Best practice in innovation

Digital Media Awards Worldwide:
Nine cases of excellence

![WAN-IFRA logo] World Association of News Publishers

World Association of News Publishers

Best Practice in Innovation –
Digital Media Awards Worldwide:
Nine cases of excellence

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Why you should read this report

"Receiving this recognition not only serves as a validation of our vision and our convictions, but also motivates us to continue striving for even greater challenges. Achieving these results is not the merit of a single person, but rather of a cross-functional organisation."

By Dean Roper, Director of Insights, WAN-IFRA

That is from Clárin Chief Digital Officer Javier Kraviez when asked about what it has meant for the Argentinian media group – and its team – to win the Best Digital Subscription award in WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Award Worldwide competition.

One of WAN-IFRA's key commitments to our members and the industry is to shine a bright light on best-practice and innovation from all corners of the globe. We strive to do that every day in the case studies we present on our content platforms and at our numerous regional and global events. Ultimately, we celebrate much of that innovation in our Digital Media Awards – again, both regionally and globally.

This report is a concise showcase of the nine Worldwide winners, detailing the strategies behind their different initiatives or ongoing innovations, how it all resonated with their audiences, in terms of engagement and real results, and what it has meant to the respective organisations today and going forward.

In 2023, we had nearly 700 entries in our various regional awards competitions. The winners of our awards in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and South Asia determine the finalists for the Worldwide competition. Those finalists are judged by an international jury of media professionals, experts and analysts – deciding on the nine winners for Digital Media Awards Worldwide in each category.

As a judge on the final competition and some of the regionals, what always stands out to me is the passion, creativity and professionalism that exemplify the cream

of the crop. Like News24 in South Africa with its documentary – which won Best Use of Video Worldwide – that helped to expose injustice in hate crime against the country's LGBTQIA+.

"We're incredibly happy that it resonated with our audience and with the judges as an important body of work," said Sharlene Rood, Multimedia Editor at News24. "It was important to us to give people a glimpse of the struggles the LGBTQIA+ community in South Africa faces daily."

An extended bow to the winners of the Worldwide awards and all the regional winners. A sincere thanks to all the brave publishers which entered any competition and the many judges who have helped with their precious time and knowledge. Big shoutout to WAN-IFRA's Neha Gupta for doing most of the heavy-lifting on this report, as well as Lucinda Jordaan for her contributions. And last but not least, thanks to our crack events teams for organising all the awards.

So... do you believe your company has launched an exceptional digital platform or project? Made an interesting innovation in AI, for example? Well, our 2024 awards categories are finalised and the regional competitions have already began taking applications. If you feel like your company is a worthy candidate to be recognised regionally and globally, stay tuned here for the competition in your area! **See where you measure up with your peers.**

And by the way, if you do win, it could even help your annual budget: "It's brought more visibility to this work inside and outside the Post, and strengthened arguments to devote resources to it," said Michael J. Coren, Climate Advice Columnist of The Washington Post after winning Best Newsletter.

Redefining newsrooms: Innovation sparks engagement across verticals

Innovation has become the cornerstone of evolution within newsrooms worldwide, reaping transformative changes in the way information is gathered, processed, and disseminated.

The nine case studies featured in our innovation report are winners of WAN-IFRA's prestigious annual Digital Media Awards Worldwide, recognising outstanding achievements in digital media by the news industry. The winners were announced during the World News Media Congress 2023, in Taiwan in June.

The cases explored span the globe – from Argentina to Hong Kong, Norway to USA, Germany to South Africa.

Best Digital Subscription Initiative

Clarín, Argentina: Moving from a metered to a smart paywall

Clarín launched a digital subscription model in April 2017, making it the first news publisher in Argentina to do so. "We did it because a business model based solely on advertising was exhausted and it was necessary to move to a model where subscription revenue had greater weight," said Gonzalo Abascal, Editorial Secretary.

Presently, Clarin's digital revenue surpasses its revenue from print, a historical turning point for the company. Emilio Basavilbaso, Chief Operating Officer, is hopeful that in the next 4-5 years, the digital unit will account for 80 percent of Clarín's revenue. The brand is working to secure 1 million paying subscribers by 2025.

Best Data Visualisation

South China Morning Post, Hong Kong: Life in Hong Kong's shoebox housing

Data visualisation brings complex, urgent information to life, enhancing comprehension and engagement. Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post (SCMP) produced a series of incredibly powerful stories to communicate the grim realities of "shoebox housing" in the city.

"Our artists have always seen great potential in this topic. Audiences, while aware of the problem, have not had enough spatial and graphic references to position themselves almost literally inside these subdivided flats," said Marcelo Duhalde, Associate Creative Director.

Best e-paper Concept

NPG Digital, Germany: New NPG e-paper product

NPG is the umbrella organisation for several digital and printed media in the southwest and east of Germany. The company launched new e-paper apps (iOS and Android) and e-paper web portals for SÜDWEST PRESSE, a daily newspaper based in Ulm, and its partner titles – Lausitzer Rundschau (LR), a daily regional newspaper published in Cottbus, and MOZ.de, an online news portal in and for Brandenburg. The purpose behind launching this app was to combine online news and the e-paper, to provide users with a comprehensive platform for accessing their preferred news content, and strengthening the subscription business model.

Best in Audience Engagement

Aftenposten Junior, Norway:
How a birthday party in Minecraft made a massive impact on brand awareness, engagement and sales

Aftenposten Junior, based in Norway, is the only national newspaper aimed at kids. Faced with a decline in sales, this print-driven brand turned its 10-year anniversary celebration into a roaring success by combining business and gaming. It grew its print sales by 57 percent.

"Parents and children are reading less print journalism, while the time spent in front of digital devices is increasing with today's broad offer of entertainment," said Johanne Barman-Jenssen, Brand Manager. "We wanted to create a celebration that would pique children's interest, which parents would find relevant, and something that would gain general public interest."

Best News Website

STAT, USA: The Leading Site Covering Health, Medicine, and Science

In 2023, STAT relaunched a new homepage sporting a new website navigation bar and brand colour. This three-part redesign worked as a new "storefront" for the product, resulting in a 10 percent increase in page views originating from the homepage.

STAT, reporting from the frontiers of health and medicine, is produced by Boston Globe Media.

"Every design element and its placement on the page serves a purpose – whether it's to provide a visual cue, show a relationship, or further convey the brand. And with this intention and minimalism comes great user experience," said Richard L. Berke, Co-Founder and Executive Editor.

Best Newsletter

The Washington Post, USA: [Climate Coach](#)

The Washington Post launched the Climate Coach newsletter in January 2023 to help readers navigate the choices they face when seeking to live a more climate and environmentally friendly life.

The newsletter is helmed by Michael J. Coren, Climate Advice Columnist at The Post. Climate Coach is the company's first climate advice email product and the primary newsletter for its climate vertical. It is not your ordinary newsletter. It does not deal in lists of "101 things" or symbolic gestures. It sports a friendly and conversational tone while digging deep into data, and dispensing evidence-backed advice and analysis about what matters in protecting the planet and one another.

Best Podcast

The Outlaw Ocean Project, USA: [The Outlaw Ocean Podcast](#)

Washington DC-based The Outlaw Ocean Project, is distinct not just in its focus, but also in how the reporting is conducted and distributed. Most of the stories are reported at least partially at sea. This seven-part podcast series records a global network of crime and exploitation – laws, lore and lifestyles of a hidden realm populated by traffickers, mercenaries, wreck thieves and repo men, vigilante conservationists and elusive poachers, oil-dumpers, shackled slaves and cast-adrift stowaways.

Best Trust Initiative

Legit Media Group, Nigeria: [Media Literacy Campaign](#)

In November 2022, three months ahead of the country's challenging national elections, Nigerian publisher Legit set out on an ambitious multimedia project to build media trust and counter mis/disinformation, especially within the country's youth.

Known as the Legit.ng Media Literacy Project, the initiative relied on a well-defined and executed strategy that incorporated a dedicated media literacy microsite, webinars, gamification, short-form videos, and partnerships with influencers and celebrities. The campaign reached over 30 million people.

Best Use of Video

News24/Media24, South Africa: [DOCUMENTARY: Killed For Being Queer](#)

This compelling documentary from the News24 Special Projects team shines an unflinching spotlight on the realities faced by South Africa's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning and asexual communities.

The 35-minute documentary is not a standalone feature. Housed on a special microsite for free, easy access, it serves as an anchor to four accompanying feature articles on three key issues affecting the LGBTQIA+: the lack of queer safe spaces due to the pandemic; police's queerphobia and the introduction of the hate crimes bill.

Digital Media Awards Worldwide: nine cases of excellence

Argentina's Clarín sets sight on a million subscribers by 2025

Clarín, a Latin American media house, launched its registration system in 2015. This laid the foundation for launching a digital subscription model in April 2017, making it the first news publisher in Argentina to do so.

"We did it because a business model based solely on advertising was exhausted and it was necessary to move to a model where subscription revenue had greater weight," said Gonzalo Abascal, Editorial Secretary, Clarín.

Clarín won the "**Best Digital Subscription Initiative**" for "moving from a metered to a smart paywall" at WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

As of July 2023, the company has more than 650,000 paid subscriptions.

Their new goal is to reach 1 million subscribers by 2025, and expand the teams dedicated to the production of premium content.

As part of this plan, they are working to get into other markets. For instance, the United States, which has a huge Spanish speaking population.

"The impetus behind this project was to find a new sustainable business model, which gave value to quality journalism, and it was made possible by a team of 25 people," Abascal said.

Currently, about 30 million people visit Clarín's website each month.

"We all know they are sporadic readers, and they don't pay anything to read one note, two pieces or three pieces, but we have the opportunity to convert them, to turn them loyal and then to subscribe," said Emilio Basavilbaso, Chief Operating Officer.

Divide and conquer subscription strategy

The digital management team used a metered paywall to execute the following actions:

- Article reading limits based on content and reading preferences.

- Generate user clusters, according to their interests and reading frequency.

- Create corporate subscription offers through agreements with associations, clubs, unions and universities.

- Produce five exclusive newsletters for subscribers with premium content. They currently produce 24 newsletters.

- Create different offers during sales.

- Develop its own technological tool for subscription and reader service.

Diverse portfolio and organisational alignment

The leading Spanish-language publisher ranks 15th in the global journalistic market. It offers three subscription packages – annual digital subscription, monthly digital subscription and a full digital monthly digital deal.

