Sophi

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

How we automated our website

FEBRUARY 28, 2020 – CONFIDENTIAL – NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

How much is automated?

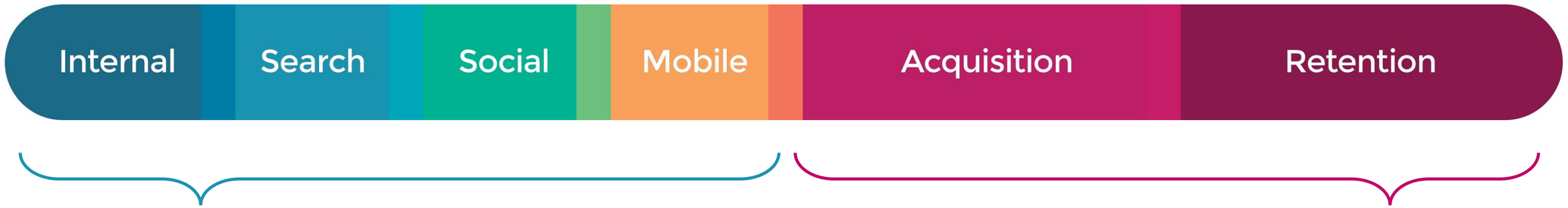
At least 99 per cent of what you see on the Globe and Mail’s website is placed there by an AI algorithm.

But what about clickbait?

If you focus on pageviews, you will get clickbait.

But if you examine what your readers truly value, you won’t.

Building Your Own Sophi Score



Advertiser Revenue

- Visits*
- Enagement
- Recirculation
- Advertising Value (eCPM)

