy.

**Reason 2**: Close the loop! If Google Analytics is giving you the “What”, Google Surveys will give you the “Why”. Just ask your readers and learn more about them!

Best Practices

Collect free readers’ feedback with [Google Surveys](#)

WHERE TO FOCUS

1. **Get readers’ feedback for free with Google Surveys**
   You can use Google Surveys for free, exclusively across your site and properties. Once your surveys are live (up to 10 questions), you will be able to analyze results in real time.

2. **Identify conversions roadblocks**
   There are many reasons why your readers are not subscribing to your publication. Are your readers loyal to your brand? Are they aware of your subscription packages? What do they think of your checkout flow? Identify potential roadblocks to grow your conversion rate.

3. **Measure Brand sentiment / affinity**
   Running surveys will help you define your brand strategy. How do your readers perceive your publication? What is their level of connection with your brand? What news publications are they reading? Which of your values resonate? The results will help you inform the way you communicate on your site and in your marketing campaigns.

4. **Optimize your value proposition**
   Gather insights on the type of benefits that your readers would expect if they subscribe. This can help you improve your current consumer revenue strategy or inform plans to build one. [Survey Example Here](#).

Comments/Observations

- Unfortunately, you won’t be able to target specific Google Analytics segments with Google Surveys. You can use “Screening questions” to filter respondents based on specific answers, such as asking about subscription intent and screening-in only readers who answer “I do not plan to subscribe.”
Reader Revenue

Best in Class examples

Which benefit(s) would you expect from a subscription to our Site?

- Anytime cancellation: 26.7%
- Access to thousands of live events: 21.0%
- Watch on any device: 17.1%
- The complete articles library: 11.2%
- Access to exclusive originals: 9.8%
- Free access to share with friends/family: 9.5%
- None (+): 0.9%

Identify expected benefits for your digital & print subscriptions, membership offers

Why do you NOT intend to subscribe to our Site?

- I do not see the benefits of subscribing: 33.1%
- I don't visit your Site enough to subscribe: 30.6%
- The subscription is too expensive: 27.4%
- I don't know how to subscribe: 6.6%

Uncover roadblocks to subscription or contribution

Which of the following BEST describes how you feel about Our News Site?

- I'm a bit familiar with your News Site: 47.8%
- I know your News Site: 38.8%
- I usually check your News Site: 7.5%
- I care about your mission: 2.0%
- I'm part of your Site community: 3.9%

Discover how your Readers connect with your brand
Optimize your Marketing Messages

WHY IT MATTERS

Reason 1: On average, less than 1% of news publishers’ traffic visit subscription pages. Marketing messages are crucial to improve subscription packages awareness.

Reason 2: “No one ever became a member of a journalism site offering news that feels like a commodity” (Source)

Best Practices

Grow your offers awareness with marketing messages

WHERE TO FOCUS

1. **Formats: pay attention to when and where**
   On all your pages, you should have a CTA button in a sticky header. Leverage anchor and inline banners on your article pages. Overlays perform well but should be triggered with caution: upon landing page for returning visitors or upon exit intent for example.

2. **Leverage the emotional bond**
   Subscribing to news shouldn’t be transactional. Your most engaged readers have developed an emotional bond with your publication. You should highlight publication values that resonate with them. Communicating your values isn’t limited to the words you use, it also comes down to the visuals that are used.

3. **Content, Look & Feel**
   Make sure to highlight your packages pricing, savings and if a user can “cancel anytime”. Your call to action buttons need to have rounded edges and contrasting warm colors. “Join”, “Start” and “Claim” are more likely to drive conversions than “Subscribe” or “Sign Up”.

4. **Customize your marketing messages**
   Different offers will appeal to different readers. Understand what each audience responds to and personalize your benefits accordingly.

Comments/Observations

- A/B Test benefits, discount messaging, headline and the CTA. These are the crucial elements that drive clicks.
- Be cognizant of user fatigue. Keep refreshing your design: headline, CTA and background color.
- Your House Ads (unsold inventory) present a great opportunity to promote your subscription packages and your mission to your readers.
- Make sure you’re measuring the performance of your marketing messages with News Tagging Guide.
Callouts

- Yellow, as the color of confidence and optimism, is a strong tool to use as a background color in your messaging.

