



# smartocto

the ultimate **user needs** partner

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# User Needs Model v2.0



## what is the User Needs Model?

User needs is a concept that will lead to an intellectual shift in how you **commission**, **produce** and **publish** content. As such, it's neither a feature nor a tool: it's the **foundation** onto which you can build **success** and **engagement** - and **you're** the architect.

Any newsroom can be successful as long it satisfies its **audience's user needs** strategically, consistently and creatively.

We have the tools, techniques and examples to empower and enable you to do just that - and as your partner, we're here to show you how the model can **work for you**.

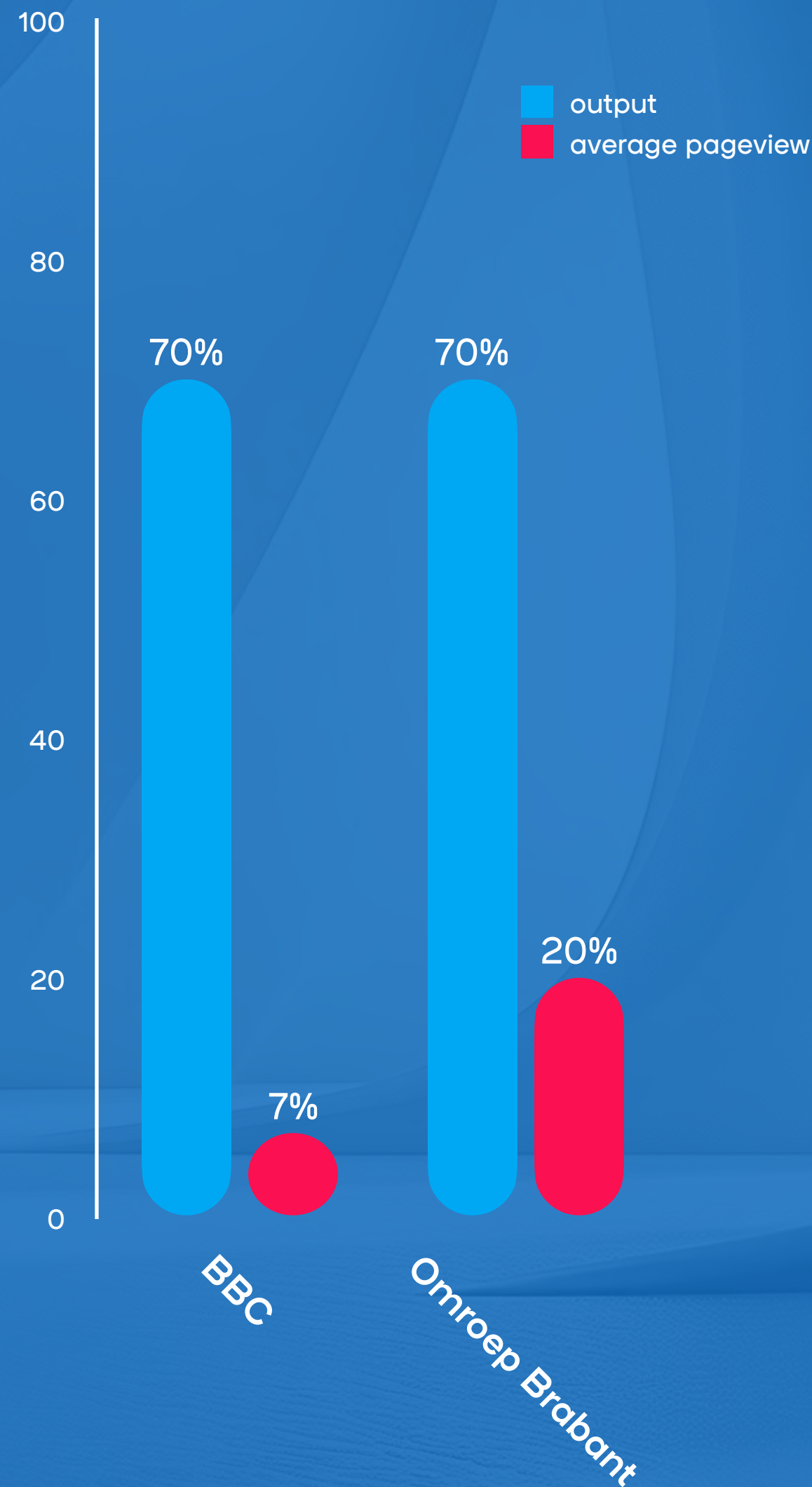
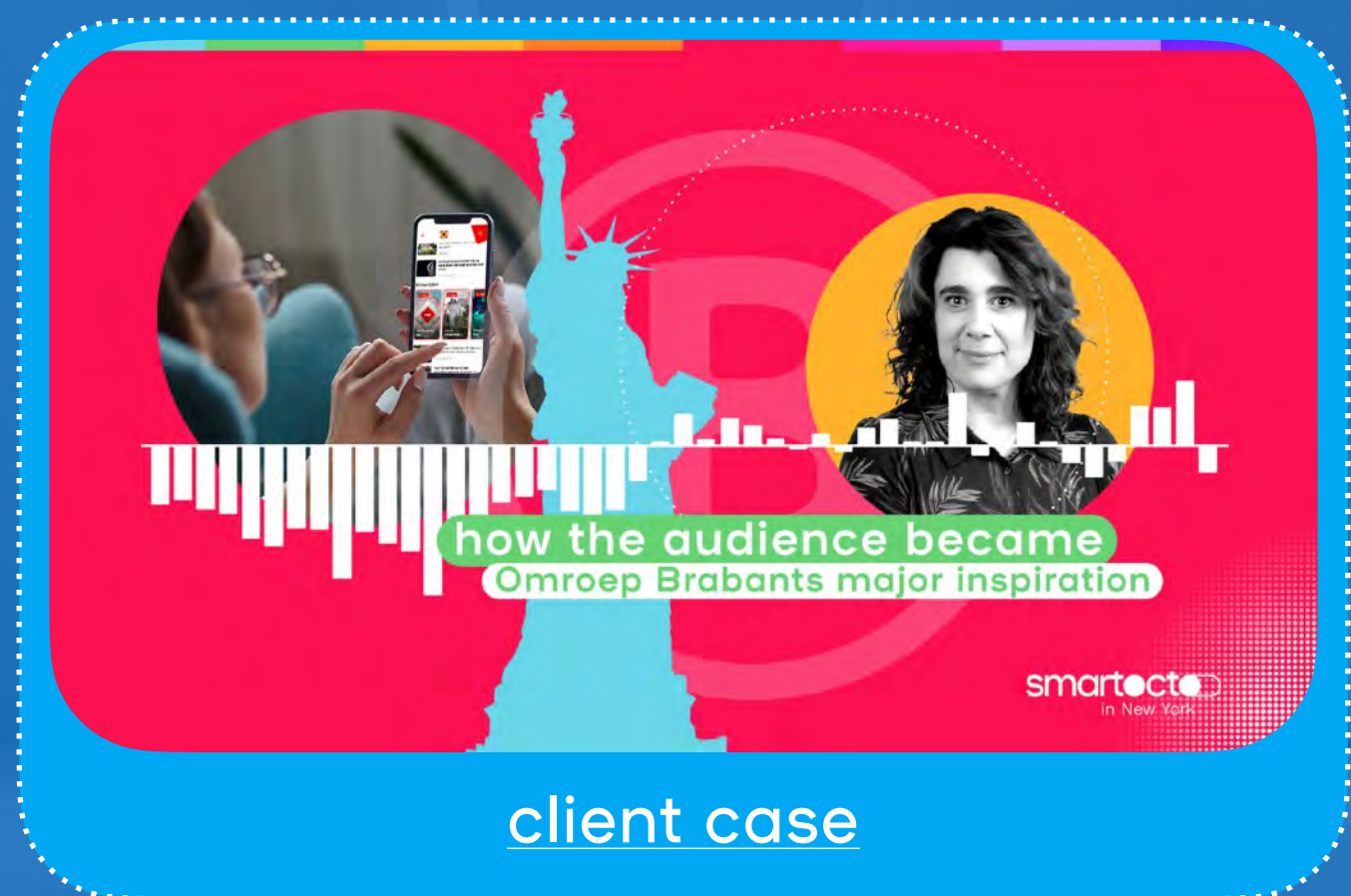
In this document, we'll walk you through the process of creating a story using **this approach** - and show you how smartocto can help you along the way. User needs based data analysis is the **first step** to create **more impactful** content that will generate **higher engagement** and a **stronger connection** to **your visitors**.