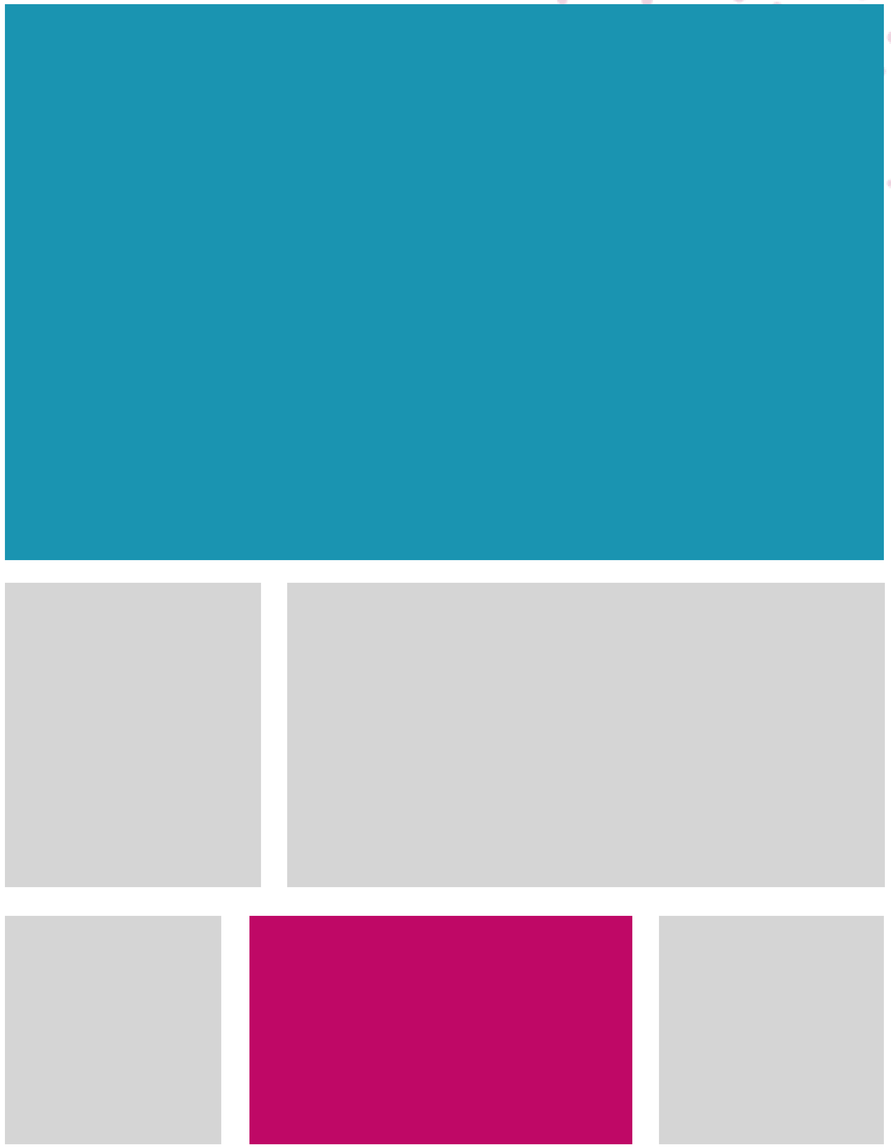
Subscriber Revenue

- Subscriber Acquisition* (LTV)
- Subscriber Retention (ARPU)

*Adjusted for promotion bias

Eliminating Promotion Bias

How do you compare metrics for a story at the top of the homepage…



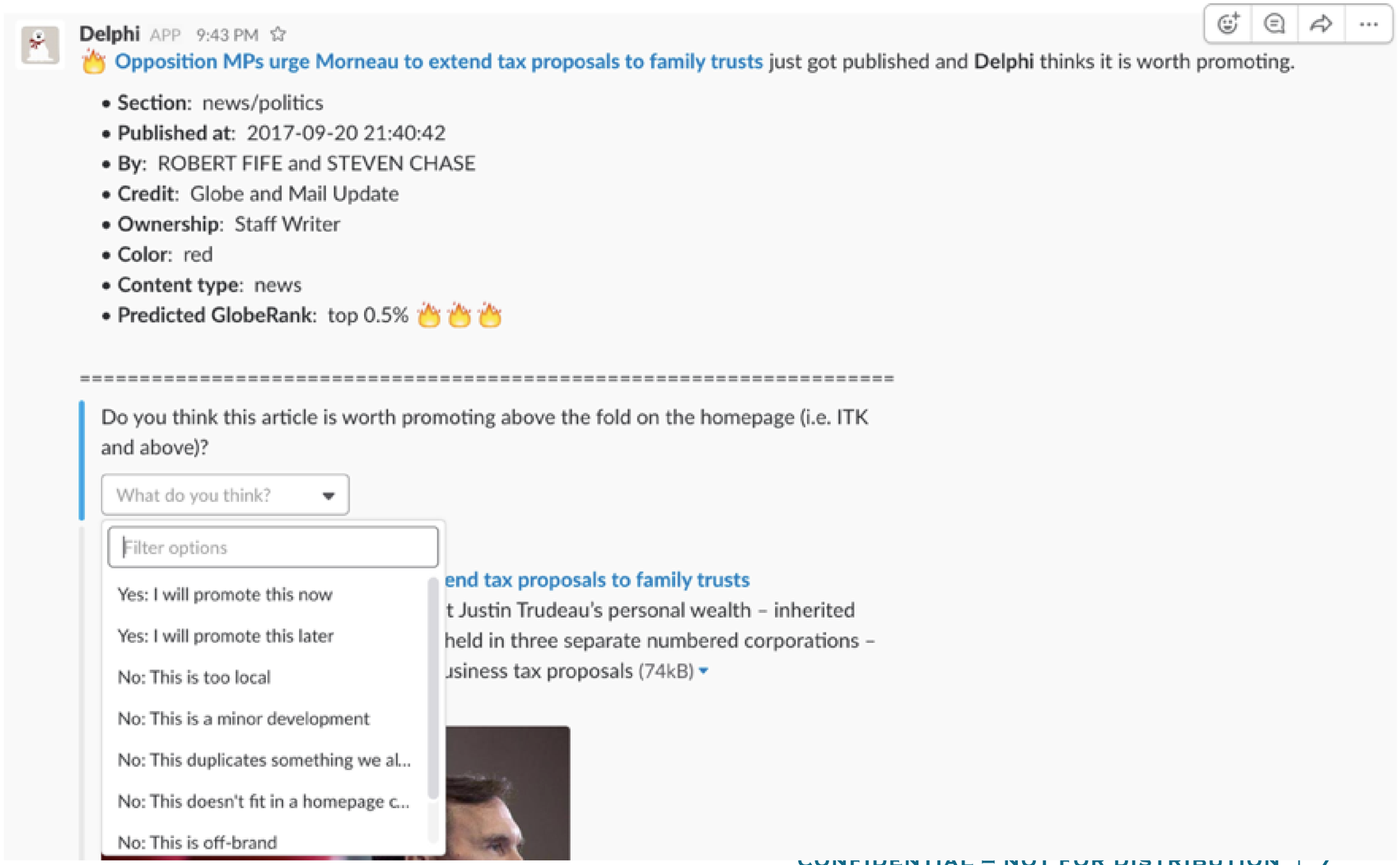
…to one that spent most of the time near the bottom of the homepage?

