How to make data-informed decisions in the newsroom

Programme outline

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This programme helps newsrooms leverage data to improve decisions and engagement performance

We'll equip publishers with practical strategies to enhance data use in commissioning, writing, distribution, and long-term editorial strategy.

participants

This programme will be most useful for small to medium publishers who are **exploring newsroom tools and processes**, as well as larger organisations who want to **optimise audience engagement** processes and **make better informed decisions**. The masterclasses will be useful for a project team of staff across audience engagement, data and editing.

curriculum

Be ready for **4 masterclasses with best practices from the Financial Times** and other news organisations, **access to smartocto for 16 weeks**, and **weekly experiments using data in newsroom decisions**. Additional masterclasses will also be available on demand.

impact

To get the most out of the programme, the **project should be led by a senior newsroom decision maker** who has the authority to commission, create and distribute content. The **newsroom should be open to running experiments** and testing new ideas at a fast pace.

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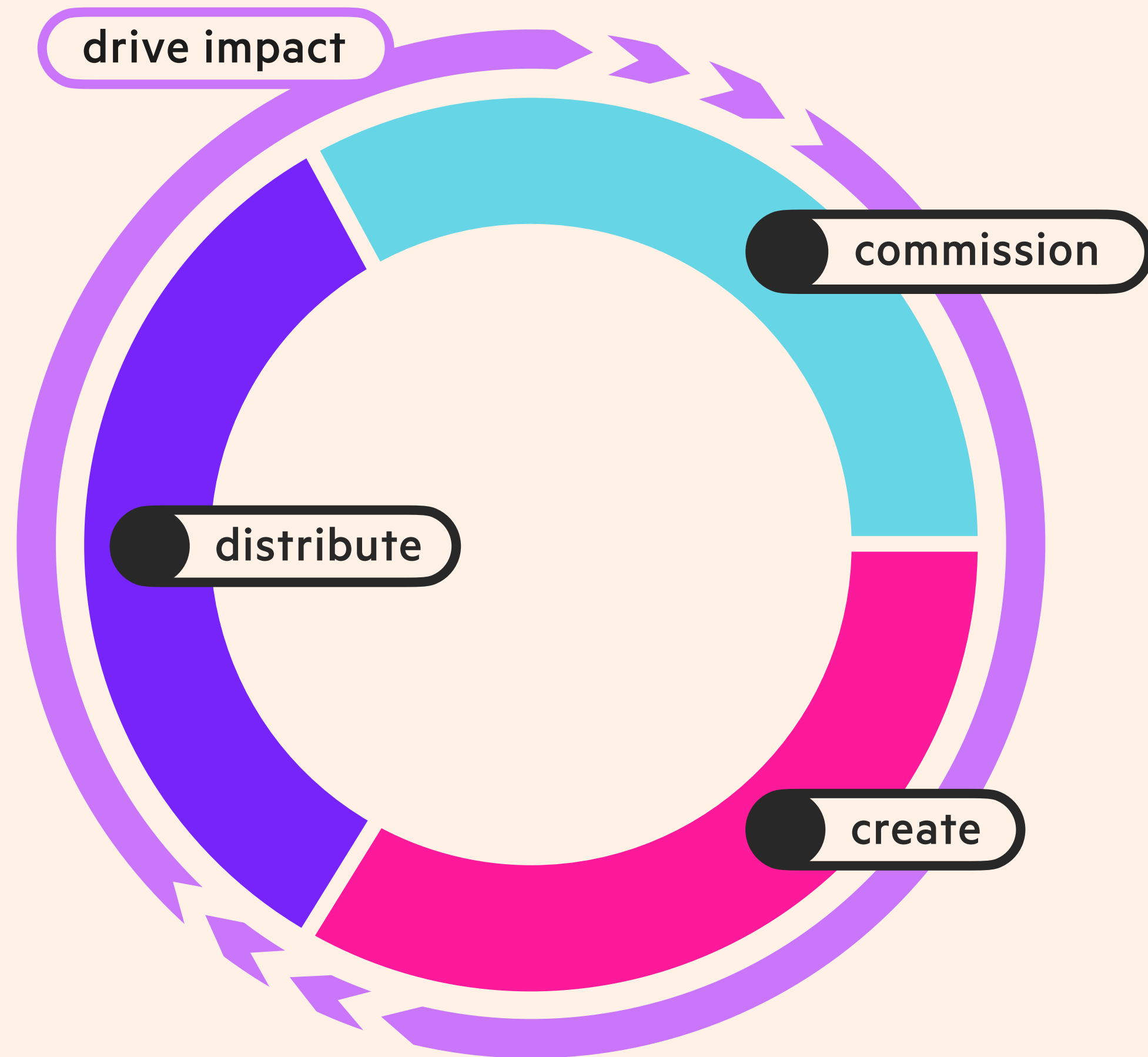
The masterclasses follow a framework to integrate data across the editorial lifecycle

