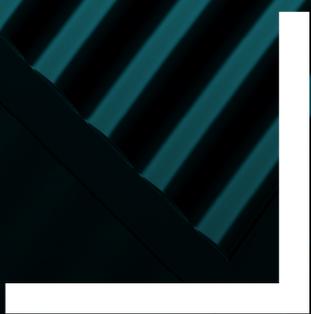


THE POWER OF REGISTRATION: FROM ANONYMOUS TO KNOWN USERS

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INTRODUCTION

News publishers have long encouraged readers to register for exclusive content, collecting first-party data in the process. With subscription growth plateauing, these direct relationships have become increasingly valuable for monetisation.

This was particularly evident during FT Strategies' Subscriptions Academy EMEA 2025, supported by the Google News Initiative. This year, 12 publishers from across EMEA — all at different stages of their reader revenue journey — came together to tackle the challenge of converting anonymous audiences into paying subscribers.

Despite differences in market context and resources, they shared a common challenge: deepening reader relationships and building sustainable audience value. Some joined seeking fresh approaches to registration walls; others discovered this need through the programme itself.

This report outlines the importance of a robust registration strategy, the barriers that hold news publishers back and how organisations can design a registration proposition that paves the way for paid subscriptions.

Drawing on insights and case studies from the 12 publishers on the programme as well as insights from the Financial Times, El País, Blick and Bloomberg, the report offers adaptable strategies that can be applied by publishers of any size.

In this report, we will explain:

- » Why registration is a strategic opportunity for publishers in 2026 and beyond
- » How successful registration strategies from across EMEA can be applied within your own organisation
- » The four challenges that block registration growth — and how tried-and-tested tactics can help overcome them



It has been a great privilege to support such a geographically diverse cohort with publishers from Spain, South Africa, Lebanon, Ireland, Italy, France, the UAE and Czechia. They've all brought a unique set of perspectives, challenges and ideas that have enriched the discussions with both the FT Strategies team and each other.

FATEN DUBARRY,
DIRECTOR, GOOGLE NEWS PARTNERSHIPS LEAD,
FRANCE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The Subscriptions Academy EMEA 2025 is a five-month programme delivered by FT Strategies and supported by the Google News Initiative. This year's edition was the eleventh Subscriptions Academy since 2020 and the sixth iteration of the programme in the EMEA region.

Participating publishers in this year's programme included:

-  **ABC:** An influential Spanish publication recognised for its authoritative reporting and insightful analysis of national and international affairs
-  **Ouest-France:** France's most widely read newspaper, valued for its deep regional engagement and balanced national and international reporting
-  **Heraldo:** A leading regional news outlet published in Zaragoza, known for its robust journalism and commitment to informing local and national audiences
-  **Le Parisien:** A leading French outlet combining accessible reporting with authoritative coverage of current affairs in Paris, across France, and beyond
-  **Project Syndicate:** A global platform providing expert commentary and analysis from the world's foremost economists, policymakers, and thinkers
-  **Irish Farmers Journal:** Ireland's definitive source for agricultural journalism, delivering sector-leading analysis, reporting, and market intelligence
-  **News24:** South Africa's largest source of news and analysis, widely read for its investigations and coverage of domestic and global developments
-  **Pagella Politica:** A prominent fact-checking and analysis organisation dedicated to promoting accuracy and transparency in public discourse
-  **L'Orient Today:** A respected English-language outlet offering in-depth and nuanced coverage of political and economic issues in Lebanon and the Middle East
-  **Il Fatto Quotidiano:** A highly regarded independent publication known for its investigative reporting and critical examination of political and institutional power
-  **Majarra:** A pioneering Arabic-language media group providing high-quality, knowledge-driven journalism for audiences across the Arab world
-  **Courrier International:** A globally minded publication that translates and curates high-quality journalism from around the world for French-speaking audiences

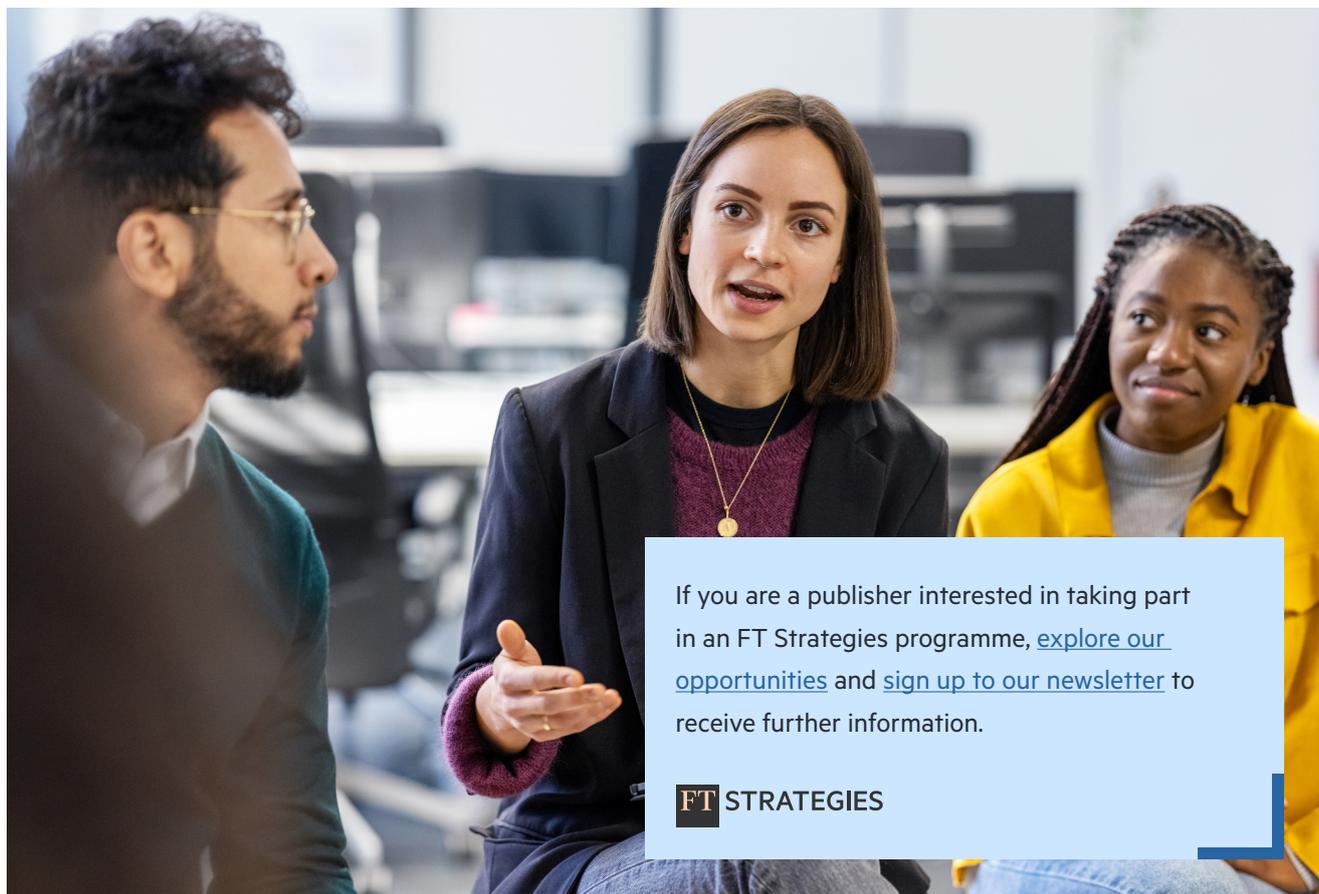
Throughout the programme's unique mix of masterclass sessions, one-to-one consultations and inspiration sessions from industry leaders, these publishers were supported with:

1. Identifying opportunities to drive digital subscription growth
2. Developing an ambitious North Star goal for digital subscriptions
3. Creating an actionable plan with initiatives and tactics to achieve the goal
4. Designing, running and analysing experiments to validate high-impact ideas

“

We like this programme because it's a very good mix of inspiration sessions and practical projects which really make sense for our publication. This programme “forces” us to take time and think about our strategy...

