

welcome



objective and structure of the seminar

10:15 - 10:35

Luuk: Presenting Research Findings

Topic

clickworthiness of headlines

- Research questions
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion
- Audience interaction based on the following statements:
- Negativity is the most stable feature over all. More negativity?
- Should every headline be A/B tested?

10:35 - 10:55

Roy: Practical Application

Topic

headline testing at DPG Media

- Link to the questions raised by Luuk
- How do DPG titles handle A/B testing?
- What lessons are applied in practice?
- Examples of effective headlines and why they work
- How does DPG Media ensure that optimisation contributes to more online subscriptions? (relevant to the 'subscriptions' focus of the summit)
- Inspiration: blog by Gerbert as a guideline

10:55 - 11:15

Rutger: Demonstrating Tentacles/smartocto.ai

Topic

why is A/B testing important?

- What can be A/B tested?
- How is the winning headline determined?
- How does A/B testing work in Tentacles?
- Research with Omroep Brabant on AI-generated headlines
- How AI can assist in suggesting better headlines
- What's Next

11:15 - 11:30

Q&A and Discussion

- Questions from the audience
- Discussion on the future of headline optimisation
- Potential follow-up research and innovations in A/B testing

Luuk Lagerwerf

clickworthiness of headlines

Effects in national and regional news sites
in The Netherlands



this presentation

1. Research questions
2. Methodology
3. Results
4. Discussion



Which **news values** in headlines have **most impact** on **Click Through Rate**?

research
questions

Do news sites **differ** in **successful use** of **headline features**?

methodology



news values expressed

Most vaccinated still adhere to the covid-19 measures

consonance

continuing existing issue

Why Twitter calls Baudet's tweet 'misleading'

elite

important actors, events or institutions

The damage for the British royalty is extensive – very extensive

negativity

negative valence of headline words

The giggling girl with the frightning final shot

novelty

new or unusual

Girl (14) killed and thrown into Seine by ex-boyfriend

personalisation

emphasising personal / human aspects

This Dutch hospital has a robot surgeon

proximity

people or institutions close to presumed reader

'The more psychiatrists, the happier man', and more insights about happiness

impact

consequences are indicated

Masseurs and barbers busier than ever

superlativeness

indicating extremities of events

narrativity, super detail, quotes

Hardly anyone knew that Saïda Gropstra was illiterate. Then she took matters into her own hands

narrativity

at least two events in chronologically ordered structure

Ghost driver was fleeing from police with toddler in back seat

super detail

unnecessary but remarkable extra

Laughing on command with Els: 'Might work better than talking with psychologist'

quote-introduction

words pointing to content article

This Go Ahead
goalkeeper keeps the
zero more often than
Neuer and Oblak

Demonstrative
pronouns **without
referent in headline**

Three cultural
backgrounds, one
podcast: 'Showing
emotions? Nothing for
men, but we do it'

Personal pronouns
without referent in
headline

Where Schulting got
the strength from on her
golden 500 meters

Interrogatives **without
questions**

Hier (this is where) and
zo (this is how)

Specific words
pointing to content
article

results

Consonance

4,61

4,23

Proximity

4,35

4,49

Novelty

4,29

4,56

Personalization

4,24

4,6

Elite

4,24

4,6

Superlativeness

4,28

4,56

Narrativity

4,2

4,64

Super detail

4,08

4,76

Negativity

3,85

5

percentage CTR

absent

present

0

1

2

3

4

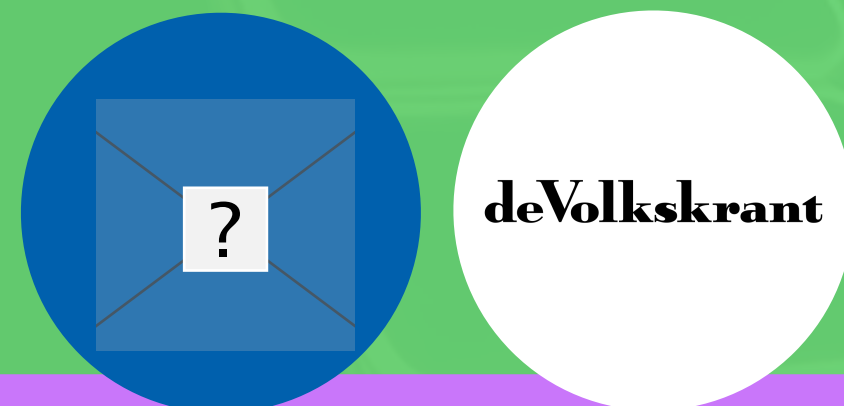
5

6

Conclusions Not every brand shows same values

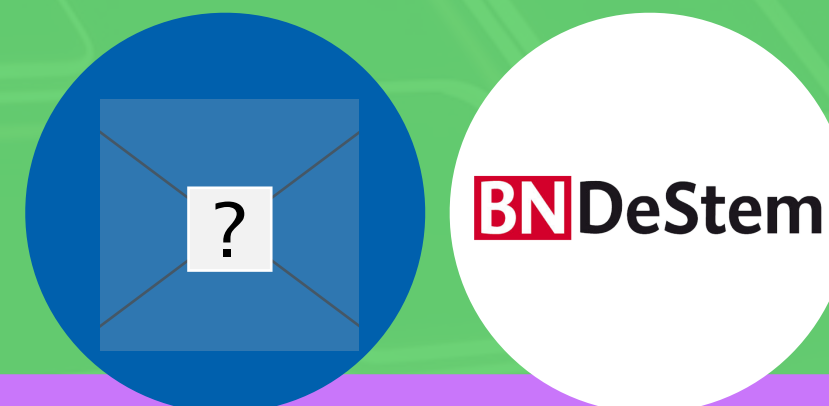
Interactions of features and news sites

Elite news site



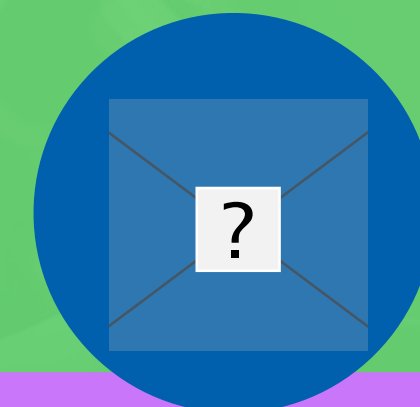
Elite positively affects CTR for **De Volkskrant** and **Eindhovens Dagblad**, but not for BN DeStem and Brabants Dagblad

Personalisation news site



Personalisation positively affects CTR for **Eindhovens Dagblad** and **BN DeStem**, but not for De Volkskrant and Brabants Dagblad

Narrativity news site



Only for **Eindhovens Dagblad**, Narrativity positively affects CTR

Conclusions Remarkable non-effects

High expectations
but **no effect** on CTR

Quote-introduction or citation
without source

Actively encouraged within
newsrooms

Pointing at content
article

Typical clickbait

Previous research always showed
effect

Except for Algemeen Dagblad:
negative effect

Not particularly tested?

