



# REINVENTING DIGITAL EDITIONS

BEST PRACTICES FROM LEADING  
EUROPEAN PUBLISHERS

RESEARCH REPORT, APRIL 2018

**CONTACT PERSON:** MARY-KATHARINE PHILLIPS

*"We believe in the power of editions. Our readers love the curated order, finite experience and editorial choice. In times of limitless information and limited time, editions provide the valuable service of selection and judgement."*

Alan Hunter, Head of Digital at The Times & The Sunday Times

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# INTRODUCTION

## REINVENTING DIGITAL EDITIONS

Newspapers are re-discovering the power of editions as their core and unique value proposition. After years of investing in the “news flow”, they have learned that their most loyal and profitable audiences are actually hooked by carefully curated and packaged publications.

A significant part of news readers love editions. According to research from Reuters Institute, 44% of readers prefer to be briefed a couple of times per day. Newspapers have traditionally focused on providing a structured overview of the news, supplemented with opinion and analysis.

At Twipe we strongly believe in the power of editions, and the importance of edition-based publishing to the future of journalism. That’s why we launched this research project on successful digital editions. Some editions replace the entire print publication, like The Independent. Other editions target new, complementary audiences, like L’édition du Soir (Ouest-France). Some explore new, more interactive and phone optimized formats, like La Matinale (Le Monde).

“

*At Twipe we strongly believe in the power of editions, and the importance of edition-based publishing to the future of journalism.*



Danny Lein,  
Twipe

”

The goal of our research was to identify key success factors for digital-only editions. Interviews with leaders behind these editions revealed the key motivations in developing new innovative, digital-only editions. Finally, we analysed the business impact of these editions.

The winners of tomorrow are today experimenting with new forms of digital editions. By sharing the key findings of our research in this report, we hope you will find inspiration to start your own new digital-only edition.

**Danny Lein,**

**Twipe Founder and CEO**

## MARKET LANDSCAPE

Our research started with the aim of compiling the first ever comprehensive list of digital-only editions on the market. We quickly realised however that the market is not as mature as we had expected, and that outside of the stand-out examples we’ve analysed in this report, there are not many other digital-only editions available today. From this finding, we wondered what had driven the creation of these editions and what commonalities they had that led to their success.

Analysis of the editions served as the first ever benchmarking for digital-only editions, and found common factors in terms of format and navigational structure, publishing frequency and time, length and amount of non-news content, and features. In addition to the analysis, interviews with leaders behind these editions revealed the key motivations in developing new innovative, digital-only editions. Through this, we’ve identified six best practices for successful digital-only editions.

“

**Definition of a digital-only edition: bundle of finite content, published via digital channels with a certain frequency, belonging to a series, and with no counterpart in print containing the same content**

”

## LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Thank you to all the interviewees for their time and insights into the success of their digital-only editions. We appreciate their innovative spirit that has brought edition-based publishing to today's digital world.

**HANDELSBLATT10,**  
HANDELSBLATT



DESIREE LINDE,  
HEAD OF H10

**DN+,**  
DIARIO de NAVARRA



PABLO FRAUCA,  
MARKETING & NEW BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

**LA MATINALE,**  
LE MONDE



DIANE LEMOINE,  
DIRECTOR OF  
DIGITAL MARKETING

**WELT EDITION,**  
DIE WELT



GRISCHA RODUST,  
HEAD OF EDITORIAL PRODUCT  
DEVELOPMENT

**L'ÉDITION du SOIR,**  
OUEST-FRANCE



EDOUARD REIS CARONA,  
DIGITAL EDITOR

**ESPRESSO,**  
THE ECONOMIST



REMY BECHER,  
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF AGILE  
PROJECT SERVICES

**THE INDEPENDENT  
DAILY EDITION,**  
THE INDEPENDENT



SIMON FRY,  
HEAD OF PRODUCT

**12,**  
TAMEDIA



MICHAEL MARTI,  
HEAD OF 12 APP

# DIGITAL-ONLY EDITIONS PREVIEW

These editions are popular across Europe, but if you haven't yet checked them out, here's a sneak peek and some facts to familiarize yourself with the digital-only editions we studied in our research.

## 12

**Publisher:** Tamedia  
**Country:** Switzerland  
**Year Launched:** Fall 2015  
**Readership:** 22,000 daily users and 4,500 12-only subscribers (2018)



## DN+

**Publisher:** Diario de Navarra  
**Country:** Spain  
**Year Launched:** 2016  
**Readership:** 1,000 monthly users (2018)



## WELT EDITION

**Publisher:** Die Welt  
**Country:** Germany  
**Year Launched:** 2010  
**Readership:** 1.3 million monthly visitors (November 2017)



## ESPRESSO

**Publisher:** The Economist  
**Country:** UK  
**Year Launched:** 2014  
**Readership:** 250,000 monthly active readers (2018)



## LA MATINALE

**Publisher:** Le Monde  
**Country:** France  
**Year Launched:** 2015  
**Readership:** 1.5 million visits per month + 720,000 app downloads (2018)