How do we use Sophi for automation?

We asked our editors to:

- Train the algorithm
- Set parameters for it to operate within
- Slowly and carefully test and measure; gradually expand the test

For example:


Delphi APP 9:43 PM
Opposition MPs urge Morneau to extend tax proposals to family trusts just got published and Delphi thinks it is worth promoting.
• Section: news/politics
• Published at: 2017-09-20 21:40:42
• By: ROBERT FIFE and STEVEN CHASE
• Credit: Globe and Mail Update
• Ownership: Staff Writer
• Color: red
• Content type: news
• Predicted GlobeRank: top 0.5%
Do you think this article is worth promoting above the fold on the homepage (i.e. ITK and above)?
What do you think?
Filter options
Yes: I will promote this now
Yes: I will promote this later
No: This is too local
No: This is a minor development
No: This duplicates something we al...
No: This doesn't fit in a homepage c...
No: This is off-brand
end tax proposals to family trusts
t Justin Trudeau's personal wealth – inherited
held in three separate numbered corporations –
usiness tax proposals (74kB)

Considerations

- We have different types of widgets, and different articles. Each has its own specifications about what we can place
- We don’t want the whole front page to be different articles about Trump
- News has a best-by date
- We can’t show an article more than once
- We have a brand to uphold

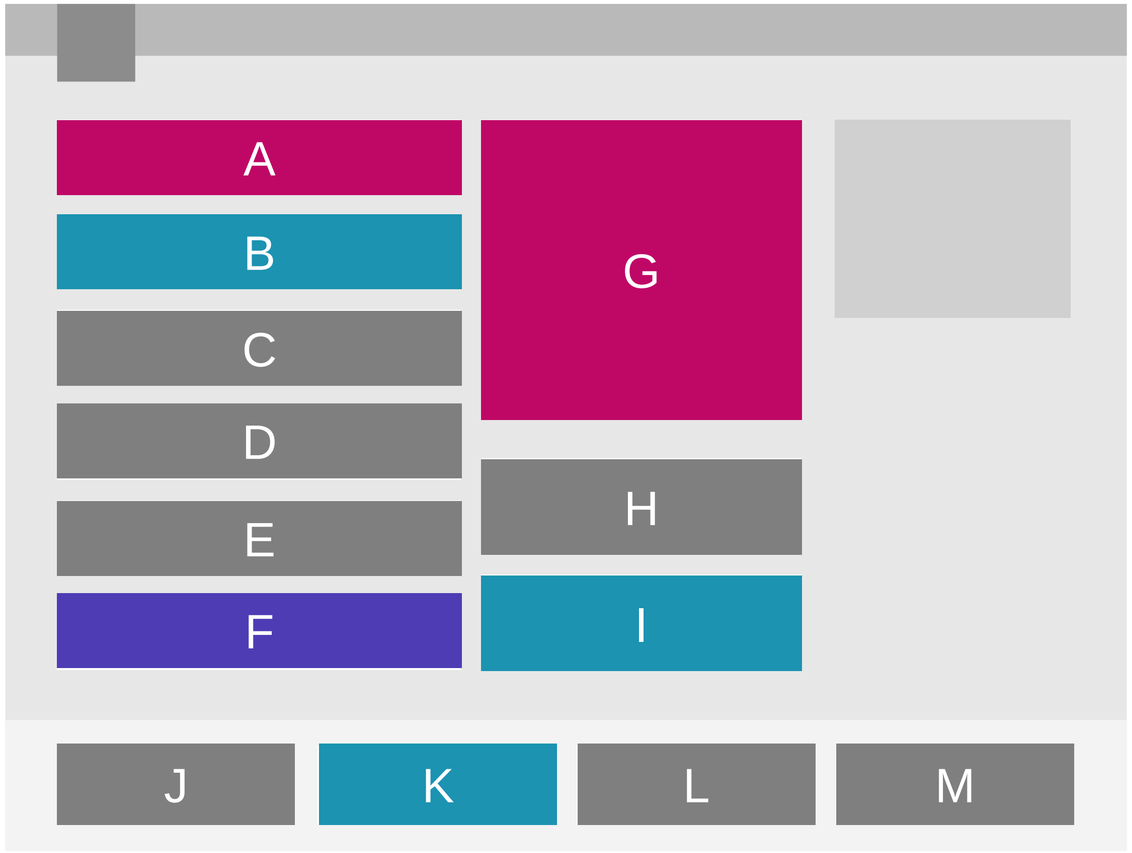
Implementation

- Model written in Python
- Runs every 10 minutes to update recommendations and page
- We start with all the articles from the last 60 days (longer for videos).
- For each widget on a page, we determine whether this article could be placed in it based on a number of filters

AUTONOMOUS TOOLS

Sophi Site Automation

Sophi driven section pages outperform human curated pages by a significant margin and free up newsroom resources so that they can focus on finding the next story that matters



Editorial curation

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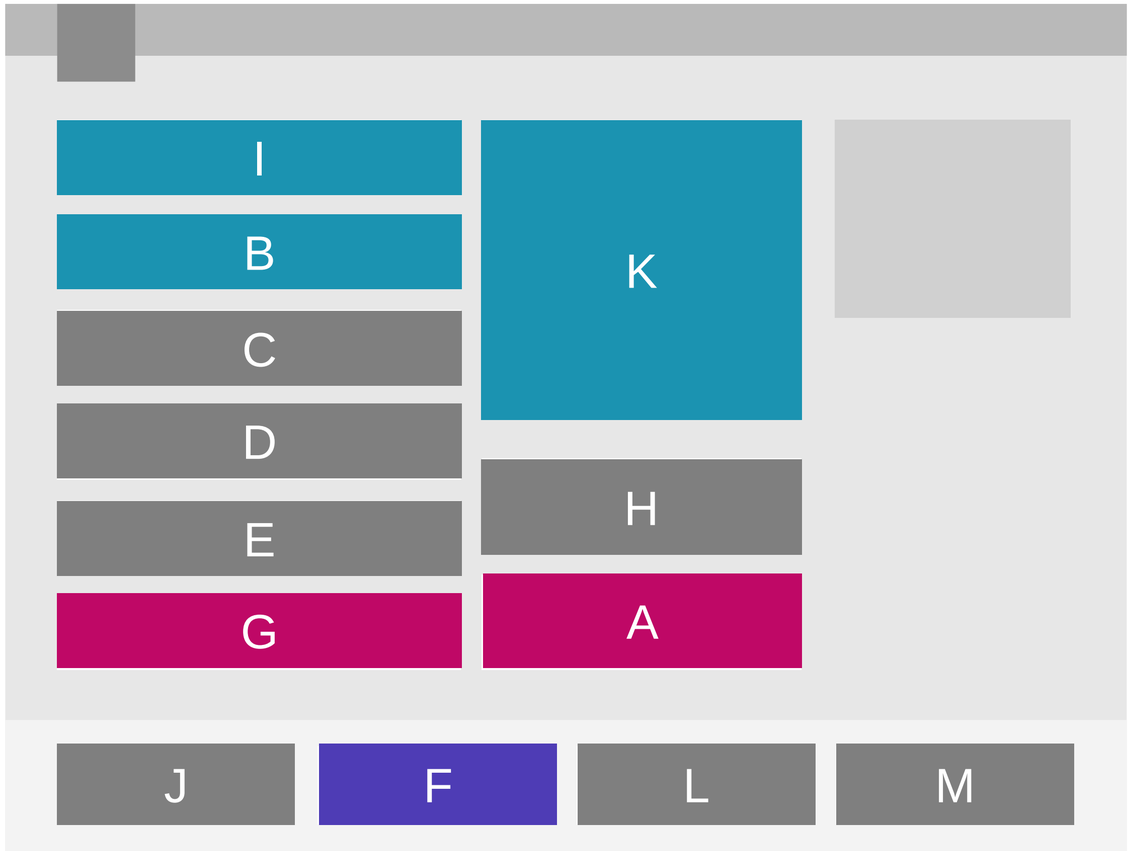