Clárin offers three subscription packages – annual digital subscription, monthly digital subscription and a full digital monthly digital deal.
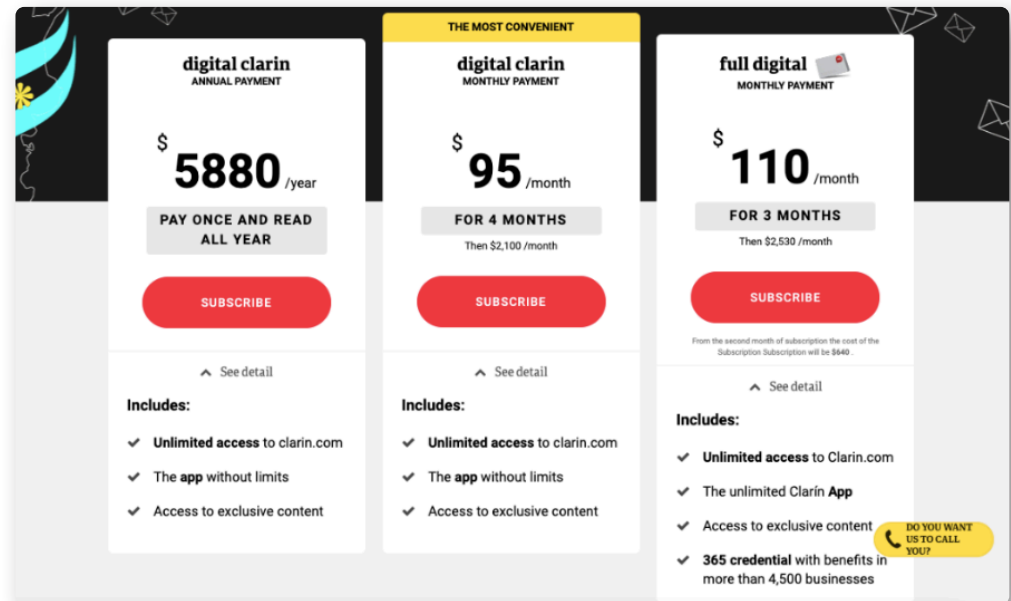
After reaching this milestone, the company doubled down on its efforts of building diverse offerings for their gamut of readers and potential subscribers, while facing the continuing challenge of growing total unique users.

This involved moving away from a traditional functional structure towards a key initiative-based approach, with a focus on the company's organisational capabilities.

To accomplish this, a digital management team was formed to oversee the site's technical performance, innovation, product improvement and user experience.

The newsroom's organisation chart was then reformulated to meet the new objectives.

The process started by dividing the editorial vertical of the newsroom into four sections, each of which fell under the leadership of a central desk chief.

Three of these four sections track the consumption of information by registered users and subscribers, number of subscribers who read the content, and time spent as the key performance indicators.

The fourth section works exclusively under the requirements of the mass audience.

Javier Kraviez, Chief Digital Officer, notes: "The intention is not to overlook those readers who are not subscribers and who may never become subscribers, but for whom Clarín's brand must continue to be a reference."

Each of the four sections has its own objectives for subscription and page views.

This period also saw the development of the production of special content for subscribers. The average reading time of each piece of this content was more than 4 minutes, exceeding the time of the regularly published content.

These efforts were coordinated by Clarín's 10-person Special Productions team, which comprises journalists, illustrators, video and audio editors, graphic designers and web designers.

It takes at least three weeks to bring each production to completion.

Clarín's most consumed and highest subscriber converting content – produced by the brand's most popular journalists – was put behind the paywall.

Resultantly, for the first time in the brand's history, Clarín's digital revenue crossed its advertising revenue.
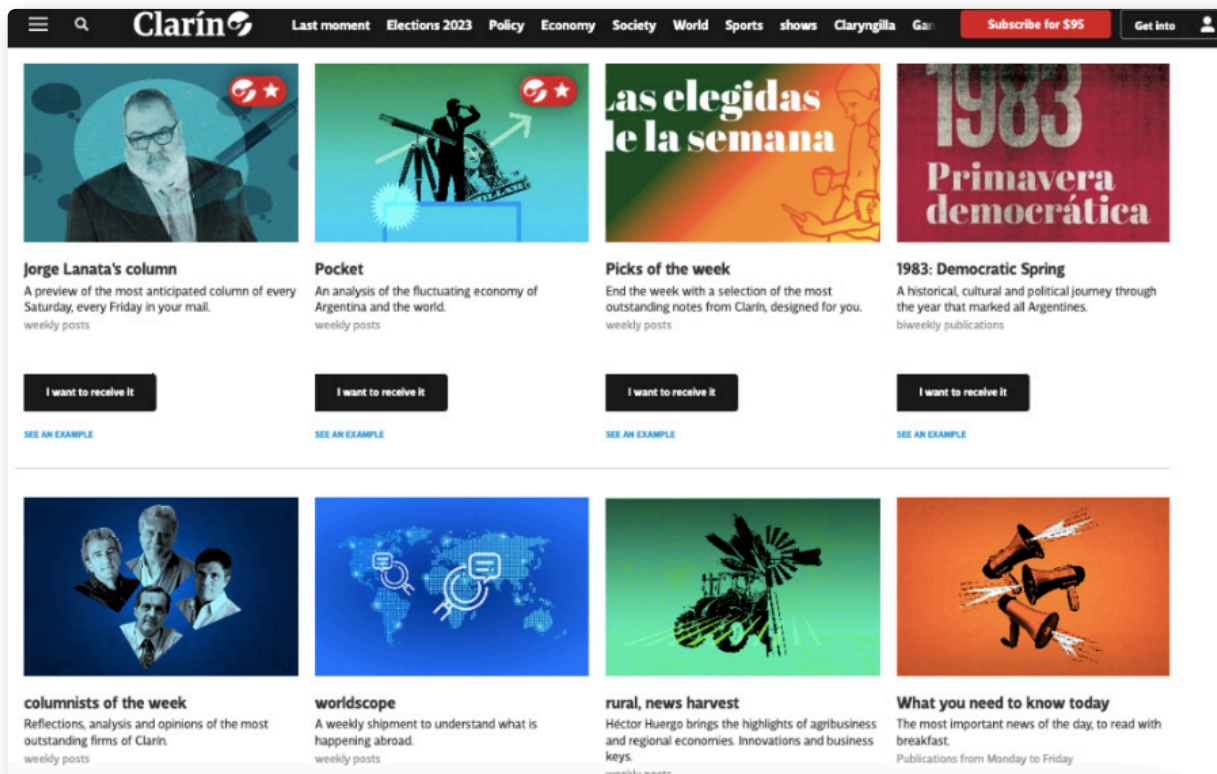
"In the next 4-5 years, the digital unit will be 80 percent of our revenue," said Basavilbaso, the Chief Operating Officer.

"The participation and cooperation of Clarín's different departments have been vital factors in the success of this subscription model. We always understood that this was a work of co-creation and co-execution," he said.

Behind-the-scenes and a redesigned app

The first step in the implementation of the smart paywall involved conducting a thorough diagnosis of Clarín's subscribers' consumption patterns and habits.

The team surveyed its potential digital subscriber base, segmenting them into well-defined clusters to understand the depth of their relationship with the brand and product.

They also analysed how these different segments were spending time on the Clarín website.

The team parallelly worked on improving the UX, in collaboration with the international firm GlobalLogic, to exhaustively understand the various points of interaction between the product and the readers, to "offer a user experience that would ensure potential digital users' satisfaction."

"A complete diagnosis of the internal work process was also carried out to identify bottlenecks, and idle and insufficient capital," noted Abascal, Clarín's Editorial Secretary.

As part of the subscription strategy, they also launched a new mobile application.

Q&A with Javier Kraviez, Chief Digital Officer, Clárin

1) What has been your biggest takeaway or learning from this product/initiative, etc.?

The key thing for a media of mass consumption in this new reality is to understand that not all audiences are willing to pay for content, so it is important to identify and create clusters, and know their preferences.

Once that is done, it is essential to provide your paying users with content they consider relevant and see worth in.

"We're making business decisions based on data and evidence. Decisions that have to do with how we achieve better engagement between readers and content producers, without jeopardising the accuracy and value of the informative hierarchy, are two immutable values of Clarín's journalistic activity," he said.

Additionally, Spain's El País highlighted Clarín as one of the four global media outlets with a **successful subscription model**. The others are The New York Times, the Financial Times and Le Monde.

In retrospect, Abascal said the team should have launched premium content for subscribers right from the beginning. "We should have restricted access to columns by the company's main journalists. They are the most consumed and generate the highest conversion rate," he said.

Javier Kraviez
Chief Digital Officer
Clárin

2) How has this evolved or developed since the time of submitting your awards entry? Can you share any results?

In the three months since the entry submission, Clarín's subscription base has grown by 8 percent.

3) What has the award itself meant to your team, whether that be internally or externally?

Receiving this recognition not only serves as a validation of our vision and our convictions, but also motivates us to continue striving for even greater challenges. Achieving these results is not the merit of a single person, but rather of a cross-functional organisation.

Best in Data Visualisation: South China Morning Post, Hong Kong

How SCMP visually depicted Hong Kong's shoebox housing crisis

Housing is a pressing problem in Hong Kong, one of the least affordable cities in the world, with some of the most expensive property rates.

The median home price is nearly US $3,200 per square foot while the average home costs about US $1.28 million, according to the latest Home Attainability Index from the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Asia Pacific Centre for Housing.

The monthly rent for almost half of the apartments in the city is US$2,550, which is more than the median monthly salary, evidenced by the findings.

Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post (SCMP) produced a series of incredibly powerful stories, using data visualisation, to communicate the grim realities of housing in the city.

SCMP's goal was to show a different dimension of the housing crisis using data visualisation tools, illustrations and graphics to reveal spatial references to its audience.

It won the "**Best Data Visualisation**" award at WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Awards Worldwide for this project.

220K people live in "coffin homes"

The situation is especially critical for people living below the poverty line, who have trouble finding decent housing, ie, roughly one in five Hongkongers, or 1.65 million people, as per the Home Attainability Index.

SCMP research showed that at least 220,000 Hong Kong residents live in subdivided flats – standard dwellings split into multiple living spaces, where residents (sometimes as many as 20 people) share one or two bathrooms along with a kitchen.

These compact living spaces, often measuring less than 20 square feet, dwell in narrow buildings and are stacked on top of each other. "There is barely room for one person in each unit, and with belongings taking up precious space, inhabitants cannot fully stretch out," said Marcelo Duhalde, Associate Creative Director.

Goals of the project

- To present a different perspective on a well-known issue by using data visualisation tools, illustrations based on 3D analysis, the proper use of scale and proportions, comparisons, visual hierarchies and thematic maps.

- To explain the living conditions of the people using only illustrations, so as to respect the privacy of those who helped the team with their testimonies and allowed them to access their living spaces.

- To reach local and overseas audiences and expose them to Hong Kong's housing crisis.

- To learn more about how to conduct field research with multiple tools.

- To establish links with local communities.

The team's investigation also showed that these shoebox houses did not meet safety regulations and construction standards, and had poor acoustic or thermal insulation.

"Low maintenance and other associated problems have a negative impact on the physical and psychological well-being of the tenants, especially the many elderly people who live alone," he added.

Detailed groundwork, rich illustrations

The 6-person data visualisation team planned the coverage to clearly depict material references, detailed interiors of the small rooms, and the limited conditions that the inhabitants of subdivided flats have to endure.

The infographics team began the project with an in-depth investigation. It worked on addressing the primary reasons for the crisis with the help of several datasets, government reports, university studies of land use in the territory, interviews with experts, and the evolution of the demographic figures of Hong Kong.

This research culminated in compelling visuals showcasing detailed floor plans to emphasise the large amount of money needed to rent a reduced, tight space in most residential places.

The team also conducted field research to collect visual references, record dimensions and surfaces, and the information possible to build illustrations that clearly revealed the problem, providing tangible references for the reader.

