



Google News Initiative

Impact in Europe

2020 GNI Impact Report Europe

Updated November 2020

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Introduction

The way people are consuming news is changing, and the business models which underpin and sustain news are [changing, too](#). That's why at Google, we have worked hard to deepen our support of the industry in many ways over many years.

In 2015, we launched the [Digital News Initiative](#), a €150m million initiative to further support high-quality journalism in Europe by funding innovative projects with publishers. Working closely with leading publishers, these projects [resulted in brilliant concepts](#) which help tackle industry challenges from battling misinformation and telling local stories, to boosting digital revenues and exploring new technologies.

The news industry's shift towards digital will take time, which is why we continue to support publishers through efforts like the [\\$300 million Google News Initiative](#), which furthers this work in Europe and around the world. As of today, the GNI has awarded [a total of \\$54.3m dollars to European news partners](#). We look forward to seeing the results, and learning more about how we can best support the industry.

Quality journalism is more important than ever. That's why Google is helping people find news, helping fund journalism, and helping support the diverse range of news publishers with products and technology as they adapt to a digital world.

— The Google News Initiative Team in Europe



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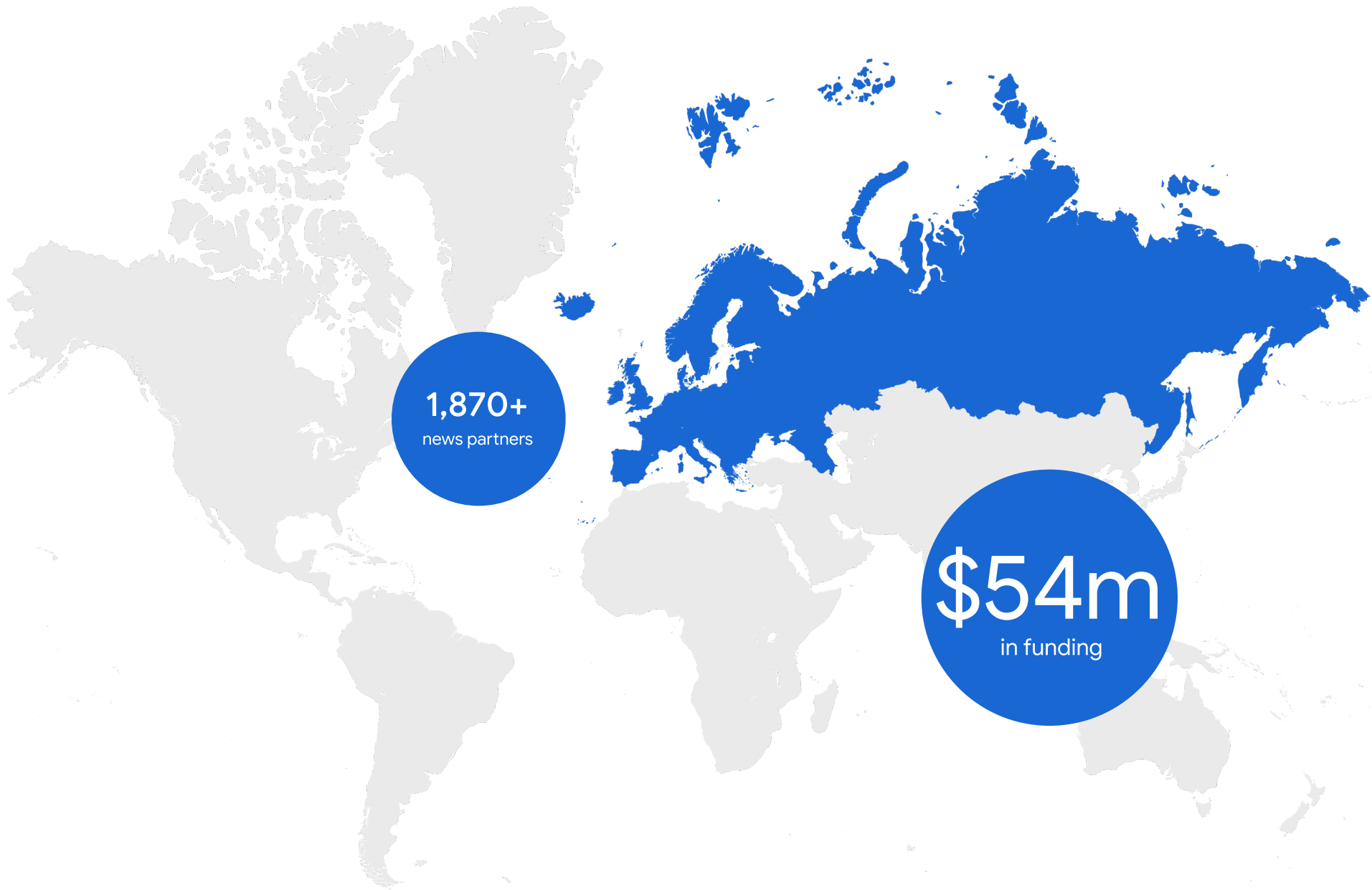
Sandra Whitney
Director, Online
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About this Report

