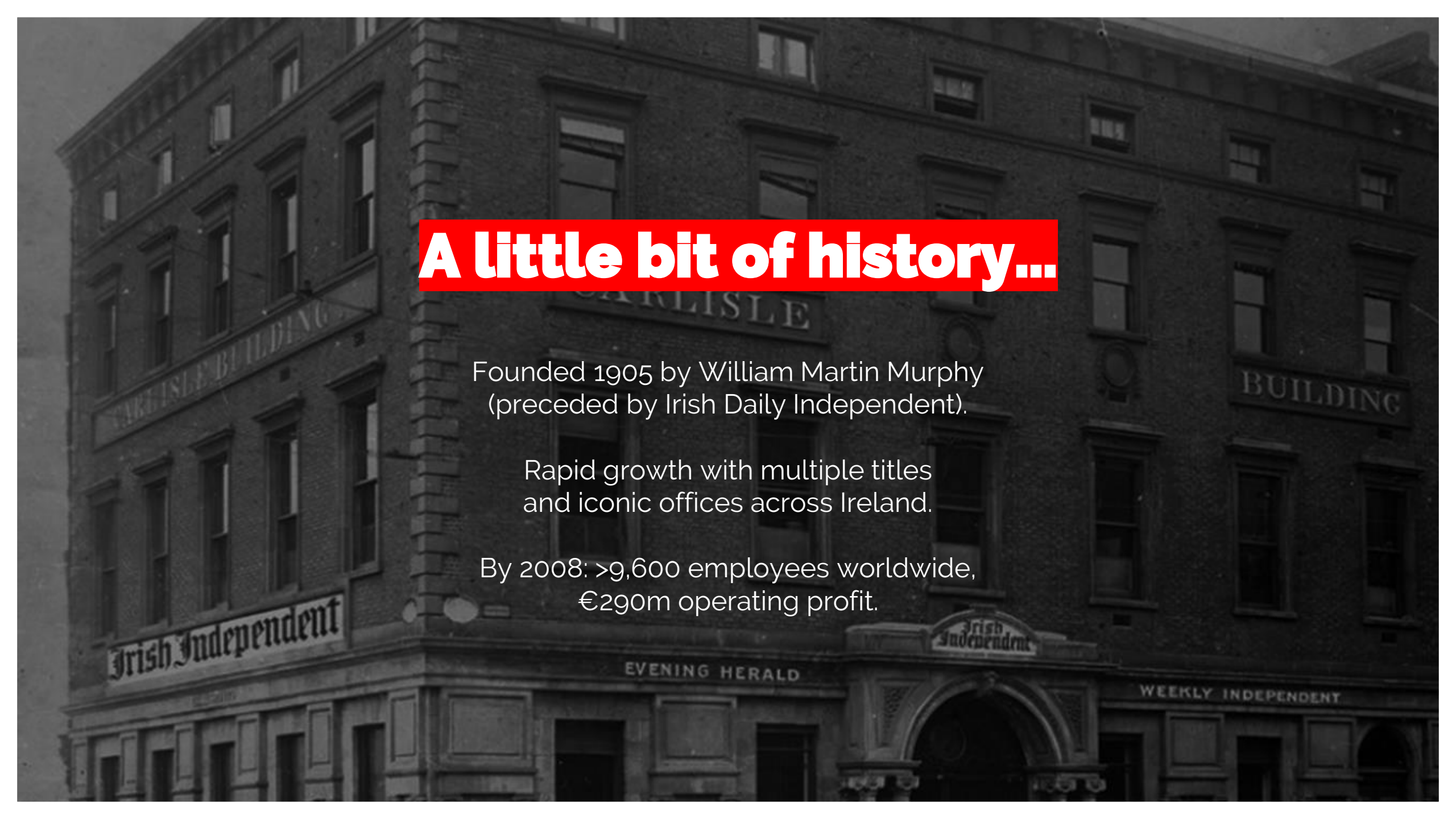




How Mediahuis Ireland
reached 100,000 digital
subscribers

13 November 2025





A little bit of history...