More **specific**
research needed

Conclusions Every brand needs **unique focus**

Do quotes in headlines enhance CTR in A/B tests?

No, they don't; neither do questions or rhetorical figures

Do news sites differ in successful use of headline features?

Emphasis on Elite works for national news paper and Eindhovens Dagblad

Personalisation works for regional websites but not Brabants Dagblad
Focus on economic news (Brainport Eindhoven)

Narrativity works for Eindhovens Dagblad

Discussion

Negativity is the most stable feature over all.

More negativity?

Should every headline be A/B tested?



Roy Wassink

Headline testing @ DPG Media



Headline testing at DPG Media

- **13 News media titles** in Belgium and the Netherlands
- More than **9,000 tests per month**
- Almost **all key stories** are tested
- Writers provide articles with at least **three headlines**, online editors **test in Smartocto Tentacles**
- Headlines are tested based on **loyalty clicks**, not CTR





Color your story with 'super details*'

*A seemingly unimportant detail that adds color to the subject or event in the headline



**Schipper finally
retires from work at
the age of 84**

ROTTERDAM



**Skipper Wout finally
retires from work at
the age of 84**

ROTTERDAM



**Skipper Wout of the
Pancake Boat finally
retires at the age of
84**

ROTTERDAM



**Skipper Wout van de
Pannenkoekenboot
finally retires at the
age of 84, but
continues to do odd
jobs**

ROTTERDAM

A man with a beard, glasses, and a grey knit beanie is looking down at his smartphone. He is wearing a blue denim shirt and holding a white coffee cup in his left hand. The background is a blurred city street with cars and buildings, and a bright sun flare is visible in the upper right corner. A purple banner with white text is overlaid on the image.

name (especially ordinary) people



**Translator couple on
their income: 'We get
7.8 cents per word'**



**Translator couple
Manon and Pieter on
their income: 'We get
7.8 cents per word'**



**Refugee delivers
paper round to earn
some extra money,
reader provides new
bike**

ENSCHDEDE



**Aboubacar delivers
paper round to earn
some extra money,
reader Annelies
provides new bike**

ENSCHDEDE

A person with a backpack is seen from behind, looking over a city. The person is wearing a brown knit beanie and a dark jacket. They are standing on a stone wall, looking down at a city street with cars and buildings. In the background, there are hills and a church with a green roof. The text "never underestimate the power of a story" is overlaid on the image in a green box.

never underestimate
the power of a story

PREMIUM



UITGEZWORVEN

Despite serious illnesses, Tom (36) enjoys his life on the Costa Blanca every day with his family

'S-HERTOGENBOSCH

PREMIUM



UITGEZWORVEN

Tom (36) had a tumor the size of a melon in his stomach: when he was clean, he made a drastic decision with Daphne

'S-HERTOGENBOSCH

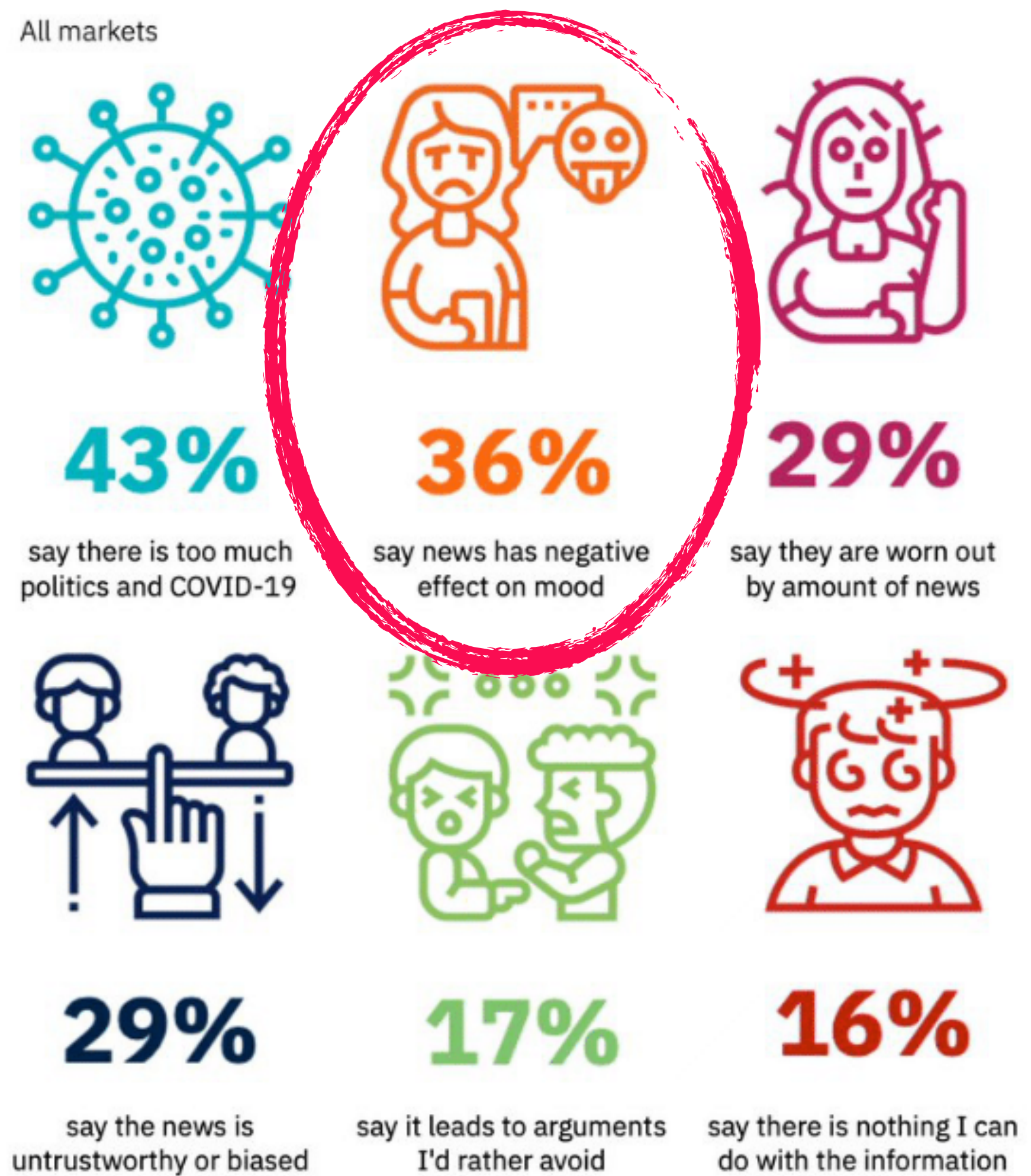
A woman with dark, curly hair is looking over her shoulder towards the camera. She is wearing a dark top and a tassel earring. The background is a bright, colorful office space with a man working at a computer in the background, various plants, and colorful sticky notes on the wall.