## HANDELSBLATT10

**Publisher:** Handelsblatt  
**Country:** Germany  
**Year Launched:** 2016  
**Readership:** H10 is part of the 'digital pass' for all Handelsblatt digital products so separate numbers for H10 are not given



## THE INDEPENDENT

**Publisher:** The Independent  
**Country:** UK  
**Year Launched:** 2016  
**Readership:** More digital subscribers now than for the previous print version



## L'EDITION DU SOIR

**Publisher:** Ouest-France  
**Country:** France  
**Year Launched:** 2013  
**Readership:** 1.7m unique monthly visitors + 135,000 recurring users (2017)



# GENESIS OF DIGITAL-ONLY EDITIONS

In our search for understanding what drove the genesis of digital-only editions in European newspaper organizations, four drivers were identified: a desire to innovate, creating editions for new times of day, meeting the needs of time-crunched readers, and changing business needs.

## DESIRE TO INNOVATE

A common refrain among the creators of digital-only editions is the desire to innovate and create new product offerings. This spirit is seen throughout the entire life of the edition not just during the creation, with continued testing in all aspects of the digital edition being quite common.

One compelling case is Welt Edition, who decided to create a digital-only edition when they heard that Apple would release a tablet. When they first started, they did not even know that it would end up being called an iPad, they only knew that they wanted to be first on the German market with a newspaper tablet app.

“

*We wanted not only to broadcast the news but create a real new product for the news.*



Diane Lemoine,  
La Matinale du Monde

”

## NEW TIMES OF DAY

Digital-only editions can help publishers reach a new audience, without the risk of alienating their current audience. Ouest-France did just that when they observed a trend in their readers of wanting something more light-hearted to read in the evening. In response, they created an evening newspaper with an emphasis on games and interactive stories. Through this, Ouest-France joined other savvy news organizations in knowing the importance of meeting its readers where they are and adapting the content to the time of day.

On the other hand, Le Monde, a lunch-time newspaper, wanted to reach a younger audience with their digital offering, so they launched La Matinale, which also allowed them to become a player in the morning newspaper landscape.

## TIME-CRUNCHED READERS

A common reason people give for not reading the news is a lack of time, so some news organizations have decided to produce editions that are meant to be finishable even for the busiest of people.

This was especially true for The Economist's Espresso, which has positioned itself as a 'shot of daily news,' for busy people who only have a few minutes to be informed each morning.

It is the aim to be finishable that is important in a world with continuously updating news. Just because it is now technically possible to put news live as soon as it happens, it does not mean that this is what readers are searching for. The Welt Edition learned this lesson early on; they had multiple updates each day, but they saw that most readers were only opening the app once a day, so they changed to today's single edition model.

## BUSINESS NEEDS

Publishers identified three ways digital-only editions can help them meet their business needs.

### Reaching new subscribers

First, digital-only editions can help to reach new subscribers. A digital-only edition subscription is often cheaper than a full subscription (although not true in all cases), so it can better attract new subscribers who are not sure about the commitment of a full subscription.

A digital-only offering can serve as a middle option between completely free digital news consumption and a hard paywall, bringing in new potential subscribers.

“

*We wanted to have something to offer in between the free consumption of the digital articles and becoming a full subscriber—an on-ramp for becoming a subscriber.*



Remy Becher,  
Espresso

”



## Deepen value proposition

Second, the increased value proposition of a digital-only edition can help encourage more readers to pay. The convenience of a digital-only edition, plus the improved reader experience when the edition is specifically designed for digital consumption, creates a sense of added value that readers are more willing to pay for. This is true for DN+, who decided to create a digital-only edition when their internal research showed readers would react negatively to a new subscription or paywall model. They realized they needed to add more to the digital offering in order to justify why readers needed to pay for the content.

## Cost savings

Finally, it can also be more economically interesting to produce only a digital edition, due to the expense of printing and distributing a typical print edition. The Independent decided to switch to digital-only when they realized producing their print edition was no longer a financially viable decision. Thus the digital-only edition was not necessarily a new product, but instead a pivot for the long-standing print edition.

# BENCHMARKING + COMMON FEATURES

After understanding what drives the genesis of digital-only editions, we wanted to look more into the factors the editions have in common. The editions themselves were analysed, in terms of format, navigation structure, output channels, the publishing time and frequency, length and content, and features, in order to find any common trends.

## FRONT PAGE

Traditionally, the front page had substantial importance for editions, used to highlight the biggest events of the day, tease stories, or give visibility to the brand. When creating a new product, publishers had the chance to decide what to include, so it is interesting to see that some have decided not to include a front page. This is a departure from other developments in the age of digital news, as news flow websites still often have one or two main stories highlighted on the top of the page.



Some, such as The Independent, have retained a print-like front page with one large story teaser and links to other stories, while others, such as La Matinale, have done away with the front page and opted instead to jump directly into the first story. In the latter, there is no branding apparent, with no logo or clear indication of where the story is from.