ÉMILIE SUEUR,
HEAD OF DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT, L'ORIENT TODAY



REGISTRATION AS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

After a decade of steady growth, digital news subscriptions have reached a natural plateau in many markets.

According to the 2025 [Reuters Institute Digital News Report](#)¹, just 18 per cent of people across 20 countries pay for online news. This figure includes digital subscriptions as well as membership, donations and one-off contributions, and shows little change compared with 2024.

This pattern suggests a structural limit to paid-for news rather than a short-term slowdown. Many of the audiences most willing to pay have already converted, while economic uncertainty and shifting consumption habits have made it harder to expand beyond this core group. At the same time, audiences have become [more fragmented across platforms](#)² and increasingly disengaged from a [chaotic, ever-changing news agenda](#)³. As a result, publishers are rethinking how to sustain their subscription growth. Registration — converting anonymous audiences into known users through a lightweight value exchange — has become what the International News Media Association [recently described](#)⁴ as “the lifeblood of sustainable media businesses.”

From our experience on the programme and working with more than 1,000 publishers over the last five years, registration consistently delivers two clear advantages:

- 1. Accelerating sustainable growth** by expanding known audiences and improving revenue performance amongst priority segments
- 2. Strengthening resilience to market change** by enabling publishers to respond more effectively to shifts in consumer behaviours and data privacy rules



1. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. “[Digital News Report 2025](#),” June 17, 2025.

2. Nieman Lab. “[For The First Time, Social Media Overtakes TV as Americans’ Top News Source](#),” Nieman Lab, June 16, 2025.

3. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. “[People Are Turning Away From the News. Here’s Why It May Be Happening](#),” February 21, 2025.

4. Hopperton, Jodie. “[News Companies Rewrite Their Playbooks With the New Rules of First-party Data](#),” International News Media Association (INMA), December 10, 2025.



ACCELERATING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

For publishers looking to accelerate sustainable growth, three common drivers are prompting news publishers to reconsider their registration strategy:

1. ‘We have hit our subscription ceiling amongst readers who know about us’

With subscriptions flattening in many markets and fewer people willing to pay for online news, growth is harder to achieve than it was five to ten years ago. As a result, many publishers are focusing on converting regular but anonymous users into known, engaged readers.

In mature news markets, this is made more acute by the fact that a [small number of national publishers capture the majority of paying subscribers](#)⁵. For the rest, growth relies on building direct relationships with audiences methodically through registrations, newsletter sign-ups and surveys.

Once registered, users can be nurtured through content sampling, tailored products and personalised experiences that deepen engagement and move them towards a paid subscription.

2. ‘We want to attract new audience segments’

For many publishers, future growth depends on reaching audiences who are not yet deeply engaged with their products — including younger readers, new geographic markets and other casual users who sit outside their core base. As [the 2025 Digital News Report shows](#)⁶, these groups typically consume news differently; they are more likely to encounter it first through platforms — particularly

social/video — than to seek it out directly from news sources.

In this context, an immediate subscription pitch is unlikely to succeed. Registration instead offers a low-friction way to establish a relationship, moving users from platform discovery into owned channels such as mobile apps and newsletters, where frequency of use and habit can be developed over time.

This strategy is particularly important in markets where willingness to pay remains relatively low — for example, [Italy](#) (around 9 per cent), [Spain](#) (around 10 per cent), [the UK](#) (around 10 per cent) and [France](#) (around 11 per cent). Several of the publishers in the Subscriptions Academy EMEA 2025 programme fit this profile, requiring a longer runway to demonstrate content value and build brand loyalty before asking readers to subscribe.

Once registered, users can be nurtured through content sampling, tailored products and personalised experiences that deepen engagement and move them towards a paid subscription.

5. Tobitt, Charlotte. “100k Club: 2025 Ranking of World’s Biggest News Publishers by Digital Subscribers.” Press Gazette, May 28, 2025.

6. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. “Digital News Report 2025.” June 17, 2025.

3. 'Our average revenue per user is declining'

As subscription growth slows, many publishers are relying more heavily on discounting to attract new customers. This has led to significant volatility in average revenue per user (ARPU), particularly where introductory offers dominate acquisition strategies.

Registration offers a practical way to counter this trend by enabling publishers to monetise engagement before a reader commits to a paid subscription. By collecting first-party data and encouraging habitual use, registration increases the value of logged-in audiences to both advertisers and subscription teams.

For example, publishers can:

- **Charge around 45 per cent more for display advertising when demographic data is available (at least three data points)**

- **Convert around 10 per cent more trialists to subscription, courtesy of personalisation informed by registration data**
- **Convert between three and 40 times more logged-in users to subscriptions, relative to anonymous readers**



Note: These data points draw on FT benchmarks and reflect a higher-net-worth audience segment than the general population.

Over time, the cumulative effect of higher engagement, improved conversion and increased advertiser value contributes to meaningful revenue gains and a higher ARPU.





STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE TO MARKET CHANGE

Registration has also become increasingly important as news publishers respond to structural shifts in how audiences are reached, understood and monetised.

Two forces in particular — audience fragmentation and tightening data privacy regulations — are reshaping the environment for news publishers. Both point to an accelerating need for publishers to build direct, logged-in relationships that reduce reliance on platforms and give greater control over engagement and revenue:

Changing audience behaviours

Over the last decade, [audience behaviour has fragmented across platforms and formats](#)⁷, weakening direct relationships between publishers and readers. More than ever, a publisher's brand and content are discovered through intermediaries rather than directly via their own products.

FT Strategies' [Next Gen News research](#)⁸ highlights how this shift is particularly pronounced amongst younger audiences. While 18-24 year olds value the news, they expect experiences that are more personalised, visual and frictionless than most publisher offerings currently provide. Their broader digital consumption habits — including switching fluidly between apps, platforms and tasks — also make loyalty difficult for publishers to build and sustain.

In this context, registration offers a practical way to capture first-party data, personalise content, and transform fleeting platform-based interactions into ongoing, recognisable relationships.

Tightening data privacy regulation

At the same time, a tightening privacy environment is transforming how audience data can be collected and used. European regulatory enforcement changes to browser policies have reduced the [availability and effectiveness of third-party data for audience targeting](#)⁹. This is shrinking the pool of addressable audiences for advertisers, as well as publishers looking to grow audience and revenue.

While not a direct driver of publishers' registration strategies, it reinforces the importance of first-party data to building sustainable engagement and monetisation. Publishers that prioritise consented, direct relationships will be better positioned to understand, engage and monetise their audiences as external data signals continue to diminish.

Together, these external dynamics explain why registration has emerged as a strategic lever for both growth and resilience. The next section of this report explores how the Financial Times and other leading publishers across EMEA are putting this into practice.

7. Nelson, Jacob L., and Ryan F. Lei. "The Effect of Digital Platforms on News Audience Behaviour." *Digital Journalism* 6, no. 5: 619–33.

8. "Next Gen News," n.d.

