FT STRATEGIES

AI and the Future of Content Strategy

15 July 2025

Opening remarks

Joanna Levesque
Managing Director
FT Strategies

FT STRATEGIES

FT Strategies is the consultancy arm of the Financial Times

Our Mission: To be the trusted partner for a sustainable future and positive impact for the publishing industry.

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FT Strategies is a specialist consultancy advising publishers on how to address strategic challenges and create more financially viable businesses.

FT Strategies works collaboratively with other FT divisions, leveraging the FT's best-in-class knowledge and **combining it with the methodology and rigour of a consultancy-experienced team.**

We help media publishers grow and innovate

Business Strategy

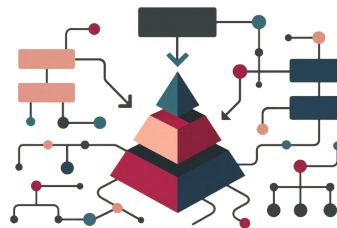*Prioritise investments that deliver a sustainable future*

- Strategic Planning & North Star
- Revenue Diversification
- Portfolio Strategy
- Market and Competitor Analysis

Commercial Growth
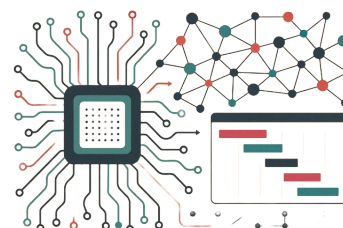
Grow your audience, revenue and engagement

- Audience & Content Strategy
- Access Model & Paywall
- Pricing, Promotions and Bundling
- Premium Advertising & Formats

Operational Transformation

Transform how you work to build a more efficient organisation.

- Organisational Redesign
- Newsroom Transformation
- Cost Management
- Print Optimisation

AI, Technology & Data

Implement new technologies effectively

- AI-content for Testing
- Vendor selection
- First Party Data Strategy
- AI Roadmaps

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Globally, we have worked with 800 organisations across the news, media and entertainment industry on their digital and strategic challenges

THE WEEK

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

RCNi

Google

CORRIERE DELLA SERA

la Repubblica

The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

National Theatre

ADWEEK

EL PAÍS

vocento

Público

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DER SPIEGEL

PEI

Expansión

EL MUNDO

V&A

DC THOMSON

DAILY MAVERICK

euronews.

THE STRAITS TIMES

EducationWeek

if International Fund for Public Interest Media

St PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

"Learning from the experts at FT Strategies has helped us develop our subscription strategy, introduce a culture of continual experimentation and encourage cross-departmental alignment."

Ross Wilmot
Head of Consumer Marketing
The Independent

"First time I've worked with consultants that already know the business before they come into the situation and work in this impactful way. You're changing consulting for the better."

Philippe Colombet,
Chief Digital Officer
Bayard

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Helping publishers to avoid the Kodak Moment

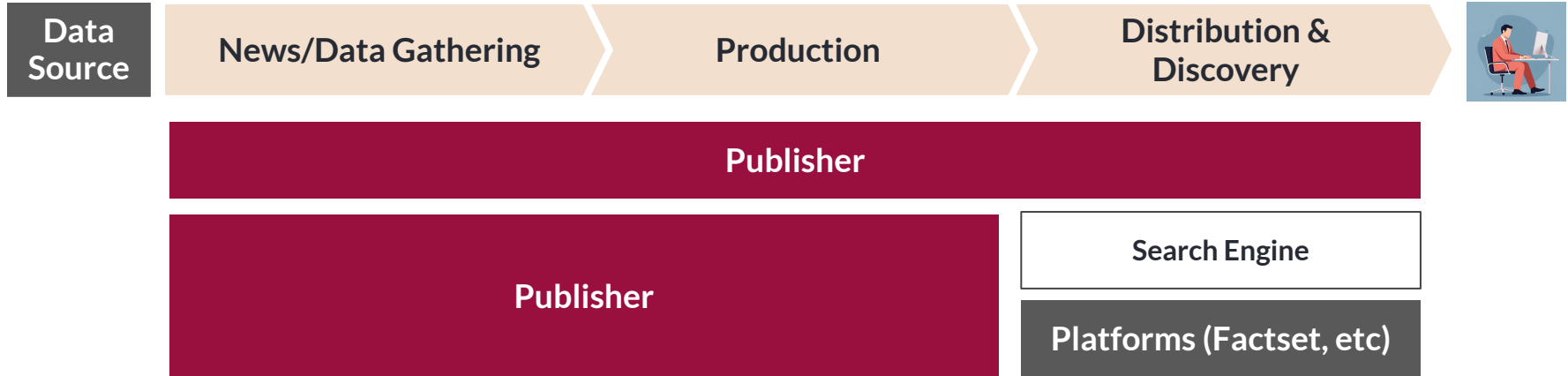# Introducing NewsCaaS... News Content as a Service

- A unique new partnership between FT Strategies, NoahWire and HBM Advisory, designed to demonstrate a way for publishing to take advantage of AI in a responsible way.