COVER PAGE



OPENS DIRECTLY ON STORY



Interestingly, it is the four shortest editions that do not have a cover page. These editions are termed 'speed reads' and are meant to be finishable for even the busiest of readers.

## NAVIGATION

When reinventing editions for digital needs, publishers could choose to address elements not possible in print, such as ease of navigation. We took a look at how the analysed editions have chosen to allow users to navigate the app.






There are two common structures for navigation: an introductory table of contents only available in a fixed location and a menu that is available no matter where you are in the edition. The latter option is more common, with half of the editions having this navigational structure.

There are also two editions that have no navigation structure at all, these are also two of the shortest editions.

## OUTPUT CHANNELS

One of the new aspects of digital-only editions is that distribution modes are so different than traditional ones. However the complexity of technology, screen sizes, and devices can present challenges to keep up.

								
TABLET	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
MOBILE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
DESKTOP	✓	✓					✓	

Less than half of the digital-only editions have desktop versions; of those editions, all also have both tablet and mobile apps.

Handelsblatt10 does not have a tablet native app, but the mobile app works on iPads as well; their desktop version is stripped down as well. DN+ also has just one format, it is only available on tablet and the editions themselves are only available in horizontal format, not in vertical at all.

## PUBLISHING FREQUENCY

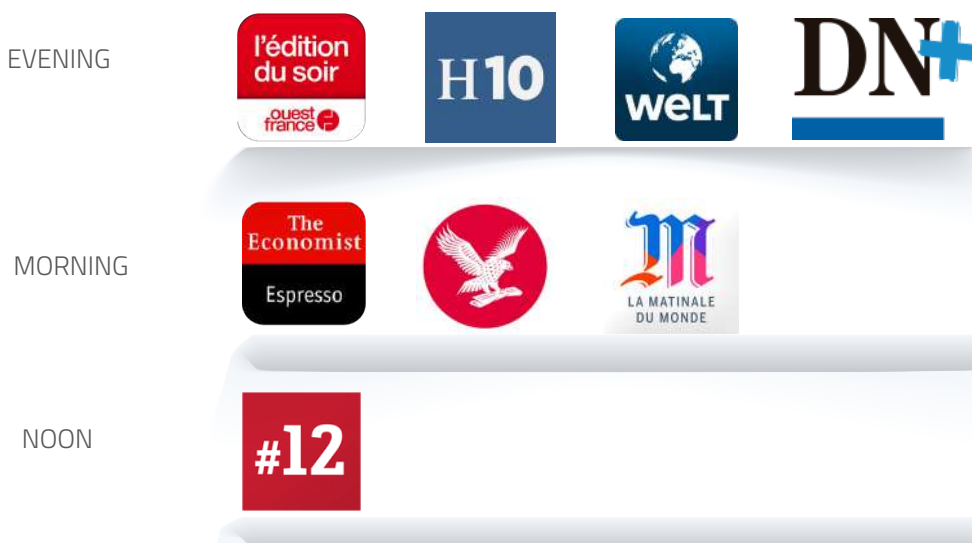
The frequency of publishing is a core element that separates digital editions from other digital sources of news, such as news flow websites. While all the digital-only editions have in common that they produce only one edition per day, not all of the editions publish every day. The editions that do publish everyday may be more automated, allowing for a heavier publishing frequency, the level of automation is examined in a later section.



Most editions are published every day, while two editions are published only during the week. Espresso was originally published only during the week as well, but added on a Saturday edition after reader feedback.

## PUBLISHING TIME

As identified in the first section of this paper, one of the key drivers of the creation of digital-only editions is new moments of consumption. By examining the time of day that the editions are published, we can see which new moments of consumption have been identified.



The two weekday-only editions are both published in the evening, while the editions published every day are mainly published in the evening, with 12 being published exactly at noon.

## LENGTH

Time-crunched readers were identified as a key driver in the creation of many of the digital-only editions, so we analysed the length of the editions to see how well the editions served this purpose.



The editions range in length from seven pages (Espresso) to 84 pages (The Independent), with the average edition containing 32 pages. There is no trend in length of the edition compared to the time or frequency of publication.