Programme outline

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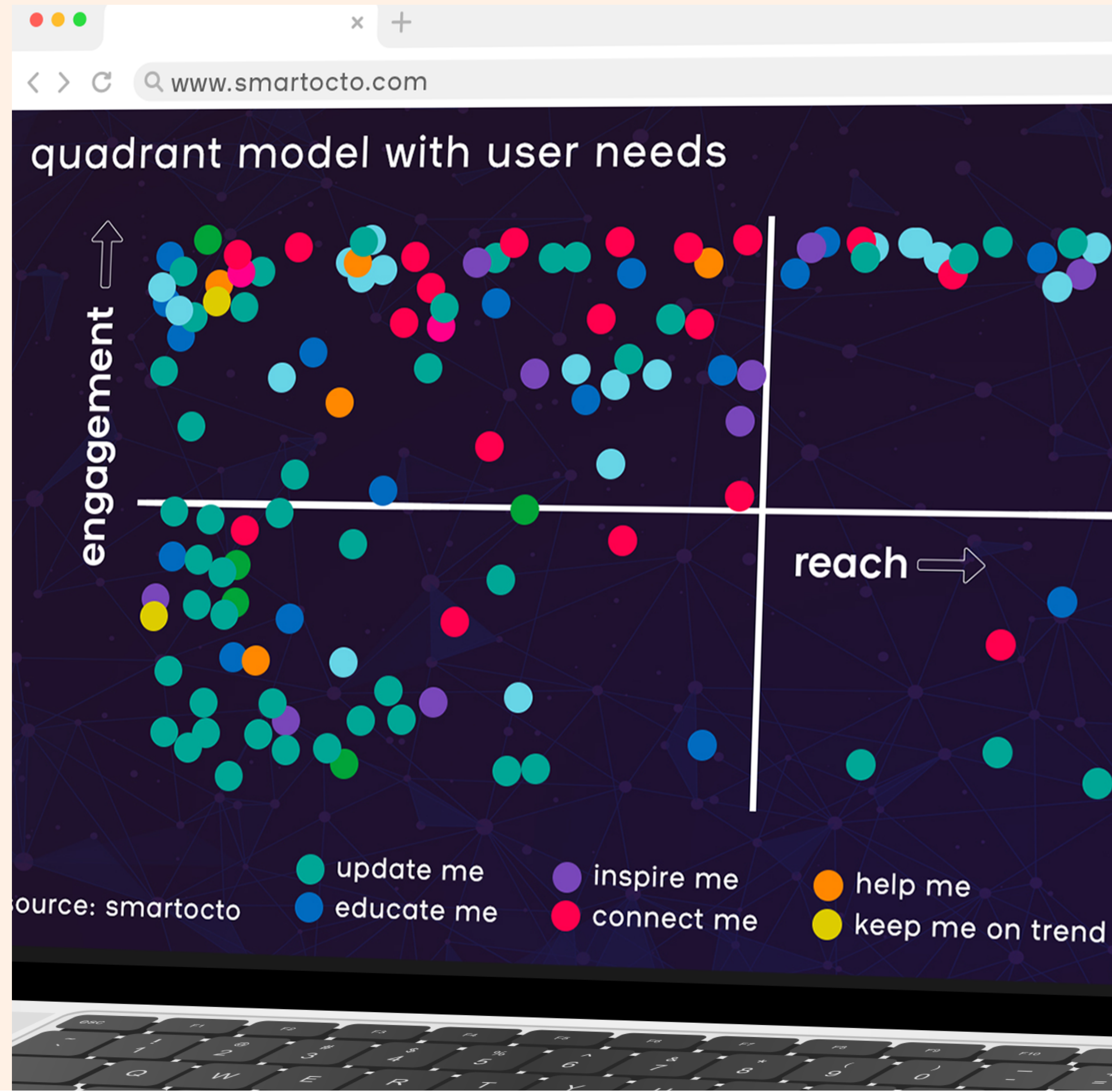## commission