- End-to-end content service, combining automation, editorial expertise and strategic planning and monetisation to identify high-potential topics, gather insights from thousands of sources, and produce fact-checked, human-edited content.

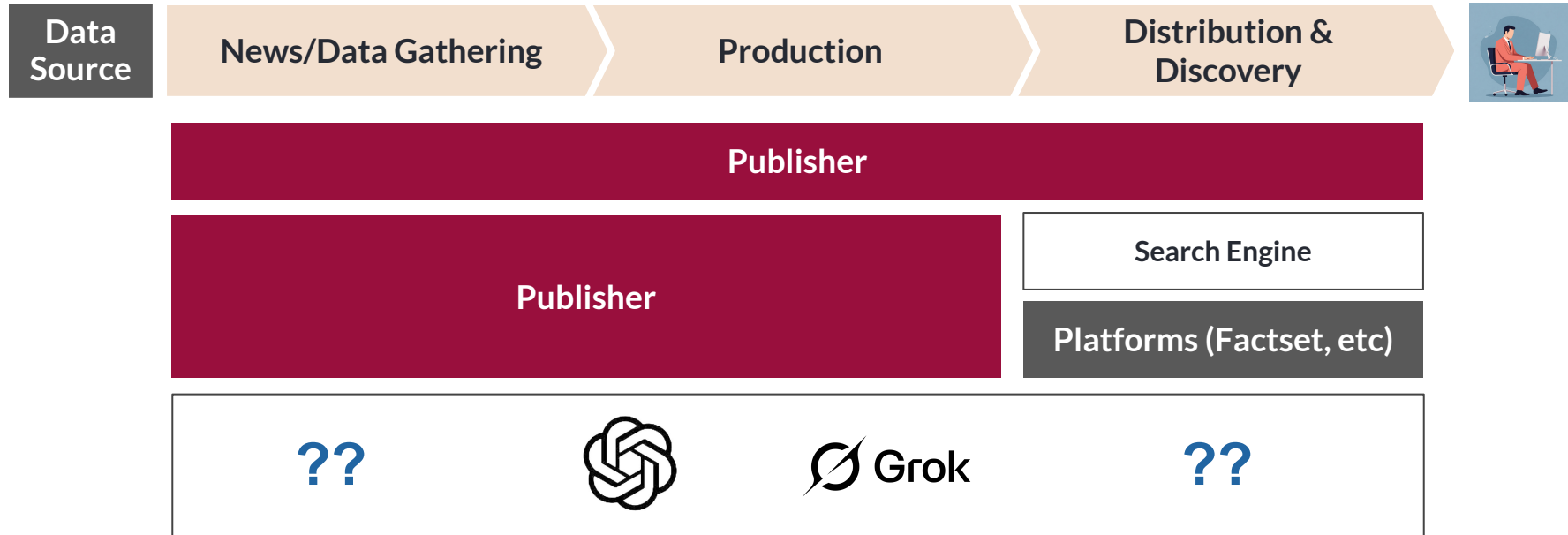# Specialist and niche publishing in the era of AI

Adriana Whiteley
Director
FT Strategies

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Publishers could control end-to-end delivery to end users, and the impact of internet platforms was mitigated by subscription models

Data Source	News/Data Gathering	Production	Distribution & Discovery

Publisher

Publisher	Search Engine
	Platforms (Factset, etc)

… Now AI enables new business models in the value chain

Data Source	News/Data Gathering	Production	Distribution & Discovery

Publisher

Publisher

Search Engine

Platforms (Factset, etc)

??   Grok   ??

Some processes in the publishing chain are more affected than others

AI Impact on Process			
No effect	Support/Enhance	Automate	Enable New

Data Source	News/Data Gathering	Production	Distribution & Discovery
	Interviewing	Opinion/ Interpretation	Events
	Ideation	Style/ editing	Personal Advisory
	Fact Checking/ Validation	Illustration/ Design	Comment Moderation
	Surveying	Writing/ Drafting	Discovery/Search Optimisation
	Translation/ transcription	Summarisation/ Repurposing	Audience Analysis
	Data analysis	SEO/ content optimisation	Scheduling/ Targeting
	Media Monitoring	Metadata generation	Social Media Amplification
	Data Scraping	Proofreading	Chatbot

