

The editorial and audience dance:  
Engaging and growing your audience



# What is the American Press Institute?



Born in 1941



Reorganized in 2013



Think tank



Non-profit, non-partisan



We tackle challenges in media.



# The big picture

Journalism is moving away from ads, toward subscribers

This is actually GREAT for journalists and the business...

... but requires changes



# Implications of the subscriber shift

From: Chasing pageviews and scale



To: Earning quality, substantive, loyal individual relationships



# Implications of the subscriber shift

From: Writing lots of stories; or writing “good” stories

To: Writing the right stories (for the right audiences) using data and active listening



# Implications of the subscriber shift

From: Newsroom is a cost center  
owners need but minimize

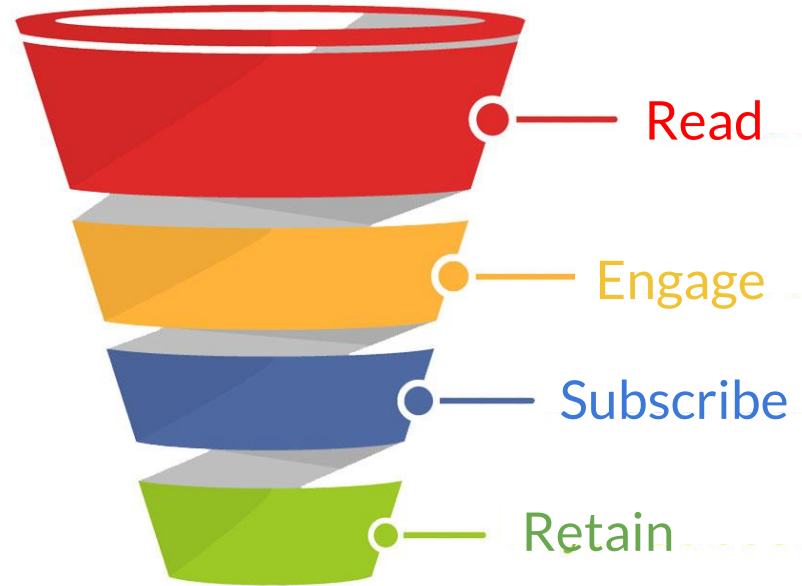


To: Newsroom is the engine of our  
consumer relevance and loyalty



# Journalists need to serve the funnel

What do you do to bring  
engagement  
at all levels?







The paths to subscription



# How we did the study

“Paths to Subscription”

- 90 local newspapers
- 4 circulation categories
- 4,100 recent subscribers
  - Print and digital
  - Subscribed within 90 days

**Most subscribers**  
**walk a long path**

73%

of those who used the product before subscribing  
did so for at least a few months...

49%

did so for **over a year** before paying



**And that means**  
**understanding your**  
**audience data**  
**better than you may now**

**You have multiple audiences**

**Do you know what engages them and why?**

# 9 paths to subscribing

Digital  
Paywall  
Converters

Friends and  
Family  
Motivated

Topic  
Hunters

Print Fans

The Locally  
Engaged

Social-Mobile  
Discoverers

Journalism  
Advocates

Life Changers

Coupon  
Clippers



# TOPIC HUNTERS





# Topic Hunters...

- Are highly interested in 1-2 subjects
- Subscribed because of that coverage
- Follow journalists on social media
- Many convert by meter / great article
- **23% of new subscribers**



*I really liked their election coverage.*

*They went the extra mile to interview a very high percentage of the candidates, which greatly helped me to decide who to vote for.*

# Tactics for Topic Hunters

- Track users by topic (it's not as hard as you think)
- Tailor digital messaging to what people read
- Create topic-specific newsletters and podcasts
- Have journalists use social media to engage readers and build following
- Host sponsored events on popular topics

**NEW** A Philly friend of Ben Franklin may have invented one of the first semi-automatic weapons

## Philly Beer

It might be a marketing slogan, but anyone who lives here knows that Philadelphia really is "America's best beer-drinking city." The region's been awash in great independent breweries since the 1990s, and distributors here started importing beer from Belgium before any others in the US. These days, the taprooms that dot almost every corner of the city serve everything great locally, all the best from Europe, and also rare brews from the rest of the country. Plus, Philly is finally experiencing a brewery boom of its own, with more in-city brewhouses opening than ever before (unless you go back to before Prohibition).

Last Updated: Sep 28 2017 · 9:41 a.m.

Get email notifications whenever we write about **Philly Beer**

**Follow This**

**Get Billy Penn**  
every day in your inbox

- Top news highlights and can't-miss Philly stories
- Upcoming events and activities in your area for you and your family
- Check out a [sample from today's newsletter](#)

**Sign Up**

Billy Penn — topical news alerts

## PMN Events

MONTHLY

Learn about upcoming Inquirer, Daily News & philly.com events.