FT masterclass

Key **metrics** in the newsroom (reach, engagement, quality reads)

External **sources** for story ideas

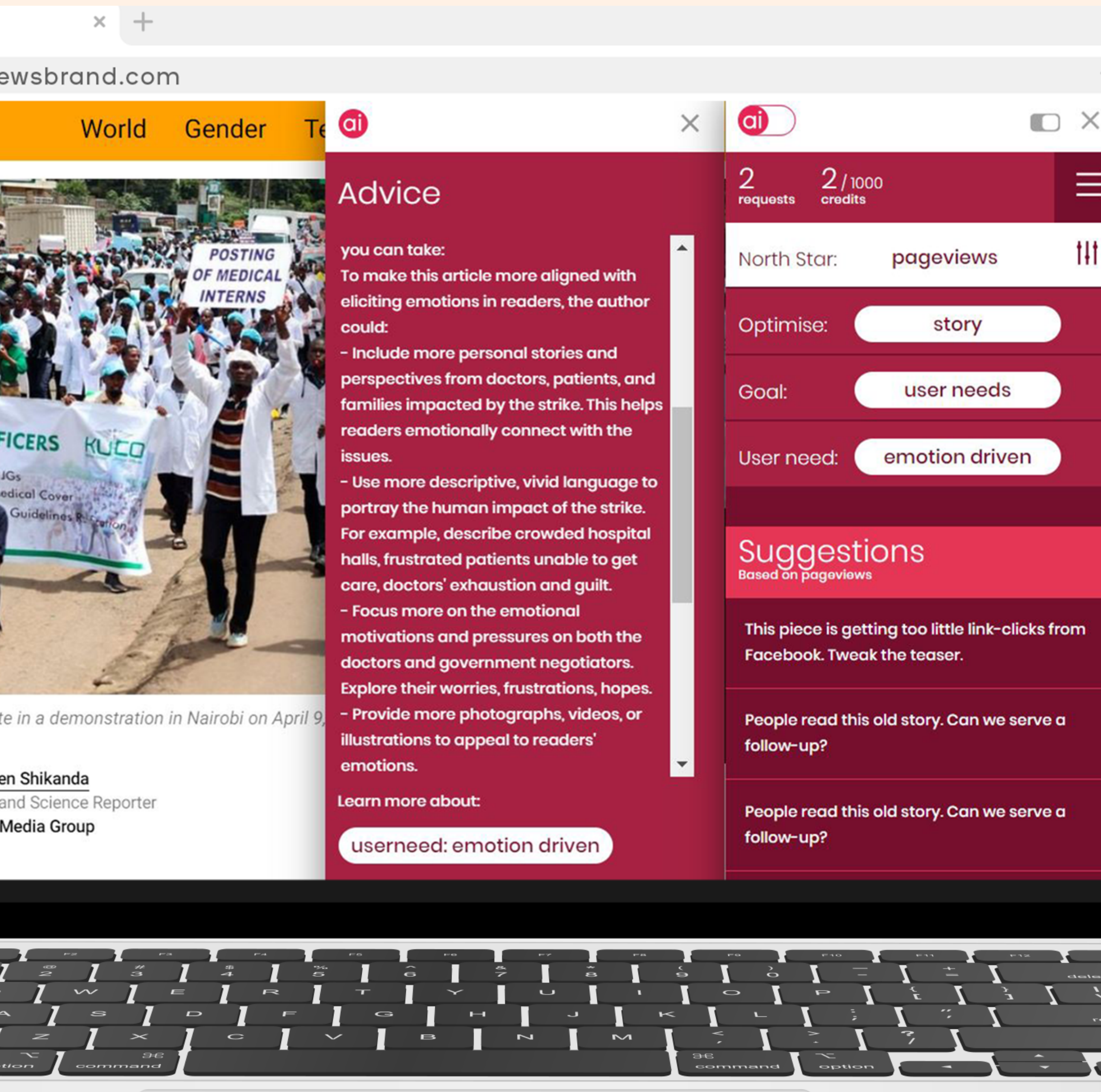Examining **past performance** to influence future commissioning