AI is reshaping content production and audience expectations

Current AI Capabilities

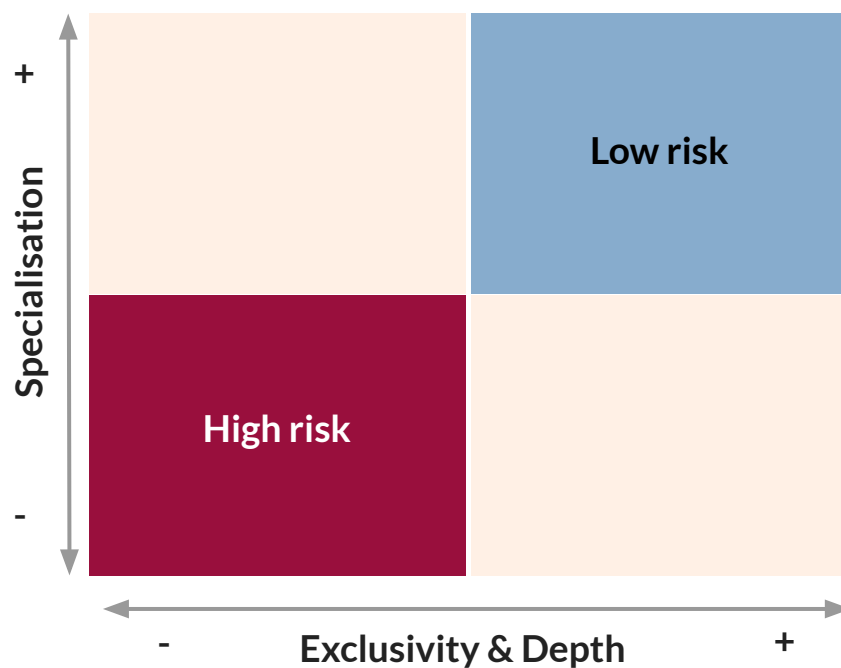|	
Cheaper content creation, in multiple formats	**Multi-language content processing**
Automated data collection and analysis	**Generative interactivity**
Real-time prediction and adaptability	**Automated personalisation**

Immediate Market Implications

- Increased competition from AI-driven content producers

- Raised expectations from audiences expecting tailored, interactive and responsive experiences

- Collapse of search as a referral source, as it moves towards AI

- Proliferation of inaccurate content putting a premium on trust and verification
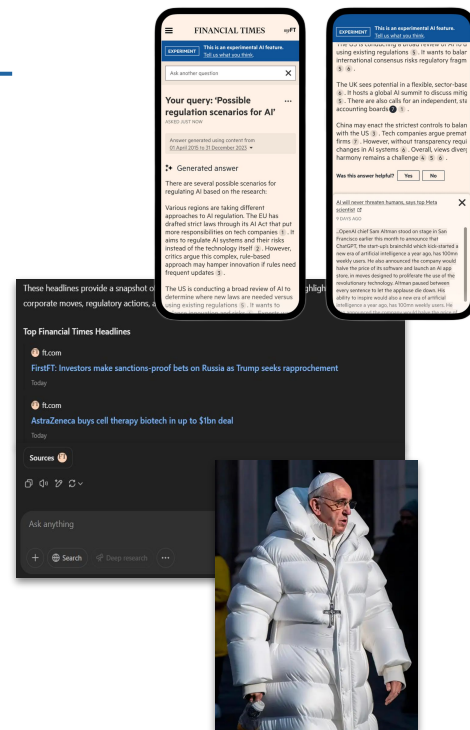
Note: Image of Pope Francis is AI-generated (source: https://www.newscientist.com/article/2366312-should-you-be-worried-that-an-ai-picture-of-the-pope-went-viral/)

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The most vulnerable content is generalist, available from public sources

- Information **serving general needs,** available from single structured **public data sources, is the most vulnerable.**

- **Information** which is **exclusive, where trust is essential, or is serving specific needs** - will be harder to replace.

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# Two non-exclusive lines of defence: building exclusivity and niche products

