

Kitchen table reporters and bedroom editors

The post-newsroom era has arrived



As the next generation discovers its news on TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram - discover how your media strategy needs to change

A **DEMOCRACY**[™] Insights Report



Sam Christie

Democracy's Head of News, Sam Christie, joined the team from the Manchester Evening News, where he was News Editor of the Reach plc organisation. Previously, he worked for the Sun and Daily Star as a news reporter, but he now leads across the agency's news output, story creation, newsjacking and media outreach for our clients.



Imagine a revenue of hundred million dollars

Marketing strategy's goal is to increase sales and achieve advantage over other competitors. It includes short term and long term activities of marketing that has to do with the analysis of a company's situation and contribute to its objectives.

The objectives will be based on how you gain sales by acquiring and keeping customers. A marketing strategy helps on making good messages with the right twist of marketing approaches in order to have a good outcome of your sales and marketing activities.

Putting your strategy into action is how your marketing plan should work. Marketing budgets will be set, at the same time it will also show you how you're going to work with your targets. It maybe through networking, advertising etc. Having the perfect timing with your activities to fit your customers buying cycles will help you saving money and maximizing sales. The marketing plan should be innovative. It should have the details on how your sales are followed up and the activities your doing to develop your offers.

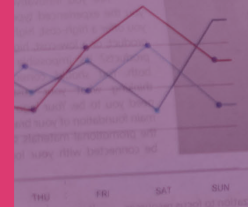


The world is messed up but I believe we are in a position now to help

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Million reinvested in travel businesses

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Are you innovative or are you the experienced type? or do you offer a high-cost, high-quality product, or a low-cost, high-value products? It's impossible to be both. You should consider on thinking what your customers need you to be. Your logo is the main foundation of your brand. All the promotional materials should be connected with your logo to communicate with your brand.

Brand messages are delivered and planned based on the questions how, what, when, to whom and where your brand strategy is. Advertisement, visual communication and distribution channels are parts of brand strategy. The branding strategy you have should be consistent as it leads to a strong brand equity.

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Fact about online marketing

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Stock Market Strategy

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Executive Summary

The most striking impact of the pandemic on the media industry is that it has resulted in the death of the newsroom as we know it.

Previously the dynamic nerve-centre of news organisations that bustled with activity, they are now increasingly empty, as editors and reporters come face to face less and less often.

At the outbreak of the pandemic it was by no means a given that newspapers and news websites could function with staff working remotely. But, it soon became clear that technology meant they could.

However it has come with a cost: More and more reporters, writers and editors are now operating in isolation - filing stories from kitchen tables and building pages from their bedrooms.

And the impact regionally has been transformative - now digital content for the Manchester Evening News can be published from north London while Sun Online stories are uploaded from Yorkshire.



A generational shift has also occurred in audience behaviours, with people who would never think of purchasing a print newspaper keen to seek out content from authoritative sources, that for them increasingly includes TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram.

All of this presents a **massive opportunity for PR** to deliver reputational work on behalf of brands that provides a trackable return like never before. This isn't the snake oil trick of listicle link building for the sake of it, but rather **authentic storytelling**, built on genuine understanding of people and brands, that **reaches the right audience** in the right place at the right time.

This Democracy Insights Report contains extensive input from our unrivalled contacts - senior journalists and editors operating at the coal-face of an industry undergoing its **most extraordinary transformation** in a generation.

It will investigate the impact of these unprecedented shifts for the comms and marketing sectors while demonstrating the key ways we can keep building brand fame and **tell stories that drive awareness**, relevance and trust.

NEARLY
40%

of Gen Z **prefers using TikTok and Instagram for search over Google**

SOURCE: <https://www.businessinsider.com/nearly-half-genz-use-tiktok-instagram-over-google-search-2022-7>



The New Audience Battleground

Audiences are growing. But, they can be *fickle* and *flighty*.

The overriding ambition in newsrooms now is to replicate what has been the cornerstone of the print model - **building communities of returning readers** who are genuinely and meaningfully **engaged with the product**.

And the more publishers understand these audiences **the more they can charge advertisers**.

Outside of a paying subscription model, the two main ways they hope to achieve this is through requiring more readers to register for access to content - and by **driving them to sign up to email newsletters**.

Both these routes require users to hand over their personal information which allows the publishers to build up a deep understanding of their preferences.