## Create reports with smartocto

Create reports based on the data that will be invaluable to your editorial team. The numbers will show which user needs are overproduced, for instance.

The client case below is a **striking example** that was created with Dutch regional broadcaster, Omroep Brabant.



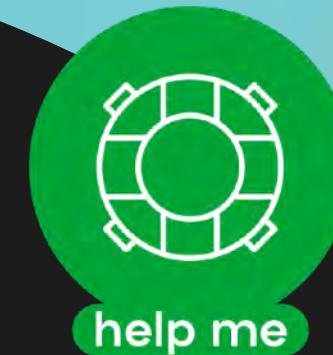
Update me articles highlight a **huge misalignment** between output and needs

- overproduction of Update me articles (70% of total output) not matched by percentage of **actual reads** by user need
- newsroom not producing content users **actually needed** or wanted



**janneke bosch**

editor **Omroep Brabant**  
The Netherlands



"Now, we create different kinds of chains: from an **update** to an **explanatory** story, maybe followed by an **inspiring** story, and then a story that **helps** the reader further.

This makes us better able to publish more stories about a topic right away, giving us more control over **which topics** we find journalistically **important**.

Thus, we're less dependent on new developments - which sometimes just aren't there."

## Weekly overview - User needs

for Apr 1, 2024 to Apr 7, 2024

CPI perspective: Traffic

### What to look for:

- Which User Need is highly valued by the audience: a high degree of reach and a high degree of reading?
- How many stories have been created in the different User Needs: **is the balance still good ?**
- Which stories deserve a follow-up or should we put on the agenda for later in the year?

### Overview of published User Needs stories

Name	Number of Articles	Article Reads Avg.	↓ CPI	Exposure CPI	Engagement CPI
Connect me	10	11,736	982	971	997
Give me perspective	16	14,053	893	988	706
Educate me	9	10,961	865	959	706
Divert me	4	18,357	834	932	957
Keep me engaged	58	16,425	707	1000	134
Inspire me	3	4,948	705	368	800
Help me	3	18,261	519	884	54

