Global State of Reader Engagement

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We enable meaningful stories to thrive — wherever they live

700 enterprise publishers
65 billion pageviews tracked per month
70 Countries
6 Continents
We’ll investigate how reader engagement has changed:

Trends in engagement

Major topics of the year

Research summary
Trends in engagement
After rising steeply at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, global traffic levels have roughly returned to normal.
OVERALL ENGAGEMENT

Engagement per pageview has been flat over the year

Interestingly, average engaged time in the Americas is higher than in Europe and Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Average Engaged Time</th>
<th>Average Word Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>00:34</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>00:33</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe/Middle East/Africa</td>
<td>00:29</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia Pacific</td>
<td>00:29</td>
<td>706</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After declines in previous years, desktop’s percent of traffic was mostly flat in 2020
Device usage did not shift during initial period of COVID-19 crisis, except in Asia, where desktop’s portion of traffic declined.
Traffic from Google and Facebook has fallen after significant spikes in March and April.

Google remains about 20% up from the beginning of the year.
As in previous years, the news aggregator landscape continued to evolve quickly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aggregator</th>
<th>% Change Jan. - Aug. 2020</th>
<th>Pageviews (mm) Aug. 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google News</td>
<td>+ 35%</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flipboard</td>
<td>+ 22%</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsbreak</td>
<td>+ 415%</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SmartNews</td>
<td>+ 79%</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TopBuzz</td>
<td>- 60%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upday</td>
<td>- 44%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LOYALTY AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

The percentage of pageviews from New and Returning visitors increased slightly in the initial period of COVID-19.
LOYALTY AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

The percentage of pageviews from New and Returning visitors increased slightly in the initial period of COVID-19.

The percentage of pageviews from Subscribers had a marked increase over the course of the year.
Major topics in US news
COVID-19 articles viewed
COVID-19 articles viewed

Total engagement for COVID-19 articles
Average engaged time per pageview has remained fairly constant throughout the year.

Readers didn’t view as many COVID-19 articles after April, but read them for as long as ever.
Police killings of Black Americans garnered little coverage in the first half of 2020 — but coverage of the George Floyd murder changed the curve.

Coverage has declines, but remained at unprecedented levels.
Readership of these stories has fallen faster than coverage, but remains much higher than in years past.
Interest in election-related stories declined in mid-March, but rose steadily leading up to the election.
Research
Huge disparities in local news consumption by state
In a case study analyzing approaches for attributing subscriptions to content consumption, we found:

- Notable differences in highlighted content when engagement is included in the attribution model
- Breaking News, Puzzles, Politics and Opinion sections tend to be key drivers of conversion for all readers
- Readers engage on average almost 2x as long with the first page they touch after converting as compared to the last page they touch prior to conversion
In our first studies of the impact of images on story performance:

- The most engaging headline is the original headline 35% of the time, but the most engaging image+headline combination is the original only 15% of the time.
- Varying images and headlines simultaneously results in 247% higher lift in engagement than varying headlines alone.
1. News around COVID drove huge spikes in engagement initially and have now returned about to pre-COVID levels, with engagement from subscribers up overall.

2. The platform and mobile/desktop landscape have been more stable than in years past, with continued shifts in news aggregators.

3. Average engagement on election-related stories is almost 2x engagement on stories overall.

4. There are huge disparities in local news consumption across the US.

5. Optimizing the photos associated with a story result in drastically higher engagement than optimizing headlines alone.

KEY TAKEAWAYS
Thank you.

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