Reach Plc's Local Democracy Editor Yakub Qureshi sums up the challenge as "turning digital pennies into digital pounds (by) clawing back ad revenue for our content which is currently being eaten up by Google/Facebook (while) building a loyal, returning audience base," adding: "Hopes are pinned on newsletters."

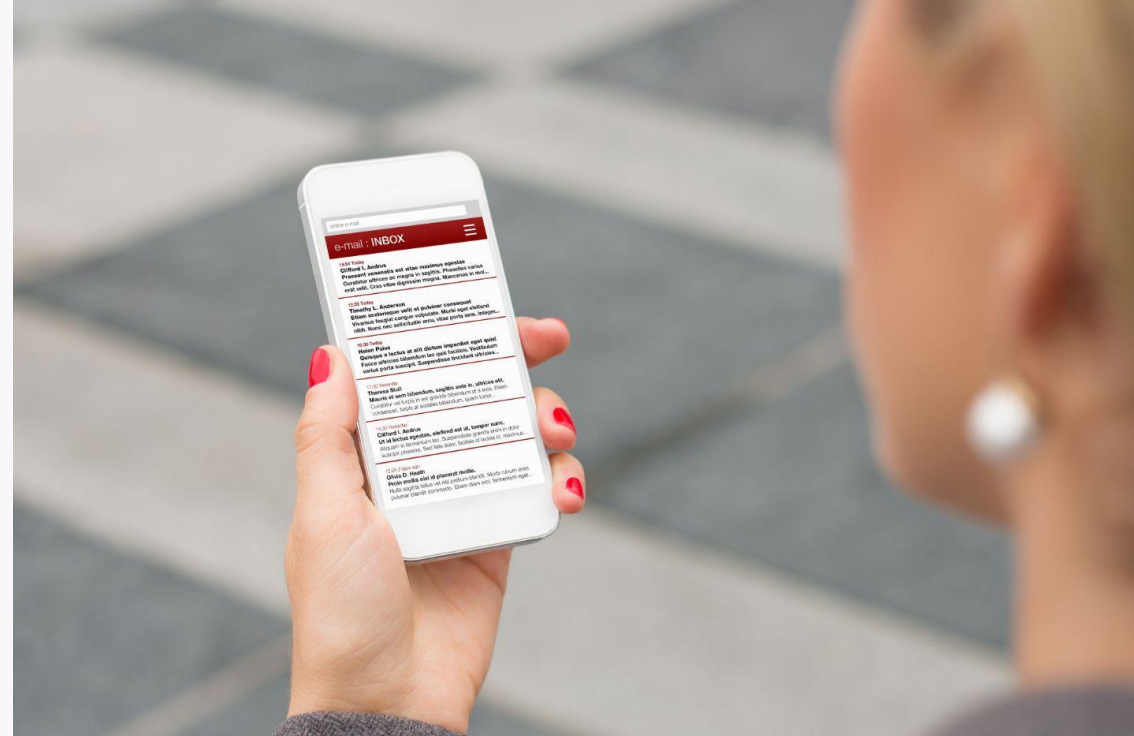
The **value of a story** (written content or video) to these publishers lies in **how many of the right people see it, how long they spend reading** or watching and therefore, **what value of adverts can be placed** around, before or between it.

Guaranteed audience eyeballs can also be promised to advertisers via newsletters, where those who want the content sign up to receive it. Publishers currently feel the fight with Google for this advertising spend is **unfair and is a battle they'll never win.**

Continuing this theme, The Sun's Art Director Garry Ollason sees the immediate priorities for digital publishers as "doing as much as you can to **protect your original, exclusive content.** Being first with stories remains vital.

"The biggest challenges are **monetising your original content** and trying to **stop others ripping it off.**"

Local group Newsquest have said: "Registrations will become increasingly important for publishers. In return, **audiences will have higher expectations from publishers** as logged-in users, which provides an opportunity to deliver on those expectations and create more meaningful interactions."