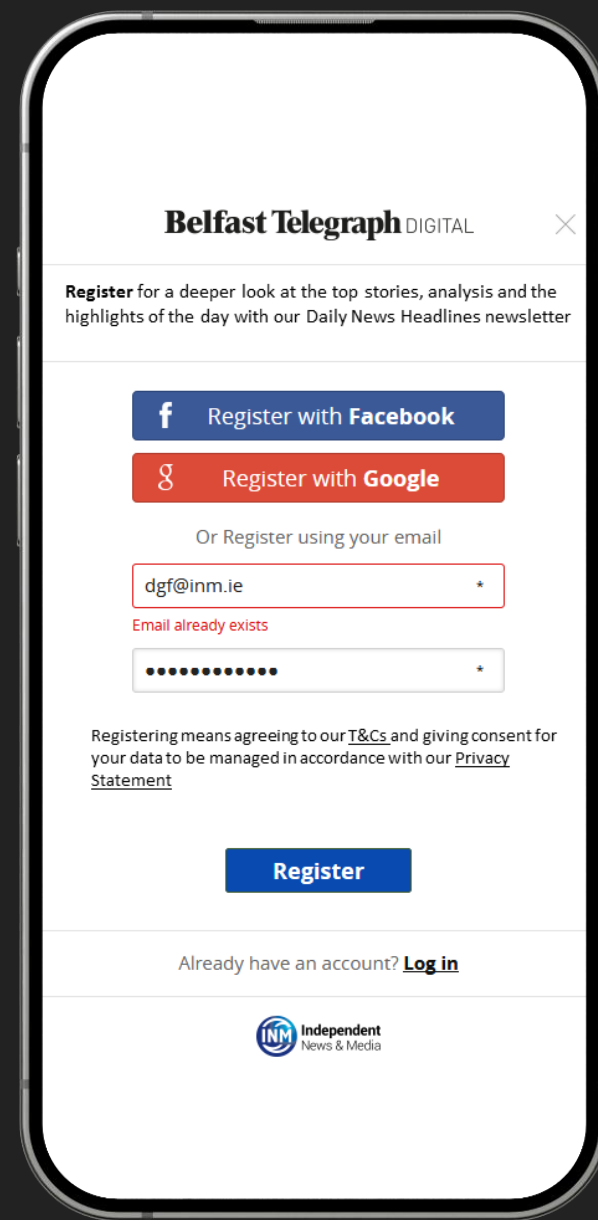
Founded 1905 by William Martin Murphy
(preceded by Irish Daily Independent).

Rapid growth with multiple titles
and iconic offices across Ireland.

By 2008: >9,600 employees worldwide,
€290m operating profit.

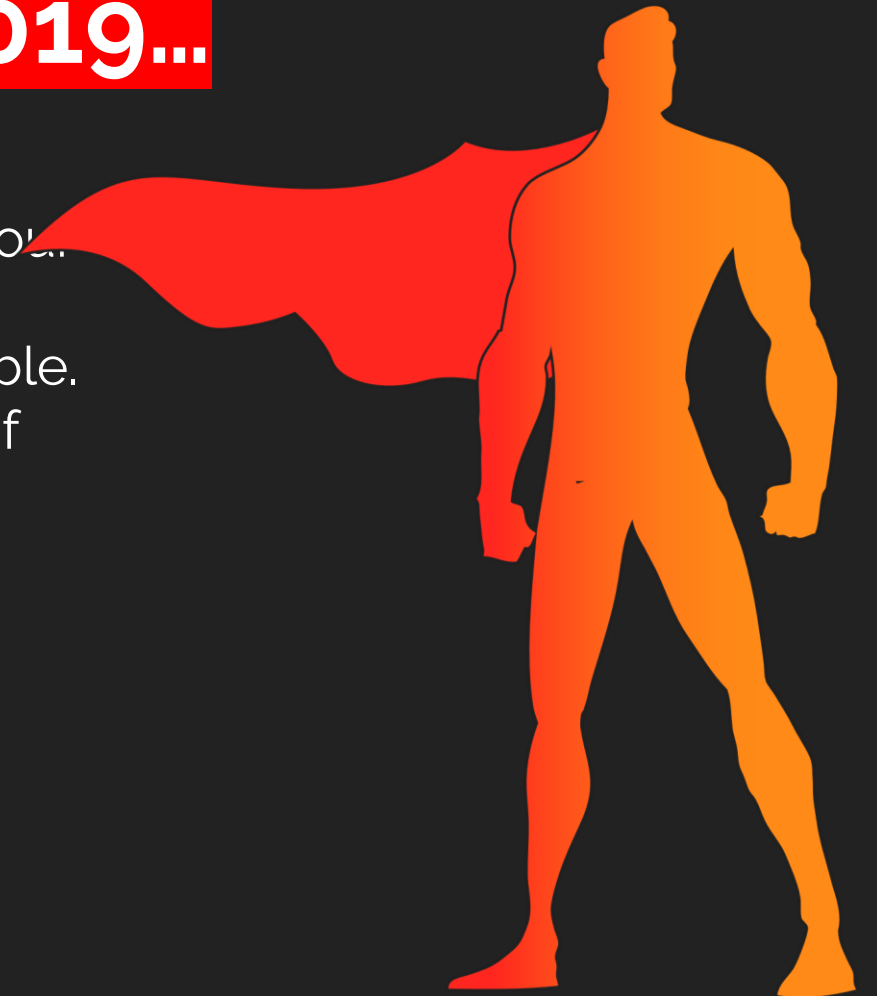
Our first steps toward digital subscriptions

