



**Greg
Piechota**

Researcher-In-
Residence
INMA
United Kingdom

INMA Benchmarks

The state of online news engagement and subscriptions

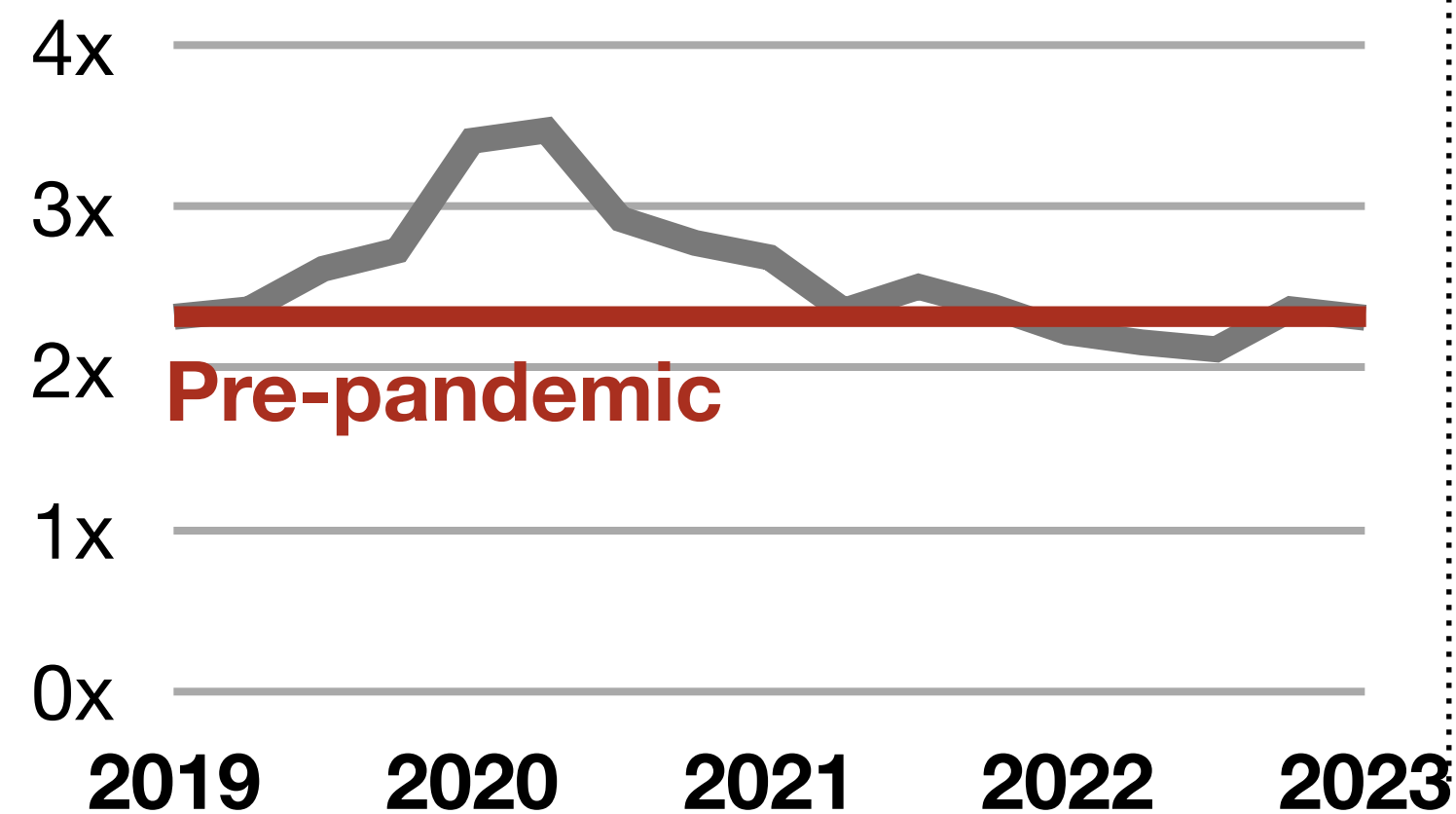
INMA World Congress of News Media
May 26, 2023

Engagement Recession or just back to normalcy?

