Emerging Mobile Strategies for News Publishers

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Table of Contents

3 Executive Summary

6 Introduction

12 **Chapter 1**
Financial Times: Content Over Technology

15 **Chapter 2**
Digital First Media: Audience Growth and Advertising Standards

19 **Chapter 3**
The Guardian: Feels Made for Mobile

22 **Chapter 4**
Sanoma: Finding the Path to the Future

24 **Chapter 5**
The New York Times: Playing to Its Strengths

27 **Chapter 6**
Telegraph Media Group: A Different Experience for Smartphone Readers

30 **Chapter 7**
Deseret News Publishing: Beyond Geography

33 **Chapter 8**
Ekstra Bladet: Adding Video to Increase Mobile Readership

35 **Chapter 9**
Tribune Media Group: Being Nimble Is Key

37 **Chapter 10**
The Globe and Mail: Unique Content for Mobile

39 **Chapter 11**
The Miami Herald: A Strategy Designed for Growing Digital Audience

41 **Chapter 12**
San Francisco Chronicle: A Trusted News Source for Local Delivery

44 **Chapter 13**
The Eagle-Tribune: "And Something More"

47 **Chapter 14**
The Spokesman-Review: Mobile First

50 **Chapter 15**
Toronto Star: Using Online Verticals

52 Conclusion

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Cover art includes: The Eagle-Tribune, Sanoma, The New York Times, Ekstra Bladet

Executive Summary

This report combines 15 case studies with global trends and data to point toward emerging Internet-enabled mobile strategies for news publishers.

With most of their content soon to be consumed via mobile device, publishers see major new opportunities in audience engagement and bundling mobile solutions for advertisers. Yet there are nuances to learn about engagement patterns that mean the difference between success and failure.

Smartphones and tablets are the key devices of focus for publishers instead of general mobile devices. The closing gap between mobile phones and smartphones worldwide is the crucial data point for publishers to consider in terms of prioritising mobile.

Cutting through all the case studies, the key takeaways from the report are:

1. The mobile news consumption crossover point will come in the next two years.
2. Smartphones and tablets expand the clock for news consumption.
3. The smartphone and tablet represent the tipping points for the all-access subscription bundle revolution that is sinking in with consumers.
4. A flexible mobile strategy is key for whatever comes next.
5. The rapid shift to mobile news consumption is inevitable.
6. The consumer expects timely information via mobile.
7. Mobile combined with social media equals engagement.
8. There are crucial differences between mobile value propositions of young versus old.
9. Content must become ubiquitous across all platforms.
10. There are contrasting approaches regarding tailored content must be for mobile.
11. People are moving fluidly from print to digital as well as between digital devices.
12. The mobile Web and mobile apps deliver different experiences for different objectives.

13. Smartphone products should serve some kind of utility, while tablet products should be immersive in nature.

14. Mobile is a central element to the emerging toolkit of marketing solutions news companies sell to potential advertisers, targeting geography and behaviour.

15. Mobile must be pushed hard in news company sales staffs.

As we look at each of the 15 case studies, we found these key takeaways:

- The **Financial Times** seeks to make mobile more appealing than print and to have a direct relationship with its readers. It has a global strategy and seeks to capitalise on emerging markets. The FT employs HTML5 as one method for achieving technological nimbleness.

- **Digital First Media** believes in its centralised platform to tailor content to the needs of each of its local markets, using both in-house and partner resources.

- **The Eagle-Tribune** uses social media feeds and promotion in a never-ending cycle to promote its mobile site.

- **The Guardian** is guided by the principles that mobile should be broadcast free, advertiser-funded, and available to everyone on any device anywhere in the world, any time, day or night.

- **Sanoma** has more than 50 mobile applications for different operating systems or sites optimised for mobile devices in Finland, and pays careful attention to changes in how people use different media. This will lead to a significant design change in 2013 for both mobile and print.

- **The New York Times** has created an Election 2012 app, which plays to its content strengths.

- The **San Francisco Chronicle** markets its free apps heavily, and its parent company has invested heavily in mobile, building its own technology and partnering with other providers. The Chronicle also leverages mobile delivery by taking full advantage of interactive capabilities through social media.

- **The Miami Herald** offers home delivery subscribers full access to its mobile apps to grow digital subscriptions and retain home delivery subscribers.

- The **Telegraph Media Group** sells mobile sponsorships to advertisers, giving them daily clickable banner ads through the apps. The newsmedia company is expanding both readership and revenue.

- **Deseret News Publishing Company** is building its Web apps to work on all platforms using responsive design. The company has experienced unprecedented growth in both print and online by focusing on stories that are distinct to its voice.

- The **Toronto Star** offers mobile delivery at no cost and tailors its offerings to

take advantage of mobile's potential for interactivity. It is happily turning online verticals — such as travel, automotive, and shopping — into cash.

- The **Tribune Company** has a philosophy that "the key thing with apps, or any mobile product …is that you really are never done building them."

- **Ekstra Bladet** is excited about the new group of readers — those in the younger age range — that its mobile delivery has brought. It has found that video content helps increase mobile readership and may diversify its content for mobile.

- **The Spokesman-Review** has adopted a mobile-first strategy and has given it a channel of its own for media advertising. Its sales staff places mobile as the first digital component within a package.

- **The Globe and Mail** provides mobile subscribers with deeper analysis pieces, some feature columnists, and other exclusive features.

Each newsmedia company has found its own way in this territory that is only now being charted. Every strategy will not work for every newspaper, but these pioneers provide insights into how your company may make its way.