negative words get clicks

(but be careful)

Most common reasons for news avoidance

All markets



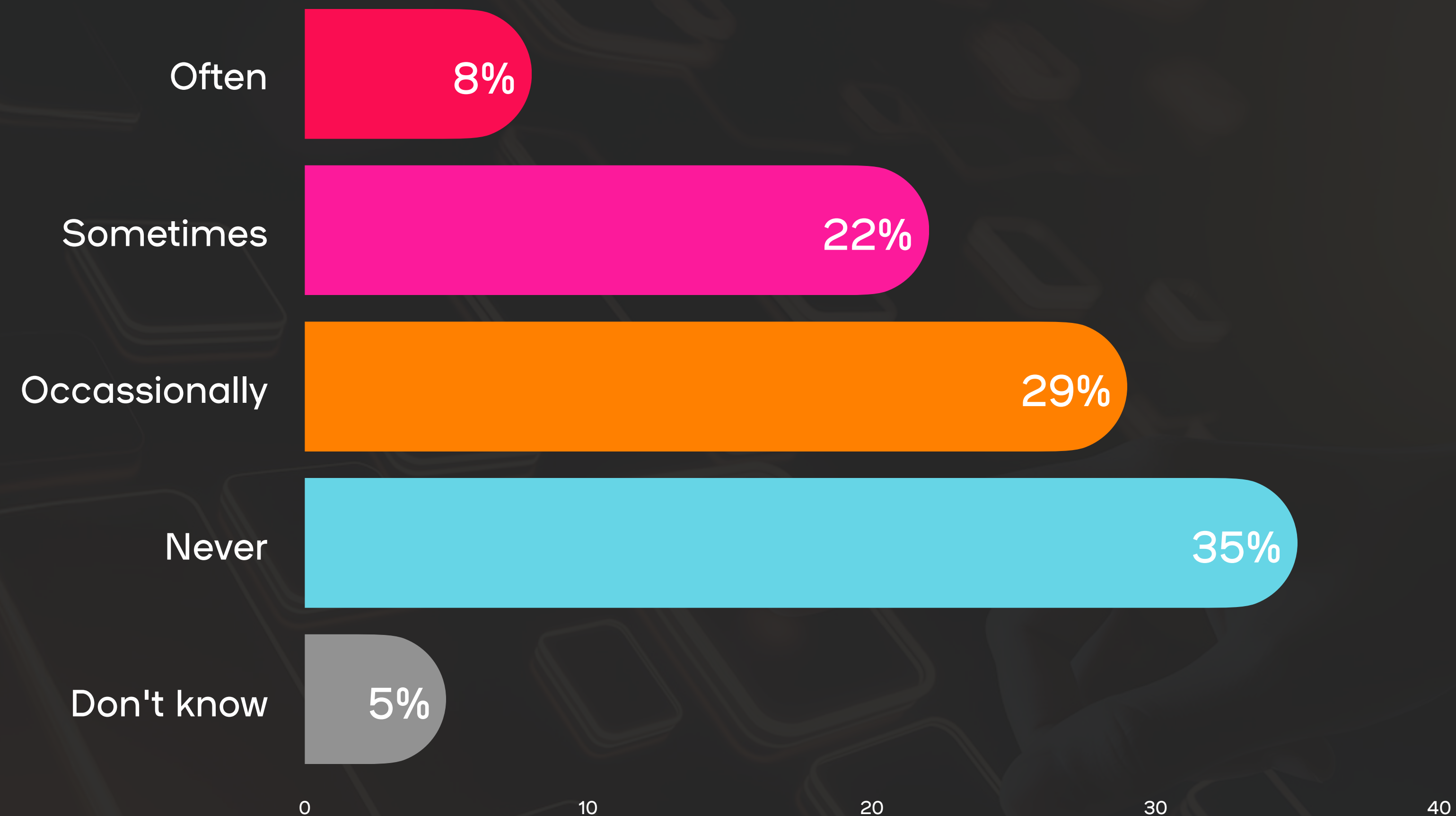
Why we don't **actively communicate** this outcome?

- Journalists have **known** this for a **long time** (and are using it every day)
- **Clicking** is **different** from reading
- **News avoidance**: short-term click versus long-term relationship

The Netherlands

Avoid the news

Reuters Digital News Report 2024
Data provided by Thomas Baekdal





Negative sentiment

Positive sentiment

Huisarts Ton (75)_geeft bij afscheid
waarschuwing mee: 'Gebruik van
genotsmiddelen in Losser is gigantisch'

