



About the Local Media Consortium:

Founded in 2013, the Local Media Consortium (LMC) is a strategic partnership of local newspapers, broadcast stations and digital media companies across the United States, totaling more than 75 members representing more than 1,700 digital properties. The LMC is committed to leveraging the latest technology and partnerships for increased revenue and audience growth to further the sustainability of local journalism.

RESULTS

- Project FUSE team engaged with hundreds of LMC member site.
- LMC member organizations have deployed Project FUSE inspired strategies that have resulted in measurable results.

Building Sustainable Digital Businesses for Local News through Data Insights

Digital Transformation and Local News Media

As news consumption has shifted to digital, local news organizations have had to transform their businesses to adapt to changing consumer behaviors. According to the Pew Research Center, a recent review of data provided by The Alliance for Audited Media (AAM) indicated that the total weekday circulation for daily newspapers in the U.S. (print and digital) – dropped 8% in 2016, which marked 28 consecutive years of decline.

However, this shift to digital also presents local news organizations with opportunity. In today's environment, news sites are better positioned to learn more about their audiences through new technologies and tools like site analytics, ad servers, and even online surveys. These technologies enable customized user engagement and audience development at a level never before possible. Publishers can develop data-driven tactics that enhance user experiences and better deliver the right piece of content to the right user at the right time.



Source: <https://www.pexels.com>

Project FUSE and Local Media Consortium: Helping news publishers leverage first party data

Founded in 2013, the Local Media Consortium (LMC) is a strategic partnership of local newspapers, broadcast stations and digital media companies across the United States, totaling more than 75 members and representing more than 1,700 digital properties. The LMC is committed to leveraging the latest technology and partnerships for increased audience growth and revenue to further the sustainability of local journalism. The LMC membership represents nearly half of the local broadcast news outlets and nearly two-thirds of the small market newspapers in the United States.

We brought Project FUSE, a consultative partnership initiative that leverages Google Analytics and Google Surveys to unlock critical audience insights, to the LMC. Project FUSE was created to help publishers better understand their audience segments, as well as the value of individual users, with a focus on driving publisher sustainability. Project FUSE turns analytics into actionable insights and informs data-driven tactical decisions for each audience segment.

In collaboration with the LMC, the Project FUSE team developed and deployed a two-pronged approach aimed at supporting LMC members with business recommendations based on their data.

About Project FUSE:

Project FUSE is a data framework and consultative initiative that utilizes Google Analytics and Google Surveys data. It was created to help publishers better understand their audience segments, as well as the value of individual users, and to inform data-driven tactical decisions around audience development efforts.

About News Consumer Insights dashboard:

The News Consumer Insights framework and dashboard emerged out of a series of findings from Project Fuse. Project Fuse was an initiative in 2017 to help publishers better understand their audience segments, as well as the value of individual users, and to inform data-driven tactical decisions around audience development efforts.

SOURCES

Barthel, Michael, "Despite subscription surges for largest U.S. Newspapers, circulation and revenue fall for industry overall", Pew Research Center, Fact Tank, 1 Jun. 2017

<http://www.journalism.org/fact-sheet/newspapers/>

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/01/circulation-and-revenue-fall-for-newspaper-industry/>

<http://mediashift.org/2017/03/demystifying-media-w-hats-future-local-newspapers/>

• 1:1 deep dive consultations with several LMC members:

The Project FUSE team audited the publishers' first party data (Google Analytics, DFP and Google Surveys) and delivered business recommendations leading to A/B testing projects and online product adoption.

• Supporting LMC publishers at scale:

The Project FUSE team created a benchmarking dashboard which aggregates the Google Analytics data from hundreds of LMC News publications. Since then, publishers have been able to measure their user performance (average session duration, pages per session) at each step of the user engagement funnel against comparable organizations and best-in-class peers. In order to reach the most LMC members as quickly as possible, the Project FUSE Team authored best practices playbooks and hosted webinars on a variety of topics, such as email/newsletter strategies.

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The LMC partnered with Project FUSE from its inception. We have hundreds of member sites, large to small, now utilizing the Project FUSE data framework with much measurable success,

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RUSTY COATS,
CEO LOCAL MEDIA CONSORTIUM

Impact and Next Steps

By the end of 2017, the Project FUSE team had engaged with hundreds of LMC news sites with several publicly reporting measurable impact on critical KPIs.

"These publishers better understand their readership and the true value associated with each segment, from casual to loyal readers. Most importantly, Project FUSE has created actionable insights that have led to improvements in our members' user acquisition strategies, reader retention, engagement, subscriptions and, ultimately, sustainability," added Coats.

Looking ahead, the Project FUSE team plans to continue partnering with news and local media organizations to uncover innovative approaches in applying data towards business growth and sustainability. Inspired by the positive outcomes driven in collaboration with the LMC, we have developed News Consumer Insights, a publicly available dashboard that leverages Google Analytics data to provide publishers of all sizes more insight into their audience's behaviors.