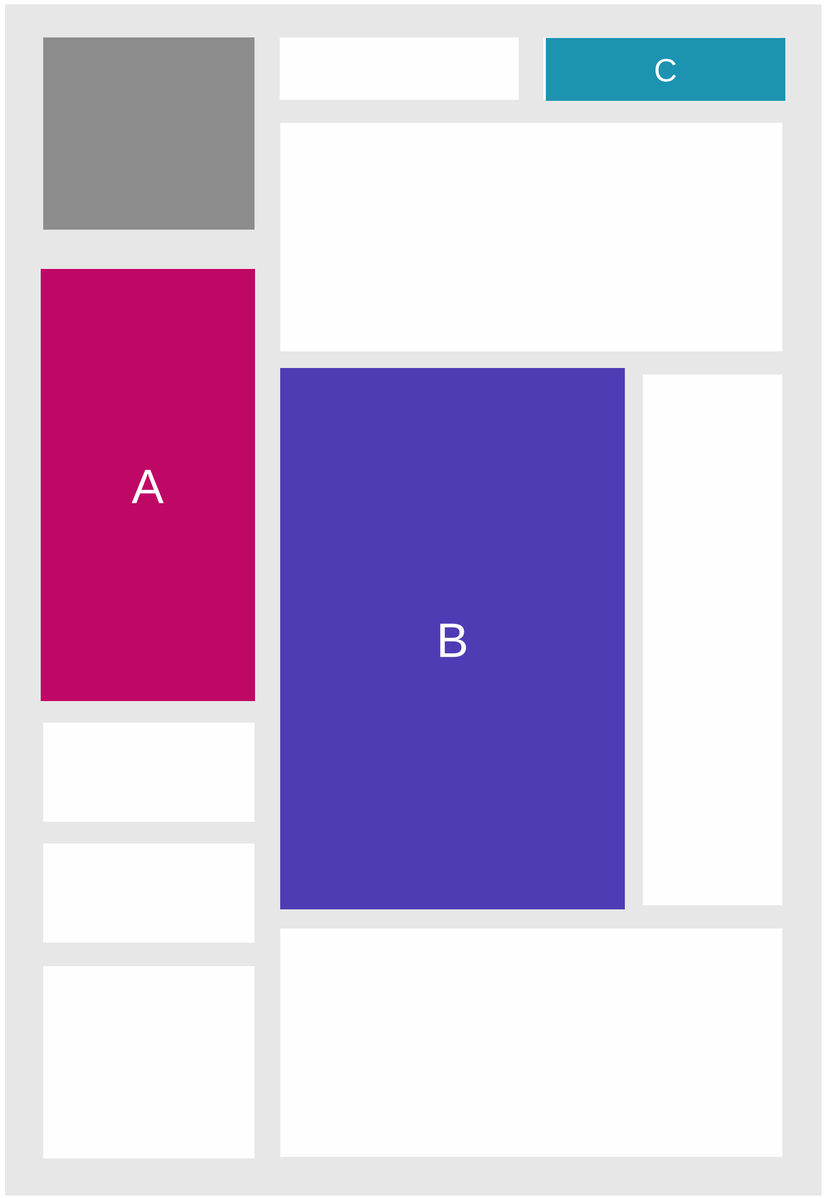
Augmented curation

AUTONOMOUS PRODUCTS

Sophi Print Laydown

With a mix of Editorial input and Sophi scores, 2 hours of pain each day can be replaced by an automated 10-second optimization process.

If the newsroom decides to add new constraints, they can re-juggle the rest of the paper in another 10 seconds.



SONALI VERMA
SENIOR PRODUCT MANAGER, ANALYTICS
THE GLOBE AND MAIL

P: 416.585.5573
E: SVERMA@GLOBEANDMAIL.COM