In 1Q 2023, users engaged with news as much as before the pandemic

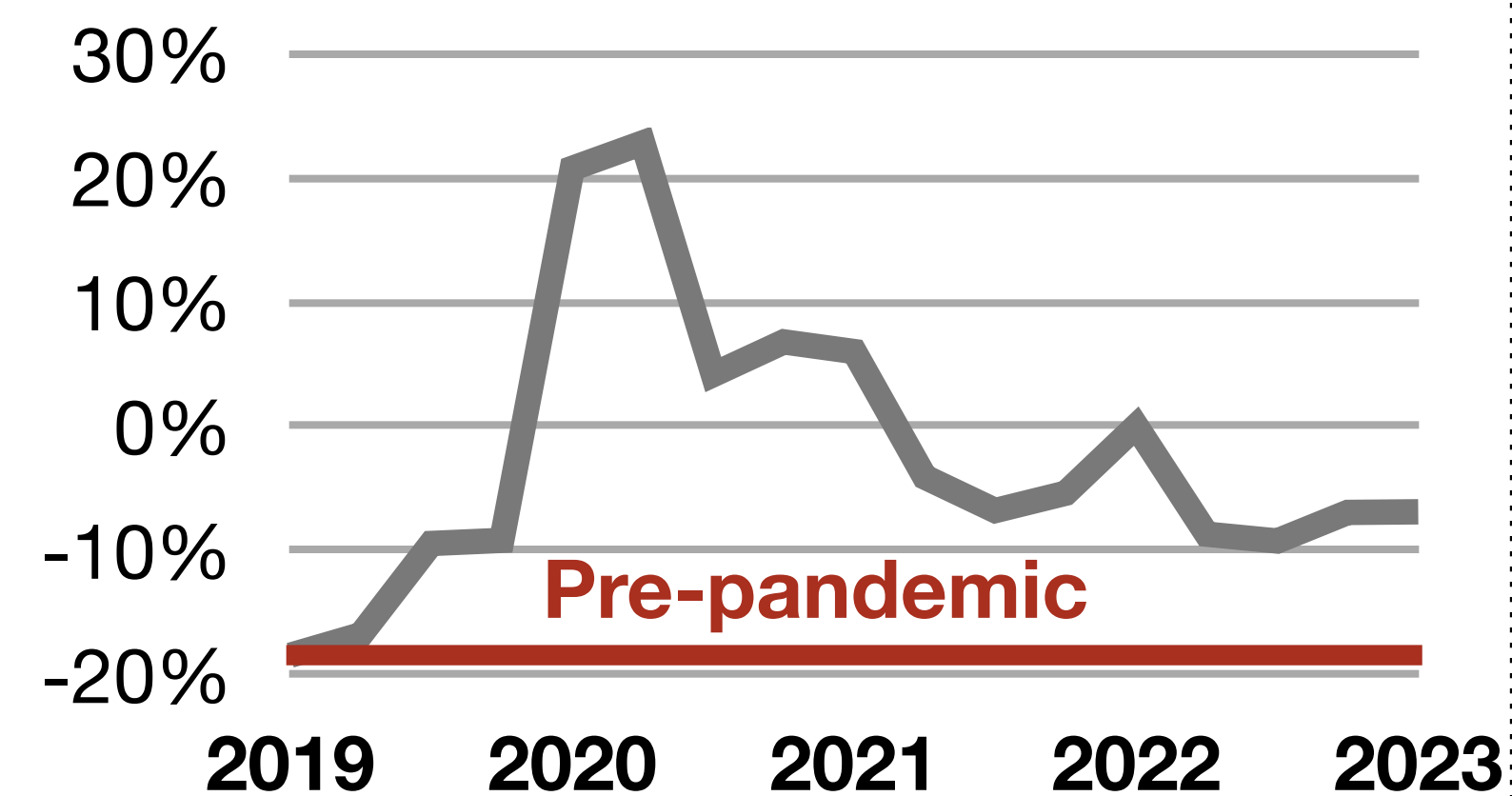
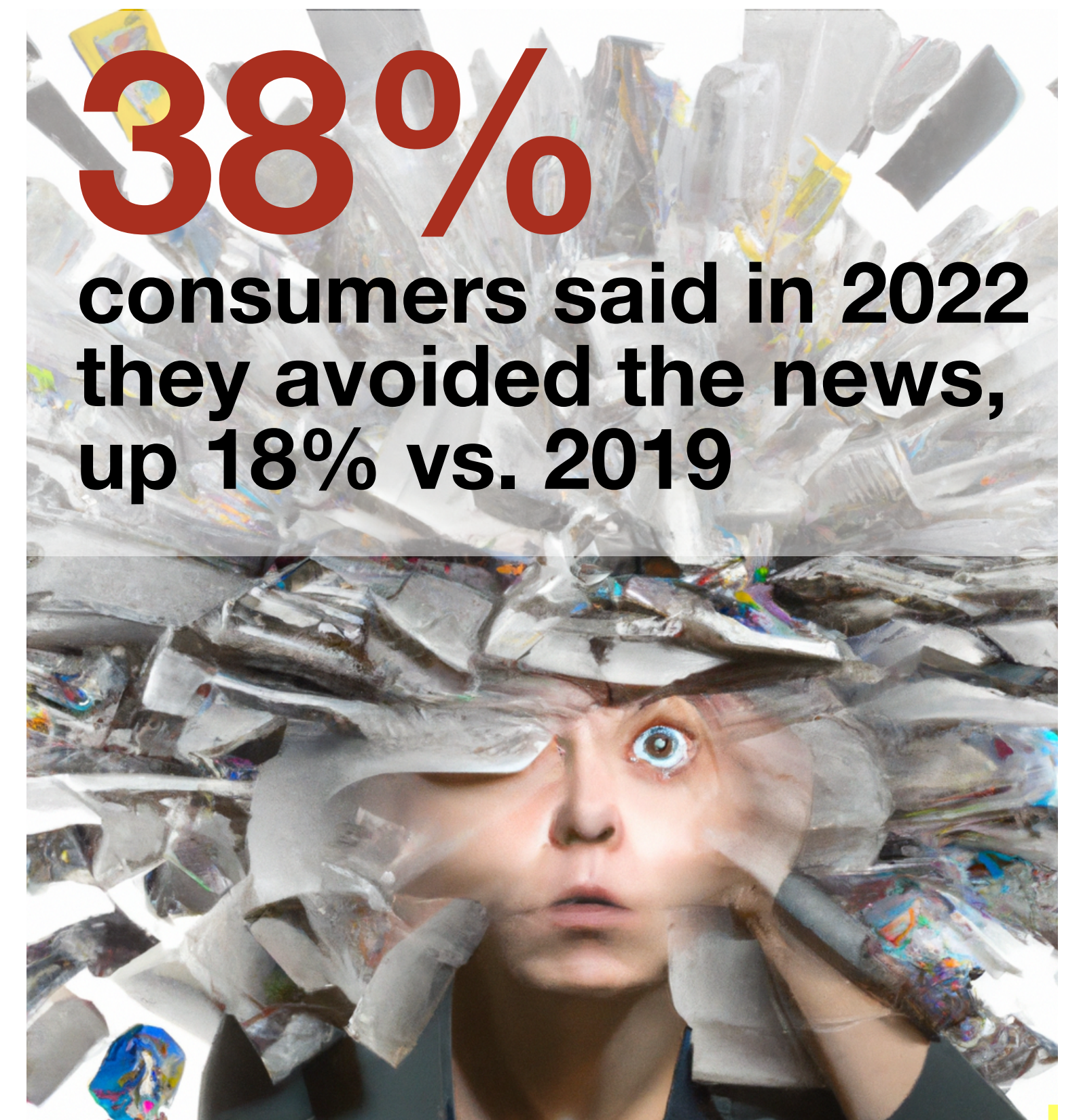
Website penetration down 32% vs. 2020 but flat vs. 2019

Median website penetration rate (users to in-market households), in multiplies, 1Q 2019-1Q 2023



Online sessions are down 28% vs. 2020 but up 4% vs. 2019

Median change in average monthly number of online sessions, in %, by quarter, indexed to 1Q 2022



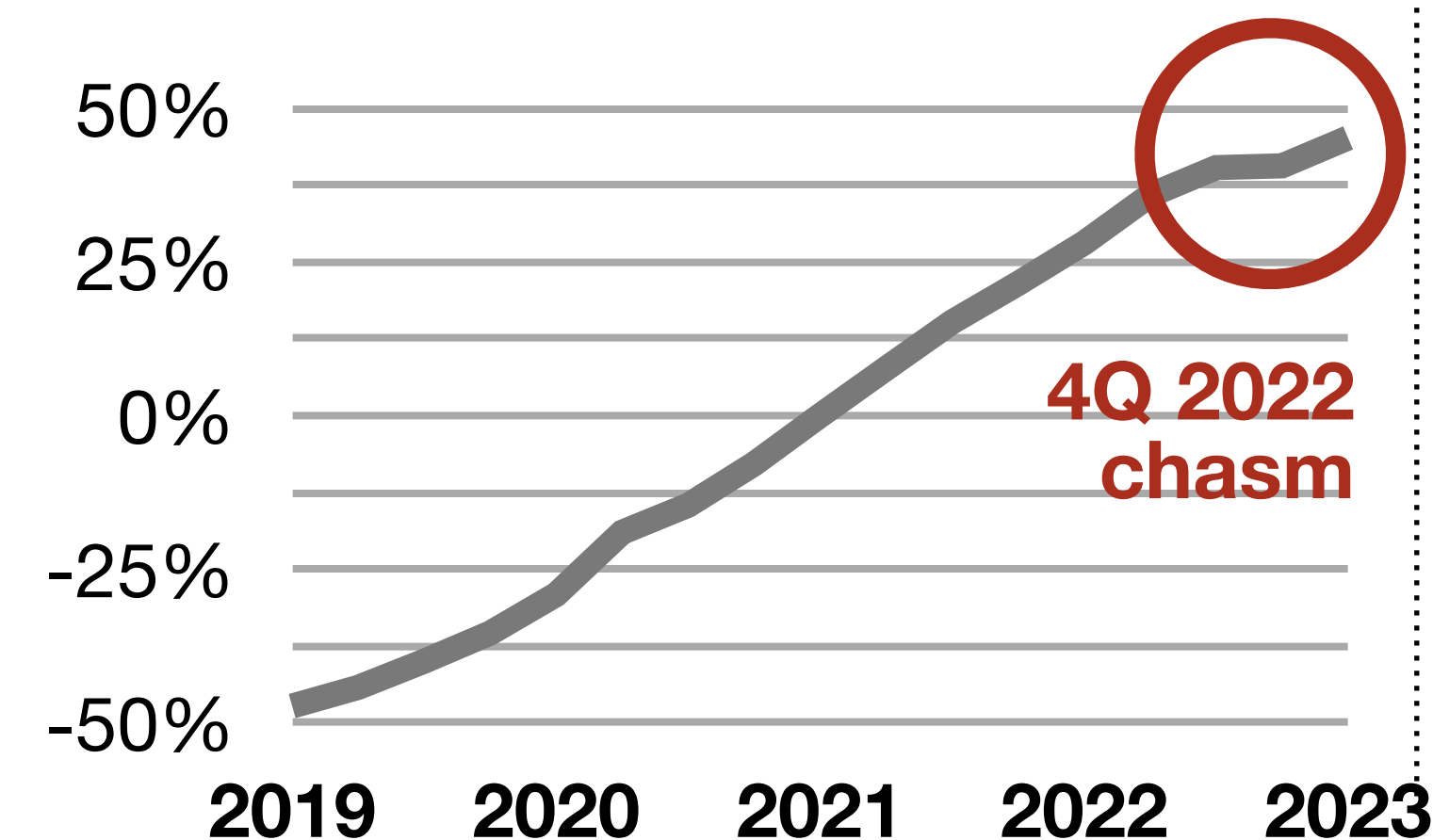
Sources: INMA Benchmarks; sample: 174 news brands internationally; median values for 1Q 2019-1Q 2023; session data indexed to 1Q 2022. Digital News Report: sample 93,000 respondents in 46 markets; average values for 2019 and 2022. Illustrated with Dall-E AI