smartocto demo

Smartocto Insights:

Quadrant model - Powerful visualisation on story performance

CPI - The content performance metric on loyalty, reach & engagement

Reports - Smart Mail reports on Missed Opportunities

Experiments

Use smartocto's historical Insights feature and quadrant model to **commission new stories**.

E.g. try a different angle for an underperforming topic, or publish more pieces on an overperforming topic

quadrant model with user needs

engagement

reach

source: smartocto

- update me
- educate me
- inspire me
- connect me
- help me
- keep me on trend

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create

FT masterclass

How to write **audience-first content** using the User Needs Model

Using AI to support story creation

Adapting formats for different audience needs and habits

smartocto demo

Tentacles A/B Testing of headlines and homepage optimisation

User Needs Model 2.0 audience-centric approach to news coverage

smartocto.ai smart AI-powered suggestions for storytelling

Experiments

Use smartocto.ai to **optimise stories based on user needs** and understand the power of **follow-ups**

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distribute

FT masterclass

Choosing the right **headlines and images**

Homepage placement, **social** distribution and **SEO** optimisation
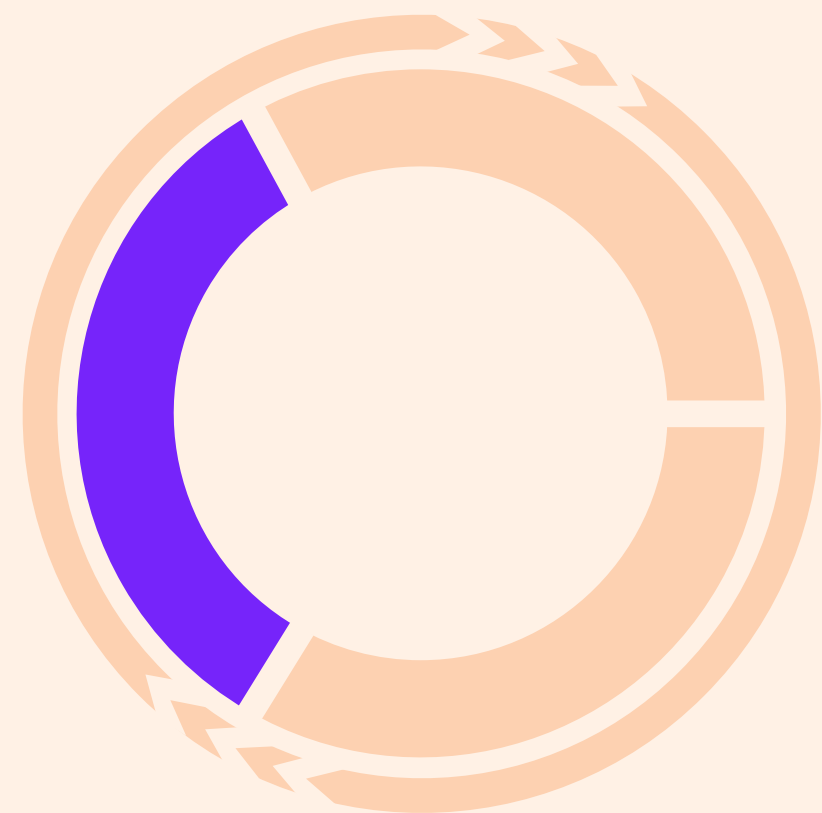
smartocto demo