- Highlight the personalized savings with a strong CTA like “Claim This Offer” (see Loss aversion bias)

- Highlight the mission that the user will resonate with “Be a global citizen” and cancel anytime
Reader Revenue

Best in Class examples

- Large inline banner top of the page

- CTA in Sticky header

- Anchor format, yellow background and sense of urgency

- Soft paywall with Visual

- "Countdown" exit intent prompt on subscription landing page

Callout

Create a sense of urgency highlighting the timeline of the offer and/or with countdown
More and more news publishers have decided to step up and communicate on their values and what they stand for through powerful on-site and offsite marketing campaigns.

**The Klay Offer** Bay Area News Group

“Words are powerful. Choose them well”, The Telegraph

**The Truth** New York Times

Supporting Local Journalism, Newsday
**Segment your audience:** some signals are more likely to define subscription intent: visits frequency (session/user), depth of visits (number of page views/time on site), type of content visited (site categories/leading articles), and readers’ location.

**Retarget your readers with the right marketing message:** Google Analytics users can create audience segments based on these signals and retarget them with Google Ads campaigns offsite. Google Analytics 360 users can target these audience segments with Google Ad Manager Ad Campaigns on their site.
Optimize your landing page on mobile

Why it matters?

**Reason 1**: “Just because your desktop landing pages can be viewed on a mobile device doesn’t mean you shouldn’t design specialized pages solely for mobile.”

(Source)

**Reason 2**: “You have 0-8 seconds to make a compelling headline and landing page. After 8 seconds, the majority of visitors leave.”

(Source)

Best Practices

Make it attractive to subscribe on your mobile landing page

WHERE TO FOCUS

1. **Pin the content above the fold on mobile**
   With a low attention span on mobile, you should be displaying what matters above the fold: your publication logo, an emotional tagline, “Cancel Anytime” and your “Best value” package.

2. **Look and Feel**
   Display 3 packages to maximize conversion. The first one should have a “Best Value” label. Don’t forget to highlight pricing & savings. Your call to action buttons need to have rounded edges and contrasting warm colors.

3. **Keep it concise and clean**
   Only display benefits for your “Best Value” package. You shouldn’t have more than 6 benefits to showcase. Use bullet points to highlight them. Visuals of package offerings and benefits should only appear in the first package on mobile to increase focus and therefore conversions. For the other packages, you can use accordion style buttons to reveal that content.

4. **Make it load fast**
   Every second counts. The longer your readers have to wait for the page to load, the more likely they are to give up and leave the site.

Comments/Observations

- You can A/B test removing site navigation bar on your landing page.
Reader Revenue

Best in Class examples on mobile

Case Study

+18% Conversion rate on mobile devices
Key business teams across The New Yorker including Audience Development, Consumer Marketing and Product have worked hand in hand to address the subscription conversion funnel.

Read Case Study
Optimize your landing page on desktop & tablet

WHY IT MATTERS

Reason 1: While readers are mostly on mobile, desktop and tablet landing pages are still crucial as they provide more opportunities to showcase your package offerings and your values.

Reason 2: On these devices, more space could mean more content and therefore more confusion. Instead, focus on what matters and keep it clean!

Best Practices

Make it attractive to subscribe on your desktop and tablet landing pages

WHERE TO FOCUS

Psychological principles
You should display 3 offerings to maximize conversions. Put your most expensive package on the left and the “Best Value” package in the middle.

Emotional bond
Use the top of your landing pages to highlight your values and what you stand for.

Remove commitment
You should clearly highlight “cancel anytime” in your packages and at the top of the page.

Package Benefits
Make it easy for readers to compare your packages. You shouldn’t have more than 6 benefits per package. Use bullet points to highlight them.

Visual cues to improve conversion
Your best ROI package should be larger, appear in the middle and have a “Best Value” label. You can also use a mouse over effect to make your offers stand out.

Look and Feel
Make sure to highlight offer visuals in your packages as well as pricing & savings. Your call to action buttons need to have rounded edges and contrasting warm colors.

Comments/Observations

- Displaying 3 packages usually helps grow conversions by having readers to focus on the middle package (see Asymmetrical Dominance Effect). The higher tier on the left effectively functions as an anchor, which then pushes your readers toward purchasing the middle tier (see Price Anchoring).
- Make sure to leverage market research solutions like Google Surveys to determine how to communicate your values and the package benefits to promote.
- Communicating your values isn’t limited to the words you use, it also comes down to how it looks: use relevant images and videos!
The headline is the first thing your readers will see on your landing page. Whether they stay and engage or navigate away could depend entirely on what your headline says. Make it clear & concise.

