



smartoct

the ultimate **user needs** partner

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User Needs Model v2.0



[download the whitepaper](#)

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**.



prove that your efforts **pay off**

If putting your audience first truly matters to you, then you'll want to work with a data tool that can **provide evidence** that the **user needs** model is **effective**.

That's why **Ringier Media** has chosen to work with **smartocto**. In collaboration with **Dmitry Shishkin**, they sought to answer the following question: Do articles with a **clear user needs** focus **perform better**?

To find out, we conducted a **large-scale data analysis** of articles published by titles within Ringier Media International. This was made possible by smartocto's **advanced artificial intelligence system**, which enables the analysis of **vast amounts of content data** in a **fast** and **reliable** way.

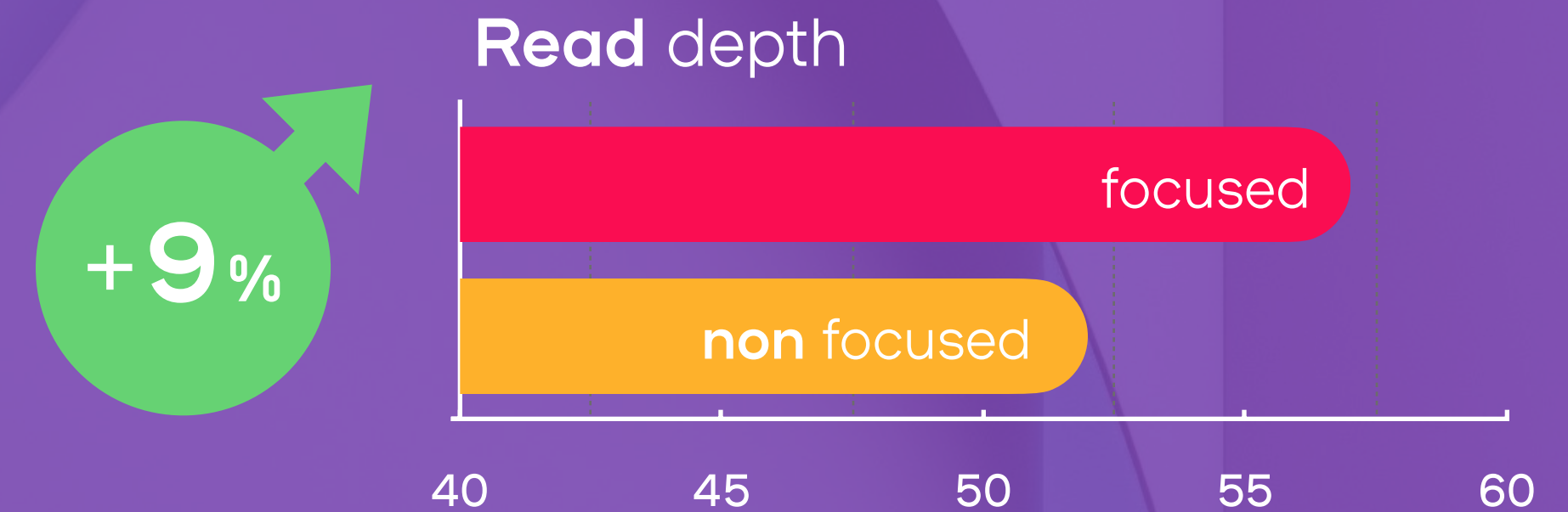
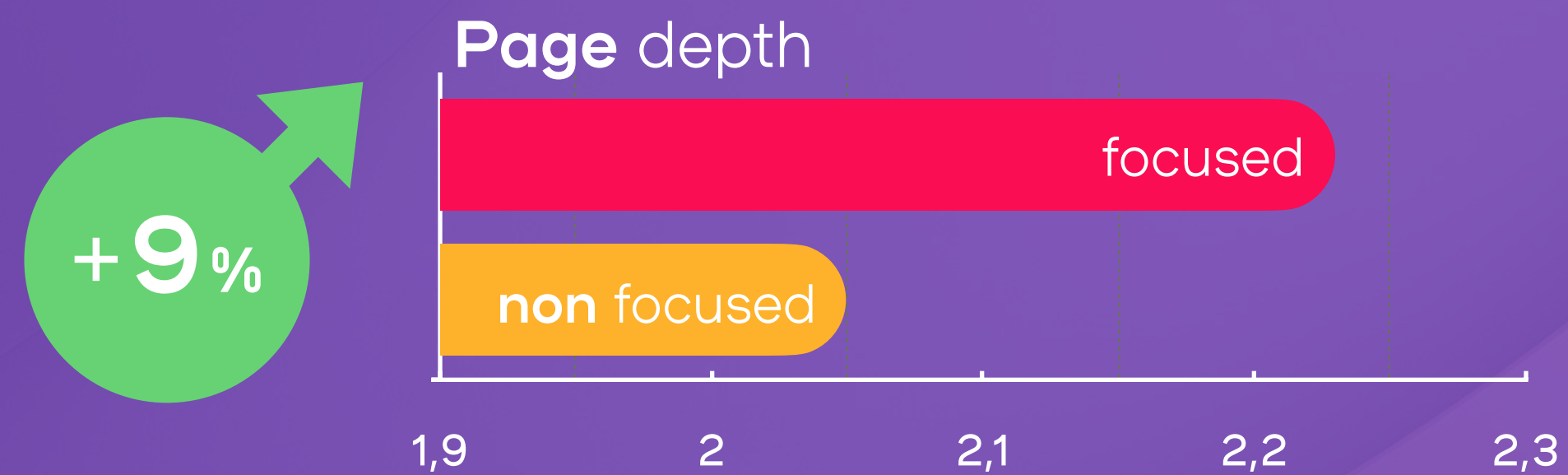
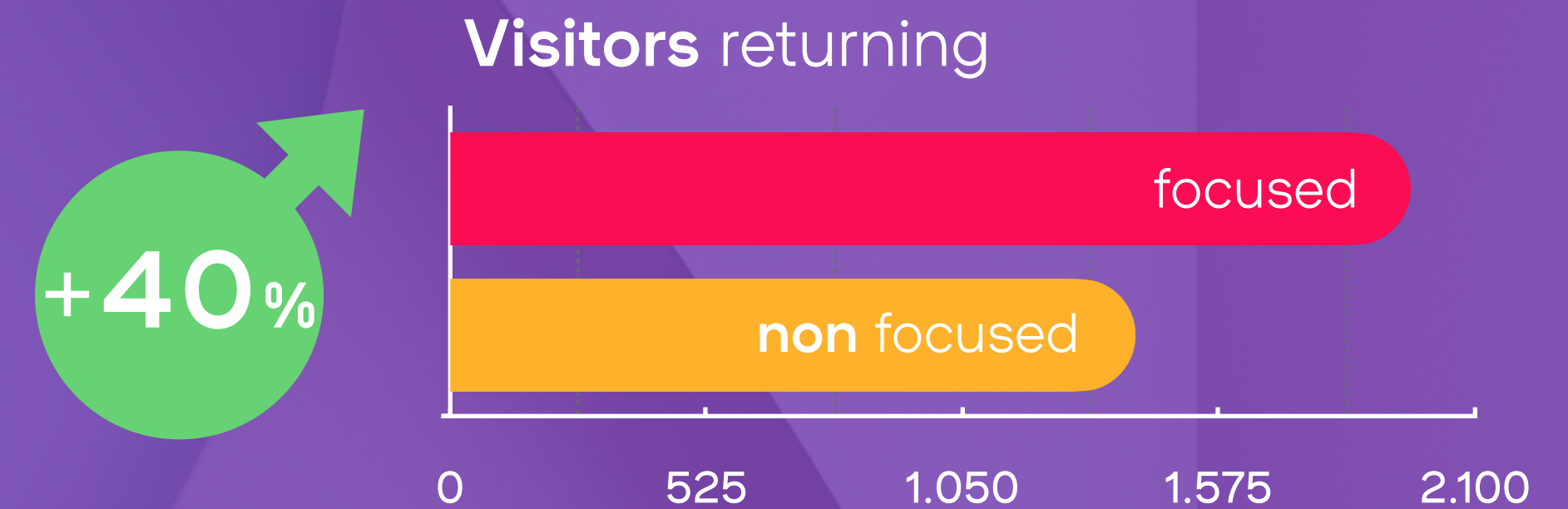
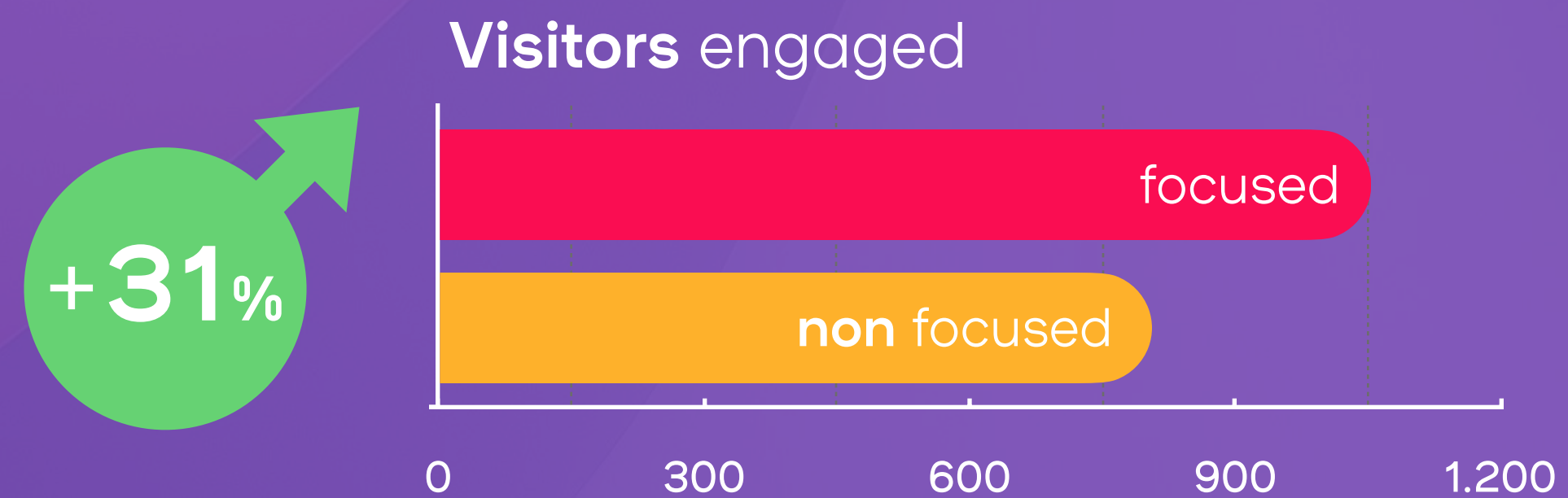
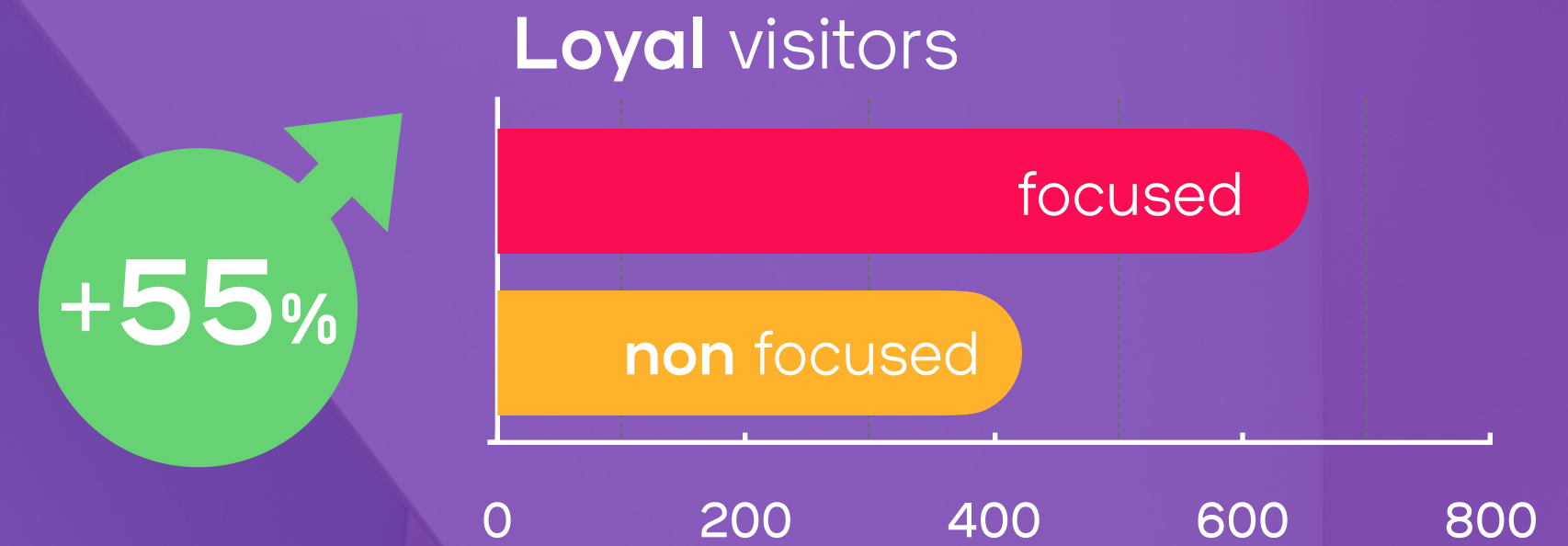
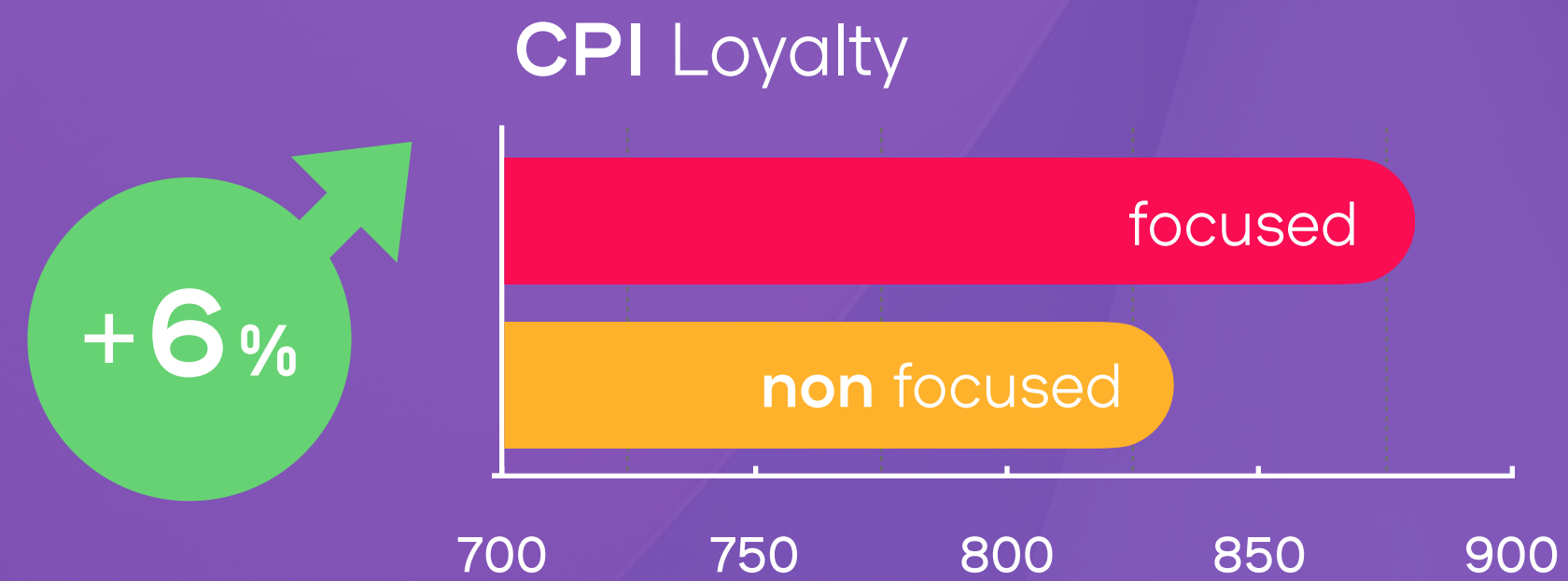
What we discovered was clear: articles with a **strong focus** consistently **outperformed** others across multiple metrics. These results were statistically **significant**, and in some cases, the differences were **striking**.