- Started to build direct relationships with our readers in 2016.
- Challenging time as this new strategy impacted our main KPI's at the time;
 - Page Views and Unique Users (device IDs).
- Expectations on how Paid-for-Content (PFC) would perform were tempered.

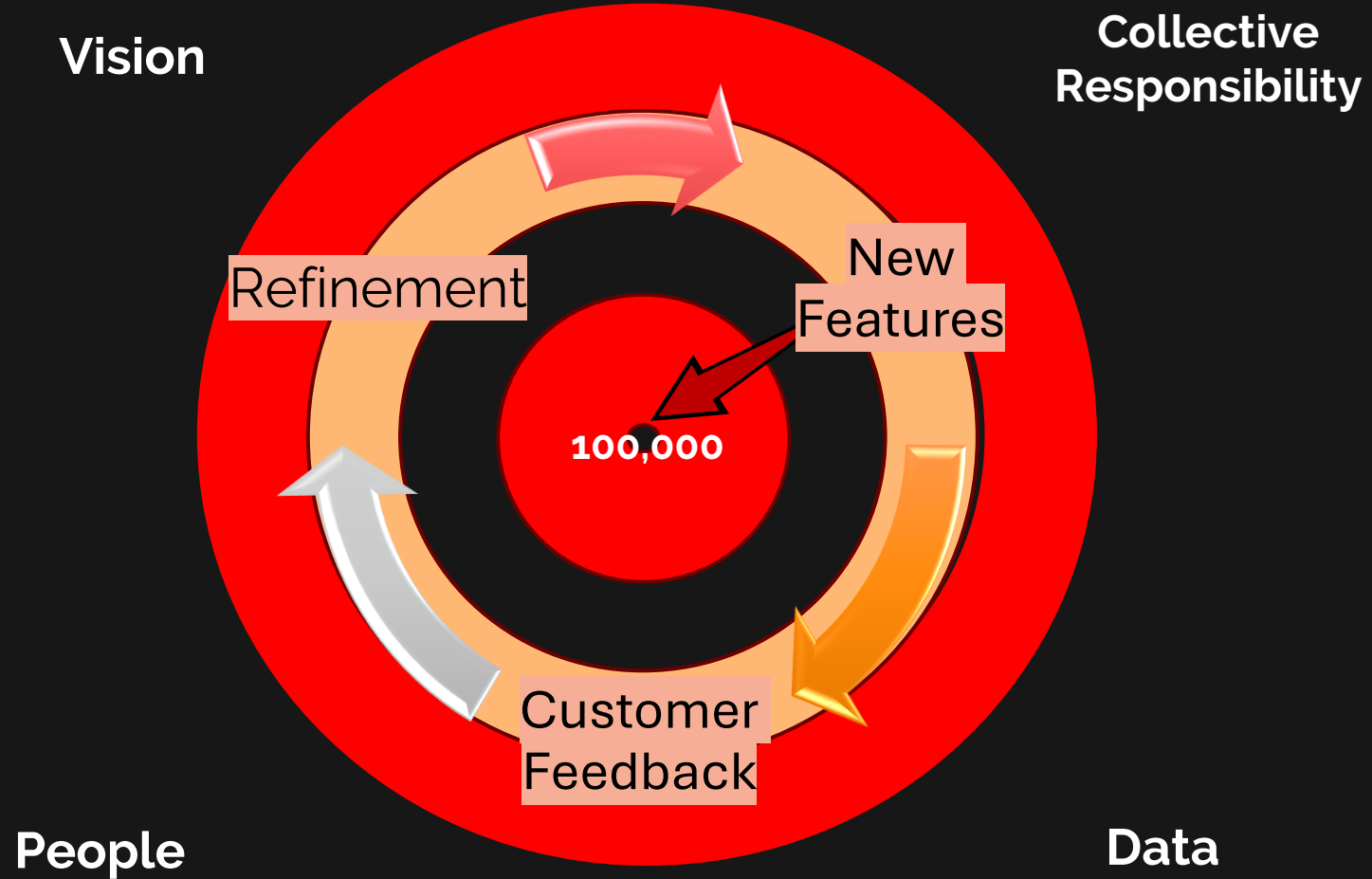


Mediahuis arrived in mid 2019...