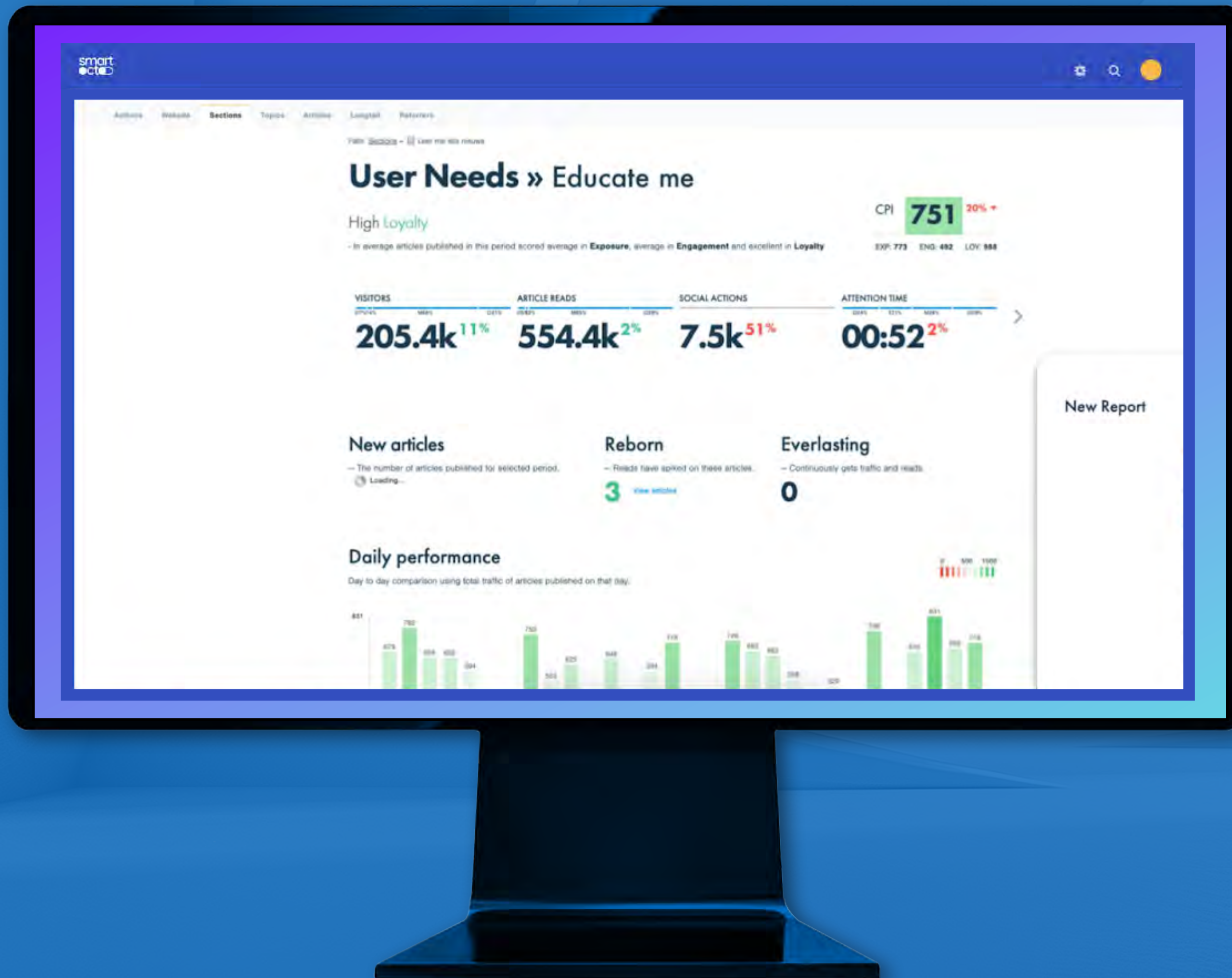
## Educate me

Title	Exposure CPI	Engagement CPI	↓ CPI	Article Reads
From the editor-in-chief: Journalist goes to prison, is that allowed?	319	1000	679	6,294
More rooms for homeless people in 'luxury hotels' can stay until the end of the year	309	881	599	6,085
New homes may not be able to be supplied with drinking water	720	574	539	10,091
Weeds in drive-thru: fast food chain has been empty for four years	950	524	516	20,530
Breaking up land over a length of more than two kilometers for a new water pipeline	626	14	471	5,349
Another detour because one of the busiest N-roads in the Netherlands is closing: 'Will not solve traffic jams'	1000	334	447	37,386
How could supermarket killer walk free despite all warnings and stab someone to death?	162	26	350	3,975
Cheese girls see themselves all over the world: 'There is a fight over you'	324	399	308	5,720

• Our **Context Performance Indicator (CPI)** •

shows in **historical** data reports which articles and user needs outperform others.

# Create reports with smartocto



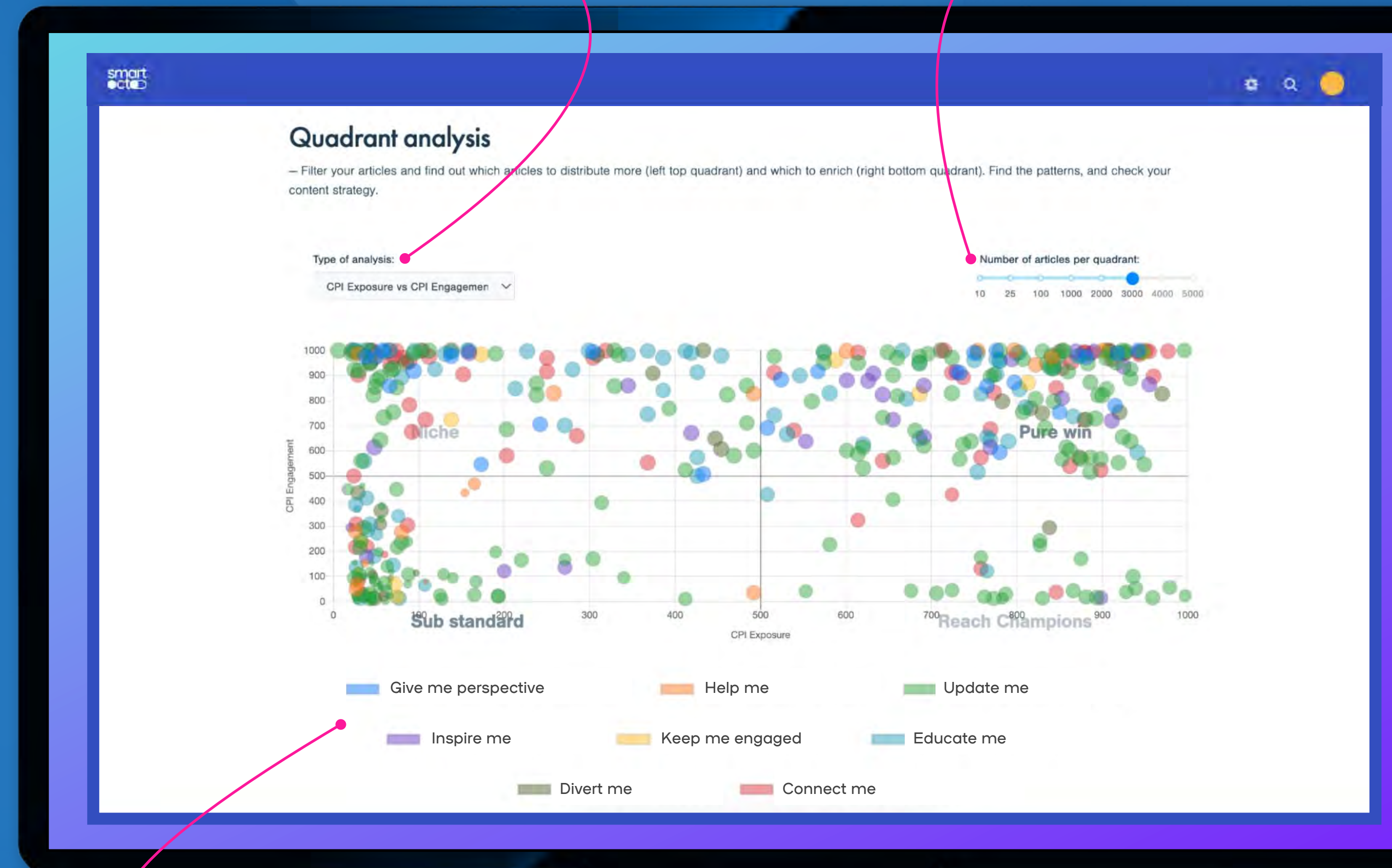
With the report builder in smartocto's feature **Insights**, you can create **any kind of report** you like (or need). Filtering on user needs, makes it easier to find **missed opportunities**. It makes it simple to decide which follow-up stories to write.

