

51%

More daily users

52.5%

Increase in CVR

“Thanks to Google, JoongAng’s data maturity level has grown from Nacent to Mature/Leading while changing our company culture and business decision from experience-based into data-driven ones”

Jin Hwan Jung
Head of Digital News Service
JoongAng Ilbo

The challenge

JoongAng Ilbo is one of the biggest newspaper publishers in South Korea.

The news industry has been suffering from negative growth in traditional offline business. Even pioneers in the digital news industry have been facing significant challenges to fully transform their business into efficient online publishing by using the full potential of data.

Embedding data-driven decision into business models can greatly benefit the publishing industry to drive revenue and improve user engagement. With this in mind, JoongAng has been a pioneer in digital news transformation and has adopted advanced solutions like a content recommendation system to personalize user experience.

However, despite the best efforts of the company, their legacy recommendation system could only increase CVR by 2.2%. This has been significant concern for JoongAng since user engagement and conversion rate are critical to JoongAng’s news business.

The results

In order to improve CVR and drive more business impact, JoongAng and Google embarked on a project to develop an advanced machine learning-based recommendation system to personalize content and improve user experience.

By leveraging JoongAng’s news business and Google’s ML expertise, the teams applied advanced ML algorithms and data analysis techniques to build a model to provide highly relevant and personalized recommendations to each reader.

Initial A/B testing validated that the ML-based recommendation engine outperformed the legacy system (2.23% vs 2.45%). Within a few months of implementing the new model, the daily number of users increased by 51% leading to a significant uplift in daily conversions by 52.5%.

Overall, the implementation of a ML-based recommendation system was a major success for JoongAng by helping to increase CVR and produce a stronger bottom line for the company.