9. Lively, Taylor Kay. "The Way the Third-party Cookie Crumbles: Part 1 – EU and UK Developments | IAPP." [IAPP.org](#).

CASE STUDY

THE FINANCIAL TIMES' REGISTRATION STRATEGY

Over the past 15 years, the Financial Times has grown its subscriber base to more than three million paying digital subscribers. A central driver of its business-to-consumer (B2C) growth has been its focus on registration as a mechanism to both gather first-party data and engage users more deeply with its products.

The FT's approach to registration centres on three main pillars:

1. Making the registration proposition valuable
2. Using rich first-party data to enable personalisation
3. Continually refining the registration wall

FINANCIAL TIMES

Access Account Preferences

Create an account

Get access in a couple of steps and upgrade later for the full FT experience.

All new members also start receiving our weekly **Editor's Digest** newsletter

Email address
This address will be used to create your account

Enter your email address

“
Personalising a customer experience is critical to making the subscriber feel relevant to them and therefore with the pricing that they're paying, which means we can retain them for longer. That personalisation is focused across customer care interactions and across marketing campaigns; we're building it into product experience and we're creating triggered experiences where we can respond in real-time to a change in customer behaviour.

MARIE GODDARD,
HEAD OF RETENTION, FINANCIAL TIMES

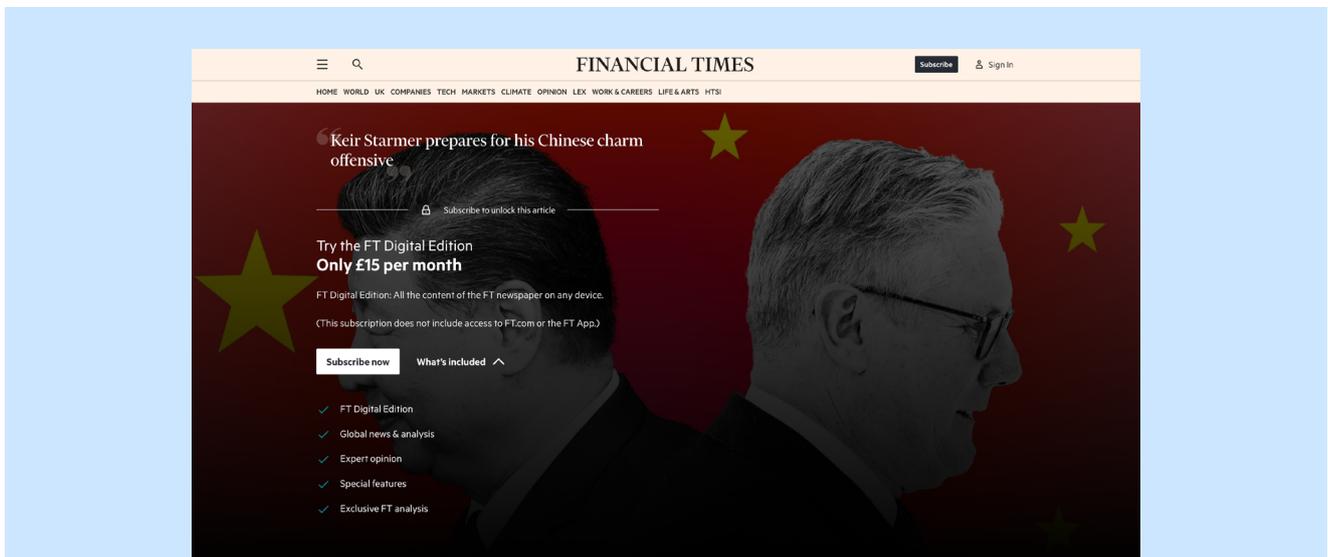


MAKING THE REGISTRATION PROPOSITION VALUABLE

At the Financial Times, registration is treated as a product in its own right, rather than simply as a stepping stone to subscription.

By default, anonymous users can only read free content on the FT or sample premium journalism through certain routes, such as 'first click free' or via gifted articles. Meanwhile, registered users receive meaningfully different access: they retain unlimited access to free articles and to habit-building features such as commenting, sharing and saving articles, following topics and receiving personalised alerts. They also receive a monthly allowance of three premium articles.

Importantly, the FT's content mix supports this progression from anonymous reader to registered user. Around 15 per cent of content is free to read, approximately 77 per cent is standard, and about 8 per cent is premium. This structure provides a clear incentive for readers to register and a structured pathway to subscribe.



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USING RICH FIRST-PARTY DATA TO ENABLE PERSONALISATION

During the registration process, the Financial Times has been careful to reduce friction. Sign-up is completed in a single step, and users only need to provide an email address. Additional data — such as job role and industry — is requested through progressive profiling, an approach that increases completion rates while still building a contactable, consented user profile.

Crucially, this data isn't only used to market subscriptions to interested users. It also underpins the FT's product

experience. By combining the topics that users care about with behavioural data such as reading time, the FT can recommend content to registered users that is proven to engage and convert lookalike audiences.

As a result, the value of registration is felt immediately. Registered users receive more relevant content both in their email inbox and across the FT's website and app, reinforcing the benefits of signing up and encouraging habitual use.

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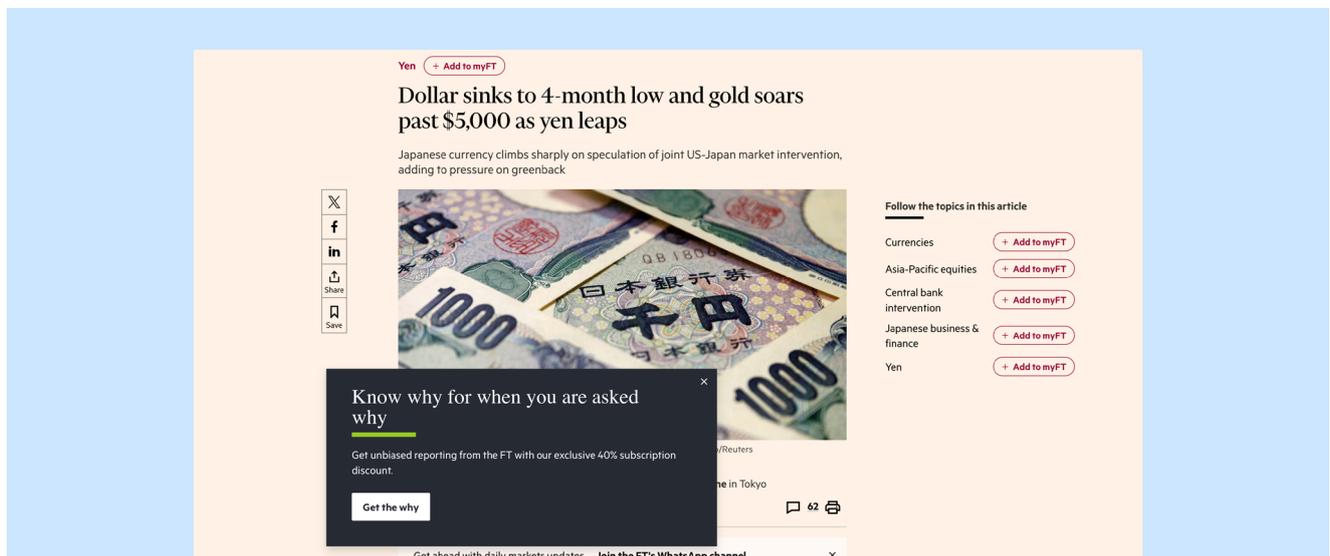


CONTINUALLY REFINING THE REGISTRATION WALL

The Financial Times has taken an iterative approach to refining its registration wall, regularly testing its timing, placement and the information requested from users.

Earlier experiments that enforced registration for all users led to higher bounce rates and a decline in advertising revenue. In response, the FT has moved away from rigid requirements towards a more flexible, non-intrusive model. Today, users are encouraged to unlock additional content and features by sharing more information over time.