To achieve this, they used pencil illustrations in the planning stage. "We completely ruled out the use of photographs or videos in our piece; we did not want to expose real homes, and the intention was to respect people's privacy," said Duhalde.

Additionally, the richness of the illustrations based on analysis of videos, images, quick sketches, and 3D modelling tools, helped break down the various elements and depicted these tiny living spaces more clearly.

Combining digital and traditional drawing techniques enriched the user experience and delivered a more immersive result.
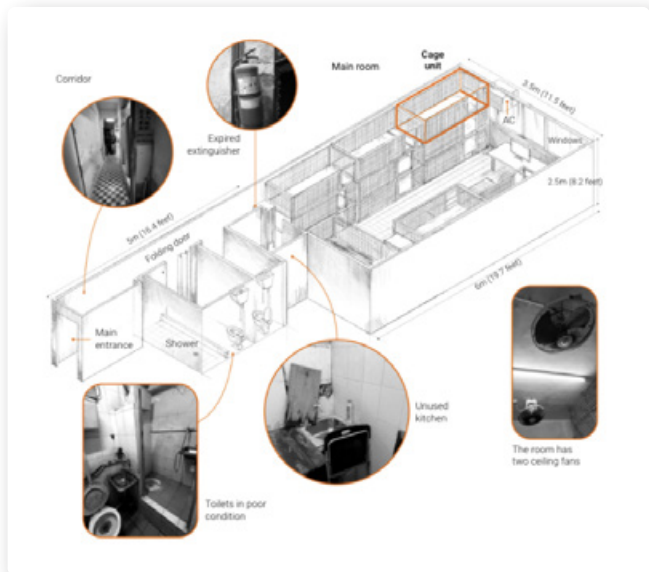
"Animations were included at the beginning to accurately contextualise the location of these homes, and various illustrative styles were combined to make evident the impression that the critical situation of these people caused in each artist who reported these places," he pointed out.

"The content went through rounds of revision, correction and polishing of visual details in a bid to deliver content that "brought readers as close as possible to the real-life living conditions of many Hongkongers," Duhalde said.

It took the team four months to bring this project to completion, before launching it in June 2022.

The shoebox housing piece is one of SCMP's most popular online, with a total of 105,000 pageviews, globally. Another video produced using subsidiary assets and information from the main piece also received 3.5 million views.
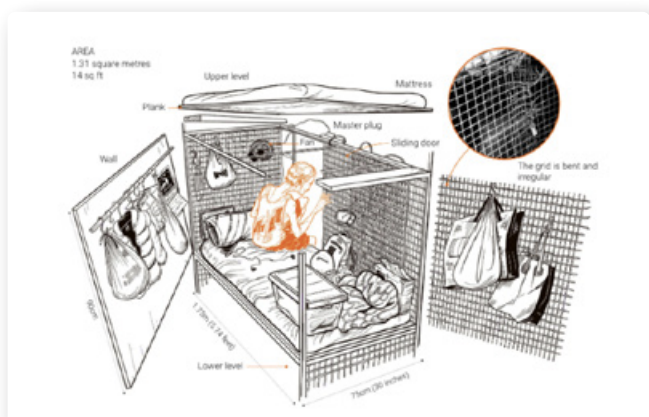
A realistic, immersive experience for readers

Hong Kong's housing crisis is one that affects the most vulnerable social classes in the city, while offering multiple visual and analytical visual approaches to the central problem, Duhalde said.

"Our artists have always seen great potential in this topic. Audiences, while aware of the problem, have not had enough spatial and graphic references to position themselves almost literally inside these subdivided flats," he noted.

Developing this project was very different from anything SCMP had tackled before. The graphics team split into two groups to interview residents and visit the "coffin homes" in person, collecting real-life measurements of the infrastructure.
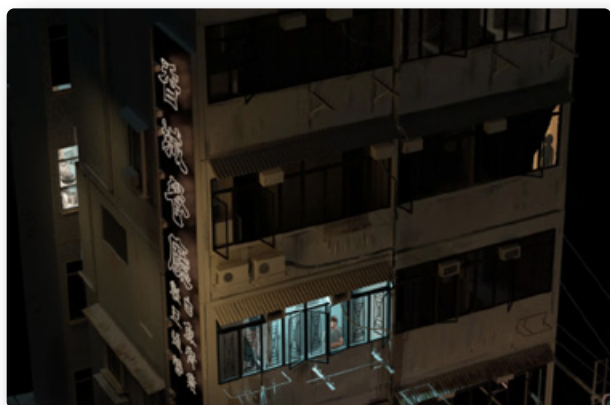
Interactive tools to create impactful visuals

The opening image on the landing page was built using Blender 3D (a graphics software) tools and refined with Adobe Photoshop.

The team first drew the illustration as a skin, later connecting it with the 3D models they had built earlier. Then they cut the illustration into pieces with Adobe Photoshop and combined them with different layers in Adobe Illustrator.

They plotted the areas using QGIS (free and open-source cross-platform desktop geographic information system application) and edited them with Adobe Illustrator for the urban footprint map. Eventually, they implemented Javascript to complete the scrolling animation showing the living conditions inside the "coffin homes".

The team used d3.js (JavaScript library for producing dynamic, interactive data visualisations in web browsers) to build interactive graphics – data visualisations of waiting time for public housing and residents in the subdivided flats. Users can click through the buttons to view the backgrounds of the residents.

Q&A with Marcelo Duhalde, Associate Creative Director, SCMP

1) What has been your biggest takeaway or learning from this product/initiative?

Topics close to the heart of communities – regardless of region or country, as long as it affects people in some way or presents a problem from daily life – always receive a warm reception from audiences.

This project, and how it was created, has been exhibited at talks in Europe and South America.

A visual journalism department must be connected to the community, neighbourhood or city to which it belongs. Visual stories can have a bigger, more enduring impact than other work from mainstream media.

We've learned to be alert and aware of developing unique, relevant themes for our audience. Human patterns are repeated across cultures, and projects like ours represent the problems of many.

2) How has this evolved or developed since the time of submitting your awards entry? Can you share any new results?

The project has remained the same from the submission, and since its publication. It is necessary to do some updates in the future to include fresher figures and references.

If there is a big change in the conditions of the people living in subdivided flats, (some new rule or maybe a radical solution provided by the government) will be necessary to do a new project from scratch.

Marcelo Duhalde
Associate Creative Director
South China Morning Post

There is one video which is based mostly on our projects. I can say it is the video version of our piece. We collaborated with our video team to create this product which has been incredibly successful in terms of views.

3) What has the award itself meant to your team, whether that be internally or externally?

This project has been the most awarded one in the history of our team. SCMP's Infographics Team started to publish outstanding pieces around 2010, and along the years, we have received many awards, but the Hong Kong Shoebox Housing Project has brought us around 15 awards across different competitions this year.

As a team, we feel very proud and honoured. It is exceptional, satisfying, but also challenging because the achievement is huge and we need to maintain that standard to keep delivering high quality visual stories for our audience.

Best News Website: STAT, USA

Ambitious journalism, smart design powers USA's STAT

STAT, a leading American health-oriented website, hit notable milestones in 2022 and drove substantial growth across events, advertising, community, product design, and engineering. Reporting from the frontiers of health and medicine, STAT is produced by Boston Globe Media.

STAT, which has a staff of 100, grew its individual subscriber base by more than 26 percent and group subscriptions by nearly 30 percent year-on-year.

This was achieved through collaboration between the product, design, and engineering teams to build and launch a self-serve option for small groups to customise their subscriptions to STAT.
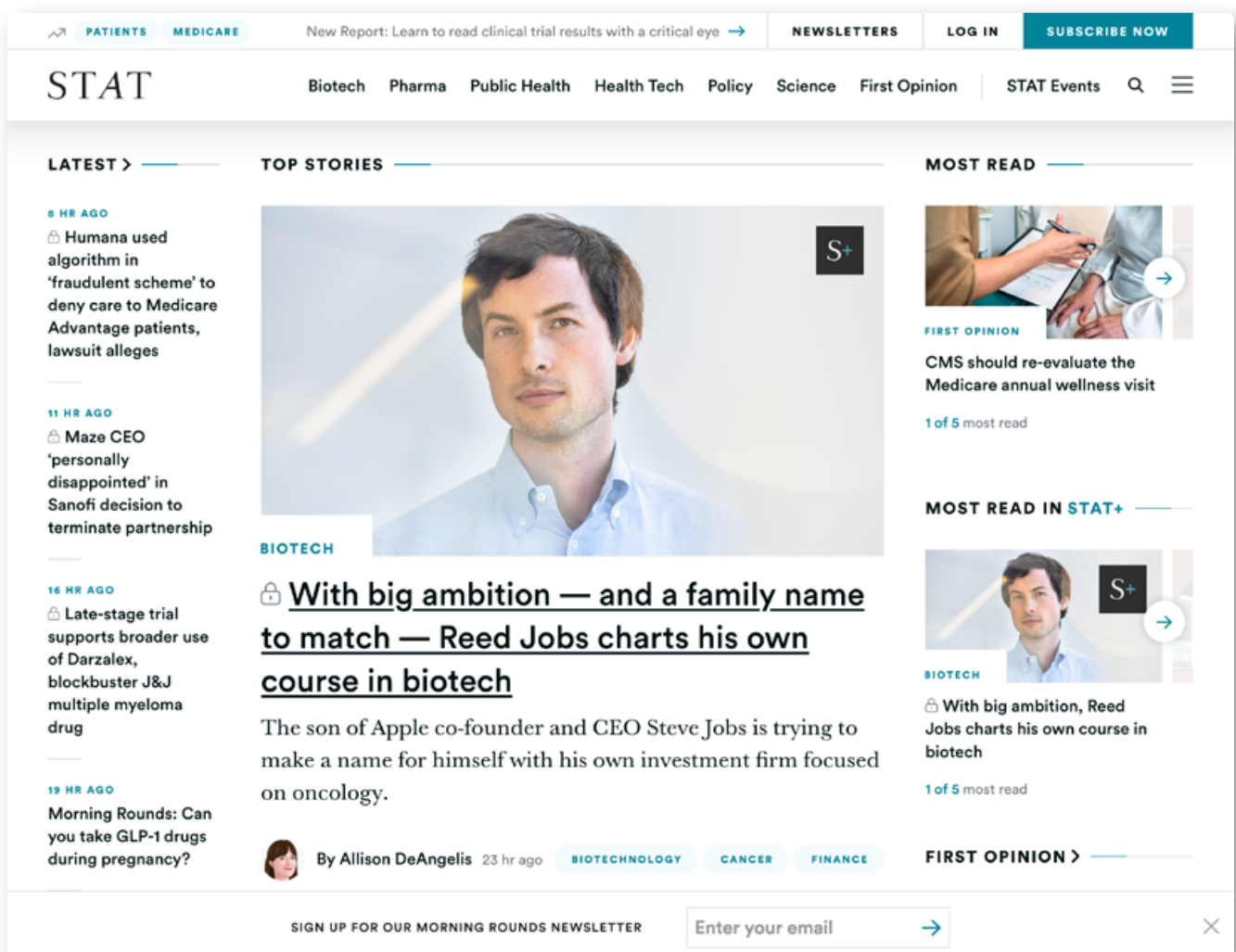
"In the seven years since STAT's founding, we've created something incredibly rare these days: a thriving news organisation with readers paying for high-quality, ambitious journalism," said Richard L. Berke, Co-Founder and Executive Editor.