## NON-NEWS CONTENT

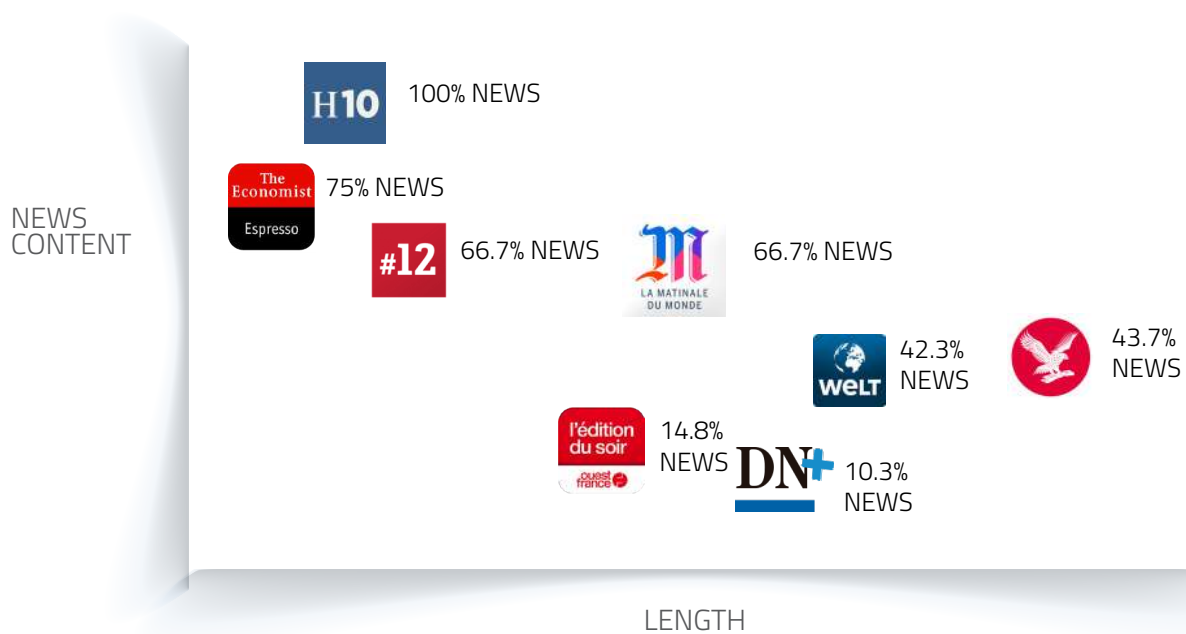
Editions have traditionally included non-news content such as weather or games. How have publishers decided to integrate such concepts when reinventing editions for the digital age?



The average edition has 52.4% hard news content, with the remaining content consisting of games and puzzles, comics, opinions, culture, sports, weather, TV listings, human interest stories, and in one edition, obituaries (The Independent).

## NON-NEWS CONTENT VS. LENGTH OF DIGITAL-ONLY EDITIONS

As we identified three speed reads, which all had the aim of meeting the needs of time-crunched readers, we analysed the length of the editions versus the percentage of pure news they contained. From this a clear pattern emerged: the longer the edition, the more non-news content it contained, such as weather, games, and lifestyle stories. For publishers who are just starting on their digital-only edition journey and want to include games, we can see that creating a medium-read (between 20-35 pages) is most suitable.



### SPEED READS

The shortest editions, the three speed reads, have a higher than average percentage of hard news content. This trend can be coined "pocket news", digital-only editions full of news meant to be read in only a few minutes.

### MEDIUM READS








Two of the medium reads have a much lower percentage of hard news content, between 10-15%. Such editions can be coined as "lifestyle reads", meant to be consumed by more leisurely readers who want to be entertained while they are also informed. The other medium read, La Matinale, was more in line with the 'speed reads', with 2/3 of its content being hard news.

### EXTENDED READS

In between these two extremes are the extended reads, with more of a mix of news and non-news content, at an average of 43% hard news content. These editions are meant to replace their print counterparts, so this may signify that such editions have content mixes more in line with traditional print newspapers.

## FEATURES

In their digital form, editions have the option to include a variety of features. Which features they chose to include may show what type of reader they are targeting and the reading experience they want to offer.

								
TEASERS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
STAND OUT QUOTES	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
SOCIAL SHARE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
BOOKMARKS	✓			✓	✓		✓	
VIDEOS		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
ADJUSTABLE TEXT SIZE	✓		✓	✓			✓	
SEARCH	✓						✓	

All editions have teasers, which show a glimpse of an article to trigger people to read more. Social sharing is also a common feature, with all the editions except for DN+ having this feature.

## GAMES

Four of the editions have games, with most being interactive save for DN+ which has the games link outside of the app.

For Ouest-France, games and puzzles were an important part of their edition. Since they wanted to provide an offering for reader relaxing in the evening, they knew that having a more interactive reading experience would be important.

There was no common link between the four editions that do not have puzzles or games: they are evenly split among time of day and days they are published.

“

*Quickly, we saw that there was a developing market for news at the end of the day. We decided to create a 100% digital newspaper, with news and games.*



Edouard Reis Carona,  
L'Édition du Soir

”








## PRICING STRATEGY

The pricing strategy for each edition is interesting, in order to understand the value the publishers place on the edition.

Two decision makers mentioned benchmarking the price of a subscription to other items so that potential readers are more willing to subscribe. Michael Marti of the #12-app called their pricing model 'Spotify-pricing', in that it is a lower price point similar to Spotify for the millennial generation that is willing to pay a small amount each month. The name of The Economist's Espresso even comes from this benchmarking, as it is priced the same as a cup of coffee each day.

Four common subscription types were identified: weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly. A few of the editions are also able to be purchased as one-offs.

La Matinale du Monde is the only edition that does not have a separate subscription offer, instead it is included free to Le Monde subscribers (who pay at least €17,99 per month).