This approach ensures registration enhances engagement with FT journalism rather than interrupting it. Across the business, registration is now viewed not simply as an acquisition tool but as the start of a relationship that can be supplemented by other channels. For instance, readers on a trial are **134 per cent more likely** to be retained if they subscribe to a newsletter. This highlights that early engagement through direct channels plays a critical role in conversion and long-term retention.



Across the business, registration is now viewed not simply as an acquisition tool but as the start of a relationship that can be supplemented by other channels.

OTHER SUCCESSFUL REGISTRATION STRATEGIES

The Financial Times is not alone in using registration as a strategic lever. Publishers across EMEA have deployed registration to expand known audiences, encourage habitual usage of their products and increase conversions to paid offerings.

The cases below illustrate approaches that can be adapted by publishers at different stages of maturity:

EL PAÍS

Run a registration wall before (or alongside) the paywall

El País initiated a year of free account creation before launching its paid product, building a base of 3.7 million registered users by 2021. When subscriptions were introduced, around 80 per cent of paying readers had previously registered. This sequencing helped de-risk the launch of the paid proposition and shortened the path to subscriber growth in the first 12 months.

Do it yourself: Pilot a soft registration wall — where sign-up is encouraged but not required — with a clear allowance of premium reads and a short onboarding flow that promotes newsletters and alerts.

Blick

Experiment with new and novel registration benefits beyond content

At **Blick**, registration was not limited to content access. It also unlocked features such as commenting, competitions and exclusive access to a hiking content vertical. This broader value proposition enabled the publisher to acquire 600,000 registered users before launching a paid-for offering. By offering benefits beyond content alone, **Blick** was able to attract new audiences without tightening access to its journalism.

Do it yourself: Ensure you have a robust content sampling model in place, then select two to three high-interest on-site features that can be reserved for registered users only. Use registration as the mechanism to unlock access to these features.

Bloomberg

Offer a “subscribe or register” decision fork

First-time readers to **Bloomberg’s** website are presented with a clear choice: create a free account for additional access or subscribe for the full suite of benefits. This user-led decision fork has grown the number of known users without undermining subscription growth.

Do it yourself: Place a decision fork on high-trafficked pages. Keep registration as a one-step process with clearly articulated benefits, while maintaining a prominent upgrade path to subscription for those who are ready to pay.

KEY REGISTRATION CHALLENGES — AND HOW YOU CAN ADDRESS THEM

One of the core elements of the Subscriptions Academy EMEA 2025 programme was working with news publishers to identify registration-based opportunities to drive subscription growth. While some had established basic registration propositions, few had yet realised their full potential.

Across the cohort, we observed four recurring organisational and strategic challenges that limited their ability to execute registration effectively. We're sharing them here to highlight the common barriers as well as the practical steps that can turn registration from a neglected proposition to a strategic lever for growth.

- 1 Internal misalignment around the business benefit of registration
- 2 Limited growth due to registration that doesn't reflect users' needs
- 3 Limited growth due to an underutilised registration wall
- 4 Limited engagement due to poorly communicated benefits



1 INTERNAL MISALIGNMENT AROUND THE BUSINESS BENEFIT OF REGISTRATION



What we saw

At several publishers, teams lacked a shared understanding of the purpose of registration or how it contributed to wider business goals.

In some cases, registration had become a neglected part of the digital offering, or it was used primarily to drive newsletter sign-ups without a clear strategy for deepening engagement or progressing users towards subscriptions. As a result, the registration proposition often bore little relation to the paid offering or failed to nudge users along the subscription journey.

A lack of internal alignment also meant that some publishers underutilised their pool of registered users. These audiences did not receive targeted lifecycle communications, personalised offers or time-bound trials and discounts, representing a missed opportunity to boost subscription numbers and revenue.



Opportunities to address

Addressing misalignment requires a single, clearly articulated strategy that defines both sides of the value exchange:

- **For users:** clear benefits that enable content sampling, unlock features that improve the experience (such as commenting or saving articles) and deliver communications that add value (such as newsletters)
- **For the business:** first-party data that supports both advertising performance and subscription conversion

Clarity on how each registration benefit creates value for users and the business allows teams to simplify the

proposition and remove elements that no longer serve a clear purpose. Once agreed, publishers can adopt governance routines to review whether registration is delivering against business objectives and what adjustments are needed to improve performance.



Quick wins

- **Run a cross-team alignment workshop:** Bring together advertising, subscriptions, product and editorial teams to understand the opportunities and trade-offs of registration. Map the current and intended user journey from anonymous reader to registered user and then paying subscriber. Identify shared objectives and KPIs to review as a group on a monthly or quarterly basis.
- **Create a registration value canvas:** Develop a one-page framework that lists each registration benefit (such as exclusive newsletter or saved articles) alongside its purpose (for example, encourage sampling or build habit) and intended business outcome (including increased subscription conversion and improved engagement). This will surface gaps in the proposition and opportunities to simplify.
- **Build a registration value model:** Quantify the business impact of each audience segment (anonymous, registered and subscribed users) using a simple dashboard. Track key indicators (sessions/user, frequency, depth), monetisation (ad revenue per user/session) and conversion likelihood (propensity and upgrade rates from one audience segment to the next) to identify the biggest levers for growth.

2 LIMITED GROWTH DUE TO A REGISTRATION PROPOSITION THAT DOESN'T REFLECT USERS' NEEDS



What we saw

Across the cohort, many registration propositions had not evolved in line with changing audience behaviours or expectations.

In several cases, benefits were heavily skewed towards functional features — such as commenting or saving articles — while content-based benefits, including premium or other sampling mechanisms, were underused. While functional features can support engagement, offering one or two without clear content benefits is rarely sufficient to make registration feel like a meaningful step towards subscription.

For some publishers, the experience of a registered user was almost identical to that of an anonymous reader. With no additional content access, limited personalisation and few incentives to log in, registered users showed similar session depth and frequency to non-registered users.

In a number of cases, registration benefits had not been updated since their launch — in one instance for more than a decade — indicating a clear misalignment with the needs and expectations of their audience.

Publishers should also ensure the right blend of content-based benefits — such as limited access to premium articles — and habit-building features, including topic follows, alerts and flagship newsletters. Content selection logic can help determine what to lock, what to sample, and what to keep free, while minimising any negative impact on advertising revenue.



Quick wins

- **Test your current registration benefits against audience segments:** Identify which benefits resonate with existing registered users and which appeal to target segments. Reframe or retire those that no longer meet user needs.
- **Experiment with enhanced sampling models:** Test approaches such as a monthly allowance of premium articles, time-limited access to specific content or more flexible metering to build habit before users encounter the paywall.



Opportunities to address

Re-evaluating registration through the lens of audience needs can help position it as the first step towards subscription. Audience research and content data can be used to identify which benefits resonate most with distinct cohorts of registered users. For instance, readers who are already familiar with the brand may respond to different benefits than those who are encountering it for the first time. The aim is to make registration feel as relevant and valuable to as many users as possible.

3 LIMITED GROWTH DUE TO AN UNDERUTILISED REGISTRATION WALL



What we saw

For several publishers on the programme, the registration wall itself limited growth.

In some cases, the wall was difficult for users to discover, either because it was poorly signposted in website navigation or triggered too infrequently on article pages. In both of these cases, registration lacked the visibility needed to make it an effective tool to convert anonymous readers into registered users.

A separate issue involved publishers pushing users straight to trial or subscription. While this can be a useful mechanism for testing users' price sensitivity, it bypasses the 'known user' stage and risks losing the long-term engagement and retention benefits that come from having a deeper relationship with registered users.