In particular, **loyalty scores** were considerably **higher** for focused articles.

The conclusion? Editors, it's **worth investing** your time in **crafting focused content**.

client case

Focused vs Non-Focused User Needs Articles



automated user needs **tagging**

The success of a journalistic organisation depends on **understanding** which stories **resonate** with the audience - and which do **not**.

To analyse whether you've reached your intended goals, it is essential to **categorise**

pages or types of content correctly. Correct tagging of content is **especially important** if you're using the user needs approach.

Smartocto invests **significant** effort in helping editors **understand** how to **tag** their **content**, more of which will be explained later in this document.

However, it is worth noting that, thanks to extensive research and work with Artificial Intelligence, smartocto is also capable of **automatically tagging content.**

The user needs tagger has been available since 2024 and is already being used by a number of our clients.



How the user needs **tagger** works

We implemented a **public API** for **user needs tagging** of articles, which can be **integrated** into clients' CMS, or the collected results can be merged with other client data and used for various types of analysis.

The system can be used in two ways: by submitting **full article content** or by submitting a **list of URLs** that need to be tagged.

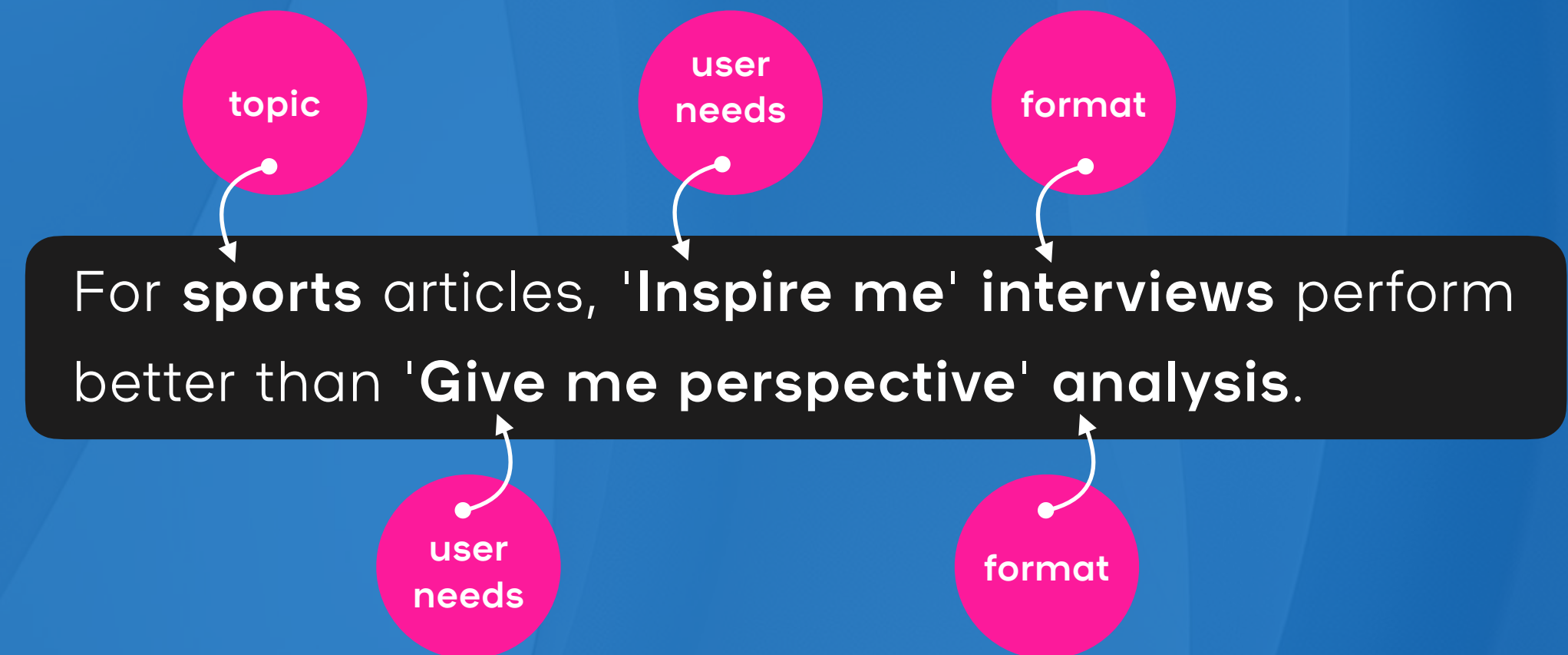
[Book a demo](#)

if you would like to see this in action

[Watch the webinar](#)

on this topic

The goal is to come to conclusions like this:



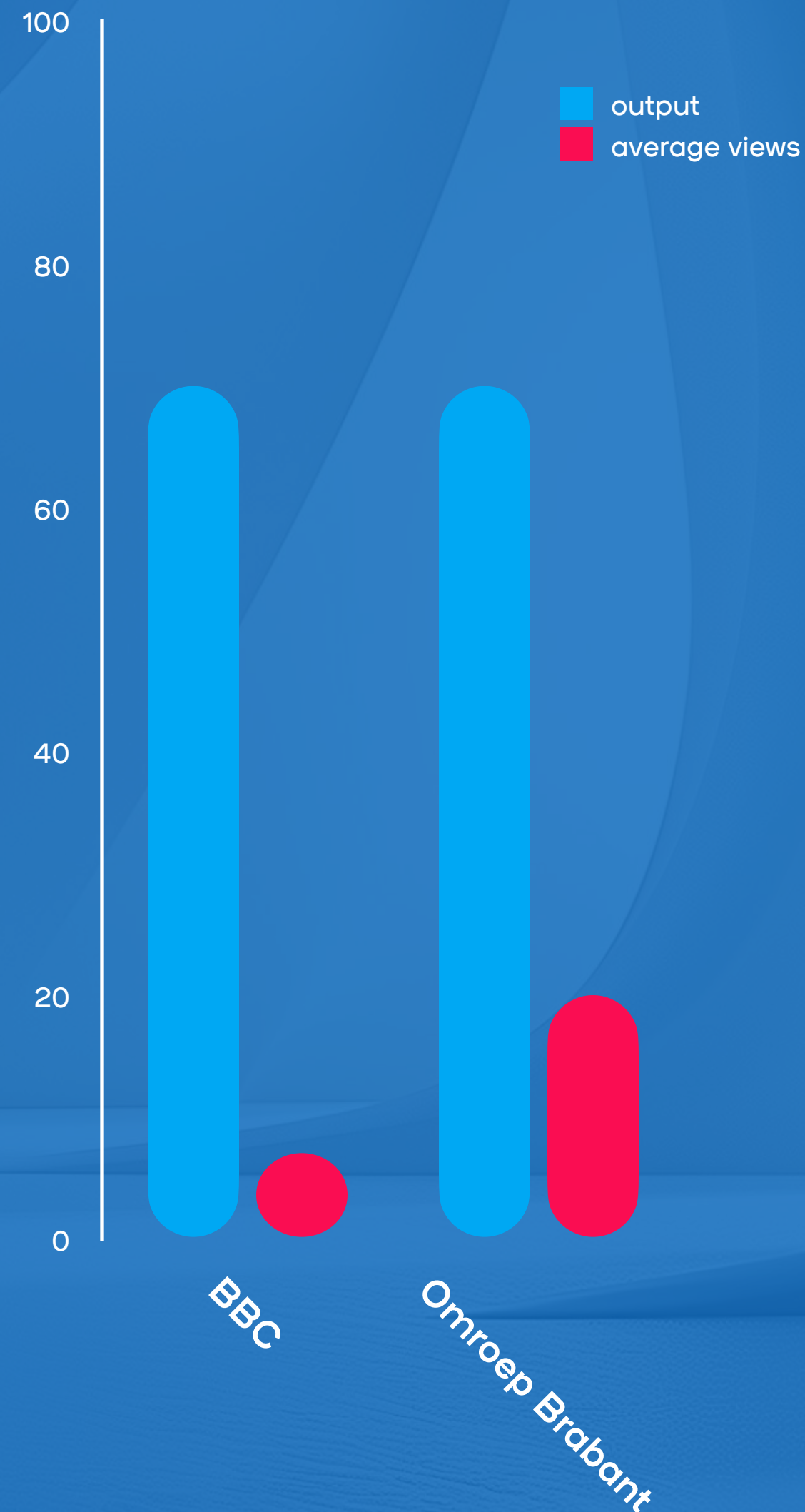
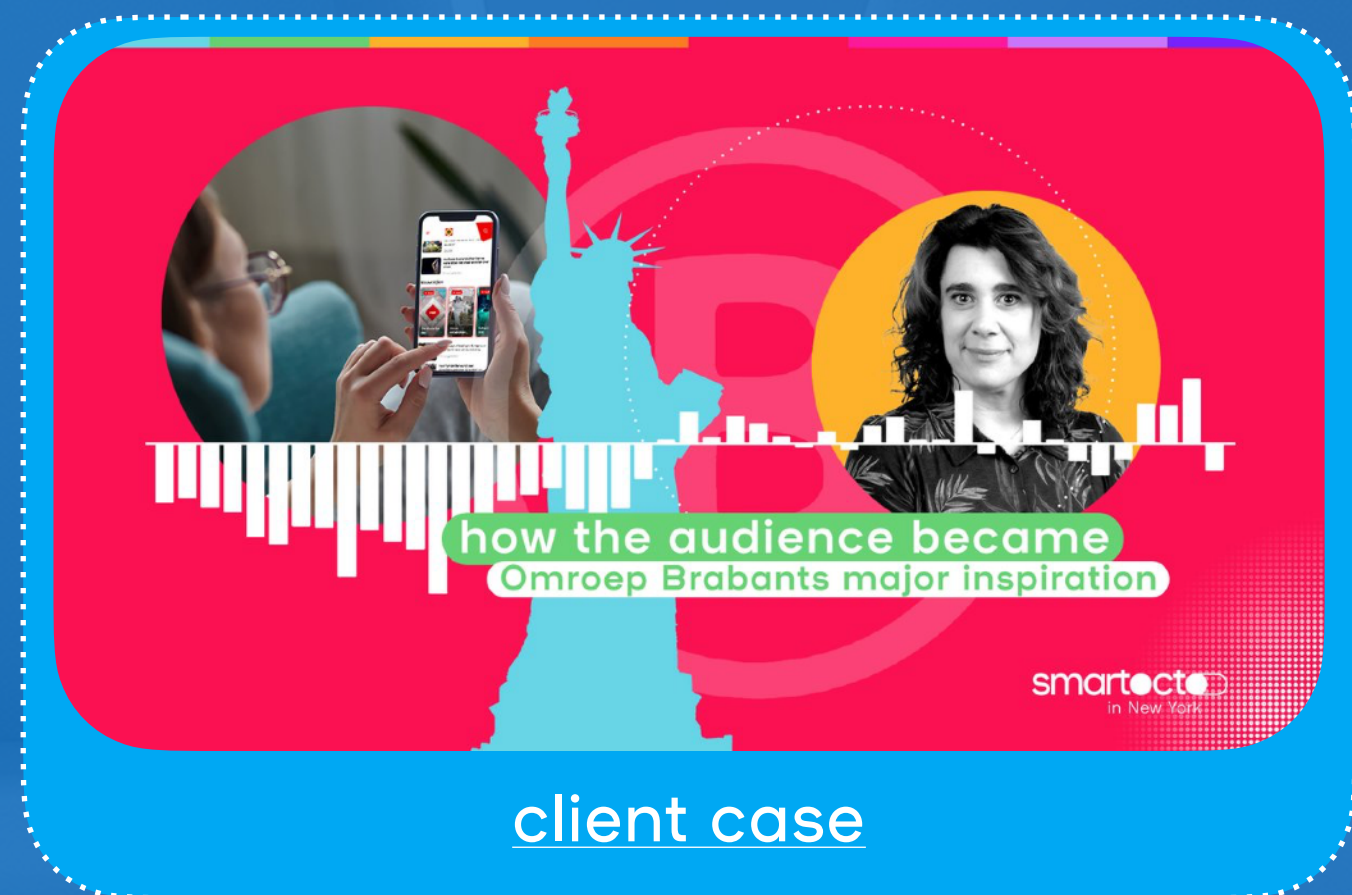
Smartocto can let artificial intelligence **help** with this process by identifying the **dominant user need** of any articles - though it is limited to the axis on which it operates: know, understand, feel, and do.

