

BEST PRACTICE IN DIGITAL MEDIA

Profiles of the 2016 World Digital Media Awards winners



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Takeaways from the world's best

Innovation knows no boundaries, and that has never been more evident than in this year's World Digital Media Awards winners. More importantly, it reaffirms that publishers can glean best practice from all corners of the globe: Oman, South Africa, India, Mexico, Germany...



Dean Roper
Director of
Insights,
WAN-IFRA

This report provides a behind-the-scenes look at how these publishers, nine in all, covering 10 categories, hatched their ideas and strategies, planned their execution, involved their audiences, and in most cases, helped the bottom line.

The World Digital Media Awards recognise publishers who have created ground-breaking digital products, services or content for their engaged audiences. The winners are drawn from WAN-IFRA regional Digital Media Awards in Europe, Asia and Latin America and for the first time this year in India, the Middle East and Africa.

Here are just a few of my takeaways from the winners:

Let your users offer brutal feedback

Publishers often launch products with the idea of reaching a specific target audience. In the case of Germany's Die Welt, the Axel Springer-owned publisher already had an established, successful tablet app, Welt HD, but decided to relaunch it with a completely new design and content. Developed by WeltN24, the Springer subsidiary, the new app was road-tested by a focus group from its core audience.

Said Welt Edition Product Owner Birger Venn-Hein: "We had some pretty radical ideas in the beginning. ... I have to say, it can be a bit of a painful process at times when you realise that what you have in mind as a news expert isn't necessarily what the users actually like or want to have. We had to alter our course quite a bit and accept that our users may not want such radical changes, especially considering that Welt HD was such a popular product." Obviously, the WeltN24 team eventually got it right.

And bring that audience great UX

That seems so obvious – but it can go so wrong too often. Each of these projects resonated with their audiences for a number of reasons, but each winner

clearly prioritised user experience and kept in mind the people to whom the project was addressed.

Laurence Topham, video producer for The Guardian, took a page or two from his well-known "Firestorm" video project from 2013, which examined a catastrophic bushfire in Tasmania, when producing last year's "Building the Bomb" exposé, which won Best Use of Online Video honours.

Said Topham, "I think a big part of what I learned from Firestorm was that unlike when creating a traditional linear documentary, there is a long process towards the end of your production where you have to do user testing... really factor in time to account for people who, in that initial round of testing, might go, 'I don't get it. What bit do I click on? Why is that coming up here? Why doesn't that work?' Because if you... come up with all these amazing ideas and don't let it out and see what other people think, you'll get to a point where you hit 'publish' and no one will know how to get to point B from point A."

Evolution on the fly

Naturally, most special projects of this magnitude require extensive planning – but others seemingly evolve on the fly. That was the case for Argentine daily Clarín's election messaging app on Telegram, a less-known platform than the likes of WhatsApp or FB Messenger. "I met with two or three guys from the newspaper and said, 'We have to do something. So let's do it on Telegram, and do it now,'" said Juan Marcos Bouthemy, mobile editor at Diario Clarín. "And we started with not much of a plan. ... It grew organically. Not according to a grand plan, but rather a piece at a time."

When in doubt...

"... Always focus on the quality, credibility, creativity and innovation of your content. Each person should find their own voice and stick to that. If one does not compromise on those elements, traffic and revenue growth is assured."

That's the simple, sage advice from Santhosh George Jacob, senior online content coordinator of India's Manorama Online, which took home the Best News Website award, one that The Guardian had garnered the previous two years. That's not bad company.

IMPRINT

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PROFILES OF THE 2016 WORLD DIGITAL
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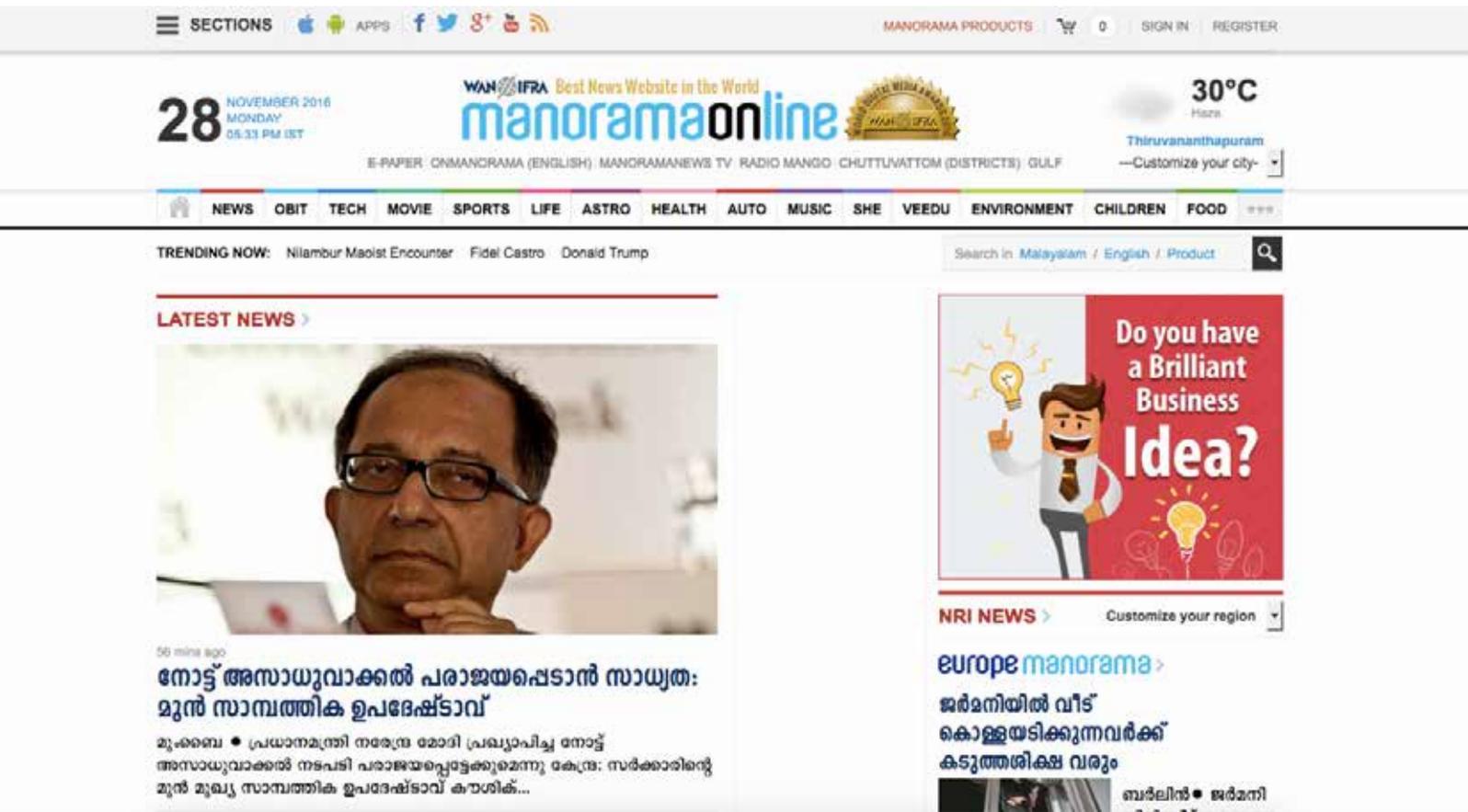
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BEST NEWS WEBSITE

Malayala Manorama

KOTTAYAM, KERALA, INDIA





Reaching a global audience with niche content at Manorama Online

PROJECT: MANORAMAONLINE.COM

Launched in 2001, Manorama Online is the digital division of publishing group Malayala Manorama, which is based in Kerala, southern India. Thanks to an 80-member strong content team producing a wide variety of content, Malayalis across the world can stay informed about the latest happenings in their home state.

High traffic figures are not en vogue these days, but how many news sites can boast of unique user traffic growth of 40% year-on-year, or 3 million new users? That’s just one achievement of Manorama Online in India this year. How did they do it? By giving their “Malayalis” across the world and “Keralites” in the region the niche, quality content they want – indeed a more critical metric for success.

The key to running a successful news website is to “always focus on

the quality, credibility, creativity and innovation of your content. Each person should find their own voice and stick to that. If one does not compromise on those elements, traffic and revenue growth is assured,” advises Santhosh George Jacob, Manorama Online’s senior online content coordinator.

Established in 2001, Manorama Online is the digital division of the Malayala Manorama group, one of the leading publishers in Kerala, southern India. Dubbed God’s Own Country, Kerala has more than 33 million inhabitants, making it

India’s 13th-largest state by population.

The division is responsible for all digital platforms, including web, mobile, wearables and devices such as Amazon Echo. Part of Manorama Online’s offer is a bouquet of more than 30 channels devoted to user interest areas, such as movies, entertainment and technology; a hyper-local news portal called Chuttuvattom; and classified verticals.

While its content still largely consists of text and still images, the

division is increasingly focusing on video, and has even started producing 360-degree video. Its YouTube channel has more than 35,000 subscribers. Additionally, the division’s Live TV channel delivers around 700,000 video streams per month with an average monthly play time of 200,000 hours.

“Reaching a global reader base through digital is our goal. We like to get ahead of the curve by trying to predict which technology will work best for our readers and in which format,” said Manorama Online COO Mariam Mammen Mathew.

The screenshot shows a news article on the Manorama Online website. The main headline is 'പുലിമുരുകൻ' (Pulickal) with the English subtitle 'THE WILD HUNTER'. The article features a large image of the lead actor, Vysakh, in a forest setting. To the right of the main image is a smaller, stylized graphic of a man's face wearing sunglasses with the text 'കടപ്പനയിലെ പുലിമുരുകൻ' (Pulickal in the Forest). Below the main image is a short paragraph of text in Malayalam. The article is part of a 'MOVIE NEWS' section, as indicated by the header. Below the main article are several smaller thumbnail images, including the movie poster and a portrait of a man, likely related to the article's content.

Manorama Online caters to users who range from “movie and travel buffs to tech enthusiasts and news junkies,” says Jacob.



Much of Manorama Online’s traffic used to originate abroad, but increasing internet access in India has helped domestic traffic grow to 40 percent.

‘The home for Keralites’

Manorama Online’s aim is to be the go-to news source for its audience of Malayalam-language speakers living both in their home state and abroad. Or, as the team puts it, being the “home for Keralites.” Its reader base has a male-to-female ratio of 70:30, with about 70 percent of the audience aged between 18 and 44.

The website is ad-supported. Editorial content comes from a multitude of sources, including articles written for the group’s flagship daily, Malayala Manorama; special

reports produced by the online editorial team; and stories from press agencies. User-generated content also plays a major role. Every day, the team receives about 100 pieces of user-initiated content; 50 survive a standard quality check process and are published. Additionally, more than 100 photos are sent in by readers, complementing the work of staff photographers.

“The content produced is mostly for the target audience of Malayalis, or people who hail from the southern Indian state of Kerala, and in that sense it is niche in nature,” Jacob said.

“The Malayali diaspora is spread all over the world and are very well connected with their native place. They would like to get updated with the latest happenings including news, entertainment and lifestyle. All content produced by the Manorama Online team is conceived on this premise and hence is unique in nature,” he added.

Content in Malayalam comprises 90 percent of the site’s output, while 10 percent is produced in English to cater to the needs of second-generation Malayalis or non-Malayalis interested in the region.

In charge of the site is an 80-member content team, which includes editors, other content producers, graphic designers, camera operators, and video editors. Although they belong to a separate division, they collaborate with the team responsible for the printed Malayala Manorama newspaper.

“We have daily interactions with the print editorial team. Stories are planned with the senior print editors. The content schedules are

“Reaching a global reader base through digital is our goal. We like to get ahead of the curve by trying to predict which technology will work best for our readers and in which format.”

- Mariam Mammen Mathew, COO, Manorama Online

shared between print and online teams, and the print bureaus also contribute to online platforms,” Jacob said.

More site visitors from India

In the past, as much as 80 percent of Manorama Online’s traffic originated abroad, but as more people in India gain access to the internet, the ratio has changed dramatically. “Traffic from India has grown to 40 percent due to the increasing internet penetration in recent years,” Jacob said. Indeed, almost 341 million people in India accessed the internet in 2015, an increase of about 25 percent from the year before, according to data published in WAN-IFRA’s World Press Trends 2016 Report.

Manorama Online has seen its unique visitor figure grow by 40 percent year-on-year, reaching 11 million from 135 countries in 2016, up from 8 million in 2015. In May 2016, 142 million page views were recorded, and the average visit duration stood at 5.3 minutes, with 3.3 pages per visit.

Focus on mobile

In India, mobile usage is a major driver of internet growth. At the end of December 2015, the country’s mobile internet user base reached 306 million, according to a report from the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).

At Manorama Online, “content is produced with a focus on mobiles, with the content management system supporting multi-platform publishing. The site is responsive, and to cater to low-bandwidth

users in India there is also a lighter version on offer,” Jacob said.

More than half of Manorama Online’s users access the site through their mobile browsers, with desktop contributing a bit more than 46 percent of total traffic. About 2 percent come from other devices. The video site receives as much as 70 percent of its traffic from mobile browsers.

Experimenting with apps

The division’s portfolio also contains a slew of mobile apps, ranging from news to entertainment and lifestyle. “We choose topics that are connected to our readers and our product strengths that can serve or entertain Malayala Manorama readers,” Mathew told WAN-IFRA in an interview earlier this year. “We experiment a lot with apps and take the successful ones forward, and switch off the less successful ones,” she said. The main app, Malayala Manorama, has been

downloaded 3 million times across all platforms, accounting for about 20 percent of total traffic.

Manorama Online also has a strong social media presence, driving 40 percent of site traffic. Facebook accounts for 99 percent of that, and across all its properties, the group has 6 million Facebook likes. Typically, the team posts between 250 and 300 stories a day on Facebook alone.

The division also publishes content on Twitter and Instagram, with nearly 96,000 and 16,000 followers respectively. The team also uses WhatsApp to promote certain types of content on occasion.

In the months and years to come, video will play a major role in Manorama Online’s digital publishing strategy. “We will be focusing more on high quality – both in terms of creativity and production – and mobile consumption of video content,” Jacob said.

ABOUT MALAYALA MANORAMA

Founded in 1888, Malayala Manorama is the region’s largest media house, with operations in print, TV, radio, online, and mobile. It owns more than 50 publications. Its flagship newspaper, the Malayala Manorama daily, has a circulation of around 2.3 million. The group started its digital initiatives in 1996 by setting up a website for the newspaper and one for English magazine The Week, followed by the launch of Manorama Online in 2001. The group’s headquarters are in Kottayam, in southwestern Kerala. Its English-language portal, onmanorama.com, won a WAN-IFRA award for Best News Website in South Asia.