This report is a summary of the activities conducted by the Google News Initiative in Europe between March 2018 and June 2020.

The financials in the Impact Report reflect total spending for GNI programs, as well as commitments to the Journalism Emergency Relief Fund and [Google.org](https://www.google.org)'s global media literacy programs, in USD from March 2018 to June 2020. Amounts in other currencies are converted to USD when the work is performed. This report excludes Marketing, PR, and Travel overhead as well as payroll, benefit, and compensation to Google full-time and temporary employees who are involved in programming. Spend is assigned by key focus area based on the primary objective of each project.

The tally of news partners supported reflects the number of news organizations, industry associations, academic institutions and nonprofits that have been funded by or participated in GNI programs from March 2018-June 2020, including the Journalism Emergency Relief Fund. The total does not combine news organizations and their parent companies in cases where each has participated in separate GNI programs, and does not include operational partners and vendors, or news organizations reached through trainings.



Since 2018, we've committed \$54 million to support 1,870+ news partners in 36 countries in Europe

Elevating Quality Journalism

Enabling diverse sources of impactful journalism is critical for our societies and core to Google's mission. To this end, we've delivered regional training programmes focused on digital skills for journalism, partnered with industry organisations to combat misinformation, contributed to regional media literacy programmes in Europe, and implemented programmes to support a more diverse and inclusive news ecosystem.



Journalist Trainings

Through both in-person sessions and an online Training Centre, we help journalists develop knowledge and skills in digital journalism across a range of topics — from harnessing large datasets to enhance storytelling, to verification of videos and images, to an introduction to machine learning.

Since launching a global journalist training programme through the Google News Lab in 2015, we've trained over 116,300 journalists in-person in Europe, and have enabled an additional 331,000 online trainings through the [GNI Training Centre](#).

116,300+
journalists trained
in-person since 2015



News Impact Summits

Since 2014, we've partnered with the European Journalism Centre to organise 29 summits in 23 cities across 15 countries in Europe and the Middle East, featuring more than 330 speakers from leading media organisations. The [News Impact Summits](#) event series brings together international media experts and local news communities to focus on new technology, tools, and methods that can improve the way journalists cover their stories and work in the newsroom.

331,000+
online trainings

Media Literacy

Misinformation is not new, but with the rise of technology, misleading online content can spread rapidly and deceive even savvy users. To help combat this, in March 2018 Google.org (Google's philanthropic arm) funded a \$10 million global initiative fund to support media literacy around the world and help readers discern fact from fiction online.



In the [U.K.](#) we've supported The Guardian Foundation's [NewsWise](#) initiative, which aims to empower nine- to 11-year-olds to understand, critically navigate and report real news. Through workshops in primary schools, accompanying resources, teacher training and curriculum-based lesson plans, and opportunities to speak to real journalists, NewsWise has reached **6,500** pupils in **117** primary schools.

In 2020 we've seen just how important it is for young people to be able to navigate the news: to recognise disinformation and find trustworthy sources of information; to manage their own emotions and wellbeing when it comes to overwhelming news stories; and to share their own voices in a fair and responsible way. Thanks to the support from Google.org we have been able to empower thousands of primary-aged children in some of the most disadvantaged UK communities with these crucial skills.

[Angie Pitt](#)
Director, NewsWise

Combating Misinformation

Tackling misinformation is a complex challenge that requires coordinated action with a broad range of experts and organisations. We've worked together with newsrooms, fact-checkers, civil society organisations, and academic researchers in support of initiatives that help curb disinformation and elevate quality journalism.

In [Spain](#), as part of a [\\$6.5 million global commitment](#) to combat misinformation, we supported [Maldita](#), enabling them to add server capacity and serve over 10,000 users at once, amid a surge in traffic



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diverse media is critical for creating a thriving and representative media for everyone, filling gaps for stories that don't rise to mainstream media, and providing a positive and authentic representation of underrepresented communities.