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

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.



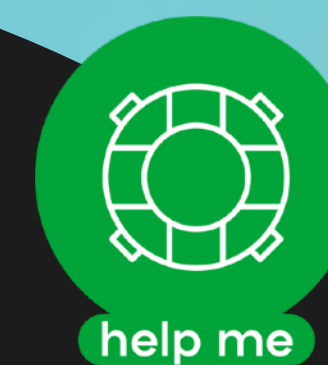
Update me articles highlight a **huge misalignment** between output and needs

- 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

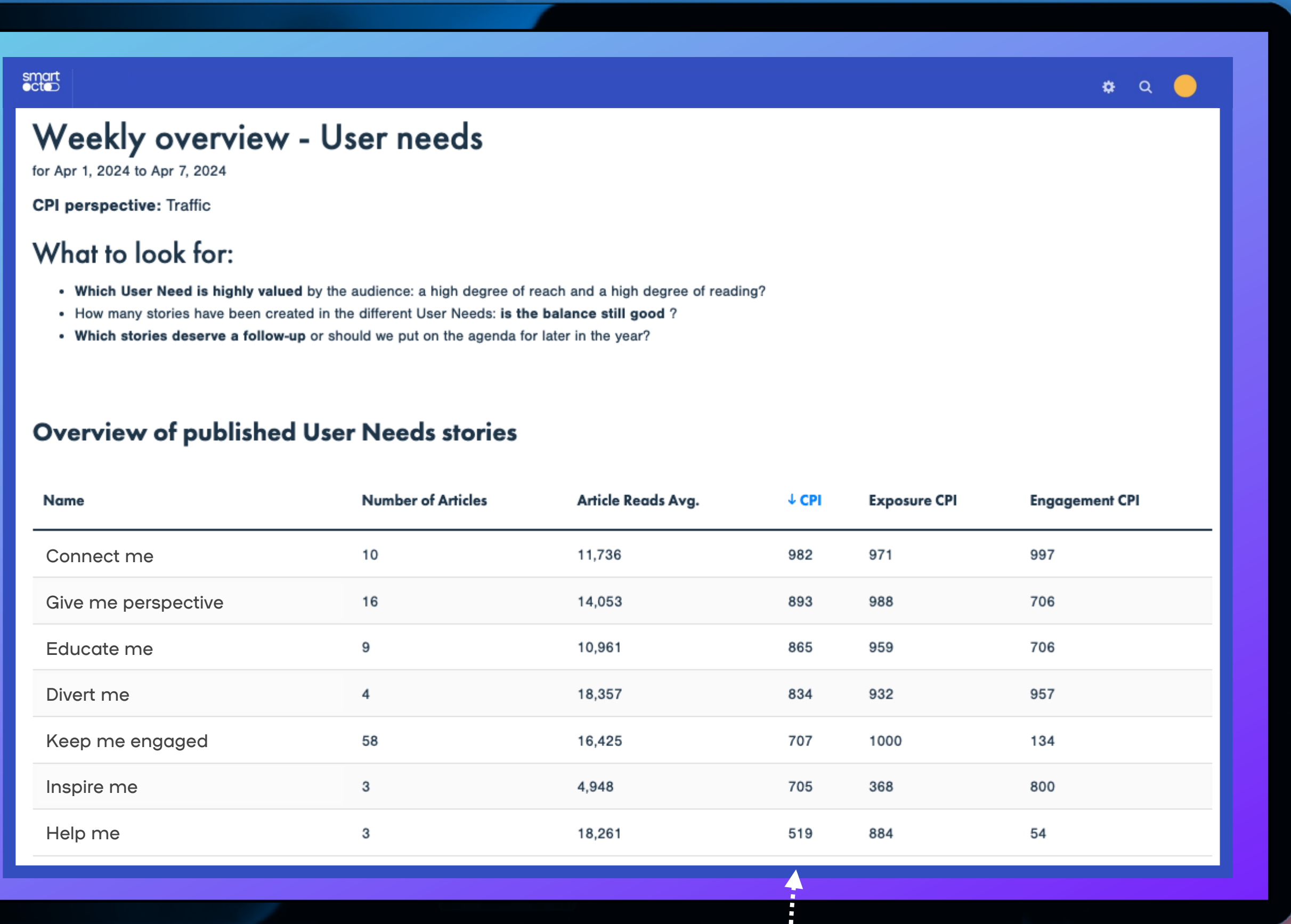
editor **Omroep Brabant**
The Netherlands



"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.

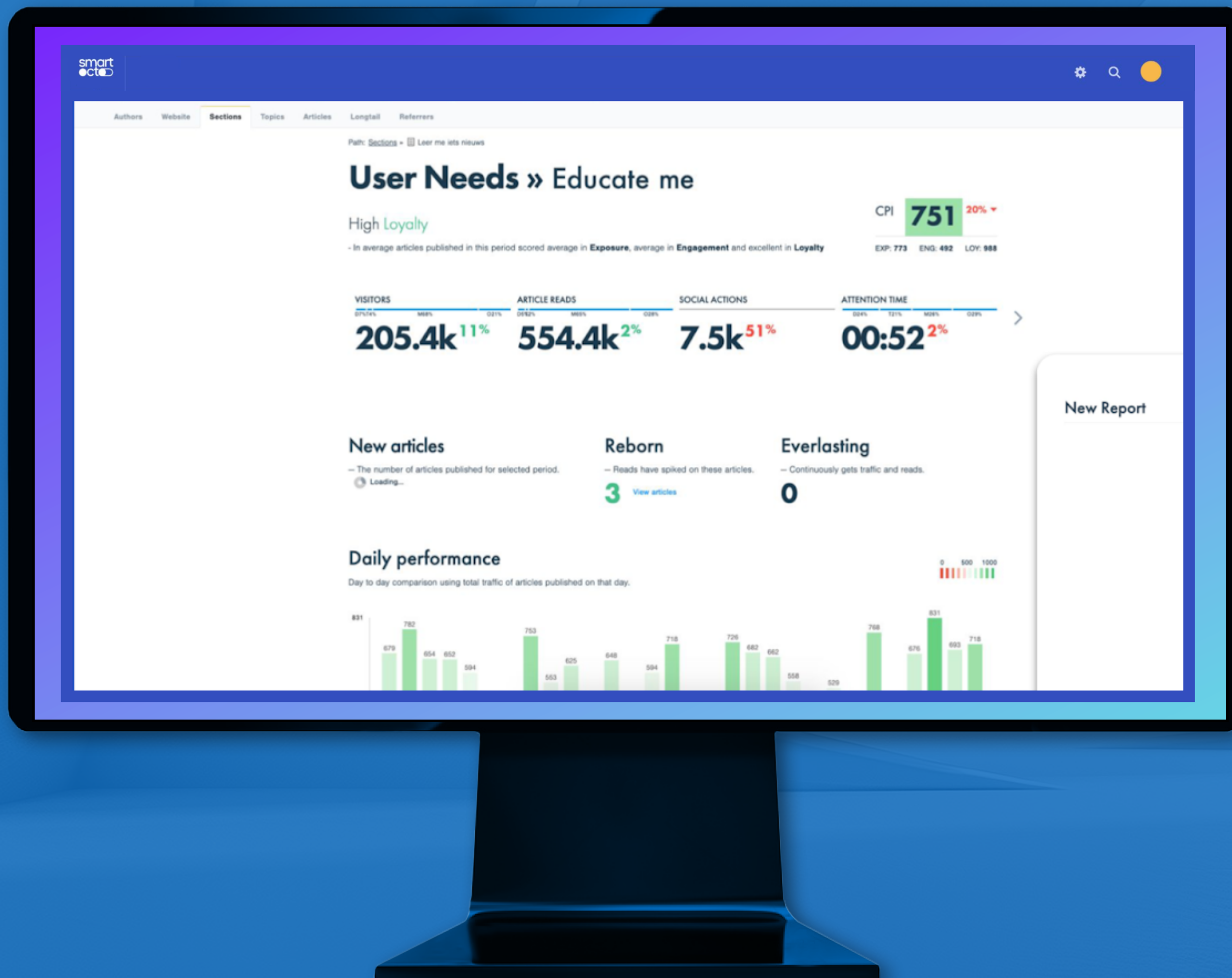
This makes us better able to publish more stories about a topic right away, giving us more control over **which topics** we find journalistically **important**.