It's a sentiment echoed by Johnston Press:

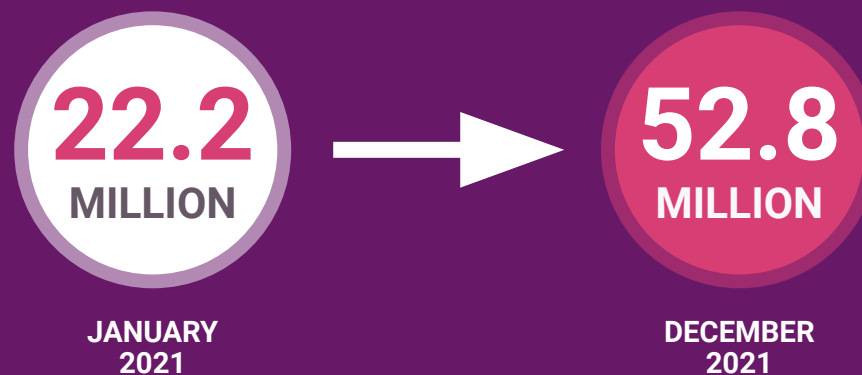
"The opportunity is in deepening our links with our audience, whether that's through more thoughtfully curated newsletters, online communities (that encourage intelligent and considerate debate), membership offerings, bespoke events (virtual or IRL), or app-based notifications."



It has seen Reach recently turbo-charge its newsletter operation thanks to an unspecified donation from tech giant Google. It could be argued that Google making this gesture is a thinly-disguised way to make the argument go away about them 'stealing' stories and ad revenues from UK publishers. However, that's a debate for another time.

Cities including Bristol, Lancashire, Liverpool, Manchester and Nottingham will receive their own daily bulletins to add to its current tally of 300 million emails it sends to subscribers each month.

It's a strategy that is already paying dividends for them with page views from newsletters.



Locking the audience in

Publishers have comprehensively re-imagined the scale and re-defined the scope of what they provide their customers. Once it was news. **Now it is so much more.**

Nowhere embodies this shift more than News UK - owners of The Sun and The Times.

Notoriously slow to respond to the changing landscape as a result of its unassailable print sales, over the past 18 months it has transformed itself and has very ambitious plans for what CEO Rebekah Brookes has described as its "*digital pivot*".

It has seen the launch of Times Radio, which has been hailed for its thoughtful broadcasting with the result that is already snapping at the heels of Radio 4. That is an extra feather in its radio division that already boasts **Virgin Radio** and **Talk Radio**.





The wraps have also come off Talk TV - the new free-to-air station run by News UK which is the home of Piers Morgan. With Talk TV, it's seeking to capitalise on the growing appetite for the kind of **issue-led storytelling** that dominates social media feeds.

These are the stories that **go global in the blink of an eye** such as the killing of George Floyd, Novak Djokovic's Australian Open vaccination saga, the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde or the unexpected death of cricketer Shane Warne.

Previously stories like these risked being labelled '*foreign news*' and relegated to the back of a bulletin. But now our connected world means that **where a story comes from has little relevance**.

One senior editor at The Sun comments:

"It's very clear where the focus of this organisation is now and that is in broadcast. It previously would have been unthinkable to consider a future without the newspapers that the business is built on, but they are now firmly viewed as legacy products with little long-term future."



The Power Of Subscriptions

While most titles remain committed to keeping their content free for fear of their audience evaporating, there are those that have taken the opposite approach - **by restricting access to subscribers only.**

And it's a gambit that appears to be paying off for the likes of The Telegraph, The Times and The Sunday Times.

While readership is drastically less than free sites, what they get in exchange is **guaranteed revenue** - and that vital ability to build exact and comprehensive profiles of their customers.

The benefits are twofold - it allows for a much more **precise commercial targeting** - and provides rock-solid insight into the holy grail of a richer **understanding of their preferences** in terms of content.

Reporters at these titles have consistently told us how their performance is increasingly judged on how many subscribers their stories bring in. At The Sunday Times a good-performing story can generate up to as much as 80 subscriptions, which equates to £30,000 of revenue.

The Telegraph currently counts more than 720,000 subscribers, with average revenues per subscription of over £175.



This battle for readers has seen The Times and The Sunday Times introduce its own bespoke performance platform into the newsroom called **Inca**.

Inca is used by reporters and audience teams to gauge the popularity of stories - and it is also increasingly informing which stories are published - with commissioning editors abandoning instinct in favour of cold, hard data.

One curious knock-on effect of this is that their online subscribers are being served **LESS** content than ever before. Previously in The Sunday Times - every single story that ran in print would find its way online. Now that is no longer the case - with editors scaling back online - **to ensure it is a more curated experience**.

And this focus on data is by no means restricted to the titles that were once known as broadsheets.

The Sun now views each piece of content through ruthlessly commercial terms. Its Editor Victoria Newton explains: *"We have a clear focus on quality of digital content, not just quantity. By that, we mean certain types of stories where the revenue opportunity is greater."*

The only stories in town

Sightings of killer sharks off the South coast were once a staple of what used to be referred to in the nation's newsrooms as *silly season*.

