



About Rappler

Founded in 2012 by veteran Filipino journalists, Rappler is the most-read digital-only news organization in the Philippines, recognized globally for its uncompromised journalism and fearless investigative reporting. Rappler’s stories on the Philippine government’s War on Drugs and the rise of disinformation on social media have earned local and international awards, notably the 2019 Global Shining Light Award from the Global Investigative Journalism Network.

RESULTS:

- 20% increase in average monthly readers year-over-year
- 8% increase in the number of articles read per visit year-over-year
- 5% increase in ad revenue year-over-year

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Rappler empowered its news organization with better user data to achieve digital sustainability

Rappler leverages GNI Data tools to achieve sustainable digital growth. The team uses News Consumer Insights (NCI) to improve reader loyalty and Realtime Consumer Insights (RCI) to optimize content and distribution strategies.

For the past few years, Rappler, has been looking for ways to innovate for more impactful content and sustainable growth, which could only be unlocked with a full pivot to data.

In 2019, Rappler saw an opportunity to position data as an integral part of achieving their strategic objectives. Rappler decided to grow its research and data teams in order to improve the company’s understanding of the Filipino online ecosystem and their audiences’ news consumption habits. The team also began leveraging Google News Initiative (GNI) data tools: [News Consumer Insights](#) (NCI) and [Realtime Content Insights](#) (RCI). These free analytical frameworks helped Rappler better understand its audience, and optimize its content and distribution strategies, resulting in an increase of loyal, paying members.

1. Optimizing Content and Distribution strategies

The [Realtime Content Insights](#) tool (RCI) was used to inform editorial teams in their day-to-day activity. The tool’s “newsroom view” was set up throughout Rappler’s offices to allow editors to monitor their sections’ performance in real-time. Rappler used Datastudio to monitor their strategic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), eg. traffic from specific regions being targeted, or specific revenue targets through the use of custom dashboards.

In an effort to promote a data culture within the newsroom, Rappler’s Data Team now also regularly releases an internal newsletter that reports on major company performance milestones, flags issues, and communicates best practices, making key metrics accessible and easily digestible.

This further allowed Rappler to make better content creation and distribution decisions. The team could better identify content that would resonate with its readers, and leverage the right distribution platforms (Social, Newsletter etc..) needed to promote its articles in real-time.

RAPPLER HAS ALREADY SEEN:

20%

Increase in average monthly readers year-over-year.

8%

Increase in the number of articles read per individual site visit.



Activated RCI dashboards in the newsroom: “Our goal is to have a holistic view of what is driving traffic and engagement across different sections”.

Meet The Rappler Audience

Over the last few months, the Data Team has been conducting research on Rappler's audience, and we've met four interesting people in the process: Cassie, Lea, Brandon, and Ramon.

These four represent the different people who have visited Rappler in the past year, profiled according to their behavior on our website and their demographic data.



Cassie (The Casual Reader)

Cassie is a **young, female professional** who met Rappler for the first time, most likely through **organic search**. She visited Rappler with questions in mind and was in search of the right answers. She read **one article**, probably from **Nation or Entertainment**, then left without coming back (sounds familiar?)

Lea (The Loyal Reader)

Just like Cassie, **Lea** is a young female professional who found us through organic search. But Lea liked what she saw on Rappler and came back.

In millennial dating lingo, however, Lea was just breadcrumbing - she's **non-committal**



Users increased across the audience funnel, from Casual Readers to Brand Lovers. Our Brand Lovers increased more than 25k - from 37k to 63k this election month. We also had nearly 10M casual readers, which are likely people who only came to look at our election result pages.

01 Casual Readers		02 Loyal Readers		03 Brand Lovers	
Users 9.2M ↑ 59.4%		Users 5.0M ↑ 73.1%		Users 63.7K ↑ 89.8%	
Pageviews 17.7M ↑ 80.0%		Pageviews 28.5M ↑ 128.0%		Pageviews 3.4M ↑ 118.6%	
Sessions / User 1.0 ↓ 5.0%	Pages / Session 1.9 ↑ 12.9%	Sessions / User 2.7 ↑ 3.4%	Pages / Session 2.1 ↑ 24.0%	Sessions / User 25.0 ↓ 1.0%	Pages / Session 2.2 ↑ 17.6%
Avg. Session Length 01:16 ↓ 24.8%	Pages / User 1.9 ↑ 13.0%	Avg. Session Length 01:51 ↑ 19.8%	Pages / User 5.7 ↑ 28.1%	Avg. Session Length 02:20 ↑ 11.8%	Pages / User 54.8 ↑ 16.3%
Casual Readers: New Visitors in Google Analytics		Loyal Readers: Returning Visitors in Google Analytics		Brand Lovers: 15+ sessions over 30 days in Google Analytics	

Organic search remains our top source of traffic. For both the elections result site and the Rappler site, organic search was the top source of traffic followed by social.

Adopting the marketing funnel across the organization to grow reader loyalty.

2. Growing loyalty with News Consumer Insights

Rappler used the marketing funnel to educate its internal teams about how each of its users' uniquely contributes to the company's overall growth.

A more nuanced understanding of its audience and its behavior allowed Rappler to conduct significant changes on their website, like improving its recommendation engines. Rappler has been able to recommend relevant content to audiences coming from many different channels. Readers coming from Social, for example, are served top trending stories, while those arriving from Search have been served contextually-related stories, leading to an increase in pageviews per session and overall time on site.

Rappler also runs tests and surveys to make sure changes in audience behavior are monitored and updated.

A better understanding of its audience also allowed Rappler to optimize its programmatic ads business. With a better segmentation of their readers, Rappler was able to identify the advertising value of its users, and more strategically streamline its programmatic offerings for advertisers. Rappler's sales team was also able to create custom segments of its audience to suit specific client objectives. These efforts led to an increase of 45% in ad revenue.

Looking Ahead

- A more powerful platform: as the publisher approaches its 8th year in January 2020, Rappler is rolling out a smarter platform that's built on its wealth of data and diverse communities. The latest iteration of the Rappler website will offer more personalized experiences and new engagement points to readers. The new site is the culmination of Rappler's 3-year pivot to data, after the news organization streamlined its processes and adopted new tools, enabling it to better understand and connect with its readers as well as diversify the company's revenue streams.
- A stronger membership business: Rappler will double down on their paid memberships model, a monetization angle they've pioneered in the Philippines in 2017, allowing loyal readers and partners who share the values of Rappler's brand of journalism to step up their support.

“As journalists, we want to communicate important issues that the public need to know. At the same time, we also want to serve our audience content they need, when they need it. Understanding the data through the lens of audience behavior has allowed Rappler to balance these objectives, serve our communities better, and grow our reach in the process. Specifically, the collaboration with GNI has prompted us to observe the dynamics of our user engagement funnel more closely. This allowed us to calibrate and measure our strategies and tactics for growing our reach, while deepening engagement with our existing audience. Having a more meaningful relationship with our audience, in turn, allowed us to diversify and grow our business strategies, placing Rappler in a stronger position to continue its growth.”

GEMMA BAGAYAUA-MENDOZA, HEAD OF RESEARCH, PARTNERSHIPS, AND STRATEGY AT RAPPLER

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