Invest in product and UX, address niche needs

Invest in deeper analytical content, building trust, human interaction

Specialisation

Exclusivity & Depth

\-   +
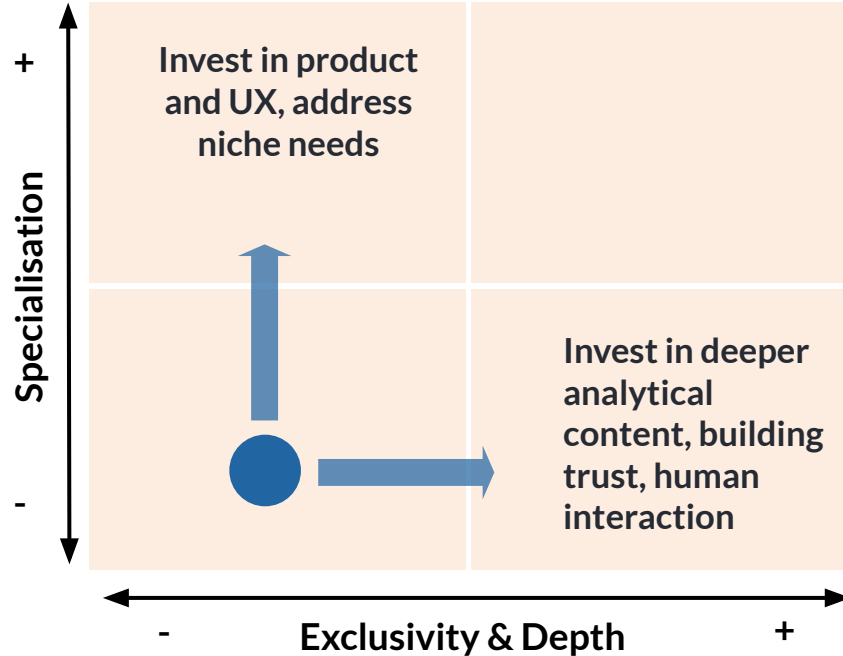
- AI enables scalable creation of hyper-niche coverage and products that serve specific needs and interests.

- Niche content tends to drive higher engagement and strengthen the collection of **first-party data.**

- Specialisation also enables **more personalised relationships** with audiences.

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AI and new 'content engines' can support new monetisation opportunities

From static publications...

... to AI-assisted niche curation
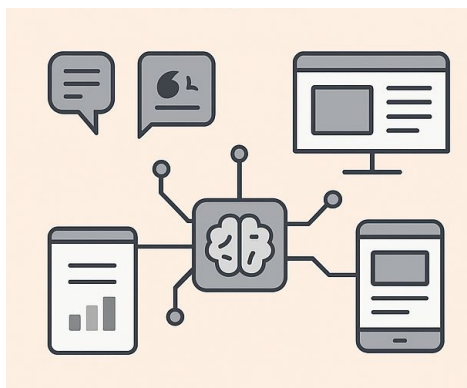
Monetisation Opportunities

Targeted events/ roundtables	'Platform' Access
Higher CPMs	Paid communities
Specialised Products	Interactive Reports

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Building specialised products requires knowing your audience and being creative. Editorial and Product need to work together

Example: Content tagging can be used to assign, e.g.:

Keywords

User needs

Topics

Places

People

Political Bias

- Tagging is essential for content classification, and meta-tagging supports connections between content **and personalisation**

- The FT uses a **hybrid model** combining suggestions from AI and journalists. Hybrid tagging leads to more tags, **better diversity and higher visibility**

- Clustering can **identify high-performing** content areas / themes at scale and unlock high-value **audience segments**

- Publishers can apply this to identify **strategic niches** - clusters of content with high engagement that could become their **next specialist product**

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Three steps to increase product and content resilience:

1

Ensure BAU is benefiting from AI

- Ensure your teams are AI-fluent and establish AI governance processes
- Review your workflow to identify and prioritise opportunities

2

Identify your audience's' needs

- Analyse your data, survey audiences and brainstorm concepts
- Build understanding of user behaviour to personalise, enhance and upsell
- Understand opportunities for sponsorships and partnerships

3

Rethink your product portfolio

- Explore new ways to package data, repurpose archives, enable discovery
- Build "expert" profiles to strengthen trust and direct relationships
- Enrich offer with events/interaction to build community and relationships

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NewsCaaS: FT Strategies, HBM Advisory and NoahWire can support publishers experimenting with niche products and content

Define Opportunity	Launch	Manage Feeds	Analytics	Monetisation
Identify/size content and audience niches with high potential	Set-up editorial guidelines and creative design	Set-up/adjust content prompts, select content	Set evaluation metrics and testing parameters	Advertising/ sponsorship packages
Define value proposition, formats	Tech integration	Produce AI article feeds	Monthly audience/ engagement reports, editorial feedback	Licensing structure/model
Define monetisation/FPD model, ROI	Define workflows, publication cadence, meetings' schedule	Editorial oversight/ fact checking	Conduct and assess A/B tests	Implement subscription packages