Subscriptions Crossed a chasm, back to growth

After a temporary slow down in 2022, publishers are growing again

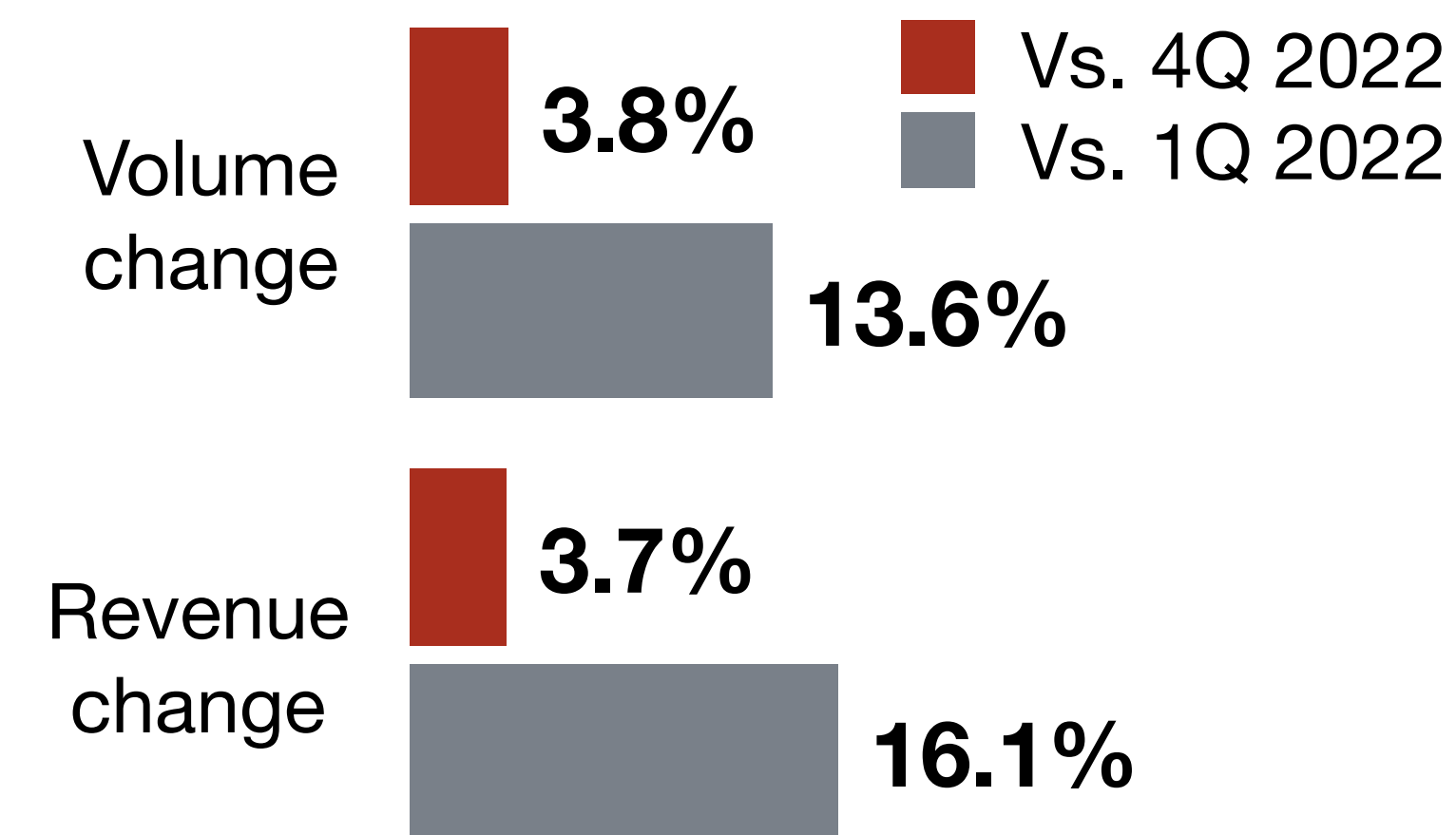
After years of a linear growth, pubs saw a temporary chasm

Median change in total number of digital-only news subscriptions, in %, indexed to 1Q 2021



In 1Q 2023, news brands globally overcame the slow down

Median change in volume, revenue from digital-only subs, in %, vs. previous quarter and previous year