STAT won the "**Best News Website: The Leading Site Covering Health, Medicine, and Science**" at WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

To boost growth and advance its global aspirations, the publisher announced the opening of its first international bureau in London in 2022.

A new visual identity bolsters STAT's journalism

In 2023, STAT relaunched a new homepage sporting a new website navigation bar and brand colour. This three-part redesign worked as a new "storefront" for the product, resulting in a 10 percent increase in page views originating from the homepage. Berke shared the motive behind each of these decisions:

New colour: STAT's brand colour is a darker and slightly more blue shade of teal, to ensure meeting accessibility standards for the web, but also conveying itself as an authoritative and trustworthy name.
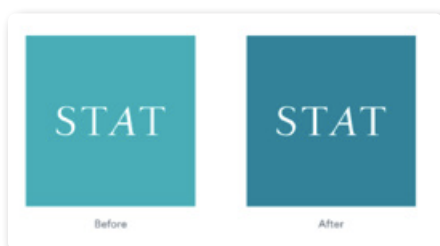
Excellence in innovation

STAT's milestones go far beyond its reportage. In 2022, the brand introduced 140 new products.

■ **STAT Trials Pulse:** A one-of-a-kind clinical intelligence platform that alerts users to real-time changes based on proprietary event classifications developed in collaboration with STAT reporters.
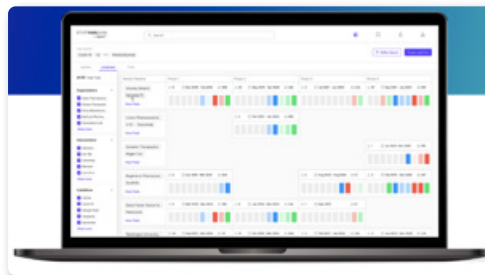
■ **STAT Locals:** A series of gatherings across the US, to help spark new connections and collaborations within the life of science communities.

■ In November 2022, the brand hosted its fourth annual **STAT Summit** in Boston, its flagship gathering that features solution-focused discussions on the most important topics in health care with some of the field's greatest minds.

■ The company also launched its first **STATUS List**, which is planned to be an annual report on the leaders and influencers in the life sciences.
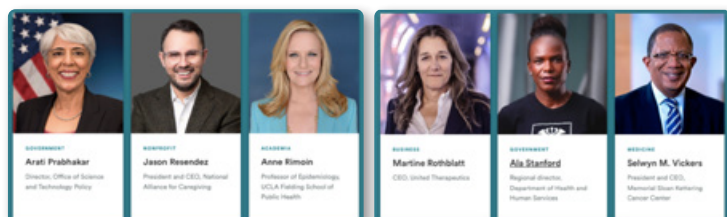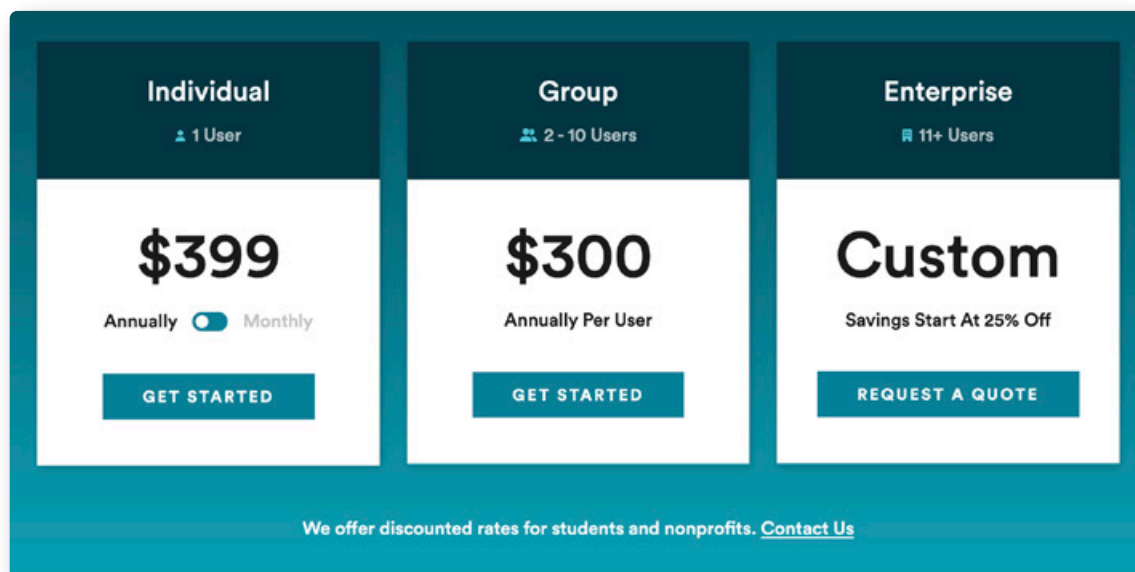
New homepage: The new homepage surfaces more of STAT's news content, but also more of what they do now beyond news, including events, reports and data products.

"It also lays the groundwork for us to provide a more personalised experience for users, such as reordering content based on user interest and the ability to follow authors and topics directly from the page," Berke said.

"Aesthetically, the new homepage uses a minimalistic design style to create a sleek and polished look that's on par with the quality of our journalism."

New navigation: A new site header navigation serves important functional and strategic purposes to better serve the company's users and business.

"Our core news categories, which our analytics show get the most engagement, are placed prominently within the main header bar followed by a rotating link that will change every few months to promote our ongoing business initiatives," Berke said.

The team also added a "mega-nav" – a large expanded menu that can be accessed from the hamburger button. This gives them space to feature links to many more sub-topics and pages, with more flexibility to add and remove links depending on how the coverage evolves.

STAT records roughly 3 million monthly unique visitors, "though we often have many million more a month on other platforms, such as Apple News," he noted.

Clean design supplements award-winning content

STAT's website is designed to both convey the brand value and improve user experience. The look and feel of the website is clean and simple – an aesthetic that lends well to the medical field.

However, it's also one that requires intention with every design decision, noted Berke.

"Every design element and its placement on the page serves a purpose – whether it's to provide a visual cue, show a relationship, or further convey the brand. And with this intention and minimalism comes great user experience," he said.

The website is designed so it doesn't overpower the photography and illustrations. "Our users come to us for our award-winning journalism. The content is at the forefront, and the design is supplementary," he said.

The STAT team usually has between 8 and 13 new stories every weekday. Daily news meetings at 9:30 am EST and again at 3 pm, with the presence of a dozen editors, are conducted to decide the homepage for the following day.

"It's a collaborative process, and we of course update the site during the day," Berke said.

Q&A with Richard L. Berke, Co-Founder and Executive Editor, STAT

1) What has been your biggest takeaway or learning from this product/initiative, etc.?

We've learned over the years that you can build a successful digital media company built on producing high quality journalism that readers will pay for.

2) How has this evolved or developed since the time of submitting your awards entry? Can you share any results?

When the pandemic hit, tens of millions of readers turned to STAT, demonstrating how in just four years we'd become the most trusted, authoritative source of journalism on health and medicine.

Since then, we've emerged from startup to thriving digital news magazine, with an award-winning staff of more than 100, and added new beats to better serve our core readers.

Across many platforms, we use the full set of storytelling tools to inform and engage our audience: investigations, absorbing narratives, provocative opinion pieces, and data trackers on our website; live events across the country; three podcasts; original artwork, video, and motion graphics, and social media posts ranging from a new LinkedIn newsletter to TikTok videos.

Richard L. Berke
Co-Founder and Executive Editor
STAT

This year, we also freshened the look of our email newsletters, redesigned our homepage, and launched a pioneering community engagement initiative to enable subscribers to discuss issues with each other and interact with our journalists in Reddit-like AMAs.

All of this rests on our impactful journalism.

3) What has the award itself meant to your team, whether that be internally or externally?

We were thrilled and humbled to receive the recognition from WAN-IFRA. STAT's journalists, our business, product, design, engineering and marketing teams are dedicated, creative, and incredibly hard working, so it's so good to see their achievements recognized not only in the US but well beyond.

How Aftenposten Junior's Minecraft campaign grew print sales by 57 percent

Aftenposten Junior is the only national newspaper for children in Norway, and since its first publication in 2012 has grown subscribers and readers quickly.

It is primarily a print-driven brand and as such has experienced a decline in sales, also amid intense competition from digital media.

"Parents and children are reading less print journalism, while the time spent in front of digital devices is increasing with today's broad offer of entertainment," said Johanne Barman-Jenssen, Brand Manager, Aftenposten.

Thinking out of the box to engage readers

Deciding it was time to make a serious move towards engaging its audience in new ways, the brand turned its 10-year anniversary celebration in 2022 into a successful sales campaign, and ended up selling 1623 print subscriptions – a 57 percent increase compared to 2021.

Aftenposten Junior won the "**Best in Audience Engagement**" for its "birthday celebration" in WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

"We wanted to create a celebration that would pique children's interest, which parents would find relevant, and something that would gain general public interest," Barman-Jenssen said.

Since COVID-19 was still a looming threat in early 2022, this event was held virtually.

"To ensure our relevance, we looked into how children spend their free time and found they enjoyed gaming and online activities that involved interacting and socialising with their peers," she said.

Turns out, the most popular game for Aftenposten Junior's target group was Minecraft. The company then toyed with the possibility of hosting an event inside the game.

The brand partnered with Skogliv, the largest Minecraft community in Norway, to help Aftenposten design a universe that would resonate with its young audience.

"To logically connect the event and the brand, we incorporated some of our most popular content in the universe – quizzes and animals," Barman-Jenssen said.

So, the team set up a server in Minecraft where it could co-create assets for the Aftenposten Junior universe together with its users. To mobilise their readers, they printed weekly assignments in the newspaper with simple instructions weeks leading up to the event.

Campaign objectives

- The brand wanted to be inclusive and invite as many children as possible

- It wanted to be relevant to engage its audience

- It wanted to get noticed and use that momentum to sell subscriptions after the event

Credit: Aftenposten Junior

"The first week we asked them to build our mascots, then houses for the mascots, fantasy animals, carousels and lastly, birthday gifts," she said.

Increasing engagement and brand awareness

The team registered around 1000 creations from Aftenposten Junior users during the five-week lead-up to the event.

The company also began promoting the event externally, emphasising that it was free and inclusive.

"Inclusivity was our highest priority, and we wanted to reach beyond our subscribers. Marketing aimed at children is not allowed in Norway so the campaign was targeted to reach parents of children between the ages 6 and 13 years old," she said.

Credit: Skogliv

Highlight of the evening

A hybrid concert with artist Sval — an up and coming singer songwriter from Norway. Aftenposten Junior taped a live recording with Sval, designed an avatar and a stage show within the Minecraft universe to look like her.

When the kids gathered in front of the virtual stage, the brand broadcast the recorded concert and triggered the show inside the game simultaneously. For some of the audience, this was their very first concert experience.

The brand used print and radio ads, digital banners, and carried out social media promotions. The call to action was joining Aftenposten Junior's Facebook event page where they posted teasers and pictures of the reader contributions.