- Brought experience and decision-making that gave our business the confidence in a PFC strategy.
- Investment in people and tools made success possible.
- Reassured Editorial & Advertising through a period of major change.
- First time selling direct to readers in 115 years.
- Company felt like a dynamic start-up for 2–3 years.



The flywheel behind our 100k



Our North Star Goal – 100k subscribers by end 2025

Turning method into practice

Worked with FT Strategies to develop a framework to ensure cross departmental efforts focused on a single goal

Created a structured process to design experiments:

- ***Idea*** → ***Hypothesis*** → ***Experiment*** → ***Evaluation*** → ***Implement, refine or bin***

Results

> 70 cross department experiments completed.

The success allowed us develop a phase 2 – towards 200k!



New Features

New mobile friendly puzzles

Background

Our puzzles were not popular and U/X was poor on mobile devices, where our most engaged were.

Those who played retained at a stronger rate. We knew we needed to improve our offering, but how??

What we did

First puzzle built called Focail, which uses both English and Irish dictionaries. Three other puzzles added in following months.

Results

The count of monthly unique visitors has increased by a factor of 40, and continues to grow.
Improved navigation in App, means >90% of users play on the App.



'Good News' Newsletter

Background

We noticed more subscribers were cancelling and stating that the news was too negative and sometimes impacting their mental health.

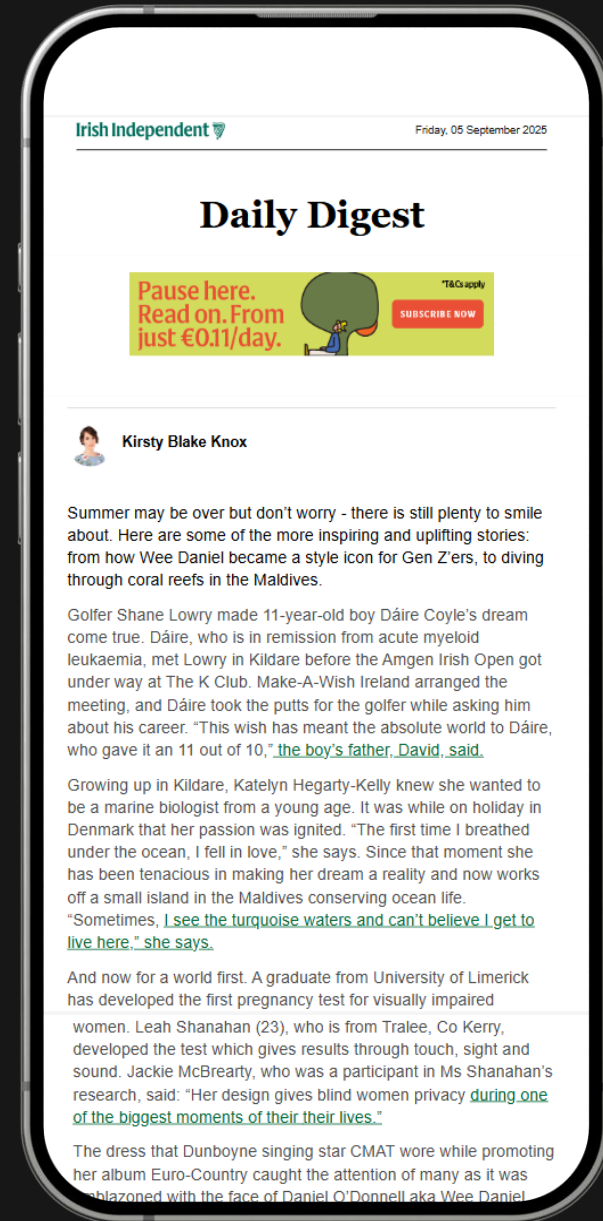
What we did:

We created a newsletter of positive stories, sent to the audience of our largest newsletter the *Daily Digest*.

Results

Satisfaction score for *Good News* is 8.0 vs. 4.3 for the *Daily Digest*.

Overwhelming positive comments about this newsletter.



Our first attempt at a Metered Wall failed

Aim

We wanted to allow more readers to sample our Premium content. In theory they would then be more likely to subscribe.