Reader Revenue

Best in Class examples on desktop & tablet

Callout

Top of the page on desktop & tablet: Value proposition & Emotional Bond, Cancel anytime -

Case Study

Business Insider

+150% subscription revenue in one quarter
+40% higher share of long-term subscribers in 2 months

Read Case Study
**Optimize your checkout flow**

**WHY IT MATTERS**

**Reason 1**: “Checkout is the most important part of your entire web experience because that is where all the work you’ve put into customer acquisition, education and retention actually converts to revenue and ROI.” (Source)

**Reason 2**: “69% of all e-commerce visitors abandon their shopping cart” (Source)

**Best Practices**

Make it easier for your Readers to check-out

**WHERE TO FOCUS**

1. **Less is better**
   
   You should limit the number of checkout steps to 3: Account, Billing and Review. Capture the reader’s email first to send a follow up in case of abandonment. The password field can appear once the email address has been entered. For the billing profile, focus on essential fields.

2. **Faster Checkout**
   
   Implement social logins to simplify registration (Facebook, Google, Linkedin). Take advantage of third-party payment options to accelerate the checkout process (PayPal, Amazon pay or Gpay).

3. **Less keyboard, happier readers**
   
   Enable Autofill for all your checkout steps including the credit card details fields. Don’t forget to customize input mobile keyboard for numbers fields.

4. **Look & Feel**
   
   You should showcase a progress bar in a sticky header. Get the checkout flow on one single page. It is advisable to showcase an “order summary” to bring clarity. That section should include the package selected and the final fee charged.

**Comments/Observations**

- Make your checkout page load as fast possible: each additional second of load time results in 7% fewer sales.
- You shouldn’t ask the physical address for a “digital only” subscription.
- You can A/B test removing site navigation bar on checkout. On mobile, this means removing the hamburger menu and other icons in the navbar and often also unlinking the brand logo.
- The order summary can easily appear in a sticky position on desktop & tablet.
- Don’t forget to add “Cancel Anytime” below the final call to action button.
Reader Revenue

Best in Class examples

Social login Sign up

STEP 3. PAYMENT DETAILS
You may cancel at any time.

Payment buttons

Sticky order summary on desktop & tablet

Progress indicator in a sticky header on mobile

Mobile input keyboard for credit card details
Reason 1: 50% of users have allowed ads to show on at least one site. (Source)

Reason 2: 54% of users do not know what the term “whitelist” means. (Source)

Best Practices

Identify visitors using an ad blocker and ask them to whitelist your site.

WHERE TO FOCUS

1. Detect: Know Your Ad Blocking Rate
   To track ad blocking rates, you can use any solution you wish such as Google Funding Choices. You can then use News Tagging Guide to enable NCI to visualize the percentage of readers with an ad blocker enabled in each of your audience segments. This can help inform your messaging strategy.

2. Explain: Communicate the value of Ads
   Highlight the value that ads provide to your organization and let your users know why you’re worth supporting.

3. Ask: Offer a choice to your Readers
   Google Funding Choices enables publishers to decide what users can do as an alternative to whitelisting. For example publishers can deploy Google Contributor, which offers users a choice to pay a publisher defined fee for each page viewed without ads or publishers can define a custom alternative choice such as subscription, newsletter sign-up, etc.

4. Limit: Choose the right implementation for your audience
   Compared to dismissible messages, non-dismissible messages come with the potential for higher whitelist rates, but higher potential bounce rates. Choose the implementation that fits best with your audience engagement strategy.

Comments/Observations

- Identify readers who have an adblocker and those who have whitelisted the site for ads with News Tagging Guide.
- Don’t forget to check IAB’s “Ad Blocking: What you need to know”
- Google Funding Choices can also be used for the purpose of gathering user consent to comply with regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Funding Choices will also be launching support for IAB-compliant GDPR messaging and CCPA opt-out messaging.
Empower users with choice to fund your content.

Goals
- Reduce ad blocking rates across Lee news properties
- Provide users with subscription option as an alternative to whitelisting ads
- Increase monetizable pageviews by serving ads to former ad blocking users

Approach
- Display non-dismissible message walls across all websites
- Offer users a choice between whitelisting sites for ads or becoming a subscriber
- Use messaging that appeals to users’ interest in local journalism, with encouragement to help support it

Results
- Simple execution for a high volume of sites
- Steady lift in programmatic monetization of 2-3%
- Highest conversion rate to subscriptions of any tracked methods
- Minimal user complaints