Extensive Personalisation on the Completely Newly Built www.fd.nl

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1 Day
Fly In, Fly Out
20+ Cases
Share a Case, Pay Less

Extensive personalisation at www.fd.nl

INMA Ideas Day Digital innovation - November 20th 2015, Berlin

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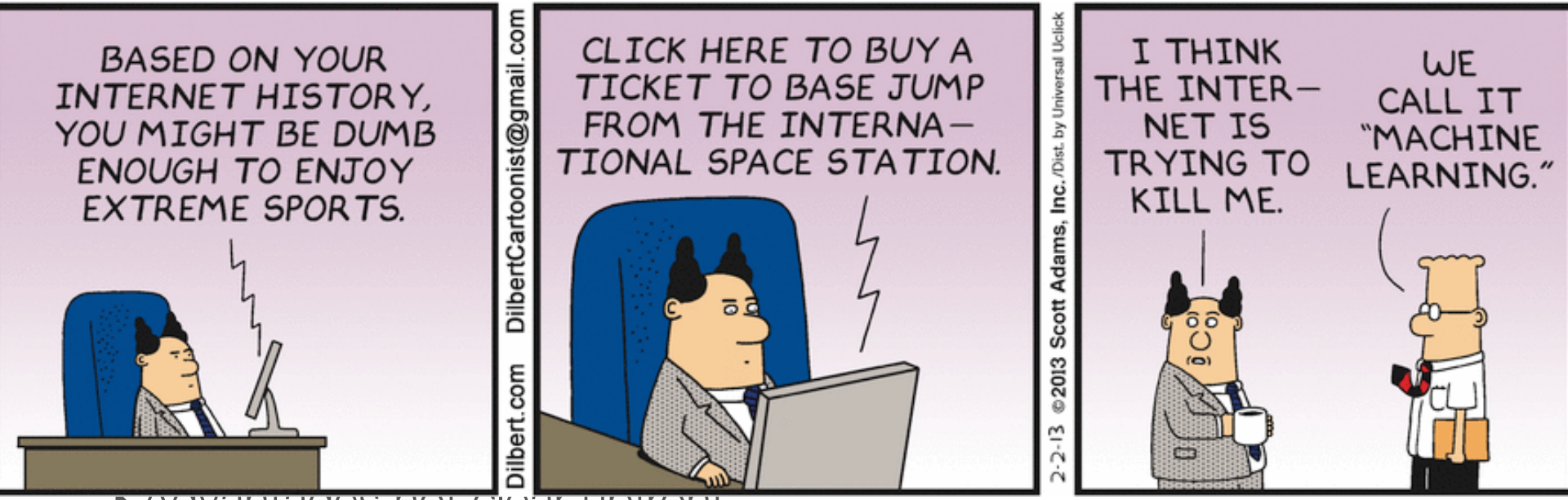
FD.nl is the website for the "Dutch Financial Times"

- Het Financieele Dagblad was founded in 1796
- Part of FD Mediagroep (Publisher: Media, Data, Events)
- Main destination for financial and economic news in the Netherlands
- 60.000 paying subscribers, **30% digital-only** (50% growth in 1,5yr)
- New FD.nl september 2014. Now >1 million monthly unique visitors
- **Digital first publishing strategy**

Why personalisation often sucks...



- Advantages not clear upfront
- Because privacy matters

Great personalisation saves time

We publish 80 to 100 articles per day on FD.nl…

…most readers don't read all of them :-)

University of Texas*:

- personalization can help reduce our perception of information overload.
- Also it satisfies our desire for control.

https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/18054

Great personalization adds (business) value

- **Personalisation enables discovery**:

  Learn more about what our users like and want to read, and help them getting this without losing serendipity. This works for news articles, company data, advertising, events, etc..