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The newsroom reimagined

Ivan Massow
Founder
Noah Wire Services

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The newsroom reimagined
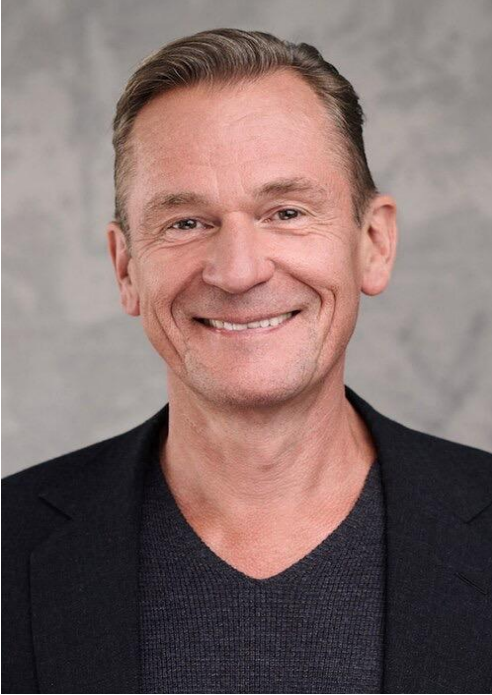
"What journalists should focus on is seeing something nobody else sees… being at a place where nobody else is and most importantly, investigative journalism, in-depth research to find out something that was not supposed to be found out."

Mathias Döpfner
Axel Springer   *(For everything else, there's Noah)*

noah

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Set your search criteria – any subject, any type of news, from B2B to B2C, to mainstream coverage

- We're a registered search engine, fully compliant with all relevant rules.

- We scan millions of RSS feeds and press releases, partner with premium news suppliers and build feeds relevant to your requirements.

- We never access content behind paywalls and we clearly mark our bots.

18:48

noahwire.com

noah   Log in

Create any feed. On any subject. From any source. Instantly.

Articles on Middle East shipping trends, covering trade routes, port developments, logistics innovations, and the impact of geopolitics and trade agreements on regional maritime activity.

Create Feed →

"We verify every sentence so you can focus on the 1% they hoped you'd overlook."
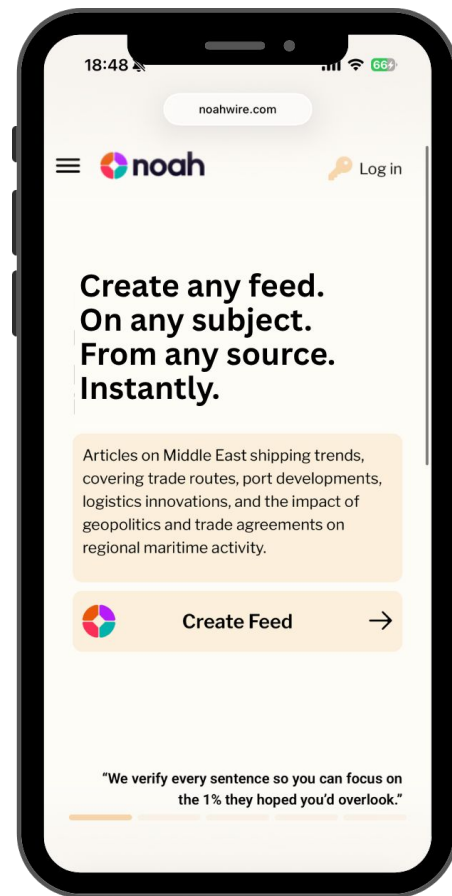
Stories drop into your feed the moment we find them, a real-time, personalised stream built like social media, but powered by verified news.

Our system tracks stories and delivers updates as they unfold – just like a live newsroom.
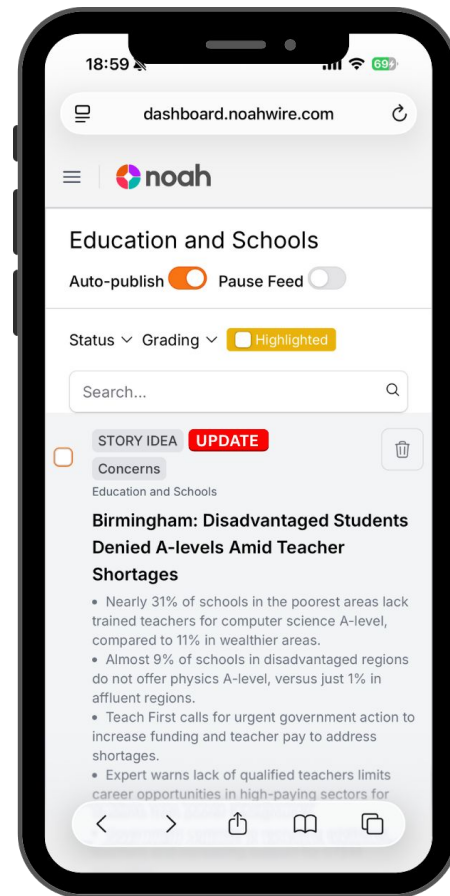
Unlike AI, every single line is verified

- Noah builds stories from the ground up with inline citations or a reference map for easy re-purposing.

- This isn't scraped content:
each article is constructed from sourced data.