What we did

Created a meter and allowed readers read three Premium articles for free each month.

Results

Low percentage of content gated, this in effect became a premium content meter.

This in turn negatively impacted subscriber acquisition rates, with a forecast 25% hit on in-contract rates by the end of 2021.

Irish Independent 

SERVICE MESSAGE: CHANGE IN SERVICE

Hi

As a registered reader on Independent.ie we are making some changes to our service.

What is happening?

From 27th May, unless you subscribe you will no longer be able to read three of our Premium articles for free every month. You will of course be able to read any of our articles that are not marked with the green 'Premium' icon.

Thank you

To thank you for supporting our journalism we would like to offer you one month free access to our Premium+ bundle - which includes access on 5 devices, all Premium stories and ePapers: Irish Independent, Sunday Independent, Sunday World & The Herald.

Best regards,

Cormac Bourke

Editor Independent.ie and Irish Independent

Try 1 month on us

€13.99/ month after discount period. Renews automatically. Cancel anytime

***Refinement of ongoing
campaigns***

Amend opt-in flow for newly registered users

Aim

If we added an extra screen at the end of the registration flow, we could increase marketing opt-in rates.

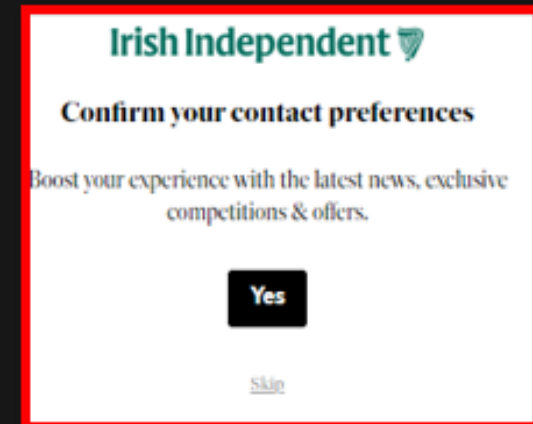
Really important to have a contactable base for acquisition where email is a very efficient conversion driver.

What we did

Additional box only served to those who have not already opted into marketing.

Results

Opt-in rates increased from 16% to 38%.



Involuntary churn -> what we call payment failures

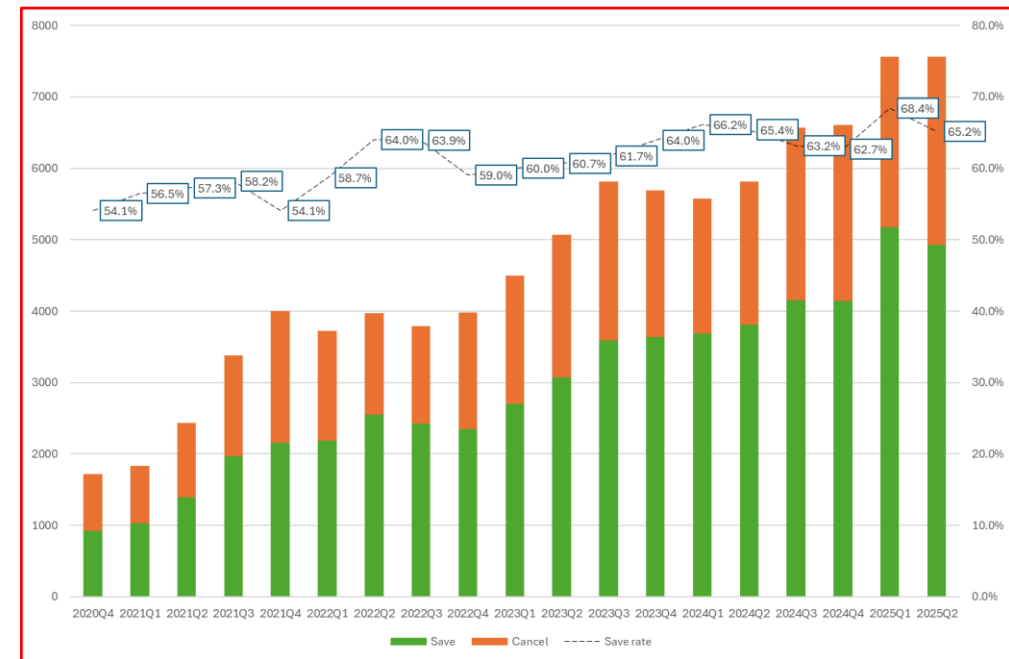
What we did

Implemented & refined a process to restore subscriptions that experienced a payment failure.