- **Personalisation increases readership** and because of that the perceived value of our digital propositions: Assumption = people that invest in personalisation read more and return more often

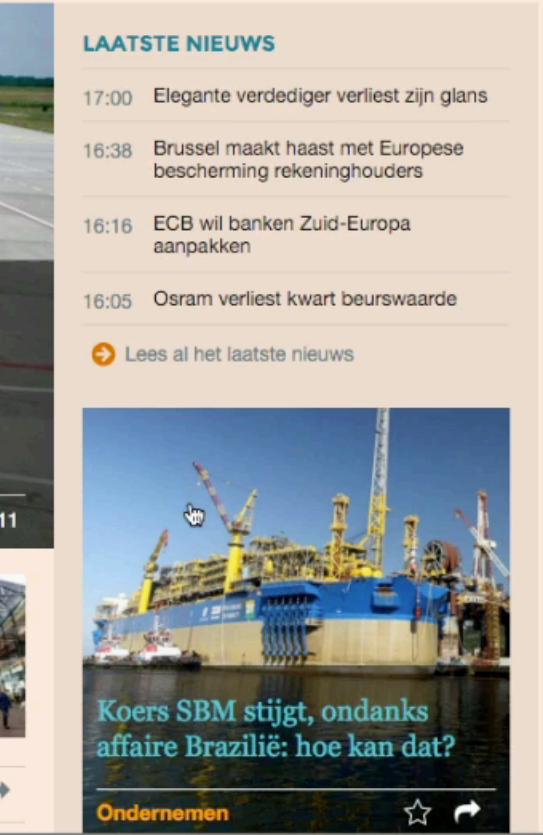
Step 1: Get your tags in check!

We've reduced 50.000 random tags to a structured taxonomy of 5.000 structured tags, based on a lot of data, e.g.:

- Actual search queries
- Google Trends data
- Databases with company names and most used industry names

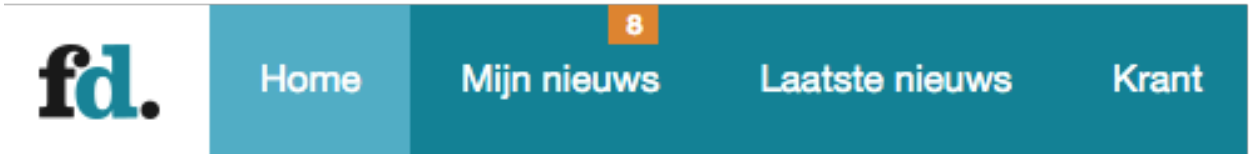
This took us at least 3 months (!)

Step 2: Put a lot of ♡ in your UX. Simple = Hard



Integrate and get people hooked

- Don’t hide it, integrate it
- Keep non-personalized options
- Get people hooked (alerts, indicator)



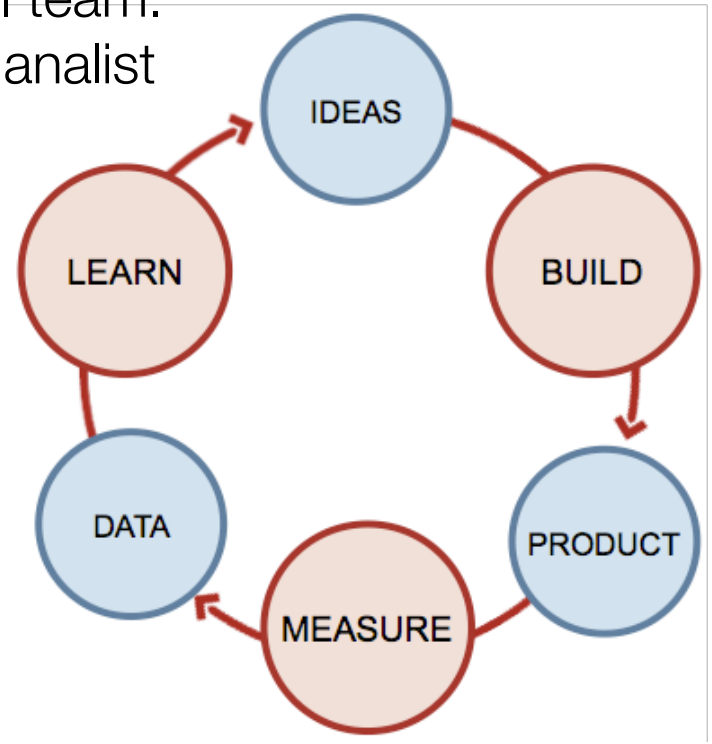
- Help users get onboard ==>

Step 3: Work agile and keep learning

- Involve whole organisation, build with small team.
2 editors, 1 product owner, 2 developers, 1 analist