Opportunities to address

Building a more effective registration wall requires treating it as a core engagement and data-capture mechanism, rather than a secondary feature.

Publishers can introduce a more visible registration wall that is triggered at moments of clear value exchange — for example, when a user hits their first premium article or during high-engagement sessions. Testing the balance between friction and data capture can help identify the most effective combinations of copy, design and required fields.



Quick wins

- **Increase the visibility of the registration wall:** Ensure it appears consistently in high-traffic areas, such as article pages, mobile apps and newsletters, with a clear, value-led call to action (for example, "Register for free access to premium stories").
- **Test registration walls at high-value moments:** Experiment with variants triggered after article previews, before commenting or prior to subscription prompts, comparing completion rates across copy, design and field requirements.
- **Expand registration fields progressively:** Begin with email, then request information such as name, interests or profession over time to improve segmentation and personalisation without increasing friction.

4 LIMITED ENGAGEMENT DUE TO POORLY COMMUNICATED BENEFITS



What we saw

For several publishers on the programme, the registration value exchange was unclear or inconsistently communicated. In short, it wasn't clear what a user received by signing up.

In many cases, benefits were not signposted at key moments — such as the registration wall, the sign-up form or the confirmation screen. As a result, users often registered without understanding what they would get in exchange for sharing their personal details.

This lack of clarity contributed to low activation amongst registered users. In some cases, fewer than 1-2 per cent of registered users became active in the first six to 12 months, indicating that registration alone was not translating into sustained engagement.

In a small number of publisher registration flows, benefits were either missing entirely, buried on later screens or fragmented across different pages. In others, the value of registration was explained only after the user's email address had been captured, leaving little immediate incentive to return.



Opportunities to address

Making benefits explicit before and during sign-up is central to addressing this challenge. Publishers should clearly communicate what users unlock immediately and what ongoing benefits they can expect over time.

Providing a small sampling allowance that can be used straight away helps ensure registration delivers immediate value. Clear onboarding journeys can then reinforce this value by guiding new users towards features such as topic

follows or high-performing newsletters.

Leading publishers in this area increasingly use propensity-informed messaging to shape the first month of the registered user experience. Rather than relying on generic nudges, they deliver timely, tailored prompts that reflect users' interests and behaviour.



Quick wins

- Audit registration messaging across touchpoints:** Review how benefits are communicated on the registration wall, sign-up form and post-registration onboarding. Consolidate key messages so users clearly understand what they receive and when.
- Optimise the onboarding experience:** Trigger a welcome email series or on-site prompts that highlight one or two tangible benefits (for example, "Follow topics you care about" or "Unlock three premium reads this month"). Provide information about how the user can further customise or personalise their experience to get maximum value from it.
- Personalise follow-up communication:** Tailor in-life email and push notification messaging based on activity levels. For example, re-engagement messages for dormant users (such as "We miss you") and tailored content for active ones ("Here's more of what you liked").

SUMMARY

Drawing on lessons from the FT's own digital transformation and the progress made by 12 publishers redefining their registration journeys, one conclusion is clear: sustainable subscription growth increasingly relies on user-centred, data-informed and continuously tested registration strategies.

In a platform-dominated, privacy-conscious market, registration provides a powerful mechanism for converting top-of-funnel reach into loyalty and loyalty into recurring revenue. For publishers planning for 2026 and beyond, registration has the potential to be more than a supporting tactic. When designed well, it can be the foundation of a sustainable reader revenue strategy.



QUICK WINS CRIB SHEET

CHALLENGE	OPPORTUNITY	QUICK WINS
Internal misalignment around the business benefit of registration	Be clear about how the registration strategy drives value for the business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Run a cross-team alignment workshop » Create a registration value canvas » Build a registration value model
Limited growth due to registration proposition that doesn't reflect users' needs	Use audience research and content data to align benefits with audience expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Test your current registration benefits against audience segments » Experiment with enhanced sampling models
Limited growth due to an underutilised registration wall	Increase wall visibility at moments of clear value exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Increase the visibility of the registration wall » Test registration walls at high-value moments » Expand registration fields progressively
Limited engagement due to poorly communicated benefits	Make benefits explicit before and during sign-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Audit registration messaging across touchpoints » Optimise the onboarding experience » Personalise follow-up communication

PROGRAMME CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY**ABC**

Increasing conversions by showing the paywall more often to highly engaged users

Situation

ABC is one of Spain's most widely recognised national news brands, attracting 27 million monthly unique visitors, many of whom are loyal users. Despite these strong traffic fundamentals, subscribers account for less than 0.2 per cent of unique users, creating a large gap between reach and revenue potential.

To close the gap between engagement and conversion during the Subscriptions Academy EMEA 2025 programme, ABC decided to test whether showing the paywall more frequently to its most engaged users could nudge them into becoming subscribers.

Action

ABC ran a controlled experiment to validate the impact of a dynamic paywall on conversion. Two groups of users were compared:

- Group 1 (highly engaged users): Users saw the paywall every time they attempted to read an article (all content locked).
- Group 2 (control): Users experienced the standard editorially-driven content lock mechanism (approximately 30 per cent locked).

The hypothesis was that if heavy users see subscription prompts more consistently, they would convert at a higher rate than those who see the paywall only on selected premium content.

The experiment focused on a single primary metric — the conversion rate — whilst also monitoring engagement to ensure the experience did not alienate readers or reduce time spent on site.

+46%

Conversion rate for users shown the dynamic paywall compared to control group



Having the opportunity to engage in joint discussions and analyses of our strengths and weaknesses, and to design an improvement plan in collaboration with the FT, is truly a privilege.

CRISTIAN GONZÁLEZ LÓPEZ,
CRO MANAGER, ABC

Result

The dynamic paywall produced a clear improvement in conversion. Group 1 converted at a rate 46 per cent higher than the control group (0.38 per cent vs. 0.26 per cent), demonstrating that increased paywall exposure for heavy readers can lift subscription performance without harming overall engagement.

Importantly, user behaviour remained stable. ABC reported minimal negative impact on engagement metrics, indicating that the more frequent paywall encounters did not deter reading or lead to unexpected drop-offs.

ABC is now piloting a more advanced version of the dynamic paywall using machine learning technology from Evolok, which will determine the optimal moment to show the paywall to each reader based on their likelihood to subscribe. If successful, ABC plans to scale testing to a larger audience segment and potentially extend the model across other Vocento brands.

CASE STUDY



COURRIER INTERNATIONAL

Redesigning the paywall to turn more curious readers into subscribers

Situation

Courrier International is a distinctive French current affairs magazine that curates global journalism for a francophone audience. It reaches around 5 million monthly users and has a strong base of around 75,000 subscribers, with low churn rates that demonstrate that readers get value from its content and products.

As part of its effort to increase the number of paying subscribers, Courier sought to convert more of its large anonymous audience. Currently, only about 10 per cent of users hit the paywall and the rate of readers converting to paid has scope for improvement. Improving the effectiveness of the paywall was therefore a priority lever for short-term growth.

Action

Courier ran an A/B test comparing its existing paywall with a redesigned version on a share of traffic. The goal was to see whether clearer design and messaging could increase both click-through from the wall and final subscription conversions.

The new design surfaced a strong value proposition (“Pour lire la suite... abonnez-vous” - “To read more... subscribe”), highlighted a clear entry price point from €3.99 per month, and used more prominent CTAs — including a “Je m’abonne” (“I Subscribe”) button and a Google Pay option. The layout was simplified to focus attention on the core benefits and next steps, and its success was measured by paywall click-through rate (CTR) and conversion rate.