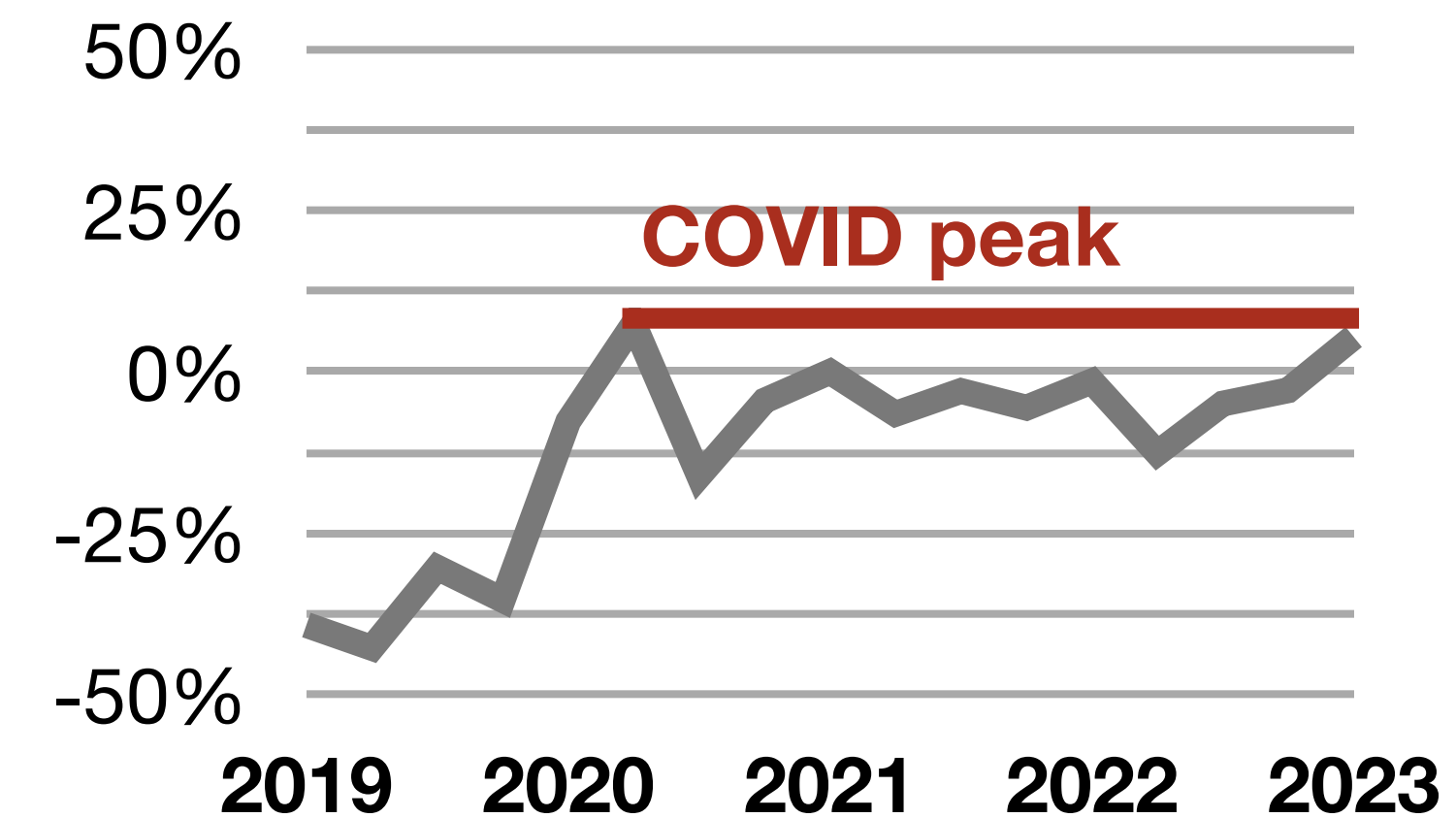
Sources: INMA Benchmarks; sample of 174 news brands internationally; median values for 1Q 2019-1Q 2023; Indices to 1Q 2021; INMA tests of 473 websites in 33 countries ranked by online reach based on Digital News Report surveys, 2018-2022. Illustrated with Dall-E AI

Story behind the story The retention call

Sales continues to be strong, but churn slows down the growth

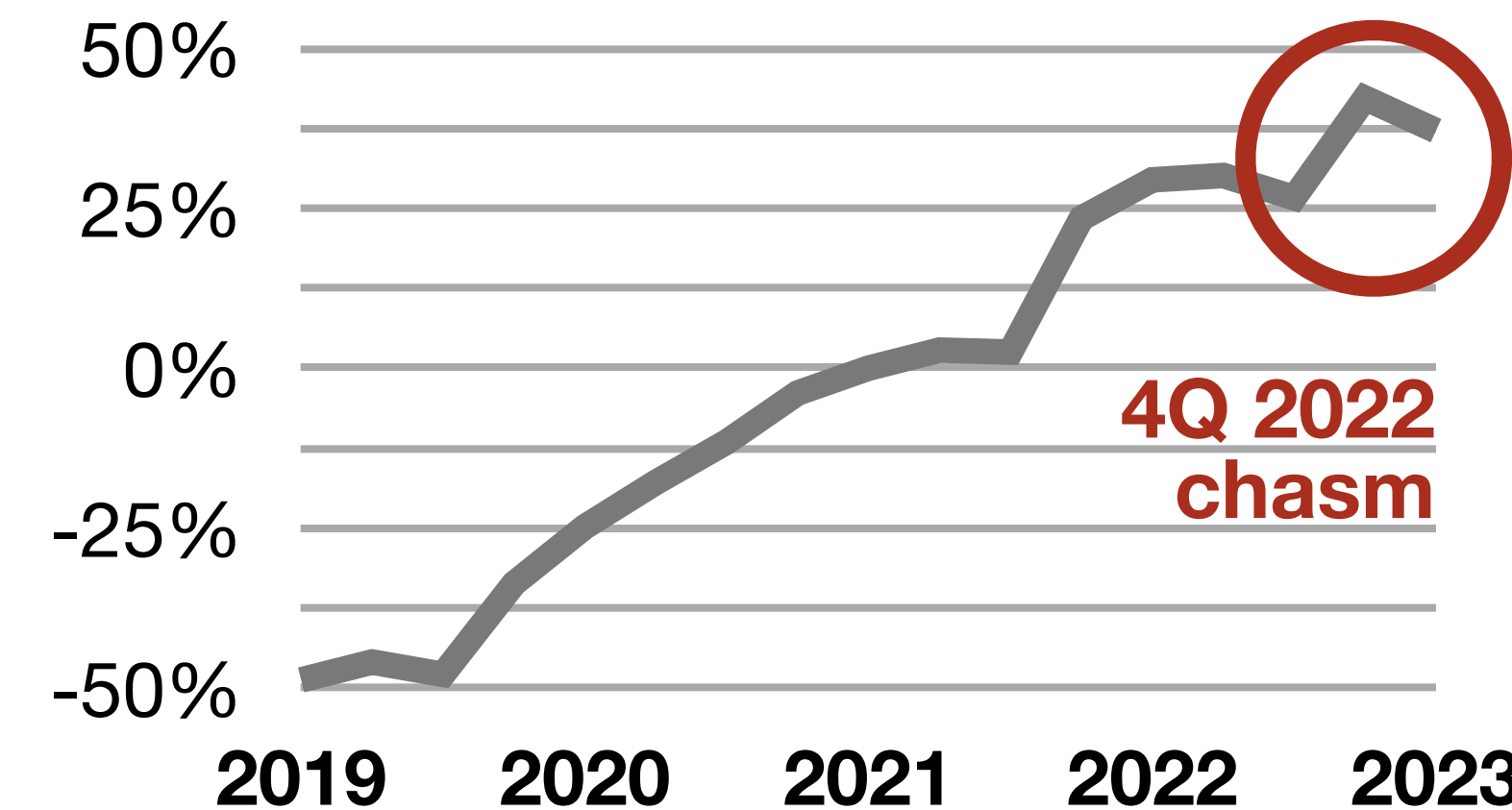
The good news is pubs sell only a bit less than in the COVID peak

Median change in monthly new digital-only subscription starts, in %, indexed to 1Q 2021