1000

Volume ⓘ

254

Waarde ⓘ

1,090

Aantal woorden

Scrolldiepte

57.9%

72.6% vergelijkgroep

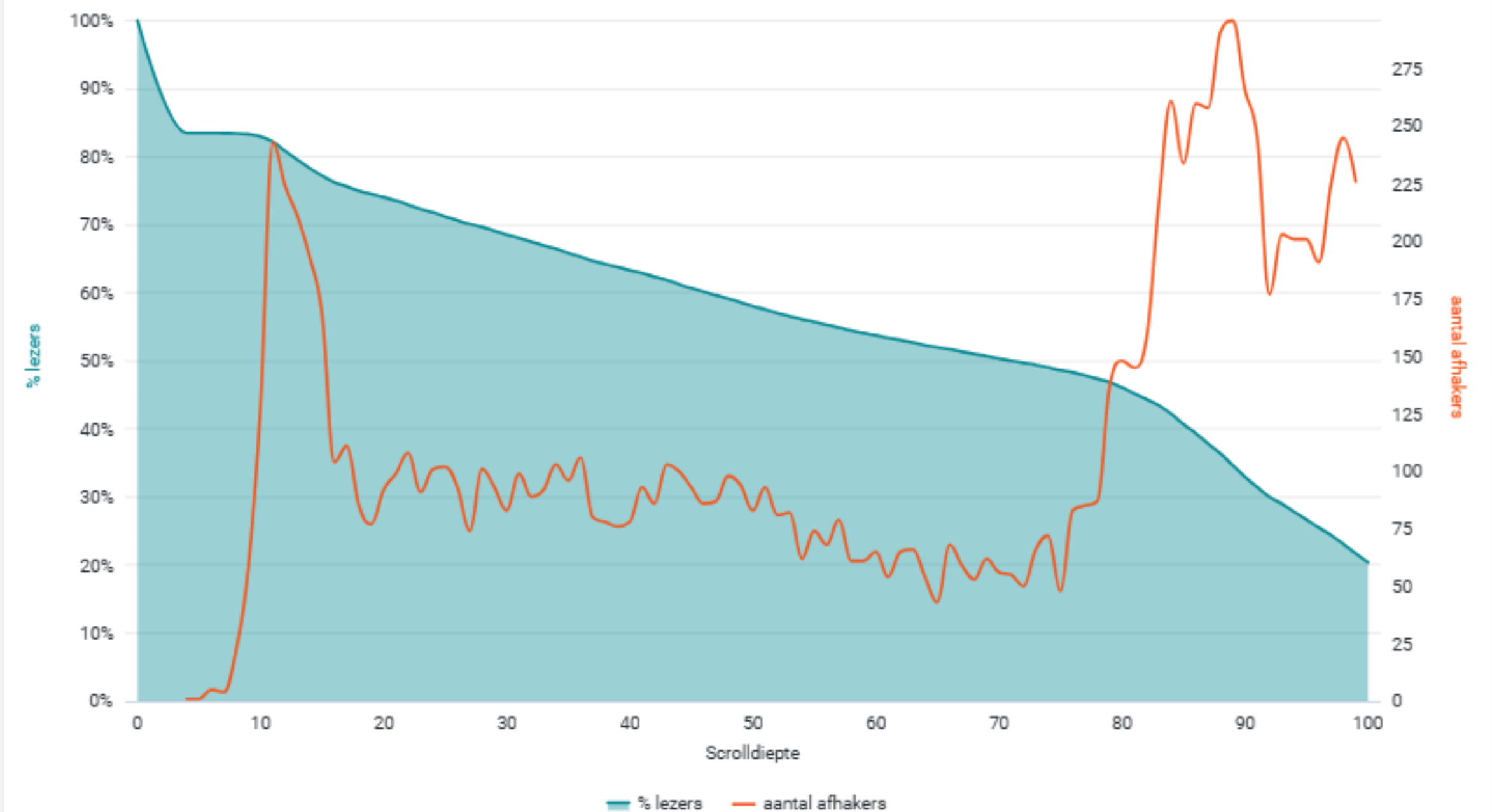
Leesduur

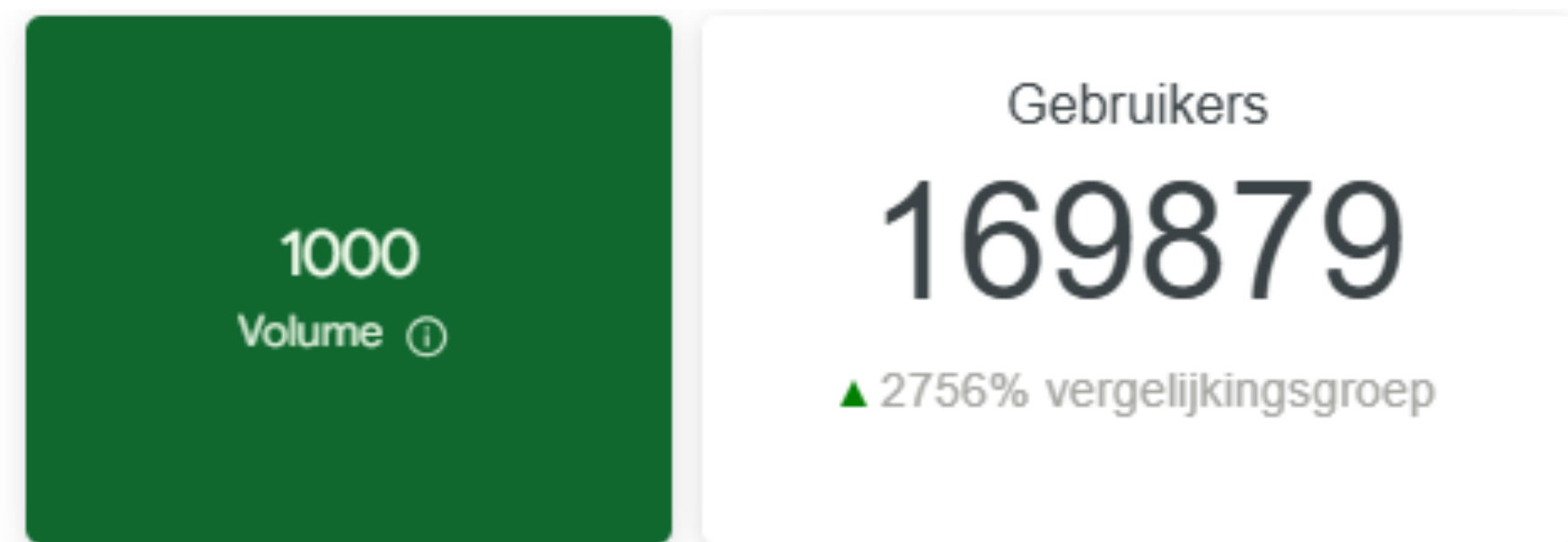
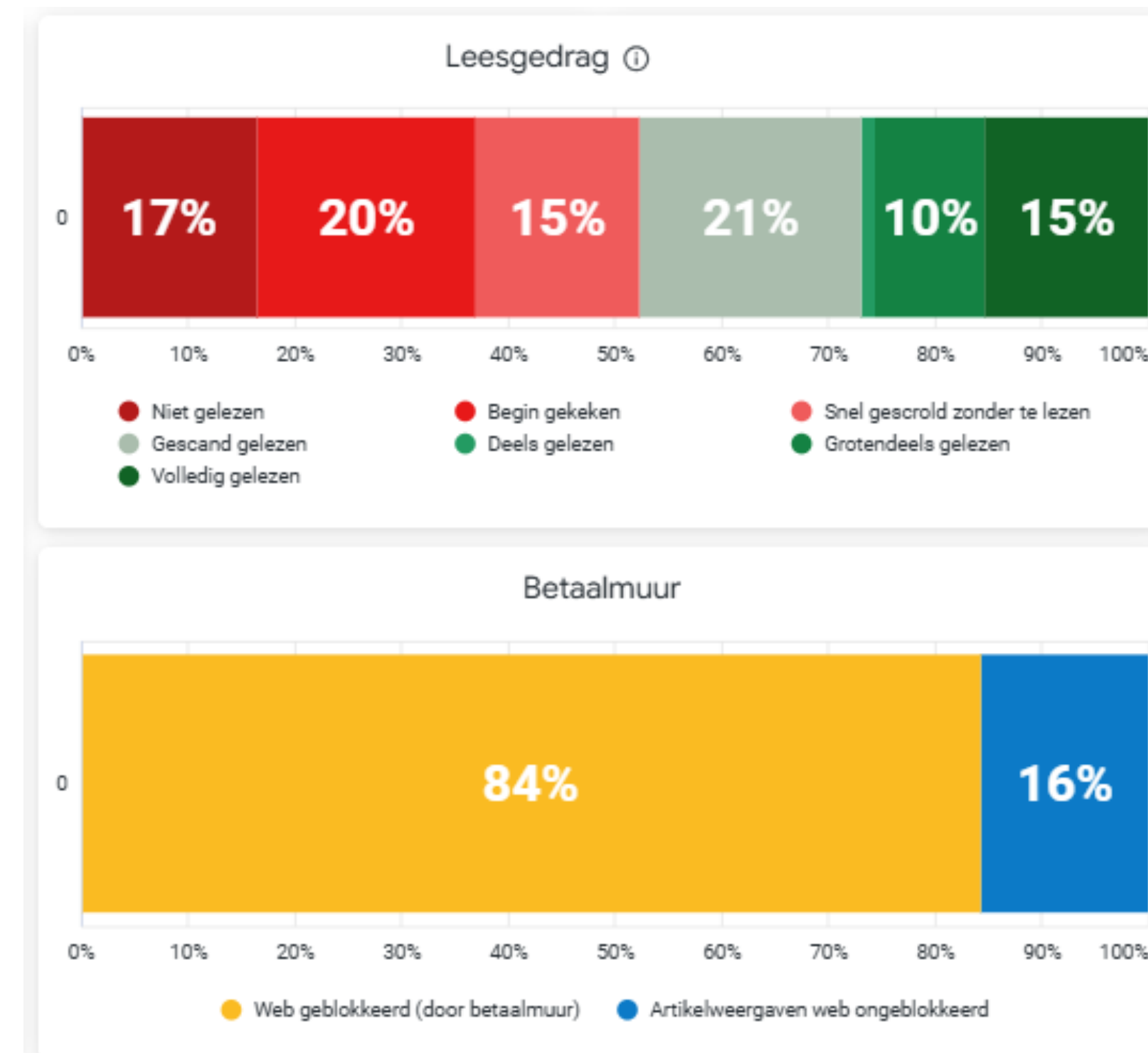
90sec

Verwacht ⓘ

151sec

Hoe ver scrollden mensen? En waar haakten ze af? (web) ⓘ





From **169,879** users to **27,180** users (past the paywall)
to **13,046** (not immediately dropped out) to **4,077**
people who actually read the article

Rutger Verhoeven

Why is A/B testing important?