BEST ENTERTAINMENT AND LIFESTYLE WEBSITE

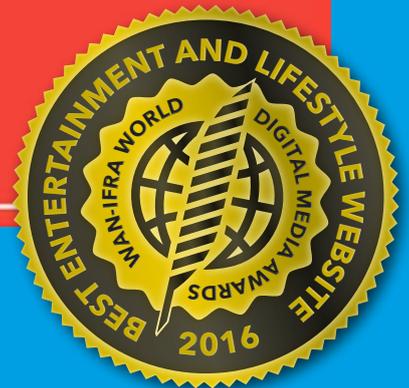
Media24

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA



**KICK
OFF**

KICKOFF.COM





KICK OFF

KICKOFF.COM

PROJECT: KICKOFF.COM

KickOff.com is a South African-based website that covers the country's top-flight Premier Soccer League (PSL), the Absa Premiership, all domestic cup competitions, the national team Bafana Bafana as well as the First Division, European and international football. Initially developed in 1998 as an addition to the successful Kick Off magazine, KickOff.com is now the brand's first point of contact for readers.

Welcome to Africa's top-scoring football news website

Mark Herman, the digital editor for KickOff.com, says the online football site in South Africa has just a “few, small” challenges to iron out:

“Managing a news website with a small pool of writers under tight resource constraints; maintaining good working relationships with the domestic Premier Soccer League, which has its own pri-

orities, needs and constraints; a highly competitive domestic football media landscape with big investments in their digital media offerings; and finding a digital, paid-for-content model in a media landscape that gives football content away for free.”

Despite those seemingly daunting challenges, KickOff.com has some-

how managed to be THE go-to site for football on the continent and it also garnered a worldwide award – with just a handful of staff.

Most readers coming from mobile

Kick Off's readers are primarily young (age 18-35), black males “who live and breathe South



“We want to remain the authority in South African football news and extend that reputation further on our existing social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat, to reach new and younger audiences using every digital touch-point available.”

- Mark Herman, Digital Editor, KickOff.com

African soccer,” in particular the Kaizer Chiefs and their arch-rival Orlando Pirates.

While the magazine has some 27,500 subscribers, Kick Off’s online and mobile sites are clearly where the traffic is coming from. According to media information, “www.kickoff.com averages 15-million page impressions from 900,000 unique users each month (source: Effective Measure), making it one of the largest soccer-specific websites in Africa, and the fourth largest sport website overall.”

Dominating the scene is Kick Off’s mobile edition, which launched in 2008. Says Herman: “We average 85,000 daily unique visitors and 500,000 daily page impressions. Approximately 80 percent of total traffic comes from mobile.”

Strong on social media

Likewise, the site is active – and popular – across a number of social media sites. For example, Kick Off’s Twitter feed has more than 290,000 followers and its Facebook page has more than 1.265 million “likes.” Also in the mix is a YouTube channel with just over 1,500 subscribers and nearly 1.5 million views, as well as an ongoing discussion forum on its site, which had more than 1,900 active discussions in early December.

While those numbers might not strike some readers as especially high when compared with popular general news sites or the kinds of numbers that trendy celebrities can put up, they are, in fact, extremely strong for this niche.

Let’s consider a couple of UK-based football (interchangeable here with “soccer”) publications and their related social media figures. We’ve selected England because South Africa and England have nearly

identical population sizes (each is just under 55 million) and football is hugely popular in each country.

World Soccer, for example, is a London-based publication owned by Time Inc. The magazine launched its Twitter presence just one month after Kick Off did (both in 2009), but as of early December 2016, World Soccer has just under 20,500 followers. That’s less than 10 percent of Kick Off’s total. Similarly, World Soccer’s Facebook



Kick Off’s social media channels use cover images of the current print version of its magazine to visually tie the various brand platforms together.

“likes” are approximately 56,500, far below Kick Off’s 1.265 million.

Here’s a second example, Shoot, another UK-based football publication, has just over 15,300 followers on Twitter (and it joined Twitter the exact same month as Kick Off, in May 2009) and Shoot has just 4,300 “likes” on Facebook – again, only a small fraction of Kick Off’s.



The Kaizer Chiefs and their arch-rival Orlando Pirates are two of the most popular South African teams for KickOff’s readership.

Small staff, active commenters

Considering those figures and the span of its coverage, one might be led to believe that Kick Off must have a large staff, but that is far from being the case. There are just four KickOff.com editorial staff members, including Herman, the digital editor. There are also “two team members whose primary focus is on the print magazine, with occasional web duties and input,” he says.

However, as with probably every sports-related publication around the world, there are of course freelancers who are regularly contributing content.

“KickOff.com uses several freelancers and publishes the occasional user-generated opinion piece,” Herman says.

He also points to the site’s very active commenters, many of whom he says come back day after day to add their opinions to articles about the latest developments.

Spend a few minutes clicking around on various stories on the site, and you’ll find it’s not at all unusual for a Kick Off piece to draw hundreds of comments.

‘Nothing is automated’

While some organizations, such as the Associated Press, are now using algorithms to cover at least some sporting events (as well as some financial news, such as companies quarterly reports), Herman stresses that “nothing is automated on KickOff.com. News and data feeds come at a cost!”

Nor does Kick Off share content. “The closest relationship we have is with Sport24,” Herman says, “and only because we are owned by the same parent company. We don’t have a formal content share arrangement in place.”

Kick Off digital content is free, so how does the site earn money? “The business model relies on advertising, limited B2C revenue, and brand activations/brand extensions which leverage the Kick Off 360 platforms (digital, social and print) for sponsorship revenue,” he says.

Looking ahead, Herman has several goals for Kick Off’s future: “We want to remain the authority in South African football news and extend that reputation further on our existing social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat, to reach new and younger audiences using every digital touch-point available.”

KICK OFF: BY THE NUMBERS

Cape Town-based Media24 is one of South Africa’s largest media companies. The print publication division of Naspers, it publishes more than 80 newspapers (including seven of the top 10 in the country) and more than 60 magazines, including the top four magazines in South Africa.

KickOff.com is clearly THE source of Premier Soccer League and South African football news in the region, with over 1.2 million active users, and 30 million page impressions a month.

KickOff.com claims that 80 percent of its audience is reading on mobile devices. Time spent on site averages 04:51 minutes with 3.21 pages viewed per session, and a low 19-percent bounce rate. Ninety percent of readers return every day to get their local football news.

BEST USE OF ONLINE VIDEO

Guardian News & Media

LONDON, U.K.





Building the bomb

EXPLOSIVE MULTIMEDIA MIX DETONATES ON USERS' SCREENS

Laurence Topham, video producer for The Guardian, has a keen eye for visualising destruction. After producing the award-winning “Firestorm” video project (in 2013) about a catastrophic bushfire in Tasmania, he then used that package as a lessons-learned blueprint for The

Guardian’s “Building the Bomb” exposé in late 2015.

One of the biggest challenges in creating such a massive multimedia presentation is melding the various media – text, photos, illustrations, audio, and video – into a compelling brew. The

Guardian’s prize-winning project takes the approach “video first and foremost,” with carefully sculpted audio details and sparing use of text. Topham says, “I was very interested in this idea of video being – rather than a box that you click on – something that you scrolled into. And it was full screen, and

PROJECT: BUILDING THE ATOM BOMB: THE FULL STORY OF THE NEVADA TEST SITE

Building the Bomb (<http://tinyurl.com/guardian-building-bomb>) is a video-led interactive presentation that tells the story of the “most bombed place on Earth,” the Nevada Test Site, an area 65 kilometers from Las Vegas where the US government carried out almost 1,000 nuclear tests during the Cold War. With rare access to the test site itself, the interactive brings together original interviews with atomic veterans, dramatic high-definition archive and evocative sound design. Each chapter takes the audience along a fascinating journey to witness an atmospheric test and examine its devastating aftermath. To fully immerse the user in the story, each video is scrolled into at full-screen.

you didn't have to work very hard as a user in order to be immersed in that video experience.”

For Topham, who has “been making films since I was 11 years old,” Building the Bomb is a logical successor to Firestorm (<http://tinyurl.com/gmfmvvu>). Firestorm combines text, still photos, video, and audio to tell its story. Topham says, “That was the starting point, really, for experimenting with this idea of how video could be ‘sewn into’ a longer written piece.”

The topic of the prize-winning project originates from Topham's history studies. He has long been

especially interested in the period immediately following the Second World War – the beginning of the Atomic Age. “I found it just extraordinarily shocking that America was detonating [atomic] weapons in its own backyard, as close as 65 kilometers from one of its most famous cities, Las Vegas. And given what we know now about fallout radiation and how harmful it is, the level of ignorance, at the time, I found deeply troubling. And I just wanted to know more about how this all happened.”

In late 2014 he contacted a friend, Alok Jha, a science reporter at ITV, a major UK-based TV broadcaster,

about possibly cooperating on an interactive documentary about the test site. “The initial pitch was to try and get access to the Nevada Test Site... to actually talk to people who worked there, who were veterans, who saw these atomic explosions, and to begin to understand what it was like as an engineer, as a scientist, as an army officer, about what that period of time was actually like.”

Cooperation with ITV

After several meetings, The Guardian and ITV agreed on a project that would yield both



“I wanted to experiment with audio... and to really give you a sense of the menace and the darkness of what atomic warfare means – and the sheer power of it. In that sense, it was not an easy proposition.”

- Laurence Topham, project director, producer and video editor

an interactive documentary for the newspaper and a film for the broadcaster. “That meant that we could pool money and resources... ITV has an assistant producer and a production manager who helped me with all of the logistical parts of it. And that gave me more time to delve into the more creative aspects and look into archives,” says Topham. “After many, many weeks, if not months, of discussing ideas, [authorities in Nevada] eventually gave us permission to go to the site, to actually be there on the ground and film. As far as I was aware of at that time, it was fairly unprecedented – they had never let a proper film crew in before.”

Pre-production took eight to nine months, followed by two weeks of shooting and four to five weeks of post-production, including editing and programming. “So it was a fairly long-winded process, and that

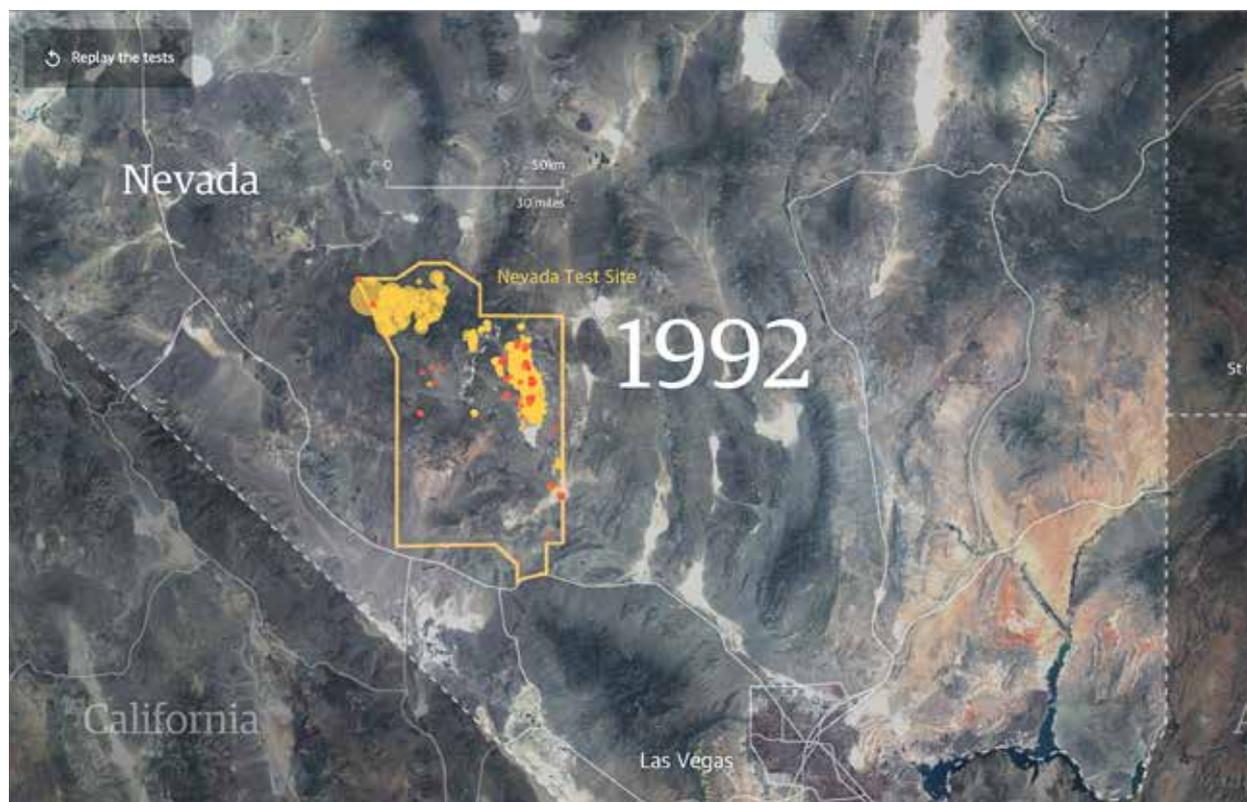
is quite unusual for The Guardian, because normally we do things that are slightly shorter in time frame, and so I was very lucky that my editors here could see the value of what I was trying to do. They very kindly gave me the space and the resources to pursue this in the way I wanted to,” says Topham. While he devoted most of his time to the project, for much of its duration he still had to juggle other, smaller, projects at the same time.

Topham and Jha spent two weeks in Nevada in August 2015, Topham shooting the video. In post-production, a developer assembled the contents, combining the visuals, text, and video, working with an art director, a sound designer, and an interactive editor. “We were very lucky in the sense that The Guardian had under one roof a lot of these people,” Topham says. “I had this incredible sound designer

who... came up with these amazing sounds.” He continues, “I wanted to experiment with audio... and to really give you a sense of the menace and the darkness of what atomic warfare means – and the sheer power of it. In that sense, it was not an easy proposition.”

Chapter structure helps focus and accessibility

To outline the project, to give it a structure, Topham used an unlikely tool: Photoshop. “I just created a mockup design of what I thought it could look like, and I put in stills, and I created dummy text. And I just kind of blocked it out as a long, thin JPEG that you could zoom in on. And that allowed the developers and the editors to all see where I was going with it, and what it might feel like and look like.” Topham says dividing the project into chapters both helped him focus on



An evolving graphic covers the years 1951 to 1992, when nuclear testing took place, and shows the number and location for tests in a given year.



his work and made it more accessible to users.