Results

Increased the save rate from c. 55% to over 65%.

Added in communications to alert subscribers to update their card details via email, SMS and onsite messaging



Redesign the Purchase Flow -> Less is more

What we did

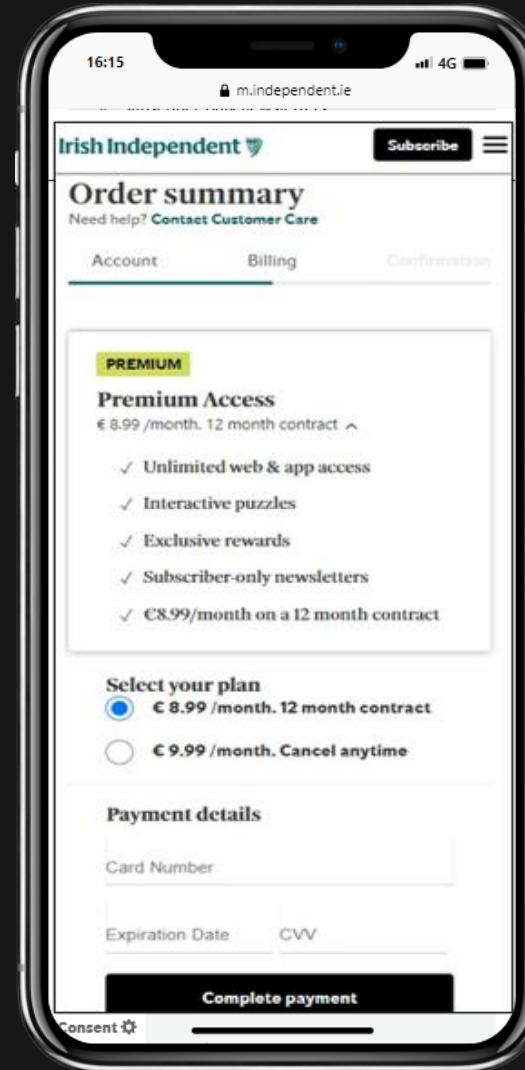
New designs focused on optimising the purchase flow for mobile users.

Visuals are more compact, cleaner and allow for better promotion of offers.