- Clear goals based on KPI's
- Agile approach
- Build MVP - Measure KPI's - Learn

- Some handy tools:
Balsamiq for quick mockups
Jira for working agile
Slack for communication
Insitez for quick user surveys



First results, 3 months after we've started

- **26.000 users** followed at least one topic
- **50% followed 3 topics** or more
- **Less than 10% followed 10 topics or more**
- Less than 2% people followed 20 topics or more
- Less than 0,5% followed 50 topics or more

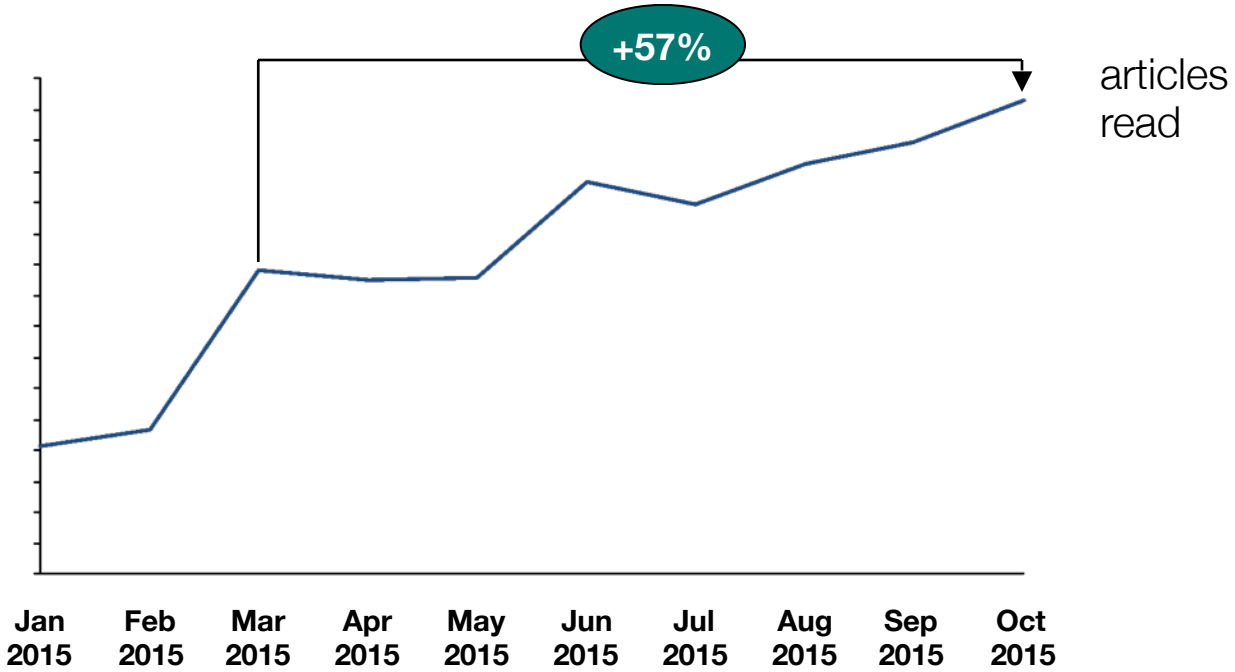
- **±3.000 newly followed tags per week**
- nett result ±2.000, because people also unfollow)

Tags followed past 3 months

It gets better: readership X4!

- On average, **Mijn Nieuws users read 4X more articles per month than other logged in users do on average**
- Mijn Nieuws in top 10 of most visited pages on FD.nl
- Client responses of Mijn Nieuws users are very positive (they praise ease of use, saving time)

+57% articles read via Mijn Nieuws this year



My Key Takeaways

- Get your tags in check!
- Keep focus on great UX
- Let the user be in control
- Work agile and keep learning
- **bonustip**: Preach what you practice :-)

That’s all!

- Let’s keep in touch
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What’s next for us?

- Promote Mijn Nieuws better to our customers base! => Embed in user onboarding
- Integrate Mijn Nieuws further withing our products (even the newspaper)
- Develop personalised tag- and article suggestions based on customer data
- More advanced tagging, e.g.:

classification (show which tags relate to persons, companies, etc)
Semantics (e.g. Tim Cook is CEO at Apple)