Waves customisable dashboards and big screens

Notifications actionable story tips supporting multiple business models

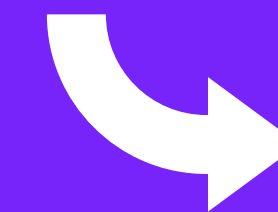**Impact Radar** visual insights on channels and timing

Experiments

Use Tentacles or notifications to **improve homepage placement or social distribution** and monitor results
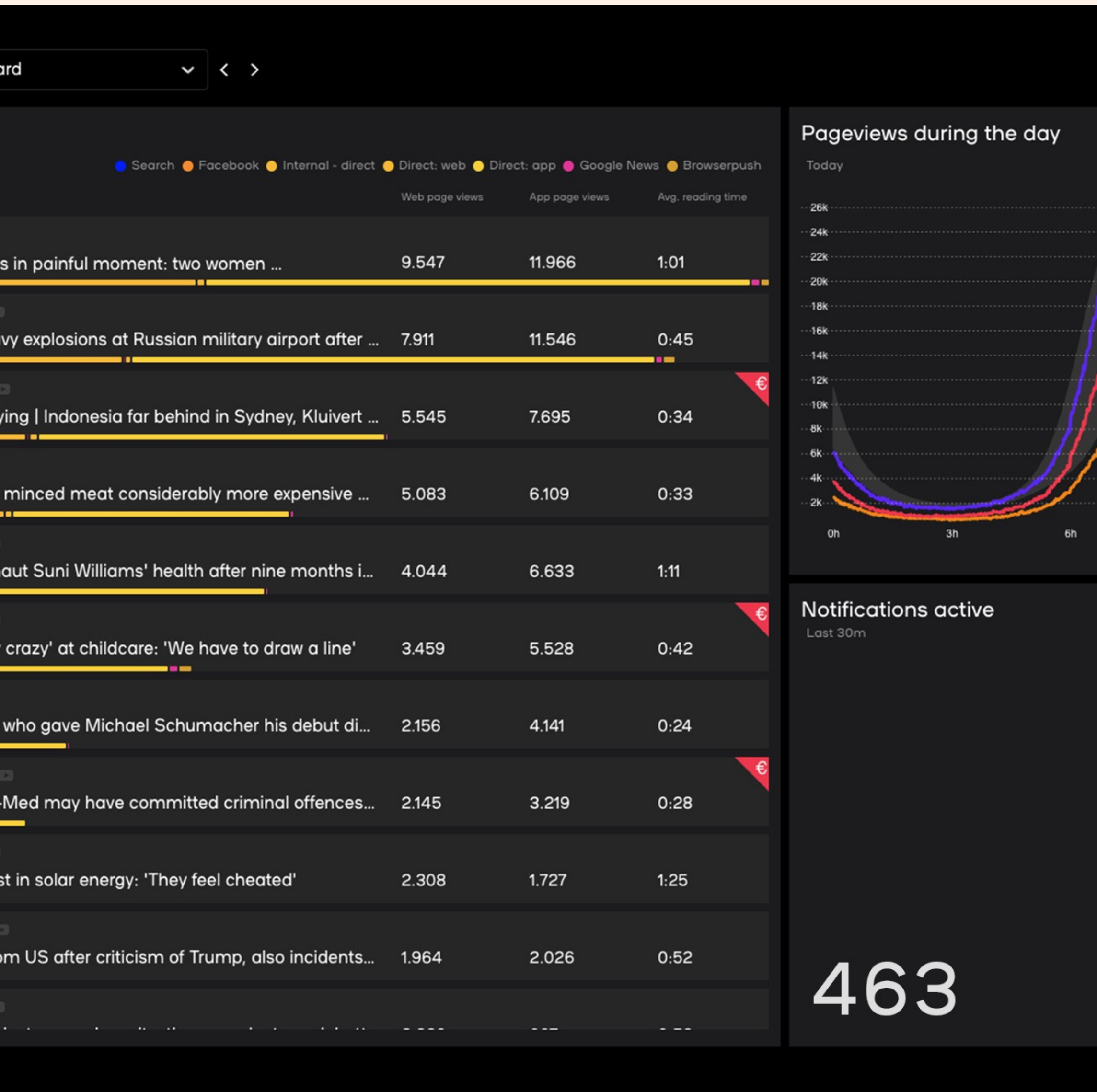
notification

This story converts well, it already has 34 conversions.