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



• Our **Content Performance Indicator (CPI)** •
shows in **historical** data reports which
articles and user needs outperform others.

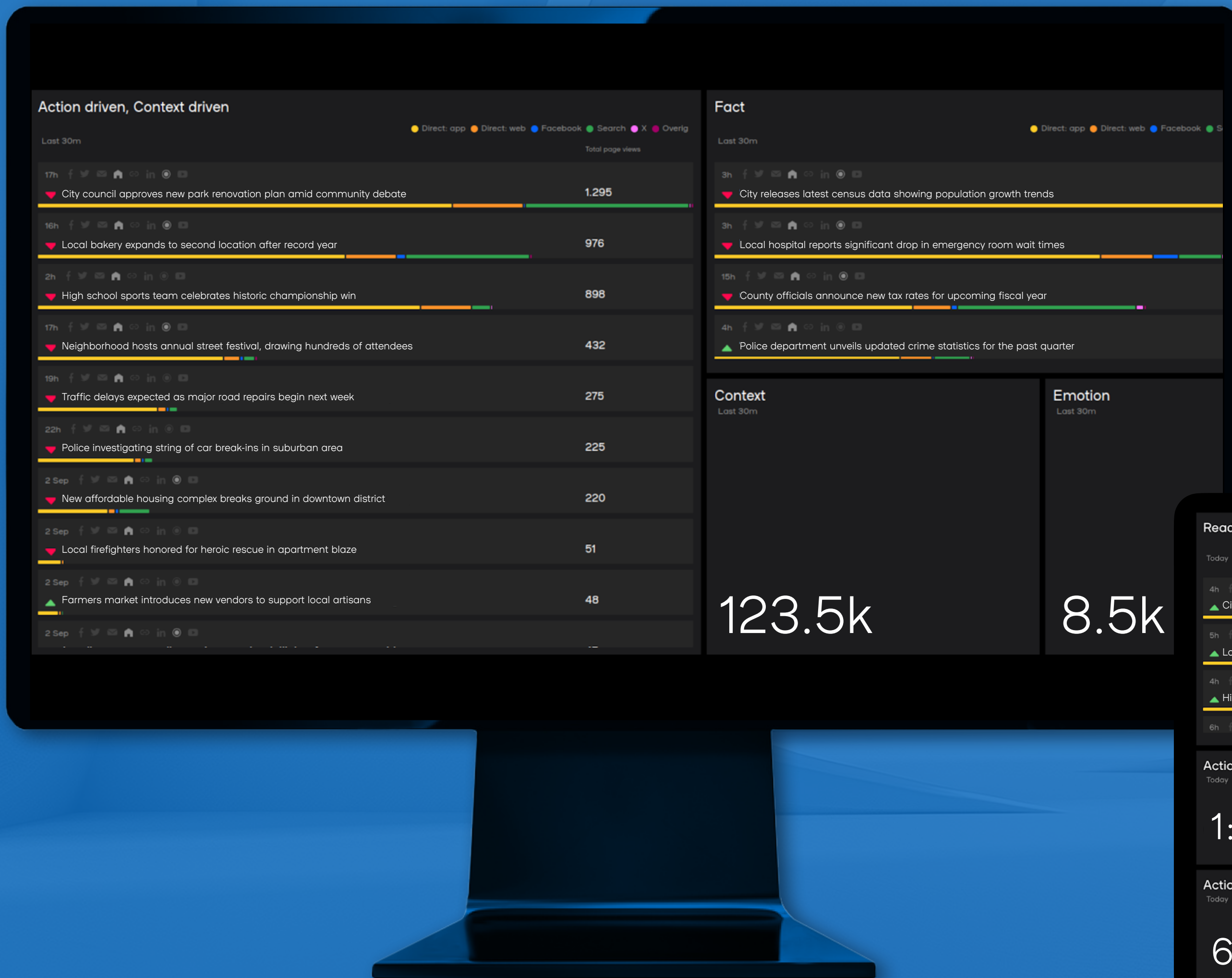
Create reports with smartocto



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.

Take a look at dashboards



Users of the **Waves dashboard** feature have the ability to **filter data** by user needs categories. This enables them to view in **real-time** which **user needs** are **performing best** and where visitors are **coming from**. Other metrics are also clearly presented, such as **reading time** and **read depth**.

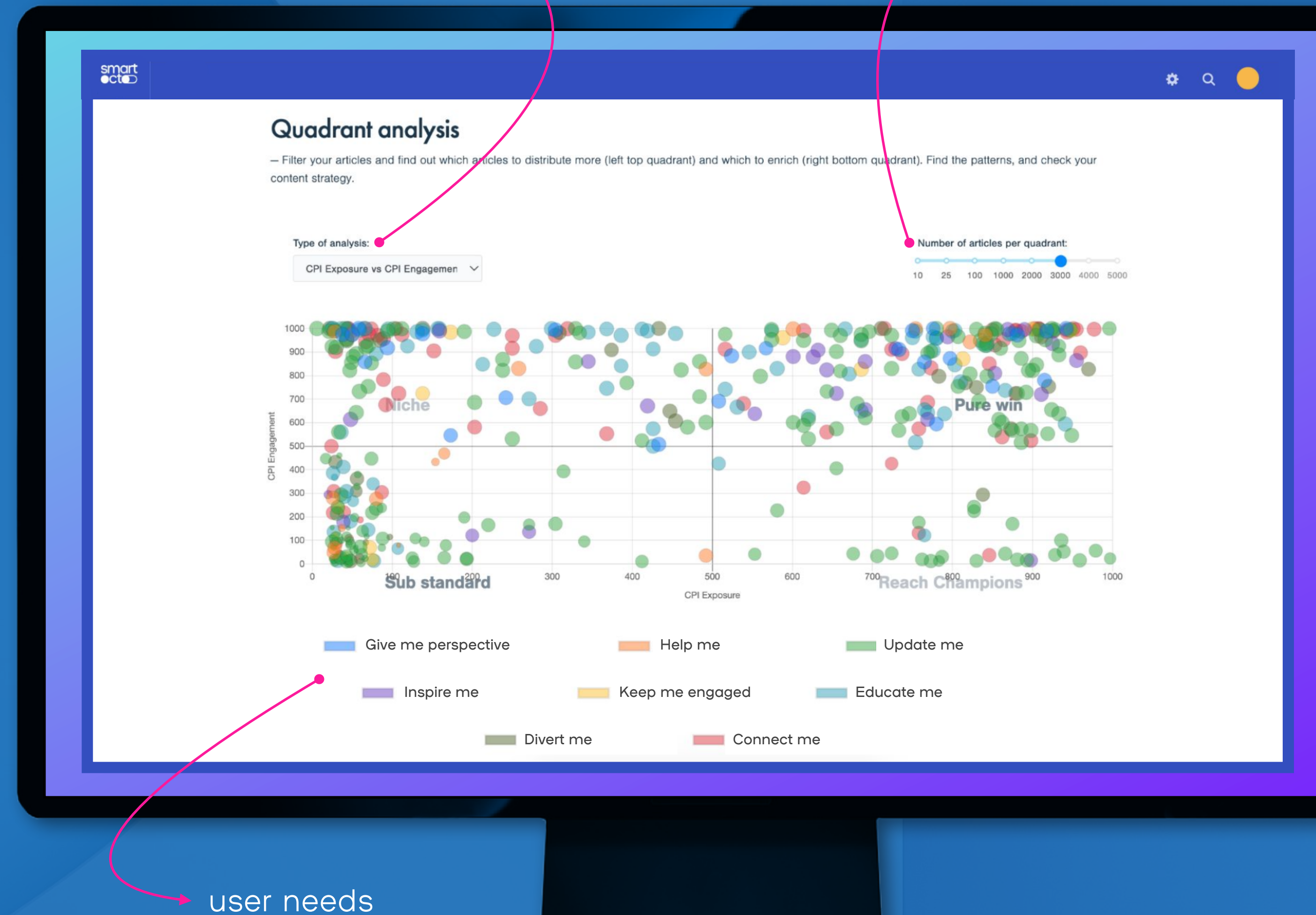


doing a proper user needs analysis

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.