The team decided to live-stream the event and rented a studio at a streaming centre in Oslo where a panel of journalists would go live to guide, engage and encourage the young users.

This enabled the audience to tune into the stream while gaming and chatting with the team and each other inside the Minecraft universe.

57 percent increase in sales

The "birthday party" managed to engage 1708 unique users and recorded 1000 viewers on the live stream.

The two-hour long event recorded an exchange of 14,075 chat messages. "That's an average of 1.6 messages per second, proving that the kids were involved and excited," Barman-Jenssen said.

Credit: Aftenposten Junior

The event entailed user creations, and other attractions including an amusement park, parkour tracks, secret tunnels, and a huge Zoo with both quizzes and fun facts connected to animals. It also featured live talks with the editor of Aftenposten Junior from the studio.

The campaign successfully ticked all the boxes of its original goals: to boost brand awareness, reader engagement and subscription sales. The company sold 1623 print subscriptions, achieving an all-time high number of sales from social media.

Credit: Aftenposten Junior

Q&A with Johanne Barman-Jenssen, Brand Manager, Aftenposten

1) What has been your biggest takeaway or learning from this product/initiative, etc.?

We need to explore new ways of engaging and interacting with our readers. Children love to contribute, and we want to make it easy for them to do so. Meeting them where they are, and merging the physical paper with online platforms has helped us evolve in this area.

2) How has this evolved or developed since the time of submitting your awards entry? Can you share any new results?

Since submitting the award, Aftenposten Junior has developed a new strategy to ensure a profitable future. We are still facing decreasing print run numbers, and need to keep continuous focus on engagement to keep our subscribers and increase our sales.

Our strategy, therefore, states that we need a stronger digital presence, in line with our Minecraft event, where we focus on interacting with our audience.

One of our newest experiments involves using AR in combination with the paper. Through a mobile device, children can now explore our printed content in a more dynamic and engaging way.

Johanne Barman-Jenssen
Brand Manager,
Aftenposten

We still have a lot to learn, but we see great potential in combining new technology with our newspaper.

3) What has the award itself meant to your team, whether that be internally or externally?

The award has given our team great motivation to keep innovating. Getting acknowledged makes us feel like we are making a difference.

How the Washington Post's climate newsletter fills gaps in reporting

The Washington Post launched the Climate Coach newsletter in January 2023 to help readers navigate the choices they face when seeking to live a more climate and environmentally friendly life.

Expert analysis with a friendly approach

Part of the Climate Coach's unique selling point is its tone that positions Coren as a trustworthy expert who provides an optimistic view on ways to combat climate change. The newsletter cultivates a unique and intimate inbox experience between him and the reader to achieve this.

"Coren directly addresses the audience and regularly uses reader-submitted questions and ideas to inform his writing topics, making the audience feel like active participants," Zak said.

"Readers are looking for ways they can combat climate change individually. With Climate Coach, we hope to give them useful tactics and advice informed by Coren's experience and unique takes on climate reporting," she added.

Additionally, Climate Coach doesn't focus on the doom and gloom aspect of climate coverage. Instead, it gives actionable takeaways that are doable on an individual level, pointed out Zak.

The newsletter is helmed by Michael J. Coren, Climate Advice Columnist at The Post. Climate Coach is the company's first climate advice email product and the primary newsletter for its climate vertical. It is aimed to address the deeply unavoidable and personal concerns of millions of people about climate change.

The Washington Post won "**Best Newsletter**" for Climate Coach at WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

Climate Coach publishes twice a week with an accompanying column. "Each week, it hosts an honest discussion about the environmental choices we face in our daily lives. We'll approach these questions with curiosity, optimism — and vigilant scepticism," said Elana Zak, Head of Audience Strategy and Growth.

It tackles issues ranging from "how Americans still use their appliances like it's 1970" to "why lentils are the perfect legume" to "battle climate change to the miraculous qualities of dirt".

Climate Coach – what's inside?

Climate Coach is not your ordinary newsletter. It does not deal in lists of "101 things" or symbolic gestures. It sports a friendly and conversational tone while digging deep into data, and dispensing evidence-backed advice and analysis about what matters in protecting the planet and one another.

These mailings often include a photo of Coren's dog – Miska – or a reader-submitted photo, and regularly feature reader-submitted questions to create a sense of community while tackling big climate issues.
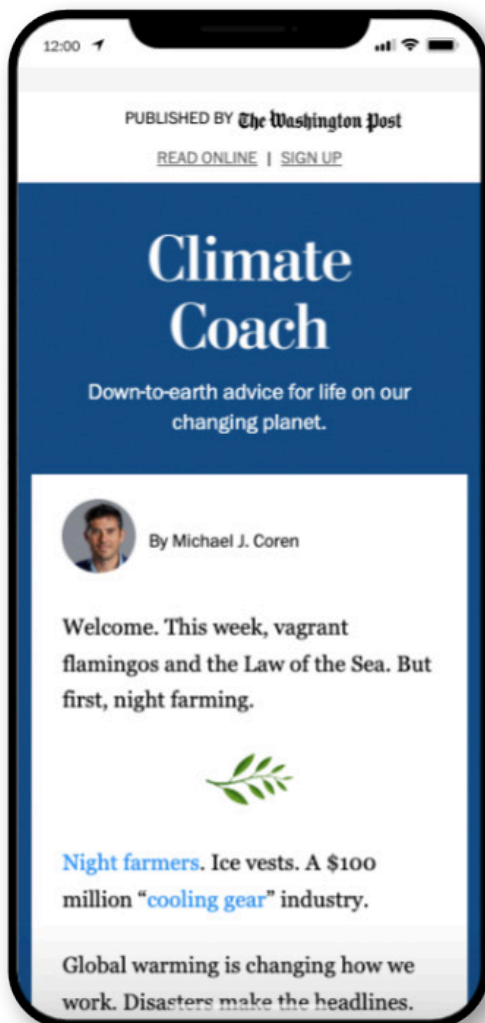
It also uses charts, GIFs, and other whimsical art elements to break up text to create a fun and easy reading experience that can be enjoyed on mobile or desktop.

It has received a lot of positive feedback from readers, with dozens responding to each email sent. Additionally, many readers have specifically complimented the broader newsletter, while others send in helpful tips or experiences.

Filling the information gap

The Post's research with its subscribers and non-subscribers revealed their significant interest in wanting more climate-focused products.

Consequently, the brand created Climate Coach to fill this gap. The newsletter was built to offer a unique perspective with advice and actionable takeaways on sustainable

living, pulling in part from The Post's extensive climate reporting.

The Climate Coach column and newsletter is housed under The Post's climate and environment vertical, Climate Lab. It includes more than 30 journalists, expanded weather coverage, as well as additional columns focused on animals and our planet.

Implementation and execution

The newsletter is published every Tuesday and Thursday. The Tuesday edition previews Coren's column, sent directly to readers' inboxes.

On Thursdays, Coren dives into reader responses to previous columns and newsletters, offers insights on how to adapt to a changing planet, highlights how the Biden administration is reshaping the nation's environmental policies, and rounds up a selection of climate stories from The Post and other outlets.

The column is often one of The Post's most-read items.

Each newsletter takes shape with the help of a small but effective team, comprising Michael Coren (author), Ana Campoy (Coren's editor), and Jennifer Baik (a newsletter strategy editor who guides the team on subject lines, provides instruction around putting the newsletter together in our email tool, and shares insightful takeaways on how to improve the newsletter based on data).
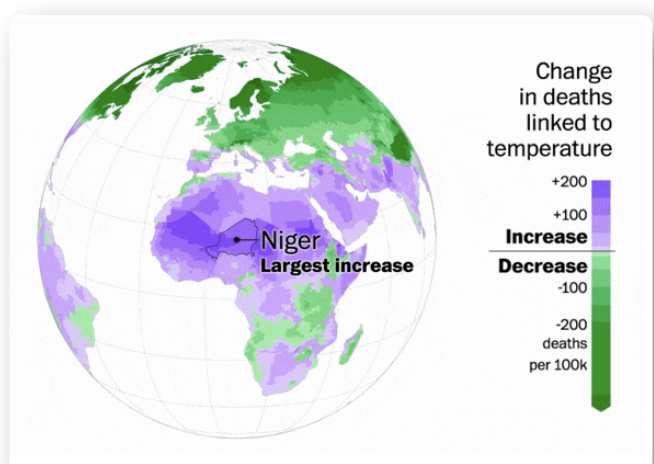
The change in deaths linked to temperature across the world. (Harry Stevens, Climate Lab anchor)

Q&A with Michael J. Coren, Climate Advice Columnist, The Washington Post

1) What has been your biggest takeaway or learning from this product/initiative, etc.?

People are hungry to take action on climate change, but need to understand how and why these individual actions work. Most of what's published tends to be overly simplistic or too complex. I aim for the sweet spot in between.

2) How has this evolved or developed since the time of submitting your awards entry? Can you share any new results?

We've brought in readers' stories and images as much as possible and really highlighted the amazing work being done by others at the Post.

3) What has the award itself meant to your team, whether that be internally or externally?

It's brought more visibility to this work inside and outside the Post, and strengthened arguments to devote resources to it.

Michael J. Coren
Climate Advice Columnist
The Washington Post

Dispatches from the sea: The Outlaw Ocean podcast chronicles lawlessness

The Outlaw Ocean Project, a non-profit journalism organisation based in Washington DC, produces investigative stories about human rights, labour and environmental concerns.

The non-profit's journalism is distinct not just in its focus, but also in how the reporting is conducted and distributed. Most of the stories are reported at least partially at sea.

The organisation was founded and is directed by Ian Urbina, who produced an award-winning series for The New York Times in 2015 and a subsequent best-selling book in 2019.

In the United States, the brand publishes its stories in various news outlets, including the New Yorker, NBC News, The Atlantic and The Washington Post. The reporting is translated into a half-dozen languages and further disseminated abroad in partnership with dozens of foreign newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations.

To reach a younger and more global audience, the organisation leverages non-news platforms, teaming up with artists to convert the reportage into music, animation, mural art, stage performance, and podcasts.

The Outlaw Ocean Project won "**Best Podcast**" in WAN-IFRA´s World Digital Media Awards competition.

Uncovering lawlessness on the high seas

Over the past eight years, Urbina has gone to extreme lengths – reporting from the "Seven Seas" and 36 countries – to expose the lawless realm of the high seas that most people didn't know existed.

This seven-part podcast series chronicles a global network of crime and exploitation – laws, lore and lifestyles

Highlights from Urbina's reportage

In the North Atlantic Ocean, Urbina experienced a near mutiny, when the crew of his transport vessel got lost in the middle of the night and the deckhands, terrified by the worsening seas, forced the ship's reluctant officers to turn back.

- In the Gulf of Oman, he stayed for several days on a floating armoury where private security guards store weapons in the increasingly armed ocean.

- On the East Sea, he bought his way onto a South Korea squid jigger to visit the world's biggest illegal fishing fleet – nearly 1,000 industrial Chinese squid boats in North Korean waters in violation of United Nations sanctions.