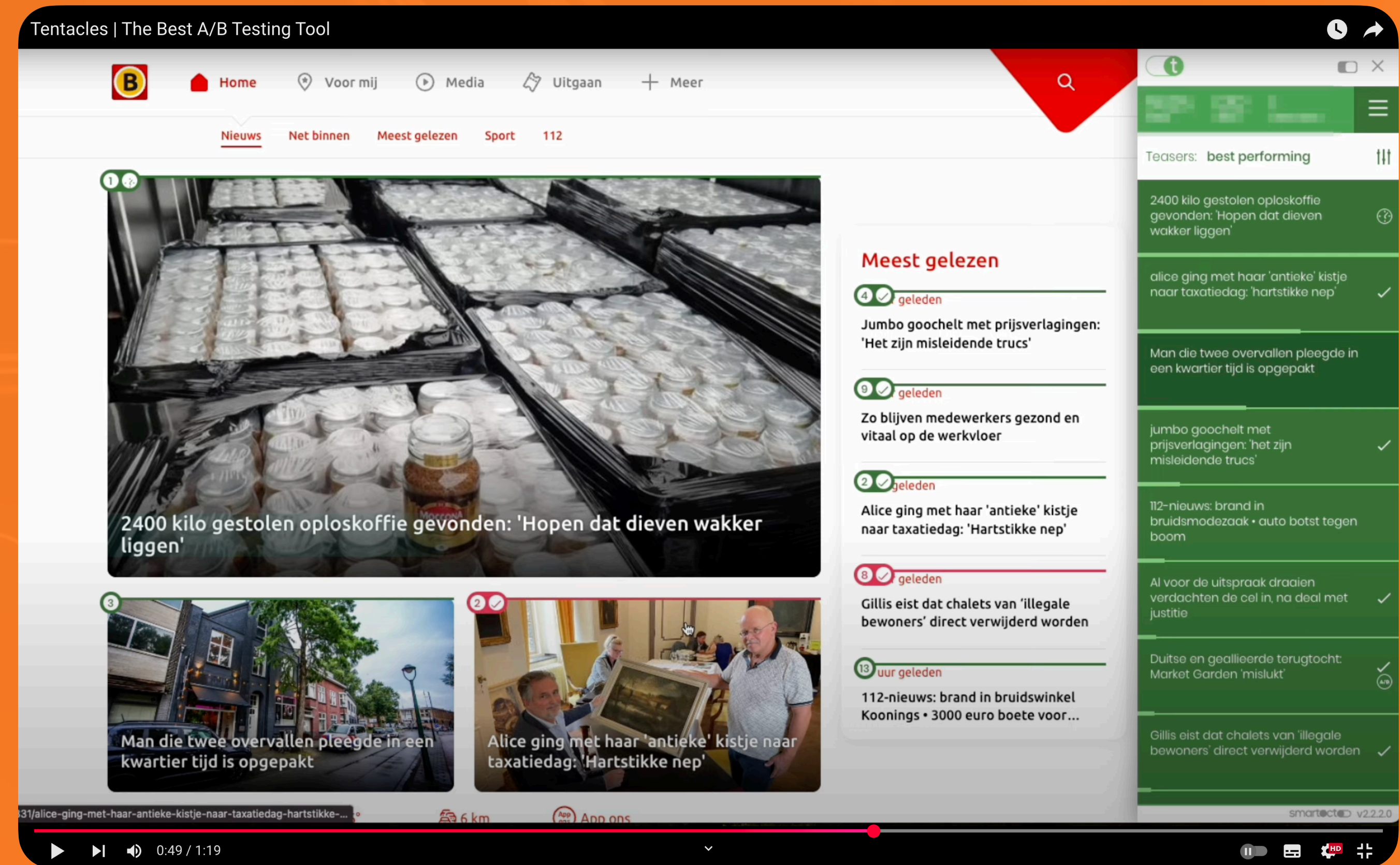
smart
octo

AB-testing with smartocto's tentacles



video
on tentacles

play video



with tentacles you
can **A/B-test**



images

leads

head
lines

How is the
winning headline
determined?

CTR & loyalty graph

Omroep Brabant is testing AI-generated headlines

video on
generative AI

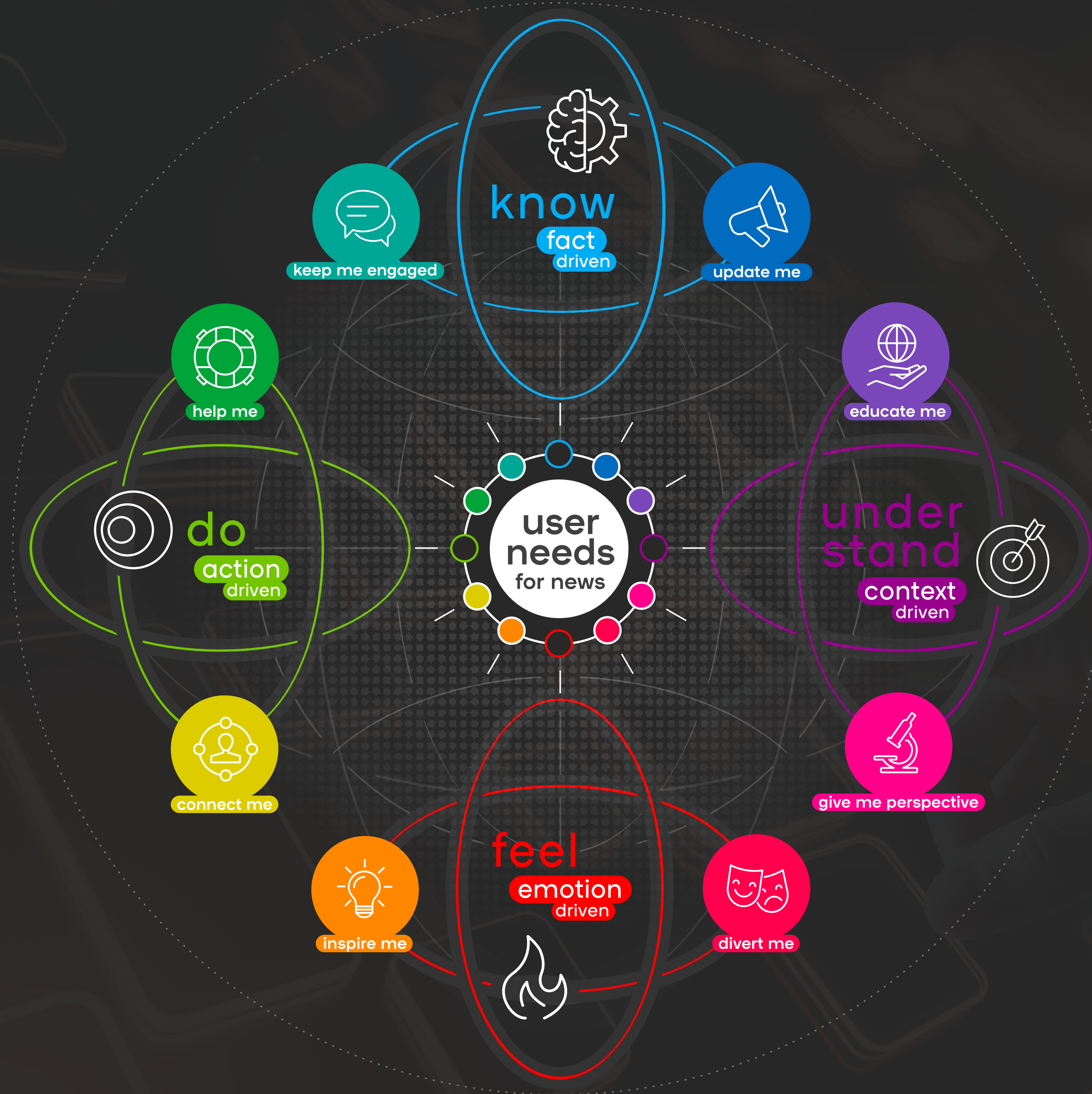
play video



What's **next?**



user needs model



video how AI helps with user needs suggestions

play video

The screenshot shows a news article on a Dutch news website. The article title is "Wendy legt zich niet neer bij beslissing justitie en ze is niet de enige". The article text discusses a legal case involving Wendy Struijk and the Dutch justice system. To the right of the article is a sidebar titled "Advice" which provides an AI analysis of the article. The sidebar includes a "Suggestions" section with several article recommendations. The sidebar also shows a "User need" section with the text "emotion driven".