We have worked to champion diversity, equity and inclusion in journalism through a combination of efforts: research, pipeline development, talent support, and digital transformation of diverse news organisations.

GERMANY

Research

In partnership with Neue Deutsche MedienMacher*innen, we supported the first of its kind "[Diversity in Journalism](#)" report in Germany. The study captures data and insights from [122 German newsrooms](#) to analyse how diversity with a focus on migrant backgrounds is reflected in editorial offices and on executive levels. The report found that only 6 percent of editors-in-chief have a migrant background, compared to a quarter for the German population overall.



Growing the pipeline of diverse newsroom talent: GNI Fellowship

Collaborating with various regional partners, we've provided 20 journalism students across [Europe](#) with an opportunity to gain practical experience over the last two years. [GNI Fellowships](#) were designed to provide greater experience, exposure and opportunity to journalists from diverse backgrounds and at the same time allow newsrooms to gain fresh perspectives and access young talent.

The GNI Fellowship sets itself apart from other career development opportunities in journalism because it is open to students interested in working at the intersection of technology, media, and journalism. This work is particularly relevant at a time when media organisations need to innovate and become more diverse in order to navigate the pandemic and reflect the society they wish to inform. This programme has made it possible for a new generation of young professionals to enter the journalism industry and for newsrooms to onboard talent with technical, digital, or business knowledge.

Vera Penêda

Team Lead, Events & Training, European Journalism Centre

UNITED KINGDOM

Broadening access to industry training

Broadening access to industry training is a key pillar of the Journalism Diversity Fund from the National Council for the Training of Journalists, which seeks to provide bursaries to people from diverse backgrounds who need help funding their journalism studies. Our partnership has helped hundreds of students across the country achieve industry qualifications.



Journalism Emergency Relief Fund

In early 2020, the news industry dealt with job cuts, furloughs and cutbacks as a result of the economic downturn prompted by COVID-19. The [Journalism Emergency Relief Fund](#) was created to sustain essential reporting around the world by delivering emergency funding to local newsrooms in this time of need.

UNITED KINGDOM

[Cornwall Reports](#) grew audience and potential subscribers by lifting the paywall for the duration of the crisis, introducing a new series on Youtube, and providing a platform for discussion and debate about how the crisis impacted the local community.

Cornwall Reports carries no advertising on news pages. The Journalism Emergency Relief Fund therefore allowed us to develop and transmit a brand new, free-to-view current affairs programme, Behind The Headlines, offering the sort of analysis and exclusive key-decision-maker interviews which were simply not available elsewhere.

[Graham Smith](#)
Editor, Cornwall Reports

FRANCE

[Mediacités](#) expanded resources and capacity to answer a significant increase in questions from local readers due to COVID-19.

With the help of the Journalism Emergency Relief Fund, we have been able to answer the most pressing questions from the public. At the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, our journalists have answered a record number of questions sent by readers on our Veracités platform. Producing fact-checking and community-driven journalism was the best thing we could do at this time to serve local citizens.

[Jacques Trentesaux](#)
CEO, Mediacités

ITALY

[L'Eco di Bergamo](#) reinforced the network of local collaborators in the area of Bergamo.

In cooperation with local health authorities, launched a fundraiser for the territory of Bergamo which suffered heavy losses during the crisis.

\$11m

in funding offered to
1,082 newsrooms
across Europe

The primary effort that we wanted to support with all our strength was to create communities, to make everyone feel united even if at a distance, at a time when along our streets... the only sound that incessantly filled the air was that of the sirens.

Bergamo people have followed us, they have completely relied on the newspaper... Thanks to their affection we have been able to transmit a collective sense of belonging to an entire community. Every day, through e-mails, paper letters, what's-apps, SMS, videos, drawings, the people of Bergamo have given us themselves, telling us about their sense of loss, their pain, their desperation, the memory of their loved ones, their anxieties, their 'heart'... an enormous quantity of material that we, day after day, have tried to give back to the community so that everyone could share in everyone's pain.

More well-known personalities were accompanied by the memory of simple people who were recognized by the community: the janitor, the garbage man, the 'vagabond' that everyone knew in the village.

