Combined Datasets for Custom Analysis

Los Angeles Times

1881
FOUNDING YEAR

190,000,000+
AVERAGE MONTHLY PAGEVIEWS

30,000,000+
MONTHLY UNIQUE
LATIMES.COM VISITORS

The Los Angeles Times has been covering Southern California for more than 138 years. Today, it's a leading source of breaking news, entertainment, sports, and politics on a national and global scale. A Chartbeat customer since 2012, the L.A. Times has used real-time monitoring and optimization tools like the Real-time Dashboard to understand audience trends and optimize content in the moment.

The analytics team at the L.A. Times uses Datastream, Chartbeat's raw data pipeline, to leverage a granular view of their audience data, connect that intel with other data sources, and find unique editorial insights that inform company-wide goals.

Powering Internal Dashboards to Equip the Newsroom

Datastream offers direct access to the raw data collected from all visitor interactions on a page, including Engaged Time on Page, Scroll Depth, Referrer, and dozens more metrics. To take their own analytics capabilities to the next level, the L.A. Times leverages Datastream's unique session-based metrics to uncover insights on the behavior of onsite and offsite visitors.
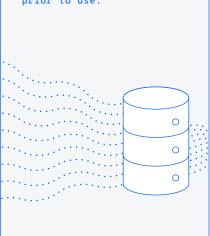
The L.A. Times combines these metrics with a range of business-critical data sources using shared keys, in order to view critical data points in one place and streamline analysis. For the unique needs of their subscription-focused business, the L.A. Times has built a custom dashboard that combines their own first-party data, Datastream metrics, CMS data, and third-party cookie data—key inputs to help their team analyze the data and make decisions.

The overlay of available metrics provides more comprehensive insights than a piecemeal approach. "We use [Datastream] to fill in metrics that we aren't getting from other sources, and give us a more complete picture of audience trends," says Joseph Gordon, L.A. Times Director of Data and Analytics. "Specifically, we use Engaged Time and Scroll Depth, metrics we didn't have before, to enhance our reporting."

PRO TIP

Datastream measures Scroll Depth, which tells you how far down your readers are scrolling into the content on a given page.

PRO TIP

Datastream feeds data straight to your systems in real time, so it doesn't have to be called, extracted, or transformed prior to use.

L.A. Times reporters and editors working on the same news beat get together weekly to analyze their custom dashboard and surface the stories that resonated most with readers, using the analytics to enhance their editorial intuition with data-driven insights. According to Alexa Sonnenfeld, Digital Analyst for the L.A. Times, their internal dashboard affords the team different angles to measure audience engagement with their content—such as conversions and traffic—enabling them to develop best practices and make informed decisions that support company-wide KPIs. From her vantage point, it also "gives folks the opportunity to step back and consider what they've written in relation to the past week or a couple of weeks."

Coupled with Chartbeat's other real-time analytics and optimization tools, which help newsrooms react instantly to trends in readership once a story goes live, **Datastream widens the perspective afforded by the data so newsrooms can plan ahead and better anticipate audience behavior.** While adaptability is essential in a fast-paced industry, the ability to learn from the data and make informed decisions about future publishing plans gives the L.A. Times an edge in a highly competitive market. As Sonnenfeld says, "It really helps folks hone their editorial intuition and make smarter bets about what we're covering and how."

Getting a Full Audience View

Chartbeat's integration partnership with Apple means that the L.A. Times can incorporate data from their Apple News and Apple News+ audiences into their custom dashboard. As Gordon notes, Apple News data in particular is difficult to get from other sources. Datastream quickly collects this data and streams it to the L.A. Times' data repository, where it is matched with other datasets to provide a multifaceted, in-depth analysis that is key to editorial and business strategies.

The result? The L.A. Times gets a full view of their audience and where they're coming from, including those reading via desktop and the L.A. Times mobile app, and those reaching L.A. Times content through Apple News.

The L.A. Times also leverages Chartbeat's partnership with SmartNews, an app with more than 50 million users worldwide, to understand their audience on this platform. Datastream integrates SmartNews data to strengthen the L.A. Times' internal reporting and understand reader behavior across channels.

"We're big fans of [Datastream]," says Gordon, who along with his team has helped Chartbeat outline critical enhancements for Datastream to meet business intelligence needs. While Chartbeat's newsroom-focused analytics and optimization tools are "fantastic for real-time insights," says Sonnenfeld, it's with tools like Datastream that data-driven departments can get more granular with their intel and help inform company-wide strategies.

Datastream