+60% Increase in conversions from new paywall design

+0.03% Click-through rate uplift from old to new paywall



The consultants from FT Strategies listen to us, are responsive and their analyses are very accurate.

MYNN-MAY VANG,
DIGITAL PRODUCT MANAGER,
COURRIER INTERNATIONAL

Result

The redesigned wall outperformed the control on both key metrics. CTR increased marginally from 0.09 per cent to 0.12 per cent, whilst the new design generated 60 per cent more conversions than the old one over the test period.

With the hypothesis proven, Courier plans to run the experiment for longer and iterate on copy and design. Further tests on paywall rules and checkout steps to understand where users drop off are also being planned.

The critical choices behind this early win were focusing on a high-leverage point in the journey, testing with a clean A/B setup and measuring both CTR and completed subscriptions to capture the full impact of the redesign.

CASE STUDY**HERALDO** **HERALDO**

Boosting engagement amongst registered users through related content links in newsletters

Situation

Heraldo is a leading regional publisher in Aragon, Spain with exceptionally strong traffic penetration and a steadily growing subscriber base. One of its key strengths — identified during the Subscriptions Academy EMEA 2025 programme — was its large registered user base, which accounts for 5.4 per cent of readers. However, most of these users are low-engagement registrants, with only 6.2 per cent of the total registrants considered active in a typical month.

Heraldo sought to bring this audience back to the site more often, deepen their engagement and increase their likelihood of eventually subscribing. One opportunity was to make newsletters a stronger re-engagement channel by integrating content that encourages registered users to return to Heraldos site more frequently.

Action

Heraldo launched an experiment in its high-volume daily games newsletter, adding a block of related top-story links beneath the primary games content. This newsletter was chosen because of its large list size and daily cadence, creating an ideal environment to test whether strategically placed editorial links could encourage more active behaviour among registered users.

The hypothesis was simple: if registered users are reminded of relevant, high-quality content directly inside emails they already open, they are more likely to click through, re-engage with the site and develop deeper habits.

Success was measured using a clear primary metric: the click-through rate (CTR) of the games newsletter after the related content block was introduced.

5.4% Heraldos users that are currently registered

+81% Increase in the CTR for the games newsletter after adding the related content blocks

Result

Initial results were very strong. The CTR of the games newsletter increased from 0.21 per cent to 0.38 per cent, representing an 81 per cent uplift and demonstrating that registered users are responsive to editorial prompts when the content is relevant and well-positioned. This confirms that newsletters can play a meaningful role in reactivating Heraldos large but underutilised registered user base.

The experiment showed no negative user reactions and required minimal operational overhead, making it a low-risk, high-value way to increase engagement. It also highlighted a clear opportunity to scale the approach across other newsletters in Heraldos portfolio.

The teams next steps are to increase the audience size for the games newsletter with improved communication about why users should sign up, and to roll out the related content block to additional newsletters to expand the engagement impact. These moves will help Heraldos unlock more value from its registered users and support progress towards its ambition to double the active number of registered users.

CASE STUDY



IL FATTO QUOTIDIANO

Strengthening retention by notifying subscribers before payment failure

Situation

Il Fatto Quotidiano is a leading Italian political publisher with a young, loyal audience and growing digital presence. Its subscription base has grown significantly in recent years, supported by strong engagement and a churn rate that is markedly lower than industry averages for publishers of its size. As part of its North Star strategy, Il Fatto Quotidiano aims to keep its churn rate at its current level whilst it pursues ambitious acquisition goals.

During the Subscriptions Academy EMEA 2025 programme, the project team identified that churn could be reduced by strengthening the payment recovery process. Before the experiment, a subscriber may only become aware of their expired card when their subscription payment has already failed. The team hypothesised that more customers could be saved if they received communication in advance of their payment failing.

Action

To address this gap, Il Fatto Quotidiano introduced pre-payment notifications for subscribers whose cards had expired. Rather than waiting for a payment to fail, the new process sent a clear, action-oriented message seven days before renewal, prompting users to update their card details.

The team designed the notification to be simple, concise and easy to act upon, ensuring the change required minimal internal effort. The experiment tracked the percentage of contacted users who updated their payment details, whilst also monitoring for any negative reactions or unintended consequences.

38% Notified subscribers that updated their card details upon reminder

“

The lessons were clear, interesting, and focused on achieving maximum results.

FABIO AMATO,
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, IL FATTO QUOTIDIANO

Result

The test delivered strong early results. 38 per cent of notified subscribers updated their card details, a material behavioural shift given that subscribers rarely update payment information proactively. 30 per cent of subscriber payment details were automatically updated by Stripe, and a further 30 per cent proceeded to payment failure.

Although the majority of subscribers took no action on the notifications, the intervention still captured meaningful revenue that would otherwise have been lost — particularly as the subscribers renewed at full price and could have benefited from discounts if they had had to re-subscribe.

Crucially, the notifications produced no negative effects during the test period. There have been no signs of confusion, dissatisfaction or cancellations triggered by the message, and no operational drawbacks. This demonstrated that the intervention carries no opportunity cost and can be scaled safely as part of the renewal journey.

CASE STUDY**IRISH FARMERS JOURNAL**

Testing new premium features to improve the subscription value proposition

Situation

The Irish Farmers Journal (IFJ) identified a critical need to enhance its digital subscriber value proposition. Existing subscription tiers relied primarily on access format (digital vs. print) or archive access, which might not be compelling enough to justify upgrades and drive growth beyond the baseline.

The need for a high-utility, differentiated digital feature became urgent. A significant market opportunity was identified because a comparable, third-party tool for tracking dairy farm vaccines (e.g., Bovilis) went offline, leaving a substantial gap for Irish farmers needing a reliable, accessible solution. This created a pathway for IFJ to position its app as a genuine 'one-stop shop' utility, especially as it would build on IFJ's industry experience and fit its core audience's immediate needs.

Action

To capitalise on this market gap and test a highly differentiated digital feature, IFJ launched a separate app to test initial appetite. Whilst delivering a best-in-class vaccine tracking tool, directly solving a major logistical pain point for dairy and livestock farmers, this experiment was also about justifying premium digital pricing by adding high-value utility to the subscription package.

+20 New subscribers

€25 Per new subscriber



The GNI programme run by FT Strategies has given us a framework to sit back for a few hours and really think about where we want to go with our subscriptions over the coming years.

DAVID HARTNETT,
CIRCULATION AND SALES MANAGER, IRISH FARMERS JOURNAL

Result

The initiative demonstrated strong initial product-market fit and validated the strategy of using essential agricultural utility features to significantly boost digital subscriptions. Key learnings indicated initial interest with 20 subscribers willing to pay €25 for this feature, proving its viability as a premium offering.

Additionally, the overall feedback has been largely positive, and there seems to be an opportunity to monetise this feature even further by allowing for paid sponsors. The next steps planned involve fully integrating the feature into the IFJ app and running further experiments to optimise the marketing and messaging around this new, powerful value proposition.

CASE STUDY**LE PARISIEN**

Optimising standard tier pricing for ARPU growth

Situation

Le Parisien faced a challenge in its monetisation strategy: the Solo package on the website — the strongest performing in terms of volume — was subject to heavy discounting, leading to the lowest ARPU amongst all products. This ARPU had declined by -18.5 per cent over the last two years, highlighting an urgent need to optimise the pricing for this core offering.

Whilst Le Parisien remained the cheapest amongst its competitors, the price difference between its lowest and highest subscription tiers was significantly steep (66 per cent difference for annual plans). This structure suggested potential optimisation to increase revenue per user.

The primary objective for the team was clearly defined: to increase ARPU by optimising the pricing of their subscription tiers.