- All quotes are properly checked and attributed

- Everything is fact-checked and scored
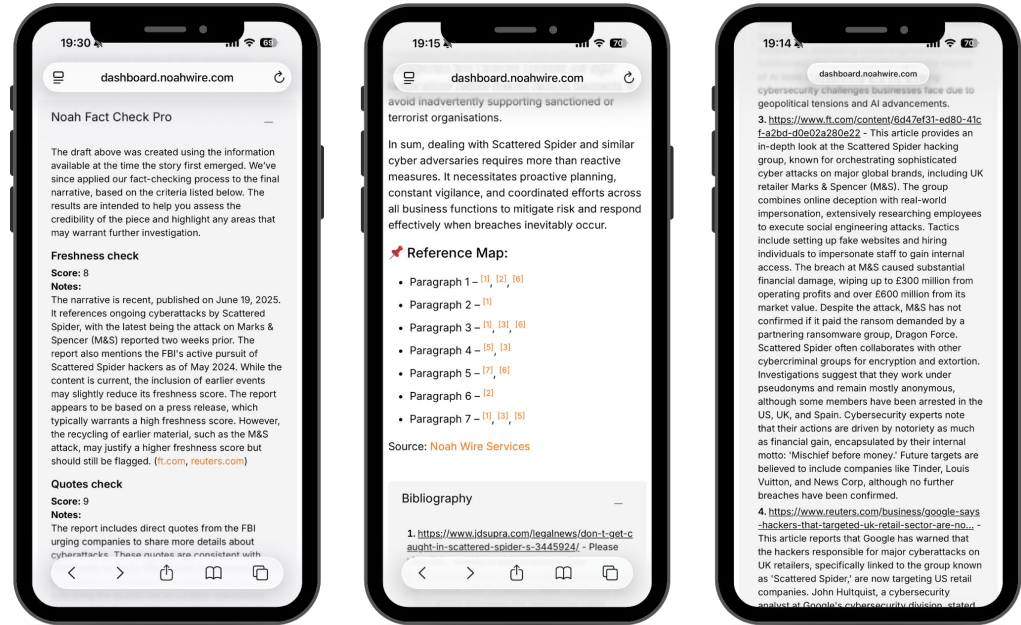
Add content style-guide for a bespoke output

- Noah integrates your style guide into every output.

- Your tone. Your format. Ready to write.

- Saves editors' time.
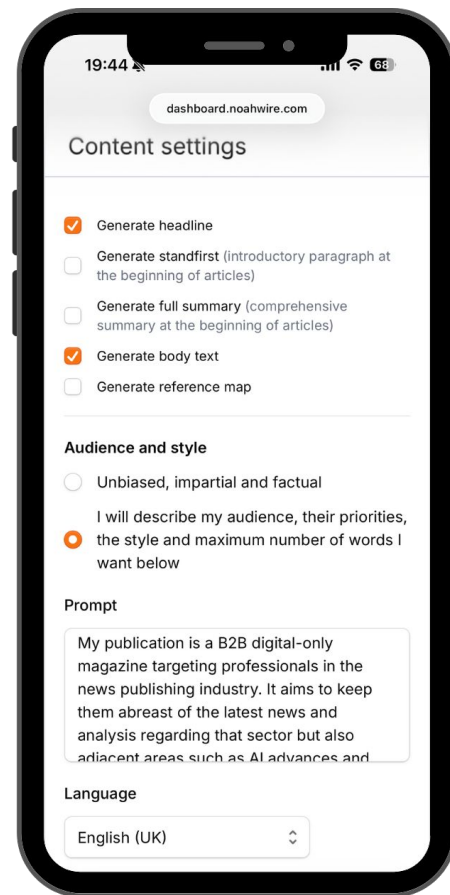
Feeds can be launched in seconds

Start a vertical this afternoon, on any subject.

- Cycling communities
- Car magazines
- Dog nutrition newsletters
- Green energy
- Personal finance
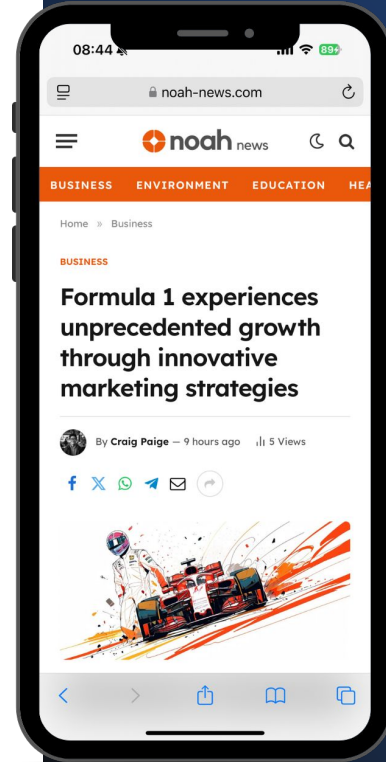
In a world after zero-search, the funnel flips — publishers need to monetise their brand through new products, newsletters, services and bundles to maintain leadership.