A major challenge was to make sure all users would immediately realize how to navigate the presentation. With online articles, video, or audio, everybody knows where to click.

“With an interactive presentation, though, whoever you are, whether you’re The Guardian, or whether you’re National Geographic or The New York Times, what an interactive is in terms of how a user responds and interacts can be changed every time. The designers and developers are re-inventing that wheel with almost every iteration, because there are new ways they come up with as to how you navigate, how the user responds to the pictures or the sounds, or the design of it.”

The navigation he eventually devised is “not particularly revolutionary,” Topham says. “But I felt that just making sure the users are comfortable in the space, that they understood where they were going and how big it was... are important especially for a web audience.” Also, it was clear that many users would access the presentation on mobile phones, “so it was vitally important that no matter how big and beautiful it looked on the desktop, we still had to ensure that it works as a mobile-first experience.”

User testing is vital

Says Topham, “I think a big part of what I learned from Firestorm was that unlike when creating a traditional linear documentary, there is a long process towards the end of your production where you have to do user testing... really factor in

time to account for people who, in that initial round of testing, might go, ‘I don’t get it. What bit do I click on? Why is that coming up here? Why doesn’t that work?’ Because if you... come up with all these amazing ideas and don’t let it out and see what other people think, you’ll get to a point where you hit ‘publish’ and no one will know how to get to point B from point A.”

The Guardian being the well-equipped, technically advanced organization that it is, testing took place in a laboratory with banks of computers and cameras. Test subjects “go through the experience, and we have remote cameras that are studying their eyes, their fingers. And we can create data that we can analyze and crunch, and we can work out what parts of the interactive are working. Which bits are they staying on? Are they

reading these bits? Are they watching these bits? Or are they getting confused or lost?”

Internally, a developer tested the presentation on both Apple and Android smartphone platforms, encoded as many as 20 versions of each video file, so the version best suited to an individual user's connection bandwidth will be served, and handled other technical fine tuning.

While Topham was doing the final editing, The Guardian's social-media team did something that in late 2015 was relatively new: they created a series of “trailers,” promotional videos that were optimized for Facebook and Instagram. The Facebook version is 70 seconds long and includes subtitles, since many people view it with their sound switched off. The Instagram trailer is in a square format and only eight seconds long.

‘Enough of a success’ in terms of traffic

Asked about statistics for the piece, Topham says, “On Facebook, we did very well... It wasn't a phenom-

“We're obviously very happy if a project does well in terms of traffic, [but] we don't obsess over it... There's an understanding that a story can still have a lot of merit and value, even if only it's getting to a particular niche audience.”

**- Laurence Topham,
project director, producer and video editor**

enal success, but it was enough of a success.” All told, the presentation has received 170,000 views from The Guardian's Facebook page and 190,000 from the main website. He continues, “I think we're lucky at The Guardian in that we're obviously very happy if a project does well in terms of traffic, [but] we don't obsess over it. It's important, of course, that our content does reach an audience, and that we have a meaningful relationship with our audience, and those engagements are real. But there's an understanding that a story can still have a lot of merit and value, even

if only it's getting to a particular niche audience.”

He clarifies, “This was an editorial project, so it wasn't distributed or sold commercially by The Guardian.”

Beyond statistics, of course, comes the satisfaction of winning the World Digital Media Award. “I was very humbled and very honored to win this award,” says Topham. While working on such a project, he says, “You only imagine that you're interested in this, that you almost forget that there's this outside world who might be interested... It's lovely to know that there are people in different countries and different cultures who responded to the story, and saw it and found it interesting.”

Topham says he hopes to do a project in 2017 in the Congo, working with a non-governmental organization (NGO) that is trying to protect an endangered species of mountain gorillas. The presentation will once again involve video, text, maps and other graphics. Topham also says he wants to experiment further with the square video format, since it is especially suited to viewing on mobile phones.

ABOUT GUARDIAN NEWS & MEDIA

Guardian News & Media, which publishes The Guardian (Monday through Saturday) and The Observer (Sunday) newspapers and the theguardian.com website, is the core business of Guardian Media Group, which is owned by The Scott Trust. The Guardian newspaper had average daily circulation of 157,317 copies in mid-2016, according to the ABC. The website, which has four versions - UK, Australia, USA, and international - drew a total of 1.6 million unique visitors per day on average in early 2016, according to Omniture. It is the third-largest English-language news site in the world, according to comScore. The Guardian's videos can be found at <https://www.theguardian.com/video>.

BEST DATA VISUALISATION PROJECT

Muscat Press and Publishing House

MUSCAT, OMAN



A nation's traditional dress in multimedia splendor on the web

PROJECT: TIMESOFOMAN.COM/EXTRA/OMANIDRESS

To mark the 45th National Day of Oman, the team at timesofoman.com wanted to explore a subject that is very close to Omani hearts.

The national dress of Oman might not seem like a likely starting point for data visualisation, but to mark the 45th National Day of Oman in November 2015, the team created an ambitious online project that broke down into intricate detail not just the history and evolution of the nation's traditional dress for men and women, but also the complex differing styles, dimensions, regional differences and locations.

That was all brought together in a highly interactive microsite that blended video, interactive graphics, photo galleries, text, and beautiful works of art by the creative team.

The following is an edited version of an interview with Scott Armstrong, Chief Executive Editor of Times of Oman, who headed the project.

WAN-IFRA: What was the key to success for this project?

Scott Armstrong: Find someone who's better than you and just get out of their way! Nine people worked on the project, all part-time: an art director, two infographics designers, three illustrators, a graphic designer, a video editor and a cross-media designer. The team members are from Honduras, Chile, Thailand, Indonesia

and the Philippines. They were all still doing two to three daily individual projects for various publications.

They devoted two to three hours a day, each of them, to this project. We sat down at the beginning of the year and planned it, and then it took the team six months to complete the print and digital versions of the project: one and a half months for research, three months for production, and another one and a half months to ready the digital version.

And with something like this, because it's Oman's heritage, it had to be right. You could cause massive

offense if you got the smallest detail wrong. We got three-quarters into the project and then an Omani member of staff was looking at us doing it, and said, 'That's really beautiful, but that's the wrong headdress.' And we were forced to go back to the drawing board, so to speak... But thank goodness that it was discovered at that stage and not at the end. The microsite was the company's first attempt at interactive/multimedia design.

The presentation is similar to Snow Fall from The New York Times.

That was a massive inspiration. I mean, what an amazing project



Click on the dots to view more content

Headdress

The most valuable headdress in the Middle East

The Omani headdress is the most distinctive of the traditional head covers in the Gulf countries and is the most delicate to produce. It consist of two parts: the turban called mussar and inside it the cap called kummah. This national symbol of identity fully reflects the unique, simple and traditional spirit of the people of Oman.

Click icon to view more content



Different Headdress



Materials



Making a Kuma



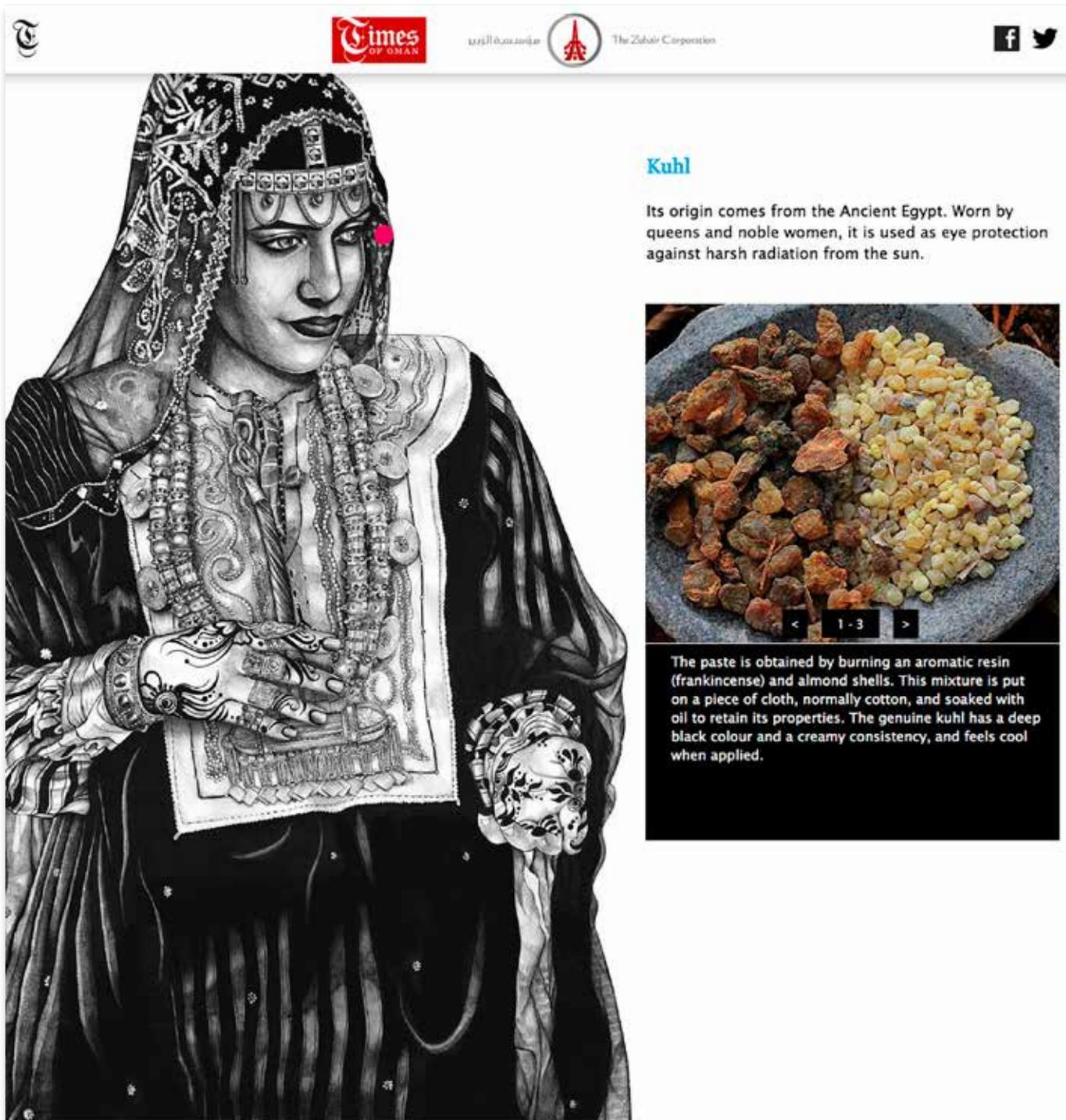
Arranging a Headdress

"The key to success? Find someone who's better than you and just get out of their way!... The microsite was the company's first attempt at interactive/multimedia design."

- Scott Armstrong, Chief Executive Editor, Times of Oman

"We asked, 'What do our audience want from us?' rather than just do something for vanity's sake... It was a subject that was so close to the heart of many people in Oman."

- Scott Armstrong, Chief Executive Editor, Times of Oman



The screenshot shows a digital article layout. At the top, there are logos for 'Times of Oman' and 'The Zohair Corporation'. The main image is a detailed black and white illustration of a woman in traditional Omani attire, including a headscarf and multiple necklaces. To the right of the illustration, the word 'Kuhl' is written in blue. Below it, a paragraph explains its origin in Ancient Egypt and its use as eye protection. A smaller photograph shows a mortar and pestle containing a mixture of yellow and orange particles, which are the ingredients for kuhl. Below this photo, a text box provides a detailed description of how kuhl is made from frankincense and almond shells.

Kuhl

Its origin comes from the Ancient Egypt. Worn by queens and noble women, it is used as eye protection against harsh radiation from the sun.

The paste is obtained by burning an aromatic resin (frankincense) and almond shells. This mixture is put on a piece of cloth, normally cotton, and soaked with oil to retain its properties. The genuine kuhl has a deep black colour and a creamy consistency, and feels cool when applied.

that was. We all looked at that and went, 'We'd love to do something like that...' and Adonis [Durado], our creative director, is a massive fan of The New York Times, and we had a great relationship with them. Adonis actually won SND [Society of News Design] awards for re-packaging syndicated content from them that hadn't won awards.

Snow Fall was just beautiful. And so we did sit down and say, 'How can we do that? Dream big. You know, we might be a small organization, but what can we do?'... We don't have the labs that The New York Times have, or The Guardian. And I was talking with Laurence [Topham, another WDMA winner] from The Guardian last night and they've got a 30-strong multimedia team – and I was weeping – just for multimedia! But, yes, Snow Fall, I think, for anybody in data visualisation, is just a massive inspiration.

That's when we thought, 'Look, we'd love to replicate Snow Fall, but what do we know? What can we do?' Oman's culture and Oman's heritage was one thing that we knew. We knew Oman's story, so that's why we decided to do that. I suspect anything that we do next year will again play to that strength. We asked, 'What do our audience want from us?' rather than just do something for vanity's sake. I think that's why we managed to make it a revenue success story as well, because, again, it resonated with the audience and it resonated with the advertisers, both in print and online, because it was a subject that was so close to the heart of many people in Oman.

Who did the coding?

The cross-media designer had no programming or coding background, and had to learn web and user-interface design as the project went along. He was actually an animator who taught himself Adobe

Muse and coding specifically for this project.... We didn't have anybody who could do it, so it meant a member of the team learning it ... It was helped by the fact that we have a kind of technology partner, because our in-house IT department is humble, shall we say.

We partnered with a company called Layout International in Lebanon, who had helped us relaunch our website... And they worked with us to allow us to host this on our own website, because we built it in Adobe Muse, as opposed to the existing CMS framework... And they were super helpful.

What have you learned from this project?

Well, everything. I mean, all of it has been a learning curve. I think the biggest thing we learned was, just don't be afraid to tackle the project. It's just about planning. Give yourself enough time, give yourself enough planning, and then don't constrain yourselves to what you think you're able to do, but look at what others have done, like Snow Fall. The biggest thing we learned was: Aim high, and we'll learn as

we go. We secured sponsorship at an early stage from The Zubair Corporation, though I cannot go into details on how much, for privacy and courtesy reasons. Nonetheless, we were committed to producing this project in honour of National Day and hadn't planned on making anything from it, so we profited as much from the involvement and support of Zubair, which is hugely respected and also has a rich history in Oman, as we did financially. They were able to help us with some of our research, since they also have two museums dedicated to Oman's past.