A few days after Easter, Pope Francis phoned L'Eco to thank the newspaper 'of the great work of Christian charity' which was done by telling stories and faces, and the President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella sent a long message to the newspaper underlining the value and strength of the newspaper within the vast community of Bergamo.

And the best gift came from our readers, who wrote to us for our 140th birthday 'Thank you. We have felt you close to our pain as never before.

ALBERTO CERESOLI
DIRECTOR, L'ECO DI BERGAMO

Evolving Business Models

As the business of news continues to fundamentally evolve, we've designed programmes and resources to address the business challenges at the core of that evolution. We've enabled publishers to grow advertising and reader revenue, increase readership and engagement, and find new models and technology to support local news.

Most recently, we worked with industry experts to combine many of these efforts under the [GNI Digital Growth Programme](#) to help news organisations across the world grow their digital businesses.



Reader Revenue

We're working with news organisations to build and grow reader revenue models, as well as develop technology that can support them along the way.

Subscriptions Lab

Our GNI Subscriptions Labs bring together publishers, subscriptions experts and industry associations over several months to build roadmaps for long-term success, implement tactics to improve performance across the funnel, and identify short-term experiments.

European Subscriptions Lab

In February 2020, the [GNI Subscriptions Lab programme expanded to help European publishers](#) strengthen digital subscriptions and grow reader revenue, building on the success of similar Labs in North America and Latin America. The European Lab has been developed in partnership with [FT Strategies](#) and the [International News Media Association \(INMA\)](#) and is a nine-month programme which includes in-depth consultancy and coaching to help publishers address every step of the digital subscriptions process from discovery to conversion to retention.

Subscribe with Google

As part of the original GNI launch, we announced [Subscribe with Google](#), which makes it easy for readers to subscribe, stay logged in and get the most out of their news subscription.

We've seen a 25% increase in subscriber clicks to publishers' sites when the "From your subscription" module appears in Google Search.

- 66 publishers from 13 countries have signed to implement Subscribe with Google in Europe.



Data

More data is available to news organisations today than ever before. This abundance of data can help publishers better understand their readers and identify opportunities for growth in key business areas. But it can also be challenging to harness the potential of this data effectively — to know what

metrics to focus on, and how to use those figures to inform stories, products and business strategies. We aim to help news organisations elevate data-driven thinking, and use insights to develop product offerings and grow digital revenue.

Turning analytics data into concrete tactics to drive reader engagement and revenue can be challenging without heavily investing in a data team. We've built [News Consumer Insights, Realtime Content Insights and News Tagging Guide](#) to help publishers make data-driven business and editorial decisions. These tools have been used by hundreds of publishers across Europe including:

10%

increase in Organic Search traffic period on period

IRELAND

Independent Media was able to improve their reader engagement:

- Grow ad inventory +39% and programmatic revenue by 22% year on year.
- Drive a +10.43% increase in Organic Search traffic period on period

The NCI framework has been very valuable for us to understand the importance of loyalty and improve the performance of independent.ie. Working with the NCI team has allowed us to generate quick, actionable solutions that had an immediate increase in organic search traffic.

Steve Dempsey
Head of Product Management,
Independent Media

UK

Johnston Press was able to enhance their newsletter strategy :

- Gather insights from their readers to understand what they want from a newsletter and revise their ongoing strategy
- Grow Email traffic to be over 2% of total traffic to the site.
- Increase their readers' visit time by 1 minute

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GREECE

Proto Thema was able to achieve the following Month on Month (MoM) improvements :

- +13% in Users
- +21% in Visits
- +25% increase in Pageviews
- Total ad revenue increase of +13% MoM, driven by ad impressions growing by +95%

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

Klix used News Consumer Insights to increase engagement, in 30 days seeing:

- +18% increase in readers, +37% lift in page views
- +72% growth in programmatic revenue
- Decrease in average page load time of -31% month over month

+18%
in readers

Being a news site we are aware the content is king, but we've always believed the technology is the queen. The News Consumer Insights framework helped us understand our audience and focus on things that really matter: pagespeed, organic search optimisation, recirculation, re-engagement and overall user experience.

Mario Šimic
Co-Founder & CTO, Klix





NEWS CONSUMER INSIGHTS

Thanks to News Consumer Insights' recommendations we succeeded in shaping our future strategy

focusing on user acquisition and user retention. It helped us make informed decisions about our readers in order to offer better content and thus better experience. NCI played a huge role in our strategy and our growth in retaining the number one place of all the news sites in Greece.