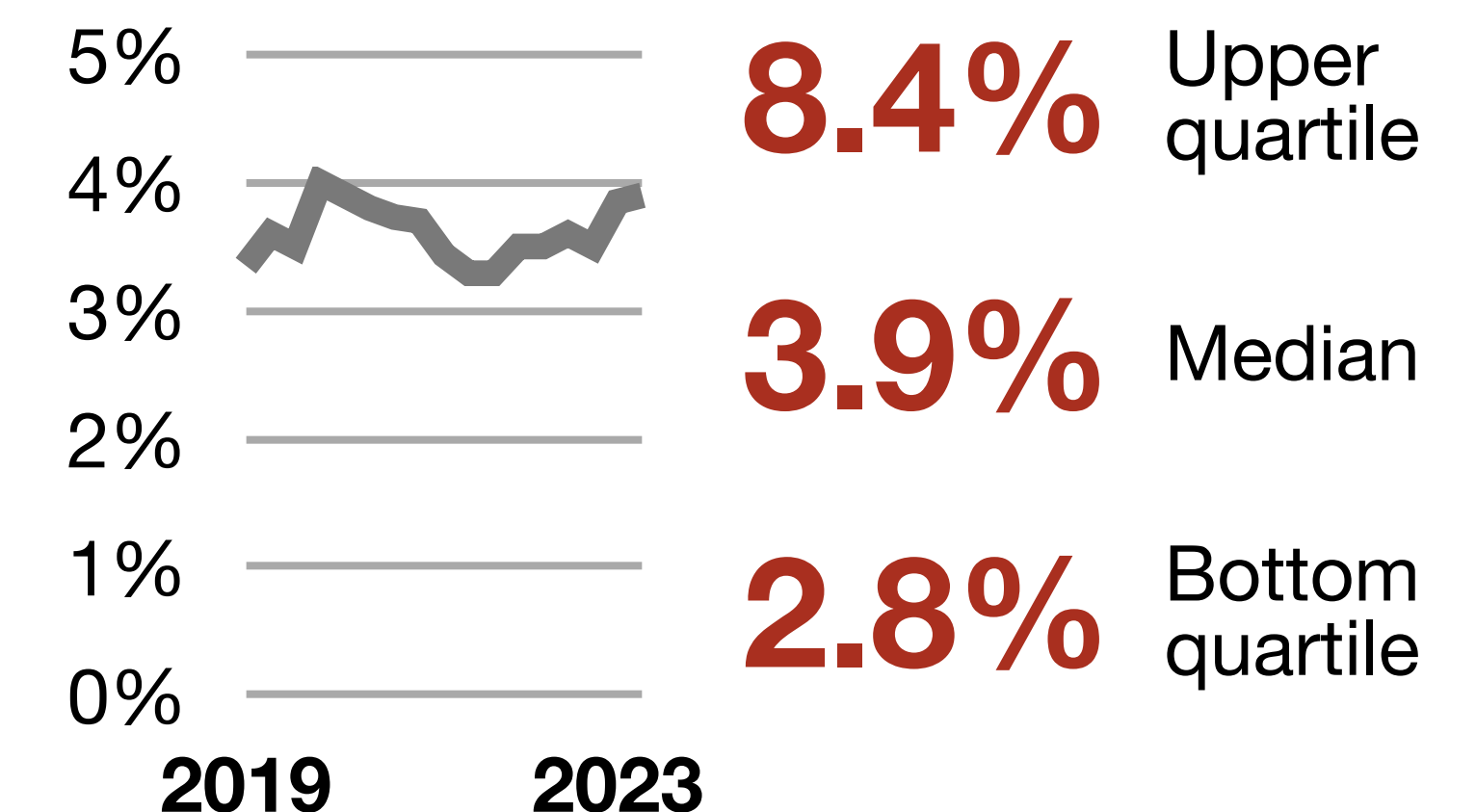


The bad news is that cancellations spiked too, and churn is now eating into the growth

Median change in monthly digital-only subscription stops, in %, indexed to 1Q 2021



Median digital-only subscription churn rate (monthly), in %



Source: INMA Benchmarks; sample of 174 news brands internationally; median values for 1Q 2019-1Q 2023; Indices to 1Q 2021

Theory on strategies across product category lifecycle

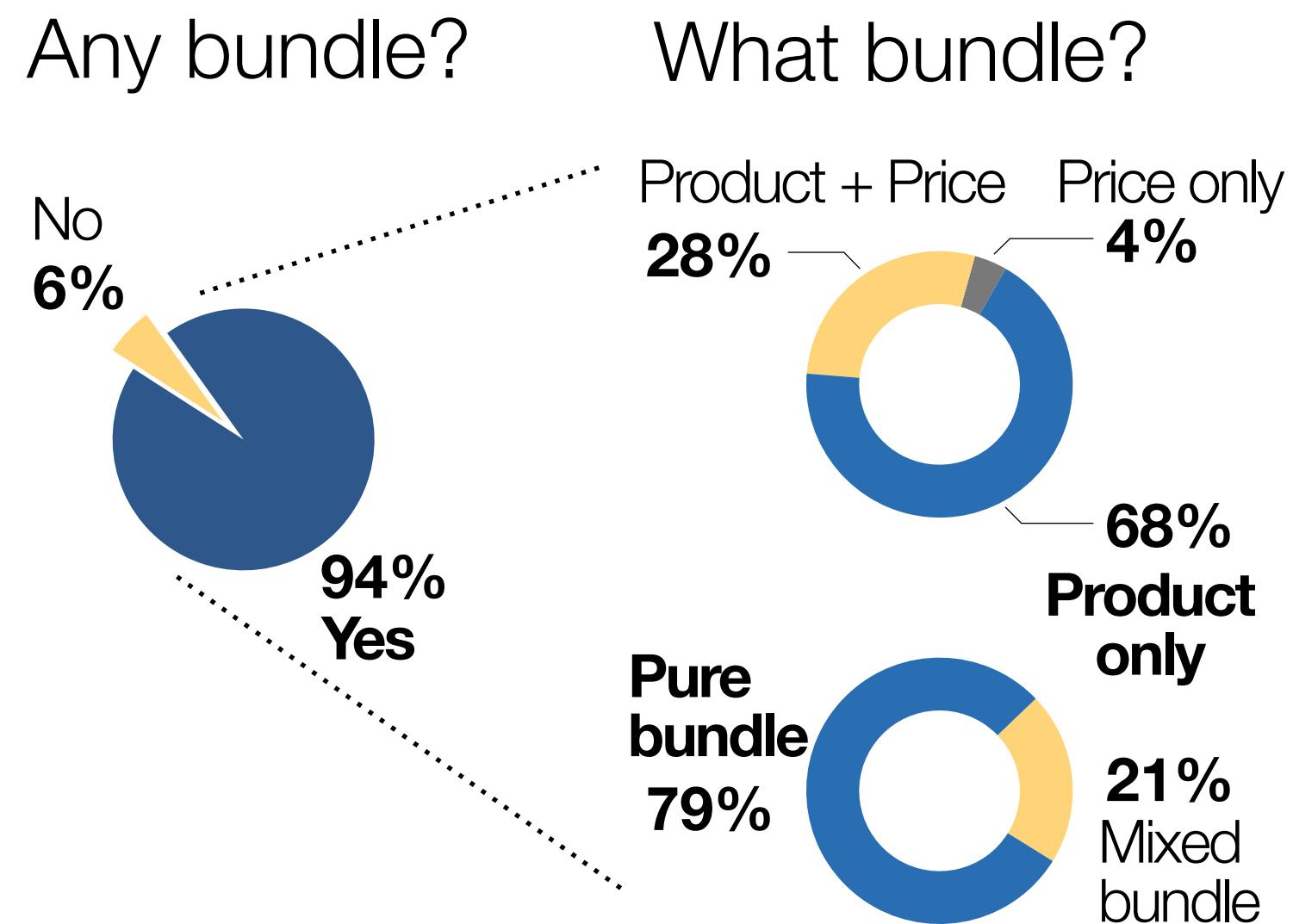
Online subscription category **is at the growth stage**