This one's on the performance of '**Educate me**' stories in the last month.

# doing a proper user needs analysis

The **Quadrant Model** is a smart **data visualisation** feature that **helps newsrooms** to understand at a glance how **specific stories, authors and topics perform**. With the model, we plot all the selected stories on a graph with 2 axes. One shows **reach** and the other **engagement**.

The **filtering** on user needs makes this visualisation more powerful, as it shows in colour which needs have the most value to your readers.



'type of analysis'

'number of articles per quadrant'

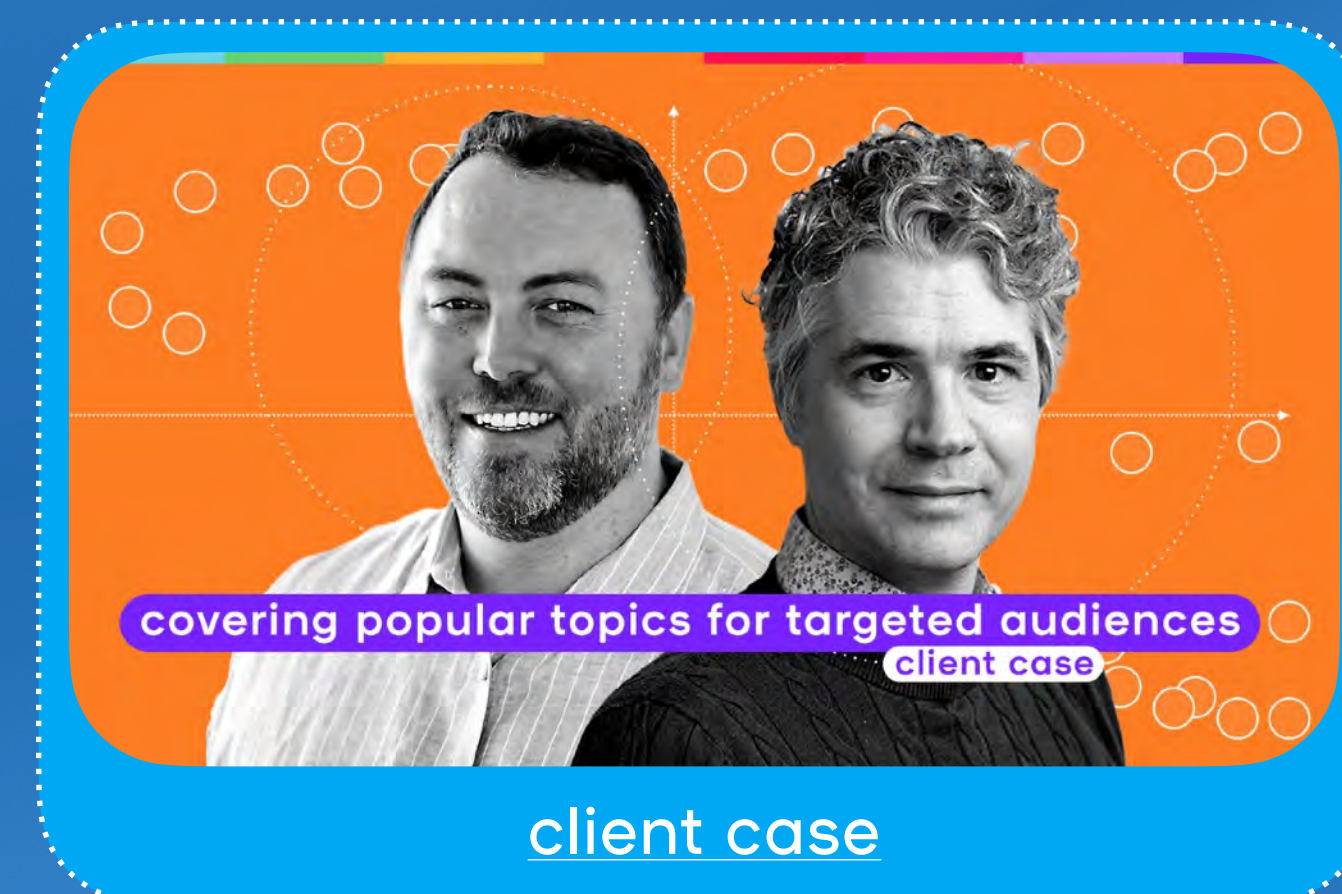
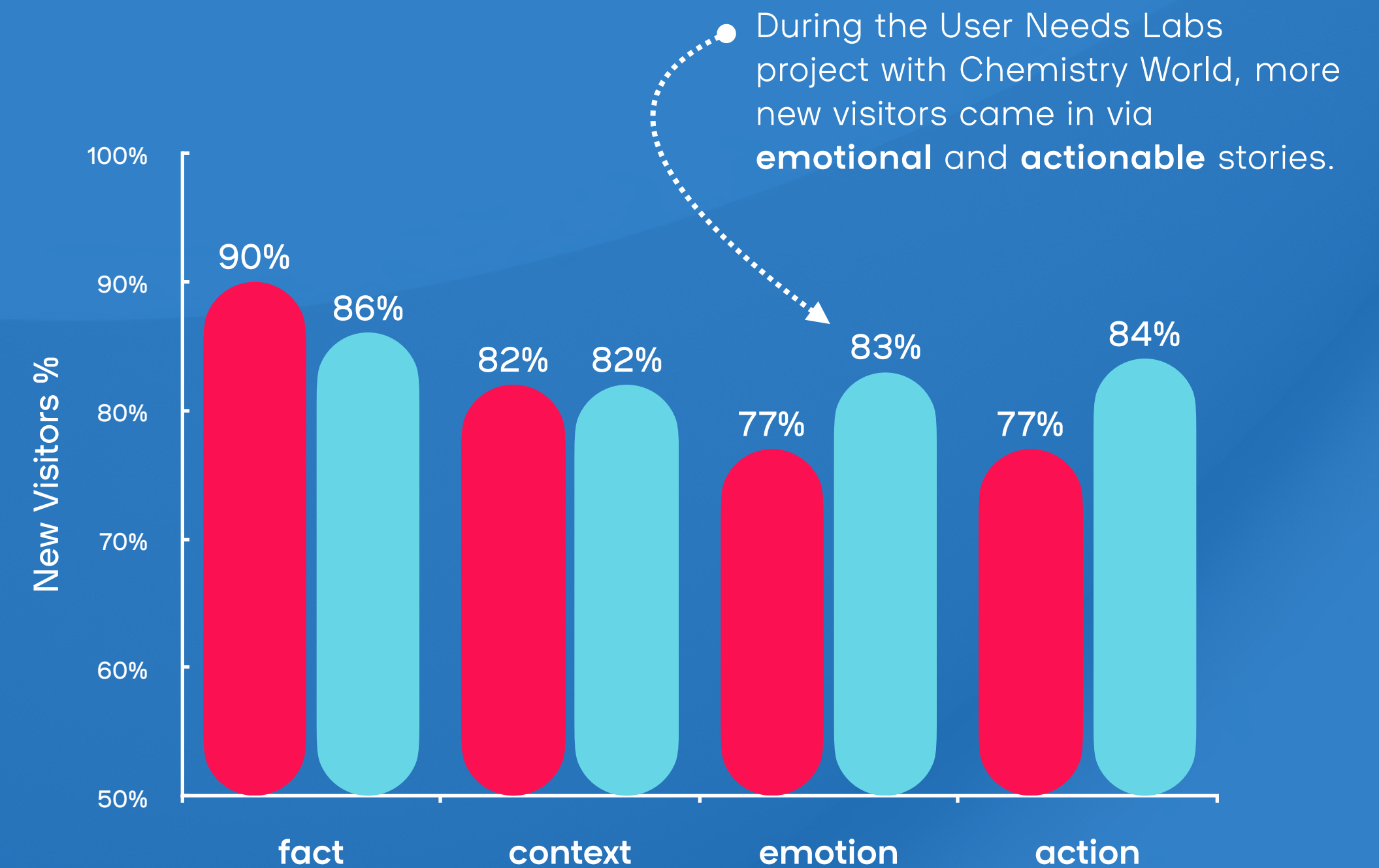
user needs



## growth hacks

Once you have data reports in place and did your editorial analysis, you will be able to start doing growth hacks, to target **specific issues** or **weak points** in your output. These can be **based on** topics, sections, authors and user needs.

Niche news site, **Chemistry World** from the UK decided to create more emotion-driven articles (based on the **'Divert me'** and **'Inspire me'** user needs). You can see from the report of the growth hack **how effective** this process was for them. Check the client case to understand more about their approach.





**philip robinson**

editor **Chemistry World**  
United Kingdom

"Chemistry World doesn't have the scale or resources to follow events at the same rates and volumes as other newsrooms, so we have to **choose** our **story points** carefully.

That means trying to keep our readers at the **centre** of our decisions: where can we **add value** for our readers and **what matters to them**?

What do our readers **expect** of us? What is the **impact on members** of our community?"

**CHEMISTRY\WORLD**

## Smartocto makes the user needs data actionable

At its core, smartocto was designed to be a tool that helps the newsroom make **editorial decisions**.

These notifications are created **together with our clients** right from the start to ensure that they get to the **right people**, at the **right time**, through the **right channel**.

This way we ensure we're a valuable asset is to **make** the data **actionable** - and **recognisable** language must emerge from the system.

These are powerful user needs notifications that help an editorial team achieve its own goals:

### notification

This article is doing great on engagement.

Create a **follow-up** based on a **different user need**.

### notification

Yesterday's **Inspire me** story had the biggest reach with 120.000 pageviews.

Keep it **relevant** today and create follow-ups from alternative user need angles.

### notification

Today this **Educate me** story performed best with 244.000 pageviews.

### notification

This article gets a lot of **reach**, but **not** so much **engagement**. Check if it's written from a clear user need perspective and edit if possible.