NIKOS ILIOPOULOS,
HEAD OF DIGITAL, PROTOTHEMA

New Models for Local

Enabling a strong future for local news is of vital importance to every one of us, and has been a particular focus for us in the last few years. Our strategy has been to support new models for local news by identifying where we see success, then support the creation of platforms and playbooks that

others could leverage. Our work has spanned launching new local digital sites, conducting in-depth research and benchmarking into the local digital native market, and enabling technology solutions for small, local newsrooms.

Table Stakes Europe

Since 2019, we have partnered with WAN-IFRA on [Table Stakes Europe](#), a programme designed to help local and regional newspapers find new ways to build local audiences, prosper in a digital world and perform their crucial role in society.

- In the first round of Table Stakes Europe, [14 publishers](#) from the U.K., Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Switzerland and Germany participated in the yearlong programme. In 2020, the programme will expand to welcome 24 European news enterprises and to accommodate Spanish in addition to German, French and English. They join hundreds of publishers who have participated in the Table Stakes programme in the United States since its launch in 2015.



Table Stakes Europe has accelerated our development and given us a toolbox to increase our digital transformation. We've seen during the programme development of the Digital Subscriptions and the NL's performance (opening rate, CTR).

Mélanie Monsaingeon,
Publisher, Le Parisien

UNITED KINGDOM

Local News Experiments Project: Peterborough Matters

Under the GNI Local News Experiments Project, we've partnered with local news organisations in the US and UK to launch new local news sites in underserved news communities and test techniques around product, audience acquisition and monetization. We also [share our findings](#) publicly with the industry. In 2020, we launched [Peterborough Matters](#) in the UK with Archant.

We will use our talents to make sure you know about important news like crime, road accidents, council meetings, and weather. We'll also help connect the community more with compelling in-depth stories about the people, places, and events that make up the fabric of our community. You'll learn about people you don't know, stories you've not heard, and ideas you might not have considered.

John Baker
Chief Reporter, Peterborough Matters



Scaling Learnings

Digital Growth Programme:

The GNI Digital Growth Programme is a free training programme for small-to-medium sized news publishers [launched in Europe](#) in July 2020 in [six languages](#), and subsequently expanded to the [rest of the world](#). The FT Strategies' ['Digital Immersion Week'](#) and 'Rapid Response Sprint' alongside Table Stakes Europe with WAN IFRA, are two anchor programmes in the broader GNI Digital Growth Programme. The programme is aimed at helping establish and grow the online business of news publishers who have more recently started developing their digital platforms and includes playbooks, tools, workshops and labs.



Premium App Development

The Guardian

We worked with The Guardian on the development of their Premium app, which has fundamentally changed the way in which they operate, collaborate and develop new revenue streams. Their team consulted with app and developer-focused teams at Google on specific ways to promote awareness of, and upgrades to, the premium tier of their app, which was specifically designed around the habits of its audience.

- This collaboration contributed to The Guardian's **60% growth in total premium tier subscribers** in 2018, and doubling of their premium acquisition volumes year on year.



The
Guardian



+60%

growth in total premium tier
subscribers

Empowering Newsrooms Through Innovation

As we work with publishers to navigate challenges for elevating quality journalism and evolving business models, it's clear that innovative thinking and approaches will be vital in developing and scaling solutions for the digital future. We've enabled news organisations around the world to demonstrate and test new ideas by investing in efforts to accelerate innovation in the news ecosystem, and partnering with news organisations to expand their journalism to new formats.



Digital News Innovation Fund

The [Digital News Innovation Fund in Europe](#), which ran from 2015 to 2019, allocated over €150 million to 662 digital news projects in 30 countries.

UNITED KINGDOM

[Urbs Media](#) and [Press Association](#)

Created RADAR (Reporters and Data and Robots) tool which provides data-driven articles to 400 UK subscribing newsrooms using a blend of human and artificial intelligence.

- Automation tool generates 200,000 articles per year
- Serves 400 UK newspaper titles through a subscription service
- Subscriber base up 150% on first quarter of 2020

We are filling a void and ensuring that important local issues – which matter to residents – are not going unreported.

Katie Williams
Data Journalist

FRANCE

[Le Monde](#)

The Go Beyond Subscription initiative focused on driving and retaining digital subscriptions, using a three-tier system that offers individual logins, but also shared accounts for couples or groups.