	Life stages	Introduction	Growth	Maturity	Decline
Characteristics	Sales	Low sales	Rising sales	Peak sales	Declining sales
	Costs	High cost/customer	Average cost/customer	Low cost/customer	Low cost/customer
	Profits	Negative profits	Rising profits	High profits	Declining profits
	Customers	Innovators	Early adopters	Early/late majority	Laggards
	Competitors	Few	Growing number	Stable/ declining	Declining number
Strategies	Objectives	Create awareness, trial	Maximise market share	Maximise profit, defend the market share	Reduce cost, milk the brands
	Product	Basic product	Add features, services	Build portfolio of brands	Cut weak products
	Price	Cost plus	Penetrate market	Competitive	Increase price
	Distribution	Exclusive/ selective	Selective/ intensive	Intensive	Selective
	Promotion	Awareness, trial of early adopters	Awareness, trial of mass market	Brand differences, switching	Retain loyal customers

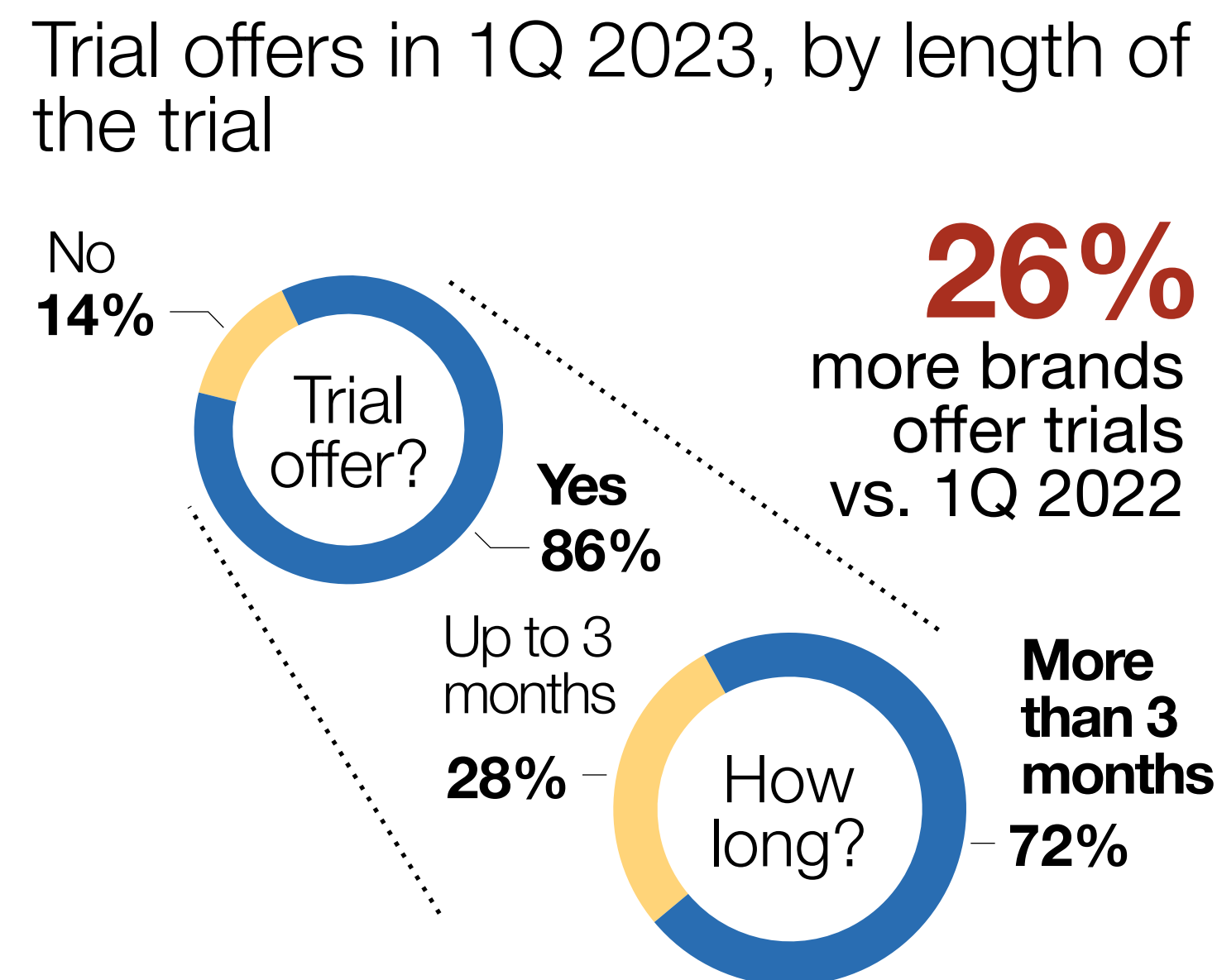
Practice Top 50 brands fight for market share

They enrich bundles, lower entry barriers, capture value at renewal

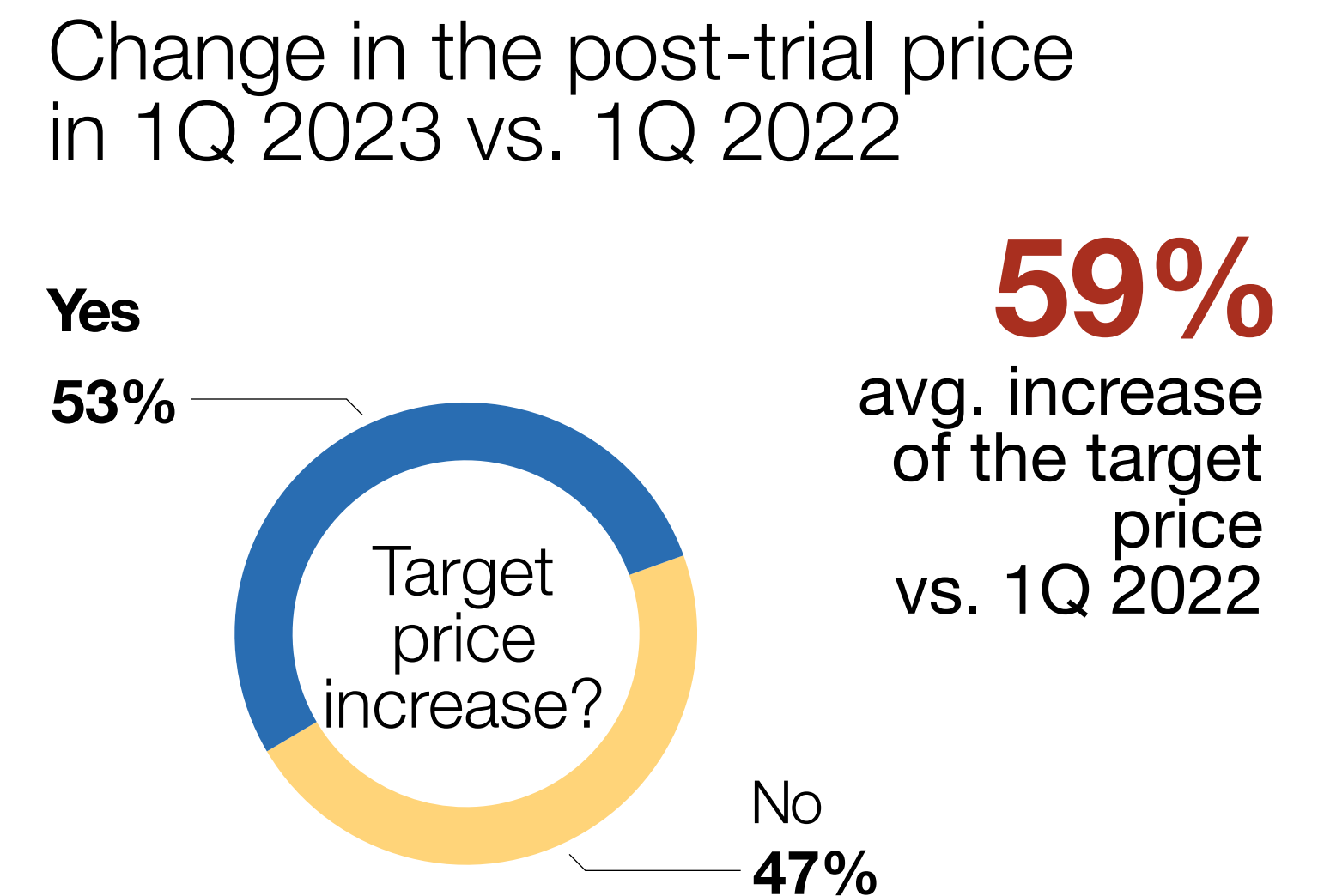
Publishers add benefits beyond access to news