- On the South China Sea, he hopscotched from boat to boat – 30 miles on one, 30 on the next – to get out far enough on the South China Sea to find one of the long-haul ships known for using sea slaves, mostly migrants forced offshore by debt or duress, to catch the fish.

Ian Urbina
Director and Founder,
The Outlaw Ocean Project

of a hidden realm populated by traffickers, mercenaries, wreck thieves and repo men, vigilante conservationists and elusive poachers, oil-dumpers, shackled slaves and cast-adrift stowaways.

It was launched in September of 2022 and is managed by a seven-member team. It received more than 420,000 downloads in its first month, has earned 4.9/5 stars on Apple Podcasts and ranked as the number one Canadian True Crime Apple Podcast.

It has received extensive critical recognition, being nominated for 14 awards and winning eight.

"We are really proud of our syndication efforts," said Marcella Boehler, Global Publishing Editor. "We paired the podcast series with written stories and ran them free of charge in several publications worldwide – including in the US, Spain, England, Cuba, the Gambia, South Africa, Japan and Indonesia."

The written stories were viewed by almost 3 million people. The Outlaw Ocean Project newsletters on Substack were viewed more than 86,000 times.

The idea for the podcast emerged from Urbina's exploration of sea docks and crews in Singapore.

He assembled an extensive library of audio and field recordings and realised that this material had the potential to become an immersive podcast series.

A snapshot of the tireless reportage

Boehler gave us a glimpse of what goes behind this unusually challenging reporting: The majority of ships circumventing the globe are unregistered and exempt from most international labour protections.

"Most governments have neither the inclination nor the resources to enforce them," she said.

Tangible results

The impact of this reporting has triggered the arrest and conviction of two captains, one for shackling a worker, another for murdering five.

The reporting also led to new U.S. government rules for combating sea slavery in the seafood harvesting industry. It was also the focus of a congressional hearing and debate at the United Nations.

"This project's goal is to bolster public awareness of human rights, environmental and labour abuses at sea around the world and, through investigative reporting, generate change for some of these problems," Boehler said.

It spurred class actions against a half-dozen major pet food and seafood companies including Nestle, Mars, Procter & Gamble, Thai Union and Chicken of the Sea.

Although major news outlets such as The CBC and L.A. Times distributed this podcast, its funding came entirely from Urbina's non-profit news organisation. It was shared with global news outlets for free.

"The podcast series also aims to demonstrate the importance of investigative reporting in a time of clickbait journalism and immersive storytelling in our era of information overload," she added.

Q&A with Marcella Boehler, Global Publishing Editor, The Outlaw Ocean Project

1) What has been your biggest takeaway or learning from this product/initiative, etc.?

Even when reporting at sea, which is a wildly noisy place, audio is worth capturing for reasons of the distinct power of podcast. Unlike video and the written word, we learned that audio carries a distinct emotional power.

Looking back, the audio balance between music and interview voice probably should have been calibrated differently as some listeners felt that the narrator – Urbina – was, at times, too quiet.

Furthermore, in light of the unusually strong public reaction, we could have afforded to have more episodes in the series.

2) How has this evolved or developed since the time of submitting your awards entry? Can you share any new results?

Since submitting our awards entry, we have seen new and noteworthy results that further emphasise the impact of our work.

Our project has reached a broader and more diverse audience than initially anticipated. The engagement on our platforms, website, and social media increased significantly. This has helped us raise awareness and encourage conversations around the topics we covered.

We have established partnerships and collaborations with other organisations and professionals and received substantial positive feedback from our audience, listeners, and readers, reinforcing the relevance and importance of our project. It

Marcella Boehler
Global Publishing Editor
The Outlaw Ocean Project

got so much attention that CBC invited us for a second season, which is currently being produced.

3) What has the award itself meant to your team, whether that be internally or externally?

Winning the WAN-IFRA Digital Media Awards Americas has held significant meaning for our team. It has served as a powerful motivator and source of validation. The award reinforced our commitment to producing high-quality content, and encouraged us to continue our creative endeavours in the podcasting realm.

Externally, it has helped to enhance our reputation and credibility within the industry and act as a tangible acknowledgment of our value and quality. It has also drawn a broader and more engaged audience to our project, expanding our reach and impact.

How SWP's e-paper apps helped boost engagement, subscriptions

NPG is the umbrella organisation for several digital and printed media in the southwest and east of Germany.

One-stop-shop for news and e-paper

SÜDWEST PRESSE and its partner titles reach more than 1.1 million readers every day.

The new hybrid apps are designed so they are technically identical for LR, MOZ.de and SÜDWEST PRESSE.

They combine online news and the e-paper, offering a visually separated interface making for a seamless experience, allowing users to navigate and consume news effortlessly.

New consumers are guided to the app through an onboarding experience — a step-by-step guide to register or login, enable a range of push notifications, select which geographical region they are interested in, and finally, choose if they want to peruse the content on the app or the website.
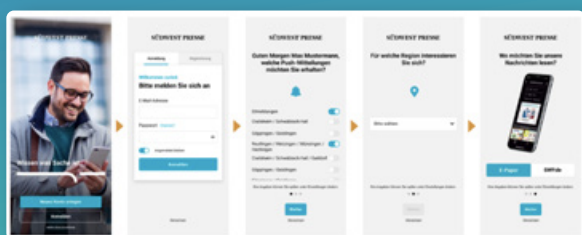
This past year the company launched new e-paper apps (iOS and Android) and e-paper web portals for SÜDWEST PRESSE, a daily newspaper based in Ulm, and its partner titles — Lausitzer Rundschau (LR), a daily regional newspaper published in Cottbus, and MOZ.de, an online news portal in and for Brandenburg.

A 35-person team worked for a year to put the app together, ultimately launching it in January this year.

NPG won the "**Best e-paper concept**" at WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Awards Worldwide.
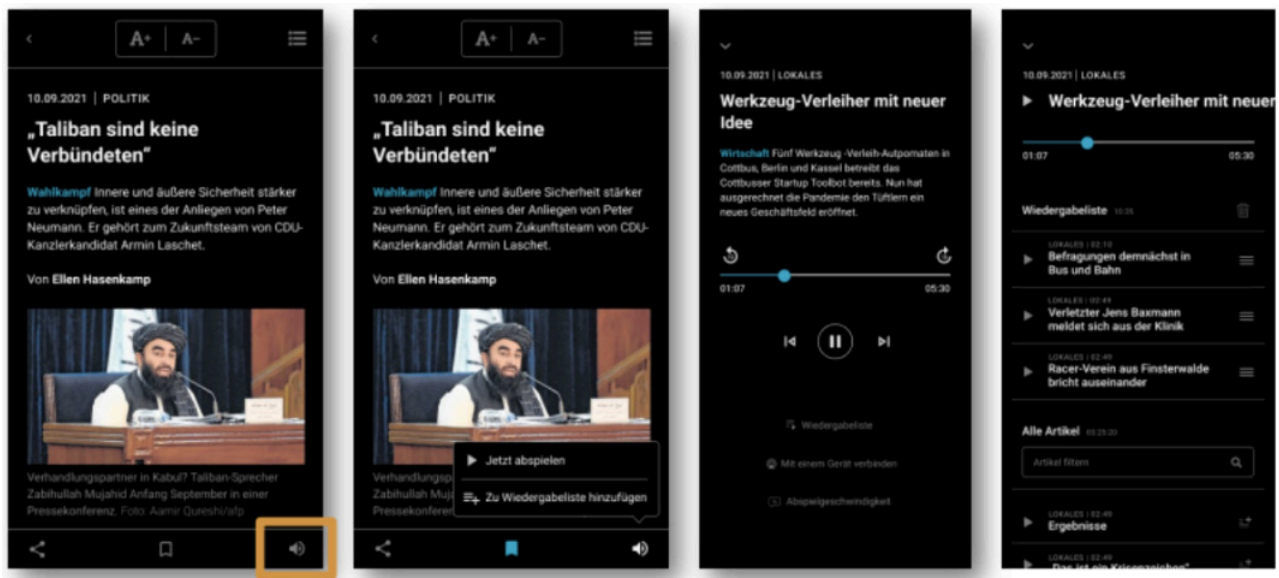
The purpose behind launching this app was to combine online news and the e-paper, to provide users with a comprehensive platform for accessing their preferred news content, and strengthening the subscription business model.

According to Daniel Geiger, Head of Product, NPG Digital boasts of more than 20,000 weekly active users across its range of apps. This user base is segmented into two main categories: e-paper subscribers and SWPplus subscribers.

Collectively, these groups exhibit an average interaction time of approximately 19 minutes per session. Notably, SWPplus users tend to spend slightly less time in the app, while e-paper users engage for more extended periods.

What's inside the app?

The app sports two kinds of layouts for the users – a classic view and a modern one.

Users have the option to either download the e-paper issue in the usual newspaper layout or read it in the modern view.

The Modern View, produced automatically from the print edition, has proven to be a game-changer for the brand, taking the e-paper experience to another level.

"Modern View adds a contemporary look and feel to the app, adapting content to the screen size, making it easy for users to read across devices," said Geiger.

Around 16 percent of all SÜDWEST PRESSE readers use the modern view.

"From 8 p.m., users even have the option of reading the following day's edition," said Greiger.

Further, features such as Read-Aloud (text-to-speech) and Bookmark List (save stories for later) make it even more convenient for readers to engage with the content, even if they do not have network connectivity.

With the Read-Aloud function, users can create their own news playlists and have their selected articles read out loud at the touch of a button.

"The app's design and features are not only aesthetically pleasing but also practical, providing users with an optimal reading experience. These premium features have helped us increase customer accounts," he said.

Personalised recommendations allow users to set up their app preferences to access content they're actually interested in.

"Depending on which newspaper you read, you will receive the appropriate regions and push options," he added.

The bottom of the app's homepage has a section for inserts and brochures.
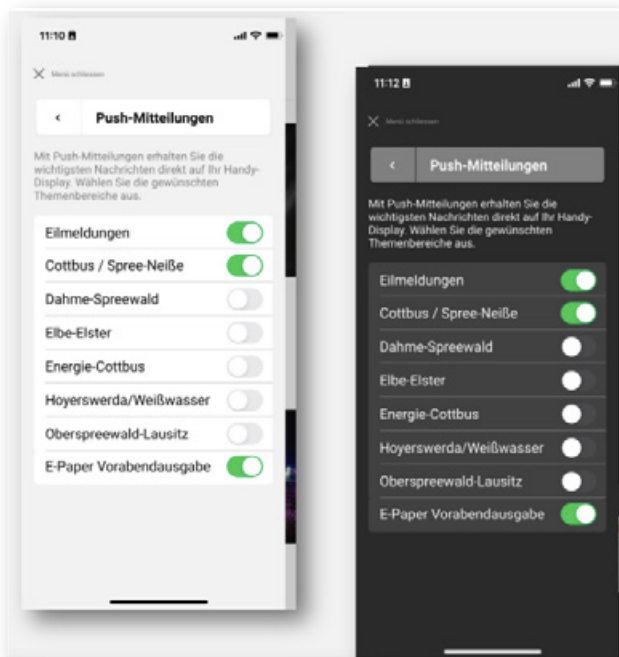
Exclusive access through SWPplus

Users can purchase their subscription directly in-app to access paywalled content with SWPplus – that's around 250 stories every week. The company currently offers two payment plans.