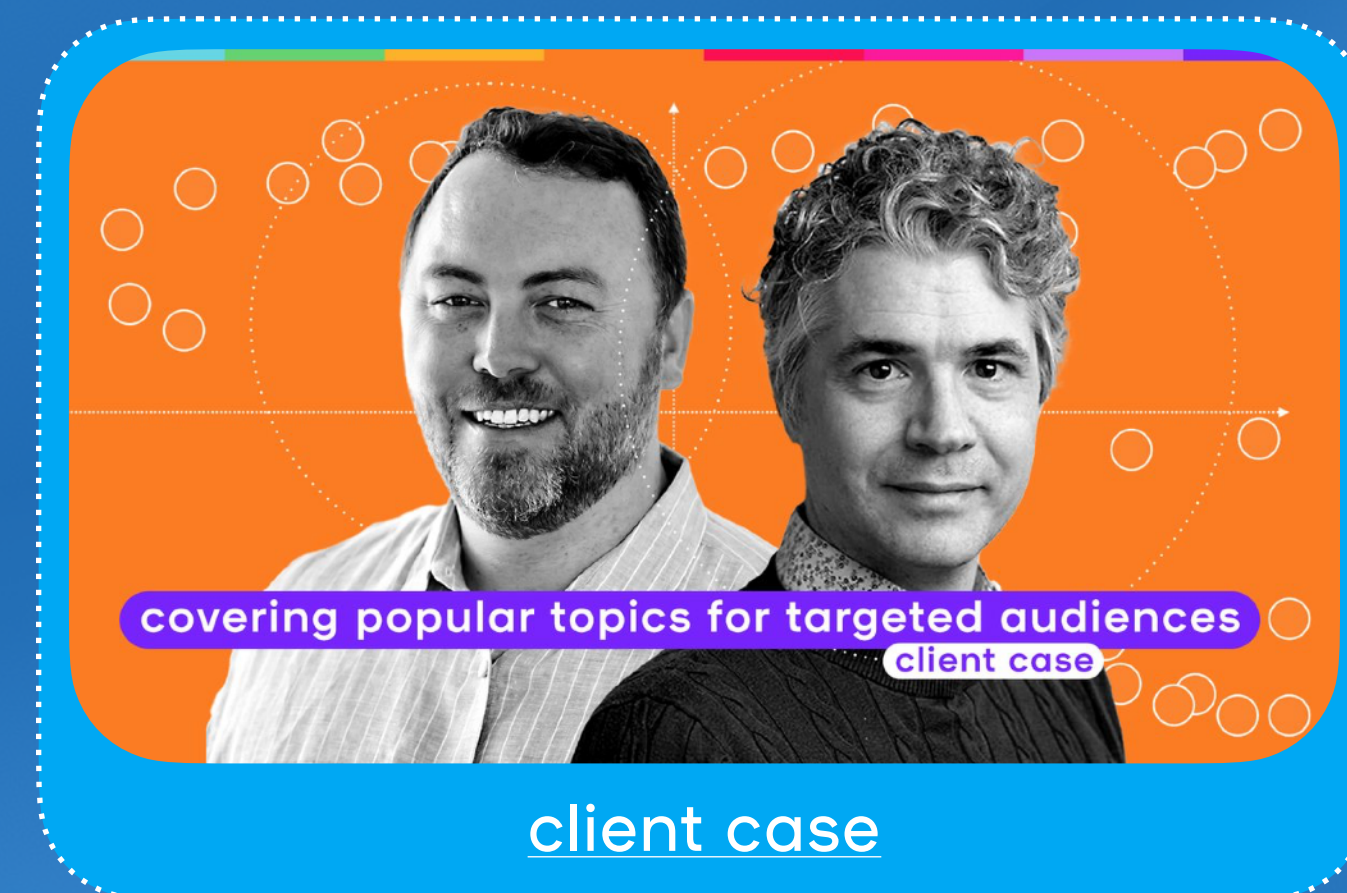
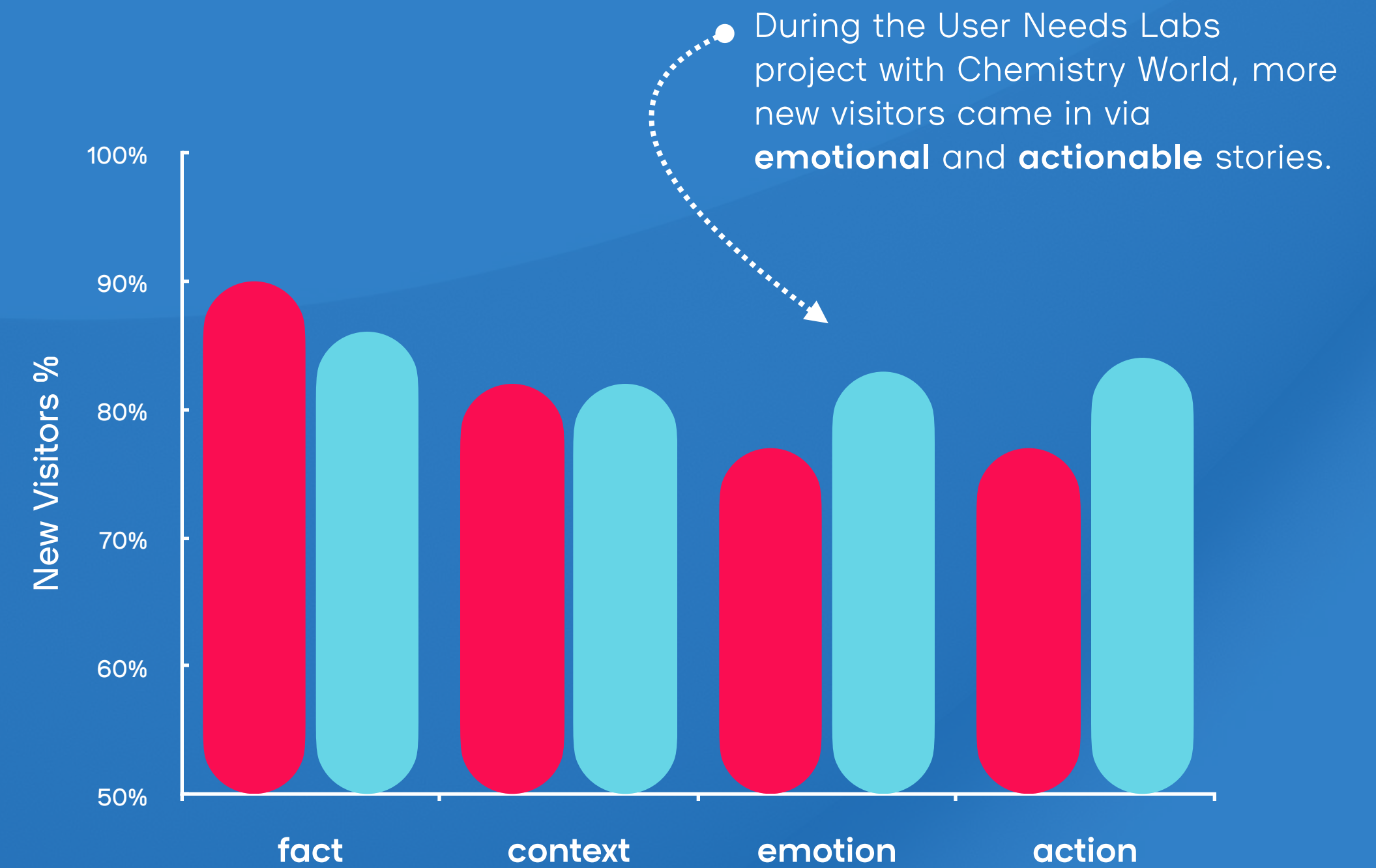
Automated tagging makes this feature very easy to use from the start.



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.**"



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 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

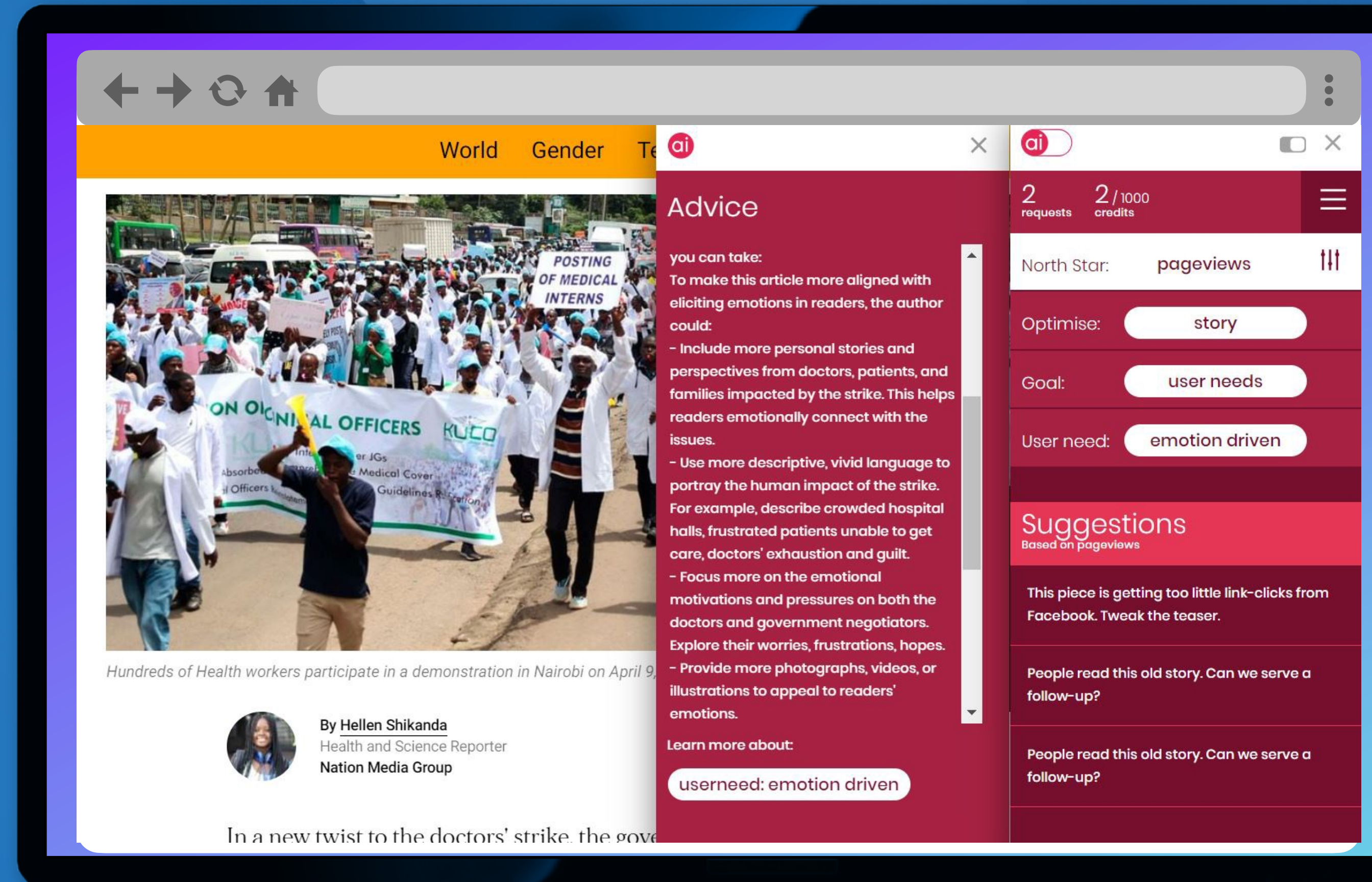
2 Instantly actionable suggestions for discovering new perspectives on user needs.