We backed it also with a beautiful print supplement – the guys did a really good job – and sold advertising in that. So it was cross-platform: it was print and it was digital. So we made money from it. And we learnt so many skills that we didn't have when we started the project.

One of the major things we learned was on the analytics side. Again, we did not set out with the intention that this would be a big traffic generator. Rather, the desire was to honour His Majesty on the 45th National Day by producing some-

ABOUT TIMES OF OMAN

Times of Oman, the flagship publication of the Muscat Media Group, is published six days a week. Circulation has remained steady at about 35,000 for several years; IPSO readership was most recently cited as 125,000. The group also owns the successful daily Al Shabiba, an Arabic-language paper in Oman; a weekly lifestyle magazine; and a monthly magazine and various supplements.

Timesofoman.com is free to all. In October 2016 the site drew a new high total of 815,000 unique visitors. It had 40 million pageviews in 2015 and was expected to reach 60 million this year. For more about Times of Oman, see the World News Publishing Focus blog: www.wan-ifra.org/times_oman_post.

thing with a “wow factor.” With that in mind, the team were totally focussed on the delivery and learning how to create the thing, which we’d never done before, rather than capturing the analytics.

We learned some lessons about importing a project from Adobe Muse into a domain on our site and how to tag it correctly with Google Analytics. In the end, the number of pageviews was lower than we had hoped, but people apparently spent a great deal of time exploring the project – as long as 59 minutes, with many people spending in the region of half an hour, which is a very long time to look at a web presentation.

The other consideration we learned was about the infinite scrolling nature of the project and its limitations for generating traffic figures. If you look at the entire graphic, it is literally all under one URL. That’s all – when in fairness, it’s a microsite, with lots and lots of elements. Next time we will find a way to make that factor reflect in the statistics.

As a piece of digital content (or art), we felt it 100-percent achieved its goals.

Looking back, what do you wish you had known when you started it?

When the guys were going nuts and working their absolute backsides off, to know it was going to be such a success for them, that’s what I wish I had known! But seriously, even the mistakes we made, we learned from the mistakes as we went. Even if we hadn’t won a single award, the effort was reward in itself, because we did learn so many new skills doing it. I think each member of the team walked away from the project as more rounded, better professionals with a bigger skill set.

So I wouldn’t say there’s anything that we wished we’d known. There were no regrets, because even as we made mistakes in the project, we learned from them, and maybe we can apply them to the next project. Maybe the next project will be a little bit quicker, will be a little bit smoother. Might be more efficiently planned. Maybe we’ll make more of an effort to have a dedicated team and take people out of general circulation, because the guys had some really tough days because they carried on doing their ‘day jobs.’

What advice can you give other newspapers that are considering something like this?

Plan it well. Give yourself lots of time ahead of when you want to launch it, because it’s not going to be easy. You will make mistakes, but don’t be scared of that. And, again, don’t be scared to dream big, because you can do it. I wouldn’t say, ‘If my guys can do it, anyone can do it,’ but it was a small team that didn’t have 70 percent of the skills they needed at the time to make it happen. We didn’t have the tactical skills. We had the desire

and we had creative people that wanted to express themselves. So I would, again, say, ‘Dream big, and if you’ve got talented staff that want to do something like this, let them express themselves.’ And if you’re the boss looking at this, get out of the way. Let them do it, and just try and make things easy for them.

It was part of a digital journey that started three years ago, to vastly improve what we did in digital. We’ve still got a long way to go, but this was one of the things that were on the list of aspirations, to be good in this field, data visualisation.

How will the next project build on what you’ve learned?

Our next project is ‘Oman: The Land of Frankincense,’ (<http://timesofoman.com/extra/frankincense>) due to be launched in mid-December. It’s also sponsored by The Zubair Corporation, and we’ve applied the lessons learned from the National Dress project to it – including the part about statistics. It is divided into five chapters. We’re very proud of it!



The Times of Oman’s next major data visualisation project, “Oman: The Land of Frankincense,” launched in mid-December 2016.

BEST NEWS MOBILE SERVICE

Clarín

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA



PROJECT: CLARÍN BALOTAJE EN TELEGRAM

In October 2015, Clarín decided to join the small group of legacy media that covered a news event via a messaging app. The Argentine daily decided to cover the first presidential runoff election in the country's history by means of a "channel" on Telegram (www.telegram.me/clarincom). The coverage enabled Clarín to experiment with mobile journalism through messages, test users' reactions to the "push" notifications it distributed, and associate its brand with a platform committed to technological innovation and free speech.

Presidential election coverage via a messaging app: a trial

For Juan Marcos Bouthemy, mobile editor at Diario Clarín, winning a World Digital Media Award is meaningful on several levels. For one, he says, it recognizes that meeting news consumers' needs should be the driving force behind innovation.

The paper created an election-news service "because there was a need on the part of citizens, because of the big event," he says. "I think every project, every piece of news content, should start from there: seeing what the people are doing, where are they doing it, what do they need? For me, the award is important because it celebrates that."

Bouthemy continues, "For Clarín it's important because of this need to change the culture, because of the transformation from a print company to a multiplatform company," both internally and in the eyes of the public.

In general, "We see in mobile, and in the industry in general, that you have to try things everywhere. And it's very difficult to find things that you can monetize right away. In terms of messaging apps, we are far from that. But you have to try something," he asserts.

The idea for the project came from Bouthemy. In the run-up to national elections in late 2015, he noticed that mobile users were accessing election news in record numbers. "This was a very special election. It was the first time in history that we had a runoff – a second round of voting with only two candidates. So people were really interested." (Editor's note: Voter turnout in the first round and runoff election surpassed 80 percent, according to Wikipedia.)

Earlier that year, in June, the paper had started investigating various messaging apps, beginning with

WhatsApp, the most popular service in Argentina. "But WhatsApp is very walled, very closed. ...They really are not interested in working with media." Bouthemy says the service has severely limited functionality for sending a message to large numbers of users. (Despite the hurdles, he says, Canada's The Globe and Mail operated an election-coverage service on WhatsApp last year that got favourable responses from users. See <http://tinyurl.com/globe-mail-whatsapp>.)

'Channels' on Telegram a decisive factor

The other messaging app he investigated was Telegram, which has a much smaller user base in Argentina. Launched in 2013 by two Russian expatriates, Telegram in September 2015 started a feature called "channels," which can be used to broadcast messages to as many subscribers as desired.

**Dos candidatos,
miles de noticias.**

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Clarín

“We decided this was our chance to experiment, to see what we can learn, find out how people react to this kind of communication. We knew it was not going to be successful in term of business or mass appeal, but we were going to be able to try dealing with a messaging app – to see how a small group of people reacts to what we send, and the type of content we can create,” Bouthemy says.

Telegram and Clarín agreed from the beginning that no commercial interests would be involved. “We told them, ‘We just want to experiment with this, and we would like all the help you can give us.’ So they gave us some advice. And they verified our channel, so users knew that it wasn’t a fake channel. Clarín tends to have that problem because it’s a huge brand. Many people tend to create, in Twitter or in Facebook, fake Clarín posts or feeds,” Bouthemy says.

“I met with two or three guys from the newspaper and said, ‘We have to do something. So let’s do it on Telegram, and do it now.’ And we started with not much of a plan. In fact, the first posts are kind of untidy. And then the people from the website said, ‘Oh, let’s put the logo here. Let’s do this.’ So we were improving it. It grew organically. Not according to a grand plan, but rather a piece at a time.”

The emergence of ‘news fandom’

In the 25-day duration of the service, says Bouthemy, “We did learn a lot, not only about messaging or what kind of content is good for messaging but also about what I guess you would call ‘news fandom.’ We don’t usually talk in terms of fandom in journalism, but I think we should start. And I think we should see what kind of news reports generate this kind of

relationship with the audience. It’s almost like a fan club.

“For a period of time you can be so intrusive as to send a user three or four messages in a day, but in a conversational way and with the depth that comes from being immersed in the topic. We could say, ‘Here we have a topic that we know has fans.’ People were looking for more, more, more,” he says.

At the beginning it was a one-person job. “I started by myself, and then... started talking with editors from the politics section. I asked, ‘What kind of material can you share with me so we can produce a small amount of content for our audience?’ We started to build up routines that didn’t interfere with the rest of the production – with the people from politics, with the people from photo, and with the people from social media.” And he insisted that the service consist

of more than just “sending links... That’s not added value. We wanted something with more quality.”

Editors willing to get involved

Considering that Clarín was “a legacy newspaper, focused on print and the desktop website,” with mobile regarded as “still the new thing” in 2015, Bouthemy surprisingly had little trouble quickly finding volunteers in the more than 400-strong newsroom.

He continued doing his other job duties while the service was in operation. “For those 25 days, I spent a lot of time with Telegram, but I did have my other duties. And

I did a lot of work from home. But I was really interested in seeing what was happening, what could happen with this. For me, it was a lot of fun. It was also a matter of inventing routines and workflows that didn’t exist.”

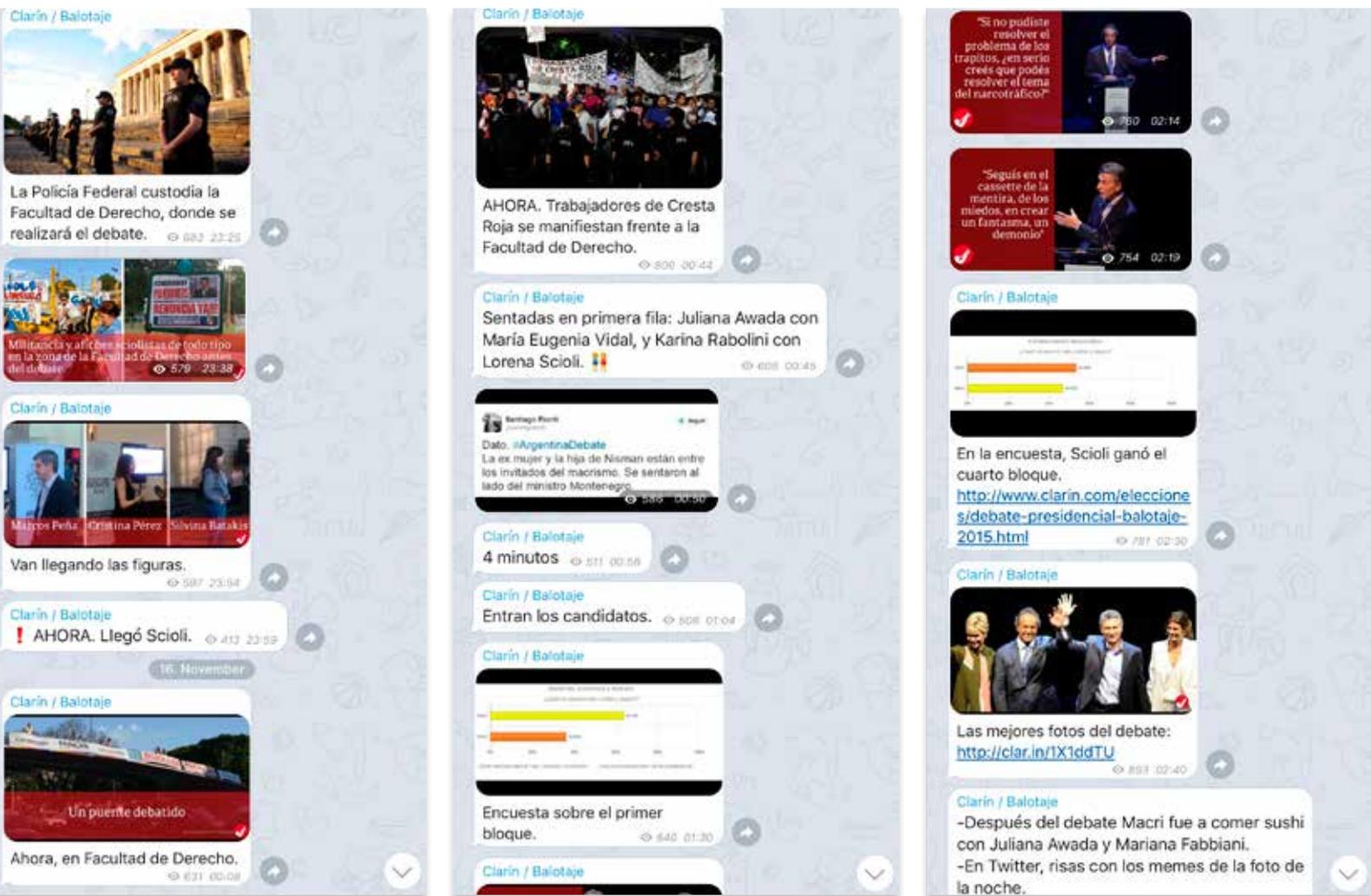
He said there were no technical challenges involved. “Telegram made it really, really easy to create the channel, to post. And it was interesting because it [the “channels” functionality] was a really new feature for Telegram. They were developing things, so in this cooperation, they were telling us, ‘Next week we are launching this or that feature for channels.’”

“In fact, I did ask for a couple of

things from the Telegram people. They didn’t pay much attention to me, but the thing I wanted most was more statistics. If this is going to be a learning experience, you really need feedback. But, well, we learned what we learned.”

(Parallel to the election channel, Clarín experimented with a news bot on Telegram. That required assistance from the paper’s IT department and also proved to be an important learning experience.)

“Telegram gives you, of course, the number of subscribers you have at any given moment,” Bouthemy says. “People come and go all the time, so you don’t have the exact number, how many people were



subscribed over the course of the month. But we know that we reached 1,800 simultaneous users at the highest point.

“And we can see the number of views that each message has – views not only by users who are subscribed to the channel, but also by users who received a message because someone shared it. So it’s a number that tends to be much bigger than the subscriber base.

“We decided a good benchmark was the amount of time it took a message to reach 50 percent of our subscriber base. We saw that while the campaign was proceeding, we were improving the service in journalistic terms and in content terms.

THE CLARÍN GROUP

The Buenos Aires-based Clarín Group includes the Clarín newspaper (the most widely circulated daily in Latin America), Cablevisión cable television, Radio Mitre, and the internet provider Fibertel. It also includes a leading sports newspaper and the Artear media company, which includes a national TV network and many cable channels.

Published seven days a week, Clarín had a circulation of 209,551 copies in October 2016, according to the Instituto Verificador de Circulaciones (the Argentine bureau of circulation verification). In September 2016, Clarin.com was the number-one Spanish-language newspaper site in the world in terms of page views and time spent, according to comScore. The paper had 2.45 million followers on Twitter in mid-December 2016.