								AVERAGE PRICE
SINGLE	✓	✓					✓	€1,39
WEEKLY	✓	✓					✓	€2,75
MONTHLY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		€8,64
QUARTERLY	✓						✓	€36,57
YEARLY	✓					✓	✓	€144,05

Of the three editions that have only one subscription plan, they all have just monthly subscriptions. Only one edition offered all four types of subscriptions plus individual editions, The Independent.

While some of the editions offer limited free trials, none of the editions are available for free. They all require a subscription, which goes back to the genesis of many of the digital-only editions: clearly, these editions are seen as an opportunity for new revenue streams for the publishers.

However there is still a public perception that it is cheaper to produce a digital edition than a printed edition, and so digital-only editions need to account for this when setting the price.

It is also important to highlight the added value of the digital edition, such as the optimization for busy on-the-go readers. This helps to show readers why they should pay for digital news when so much of it is already available for free elsewhere on the internet.

“

*We have to add more value if we want people to pay for our digital proposals. There are many free alternatives and for most of the users, the free versions are enough.*



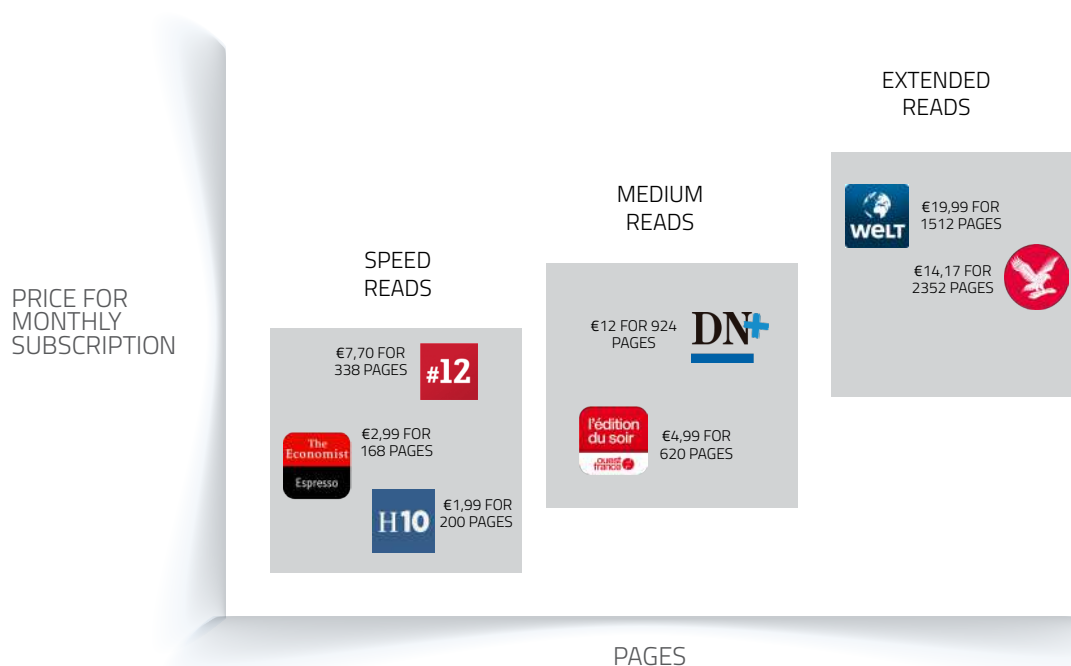
Pablo Frauca,  
DN+

”

## ANALYSIS OF PRICE VS. LENGTH

The differences in pricing strategies can be better viewed through the lens of how much content is created on a monthly basis. In this view, the three clear clusters emerge again.

La Matinale du Monde is removed from this analysis because there is no subscription offering for only La Matinale.



### SPEED READS

On the shorter side are the speed reads, which are some of the least expensive subscriptions: Handelsblatt10, 12, and Espresso. With an average of 232 pages per month, the average monthly subscription is €4,22. The three editions in this category differ both on publishing frequency and time. When we look at the price per page, these editions are among some of the most expensive, with an average price of 1,5 cents per page. However as these editions originated from the needs of time-crunched readers, it is clear that there is an audience who is willing to pay more for the convenience of only having the most important stories presented to them.

### MEDIUM READS

Then there are the medium reads, which have more mixed pricing: L'édition du Soir is closer in price to the speed reads while DN+ is closer to the extended reads. In fact, a monthly subscription for L'édition du Soir is less than for the 12-app, which has almost half the number of stories—but the 12-app has a significantly high proportion of hard news content.

### EXTENDED READS

Finally, the extended reads, The Independent Daily Edition and Welt Edition, have more than double the average reading content in a month and a subscription price to match. These editions are more similar to the traditional print newspapers, with a mixed level of news versus non-news content and are published every day. As The Independent was previously a print newspaper, it is interesting to note that the monthly subscription for the digital edition is significantly cheaper than it was for the print edition.



