

eGuide for digital publishers

how smartocto **optimises** your business strategy the subscription model

smartocto

Up to
39%
extra conversions
with smartocto

Up to 39%!

the proven impact that smartocto delivers

The team of smartocto has a track record in journalism, so trust us, we know: systems do not deliver subscriptions, editors do. Great journalism, delivered to the right audience, well timed in the optimal channels, that is what drives conversions. But smartocto assists storytellers in exactly those processes, and we do it thousands of times per day.

So after working with hundreds of newsrooms in their subscription strategies, and analysing mountains of data, we have a clear view on the uplift effect of smartocto.

This is a representation of the Quadrant Model. For further details about the operation and application of this feature, see page 18.



Up to 39%!

the proven impact that smartocto delivers

You can calculate it in many different ways (for a lot of publishers we even measure the conversions directly) but It is most easily visualised in the Quadrant Model.

On average, articles in the top right quadrant (the gold nuggets) deliver 10 times as many subscriptions than the average story and they drive 66% of the total number of conversions. On 50% of these top stories, smartocto delivers actionable tips.

If you state - and we see that with a lot of established newsrooms - that the action percentage on these tips is 42%, you can calculate that the uplift is **up to 39%** (!) on the monthly new subscriptions.

Ofcourse, this is an average and it can vary from newsroom to newsroom. Mature subscription strategies will win a bit less in percentages, and smartocto will be even more effective if you execute well on the actionable notifications.

But benchmarking on different calculations, across countries, among multiple brands gave us the same result.

To conclude: if you want to execute on a subscription strategy and align the content strategy with the business model, a call to the smartocto team will be one of **the best decisions you will ever make.**



business model

These smartocto features help to optimise your subscription model.

In this eGuide we will describe the essentials of each **smartocto** feature and explain how to use them if you're looking to build a long and lasting relationship with your audience.



notifications



preventing churn

cpi

quadrant model



predictions

how smartocto optimises your business strategy

the subscription model

Attracting more subscribers is absolutely essential in the digital media age. Making use of the right analytics can help a lot. Here's how we can help you find the content strategy that fits, grows and retains your audience base.

News organisations, publishers and media companies understand that building a sustainable relationship with their customers is key in optimising the online business model. It's all about converting readers into subscribers. **Smartocto** provides actionable tips on how to act on audience behaviour in order to convert readers deeper into the funnel (i.e. login, subscriptions, paywalls etc) or to prevent churn.

In this eGuide we will explain how some prominent features of **smartocto** (realtime, insights, tentacles, waves and smartify) support multiple business challenges. Step-by-step, we'll describe how these features can contribute to the success of your subscription model. We'll share links to additional materials and share quotes from clients about our solutions.

We believe the following things should have your attention if you're trying to optimise your subscription model.

! notification

Homepage optimisation for conversion

There is too little premium content on your homepage right now?
Does this story qualify?

how smartocto optimises your business strategy

the subscription model

what you want to know

(and what we measure)



- The stories that could potentially convert.
- The topics that convert best.
- Authors that contribute most to conversion.
- The user needs that fit your brand and will attract engagement.
- The performance of various conversion variants that you could use (i.e. hard paywall, soft paywall, newsletter subscribers, etc.)
- Engagement KPIs, like read depth or attention time.
- Keep track of what your loyal subscribers are reading.

what we offer to help you use that knowledge



- Explain what your audience is eager to read about.
- Show which stories need your attention and optimisation.
- Dashboards that show which stories convert readers the best - and how these compare against all stories
- Editorial tips related to your newsletter, website, app or social media posts on engagement and reach.
- Present how topics, stories or even authors score based on our Content Performance Indicator (CPI) .
- Predict which stories should be premium - and how many readers they potentially could attract.
- Prevent churn by explaining what stories not to make.

Let's take a closer look at all the features that support your subscription strategy.

1. tentacles

how A/B testing supports your subscription model

Tentacles is a layer on your website. The feature can be used directly on your homepage and index pages and allows you to run A/B header tests to increase audience engagement and raise click through rates. As we make a clear distinction within Tentacles between value and clicks, we're able to help to signal clickbait.



Erik van Gruijthuijsen
director of journalism @ DPG Media

"We want impact. A system that - in real time - thinks along with journalists about the next steps is crucial. Smartocto has the automated intelligence and the journalism background that goes with it."