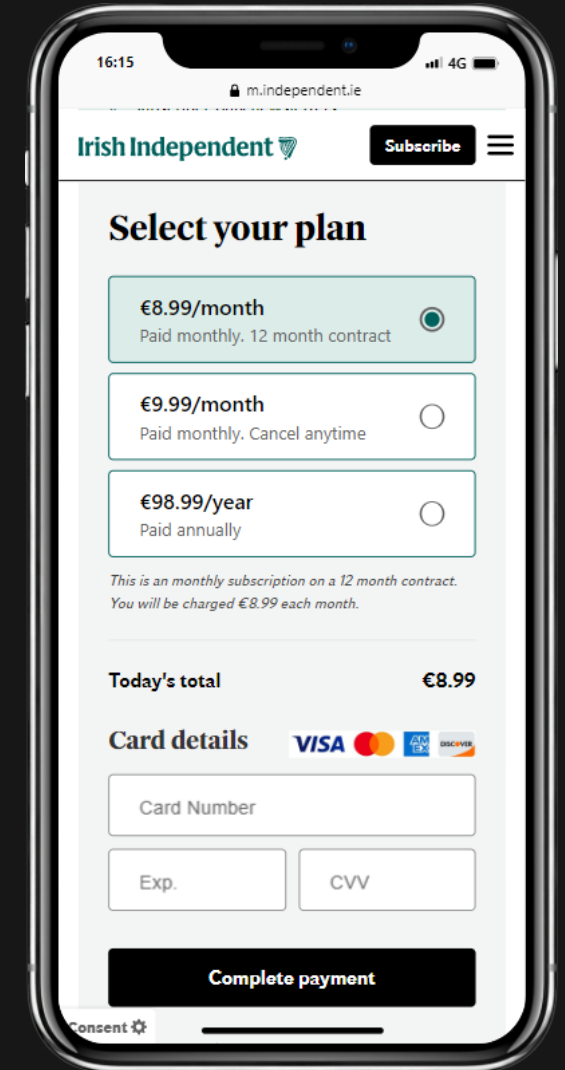
Results

In-article CVR increased by 20%
Shopfront CVR increased by 24%

BEFORE



AFTER



Churn model created to help focus resource

What we did

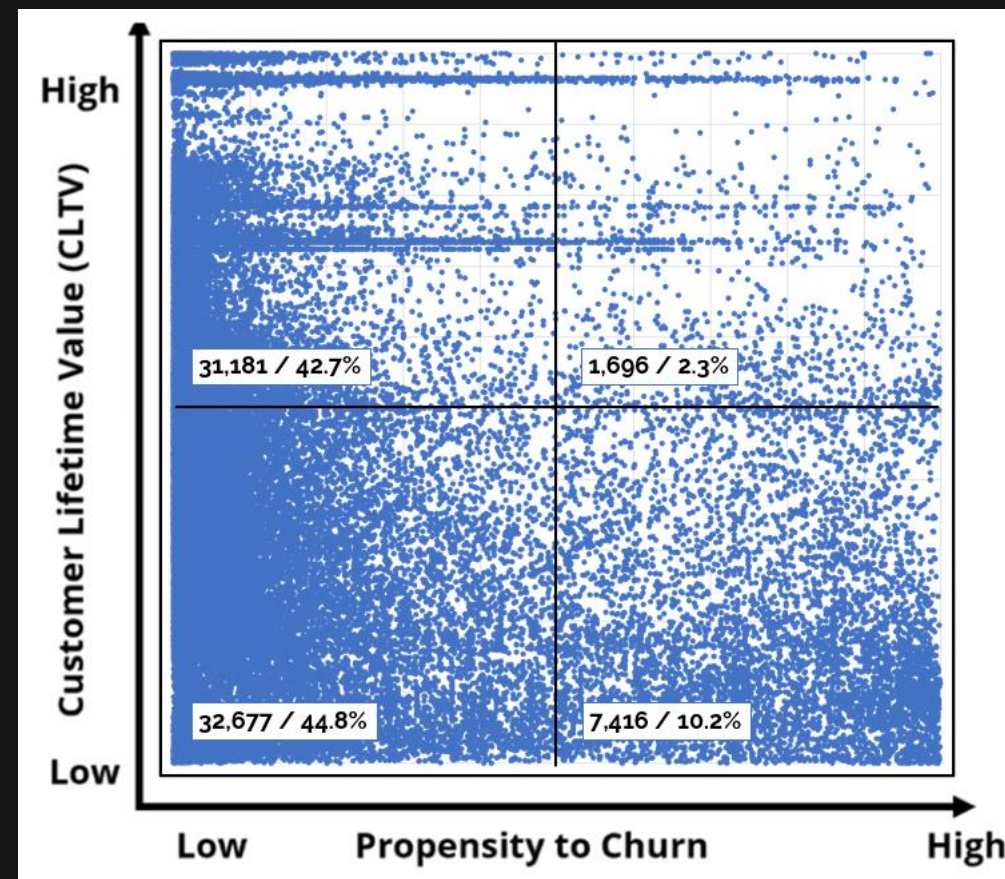
Each subscriber is given a score between 0 and 1, calculated based on behaviour.

Tenure and daily visit behaviour are very important indicators.

Results

'Check-in' phone calls added to our suite of retention levers.

Measured their decay vs. others with same score but not contactable – after 6 months there was a 15% point gap



Irish Independent rebrand

Background

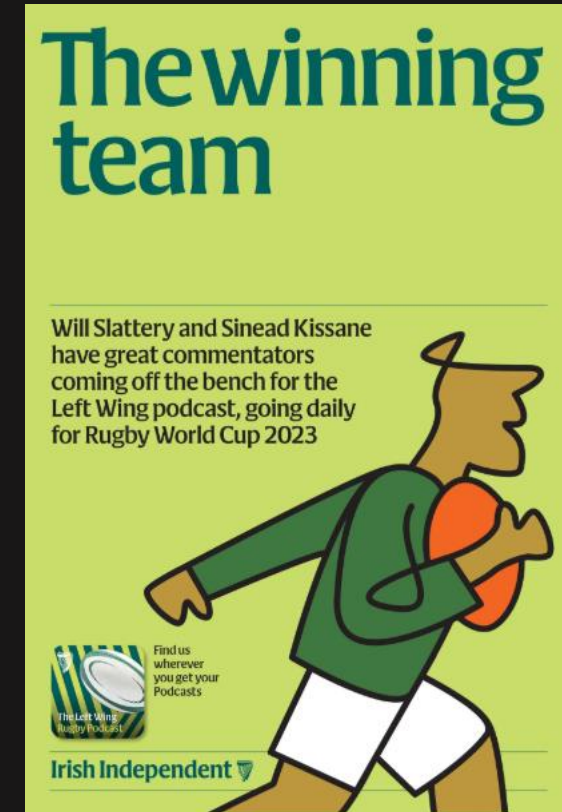
Too many brands and customers didn't know who we were.
We needed to create a single multi-channel brand.