Continue to offer long trials at a discount



Personalise post-trial prices, raising full rates

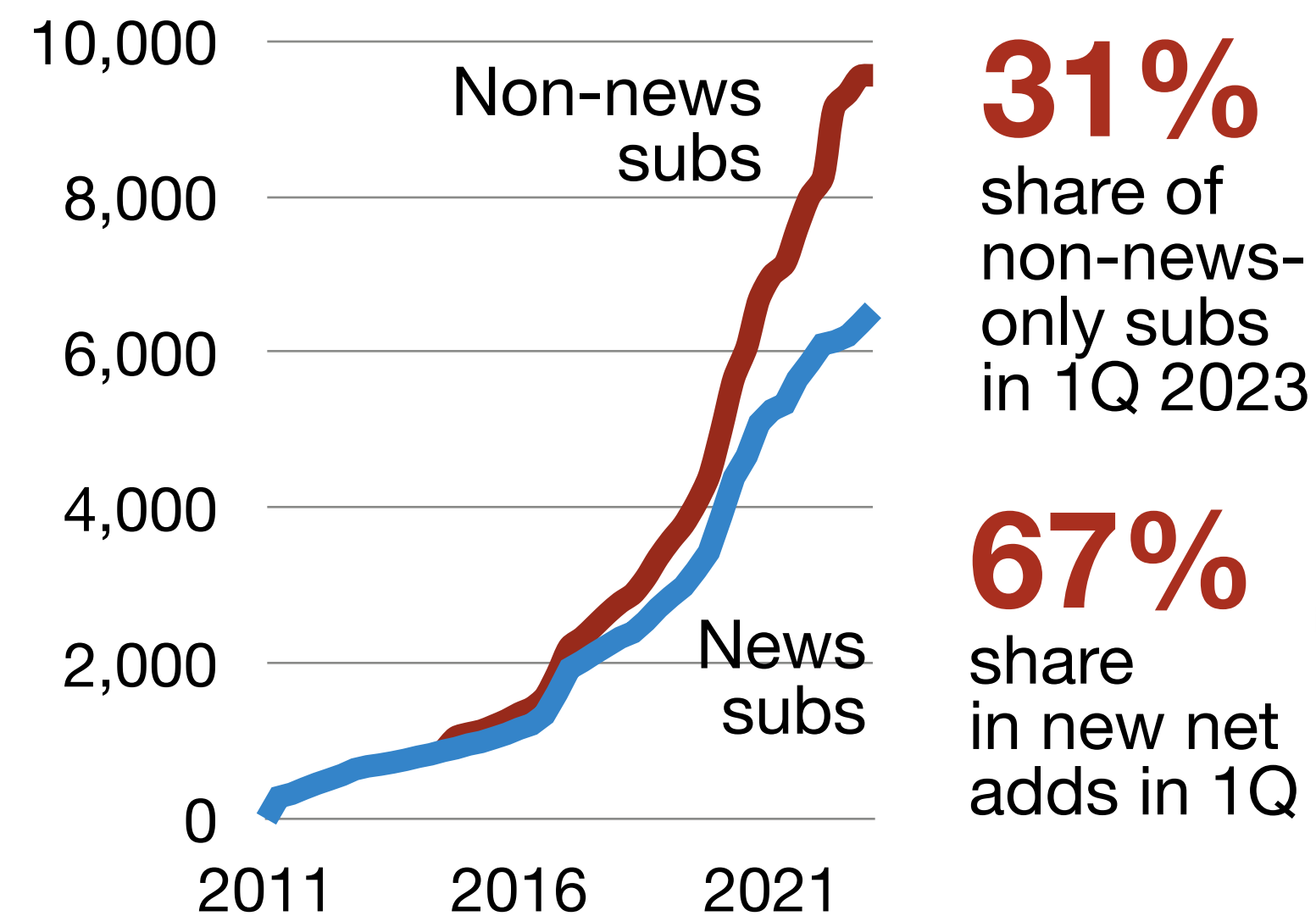


Case study of The New York Times

On a path to become “the essential subscription”

The Times's growth is increasingly driven by non-news products

Digital-only subs (excl. The Athletic), by product type, in 1000s, 2011-2023



Print bundle

Core news product

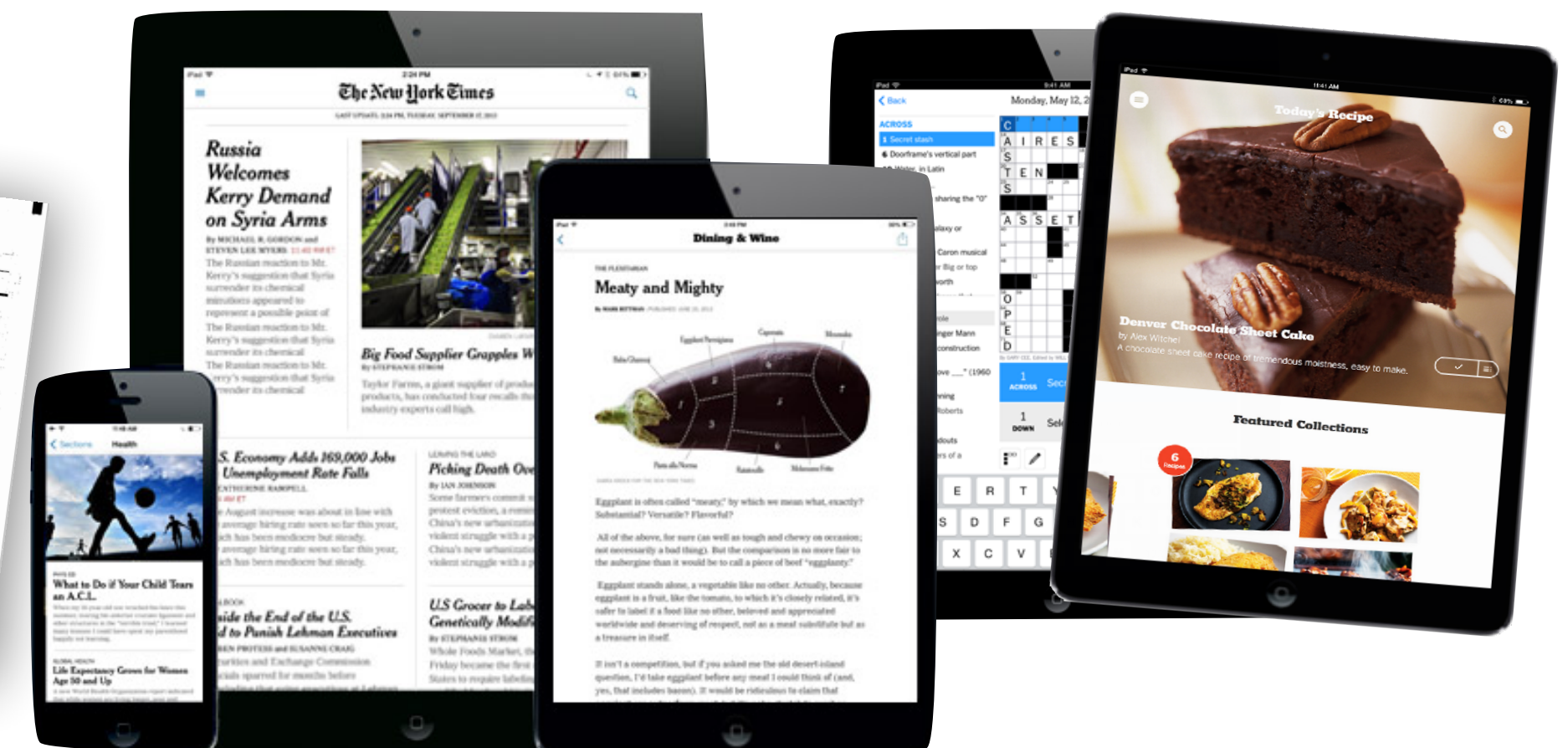
Weekend, Sports, Science, Living...