The power of Tentacles is that it 'lives' on your own homepage and it makes use of your design and fonts. That makes it very intuitive to use.

why you need this

Better headlines mean more clicks. More clicks mean more reads. And, once your readers get into the writing (and realise the value of your content) you're able to start converting them from readers to subscribers. Furthermore, because you're able to see the point at which your readers stop reading, editors are easily able to adjust the text and keep their attention.

The result is simple: **better engagement**. And the research shows that the more engaged your visitors are, the more likely they are to pay.

1. tentacles

how A/B testing supports your subscription model



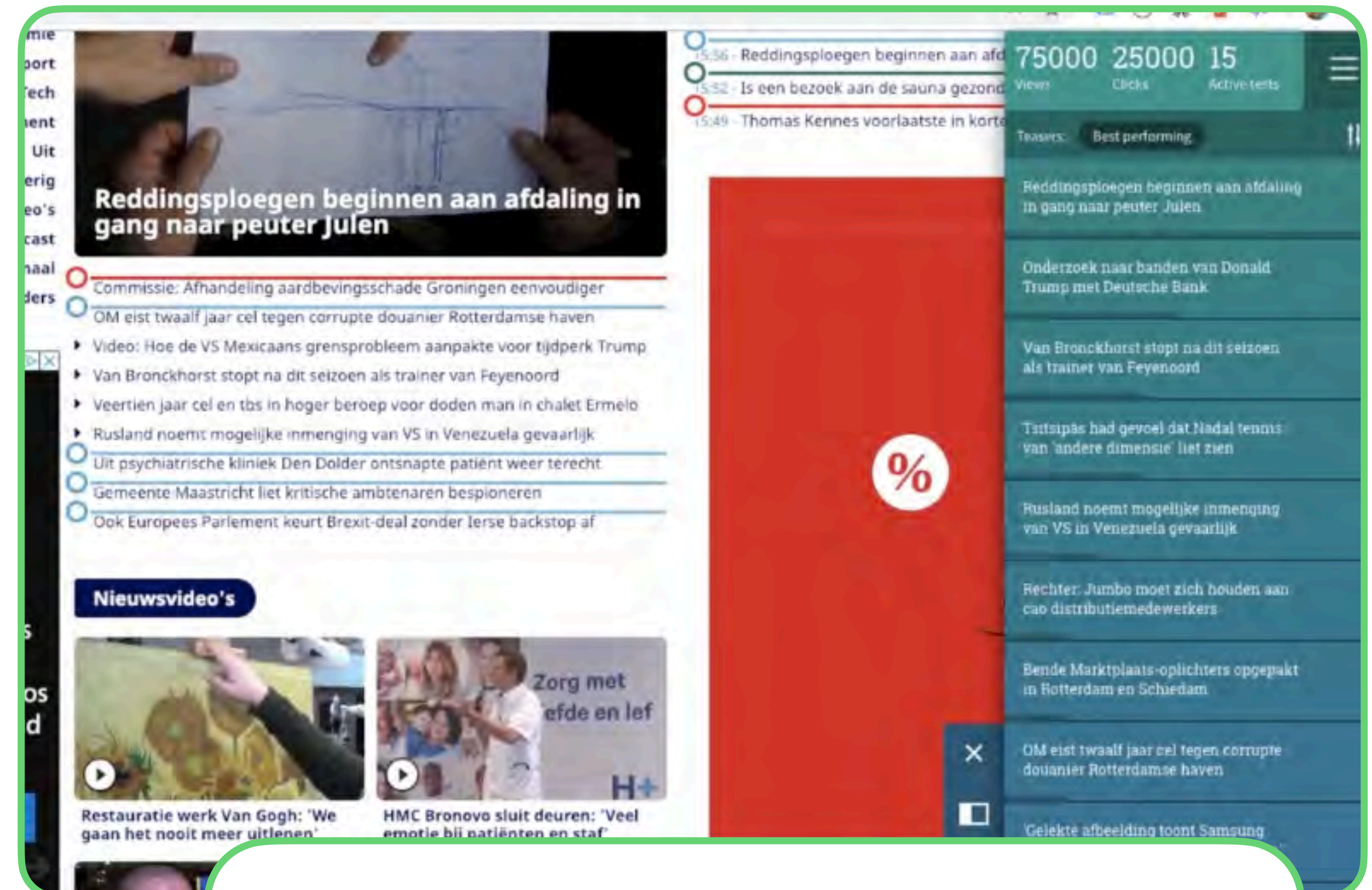
tip

grow your loyal audience base

Optimising your headlines with smartocto's Tentacles will let you **grow your audience base**. In Tentacles we measure and show the difference between clicks and loyalty clicks.