Sign Up



## Phillies Newsletter

DAILY

The best Phillies coverage every day, from spring training through the push to October

## Things To Do

THURSDAYS

Stay up to speed on concerts, exhibits, film screenings and family events.

Sign Up



## Dining In and Out

THURSDAYS

Get recipes, restaurant news and the latest from Inquirer food critic Craig LeBar

## Sports

DAILY

The day's biggest stories for Philly's biggest sports fans.

Sign Up



## Business

WEEKDAYS

Learn about the latest business developments happening locally, regionally and nationwide

Philadelphia Media Network — topical newsletters



# SOCIAL-MOBILE DISCOVERERS



# Social-Mobile Discoverers...

- **19% of new subscribers**
- Get news often on cell phone
- Use social media often
- Follow your journalists on social
- Engagement leads to subscriptions



*I was reading articles online from following them on social media and enjoying them.*

*I also started listening to their podcast.*

# Tactics for Social-Mobile Discoverers

- Use social media for deep relationships, not just traffic
- Put best content on social media platforms
- Encourage sharing, following
- Respond to comments, questions and complaints
- Create Facebook groups around topics or for subscribers
- Relax paywall meter to accommodate sharing



The Dallas Morning News 

@dallasmorningnews

Home

About

Groups

Posts

Videos

Photos

Events

Live Videos

Community

Create a Page



 Like  Follow  Share 

Sign Up

 Send Message

### Groups



#### Dallas Parents

Closed Group  
638 members


Join



#### Texana: A celebration of Texas

Public Group  
1,195 members

Join

 Charlie Scudder posted:

 1 Response



#### Questions of Color

Closed Group  
229 members

Join


[See All Groups](#)


Newspaper in Dallas, Texas

### Community

[See All](#)

 Invite your friends to like this Page

 411,664 people like this

 404,025 people follow this

### About

[See All](#)

 (214) 977-8222

 Typically replies within an hour  
[Send Message](#)

 dallasnews.com

 Newspaper · Media/News Company

 Suggest Edits

Dallas Morning News — Facebook groups



# DIGITAL PAYWALL CONVERTERS



# Digital Paywall Converters...

- Hit a limit of free stories online
- Wanted unlimited access
- Driven by seeing interesting articles
- Also want to support local journalism
- 21% of new subscribers

“

*I found myself continually hitting my max free online articles and thought it was about time to subscribe.*



# Tactics for Paywall Converters

- Improve UX of subscription signup page
- Experiment with dynamic meter that adjusts to individuals
- Use data to find signals or models of likely converters
- Target ad-blockers with subscription messaging

Step 1 of 2

## Create Your Account

Already have an account? [Log in here »](#)

Use Facebook  Use Google 

OR

Email Address

Create Password [Show Password](#)

You agree to receive occasional updates and special offers for The New York Times's products and services. You may opt out or contact us anytime.

By creating an account, you agree to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

Create Account

### Get Started Today!

#### YOUR ORDER

**Basic Digital Access** **\$8.00**

You will be billed the following amount every 30 days. Unlimited access to all NYTimes.com content, and the NYTimes smartphone and tablet apps.

Sales tax may apply.

**Total** ~~\$16.00~~ **\$8.00**

#### Some friendly reminders:

- Your payment method will be charged \$8.00 every 30 days for the first 12 months.
- It will then be charged \$16.00 every 30 days thereafter, starting on February 11, 2019.
- Your subscription will continue until you cancel.

New York Times — Simple signup

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

## Premium Digital [Change plan](#)

\$1 for the first 4 weeks  
then just \$15 every 4 weeks

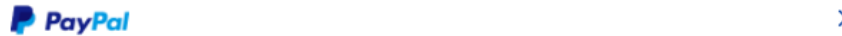
~~\$195~~ \$150 a year  
**Best Value**

### Your contact info

Email address

You'll use **your email address** to sign in on washingtonpost.com and Washington Post apps. If this is a new account, we'll ask you to set a password later.