This period at the height of summer coincided with the school holidays, when MPs were away from Westminster.

It was a time when little happened, forcing News Editors to clutch at the slimmest of straws.

But, there has been no silly season in recent years. In these unprecedented times there has been a relentless stream of stories that have dominated the news agenda. In the past six years alone we have navigated Brexit, general elections, a global pandemic, and now the invasion of Ukraine and an economy in freefall.

It means PRs working on behalf of brands **need to be skilful storytellers** more than ever - as **competition has never been more fierce**.

And as the cost-of-living crisis grows only more acute, this further reduces the space for brands to take up space in the daily news agenda.





How Digital-only PR Has Dug Its Own Grave

'The Ten Best Spades For Summertime': Just reading that headline makes the heart sink.

It exemplifies the approach taken by many digital-only PR agencies.

It is one of barrel-scraping; that devalues the entire discipline of PR along the way.

And more critically - for brands and organisations - **it risks having the opposite effect to the one intended.**

This is as a result of Google becoming increasingly more sophisticated in how it judges and ranks content. Changes to its search algorithm means content **must now satisfy much more stringent quality thresholds.**

In effect the search giant can now see this content for what it actually is - an exercise in link-building that is cynical, contrived and devoid of merit.

These links are now flagged as '*unnatural*' - in other words of low quality - actively **impacting negatively** on search rankings.

At the same time, this kind of content - our industry contacts tell us - **increasingly fails to hit the mark for reporters** - who require stories that **drive engagement** and **spark debate**.

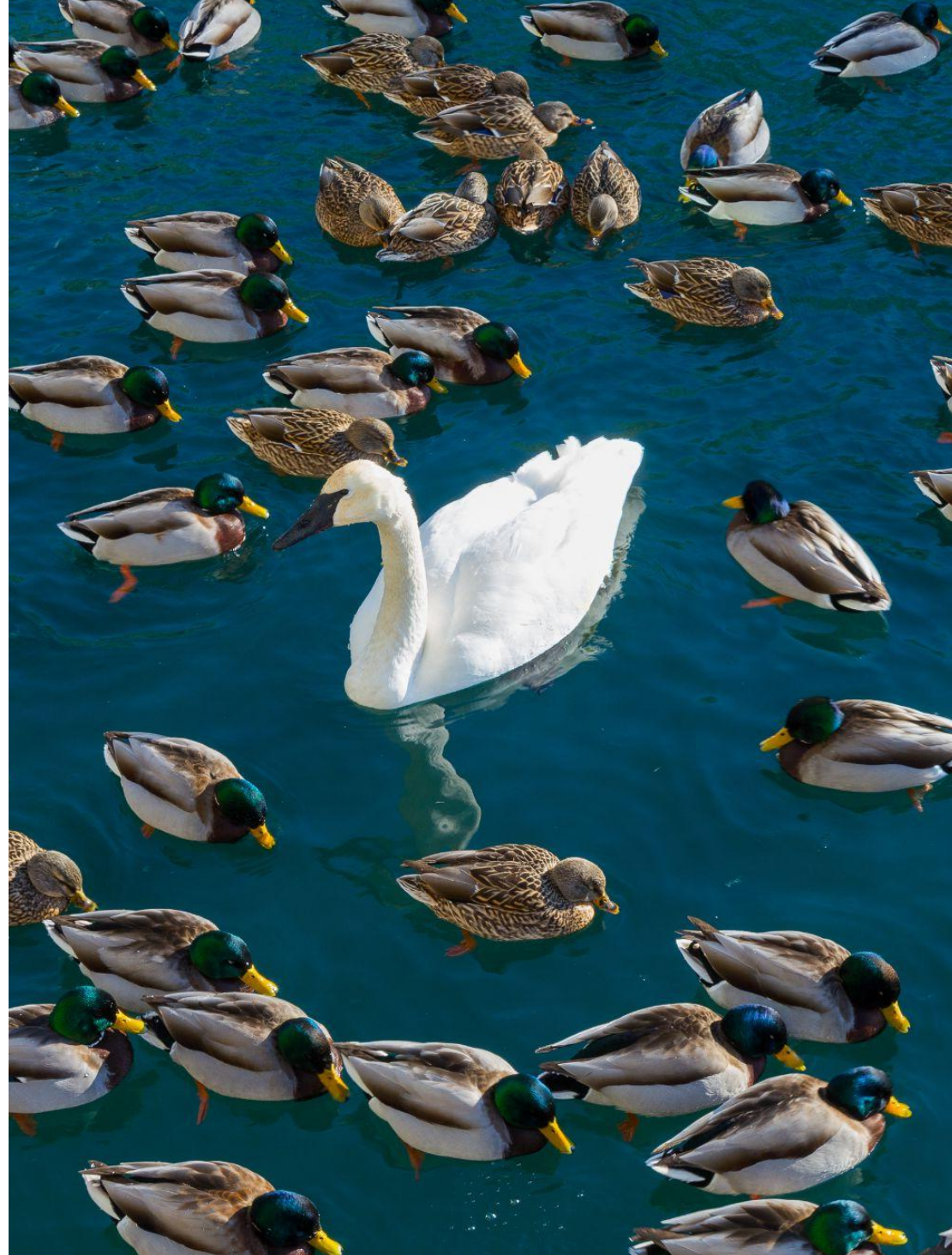
The result is the era when agencies could indiscriminately pipe out low-quality content and Hoover up links from the the dustiest recesses of the world wide web is now at an end.