The clicks are the actual number of visitors that click on a headline whereas the **loyalty clicks measure** those who are still on the page after 30 seconds. With that knowledge we help you connect to the engaged and interested audience.

And if you connect to a larger new audience base it's more likely to **convert them to subscriptions**. Needless to say that the engaged audience is more likely to pay for your content.



In this video you can see what it looks like. We have written a variety of blogs and articles about this feature (for example on how to do a headline test) and even have an animation on how it works for teasers.

2. real time

how smart editorial analytics support your subscription model

With **smartocto** real time you get an overview of performance of all your stories in - yes, you've guessed it - real time. All the things you want to know about the performance of a single article is powerfully visualised and gives a clear picture of the impact. As well as reach, we also help you better understand the social impact of the stories you make. We measure all the relevant engagement - and can even distinguish between the various likes (lol, omg etc) on Facebook, for example.

But what makes **smartocto's** real time analytics stand out from the crowd is our [smart notifications](#).

These automated editorial tips help newsrooms to spring into action and optimise all the relevant stories in order to serve your audience better. We also measure conversions - even within specific segments (login, subscriber etc.)

Smartocto real time has tons of dedicated notifications that help you supercharge your subscription efforts and increase your audience engagement - thus reducing the dreaded churn. If you want members, not traffic, this is the solution.

! notification

The number of logged in visitors is really high for this story. Put it higher up on your homepage!

! notification

The share of logged in visitors compared to non logged in visitors to this story is exceptionally high. Your paying subscribers are engaged with the topic!

! notification

There's not enough premium content on your homepage right now. Does this story qualify?

! notification

There are only a few visitors interested in this story but they spend a lot of time on this page. Run an A/B test on the headline to attract a larger audience.



get more subscribers

The smart notifications that smartocto has available within its analytics system are able to support **your business model** in real time. The segmented approach and the predictive calculations about impact make it even easier to make the right decisions all the time.

Giving tips on things like writing follow ups on topics your audience cares about and **putting them behind the paywall**, optimising your homepage in order to convert as many engaged visitors as possible and fine-tuning your social media strategy to **attract a new audience** and bring them to your own channels are all possibilities smartocto supports.

get more
subscribers



3. waves

how customisable dashboards help grow your subscription model

With Waves you can build your editorial big screen any way you want. And, because the screen itself is probably situated right next to your editor's writing desk or on the wall of the bullpen, the world of data becomes a living object in the newsroom. The power of Waves is that it's flexible and customisable. And that makes it possible to support lots of different roles within your newsroom.

You're completely in control of the insights you want to receive. From the most relevant notifications on a story level, to actual insights on business goals, or even the amount of conversions or subscriptions you've realised today. Waves makes it possible to get all the information you want and need instantly, without having to wait for a report.



Davy Geens
Distribution manager De Tijd at Mediafin

"The Waves dashboards help us to bring the numerical insights to the attention of the entire editorial staff in an accessible way. The colourful presentation that shows at a glance what is being read in real time, regularly makes editors stop at the big screen in the editorial office."



tip

drive conversations

The easiest (and by far most effective) way for newsrooms to drive conversions is by **making lists of stories** ranked in realtime on things like **attention time**. This ensures that every editor knows which stories have the most potential to convert readers.

More advanced users can compare the engagement list to the traffic list to see where to **improve distribution**. These things will help improve the user experience - but also ensure you get the most out of your visitors. It's all within reach with the Waves feature and **smartocto** has lots of proven business cases available to help you get a head start!



Stefan ten Teije
Senior Content Editor @ smartocto

"I've written for multiple news sites in The Netherlands and experienced firsthand the introduction of dashboards on screens within newsrooms. A revolution unfolded as we felt a real connection with our readers for the first time.

That said, editors had their reservations because they were worried the number of clicks was the new sheriff in town. With new metrics like scroll depth, loyalty and conversion rates the dashboards have grown more mature. They are crucial in creating consciousness and setting common goals. I couldn't work without them now."

"I couldn't work without them anymore."

4. smartify

how predictive actions can help you grow and maintain your audience base

Journalists, editors and storytellers often perform repetitive editorial tasks routinely, at specific times each day.