Think about promoting it further.

The notification is triggered if the story **exceeds** the specified **number** of **conversions**.

The defined **threshold** for **conversion** number is set using the **parameter KPI**.

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Drive impact

FT masterclass

Newsroom **dashboards** and **communicating data**

Creating a **long-term content strategy** and **diversifying** audiences

smartocto demo

Compare impact comparisson for multiple timeframes

Goals set your targets and get visual support for progression

Conversions instant feedback on subscriptions and funnel performance
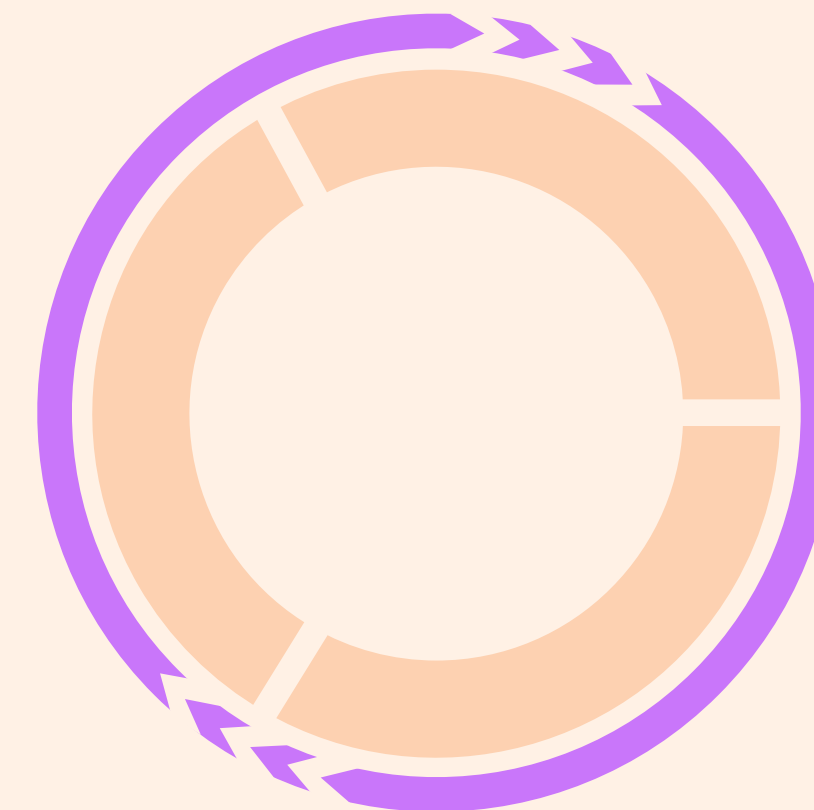
Experiments

Create a **realtime dashboard** or **long-term report** tailored to your newsroom's needs and metrics and demo it with the newsroom

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FT Strategies

- 4 x Webinar Masterclasses with FT Strategies consultants
- 2 x One-on-one Publisher Consultations
- 1 x Inspiration session with an FT Newsroom expert
- 2 x Cohort Specialist Sessions
- 1 x Diagnostic support
- 1 x Tailored recommendations
- 1 x FT Experimentation framework
- Regular Q&A with FT Strategies consultants
- Regular Cohort based interactions and activities

Deadline registration: 4th June 2025

Start programme: 8th September 2025

smartocto

- Access for 16 weeks to the premium smartocto tool (realtime, historical and predictive)
- Advanced session on setting notifications to organisational strategy
- Reporting on programme experiments
- Assistance on Implementation
- Access to tutorial videos on data in the newsroom
- Regular Q&A with smartocto strategy consultants