# PROMOTION OF DIGITAL-ONLY EDITIONS

## SOCIAL MEDIA

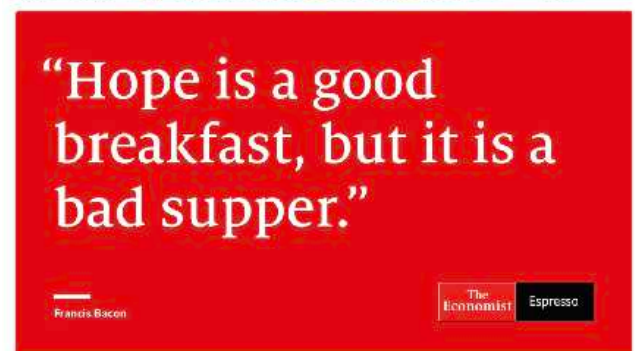
While social media was often discussed in the interviews as a form of promotion, it was mentioned in a limited manner. In fact while all publishers had brand pages, only a few editions had their own dedicated accounts. L'édition du Soir has both a Facebook and Twitter account, while 12 and La Matinale du Monde have only Twitter accounts.

The most common social media strategy is to publish a few stories from the edition on different platforms, mainly Facebook and Twitter. When choosing the stories to post on social media, there did not seem to be any trend to think about the potential for virality, or to pick stories that were the most engaging with readers of the edition already.



The editions that do not have their own social media platforms are instead pushed on the main brand account, as seen in this example from Le Monde.

From The Economist Espresso: Quotation of the day [qfy-d.tlkn.io/serve?action=c](http://qfy-d.tlkn.io/serve?action=c) ...

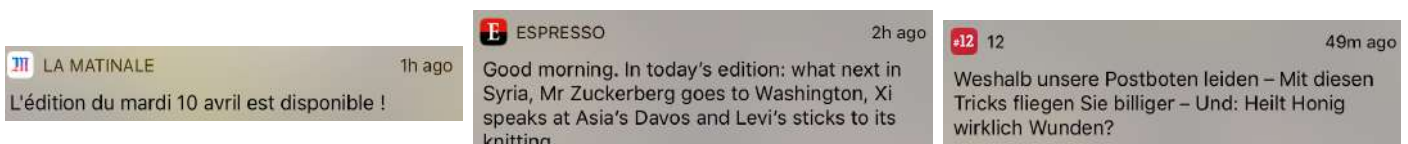


2:01 PM - 9 Apr 2018

One interesting detail that emerged is how important social sharing is for the Espresso. Their quote of the day is commonly shared on social media, so they have spent time optimizing it for sharing. The goal is that people who see the quote of the day on social media are triggered to download the app. Other digital-only editions did not seem to have as focused of a strategy for social sharing.

## PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

On the other hand, push notifications were a much more important aspect of the distribution strategy for many digital editions. The exact strategy for push is different for each edition, ranging from simply notifying readers when a new edition is available to be read to highlighting top stories in the day's edition.



What is common however is the importance of push notifications for triggering readers. Michael Marti of the 12-app discussed how once there was a problem with the push notification so it did not get sent and as a result, the opening rate of the edition was much lower than normal.

As digital-only editions give more room for exploration, push notifications are often experimented with as well. Diane Lemoine described La Matinale as a 'sandbox' for trying new things in push notifications. She highlighted that while Le Monde's app has editorial notifications such as breaking news alerts, La Matinale is their first app to have more marketing-style notifications.

# ROLE OF DATA + TECHNOLOGY

Operating in a digital-only environment brings the advantage of data insights, but not all publishers welcome this.

“

*We believe in a clear separation between church and state. We will never click-bait or change our headlines so more people will read it. We do keep a close eye on what stories people engage with most, but it isn't that we then use that data to change the edition's content.*



Remy Becher,  
Espresso

”

## DATA CAUTIOUS

Most decision makers had an adverse reaction to a suggested impact of data and technology on the creation of the editions. The most common sentiment was that while data is analysed, it is not a driving factor in the creation of the editions. The stories and placement are chosen by gut feeling; if data shows this is a popular topic then it is a bonus, but never the reason why a topic will be chosen.

Still a lack of clear insights was mentioned more than once. While there is a lot of collected data, it is either divorced from context or overwhelming to try to make sense of.

## DATA INTEGRATED

Tamedia's 12-app stood out for how data integrated it is. They even have developed in-house technology to pick stories, which they call the Octopus.

The Octopus crawls their database and picks out the best articles for each day's edition. Still, Michael Marti, head of the 12-app, cautions that the Octopus is used in conjunction with human curation to decide the final content for the app.

More newsrooms are comfortable with data and technology being used to understand reader behaviour, as opposed to being used in the creation process itself. One example is at the Espresso, where they learned how important the speed of the edition loading is. Their data shows a clear correlation between the speed of the edition loading and commercial success of the app itself.

## AUTOMATION

Most editions have some level of automation, but to differing degrees. Often the creation of the edition itself is highly automated, for example once a story is written The Economist's Espresso, the picture desk is tasked with selecting the appropriate images, and then the images are automatically added to the article.