3 Headline and paragraph improvement suggestions. Text improvement suggestions via smartocto.ai 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.

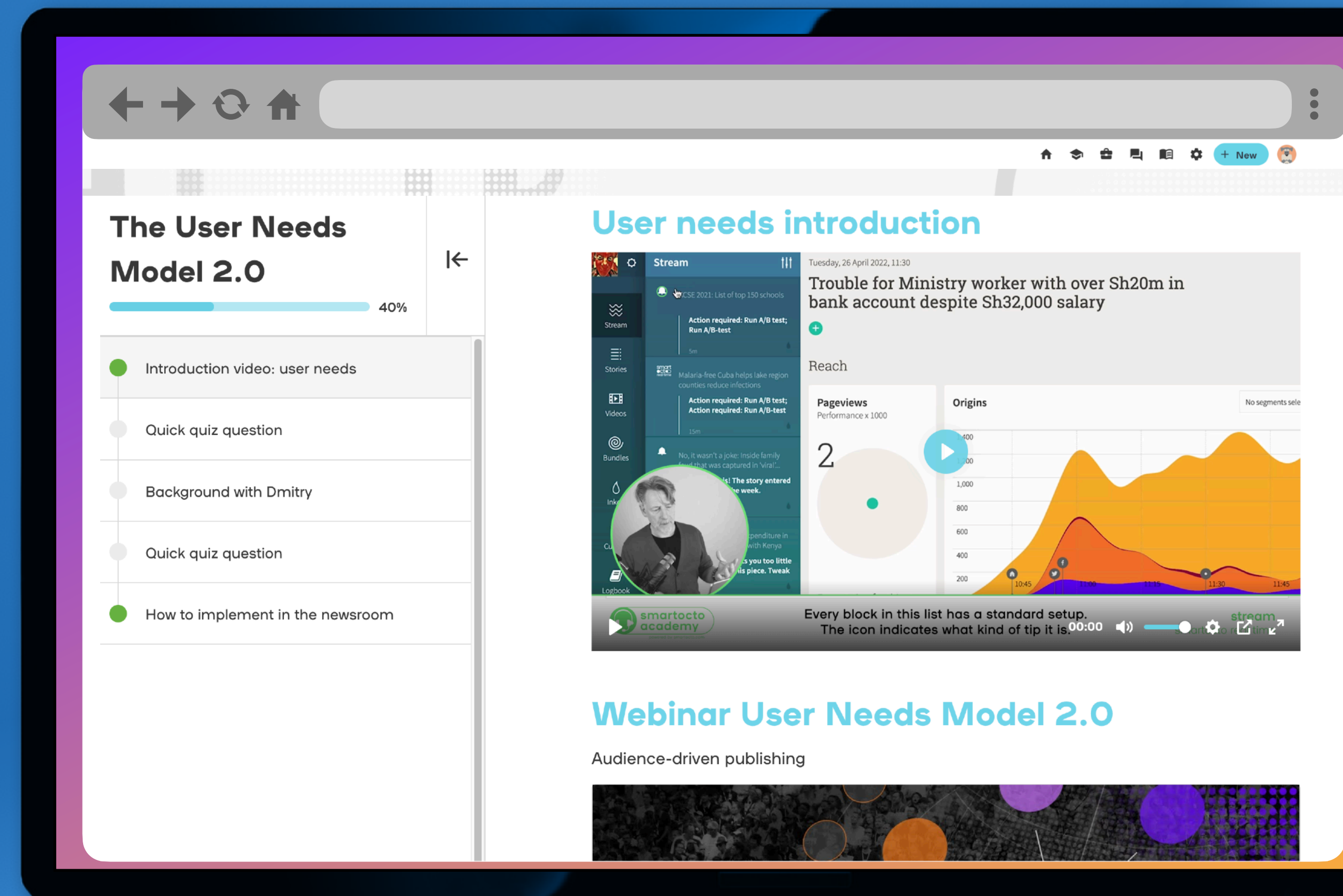
It's as if you, as a visitor, are browsing your own website and receiving **advice for improvements**. The system understands the **historical** and **real-time** data, and thus knows where actual improvements can be made.



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**.





thomas boeschoten

lead news analytics team
DPG Media - The Netherlands

"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."

"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."