Wendy legt zich niet neer bij beslissing justitie en ze is niet de enige

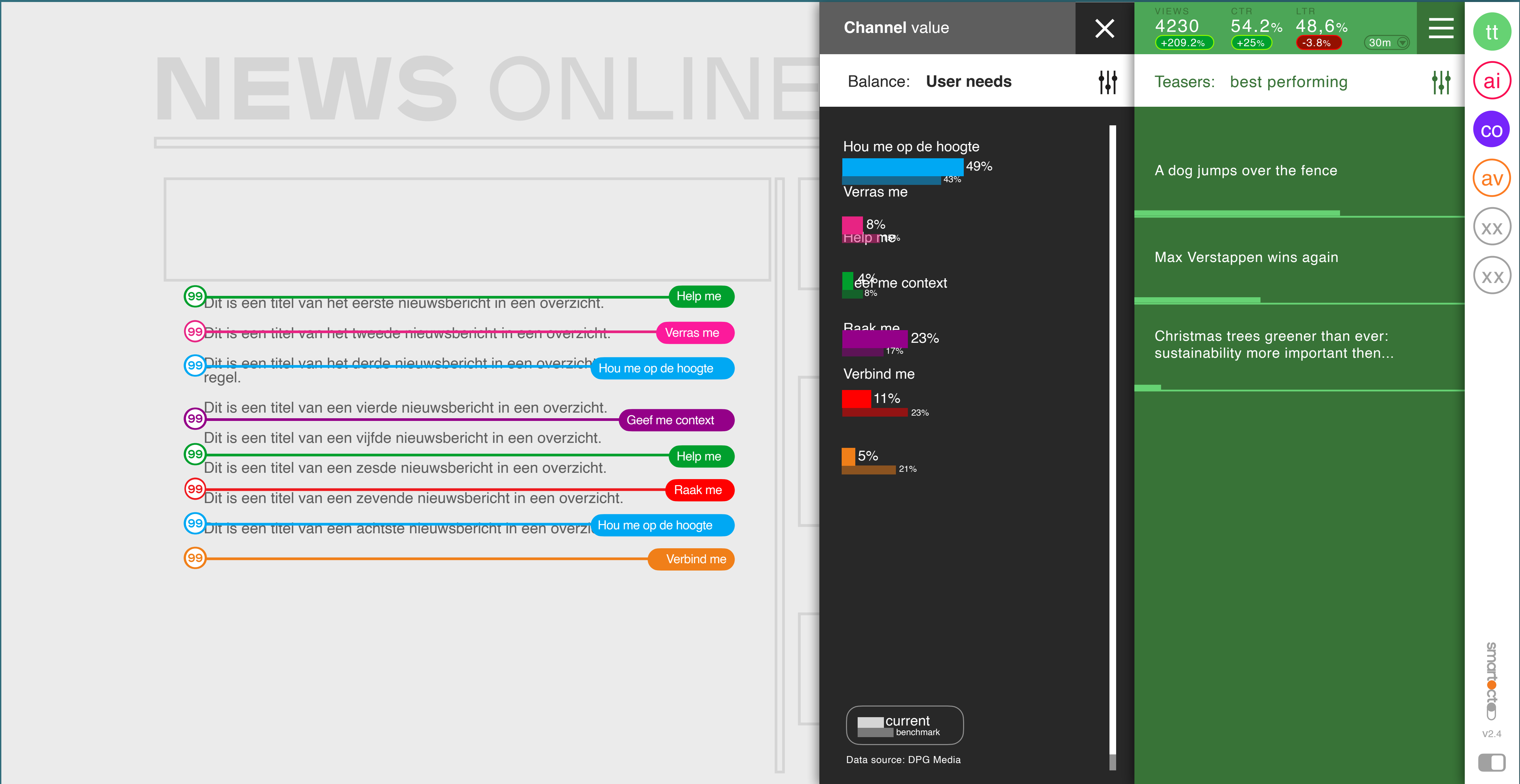
Vandaag om 11:30 • Aangepast vandaag om 13:09

Wendy Struijk (foto: Alice van der Plas) / Het Paleis van Justitie in Den Bosch (foto: Hans Janssen).

Justitie handelt kleine zaken regelmatig te onpersoonlijk af. Dat zegt onderzoeker Leonie van Lent van de Universiteit Utrecht. Zij deed onderzoek naar de zogeheten artikel 12 procedure, een klacht die mensen kunnen indienen als justitie een zaak niet voor de rechter wil brengen. Een

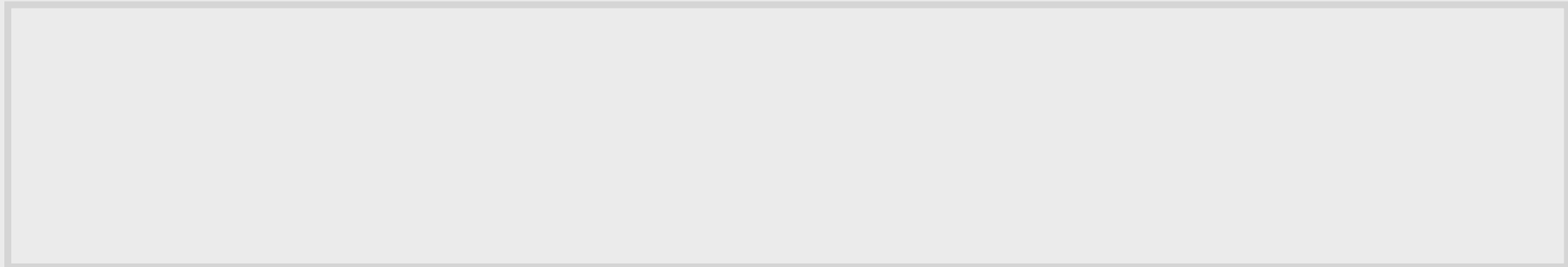
smartocto v2.4.7.0

3B Tentacles channel value user needs



3B Tentacles channelscore video usage

NEWS ONLINE



- 99 Dit is een titel van het eerste nieuwsbericht in een overzicht.
- 99 Dit is een titel van het tweede nieuwsbericht in een overzicht.
- 99 Dit is een titel van het derde nieuwsbericht in een overzicht en met een tweede regel.
- 99 Dit is een titel van een vierde nieuwsbericht in een overzicht.
- 99 Dit is een titel van een vijfde nieuwsbericht in een overzicht.
- 99 Dit is een titel van een zesde nieuwsbericht in een overzicht.
- 99 Dit is een titel van een zevende nieuwsbericht in een overzicht.
- 99 Dit is een titel van een achtste nieuwsbericht in een overzicht.