Action

To address the low ARPU in the standard tier, the team launched a straightforward A/B test focused on the Solo standard monthly pack.

The hypothesis was that increasing the price of the standard tier would deliver a sufficient uplift in ARPU to offset a potential decrease in conversion volume, leading to net revenue growth. Le Parisien A/B tested a higher price point (€8.99) against the original standard price point (€7.99).

The initiative was a direct attempt to improve the revenue component of the North Star, understanding that high prices might reduce the volume of new conversions, but the resulting ARPU uplift could justify the trade-off.

+€1 Increase per subscription



It was very helpful to have your external vision. You were part of the team and [the programme] has been really useful - thank you so much. I feel more confident when I hear you. It's really useful to have this synthesis with you - for me it's light at the end of the tunnel.

ANNE-VIOLETTE REVEL DE LAMBERT,
CEO, LE PARISIEN

Result

The initial findings from the A/B test provided clear directional data on subscriber price sensitivity. The standard package, at the higher price point of €8.99, resulted in 10 per cent fewer conversions compared to the original price of €7.99. However, at this early stage of the experiment, there were no conclusive churn results available.

The outcome showed a measurable negative impact on conversion volume, indicating that Le Parisien needs to proceed carefully with price increases for its high-volume tier. Additional pricing analysis, such as Gabor-Granger or Van Westendorp, might be required to further test the audience's price sensitivity.

CASE STUDY

MAJARRA

Using a structured programme to frame subscription problems, prioritise experiments, and align the full funnel

Situation

Majarra is a premium Arabic-language knowledge platform that publishes internationally recognised brands such as HBR Arabia and MIT Tech Review Arabia. With a growing base of digital subscribers and ambitious revenue goals, subscriptions had already been identified as a core growth engine for the business.

Like many content-led organisations, Majarra faced a familiar challenge: multiple plausible optimisation opportunities across the subscription funnel, but limited clarity on how to prioritise them or assess their relative impact. Questions existed across acquisition, onboarding, engagement, retention, and payments, from registration friction and early churn, to notification strategy and involuntary churn. However, tackling these areas in isolation risked fragmented gains rather than sustained growth.

Action

Through the GNI Subscriptions Academy EMEA programme, Majarra adopted a structured framework to analyse the subscription journey end-to-end, from first registration through long-term retention and payment recovery.

A core element of the programme was a thorough, expert-led deep dive into Majarra's subscription model, facilitated by FT Strategies. This helped surface assumptions, stress-test existing approaches, and identify where focused experimentation was most likely to drive impact.

These strategic reviews were complemented by one-to-one working sessions, in which Majarra's team discussed implementation details, trade-offs, and potential experiments in depth. The programme also included a dedicated experimentation workshop focused on how to design, run, and evaluate experiments across different stages of the subscription funnel. Within this structure, Majarra designed and ran targeted experiments, including:



The programme came at exactly the right stage in Majarra's growth. The combination of expert review, one-on-one working sessions, and a shared experimentation framework helped us prioritise with greater confidence, aligning teams around a clear roadmap and concentrating effort where it has the highest impact on sustainable subscription growth.

AMMAR HAYKAL,
CEO, MAJARRA

- Optimisation of the registration wall, testing how friction and value signals affected conversion quality
- Structured churn and cancellation surveys, to quantify cancellation drivers and validate retention hypotheses
- Experiments on in-app notification volume, balancing engagement lift against fatigue and disengagement risk
- Billing retry experimentation, testing alternative retry cadences and diagnostics to reduce involuntary churn

Result

The primary outcome of the programme was a step change in how Majarra approaches subscription growth. The team moved from reactive optimisation to intentional, hypothesis-driven experimentation, with clear learning goals and success criteria.

Previously opaque areas of the funnel, such as early cancellations, notification fatigue, and payment failures, were reframed as systems that could be tested and tuned over time. The programme compressed months of internal debate and iteration into a structured learning cycle, giving the team confidence in where to invest next and how to scale improvements sustainably.

CASE STUDY



NEWS24

Repackaging flagship investigations to unlock new audiences and warm future subscribers

Situation

News24 is South Africa’s leading digital news brand, with strong reach and a growing subscriber base. Yet engagement and new subscriber growth had started to soften, whilst most of its high-impact investigations sat fully behind the paywall.

To support its goal of significantly scaling subscriptions, News24 needed a low-lift way to showcase the value of its journalism to non-subscribers and re-engage key target segments.

Action

News24 and FT Strategies co-designed an experiment to repackage archive investigations. The team curated a “Best of Investigations: 5 Years” series, refreshing five of its strongest investigations and running them over a focused, one-week window. Each day’s piece was free to all users for 24 hours from publication, before relocking behind the paywall with strong prompts to subscribe or register. Each piece was promoted via owned and off-platform channels, including newsletters, and using paid marketing.

All five pieces were brought together on a simple landing page with clear calls-to-action to “Subscribe” or “Register”. Execution required tight collaboration across editorial, product, marketing and data teams.

The experiment was designed to showcase the depth and value of News24’s journalism whilst creating a sense of urgency to subscribe.

Result

The series outperformed core benchmarks: average page views per article reached 15,000–20,000 (higher than

500,000

Total reach of investigations content across all platforms

+9.63%

Click-through rate of Facebook ads, higher than 2% benchmark

23,000

Pool of engaged Facebook users targeted for future subscription



This has been a successful experiment and one we want to replicate across other content desks.

KATE HENRY,
ASSISTANT EDITOR: DATA, OPERATIONS AND INNOVATION,
NEWS24

the 10,000 average) with the top pieces capping out at 30,000-40,000. Newsletter open rates hit 56 per cent (vs. 30-35 per cent benchmark) and delivered a 9.63 per cent Facebook click-through rate (vs. 2 per cent benchmark). Overall, unlocking News24 investigations content reached over 500,000 users.

Following the initial campaign, around 23,000 engaged users were added to a retargeting pool for Black Friday and future subscription campaigns. This is a sizeable warm audience which demonstrates the value of targeted sampling with high-quality content.

Key to success were three choices: using high-impact archive content, creating a clear 24-hour free window and coordinating promotion and measurement across all major channels.

CASE STUDY**OUEST FRANCE**

Accelerating registration with a newsletter wall on free articles

Situation

Ouest France is one of the largest and most trusted news brands in France, reaching around 50 million monthly users across the country and beyond. Its wide product portfolio and reputation for reliable local and national reporting give it a uniquely broad digital footprint, supported by steady acquisition and retention that exceeds international benchmarks.

However, despite this scale and maturity, the vast majority of Ouest France's readers remain anonymous, limiting the publisher's ability to build direct relationships, personalise experiences or activate them along the subscription funnel. Internal research suggested that newsletters are a compelling route into registration, often outperforming standard registration walls. This insight led to the decision to test a newsletter wall on free articles, as a way to encourage readers to provide their email address.

Action

Ouest France introduced a newsletter registration wall triggered when highly engaged anonymous users reached their second free article in a session. The newsletter that was offered varied depending on the article topic, such as sport, environment or local news, to maintain relevance and maximise the likelihood of conversion.

The experiment aimed to intercept high-volume, high-traffic reading patterns and convert those readers into identifiable, contactable users. Success was defined primarily by the registration conversion rate, with a secondary focus on dismissals and exit behaviour.

Early results showed that many users did not engage with the newsletter wall. To address this, Ouest-France has

338k Newsletter wall impressions during the initial test

800 New newsletter registrations

UNCHANGED

Exit Rate, compared to articles without the newsletter wall

since introduced significant design changes, including removing the close button, making the wall non-dismissable and ensuring it commands full attention on the page.