### Payment method



Washington Post — Simple signup

# Choosing the right tool

Real-time



Deep-dive



Engagement



Context



Competition



Blended



<http://bit.ly/BetterNewsMetrics>

**Web analytics were  
never journalism  
analytics**

**But you can take control  
and make your own**



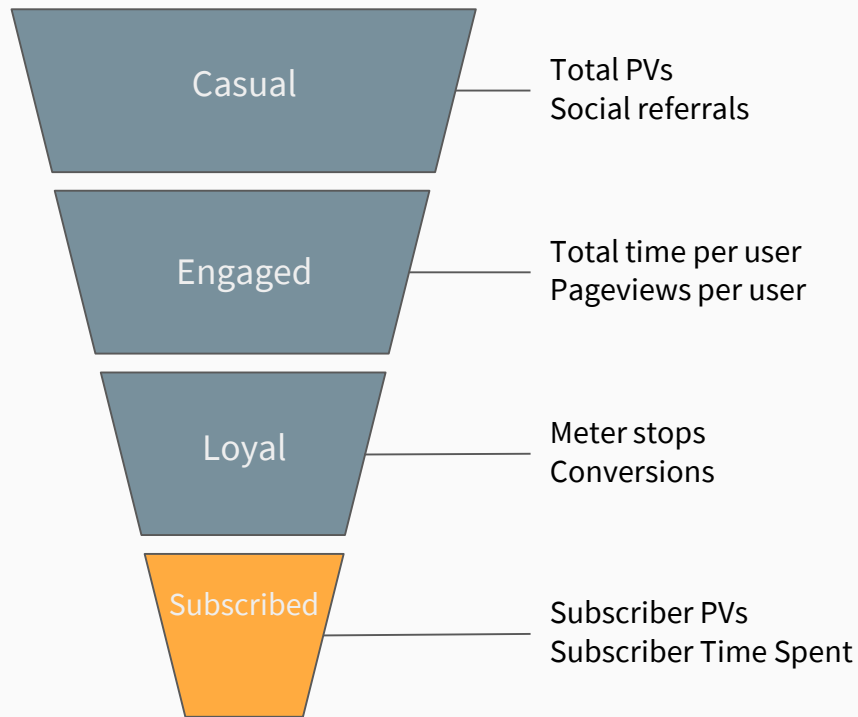


## Newsroom leaders:

- Foster staff culture of data discovery
- Explain “the funnel”
- Teach the business side about your process (and vice versa)

# Funnel analytics

Measure different things at different funnel stages





A web-based application that allows publishers to track journalism qualities that drive engagement

# Tracks journalistic qualities...

WHY people would  
read the content

Topics and beats

Enterprise level /  
content form

Authors

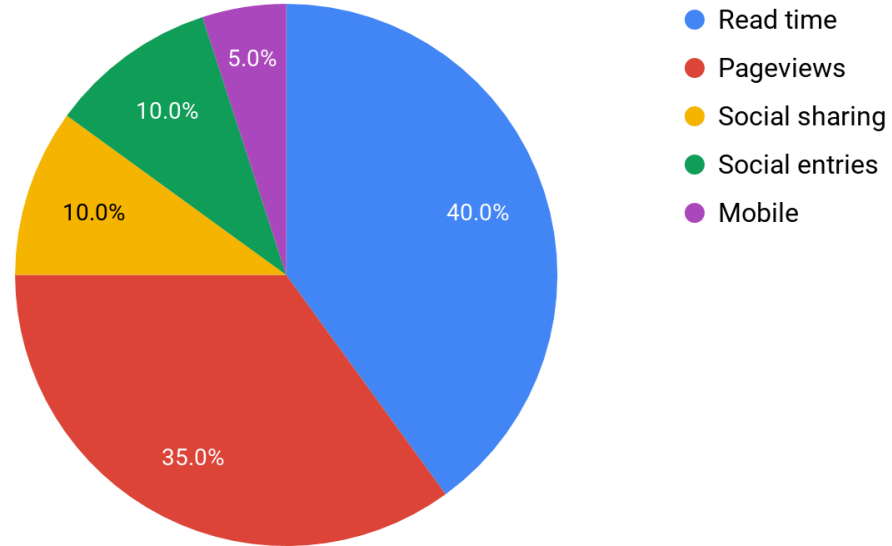
Location

Multimedia

# Engagement Scores

- An innovative approach to measuring engagement
- Weighted to what most local newsrooms care about
- Blending key metrics to show a simple, yet comprehensive view of engagement

Sample engagement score



# Example: Serving potential subscribers

**Dallas Morning News** used MFN (combined with Mather and Parse.ly data) to discover “hidden content” that drove subscriptions:

- On list of top-performing stories (by pageviews), SMU sports coverage performed poorly in general. When DMN shifted its KPI to focus on driving subscriptions, SMU moved to the top of the list; this coverage drove more conversions than other sports topics. If they had only paid attention to PVs, this coverage would continue to be deemed unsuccessful.
- Now building a similar franchise around high school sports.



# Stay in touch!

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[@katiekutsko](https://twitter.com/katiekutsko)

Metrics for News:

[metricsfornews.com](https://metricsfornews.com)

Need to Know newsletter:

[bit.ly/getapi](https://bit.ly/getapi)

Reader Revenue notifications

[bit.ly/RevenueResources](https://bit.ly/RevenueResources)

Subscriber Research Studies

[Americanpressinstitute.org](https://Americanpressinstitute.org)

[BetterNews.org](https://BetterNews.org)