Channel value

X

VIEWS
4230
+209.2%

CTR
54.2%
+25%

LTR
48,6%
-3.8%

30m

tt

ai

co

av

xx

xx

smartocto

v2.4

Balance: Video usage

Teasers: best performing

42%

58%

video

no video

A dog jumps over the fence

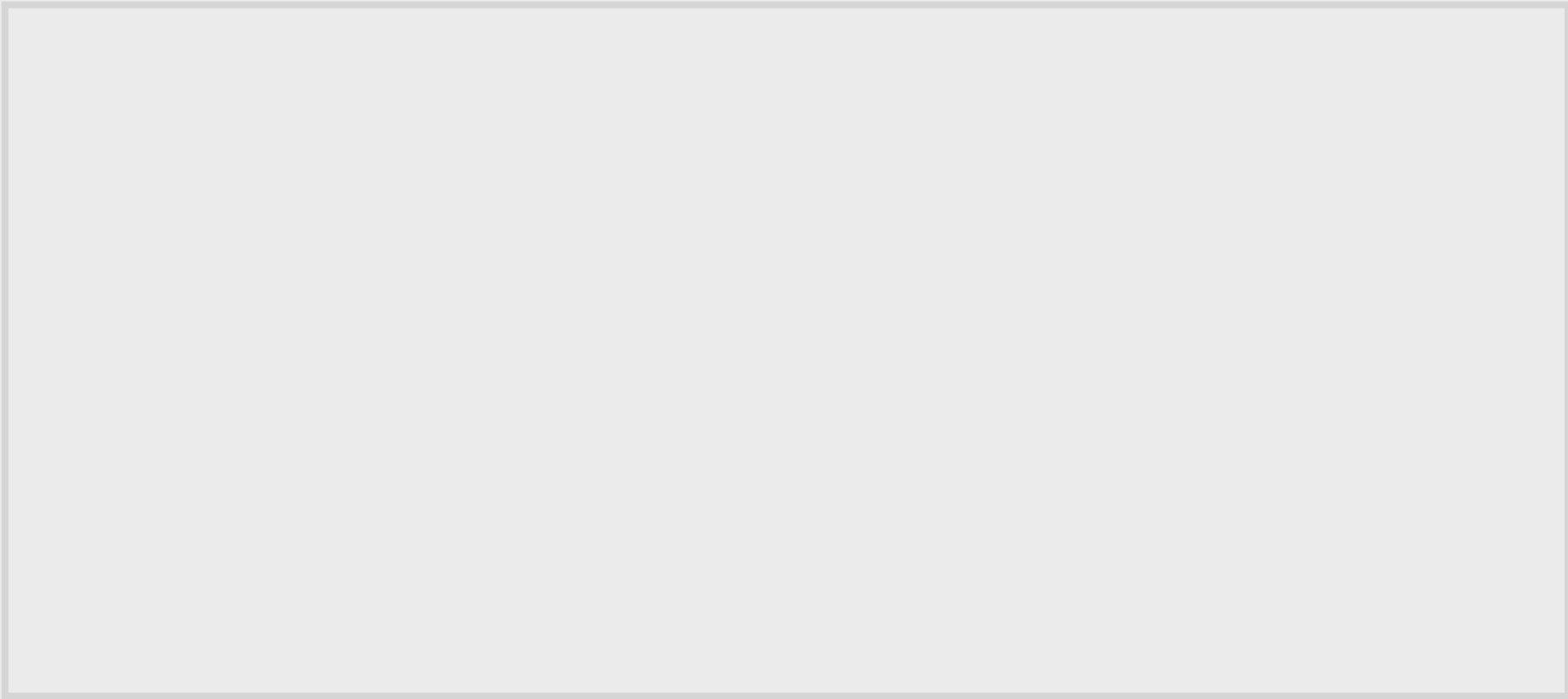
Max Verstappen wins again

Christmas trees greener than ever:
sustainability more important then...

Data source: DPG Media

Tentacles article value

NEWS ONLINE



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Sed urna justo, lacinia id tincidunt a, faucibus in nulla. Maecenas et mi odio. Nulla iaculis, dui et consectetur hendrerit, est tellus ultricies libero, ac sagittis enim sapien a massa. Maecenas porttitor magna eros, ut accumsan lacus tincidunt eu.

Integer congue laoreet lacinia. Quisque ut arcu sed ipsum commodo faucibus eget in tellus. Phasellus a tristique nibh. In auctor ante sit amet nulla porta, quis faucibus quam molestie. Cras nulla augue, tincidunt ac dolor at, consectetur iaculis arcu.

Interdum et malesuada fames ac ante ipsum primis in faucibus. Pellentesque accumsan nisl non nulla mattis, eget venenatis justo porta. Nunc sit amet tellus tempor, volutpat dui eu, pulvinar sem. Vestibulum vitae tortor a quam aliquam iaculis. Nullam consequat ante et mi

Article value

X

VIEWS4230+209.2%

CTR54.2%+25%

LTR48,6%-3.8%

30m

tt

ai

co

av

xx

xx

smartocto

v2.4

Value:

Teasers: best performing

17

details

Volume

12345678910

Reach172650

Leeskwaliteit

12345678910

Scroll depth22%

Interactiescore1:190

Attention time

12345

Conversions18

Active logins9333

Suggestions

Dit verhaal krijgt bereik en wordt uitgelezen.

1m

hide

done

Niet veel mensen klikken naar dit verhaal, maar

55m

hide

done

Data source: DPG Media

There are no teasers.

This page is not set up for position optimisation, but you can perform a teaser-test.

Q&A discussion

- Questions from the audience
- Discussion on the future of headline optimisation
- Potential follow-up research and innovations in A/B testing

thank you