- 6.8% of subscribers use premium couple or group options
- 40% accrual on year-over-year digital subscribers since the start of 2020
- Subscribers rose by 14,000 to 335,000 in the month the paywall launched (June)

The project helped to expand our subscribers, and reward their loyalty.

Julien Laroche-Joubert
Digital Director, Le Monde



LITHUANIA

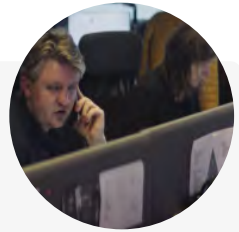
[DELFI](#)

[Created Debunk EU](#), an initiative to tackle fake news online using a combination of artificial intelligence-based analytics and a dedicated community of volunteers.

- Implemented an automated debunking tool in six countries
- Partnered with organisations in 17 countries
- Produced 72 reports per year
- Spotted 617 cases containing disinformation in the past six months

We needed to hire people who had knowledge of political science and international relations, alongside developers who would be able to work with machine learning and artificial intelligence.

Ieva Ivanauskaitė
Head of Business Development, Delfi



YouTube Innovation Funding

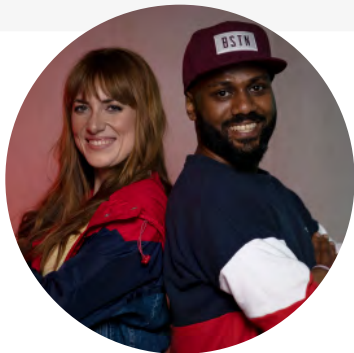
Through YouTube Innovation Funding, we supported 15 publishers in Europe on projects to strengthen their online video capabilities, try out new formats for video journalism, and experiment with new business models.

GERMANY

Stern

Experimented with a new content format to reach an online news audience. The new format - a debate show called DISKUTHEK - appeals to a younger demographic, while staying true to the brand's high-quality journalism.

- 30% increase in channel subscriptions within eight months.
- 9 million+ views and 70K+ comments on DISKUTHEK after eleven months.
- 1 million views of the first "DISKUTHEK" episode within eight months.



FRANCE

Le Monde

Engaged new, young audiences by building up their digital video capabilities and experimenting with a variety of new formats, including a fact-checking show called Les Decodeurs (based on the popular section of their website by the same name).

- 6M views and 300k hours of watch time on Les Decodeurs in the first 5 months
- 2x growth in YouTube channel subscribers in 12 months

ITALY

Ciaopeople

Invested in technology and set up workflows to enable a continuous 24/7 live stream edition of Fanpage.it.

- 2M+ YouTube channel subscribers
- 55% increase in revenue from YouTube



Engaging the European News Community



Engaging the European News Community

All of our work can only be accomplished through broad collaboration, through building connections among publishers, journalists, academics, and associations through events, working groups, research, and program support.

GNI Summit in Europe, the Middle East, & Africa (EMEA)

We hosted **180 publishers**, news executives, editors and academics from **29 countries** across EMEA in Amsterdam at our first **GNI EMEA summit** in February 2020, where we discussed the latest opportunities and challenges for the news industry. During a series of lightning talks and breakout sessions, external partners and DNI fund recipients shared insights about the latest products and innovations, the role of machine learning in publishing and new ways to grow reader revenue.

GNI Northern Europe Event

We hosted **60+ publishers**, editor-in-chiefs, digital editors, marketing managers and digital product managers from Newsbrands, Broadcasters, digital only, large and small, from the **6 Northern Europe countries**, to our first GNI Northern Europe Event. We discussed the opportunities, success stories and latest technologies from the news ecosystem; engaged with the newest products and programmes from Google and showcased how we can be a helpful partner to our partners.

Supporting Local Press in Poland

Since 2019, we have partnered with the Local Press Association of Poland (Lokalnej, SPL) to support small and medium publishers. Through our partnership, over 100 participants went through workshops aimed at increasing their digital transformation skills. SPL also hosted a two-day local media event in Warsaw which hosted industry experts for approximately 100 representatives of local press from all across Poland.



What's next?

As we continue to learn, we're consolidating insights from the work we've done, and finding ways to scale those learnings to publishers globally through efforts like the [Digital Growth Program](#).

The news industry is still in the midst of a difficult transition. But this period of evolution presents opportunities to rethink the role news plays in people's lives and how it should evolve to meet our changing information needs.

We'll continue to collaborate with organizations around the world working to create a healthy, diverse and sustainable news ecosystem, and we're excited to share more in the coming year.

[View Global Report](#)