Clarín / Balotaje



El análisis de este sondeo, por Eduardo Paladini: <http://clar.in/1Odf7Y>

857 13:47

Clarín / Balotaje

OFF THE RECORD: En el macrismo, están sorprendidos (y felices) por un dato que les acercó un kirchnerista-peronista de la vieja guardia: el oficialismo tendría problemas para fiscalizar la provincia de Buenos Aires. La derrota dejó heridos (y enojados) en el distrito clave.

842 14:57

Clarín / Balotaje



El Cronista muestra hoy el "gnomo de la victoria", un muñeco de Ottmar Hörl, que Scioli tiene en su oficina con un rosario. ¿Daré suerte?

828 17:18

Clarín / Balotaje

La bronca de Macri cuando en Telefe lo compararon con Boudou. Video

830 19:00

0:44

Clarín / Balotaje



La entrevista completa

<http://clar.in/1QwefZ4>

16 15:44

Clarín / Balotaje



La entrevista completa

<http://clar.in/1QwefZ4>

16 15:44

Clarín / Balotaje

AHORA: Gabriela Michetti fue internada por gastroenteritis y se pierde el acto de cierre de campaña. <http://clar.in/1QwefZ4>

16 16:29

Clarín / Balotaje



Clarín / Balotaje



Con bromas y frases de campaña, así votó Scioli

<http://clar.in/1NkQkeN>

14 14:02



Clarín / Balotaje

AHORA. Votó Macri con Juliana Awada, medialunas y un coro de seguidores que cantaban "¡Sí se puede, sí se puede!". "Es un día histórico que cambiará nuestra vida", dijo. "A partir de mañana esperamos trabajar no sólo unidos los argentinos, sino todos los latinoamericanos".

16 16:22

Clarín / Balotaje

AHORA. Votó Cristina y se manifestó preocupada por las pintadas que aparecieron en la Mansión Seré. "Me preocupa no escuchar declaraciones condenatorias por quienes son favorecidos por las declaraciones y hechos de estas personas", dijo.

That time lag became shorter. People were really paying attention to what we were doing. Because one thing that is really interesting is that every message is a push notification – it’s not like a Twitter feed. You’re going to receive an alarm or a notification on your telephone that is really intrusive or invasive, so it can be annoying.

“But when we saw that 50 percent of the subscribers were reading a message really quickly, we realized that they weren’t ‘muting’ the channel [shutting off the alerts function]. That’s an option in Telegram – you can be subscribed, but mute it.”

A wide variety of content formats

All told, from 30 October to 22 November 2015, more than 300 messages were sent, with 130 images, 80 links, 20 video and audio clips, and one PDF. Content formats included text, links, emojis, photos,

photos with quotes, graphs, charts, and multimedia clips. In addition to push messages that were sent sporadically, the feed included a daily bulletin that was distributed in the evening, plus special coverage of the pre-election debate and election day itself. It was a widely varied “feed” that maintained a conversational tone.

Bouthemy attributes the service’s success to the users’ perception that “You’re giving them something special, something different. They feel like you are serving them.... Messaging is one of the areas we should be experimenting with a lot because it’s a direct relationship with the user. You’re putting your brand, the loyalty to your brand, in the middle... I think that’s what’s interesting.”

Addressing other news organizations that plan to experiment with services on messaging apps, he advises doing “push” services, as opposed to only bots. The latter

puts too much of the burden on users, he says, “You can’t wait for the user just to look for what he needs,” he says, adding that bots are time-consuming to create: “You need a lot of work to create a tree of questions and answers.... You have to think of all the possibilities – and then bring a human style to the role.”

New Telegram service and Facebook project

Since the presidential election ended, Clarín has been operating a low-key daily news service on Telegram, “a morning message with a selection of news reports in a really informal, conversational tone. Like a newsletter, but on Telegram,” says Bouthemy.

The paper has been applying lessons learned from its experiences with Telegram to a far more ambitious new project on Facebook Messenger, the top messaging platform in Argentina.

BEST ENTERTAINMENT AND LIFESTYLE MOBILE SERVICE

Media24

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA



REGISTER NOW!

SIGN IN



Belly Off 'works out' and pays off for Media24

PROJECT: BELLYOFF.CO.ZA

The Belly Off paid mobile service is a new platform for a popular sub-brand of Men's Health magazine, which offers readers advice on nutrition and workouts. The magazine engaged the Sports Science Institute of South Africa to develop a diet and fitness plan that would work for anyone, and then promoted it across its print and digital properties.



“The response and uptake has been good. A good indicator of this is the low number of queries we get – we’ve had very few problems or complaints. In fact the most popular questions have been around options for the diet, which we’re happy to offer.”

– Jason Brown, Men’s Health Editor-in-Chief

In early 2015, the editors of Men’s Health magazine at Media24 in South Africa came up with an interesting way of bringing together the new and the familiar with the expressed goal of increasing their mobile revenues.

The concept was this: Take an already popular regular feature from the Men’s Health magazine that offers readers advice on getting the most from their workouts as well as providing tips on diet and nutrition, expand it, and build it into a mobile-first, payment-based service that any adult male could use in order to lose weight and get into better shape.

Promoted across platforms

This new service could also be easily promoted across all the existing Men’s Health platforms: print, digital and social media within South Africa. The name: Belly Off.

Men’s Health Editor-in-Chief Jason Brown says, “it was identified as a ‘sub-brand’ or franchise after the great reader response to the page in the magazine which featured reader weight-loss success stories, which later became a reader-challenge online and an extended magazine story.

“At the centre of this,” Brown continues, “the [nutrition and workout] plans were a huge hit, and we used this information to create a mobile service based on a 12-week weight-loss journey that anyone could do, no matter their fitness level.”

The related nutrition and workout plans were created by the Sports Science Institute of South Africa.

Cape Town, South Africa-based Media24 is the print publication division of Naspers. Media24 publishes more than 80 newspapers and more than 60 magazines and is the licensed publisher of the South African edition of Men’s Health, which was founded in the United States in 1987.

However, both the award – and this article – are specifically related only to the South African edition of the magazine and its digital extensions.

Belly Off was one of two World Digital Media Awards won by Media24 this year, with the company also picking up the Best Entertainment & Lifestyle Website category for their football website, KickOff.com (see page 13 of this report).

From concept to launch, Brown says, the Belly Off mobile project took about six months. During that time, a team of just five staff members developed and managed all areas of the project, including generating content and the design.

‘A collaborative effort’

“It was about bringing in the best people on the team to work on specific parts of the project, whether it was commissioning the expert plans, outlining the UX (user experience) or just managing the technical side and writing the newsletters – it was all a collaborative effort by the Men’s Health team and our digital project management team,” Brown says.

He adds that a third-party developer was hired to build the app.

As mentioned above, Men’s Health is an international brand, and variations of Belly Off have been done before, and indeed going back some years. For example, there is also a related Belly Off book, available in print through the Men’s Health South Africa website for R200 (about 13.75 euros). Media24’s mobile payment service version, however, was “conceptualised and developed in South Africa and is currently only running here,”

Men'sHealth

BELLYOFFTHE READER'S
CHALLENGE!

HOW IT WORKS

To enter follow these simple steps:



Upload Your Photos

Choose two photos, before and after, that show your transformation.



Put In Your Stats

How much weight did you lose?



Tell Your Story

Tell us your story in your own words, including the time it's taken to get where you are.



Share Your Profile

We want guys who are proud of their achievements, so go out there and share your story.

Brown told us. "Other countries in the MH global network are considering it, however."

The response and uptake has been good," he added. "A good indicator of this is the low number of queries we get – we've had very few problems or complaints. In fact, the most popular questions have been around options for the diet, which we're happy to offer."

A hit with users and a success for Media24

Belly Off has been a big hit with users, who have sent in testimonials of their weight loss and before-and-after photographs to document how they have changed.

"It's made me a healthier person and it makes me feel like a man, and a damn good one," said one user who lost 11 kilos (24 pounds) while gaining "six pack" abs.

"I learned to respect myself and my body," said another, who reported losing an impressive 33 kilos by following the 12-week programme.

Best of all, Belly Off has been a nice financial success for Media24 as well, and one that Brown says they will use as a template for similar projects in the future.

BELLY OFF: LESSONS LEARNED

Men's Health Editor-in-Chief Jason Brown points to several lessons he and his team have learned from experience with the Belly Off paid app:

- "Our audience is ready to pay for mobile content, but it needs to deliver on their expectations.
- "The simpler the UX (user experience), the better.
- "Also, it sounds obvious, but you have to 'editorialise' it – it's important that the magazine staff write the copy and present it in the voice, tone and style of the brand they're used to. It can't seem like it's been produced by an outside party.
- "Authenticity and credibility are key – we used the best experts in the country to help us produce it."

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SIGN ME UP!

“This is the first South African ‘paygate’ fitness plan and has pioneered a new platform for fitness/weight-loss instruction as well as a new revenue model for service-based content,” he says.

“This paygate template will be used as a model for other health brands within the group,” Brown continues.

He told us that 1,424 plans were sold during a 10-month period [the user fee for each plan is R499, or about 33.50 euros].

The project surpassed budget projections and established a new revenue stream and content distribution model outside the traditional print and web products.”

‘We’re looking at how it could be extended’

The success of the Belly Off mobile service has helped ensure its future. In the near term, it will continue in much the way that it has operated since the launch. Brown says Media24 plans to continue promoting Belly Off.

“A year is a long time in digital and while this franchise is still growing, we’re looking at how it could be extended and offer more options to entice new users.”

- Jason Brown, Men’s Health Editor-in-Chief

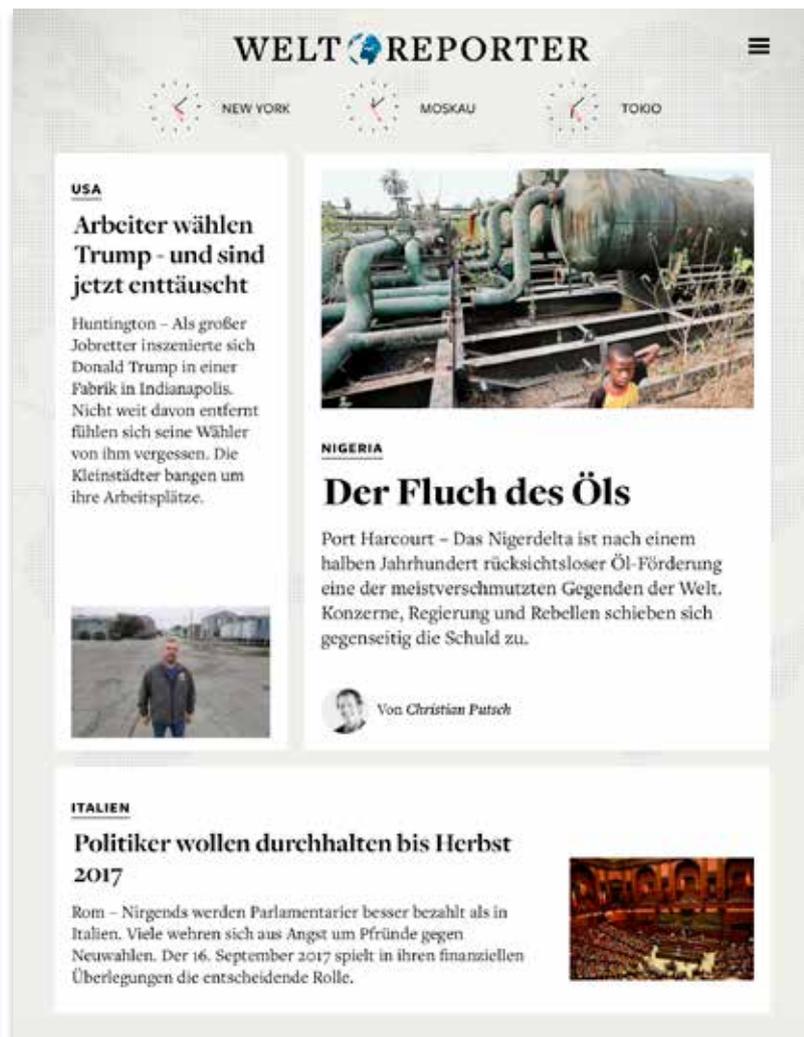
“But I think any project needs to be reviewed, tweaked and updated,” he adds. “A year is a long time in digital and while this franchise is still growing, we’re looking at how it could be extended and offer more options to entice new users.”

BEST IN TABLET PUBLISHING

WeltN24

BERLIN, GERMANY





Re-inventing the newspaper with

PROJECT: WELT EDITION

Launched in September 2015, Welt Edition is the successor to the popular Welt HD tablet app. Emulating the look of a traditional newspaper with interactive elements, each of the daily editions gives users access to a hand-picked selection of content from the brand's newspapers and website.

Relaunching a product, particularly any mobile or tablet app, can be a source of anxiety – especially if it is already an established success. That's what faced the WeltN24 team tasked with redesigning Die Welt's app. But, they thought, "Have no fear! When you involve your established audience and have them practically build the app for you, how can you go wrong?"

A product of Axel Springer subsidiary WeltN24, Welt Edition is a sub-



an interactive app at Die Welt

scription-based news app available for both smartphones and tablets on iOS and for tablets on Android.

Launched in September 2015, it provides access to content from the brand's flagship newspapers, Die Welt and Die Welt am Sonntag, as well as articles from the website and video content from television news channel N24.

Every day, the most important and intriguing stories are handpicked and published in one edition, offer-

ing a comprehensive and engaging reading experience.

Why a new app?

The group already had a successful tablet app on the market, Welt HD, which it launched in 2010. In fact, it won a XMA Cross Media Award, WAN-IFRA's predecessor to the World Digital Media Awards, as best paid-for content app.

Despite its success, the publisher believed it was time to rethink and

redesign the product.

"We launched Welt HD right when the iPad came out, and it was really successful, the most successful news app in the German iTunes store. But four years later, we found that the code had become a bit outdated, and that the competition had caught up a little bit. So we decided to build a new and improved app," explained Welt Edition Product Owner Birger Venn-Hein.

"In fact, we were still market lead-

ers from an economic perspective, but we wanted to have the best app possible.”

Strong input from users

The app was developed in close collaboration with existing users, who were engaged through user tests and surveys. Additionally, a closed Facebook group with some

op this new product so closely with users,” Venn-Hein said.

Taking an agile approach to the app’s development, the interdisciplinary team of editors and product managers, including usability and interface designers, built new prototypes every two weeks in the early stages of the process, presenting them to focus groups made up of six people each.

The prototypes weren’t functional, but users could browse through them to get a feel for the product.