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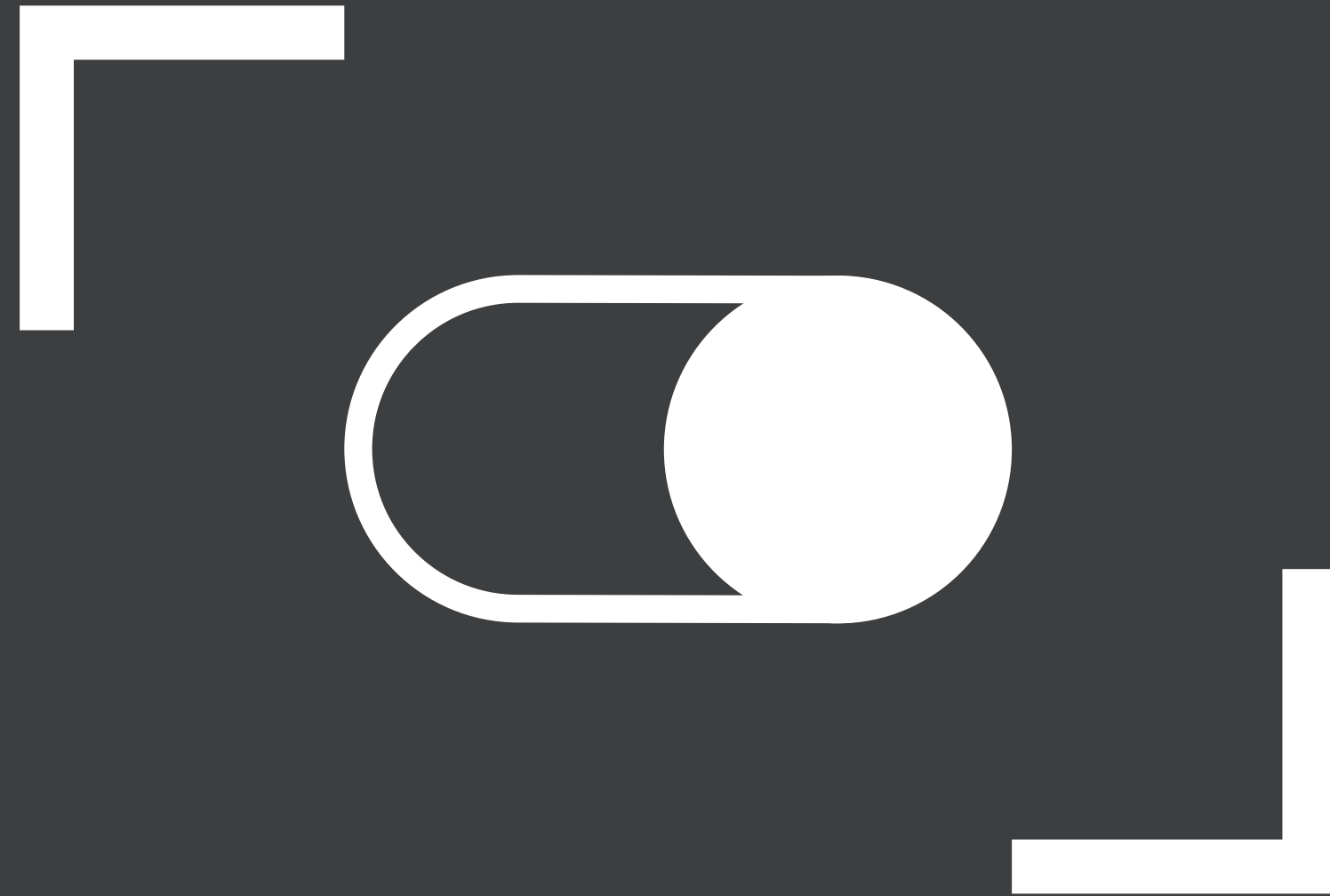
About FT Strategies

FT Strategies is the specialist media consultancy owned by the Financial Times.

Staffed by the experts who successfully transformed the FT's business model in the face of disruption, FT Strategies works with news and media organisations globally to help them address strategic challenges, drive sustainable growth and innovate using AI, technology and data.

About smartocto

Smartocto is a smart content analytics system. Serving more than 300 newsrooms across 40 countries, smartocto is globally one of the premiere analytics and decision-making systems for the content industry.

Smartocto has been a pioneer in data, notifications, user needs and AI.

Need more info?

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