The first one offers access to all SWP content in addition to the e-paper. Users get the first month free, and then pay € 34 per month.

The second package comes at € 7.99 for the first two months, then € 11.39 per month. It includes unrestricted access to all the content from swp.de.

The annual subscription for that content is priced at € 90.07.

"The tally of in-app purchases continues its upward trajectory, marking a consistent and promising trend. Opting for in-app purchases stands out as the most straightforward method for users to subscribe, streamlining the subscription process," said Greiger.

"Furthermore, the app serves as a potent catalyst for user engagement. This effect is particularly pronounced for our digital subscribers, the Plus members, where the disparity in user experience compared to the online portal is substantial."

"Notably, the media consumption time of app users surpasses that of online portal users by a remarkable factor of 13, underscoring the app's unparalleled role in fostering prolonged user interaction," he added.
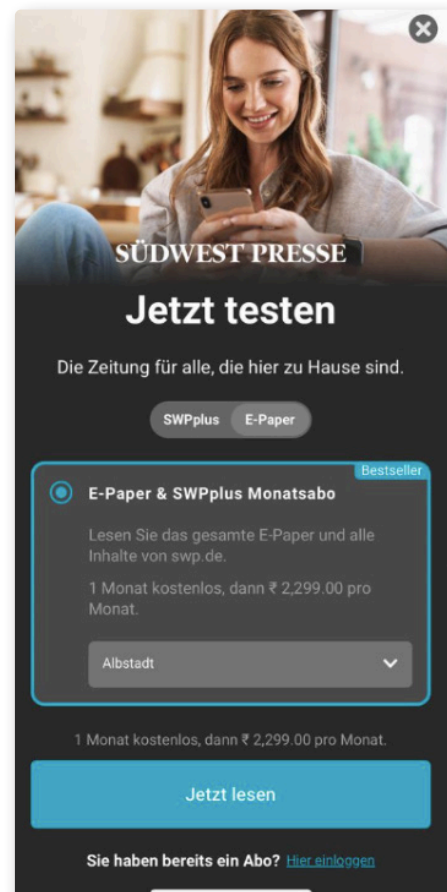
Q&A with Daniel Geiger, Head of Product, NPG Digital

1) What has been your biggest takeaway or learning from this product?

For a company to position itself effectively for the future, it is crucial that customers have the flexibility to transition to digital products. This shift is contingent upon the digital offerings meeting a specific standard of quality.

Beyond functionality, the user experience must be enjoyable, making interaction with the product a pleasure. Introducing additional features serves as a compelling incentive, encouraging customers to embrace the digital product seamlessly.

At the core of our digital product spectrum lies the app, serving as the central hub. It stands as the optimal platform to deliver an unparalleled user experience, ensuring customers encounter the finest features and functionalities in one cohesive space.

2) How has this evolved or developed since the time of submitting your awards entry? Can you share any results?

We've just launched a significant update for our apps, introducing a host of UX enhancements and exciting additions, such as a new puzzle feature. This engaging feature is being enjoyed by a substantial user base. This strategic inclusion serves as a catalyst, actively motivating users to open the app regularly, fostering sustained and meaningful engagement.

Daniel Geiger
Head of Product
NPG Digital

3) What has the award itself meant to your team, whether that be internally or externally?

We are very pleased about the award. The positive feedback reassures us that we made the right choices with the concept and development. Together with our partner iApps Technologies GmbH, we will continue to develop our apps to guarantee our users a modern and comfortable reading experience in the future.

Four valuable lessons from Legit.ng's digital-first approach to boosting media literacy

In November 2022, three months ahead of the country's challenging national elections, Nigerian publisher Legit set out on an ambitious multimedia project to build media trust and counter mis/disinformation, especially within the country's youth.

Known as the Legit.ng Media Literacy Project, the initiative relied on a well-defined and executed strategy that incorporated a dedicated media literacy microsite, webinars, gamification, short-form videos, and partnerships with influencers and celebrities.

Open to challenges

With the "imperative to seek the truth in news that we spread online" as their impetus, the team of 10 soon realised that challenges existed to their primary goal of boosting media literacy and attuning news readers to identifying fake news. Their response was to turn these into two secondary goals:

1. Ensure all Nigerians are equipped with all the information they need to access quality and legit news always.

2. Increase the Nigerian youth access to leading fact-checkers and ethical reporters who could help their journey to becoming media literates.

The campaign reached over 30 million people, and garnered the highly coveted 'Best Trust Initiative' at WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Awards Worldwide. This is a new award category that recognises news projects that help restore public trust in quality journalism.

What the Jury said: *"Bravo to this publication for this outstanding media literacy campaign – the right campaign, for the right audience at the right time. The need for media literacy, and the media trust it can potentially create, is never greater than during an election cycle. This initiative effectively utilised the digital spaces where young voters live to aim to create deeper engagement and public understanding of the need for "real news" and the risks of misinformation."*

How they did It

Legit.ng has more than 13 million monthly readers and 11 million+ Facebook followers. To reach them, the project adopted a multimedia strategy.

The campaign launched with a digital microsite that taught audiences how to distinguish between fake and true news, and included an integrated gamification feature in the form of a quiz.

Another digital touchpoint included short videos produced in partnership with top Nigerian celebrities who have been affected by fake news. These videos were made available on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, and extended to the more than 6 million followers of participating celebrities and influencers.

The campaign was further sustained with static social media content such as Quotes and Q&As in GIFs, banners, and short-reel formats. And in January 2023, it was amplified with a NextGen webinar on media literacy. Legit recorded over 400 registrations from university students across Nigeria, and in total, connected with over 6,000 youth via Facebook, with the webinar livestream reaching over 8,000 people on Facebook.

This was followed by the launch of Legit's first Twitter Spaces conversation, as the elections approached. Featuring political editors and investigative reporters from various news and watchdog organisations, the discussion centred on the importance of media literacy, and how to fact-check every news item.

Lessons learned

This ambitious and highly successful project, led by Project Manager Oluwaseyi Tomosori, comprised a team of 10, who all gained invaluable insights from the experience.

1. **Digital first:** Running a campaign in Africa's most mobile-centric country means optimising for mobile and leading with digital. As a result, we integrated the use of digital technology in developing a special microsite and leveraged other communication/event tools like Zoom and Facebook events to get our message out there.

2. **People-centric:** We learnt that we must depend on people to succeed. In a situation whereby we want to reach our target audience, we need to build our content around people. This knowledge shaped our path to partner with the people whose opinions are valued in the society, to also push our message forward to our public.

3. **Innovate always:** In a fast-paced and agile world like we currently live in, it is important to meet up with the times. This means thinking on our feet, being creative and innovating to leverage new channels and develop trusted content that can drive our efforts on increasing media literacy among our audience.

4. **Teamwork:** No man is an island. Without teamwork, we have realised that the possibility of going far would be almost non-existent. As a result, we work across various teams in the most synergistic manner.
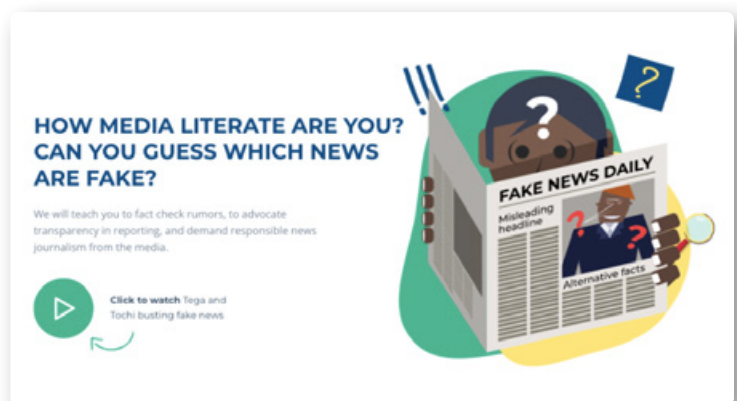
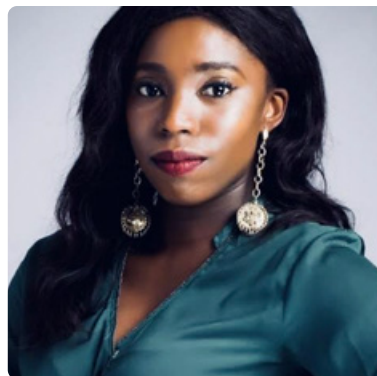# Q&A with Oluwaseyi Tomosori, PR Manager, Legit Media Group

1) What has been your biggest takeaway or learning from this project?

Our most significant takeaway from this project has been the realisation of the profound impact that media literacy initiatives like ours have had on readers' attitude to news consumption. Our media literacy project has fostered critical thinking and responsible news consumption among the Nigerian youth. It highlighted the urgency of addressing misinformation and promoting trustworthy journalism as a means to safeguard the integrity of information.

2) What further developments have arisen around this project, if any, since your submission to the awards? Can you share any new outcomes, developments or results?

Since our submission to the awards, and our memorable win thereafter, we have continued to sustain our message about preserving trust in journalism. We have done this by getting into **partnerships with youth-centric NGOs with a large youth-audience base across Africa, and also partnered with top fact-checking organisations**, to drive mass youth sensitisation about media literacy, and give practical application classes, on news fact-check. Our recent media literacy webinar was done in partnership with a leading NGO in Nigeria, LEAP Africa, via their youth development platform – YDOS, for the UN International Youth Day of Service 2023. The webinar attracted over 4,000 registrations from across Africa. Got a record number of zoom views, and attracted over 13,000 participation on Facebook event.

This expansion has resulted in a measurable increase in media literacy among our youths, evidenced by improved critical thinking skills and

Oluwaseyi Tomosori
PR Manager
Legit Media Group

reduction in the spread of fake news within the targeted sample groups, since the last webinar held in 2022.

3) What has the award itself meant to your team; internally and/or externally?

The award has had a significant impact both internally and externally. Internally, it has boosted team morale and strengthened our commitment to upholding quality journalism and media literacy. It serves as a reminder of our responsibility to combat misinformation.

Externally, the award has enhanced our reputation and credibility within the media industry, reinforcing our status as a trusted source of news and information. It has also provided confidence to like-minded organisations to approach us for impact partnerships, and armed us with tools to also approach valuable partnership conversations from a place of strength.

In all, the award has further advanced our mission to combat fake news and promote trust in journalism.

How News24 exposed injustice in hate crime against SA's LGBTQIA+

South Africa has the most progressive constitution in the world; its Bill of Rights was the first constitutional text in the world to explicitly protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation. South Africa is also the first country on the continent – and fifth in the world – to legalise same-sex marriages.

