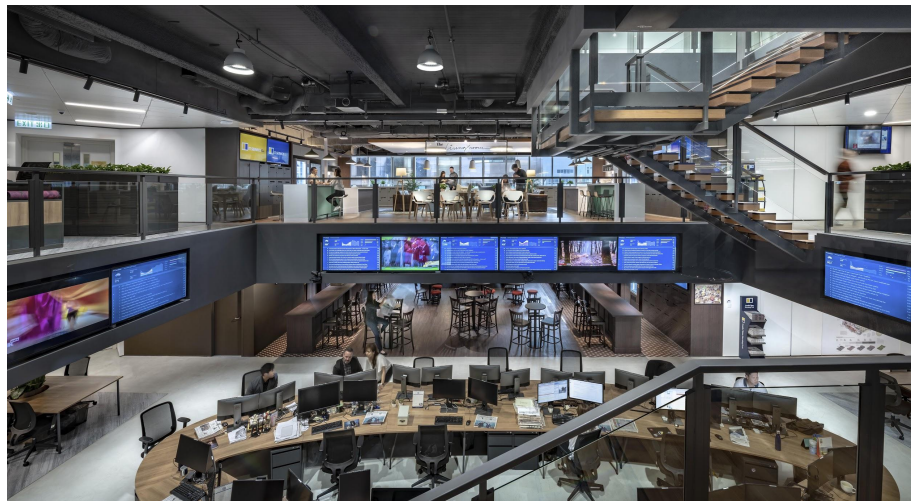


## 6x

Increase in CTR via “People also Read” widgets

## 25%

Increase in average time on page



“This project exemplifies our commitment to elevating our users' experience by serving readers with content based on unique demographic, psychographic, and behavioral data. By better personalizing user journeys, we can meaningfully engage with our readers with relevant content while achieving stronger retention and conversion.”

Vhanya Barba Mackechnie  
Vice President, Product  
SCMP

### The challenge

With over a century of experience as a leading global news company reporting on China and Asia, [SCMP](#) has gone from strength to strength in its journey from a traditional newspaper to a digital-first media organization. As SCMP's global audience continues to grow, the company needs to better understand its readers to ensure that users on its platform are consistently offered content relevant to their interests, drawn from the various publications in its portfolio.

In 2021, SCMP collaborated with the Google News Initiative (GNI) to build a recommendation engine that dynamically creates User Types based on various data sets. This allows it to serve up relevant content and calls-to-action, using algorithms to determine preferences and demographics. The goal of the project was to increase both user engagement across the board and conversions to paid subscriptions.

### The results

Aiming to improve content recommendations based on User Types, SCMP split testing into two rounds, each with a different focus. The first round tested variations of the article page structure; the second tested different algorithms based on the winning page structure identified in the first round.

By setting up a Standardized User Type retargeting framework, users that hit the paywall were targeted first and consistently converted. Identifying detailed User Types also allowed SCMP to serve more personalized content. With further iterations in content recommendation, it was able to improve the “People also Read” suggestions; clicks on the recirculation widget increased by 6x, demonstrating higher reader engagement. Removing Perpetual Scroll incentivized readers to browse the widgets and select which articles to read next, driving a 25% increase in average time on page versus the previous page setup.