However the decision of which stories to include is not automated for most publishers. Often there was a fear that automated story picking would depend too much on clicks and other 'click-bait' type data rather than on an understanding of what is important for readers to know.

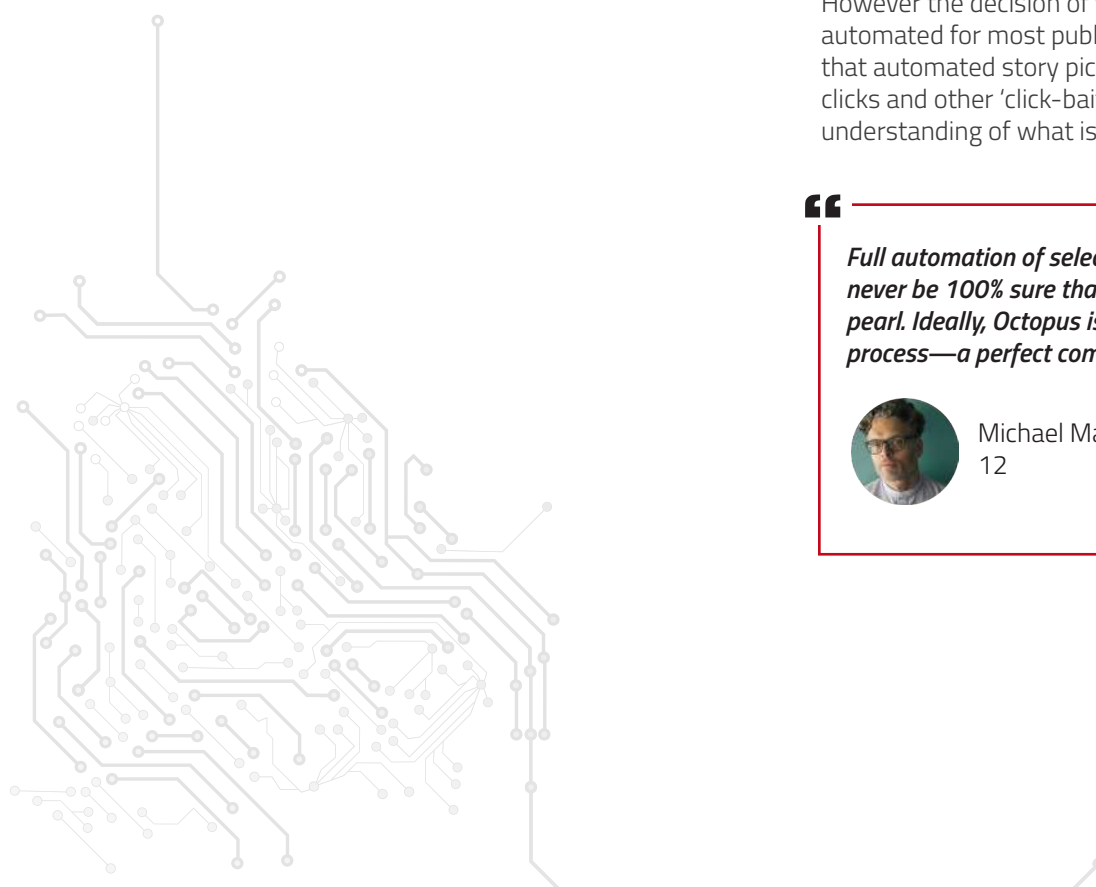
“

*Full automation of selection is unrealistic, because we can never be 100% sure that Octopus hasn't missed a great pearl. Ideally, Octopus is used to aid the decision-making process—a perfect combination of human and machine.*



Michael Marti,  
12

”



# CONCLUSION

From the beginning stages of our research when we discovered the low level of maturity for the digital-only edition market, to the conclusions of the benchmarking and interviews, it is clear that there is a great opportunity for publishers to become part of the early adopters of digital-only editions. In order to be as successful as the editions we've analysed, we've identified six best practices.

## BEST PRACTICES

Three best practices deal with the editions themselves, while the other three relate to how the company itself operates.

Best Practices: Edition Design	Best Practices: Internal Operations
Simplicity in Pricing	Desire to Innovate
Finishability	Meet Readers Where They Are
Push Notifications	Strong Cross-Functional Teams

### Finishability

Successful digital-only editions remember that finishability is key. While today readers have thousands of potential news sources, with the ability to be updated in real time, there is still a desire to be able to step away from the news. That is why the edition-based concept, having a clear beginning and end, strikes a chord with readers. They know that they can read these stories and be informed for the day.

This is one reason why we have seen such great success for the digital-only editions that limit the number of stories they include. By ensuring that readers will be able to finish the edition in a timely manner, this makes it more likely that the reader will include the edition in their daily routine.