Our industry has always been one that has **distinguished itself through creativity**.

The alchemy of truly great PR combines insight, understanding and imagination to change perceptions and build reputations. It requires **a long-term approach** - not one that plucks low-hanging fruit for quick gains.

Now, more than ever, brands and organisations need to take a coherent approach to their reputation - and that requires a **skilful combination of link-building** in the right places - alongside **stand-out storytelling** that engages audiences.

These disciplines are the cornerstones of Democracy - allowing us to build authentic audiences for brands and organisations - that **drive meaningful, long-term results**.



Restoring the media's reputation

The refrain “fake news” encapsulates how poorly the mainstream media has been regarded in recent years.

For many it is seen as a toxic industry, peddling misinformation on behalf of governments and big business - and owned by unaccountable moguls and oligarchs.

The most recent Edelman Trust Barometer showed that **nearly one out of two (46%) believe the media to be a divisive force** in society.

Yet, the coronavirus outbreak and the subsequent invasion of Ukraine are responsible for a **dramatic increase in news consumption**.

It suggests, despite their scepticism, the public is increasingly prepared to trust the media to help them decipher complex and challenging events that are unfolding globally.

We've seen **subscriptions and traffic soaring for news websites** as well as record TV audiences - demonstrating that the courage of correspondents risking their lives to tell the stories of those caught in the conflict **is not going unappreciated**.

Conclusion: Tell you what I want, what I really, really want

There is one man more than any other who has shaped the modern newsroom - and that is Martin Clarke.

When he was handed the reins of a forlorn and neglected news website a little over a decade ago, few would have predicted that he would transform it into a global powerhouse.

But that is exactly the effect his stewardship has had on The Mail Online over the past 13 years - taking its monthly views to 370million today.

In his leaving speech to staff he neatly encapsulates why understanding the reader is so central to today's newsroom - while admitting he wasn't initially thrilled with his new gig.



He said: *"I assumed when they foisted it on me that I was being shafted. And maybe I was.*

"But anyway, pretty quickly I realised that all that reader data you get instantly in real time gave me, as an old-fashioned newspaper editor, superpowers.

"And I was addicted, and pretty soon so were the readers. I couldn't imagine, within a few months, ever going back to a world where we would have to guess what the readers actually wanted to read rather than instantly knowing for a fact."

Conclusion

Ultimately, we are now in an era where reporters and editors know exactly what the audience wants.

The result is that the art of media relations has never been a more important skill in a PR professional's toolkit.

This doesn't mean 'digital PR', that meaningless term so many are quick to throw out in the hope of displaying up to date understanding of the discipline. It's much more strategic than scraping data on the 10 most searched for characters from Game of Thrones or what a bread roll is called in different parts of the UK.

Granted, the pandemic has presented the industry with challenges in how best to conduct effective media relations, but now that it is receding from view, it's vital we build back those relationships in order to gain that vital insight into the issues and the angles that most engage the wider public.

We do our job better by plugging in to the insights and sentiment that tech gives us regarding people's use of social platforms and their appetite for different kinds of content.



Get In Touch

If this makes you think again about your brand's media strategy - either changing it or creating one in the first place - we'd love to help.



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