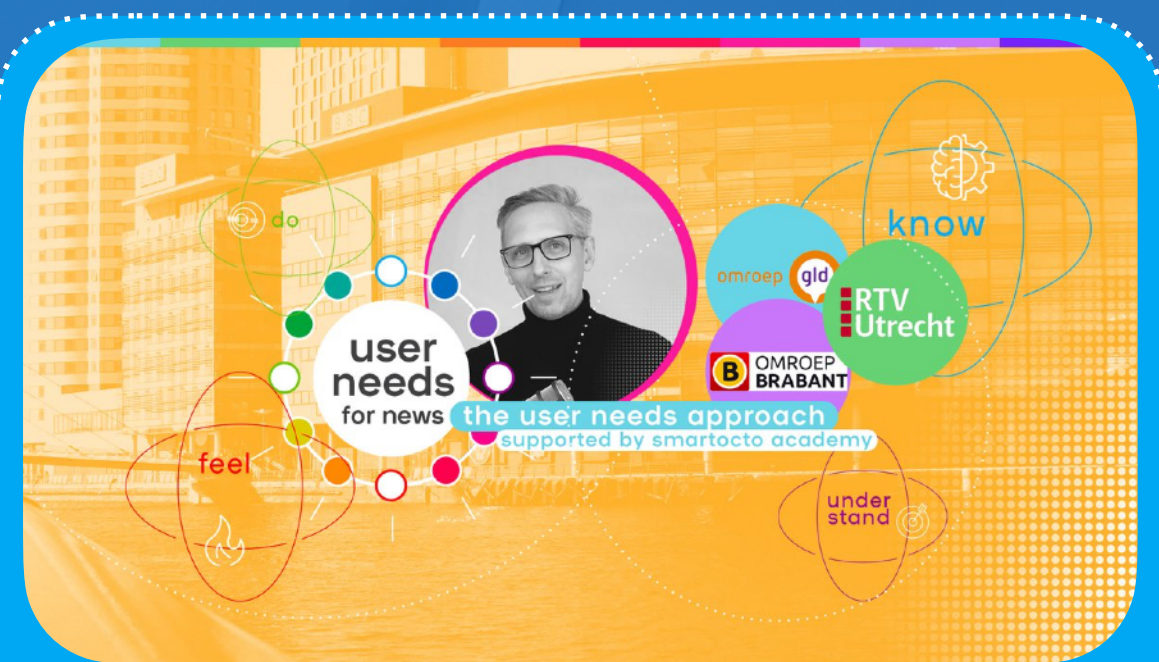
nina alatalo

data and research analyst
Turun Sanomat - Finland

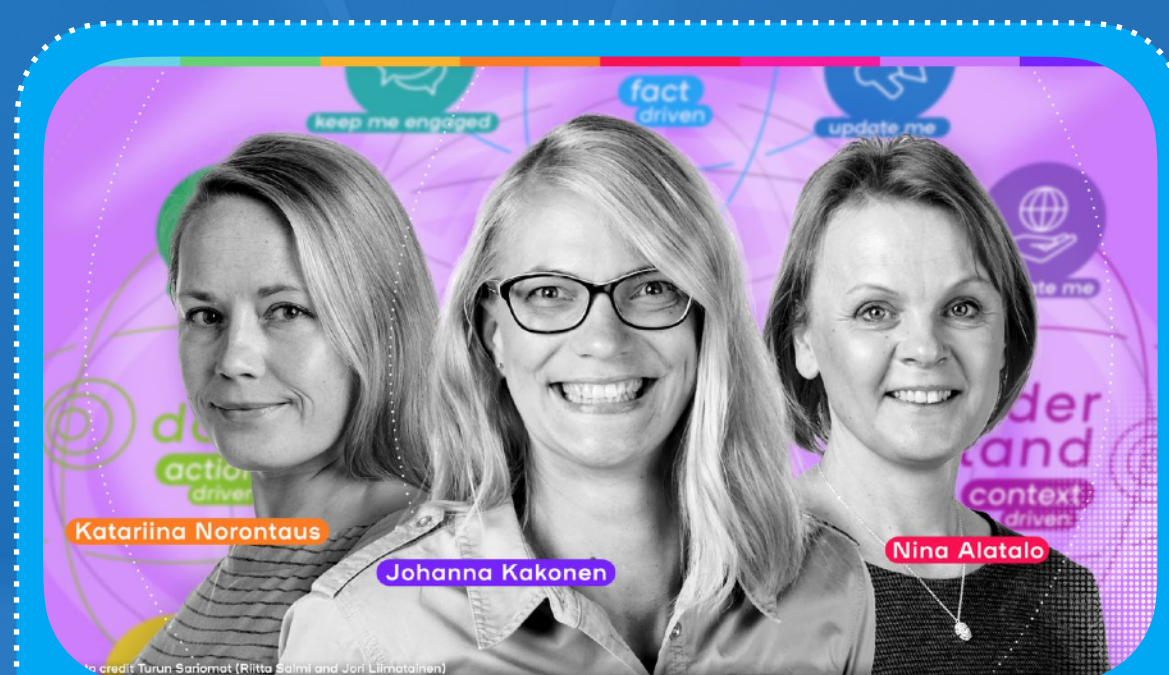
Turun Sanomat

learning to understand the model with smartocto

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



client case



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

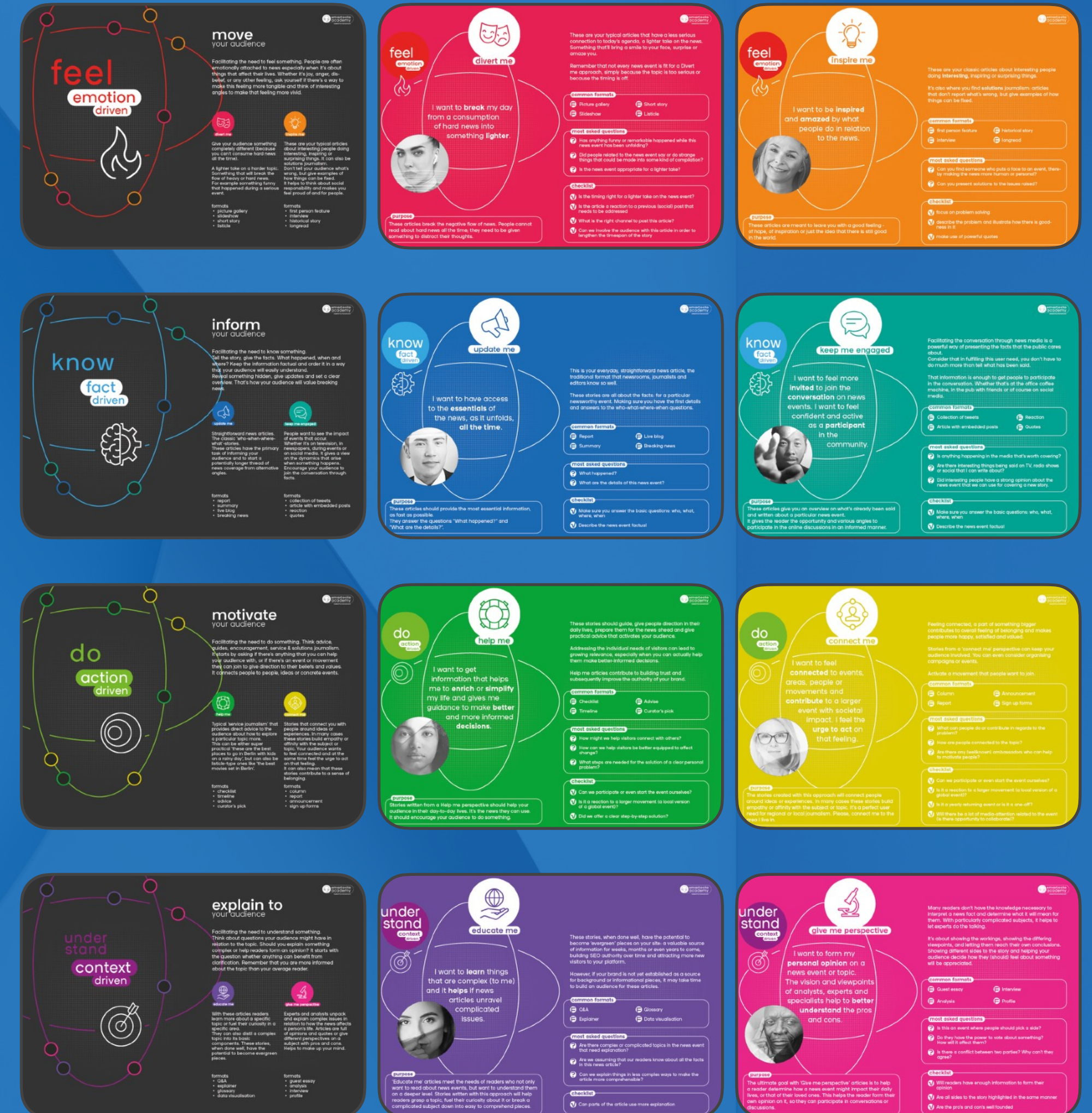
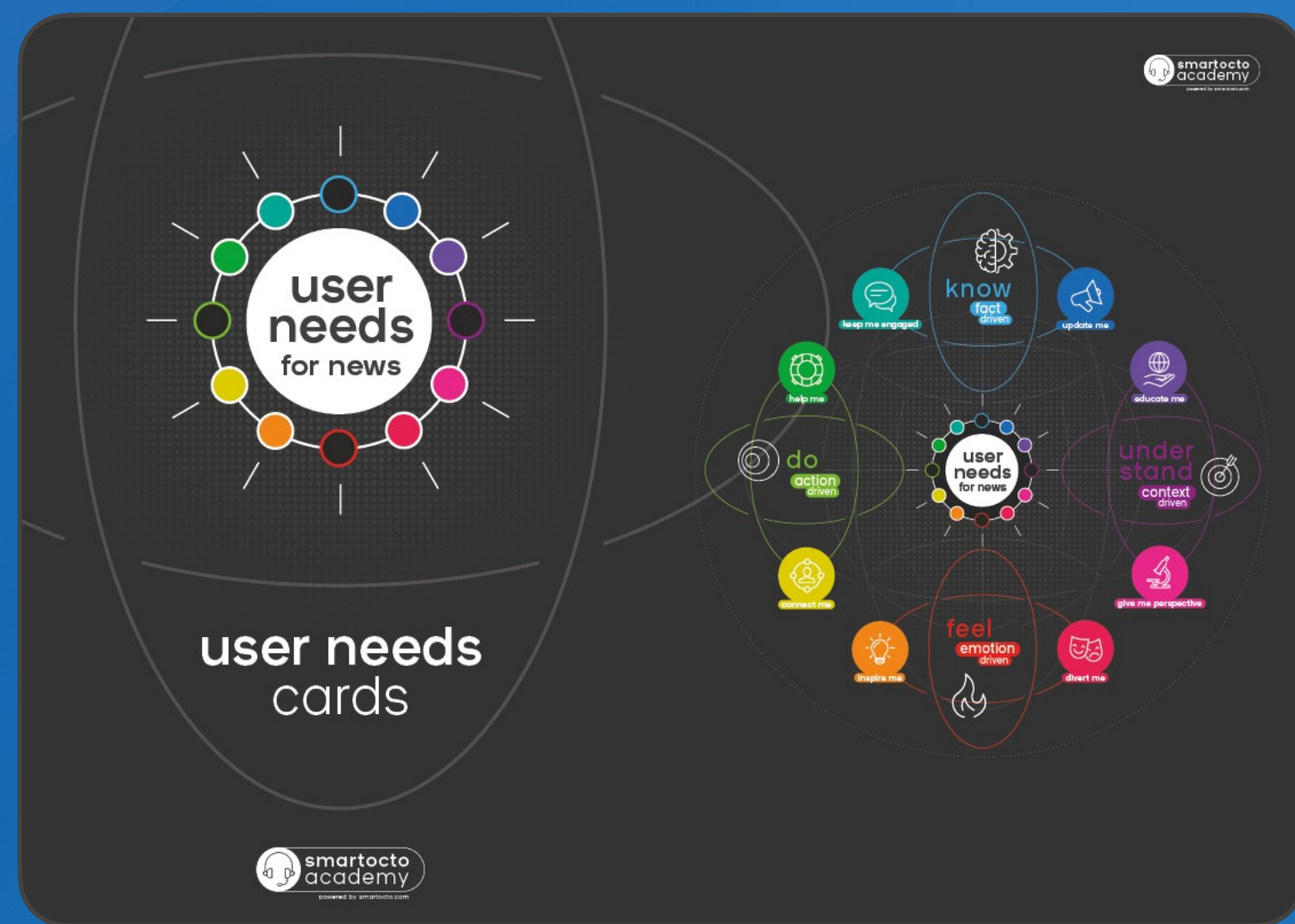
user needs labs
understand your audience

More info



learning to understand the model with smartocto

Additionally, when you become a client, you will get a **set of educational cards**. Each card gives you an at-a-glance guide to all the issues, concepts and formats related to user needs. You'll find them indispensable.



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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