"Publishers must act quickly to develop zero-search strategies for engagement - by rolling out active community strategies."

INMA

You need to use AI to beat AI. Do this, and your staff will very quickly stop seeing AI as a threat and start realising that this is just the beginning of something amazing.

noahwire.com

Log in

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BUSINESS

East and Gulf Coast port strike enters critical phase

By Newsroom

A major strike involving thousands of dockworkers along the East and Gulf Coasts of the U.S. has now entered its third day, with analysts warning of severe disruptions to the supply chain.

04

Magazines, intel, and newsletters made easy

Boost output or save costs by 500%. NoahWire automates routine content creation, allowing teams to focus on deep reporting and investigations. Create high-quality magazines, intelligence reports, and newsletters effortlessly.

Try it →

> # What does the publisher of tomorrow look like?

Alan Hunter
Co-founder
HBM Advisory

Michael Brunt
Co-founder
HBM Advisory

HBM / ADVISORY

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Who are we?

HBM Advisory is a consultancy that works with publishers worldwide to accelerate their editorial and business transformations

WSJ
Wall Street Journal

Harvard Business Review

THE HINDU

MIT Technology Review

TIMES MALTA

THE SCOTSMAN

The Indian EXPRESS

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Work as one team

- 'Church and state' is out of date

- Share goals of serving audiences and building sustainable revenue

- Flatter hierarchy that rewards curiosity, adaptability and empathy

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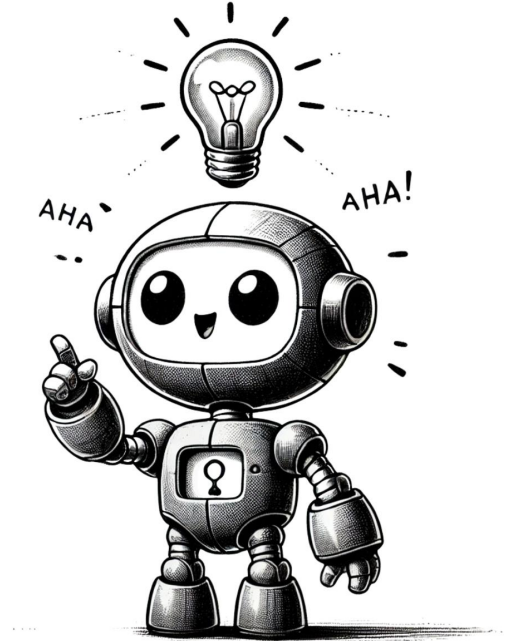
Audience-first journalism

- ***Everyone*** is a niche publisher now

- Obsess over what users actually want – not what the newsroom thinks they want

- Use audience needs frameworks and data to guide every decision
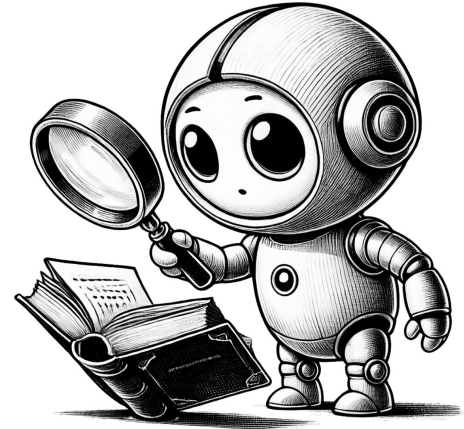
Quality over quantity

- Every story must compete for attention on its own merits

- Publish fewer, smarter, more distinctive pieces that stand out

- Respect the reader's limited time and reduce news fatigue

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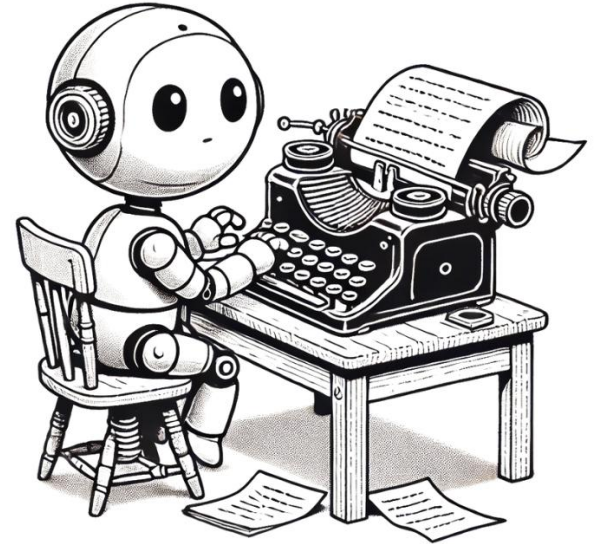
Multi-modal and personalised