The team learned a great deal from the feedback, but users completely shot down some of the changes the team had in mind. “We had some pretty radical ideas in the beginning. For example, we wanted to get rid of the sections and order everything according to user needs,” Venn-Hein said.

“I have to say, it can be a bit of a painful process at times when you realise that what you have in mind as a news expert isn’t necessarily what the users like or want to have. We had to alter our course quite a

bit and accept that our users may not want such radical changes, especially considering that Welt HD was such a popular product.”

‘The newspaper will stay at the heart of it’

Still, plenty of changes have been implemented compared to the previous app.

Targeting a more mature audience that has grown up reading newspapers, the app emulates that look and feel, supplemented with interactive and innovative digital elements.

“We’re using a lot more content from the paper and have introduced more multimedia elements. We’re focusing more on video, since N24 has been acquired in the meantime. We’ve introduced and expanded on formats like ‘the pictures of the day,’ for instance, or the daily photo story. Pictures look amazing on these devices, so we’re really trying to take advantage of that,” Venn-Hein said.

An avid user of the app himself, he’s proud of the design, which is what in his eyes sets it apart from the competition.

“I think in terms of design we’re far ahead. I think there aren’t any competitors that have done this equally well. We’re also very diverse. It’s not just about stringing articles together, but about the mix of multimedia parts and innovative elements. I think we’re really strong there.”

In addition to articles, pictures and videos, each edition also contains engaging items such as quizzes, Sudoku games, and surveys, and gives access to stock market and sports table overviews.

“We’re not all of a sudden a multimedia product, however. The newspaper will stay at the heart of

“In fact, we were still market leaders from an economic perspective, but we wanted to have the best app possible.”

– Welt Edition Product Owner
Birger Venn-Hein

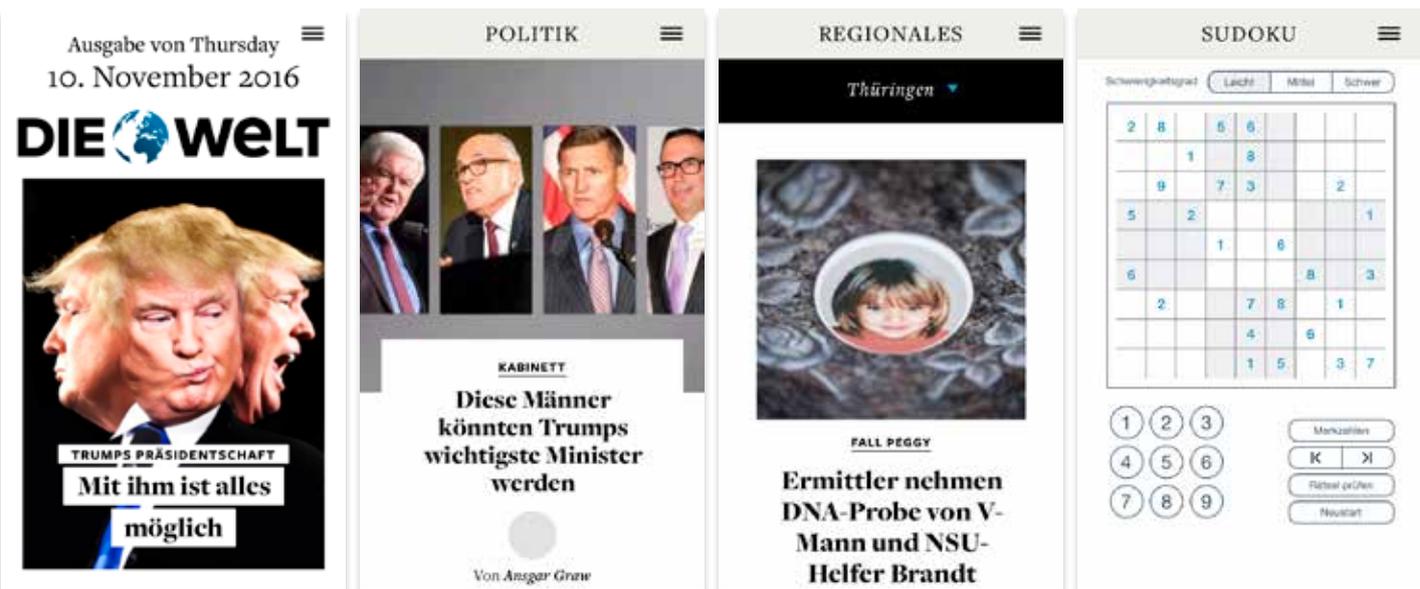
300 members was set up, allowing users to make suggestions and address technical glitches or contact the team.

“It was a new thing for us to devel-

ABOUT WELTN24

WeltN24 is a subsidiary of Axel Springer SE, one of Europe’s leading publishers. Its flagship daily is Die Welt. Published six days a week, the broadsheet, which was founded in 1946 and originally modelled on The Times, has an average circulation of around 180,000. Both Die Welt and the Sunday paper, Die Welt am Sonntag, are available in a format called Kompakt, a cut-down version of the broadsheet. The Welt Kompakt app, which was launched in 2014, won a WAN-IFRA World Digital Media Award in the “Best Mobile Service” category last year.

WeltN24 Ltd. was formed in 2014 after Axel Springer acquired news channel N24 and united it with Die Welt in a bid to “become the leading multimedia news organization for quality journalism in the German-speaking area.”



Die Welt's app targets readers who don't have time to constantly check what is going on and want to get their news in a compact manner.

it, which means we focus on readability, and use fonts readers can see well," Venn-Hein said.

Reading modes tailored to users' needs

To cater to various user preferences, the app can be switched between two reading modes. One resembles a website, featuring multimedia elements such as videos and even tweets or Instagram posts from time to time. The other is aimed at readers who care first and foremost about the text.

"The readers who strongly focus on the text, which in our case is every fifth reader, can choose a view that is more like a page in a book. Basically, all multimedia elements are hidden except for the lead image," Venn-Hein said.

Like a traditional newspaper, editions are made up of different sections: politics, economy, digital media, culture, panorama, sports, knowledge, lifestyle, and a 12-part regional section featuring local news from Germany's 16 states, which can be accessed via a drop-

down menu. Each edition contains 150 articles, out of which 80 are handpicked by an editorial team of four and 70 selected automatically.

"Our offer consists of the most important news of the day, giving readers a rounded product experience. We're targeting readers who don't have time to constantly check what is going on but want to learn what is going on in the world in a compact manner," Venn-Hein said.

"At Die Welt, we believe that there are two main types of readers. One type is very interested in breaking news, wants to be informed by the minute, uses websites and news apps, and wants to be informed about every event as it happens. Welt Edition doesn't offer that live aspect, and that's intentional."

The app also has a built-in share function, allowing users to share articles via messaging apps, email, and social media.

Free trial period

Welt Edition has been downloaded 240,000 times as of December

2016, according to Venn-Hein. A user's subscription starts off with a free 30-day trial period, and can be canceled on a monthly basis.

The app is part of several digital packages: WELTplus Premium, which gives access to Die Welt's premium online articles for 19.99 euros per month, as well as the WELTplus Gold subscription for 29.99 euros per month, which also includes the brand's e-papers.

Venn-Hein didn't want to share any figures regarding the percentage of users who continue with a paid-for subscription after the trial period, but said he was very satisfied with them.

Welt Edition can also be accessed online (edition.welt.de), and the next move will be to make it available for Android smartphones. "From the start, we had intended to offer Welt Edition on all platforms," Venn-Hein said.

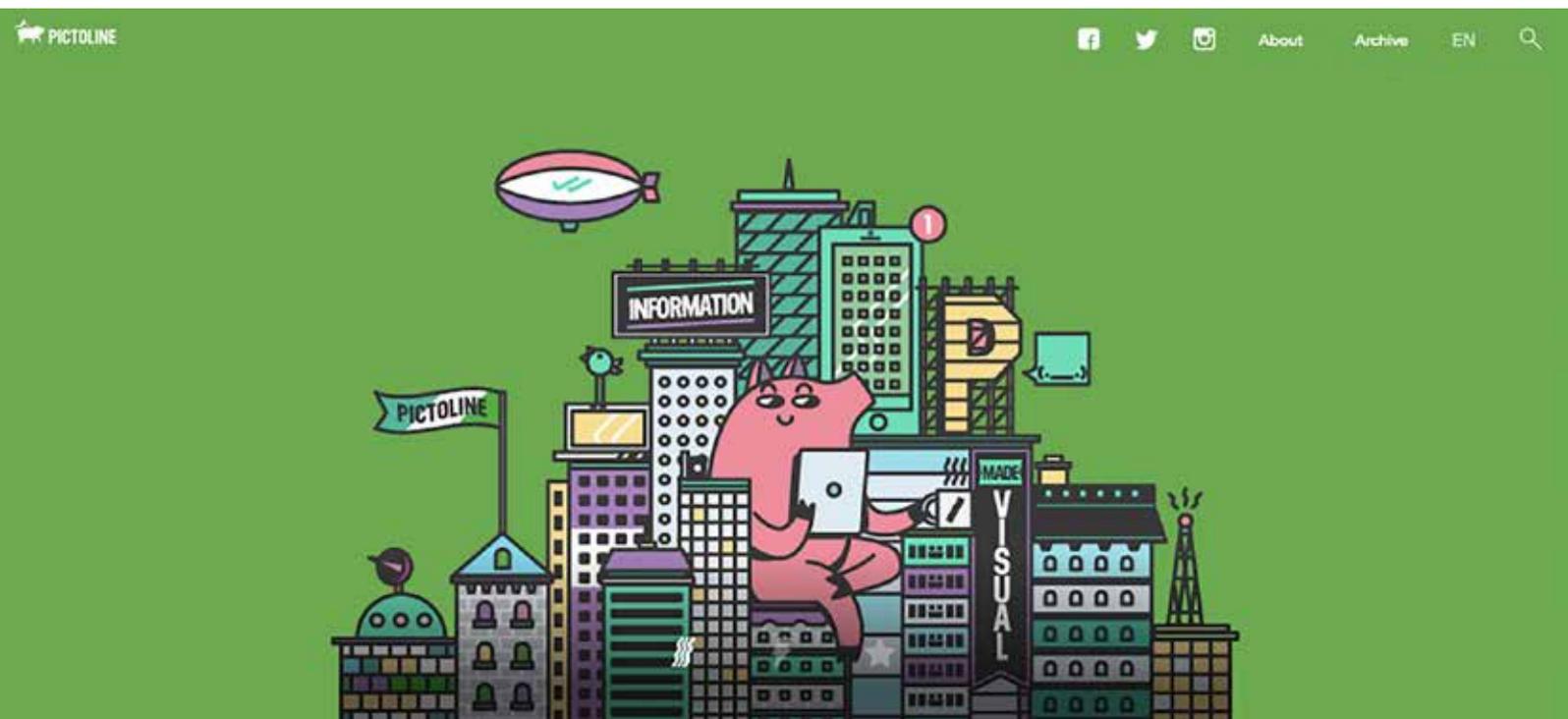
Welt Edition was voted best media app in the German version of iTunes in 2015.

BEST READER ENGAGEMENT

Pictoline

CIUDAD DE MÉXICO, MEXICO





Pictoline serves up visual ‘bacon’ that users devour on social

PROJECT: PICTOLINE

Mexican visual-media startup Pictoline appears to have found the ideal recipe for creating high engagement with its quickly growing audience: serve up arresting illustrations that millennials love to devour on the social platform of their choice.

Pictoline, a purely visual media company targeting millennials, is the brainchild of illustrator and graphic designer Eduardo Salles, who together with Gustavo Guzmán launched the startup in July 2015.

Using a wide variety of sources, Pictoline’s team of about 12 transforms data, news, and text into entertaining and informative illustrations and GIFs – so-called “bacon,” since the company’s logo is a pig – that are published on Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram as well as on its own website.

Vivid visuals score on social

The ever-increasing popularity of social media platforms along with changing news consumption habits among younger generations sparked Salles' idea for Pictoline.

"The new world is totally visual. Everything is consumed quickly, you have to get it quickly, and you have an overload of information," he said.

"We've seen that newer generations are consuming everything with images, visually, in a new way. So we decided that instead of trying to get the information out like you would in the old times, we put it in that new context. That's how Pictoline was born. We tried it and it worked."

Pictoline's following has grown to more than 1.7 million likes on Facebook, over 320,000 followers on Twitter, and about 160,000 on Instagram – all without investing a cent in marketing, according to the founders.

While gaining that amount of traction in a relatively short time is an achievement in itself, the founders are concerned mainly with strong user engagement.

On average, Facebook posts garner some 20,000 likes and are shared about 15,000 times, with users leaving hundreds of comments below each illustration. Tweets are usually retweeted about 20,000 times, and Instagram posts are liked about 8,000 times on average.

Designed to be highly shareable, the illustrations are relatively small files, meaning even users with slower internet connections or limited data plans can download them to their mobile devices, send them to others via messaging apps,



"We've seen that newer generations are consuming everything with images ... That's how Pictoline was born," says co-founder Eduardo Salles.



TRADITIONAL MODEL

Instead of publishing its content centrally on a website, Pictoline puts its images into wide circulation so that users share them on various platforms in an organic way.



PICTOLINE MODEL

or share them on social media, the founders say.

Creating value first, revenue later

For Salles, any format can create high engagement rates as long as it is designed with the user in mind.

“Creating high audience engagement is a very obvious thing for me – you have to create value for the user,” said Salles, adding that startups and tech companies have long grasped this concept.

“If you create value, if you solve a problem, people will start finding you useful. They will find you and

engage. It’s going to happen. For me, it’s not necessarily a matter of using video or using images or doing it this or that way. It’s about trying to understand the user, finding a need or a problem they have and trying to address or solve it. And if you do that, you’re going to create value for the user and for you.”

So the natural question is: What does the business model look like for such a venture, which is entirely funded by Guzmán at the moment?

“We are still polishing our monetisation plan; it begins in March,” he said, adding that it will definitely entail producing graphic content

for brands, and that companies have expressed interest in advertising with Pictoline.

Asked why the company hadn’t tried to monetise its content earlier, he said: “What we want right now is a complete verification of what we’re doing with our model. Instead of focussing on ‘getting users’ or centralising information, we are developing a structure to create value in the dissemination of information based on how fast it can spread, how relevant it can be, and how many people it can reach. I want the experience for the brand to be perfect and that they understand this reach and engagement very clearly.”

In early December, the company also published a book featuring its most popular illustrations from 2016, retailing at 350 Mexican pesos (roughly 16 euros).

Putting the audience first

In line with its millennial target audience, the company opted for a distribution strategy built for social media platforms.