According to the country's LGBTQIA+ community, however, these progressive laws "exist only on paper". This is borne out by the increasing number of hate crimes against community members – and the poor legislative response to these attacks, even when fatal.
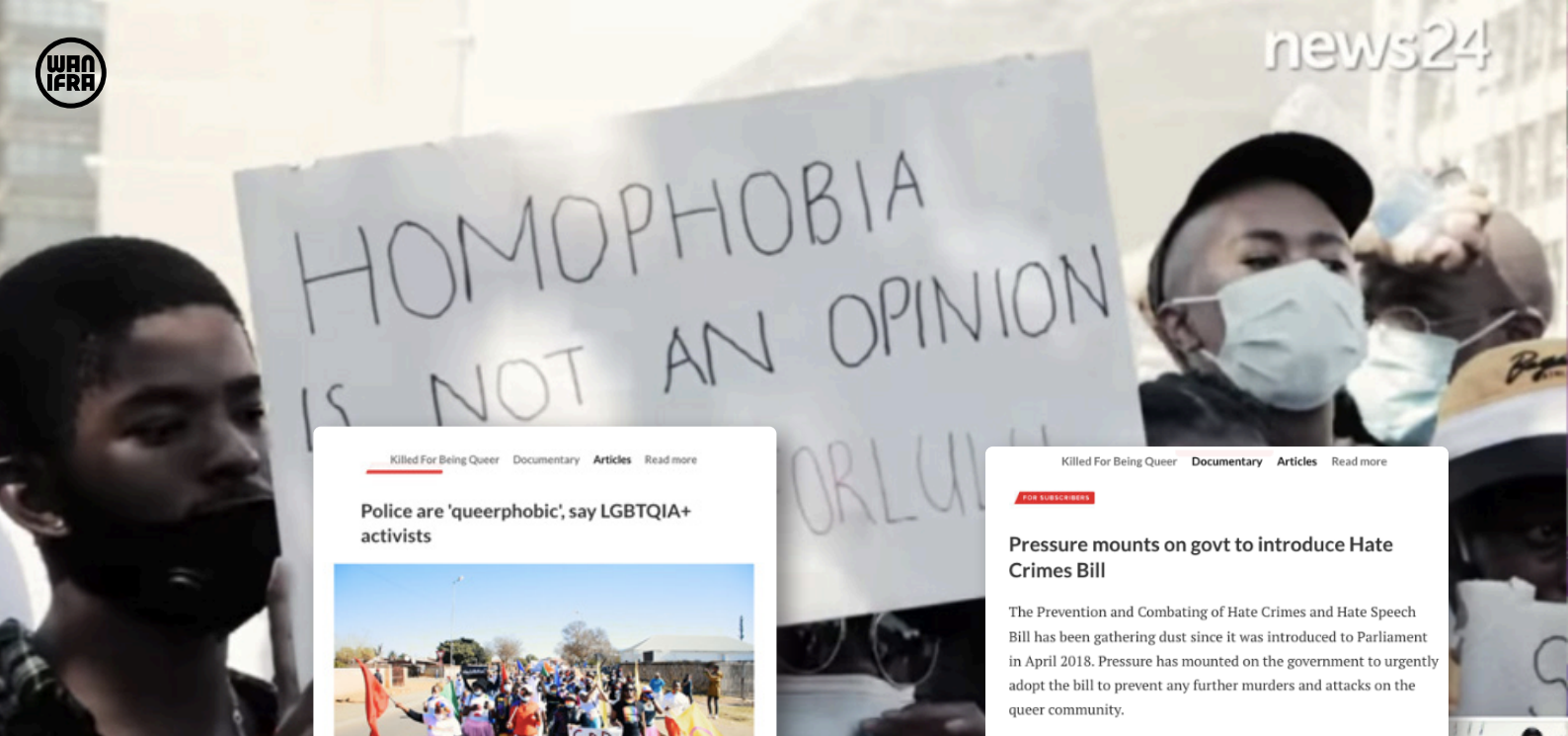
This is brought into sharp focus in Killed for Being Queer, a compelling documentary from the News24 Special Projects team that shines an unflinching spotlight on the realities faced by South Africa's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning and asexual communities.

The 35-minute documentary is not a standalone feature. Housed on a special microsite for free, easy access, it serves as an anchor to four accompanying feature articles on three key issues affecting the LGBTQIA+: the lack of queer safe spaces due to the pandemic; police's queerphobia and the introduction of the hate crimes bill.

Giving voice to the marginalised

Central to this campaign, and the core component of each production, is the different human voices that give

Police are 'queerphobic', say LGBTQIA+ activists

Killed For Being Queer   Documentary   **Articles**   Read more

The South African Police Service (SAPS) stands accused of ignoring the plight of queer people when dealing with hate crimes. This follows a number of killings in the LGBTQIA+ community last year.

Killed For Being Queer   **Documentary**   Articles   Read more

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Pressure mounts on govt to introduce Hate Crimes Bill

The Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill has been gathering dust since it was introduced to Parliament in April 2018. Pressure has mounted on the government to urgently adopt the bill to prevent any further murders and attacks on the queer community.

In July last year, Deputy Justice and Constitutional Development Minister John Jeffery provided an update on the efforts of the department to prevent, combat and prosecute such crimes. Jeffery said there were 42 pending hate crime cases. Of the 42 pending cases, 30 were for murder and 12 for rape.

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Safe spaces for queers shut doors as Covid-19 pandemic bites

unique insights into the realities of daily life for marginalised people – from lived experiences of being queer in South Africa, to that of the family of a victim who was killed because of his sexuality.

The documentary opens with the chilling illustration of the arsenal of weapons a lesbian victim of corrective rape sleeps with, to ensure her safety.

Killed for Being Queer received over 47,000 views across News24's digital platforms, YouTube and OOVVUU combined. The microsite and resultant articles garnered more than 125,000 page views. The project also won gold at WAN-IFRA's Digital Media Awards Worldwide.

An initiative within News24's Special Projects division and comprising a team of four, the project is part of a campaign to highlight the deadly impact of homophobia. This, says team, is the impetus that propelled them to "keep reporting on this issue and put pressure on the government to adopt the legislation calling for stricter laws and harsher sentences against those who commit crimes against the LGBTQIA+ community."

Addressing the elephant in the room

Between February and October 2021, about 20 LGBTQIA+ individuals were killed across South Africa, seemingly targeted because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

But these figures are hard to verify as the South African Police Service (SAPS) does not keep statistics on hate crimes. There is also a reluctance by the authorities to acknowledge the homophobic and transphobic motivation behind many of these attacks.

SAPS also stands accused of being queerphobic and ignoring the plight of queer people when dealing with hate crimes.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has, on occasion, addressed the country's grim prevalence of gender-based violence. He has yet to make mention of any of the spate of hate crimes targeting members of the LGBTIQA+ community.

This, despite a march to Parliament, and pleas for justice following the horrific mutilation and murder of Andile "Lulu" Ntuthela. The group handed over a memorandum in which they called on Parliament to hold an urgent debate on hate crimes. They also called for harsher punishment for those who commit hate crimes.

This is all captured in the documentary, and further detailed in the accompanying feature articles by News24 journalist Marvin Charles.

Q&A with Sharlene Rood, Multimedia Editor, News24

1) What has been your biggest takeaway or learning from this project?

Our reporting on the Killed for Being Queer project served as a great reminder of the media's duty to give a voice to the voiceless, and the importance of highlighting stories of marginalised communities in our country. We need to do more reporting on LGBTQIA+ communities and the struggles they face in South Africa.

2) What further developments have arisen around this project, if any, since your submission to the awards? Can you share any new outcomes, developments or results?

There have been very few developments.

In August Cabinet approved the revised National Intervention Strategy (NIS) on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) matters. Cabinet also noted the review and resolution of the National Task Team (NTT) to upgrade and broaden the focus on the NTT to deal with Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) issues, in addition to hate crimes and also approved the broadening of the focus of the NTT.

Meanwhile the media keeps reporting on deaths within the LGBTQIA+ community.

Sharlene Rood
Multimedia Editor
News24

The latest draft of the hate crimes and hate speech bill has been passed by the National Assembly and is now before the National Council of Provinces, which has called for comment on it. Comments closed at the end of May. The bill is considerably improved from the first draft that was tabled five years ago.

3) What has the award itself meant to your team; internally and/or externally?

It really is a great honour to be recognised on an international stage for the work that we do. We're incredibly happy that it resonated with our audience and with the judges as an important body of work. It was important to us to give people a glimpse of the struggles the LGBTQIA+ community in South Africa faces daily.

WAN-IFRA Digital Media Awards Worldwide Finalists

Best Data Visualisation

- **Life in Hong Kong's Shoebox Housing**, South China Morning Post, Hong Kong

- **Die Kragkrisis Regstreeks (The Electricity Crisis Live)**, Netwerk24, South Africa

- **Islamophobia 365: Lynchings and Beyond | How Anti-Muslim Hate in UP Has Grown Exponentially Since 2017**, The Quint, India

- **America's Lost Chinatowns**, Insider, USA

- **VG's Energy Crisis Monitor**, Verdens Gang (VG), Norway

Best Digital Subscription Initiative

- **Moving from a metered to a smart paywall**, Clarín, Argentina

- **Indian Express Subscription**, The Indian Express, India

- **Maverick Insider Marketing**, Daily Maverick, South Africa

- **Omni Mer**, Omni, Sweden

Best ePaper-Concept

- **New NPG e-paper product**, NPG Digital, Germany **BlokraaiPRET e-publication on Netwerk24**, Media24, South Africa **Acervo ZH**, Grupo RBS, Brasil

- **The Hindu e-Paper Learning Corner**, The Hindu, India

Best in Audience Engagement

- **How a birthday party in Minecraft made a massive impact on brand awareness, engagement and sales**, Aftenposten Junior, Norway

- **Live journalism webinars**, Daily Maverick, South Africa

- **Emotions, predictions, forecasts, users interact with La Nacion during the Qatar World Cup**, La Nacion, Argentina

- **ABP CENTENARY CAMPAIGN**, ABP PVT. LTD., India

Best News Website

- **The Leading Site Covering Health, Medicine, and Science**, STAT, USA

- **https://www.thequint.com/**, The Quint, India

- **A sports news site for the TikTok Generation**, Relevo, Spain

- **News24: South Africa's Most Trusted News Website**, News24, South Africa

Best Newsletter

- **Climate Coach**, The Washington Post, USA

- **Morning Expresso**, The Indian Express, India

- **Your Questions Answered (YQA)**, Daily Maverick, South Africa

- **Inside Politics**, Financial Times, UK

Best Podcast

- **The Outlaw Ocean Podcast**,
  The Outlaw Ocean Project, USA

- **Health For Mzansi podcast**,
  Food For Mzansi, South Africa

- **The Indo Daily,**
  Irish Independent (Mediahuis Ireland), Ireland

- **Shet Market**, Sakal Media Private Limited, India

Best Trust Initiative

- **Legit.ng Media Literacy Campaign**,
  Legit Media Group, Nigeria

- **Transparency portal – How we make VG**,
  Verdens Gang (VG), Norway

- **Elections 2022 Coverage**, Agência Lupa, Brazil

- **Women in Journalism**,
  Afghanistan Women News Agency, Afghanistan

Best Use of Video

- **WATCH | DOCUMENTARY: Killed For Being Queer**,
  News24/ Media24, South Africa

- **Paint your heroes: Original multimedia content to support the rise of women's football**, Relevo, Spain

- **Ambulancias irregulares: lucrar con la emergencia**,
  N+ Focus, México

- **ABP CENTENARY CAMPAIGN**,
  ABP PVT. LTD., India

Best practice in innovation

**Digital Media Awards Worldwide:
Nine cases of excellence**

World Association
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