Digital bundle

Core news product

Games, Cooking, Audio, Wirecutter, The Athletic...



Lifestyle sections added from 1976

Lifestyle verticals added from 2012

Bundling Groups launch cable-style offers

Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden... Who's next?

Publishers offer convenient access to a cultural package

11 median number of brands in a package (range from 5 to 90)

118% more is a bundle priced vs. the flagship brand (range from 50% to 230%)

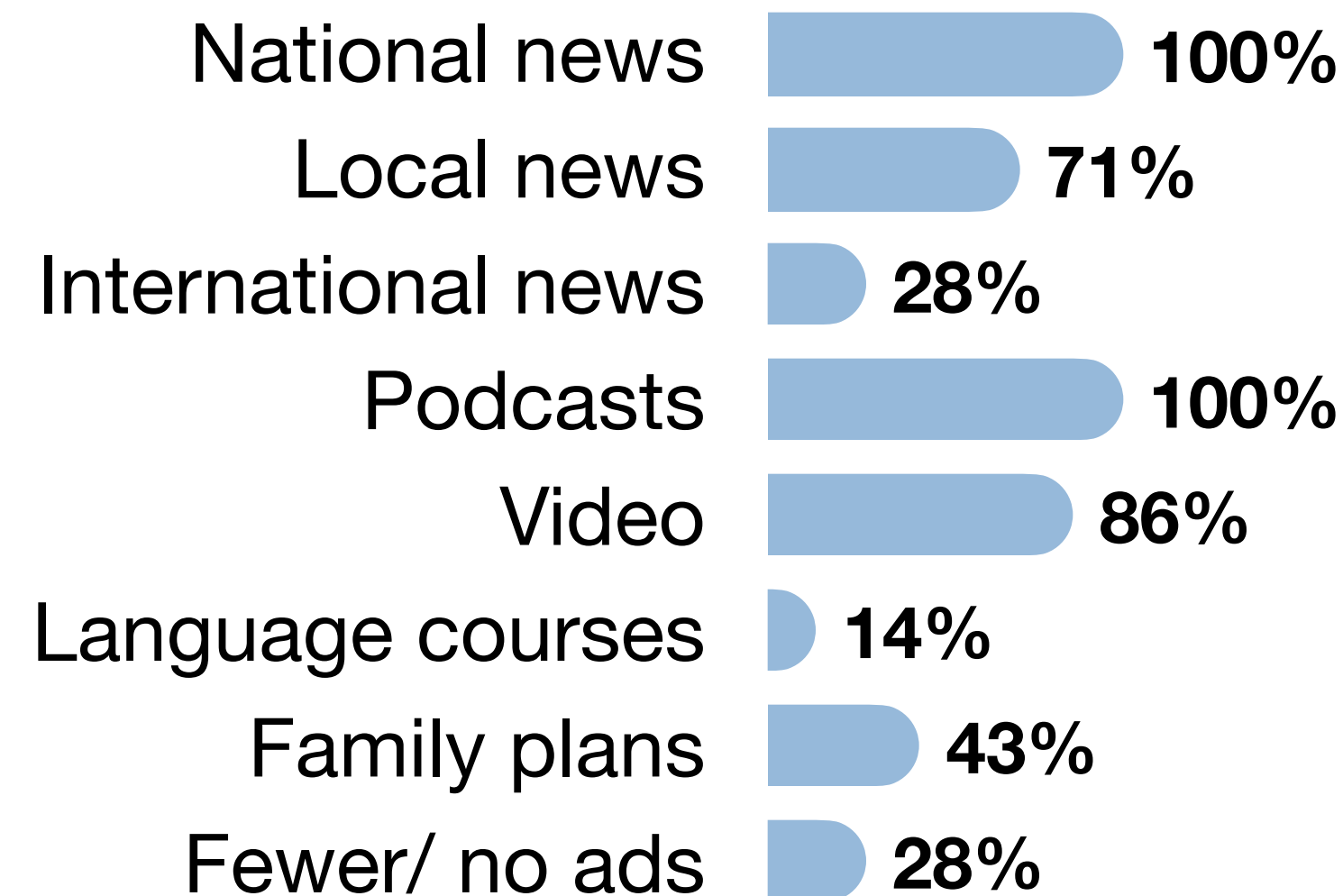


Sources: review of offers by Amedia in Norway, Ringier Axel Springer in Poland, Schibsted in Norway and Sweden, Bonnier in Sweden, Mediahuis in Belgium, DPG Media in the Netherlands, as observed in 1Q 2023

What's in a bundle?

85% or 6 out of 7 pubs offered mixed vs. pure bundles

Bundle benefits across 7 offers in 5 countries, in %

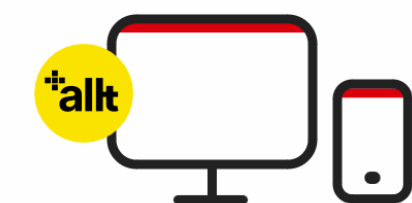


Håll dig upplyst och uppdaterad.

Ingen bindningstid. Säg upp enkelt online.
Erbjudandena gäller endast nya prenumeranter.

Välj din prenumeration

NYHET!



DN +Allt

DN Digital Bas, Expressen Premium och 43
lokala nyhetssajter

~~199 kr~~ **0 kr**

Välj DN +Allt

Engagement with online news is back to the 2019 level

After a brief chasm, brands are growing subs again

Publishers know how to sell, but struggle to keep subs

Top news brands clearly fight for the market share

Bundling is hot, likely helping upgrade subs, grow revenue

Questions?



greg.piechota@inma.org

- Researcher-In-Residence, INMA
- Fmr Researcher, University of Oxford, Harvard Business School
- Co-Author with Thales Teixeira, “Unlocking the Customer Value Chain”, 2019
- Author, “AI Guide and ChatGPT Promptbook for News Marketers”, 2023