[Smartify](#) has narrowed down these tasks to six concrete actions and presents the best qualified stories to follow up. Tasks like, 'put an article on Facebook', 'place an article in the newsletter', 'run an A/B test on the headline', 'put an article on Twitter' or 'write a follow up on this story', are presented in a clear overview. The impact of every editorial task is calculated. This gives you the power to choose the right story and shows you what the result of each action might be (for example: increase of your newsletter subscribers).



Joris Gerritsen
editor in chief @ De Gelderlander

"We demand a lot from our people in the newsroom and they constantly have to make choices. The right data helps them to make the right decisions."



tip

deeper into the funnel

Let us tell you a secret. **Newsletter subscribers have a lot of potential** to turn into paying customers, because by subscribing to your newsletter they actually signed a letter of intent. Very willing to listen to relevant and attractive offers.

Smartify helps to increase traffic to articles from social media, the homepage and even from follow up stories to fill the beginning of your desired funnel.

Smartify Choose a channel

smartocto
Notification Tracker

Channel	Action	Headline	Predicted Impact
Put on Twitter	show all 28	Police action against nuisance under Utrecht bulb roof: twenty people arrested	Popular
Post on Facebook	show all 39	I like to meet her: alive	10.58 link clicks ctr % 0.19 engagement ctr %
Add to Newsletter	show all 68	This is how activists think they can prevent the felling of hundreds of trees in Doorn	Average 630 newsletter views
Write an Update	show all 1	Smart meters give wrong readings: 'Up to three times higher power consumption'	in 2 hours
Test the Headline	show all 1	1 year old girl does not survive drama	in 18 minutes yes previously tested
Move to Homepage	show all 43	Another fire in Boxmeer: work by 'the pyromaniac'?	69329 views after

for Smartify you don't need
a smartocto data source

So if you're attached to your current data provider,
but you want to be more actionable, simply plug in
our Smartify solution and we'll get you started.



5. insights

how reports and overviews can help you understand what your audience desires most

Smartocto Insights is in perfect sync with every major publishing business model. With the help of our unique analytics solution, you can map the patterns in your readers' behaviour and influence their actions.

Insights measure real reader behaviour and content performance with unrivalled precision thanks to our advanced metrics.

we will measure

- Article reads
- Attention time
- Read depth
- Visitors
- Social actions
- our unique Content Performance Indicator based on exposure, loyalty and engagement

reports and overviews

Smartocto Insights gives all the necessary historical data on a silver platter. If you need good analysis or set new strategic goals, this feature is the underlying support.

Insights is extremely fit for making conversions happen. The complex metrics on the author, section, topic and article level will help you increase your success all round with native advertisements, banner ad revenue, subscriptions and conversions. You name it, we can help boost it. It can also highlight risky areas, show where churn is a problem, and shed light on missed opportunities.

7 days insights

— Trends, alerts and insights based on how your readers have interacted with your content over the last seven days

VISITORS

D100%

272.3k^{43%}

ARTICLE READS

D100%

245.7k^{48%}

SOCIAL ACTIONS

32.2k^{175%}

5. insights

how reports and overviews can help you understand what your audience desires most

counter strike churn

Of course a recurring concern in digital publishing is to prevent churn. By using filtering and regularly observing the content performance you can easily find out which stories are not popular with subscribers or fail to engage them.

All of that is available within smartocto insights at the section, author, article, or even topic level. These insights enable you to lower churn by simply producing fewer stories that subscribers don't care about.

In the same way, you can observe what loyal and engaged subscribers consume most and get a good idea of what keeps them pinned to the screen.

And the best part, smartocto notifies you of this as well.



tip

preventing churn

After the pandemic peaks we see many newsrooms struggle to keep their reach on level. Add the world wide crisis to that and we all understand that **preventing churn** from happening is a very important part of the strategy. And smartocto not only understands, **we can also help**. And this is how.

The segmented insights we have available, the missed opportunity reports we create on stories that are still interesting to your audience but haven't been brought to their full potential and of course the **CPI** and **Quadrant Model of impact** can help you signal all the relevant things to keep your audience base connected.

Whether it's on author level, topic level, sections or even user needs - we can give you all the insights you need **to keep your subscribers loyal**.

With custom and preset reports which can be automated to send at the precise moment you desire and in the detail you want, it's easy to keep all stakeholders in the loop and editors updated. Storytellers will also benefit from insights about their story's performance. But set aside from having all the metrics, two Insights features are incredibly powerful for conversions: CPI and the Quadrant model.

understanding audience behaviour with CPI

The power of all insights comes from [CPI](#) (Content Performance Indicator) and it fuels all the reports we make. The fact that CPI measures engagement and loyalty better than any other analytics tool in the world and automatically ranks articles, will lead to... well, no prizes for saying 'more conversions' - you'll have connected the dots by now...