### notification

This article gets a lot of engagement, but **not** so much **reach** compared to others. Do an **A/B test** and make sure to align the user need of the article with the headline.



**roy wassink**

insights manager of **dpg media**  
news analytics team

"For me the User Needs model is a common language for our news organisation, it's data in words.

It provides editorial analysts with an additional dimension to **learn more** about our stories. It helps marketers to **improve user profiles**. But the **User Needs model** can exist without all that fancy data.

For journalists, it is above all a practical tool that they can use in their daily work. It helps them to **focus**, for example when writing a follow-up to a news story, while thinking about a good headline or a new intro. And that's the most important thing in the end. **Writing better stories by understanding our readers' needs.**"

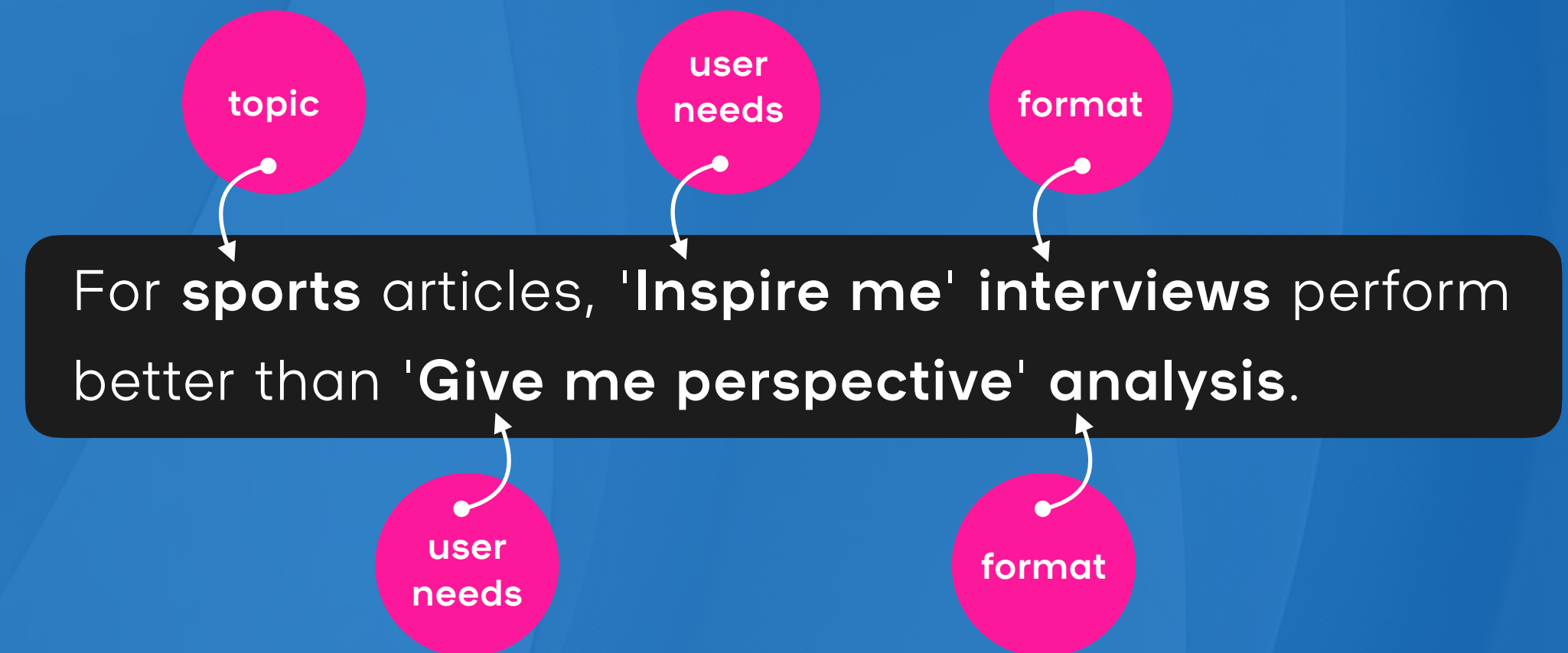


## why tagging is essential and smartocto can help

If you don't tag the articles you publish, you won't have any data, which in turn means you won't be able to extract any **insights** and **analysis**. So yes: **tagging is essential**, but you need to be on the same page as your colleagues, so a **common language** is important too.

The **8 user needs** identified in our research (see the [whitepaper](#) for more information) are an obvious start for labelling. The **topic** is a label. The **format** is a label. Set them as tags in the CMS where you record your stories.

The goal is to come to conclusions like this:



Smartocto can let artificial intelligence **help** with this process by identifying the **dominant user need** of any articles - though it is limited to the axis on which it operates: know, understand, feel, and do.

If you're unable to manually tag your articles, this will give you a quick **indication** of where your strength lies.

# How smartocto's artificial intelligence supports user needs

Smartocto doesn't just make reports based on its numerical analyses. **Thanks to AI**, it's also able to assess the quality of your content - and make suggestions about how to improve and optimise it. **User needs** are at the very **heart** of this.

This means you're finally able to answer the million dollar question:

What should you actually do to **improve** your content so that it brings you **closer** to what **your audience wants** and **expects** from you?

Check out [userneeds.smartocto.com](https://userneeds.smartocto.com) for free to see how this works - it's impressive!

This is part of **smartocto.ai**:

1

**Automated content classification available\***, including **user needs**. This means that AI helps you recognise which user need is dominant in any article.