- Create journalism that reaches users on the **platform** they want in the **format** they want and at the **time** they want

- Embrace audio and video as core journalism
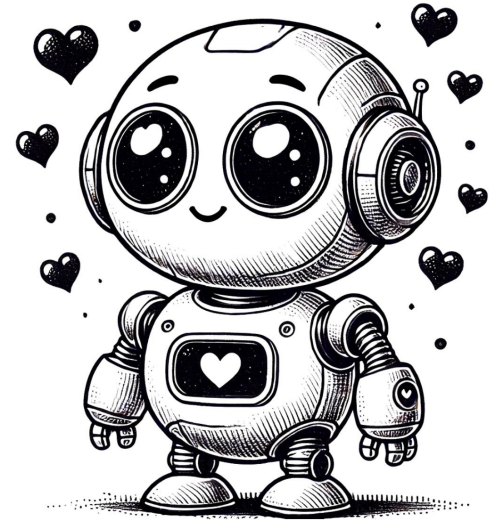
Embrace technology early and boldly

- Use generative AI for production, distribution and personalisation

- Dedicate teams to experimenting with emerging technologies

- Create products that people can use easily through voice and AI tools

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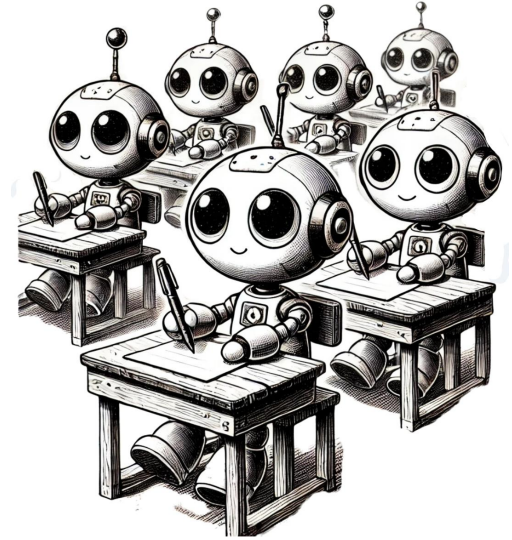
We have 'eaten our own dog food'

Tomorrow's Publisher is a publication we built with Noah to serve our industry*

- Stories: 2-8 a day
- Staff: one
- Hours: 30 mins a day

*and promote our business ;)

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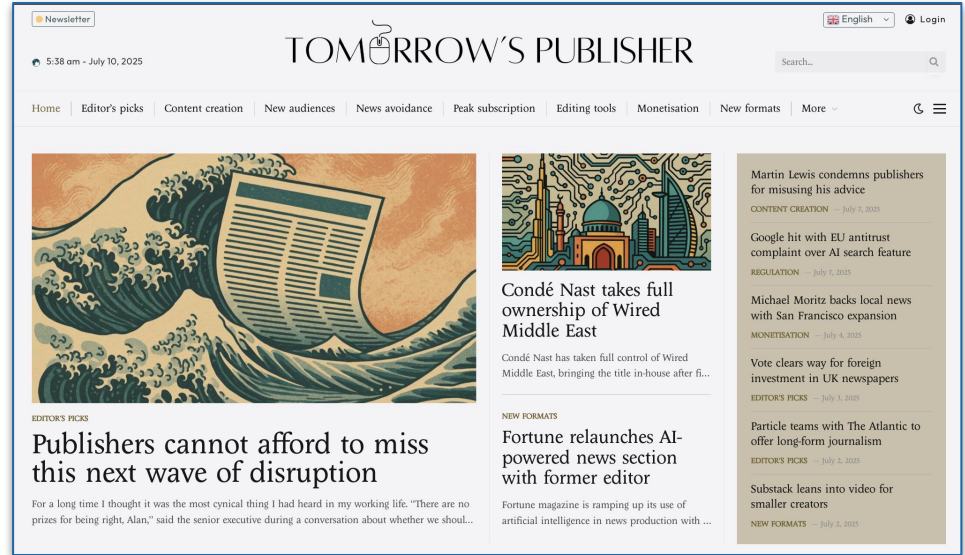
… and kept doing it

We are now producing content for other companies, associations and publishers

We are delighted to be part of NewsCaaS

- We are proud 'power users' of Noah

- We look forward to bringing our 'human' editorial rigour and expertise to NewsCaaS:

  - Curation
  - Editing
  - Fact-checking
  - Brand tone and alignment

HBM / ADVISORY

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Introducing NewsCaaS

News Content as a Service

FTStrategies.com/NewsCaaS