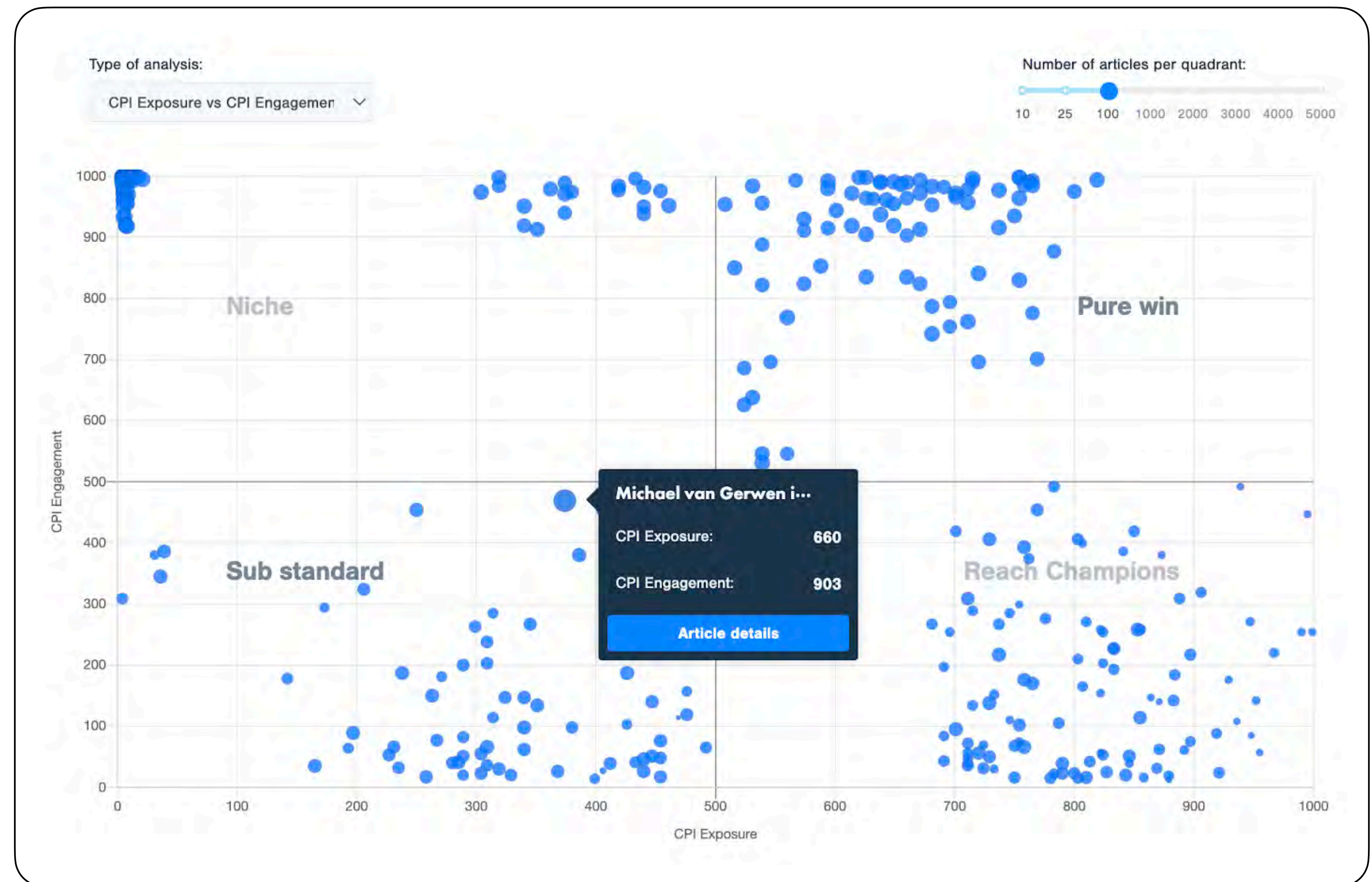
decision making

with the Quadrant Model

As much as we think that every story can be optimised, we also believe that making hard choices about the amount of articles that are being published can be the start of a very effective content strategy. With the Quadrant Model we offer insights that help to make those choices.