\*ask how we could help

2

**Instantly actionable suggestions** for discovering new perspectives on user needs.

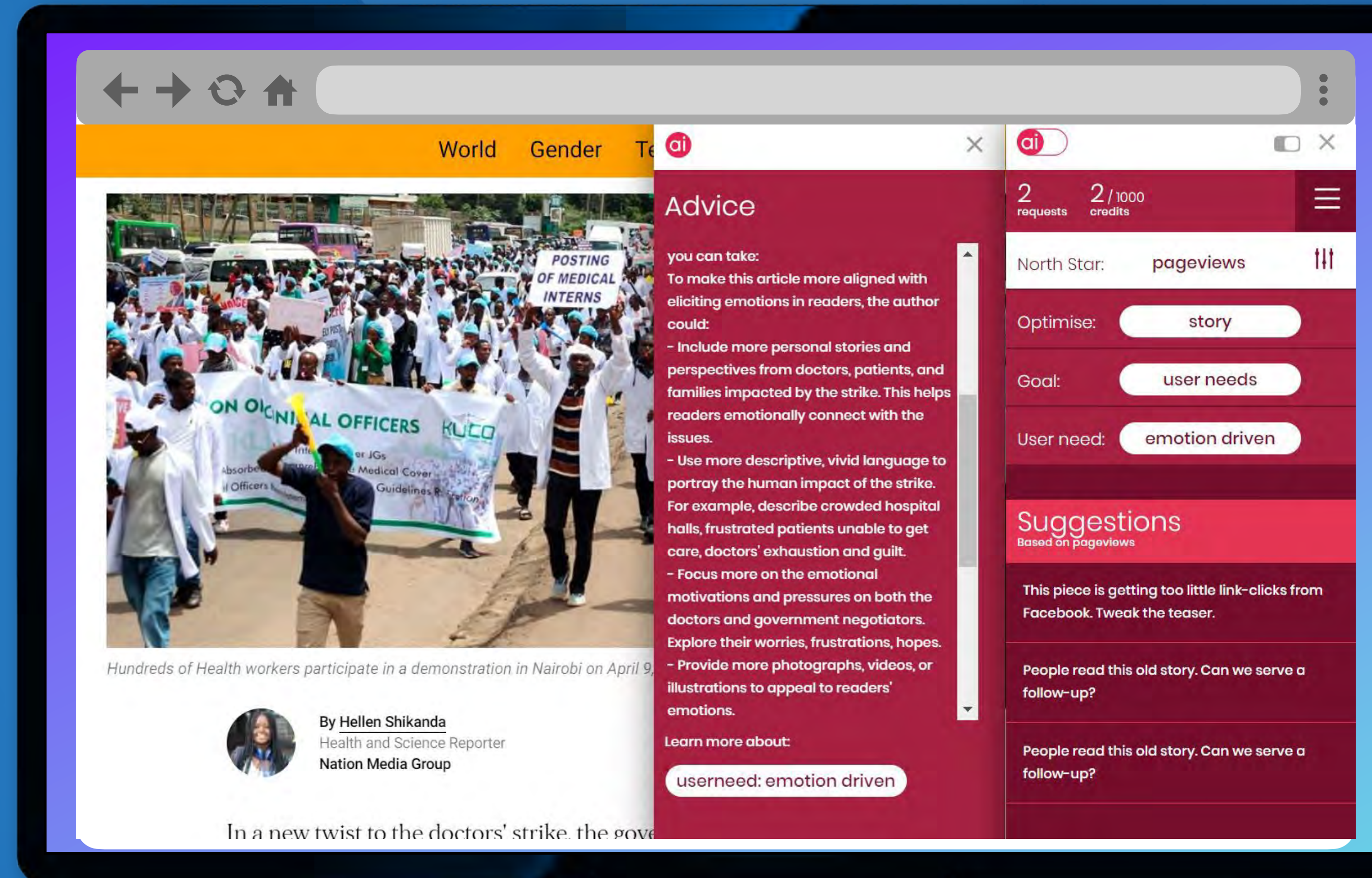
3

**Headline and paragraph improvement suggestions.** Text improvement suggestions via [smartocto.ai](https://smartocto.ai) are just a few clicks away. Smartocto takes patterns in our knowledge base and combines this with **generative** AI to **offer advice** about **what to do** next with your content strategy.

# How smartocto's artificial intelligence supports user needs

**Smartocto.ai** exists as a layer on your website. Select the elements you wish to **analyse** and receive **suggestions** immediately.

It's as if you, as a visitor, are browsing your own website and receiving **advice for improvements**. The system understands the **historical** and **real-time** data, and thus knows where actual improvements can be made.



The screenshot displays a web browser interface with an AI overlay. The browser shows a news article titled "POSTING OF MEDICAL INTERNS" with a photo of a demonstration. The AI overlay, labeled "Advice", provides the following text:

you can take:  
To make this article more aligned with eliciting emotions in readers, the author could:

- Include more personal stories and perspectives from doctors, patients, and families impacted by the strike. This helps readers emotionally connect with the issues.
- Use more descriptive, vivid language to portray the human impact of the strike. For example, describe crowded hospital halls, frustrated patients unable to get care, doctors' exhaustion and guilt.
- Focus more on the emotional motivations and pressures on both the doctors and government negotiators. Explore their worries, frustrations, hopes.
- Provide more photographs, videos, or illustrations to appeal to readers' emotions.