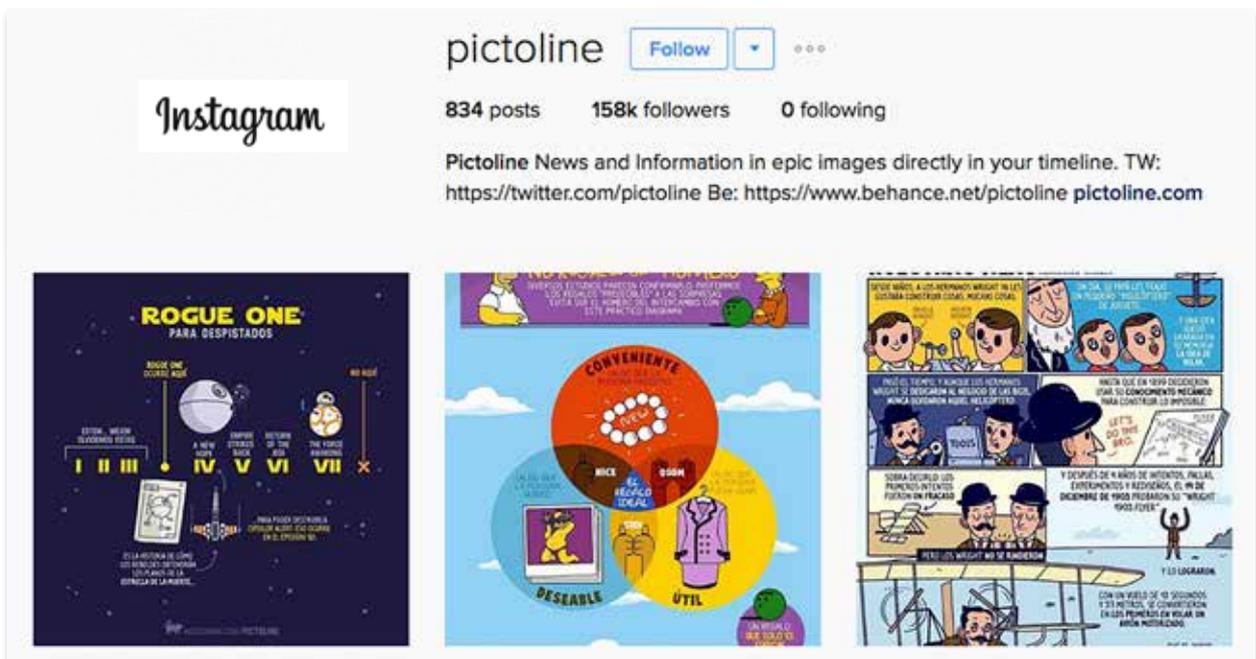
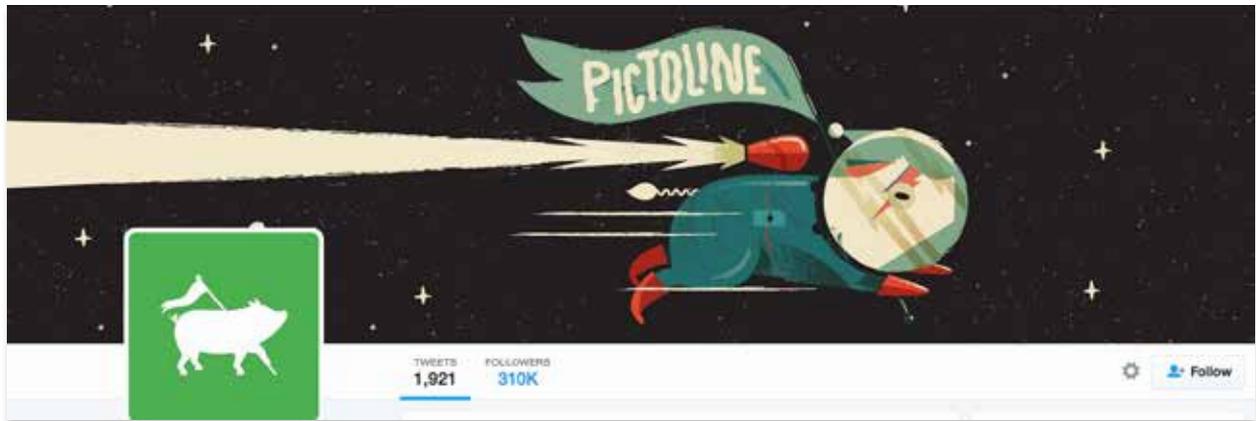
“Our model depends on being on every platform that people are

“Newer generations are consuming everything with images, visually, in a new way. So we decided that instead of trying to get information out like you would in the old times, we put it in that new context. That’s how Pictoline was born. We tried it and it worked.”

- Eduardo Salles, Co-founder, Pictoline

Pictoline's followers on social

Pictoline has amassed its loyal audience without investing a cent in marketing



(on). It's very important to understand the new generations, how they consume information. You need to go where they are. You can't oblige them to come to your platform," Guzmán said.

This approach also sets Pictoline apart from media companies using social media platforms purely as a means to drive traffic back to their website or to convert users into subscribers.

"What we do differently is we don't measure the site, we measure image performance. We know how the image is performing on different platforms," Salles said.

Adapting to changes in information consumption

On average, the team of about a dozen editors, designers, and developers publishes five posts per day on each platform. Some are designed to be more on the entertaining side while others focus on breaking news events, or are aimed at answering scientific questions.

The decision to cover a wide variety of topics stems from the co-founders' belief that users are interested in all kinds of content, and that their news consumption habits have changed along with the transformation of the media landscape.

"I think there's an old-media way of thinking about what content to select and what people really want to know. You have that format of having different sections in the newspaper, like politics, technology or sports. You have that fragmentation because you believe people consume content that way, but they don't consume information like that nowadays," Salles said.

WHO'S BEHIND IT?



Prior to founding Pictoline, 29-year-old Eduardo Salles held numerous positions in the marketing and advertising world. Before joining innovation and technology agency Flock as executive creative director, he worked on campaigns for Nike, Kit Kat and Red Cross

Mexico as creative director with J. Walter Thompson. A self-proclaimed "cultural hacker," he made waves in Latin America with his blog "Cinismo Ilustrado," a collection of cynical illustrations about modern life.



Now 33, Gustavo Guzmán founded his first company, a telecoms distributor, at just 20 years old. Since then, he has been investing mostly in media and sports companies. One of his most recent acquisitions is a monthly Mexican magazine called Chilango, which aims

to entertain and inform residents of the capital city.

To make sure no inaccuracies make their way into a post, a network of experts from different fields helps out with fact-checking before publication.

"We're living in an age where information is everywhere and it's difficult to know what to believe, to find out which information is trustworthy and which isn't, so these double-checkers are an amazing help for that," Guzmán said.

"They do it because they like it, they share our value about sharing information with the world. A lot of traditional media companies don't want to explain difficult stuff because they think people don't understand it. But it's not about that. It's about finding a good way and a good format to explain it."

Improving performance

When Pictoline first started out, its content was more focussed on topics relevant to the Mexican community. But the concept soon caught on in other Latin American countries, prompting a shift to more open content.

Analysing and improving the posts' performance is an ongoing process, with the team going through large amounts of data in order to gain insight into user behaviour.

Currently, illustrations are produced only in Spanish, but Pictoline is increasing staff by 50 percent in preparation for the launch of Portuguese in December 2016, followed in May 2017 by another language, which hasn't been announced yet.

BEST DIGITAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Quartz

LONDON, U.K.

QUARTZ

Welcome to Quartz

Quartz is a digitally native news outlet, born in 2012, for business people in the new global economy. We publish breaking news and intelligent journalism with a broad worldview, broadcast on the devices closest at hand: tablets and mobile phones.



OUR PICKS LATEST POPULAR

QUARTZ

OBSESSIONS Q ...

SPONSOR CONTENT BULLETIN BY

World in Motion

WORLD IN MOTION A DIGITAL INDUSTRIAL FUTURE

Explore how GE is inventing the next industrial era to move, power, build and cure the world.

f t in

THemes

- GE Store
- industrial internet
- healthcare
- energy
- skills & work
- infrastructure

REGIONS

THEMES / REGIONS

FORMATS

Display a menu

Quartz sets General Electric's World in Motion with sponsored content

PROJECT: QUARTZ/GE WORLD IN MOTION

In May 2015, Quartz launched General Electric's World in Motion, a sponsored-content project that took that form of advertising to a higher, more in-depth and more complex level than most other examples available. Industry trade publications and bloggers quickly took notice.



Boston's future in smart devices looks bright, thanks to these companies

The industrial Internet revolution is already underway here; GE's arrival can make Boston a major player.

Users access content by first clicking on a dot on the globe, which brings up a card (top) offering a brief overview of a given project at that location, clicking "read article" takes them to a more detailed report.

"Sponsored content is getting bigger, bolder... One case in point: General Electric's latest digital-content hub, World in Motion, which rolls out today," wrote Michael Sebastian in an article for Advertising Age.

"GE takes branded content and data visualization to a whole new level," said the Advanced Web Ranking blog in selecting World in Motion as one of "9 Inspiring Examples of Branded Visual Content."

"Definitely an outstanding piece of work," wrote Swiss-based blogger

Stephanie Grubenmann.

More recently, one of the World Digital Media Awards jurors described World in Motion as "Brilliant. Innovative and visually beautiful. Very engaging. Strong consistency in the branding in spite of the great variety of sources compiled... It really stands out by its technical and visual achievement."

The project from Quartz that excited them all is a rotatable globe (see image opposite page) that connects and links to more than 400 pieces of content about General Electric's

projects and activities around the world.

How it works

When users open the World in Motion page, the rotating globe quickly spins to their region in the world, say, Europe, and then stops, displaying dozens of rays of light in six different colours pinpointing specific locations.

To the immediate right of the globe, users can see the six themes in corresponding colours that the articles are categorized under



World in Motion helps to highlight the wide range of projects that General Electric is working on around the globe from robots to education

(industrial internet, energy, etc.), allowing them to select content by region or theme. To the lower left of the globe, the user also has a choice of six formats, including article, slideshow and video. The vast majority of the content consists of articles.

‘Brand familiarity’ is project’s aim

Asked by Advertising Age at the time of the launch why General Electric saw a need for such a large-scale project, Jason Hill, then GE’s global director of media and content strategy, said increasing brand familiarity was a key reason.

“We have tremendously high brand awareness, but not necessarily a deep understanding of what the brand does,” Hill said. “(The) reason we’ve got into a brand marketing space is ours is a story that requires more than an ad. Content helps explain the technology behind the logo – why and how GE works and its impact on the world.”

General Electric, which was co-founded by light-bulb inventor Thomas Edison, and which will celebrate its 125th birthday in April 2017, is indeed much larger and more far-reaching than a lot of people probably realize. Globally, there are some 300,000 GE

“Brilliant. Innovative and visually beautiful. Very engaging. Strong consistency in the branding in spite of the great variety of sources compiled... It really stands out by its technical and visual achievement.”

- Member of the World Digital Media Awards jury

employees working in more than 140 countries on a wide variety of projects, as anyone who spends a few minutes clicking around World in Motion can quickly see.

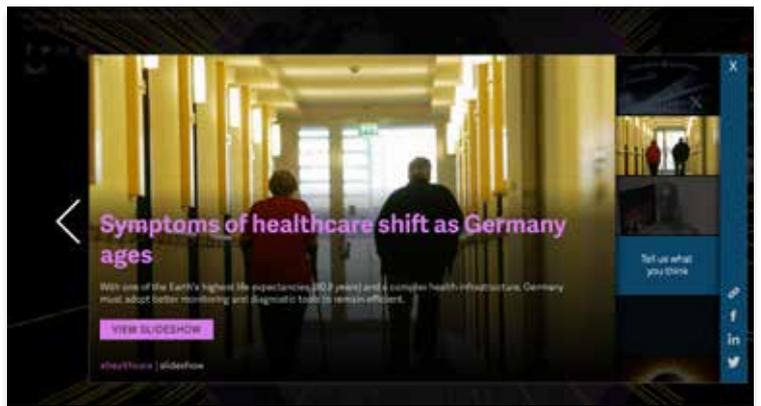
In fact, it turns out that users are spending far more than just a few minutes accessing the presentation.

“Making content easily discoverable reaped rewards. Engaged users spend an average of eight-plus minutes per session exploring content within the interactive globe, taking 12 to 15 actions,” according to information Quartz provided us with in response to a series of questions about how World in Motion came about and how it is being used.

World in Motion is the result of a collaboration among Quartz’s design, development, branded content and client services teams, the company says, adding that a group of Quartz creative services team members are assigned to General Electric, since it is one of the company’s largest full-year partnerships.

The content linked from the globe graphic is a mix of these elements: branded content produced by Quartz and its Atlas charts division; partner-produced content (by Business Insider, for example); GE Reports; third-party news reports and social content.

“Quartz’s in-house creative services



and aviation to healthcare.

team wrote and designed the content cards that appear upon clicking each dot on the globe. Each content card is meant to serve as a teaser/brief synopsis of the full piece, which users can click through to read or watch,” the company told us.

World in Motion has not only remained online for more than

18 months to date but has also expanded. More than 400 pieces of content are linked, up from 240 at launch time in mid-2015.

“GE has an incredibly robust content library, and World in Motion serves as an innovative way to improve the discoverability of GE’s efforts in inventing the next industrial era,” Quartz told us. “World in

Motion is a global destination that makes content of various formats and origins discoverable to a global-minded audience wherever they happen to be in the world.”

A shelf-full of awards

In addition to winning a World Digital Media Award, the project has picked up several other awards: three honors in 2015, such as Best Branded Content Hub at the Native Advertising Awards, and three more awards in 2016, including Best Digital Display of Information at the 2016 B2B Marketing Awards.

The future might even bring more awards, since Quartz and GE will continue to collaborate in 2017. “World in Motion is designed and engineered to inspire, inform, and energize readers with stories of GE’s innovations and impact all over the world,” Quartz says. “We look forward to creating projects like this in the future.”

LONGEVITY AND DISCOVERABILITY

World in Motion has been a successful platform for GE for the past year and a half. Quartz continues to keep articles up to date (they are refreshed about twice a month), giving General Electric content longevity and discoverability.

The interactive, 3D globe was built with the WebGL graphics library and HTML5 technology that allows users to spin, tilt, and zoom the globe any number of ways.