Result

The first iteration of the experiment generated 338,000 displays and resulted in 0.24% of users registering - an encouraging initial result. Moreover, the exit rate remained comparable to regular articles, indicating that the wall did not negatively disrupt the reading experience and that users were willing to continue browsing after encountering it.

To build on these insights, Ouest-France will continue experimenting with new variations of the wall, including improved copy, the targeting and the now non-dismissable design. These iterations will help determine the version that most effectively converts their large anonymous audience into identifiable, engaged readers.

CASE STUDY**PAGELLA POLITICA**

Using smarter newsletter linking to pull free readers back to the website

Situation

Pagella Politica is an Italian fact-checking publisher with around 245,000 monthly users and a fast-growing, loyal user base, driven largely by its coverage of major political moments. It has a small but growing subscriber base and sees subscriptions as a key future revenue stream.

Through the Subscriptions Academy EMEA 2025 programme, we identified that users visit the Pagella site infrequently, and that other engagement metrics have softened year-on-year. Meanwhile, email is underused as a traffic driver: newsletters account for just 0.6 per cent of sessions, and there is limited tracking of how newsletter readers behave once they click through.

The team wanted a low-effort test to see whether simple changes to its suite of free newsletters could improve click-through rates (CTR) and bring more readers back to the site.

Action

Pagella focused on two free newsletters — Gender and Economics — and designed an experiment to adjust their internal linking strategy. The hypothesis was that adding more links to relevant on-site articles would increase CTR and make newsletters a reliable driver of users back to the website.

For a defined period, editions of both newsletters included a greater number of internal links pointing to fact-checks, explainers and other related coverage, whilst keeping tone, design and send cadence consistent with the baseline period. CTR was set as the primary metric, with open rate as a secondary check.

+2.5pp CTR uplift across two free newsletters



I believe that if we apply what we have learned, we could achieve significant results in the medium to long-term. It will require changing our current mindset, but that is exactly why we are here.

AMBRA VANOLLI,
MARKETING STRATEGY, PAGELLA POLITICA

Result

The change delivered clear gains. The Gender newsletter saw an average around 2 percentage point increase in CTR (from c.4 per cent to 6.3 per cent), whilst the Economics newsletter recorded an average ~2.5 percentage point uplift (from c.5 per cent to 7.6 per cent).

Open rates remained stable, suggesting the improvement was driven by stronger on-site linking rather than subject-line effects.

With the hypothesis proven, Pagella plans to roll out similar tests across more editions and to experiment with different link strategies — such as fewer, more targeted links — to balance relevance, attention and click-through.

The key decisions behind the uplift were choosing a simple, low-lift change, targeting existing free newsletters with room to grow and measuring CTR carefully so that early results could feed directly into a broader newsletter and engagement strategy.

CASE STUDY**PROJECT SYNDICATE**

Refreshing the registration proposition to engage and convert more readers

Situation

Project Syndicate is a globally focused publisher of opinion and analysis with a loyal but niche audience and around 10,000 digital subscribers. Its core strength is expert-led commentary that drives strong user engagement and highly engaged sessions once users arrive.

However, traffic and new subscribers had started to plateau and the team saw that registration growth — a valuable engine for driving new subscriptions — was flat. Engagement of these users was also a challenge: active registered users were just 2 per cent of total registered users and there was little behavioural difference between anonymous and registered users.

The hypothesis was that the existing registration exchange of one free article per month did not provide a compelling reason to register or build a habit. This meant registration was underutilised as a pathway to subscriptions.

Action

To unlock more value from registration, Project Syndicate redesigned its sampling and wall strategy using Pool, a membership and subscription suite. A new registration wall invited anonymous users to create a free account in exchange for three free reads every 30 days, clearly listing benefits such as following authors and building a reading list.

For registered users, the journey introduced soft paywalls on the second and third free reads, reminding them how many reads they had left and asking them to consciously “spend” a free read on that article. A redesigned hard paywall then appeared after the third article, reinforcing that the allowance had been used and prompting subscription.

The team tracked wall effectiveness, paywall CTR, engagement metrics (page views, dwell time, RFV, recirculation) and

+52% Increase in registered users becoming subscribers

+17% Uplift in RFV for registered users

“

With your team’s help, we were able to identify two large gaps (or opportunities) for us to take forward with some of the tools you’ve equipped us with.

SHIRIN SHITY,
MARKETING MANAGER, PROJECT SYNDICATE

subscriptions from registration, comparing performance before and after launch to understand how increased sampling and clearer messaging affected behaviour.

Result

The new approach made the registration layer work much harder. The overall success rate of the walls (paywall and regwall combined) — measured by click-throughs — increased from 7 per cent to 9 per cent. In addition, there was a 14 per cent subscription prompt success rate (up from 11 per cent), which resulted in subscriptions from registered users growing by 52 per cent over a four-week test period vs. previous period.

Over half of users exposed to the widget interacted with it, confirming that the clearer proposition and progress indicator resonated. This was the case despite unique users and page views being below Project Syndicate’s usual levels.

Key to success were three decisions: expanding sampling from one to three free reads, clearly articulating registration benefits at the wall and designing a stepped soft-to-hard paywall journey that showed users exactly where they were in their allowance.

CASE STUDY



L'ORIENT TODAY

Refreshing the registration proposition to grow known users and shorten the path to subscription

Situation

L'Orient Today is the English-language edition of L'Orient Le Jour, the independent French-language news platform based in Beirut.

L'Orient Today seeks to examine the failure of the Lebanese system and to hold political and economic power brokers accountable through comprehensive, in-depth reporting. It reaches a growing audience but only a small share are currently “known” readers, meaning most visitors remain anonymous and difficult to meaningfully engage.

To build a stronger subscription funnel, the L'Orient Today team sought to increase the number of registered users and develop a clearer understanding of what persuades readers to create an account.

Action

During the Subscriptions Academy EMEA 2025 programme, the team reintroduced a registration wall on live news. The wall set out several new benefits for registered users, including limited access to its hero newsletter product, Morning Brief, as well as the benefits of creating an account. The success metrics were registration wall hits, conversion rate and sign-ups.

Result

In a two-week period, after the updated wall went live, the site recorded 35 new account creations, which was lower than the previous iteration of the wall. This may have been down to the news agenda, which affected overall site traffic and the wall visibility.

+35 New registered users in the two-week test period

+30% Registrants during the test period who converted to a subscription



This experiment didn't move the needle yet but it gave us new ideas for copy and incentives and showed the value of testing rather than guessing.

IVA KOVIC,
HEAD OF L'ORIENT TODAY, L'ORIENT LE JOUR

One interesting finding was that a third of registered users in the period went on to convert to a subscription in the two-week window. This suggests that improving the registration journey can be a key early step in their wider growth strategy.

The team also launched a follow-up copy test, making the registration wall text more evocative and value-led. The data analysis of this change is still being worked through.

Next steps include monitoring performance of the new copy, running additional messaging variants, reassessing whether the Morning Brief is the strongest hook, and, if needed, adjusting the sampling strategy to create more urgency.

ABOUT FT STRATEGIES AND THE GOOGLE NEWS INITIATIVE

FT STRATEGIES

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Google News Initiative

The Google News Initiative represents Google's largest-ever effort to help journalism thrive in the digital age. In collaboration with editors and journalists worldwide, the Google News Initiative (GNI) strives to foster a more sustainable, diverse, and innovative news landscape. Through a comprehensive suite of programmes, digital tools, training, and resources, the GNI empowers journalistic endeavours, enabling journalists to effectively discover, verify, and narrate compelling stories while upholding the highest standards of quality journalism.