Learn more about:  
userneed: emotion driven

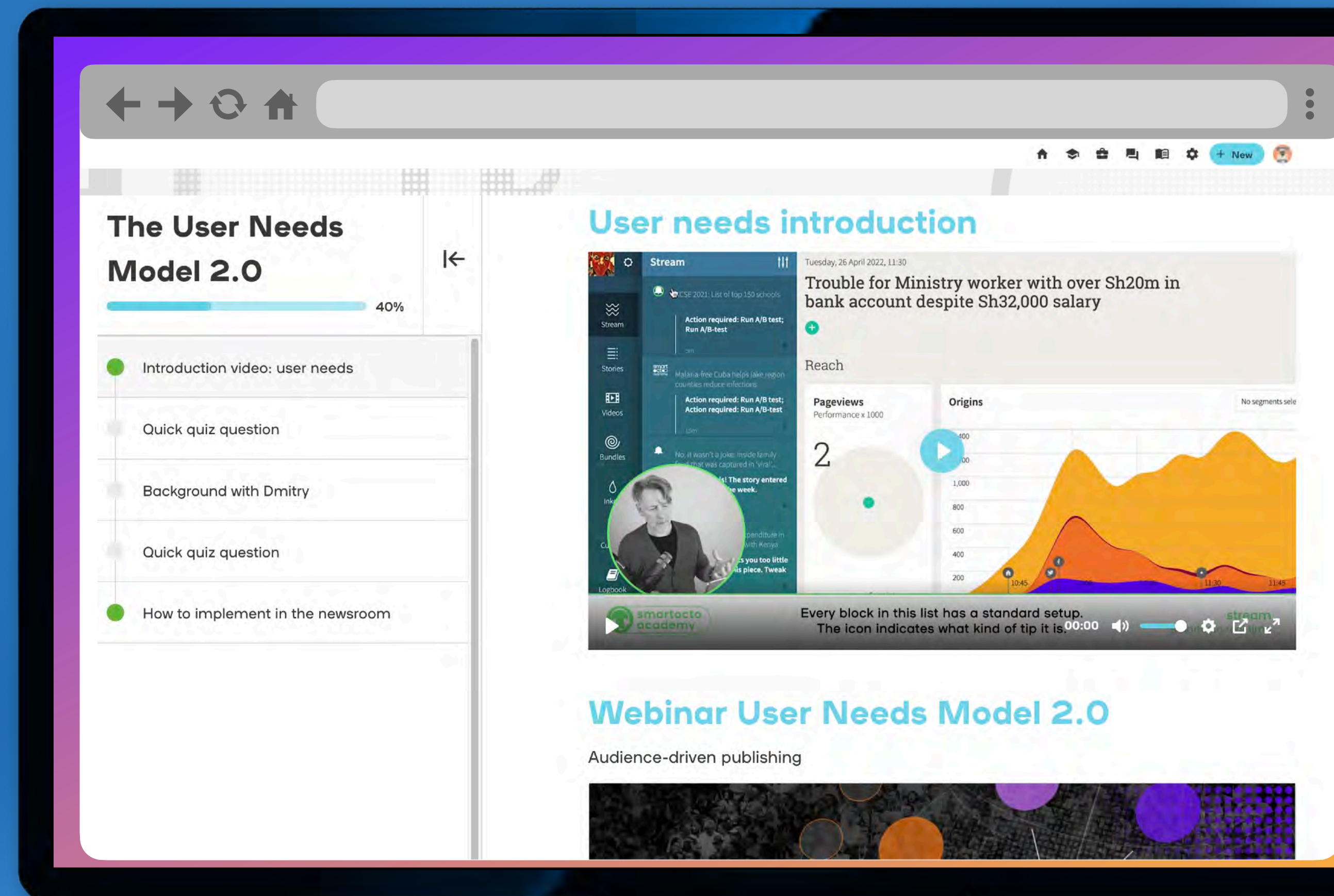
On the right side of the overlay, there are statistics and suggestions:

- 2 requests, 2/1000 credits
- North Star: pageviews
- Optimise: story
- Goal: user needs
- User need: emotion driven
- Suggestions: Based on pageviews
- This piece is getting too little link-clicks from Facebook. Tweak the teaser.
- People read this old story. Can we serve a follow-up?
- People read this old story. Can we serve a follow-up?

# learning to understand the model with smartocto

While **smartocto** can automate a lot, do think twice before defaulting to this option. We've found that newsrooms who succeed the most with user needs are the ones who **develop a strategy** with the **support of the tool**, and execute it using that **guidance**.

This is the edge newsrooms tell us they want, and we developed our **eLearning programme** so that everyone across the news organisation can upskill. There are videos and quizzes - and lots of interactive elements to ensure you can **master the basics** and **beyond**.







"The flexibility of an eLearning platform allows our journalists to **update their knowledge** at their own pace. It empowers them to **extract the maximum potential** from their stories."



**thomas boeschoten**

lead news analytics team  
DPG Media - The Netherlands

"I think everyone can relate when I say that so much is happening simultaneously in a newsroom.

In addition to journalistic craftsmanship, all sorts of data come in, and you need to respond to it appropriately.

When you also have to implement the methodology of a model, it can be scary for some colleagues."



**nina alatalo**

data and research analyst  
Turun Sanomat - Finland

**Turun Sanomat**



# learning to understand the model with smartocto

Read more about the **Academy about user needs** in these client cases.

A graphic titled 'user needs for news' featuring a woman's portrait and various icons like 'do', 'know', 'feel', and 'understand'. It includes logos for 'omroep gl', 'RTV Utrecht', and 'OMROEP BRABANT'. Text at the bottom reads 'the user needs approach supported by smartocto academy'.

client case

A graphic featuring three women's portraits. Text at the bottom identifies them as 'Katriina Norontaus', 'Johanna Kakonen', and 'Nina Alatalo'. The background has icons like 'keep me engaged', 'fact driven', and 'update me'.

client case

We also offer more **extensive programs** together with **FT Strategies**.

**user needs labs**  
this is what you get

- 1** Educational material about constructing and implementing a **user needs strategy + data dashboards** (historical and real-time) and **technical support** for these dashboards.
- 2** **4 virtual webinar sessions** and a **dedicated consultant** to guide you through the programme.
- 3** A **license for smartocto** is secured for a period of **6 months** and an additional **2.000 euro** worth of **credits** for **AI-driven advice** is included.

FT STRATEGIES smartocto

FT STRATEGIES & smartocto proudly present

**user needs labs**  
understand your audience

More info





Smartocto is the partner you need to implement the user needs approach at your newsroom. We can **guide** you through this concept **like no one else** - because we developed it **with people exactly like you** in mind.

**Book a demo** and **find out**





# smartocto

the ultimate **user needs** partner

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user needs for news

user needs for news

fact driven

update me

educate me

understand context driven

give me perspective

feel emotion driven

divert me

keep me engaged

help me

do action driven

connect me

inspire me

feel emotion driven