Results

Now operate a multi-channel brand:

- National and Local
- Print and digital
- Listen, read or watch.

Second only to RTE (national broadcaster) when it comes to awareness of a news brand (IPSOS B&A July 2025)



Listening to
customers' feedback

Being Customer centric meant adding a Self-Serve Cancellation flow

Hypothesis

By allowing people to cancel as easily as they sign up, they are more likely to return again in the future.

What we did

Agreed to test a basic proof of concept using an existing survey tool we had available.

Results

No increase in cancellations, save rates improved YoY to >20% with more than 60% of subscribers now using this flow to cancel.

CES score on exit is high - proof that the higher the score the more likely people are to return in the future.



“

Ireland's story changes every day. You are part of a community that values understanding that change. We bring you reporting and analysis not just of what has happened but what it means - and how it will impact your life and the lives of those close to you. We depend on subscribers like you. We hope you will stay.

”

Cormac Bourke
Editor Irish Independent & Independent.ie

A handwritten signature of Cormac Bourke in dark ink.

Independent.ie 

Added Apple and Google Pay -> more efficient conversion flow

Hypothesis

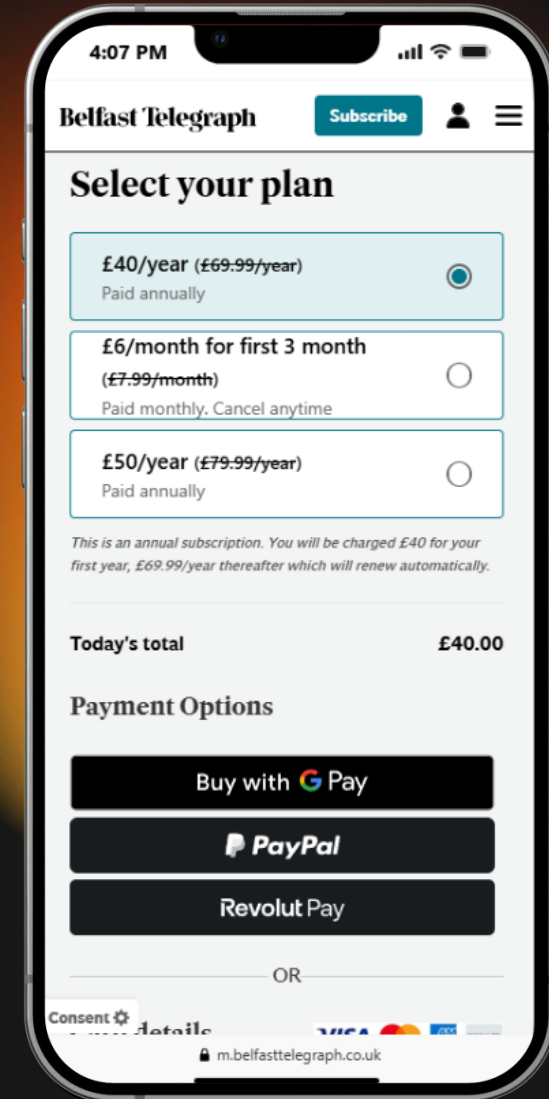
By adding Apple and Google Pay as payment options we were confident that we could increase the CVR %.

Our research indicated that Apple and Google Pay were becoming increasingly popular, in particular with a younger demographic.

At the same time more of our subscribers were having trouble paying due to Secure Customer Authentication (SCA) procedures.

Results

Increased **CVR by 5% points** and this now accounts for c.30% of all payments.



24-hour subscriptions

Hypothesis

By providing this offer, “one and done” subscribers will buy a 24-hour subscription meaning we will reduce churn from this type of reader.

Results

Popular with a younger, female and from people who had never registered before. However a small minority went on to subscribe.

During this month long campaign we could see that the 24-hour passes did cannibalise regular new subscriptions by c.33%.

Select your plan

€98.99/year
Paid annually

☐

€9.99/month
Paid monthly. Cancel anytime

☐

€4 for 24-hour access
One time payment of €4 for 24-hour access

☒

This is a 24-hour access day pass. You will be charged €4.00 which is non-recurring.

Today's total

€4.00

Questions?