“

*The edition is a success because it has a clear beginning and ending. If you've finished it then you know you know what is necessary, people are done at some time and then can go on and do other stuff.*



Grischa Rodust,  
Welt Edition

”

### Simplicity in Pricing

One of the common refrains in the interviews was that the digital-only editions were created to help with the constant onslaught of news that leaves readers feeling overwhelmed. To further lessen the overwhelming feeling that comes with news consumption today, many of the digital-only editions

have adopted simplicity in their pricing strategy. This can be seen in the editions that benchmark their price, such as Espresso being the same price as a daily cup of coffee or 12 aligning with Spotify's pricing. This can also be seen in the editions that have a single subscription offering, so that when readers decide to subscribe, they do not need to then decide what subscription plan works for them.

Interestingly, the three editions that only have one subscription plan are the three 'speed reads': Handelsblatt 10, Tamedia's 12, and The Economist's Espresso. This shows the importance of fully adapting editions to readers' habits. Since these editions are meant for busy on-the-go people, the subscription plans have been streamlined as well so that potential subscribers do not need to spend any time comparing offers.

### Push Notifications

Letting readers know that the new edition is available via a push notification helps to prompt them to read. As many of the editions are meant for people on the go, relying on the readers remembering to check for the new edition would mean that some people who would want to read simply forget to check for the new edition.

How exactly the push strategy is implemented differs for each publication. Some choose to have a notification simply stating there is a new edition ready to be downloaded, while others highlight a leading story or even a few stories.

The best push notification strategy will depend on the specific readers of an edition and what they are wanting to get out of reading. That is one reason why a desire to innovate is so key for successful digital-only editions, testing in all aspects will provide a deep understanding of the readers and what they want.

### Desire to Innovate

A key theme from all the interviewees was of a strong desire to innovate. By these creators moving beyond the current prevailing wisdom in the industry, an entirely new format has emerged.

This desire to innovate goes beyond the creation of the digital-only editions, it sustains the process of reiterating the product and creating the best possible user experience. Through being willing to try new things and pivot when necessary, the editions are constantly improving. By viewing the edition as a sandbox for innovation, the news organization as a whole can innovate.

“

***We learned to speak to our subscribers on a regular basis to find out what it is that they like about the edition, what other things that they might want.***



Simon Fry,  
The Independent Daily Edition

”

## Meeting Your Readers Where They Are

For a digital-only edition to be successful, it needs to fit into the daily routine of its readers. Since each edition must be made to be finished, it is important to understand where and when the edition will be read and adapt it to that situation.

By knowing who your readers are and what is important to them, it is also possible to deprioritize functions or features that readers do not need. For example, Handelsblatt10 knows that its target readers are on the move, so a desktop version of their edition is not necessary. This frees up resources to focus on giving the readers exactly what it is that they want.

## Strong Cross-Functional Teams

A common refrain that emerged was of the importance of cross-functional teams in both the creation and success of the editions. By having team members from different areas of the business, with diverse backgrounds and skill sets, new ideas emerge from the team. This helps with creating a truly innovative product. Additionally, cross-functional teams allow for quicker decision making. Since such teams allow

the digital-only edition to be independent, they do not need to rely on the skills or decisions of others outside the team. Having a quicker decision-making process allows for more innovation to continuously improve the digital-only edition.

## OPPORTUNITIES

One area for improvement for many digital-only editions, and for the larger publishing industry as a whole, is the integration of data in the decision-making process.

With the vast amount of information that is available today, many publishers may feel overwhelmed and do not know where to start. This may explain the common attitude of downplaying the importance of data, because in its raw form it may not provide many insights. A more structured way of analysing the data for insights into reader behaviour will need to be implemented in many newsrooms.

One element of the importance of data that has often been overlooked is that data is simply a way to understand your reader, to see when you are best providing for their news consumption needs.

“

***Today we have more than 100,000 readers...the edition succeeded in capturing loyal readers, younger and many of them outside of the natural area of Ouest-France.***



Edouard Reis Carona,  
L'édition du Soir

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## FUTURE OF EDITION-BASED PUBLISHING

We believe the future of edition-based publishing is bright, so we will leave you with the final words of Désirée Linde:

“

***We stop the clock once a day. It sounds like it doesn't make sense, but actually it is what a significant group of people want. They don't want to be, nor can be, online all day. The combination of the old and the new world makes a third additional option. This project shows us that journalism has a bright future and there are models that work well. People are willing to pay for good content.***



Désirée Linde  
Handelsblatt10

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With these best practices in mind, news organizations can better create their own successful digital-only editions. With digital news consumption only expected to rise in coming years, there is a growing demand for digital-first news content that still gives the finishability of print news.

## Twipe Digital Publishing

At Twipe, we believe edition-based publishing should be core to the strategy of every newspaper publisher. We help publishers engage more readers and monetize premium content on mobile devices with our digital publishing and ePaper solutions, including NextGen and Replica publishing, ePaper analytics, data and AI solutions, and other media innovations.

Keep up to date on Twipe's latest digital publishing research at [twipemobile.com](http://twipemobile.com)

For questions on this report or for ideas on how to start your own digital-only edition, please contact the author at [MK.Phillips@twipemobile.com](mailto:MK.Phillips@twipemobile.com)