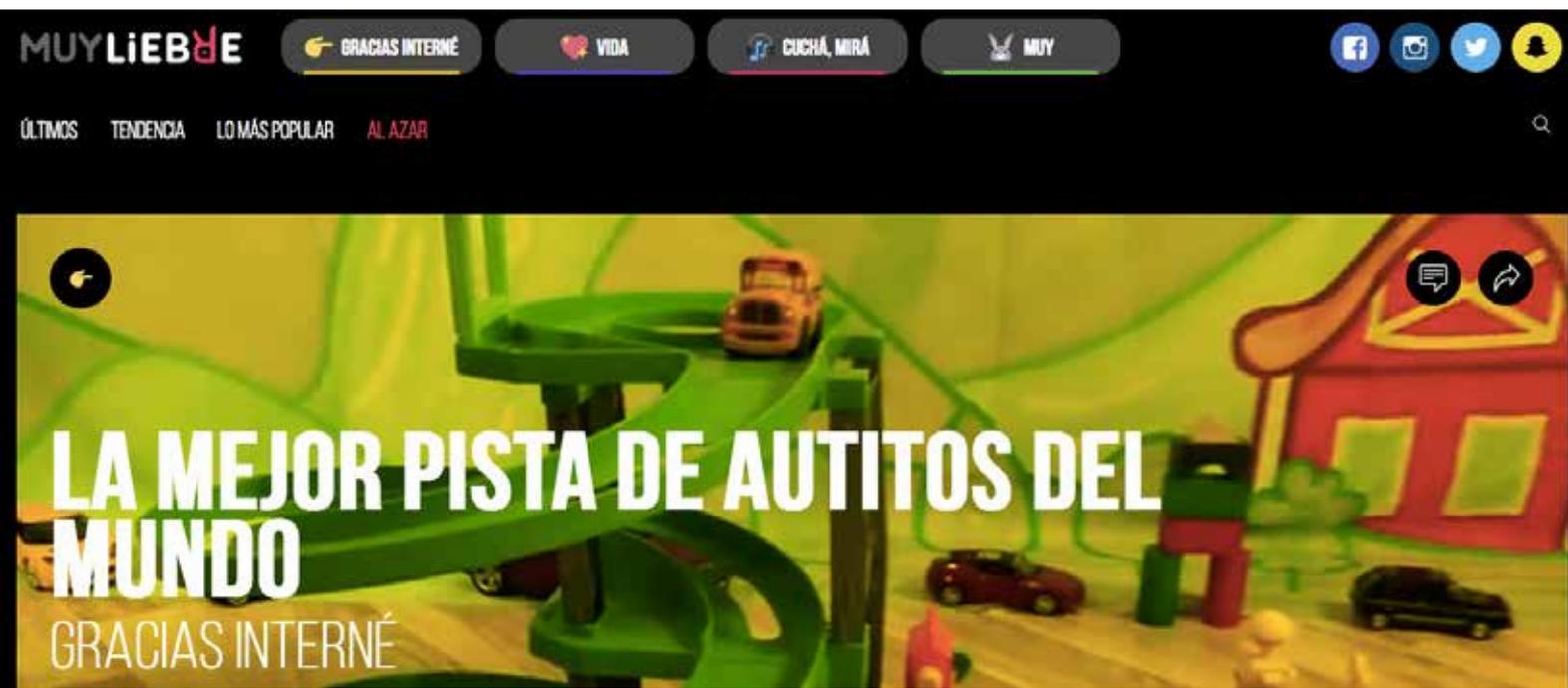
“The simplicity of design and execution needed to be taken into close consideration, especially when it is imperative that the product be equally as functional and beautiful on a three-inch mobile screen as on a traditional desktop,” Quartz told us. The company added that it is constantly learning from user behavior how to further improve the user experience, and is modifying the presentation accordingly.

BEST NEW PRODUCT

La Nación

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA





PROJECT: MUY LIEBRE

Storied Argentinian news media company La Nación set up Muy Liebre, a dedicated product and team, to reach millennials aged 17 to 25 by engaging them with entertaining videos, GIFs, and illustrations published on various social media platforms.

Inside a legacy publisher's efforts to attract young audiences

It's not unusual today for "traditional" news media to set up completely separate digital or mobile businesses or teams to drive targeted, original content and revenue. In other words, cut the umbilical cord and let digital natives do their thing.

That was sort of the thinking at La Nación when the storied Argentinian news media company established Muy Liebre, a dedicated product and team to connect with millennials on social media.

This latest innovation is nothing really new for La Nación: Despite

a history dating back to the late 1800s and a strong reputation as a high-quality traditional newspaper, La Nación has always embraced innovation – be it setting up a successful data journalism team or transforming its entire editorial operation as part of its "Nueva Redacción" project.



With Muy Liebre, the legacy publisher is now reaching out to a particular segment of millennials, engaging them with entertaining videos and illustrations on social media – an endeavour that has also given the publisher the opportunity to experiment with native advertising.

A standalone product

Although Muy Liebre is a La Nación product, it's intentionally not associated with the brand.

“La Nación has to do strong and permanent efforts to connect, attract and retain audiences under 35 and under 30, and our social media strategy focuses on that demographic,” said La Nación’s digital content manager, Ernesto Martelli.

“But we also think that it is very difficult for a news media company that produces quality journalism, deep analysis, scoops and investigative reports to have a strong impact on content consumers that are under 25. So, we approach Muy Liebre as a free and separate media unit.”

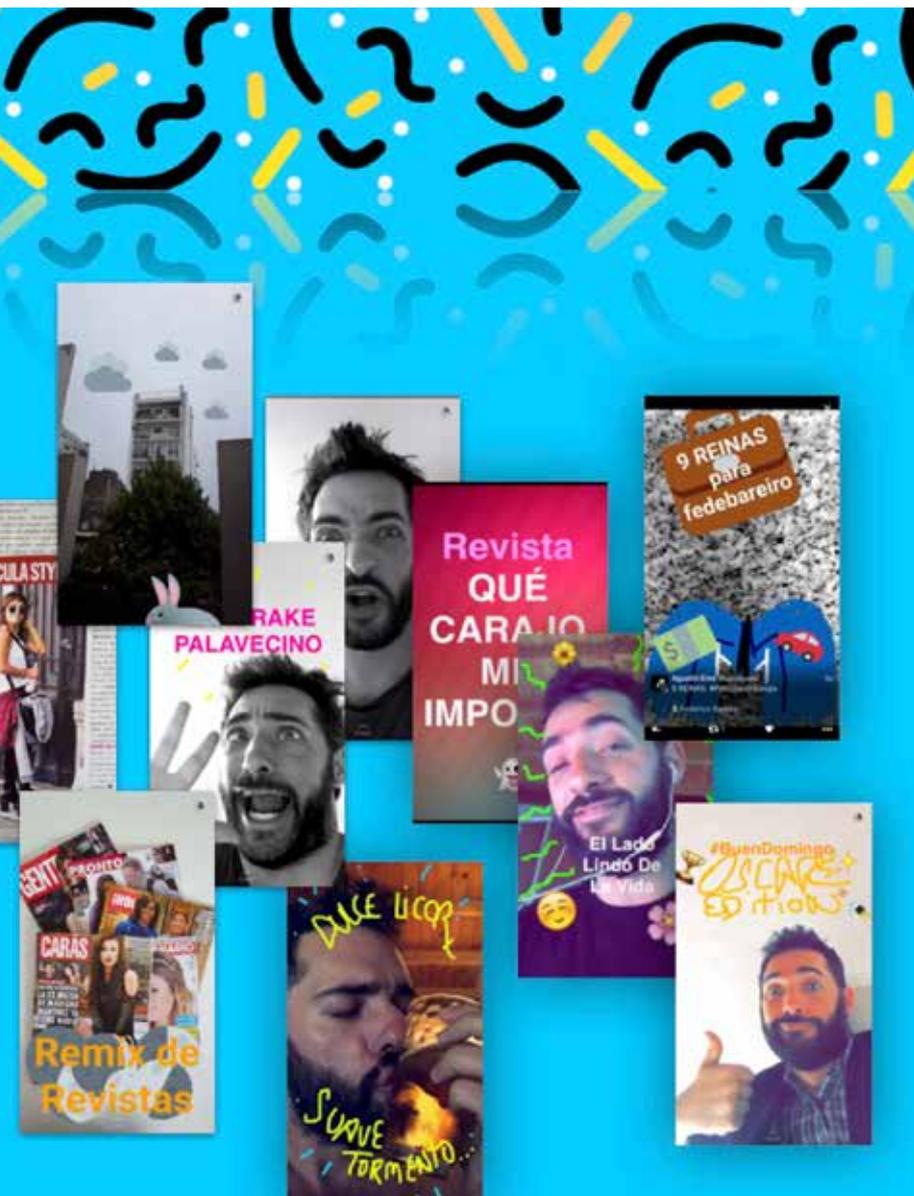
Targeting millennials on social platforms

Targeting millennials aged 17 to 25, the aim of the project is to build a loyal following on Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The content, an entertaining mix of short videos, animated GIFs, and illustrations, is tailored to the characteristics of each platform and optimised for mobile consumption.

With millennials comfortable consuming content on social media and on mobile, the team decided to meet them where they are, instead of centralising content on a website. Publishing kicked off in the final days of March 2016 on Snapchat. Now, about 80 Snapchat stories are produced each month.



Through Muy Liebre, legacy publisher La Nación is now reaching out to a particular segment of millennials, engaging them with entertaining videos and illustrations on social media.



The team of content contributors produces fun and engaging videos, gifs and illustrations for Muy Libre’s millennial audience.

“We knew there weren’t any other newspapers or media companies in Argentina producing content for Snapchat. So that was our first step. After that, we added more social networks. Today, Facebook is our main channel, and we upload a lot of content like Snapchat stories, for example, or curated pieces and short articles, with a focus on multimedia,” project leader Ariel Tiferes said.

A team of 10 is involved in Muy Libre; two of La Nación’s staff,

Tiferes and Yamila Trautman, are in charge of the project and work closely with the eight contributors tasked with producing content.

The pieces are deliberately kept short, visual, and designed to entertain. Some user-generated content is pulled from other sources and republished on Muy Libre’s social channels, but the team also produces a variety of original formats. For example, “Videoclub” is a Snapchat story series published every two weeks in which a con-

tributor recommends and analyses YouTube channels or particular videos. Another Snapchat story called Adultips features a contributor giving viewers tongue-in-cheek advice on how to be a proper adult.

Figuring out which formats work best on social media involved lots of experimentation.

“We had to find out how long a story needs to be, and when the best time is to publish. We learn a lot, and I think La Nación can take advantage of these kind of lessons,” Tiferes said.

Asked whether he would consider producing hard news in the future, he said: “It is possible that the audience will read that kind of content, but we have to build it up first. Right now, it would be impossible.”

Building a following on social media

In less than a year, Muy Libre gained more than 16,000 followers on Twitter and nearly 24,000 on Instagram, and its Facebook page was liked more than 116,000 times. The most popular Snapchat story was viewed around 4,000 times.

“That’s not terribly high, but Snapchat is only just starting out in Argentina. It’s not like it is in the US or Europe, for example. Instagram is a lot more popular, so we get more views for our Instagram stories,” Tiferes said.

The team advertised on Facebook and Instagram, but the growth on Twitter and Snapchat was all organic.

A few of the contributors who are part of the team were already well known in the social media sphere, which also helped to boost the number of followers.

Q&A WITH CONTENT CONTRIBUTOR AGUSTÍN MAGGIOTTI



What kind of content do you produce for Muy Liebre?

The content we generate for Muy Liebre is dynamic and short, focusing on entertaining or interesting topics. In my case, I usually produce content

mainly related to the cinema and the audiovisual world or about the internet in general.

Deciding what to produce is very personal. We have a great deal of freedom regarding the content. La Nación's team is always there to help or give their input, but we work in quite an independent manner, and, in my opinion, that's one of the pillars of success of the platform.

What are the most important aspects when it comes to producing content for millennials? Have you had a lot of experience producing content for this type of audience?

Dynamism. I think that's the most important thing for an audience that now consumes more audiovisual

content than anyone else at any other time in history. The content needs to be short, especially when it is meant to be consumed on mobile.

I have been producing content for social platforms for a few years now. I worked a lot with animated GIFs, producing infographics as well as working with Vine. Before I started at Muy Liebre, I got into Snapchat when basically no one was using it here. A few of us who are now at Muy Liebre started out producing content for that platform.

Why do you think the product has been successful?

I think one of the main reasons is the team – from coordination to the production of content. We all do our best to produce quality content, and I think you can see that in the end result. Being able to create content independently is also very important because creativity can flow freely. The content goes viral, which is very important, especially when your company is still growing. Finally, I think we all have a lot of fun doing what we do, and that has an enormous influence.



“Millennials don’t have time, so you need to produce something they can consume quickly. You have one shot, and you have to publish where they are. We knew that before, and we can confirm it now.”

- Ariel Tiferes, Project Leader, Muy Liebre

With current contributors aged between 25 and 35, Tiferes is hoping to also find contributors from the particular age bracket Muy Liebre is targeting in the future.

“In the beginning, the most important thing was to produce great content. We wanted millennial content producers from that segment, but we didn’t find that much talent. But the goal ultimately is to also find talented millennials because they can represent the audience better,” Tiferes said.

Exchanging lessons with the newsroom

Muy Liebre has allowed La Nación to gain more insight into how millennials consume content.

“We are learning a lot about publishing to social networks. That’s very different from what we usually do. For La Nación, we usually just put a link on Facebook to lead users back to our site,” Tiferes said.

Tiferes and Trautman share and exchange their lessons with other departments in the hopes that the entire company can benefit from them.

“Millennials don’t have time, so you need to produce something they can consume quickly. You have one shot, and you have to publish where they are. We knew that before, and we can confirm it now,” Tiferes said.

Experimenting with native advertising

While Muy Liebre is a cheap project, said Tiferes – “you can use the tools that are already available to produce and publish the stories” – the main challenge that lies ahead is to achieve sustainability through branded content.

“We approach our income strategy in the same context of the disruption that is sweeping our industry today, whether that be addressing

our audience, our content, our products or brands. That is why we are especially appreciate receiving this WAN-IFRA award. For Muy Liebre, distributed content seems a natural fit for branded content or native advertising. It is our main source of revenue and most relevant for our ad sales team,” Martelli said.

So far, Muy Liebre is producing branded content pieces for four brands that want to reach younger audiences, including well-known phone operator Movistar.

“I think the project is working fine. I think we have another year to get all the advertisers on board that we thought were interested in the beginning,” Tiferes said.

“They love it. All they had were banners, for example, and it was all very traditional. We want to make content that really works for them.”

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