In one axis, for example, we might put reach and on the other engagement and with that you get an interesting overview of topics (or even stories) that have an impact on your audience (top right) or the ones that don't (bottom left).

So to make it all crystal clear here's 4 important insights to take from the Quadrant Model.



niche but nice

Stories that end up in the left quadrant are high on engagement (indicating your audience likes the topic) but are low on reach (indicating your audience couldn't find them very well). A logical thing to consider in these articles is to distribute them better. Maybe they can benefit from social media attention, maybe adding them to the newsletter will do the trick. Either way the tip is to optimise distribution.

niche

gold nuggets

Stories that end up in the top of the right quadrant (those are the articles with extreme high reach and engagement) tend to convert 20 times more people than average articles. Needless to say you want a lot of articles to be in that sweet spot.

pure win

basement bunch

The worst quadrant to be in is the sub standard, low engagement and low reach. There's a very simple way to solve this: stop making these articles because your audience surely isn't interested in them. Sometimes you need to make these rough decisions to create more space and time for other stories to be told. Your audience will reward you for these choices. And if you're still convinced that the basement bunch is worth the effort you need to reconsider how you create these stories because distribution, choice of channel, format, user need and a lot more seems to be off in the opinion of your audience.

sub
standard

reach champions

Stories that have an extremely high amount of pageviews but score relative low on engagement should have your attention as well. This means that your audience wants something else and therefore enriching the content is probably a wise thing to do. Here the user needs could come in handy but creating relevant follow ups might also help you to engage your audience more on the topic.

reach champions

our mission

We understand that the subscription model is one of the most important business models for the future of online journalism. Smartocto is a powerful system that's built on that knowledge and is therefore fit to support you in that challenge. This eGuide is a quick summary of the main features we offer. We have learnt through multiple strategies and approaches from newsrooms across the globe. We translated all of that into graphs, metrics and notifications.

The features we describe form the foundation of data driven media outlets. They're built with and designed for newsrooms, storytellers and other content creators.

Our mission is to help you make your news stories more relevant, impactful and profitable. Get from data to action with our smart tips and suggestions - and connect the dots between you and your audience.

It's analytics made easy.



Erik van Heeswijk
CEO SMARTOCTO

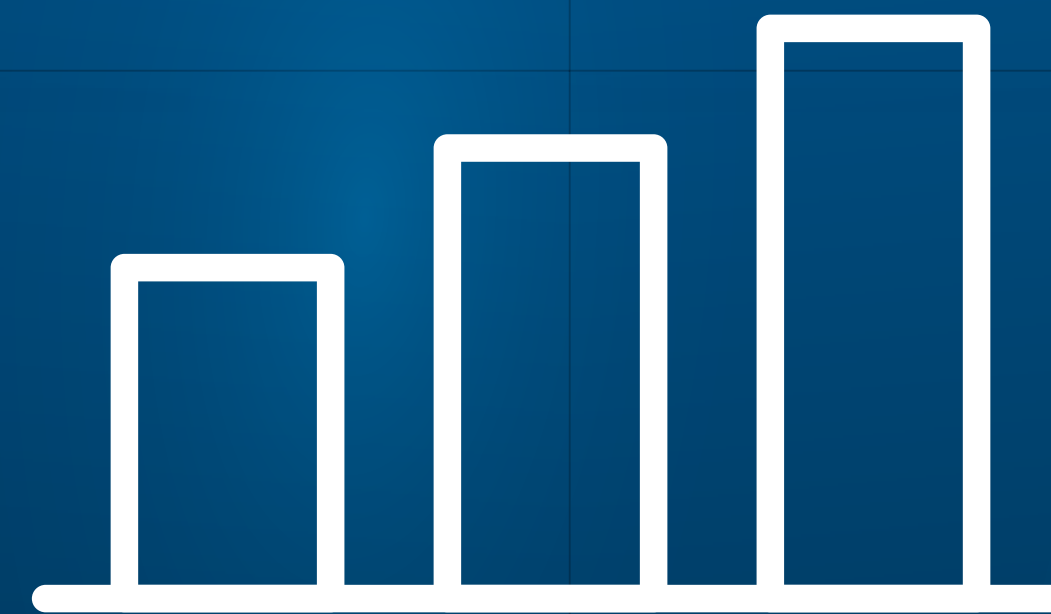


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Please reach out to us

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Ready to boost your conversion strategy?

For questions or a demo reach out to us:
smartocto.com/company/contact/

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