ezy insights ®

WHITE PAPER

EFFICIENT NEWS GATHERING

Newsrooms spend hours every day finding relevant stories to cover. Automation saves time and improves the quality and consistency of news gathering.

Table of
CONTENTS

Challenge

> **"We spend up to 3 to 4 hours on news gathering per person every day before we can start to publish."**

We wrote this white paper "efficient news gathering" to share what we've learned over the years when working with leading companies like Schibsted, Le Parisien, Metro, RCS and many others. We'll focus on news gathering, the first step in the editorial workflow.

Breaking news, viral stories and newsworthy events spread across the internet within minutes. Journalists can spend up to 4 hours per day on news gathering online. With automation, IT and artificial intelligence that time can be cut down significantly – to leave more space for creating better content.

We'll go through various news gathering practices and their pros and cons.

> *"I OFTEN KNOW WHAT I NEED TO WRITE ABOUT EVEN BEFORE I GET TO THE OFFICE."*

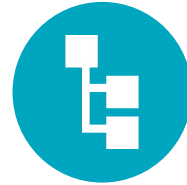**Challenge**

Five most common approaches to news gathering

| MANUAL NEWS GATHERING | NEWS & RSS FEEDS | LIST BASED FILTERING | CATEGORY BASED FILTERING | KEYWORD FILTERING |

Different approaches to news gathering

Newsrooms are going through trials and tribulations as audiences, content, distribution and payments are going digital. An industry with decades of legacy and history changes slowly for many very good reasons.

Digitalisation of newsrooms and publishing is on-going. It is posing challenges and opportunities for newsrooms on strategic, business model and operational levels.

This white paper focuses on news gathering. Regardless of your strategy and business model news gathering is still a core part of the editorial workflow for most newsrooms and journalists. We'll discuss the pro's and con's of five most common approaches to news gathering on digital, including both websites and social media platforms.

Analysis

Manual news gathering

A typical and still very common approach in many newsrooms is to manually track a set of websites: usually competitors and large publishers from the same domain nationally and internationally.

This approach is manual and based on "having 50 tabs open in the browser". It is easy, cheap (no software and license costs but obviously high labour cost) and very prone to errors. It is difficult to know what to write about if you don't see what your audience is engaging with on social media, the first indication on what is interesting to your audience.
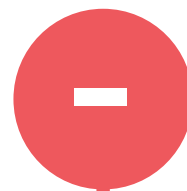
+

Easy to set up

Minimal training required

No software license costs

−

Time consuming & error prone

High labour cost

Easy to miss emerging stories

You don't know what you don't know (new sources, niche publishers, content from atypical sources)

You miss out on the social media engagement and potential for website traffic

We regularly encounter even large and established newsrooms doing news gathering manually. It is surprising to discover how many publishers are not yet taking advantage of the opportunities created by automation.

Analysis

📶 News & RSS feeds

The next step in the maturity curve is tracking RSS feeds and news feeds. This approach is often combined with manual news gathering and "having 50 tabs open" in the web browser.

RSS feeds and news feeds automatically provide a steady stream of content which is then manually tracked for interesting, relevant and emerging stories.

+

- Easy to set up

- Minimal training effort required

- No software license costs

- Automation is used to feed information to journalists

−
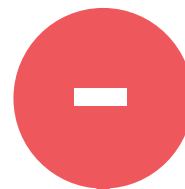
- Time consuming (high labour cost)

- Easy to miss emerging stories

- You don't know what you don't know (new sources, niche publishers than might come up with interesting content)

- You miss out on the social media engagement and potential for website traffic

- Feeds are difficult to visualise or make actionable

RSS and news feeds are widely used in different types of newsrooms at the moment. We think RSS feeds are important and valuable, but they are not the cutting edge of technology or even close to best practices.

Analysis

List based filtering

Many newsrooms discover stories with the help of "list based filters". With this approach, one creates and maintains a list of known publishers and looks at their content. Automation is then used for delivering interesting content from these specified publishers. Lists help journalists track emerging stories from known sources.

There are articles describing how this approach is important and why people outside the social media teams should participate in the effort of managing lists of known publishers.

This approach does enjoy some of the benefits of automation.

+

- Easy to set up
- Automation delivers a lot of information
- No software license costs
- You'll see social media engagement of content

−
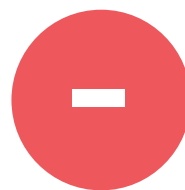
- High training effort required for non-specialists using these tool
- High labour cost
- Time consuming to manage and maintain lists of known publishers
- You don't know what you don't know (new sources, niche publishers than might come up with interesting content)
- You'll miss webshares (a significant part of the engagement)

The main limitation of this approach is that many of the tools don't track webshares, which are now even more important than earlier due to Facebook's algorithms changes. Read our analysis for details and recommendations.

Analysis

Category based filtering

Category based filters are the most accessible way of discovering content that is engaging the public in different general media verticals.

Instead of relying on individual users to have a list of sources, all content within a given category is surfaced automatically. Creating Category based filters is the perfect starting point for any type of news gathering. At any point, a user is able to see exactly what content is picking up attention and engagement in a variety of different areas including Sports, News, Politics, Entertainment, Viral and Television.

Read about how Jerusalem Post uses categories to find emerging stories.

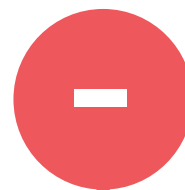**+**

- Easy to set up
- Tracks both known and unknown publishers
- Social media engagement of content in realtime
- Track webshares
- No need to maintain lists of known publishers

−

- Commercial products with subscription fee
- Some training effort required

Combined with filter options such as 'Over Performing', you're able to see which articles and content are doing better than average, no matter the size of the page.

Analysis

Keyword filtering

Keyword based filters are the next step in news gathering and automation.

Keyword based filters are created by individual journalists (or for journalists) around specific themes like national politics, sports or events like the Olympics, Oscars, or Presidential Elections. Keyworks are used for showing relevant content regardless of the sources. By using keywords (instead of a list of publishers) one can see trending and emerging stories around these subjects.

Save time on news gathering. This approach has enabled newsrooms to save up to 50 % of time spent on news gathering. TV3 Catalunya, for example, has been able to cut time spent on news gathering by up to 3 – 4 hours using keyword based filters.

+

Easy to set up

Tracks both known and unknown publishers

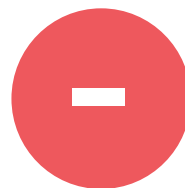Social media engagement of content in realtime

Track webshares

No need to maintain lists of known publishers

Save 30 to 90 minutes on news gathering per person every day

Find relevant stories faster

–

Commercial products with subscription fee

Training effort to onboard the entire newsroom

Keyword filtering

Time savings on news gathering will enable:

» journalists to spend more time creating content and value adding activities
» the newsroom to start publishing these stories faster than with the manual or feed based news gathering approach.

Speed is very important in digital and hybrid newsrooms. This applies to both news gathering as well as to publishing and posting on social media to gain traffic. Everyone knows speed is important. We've created an analysis on how valuable speed is in digital news gathering and publishing. You can take the model outlined in the analysis and apply the same logic to your own data to figure out the value and financial impact for your newsroom.

Finding the right story. The most important thing in news gathering is not the time saved but the ability to consistently find the right story. We recently published a case study from Le Parisien explaining how important finding the right story actually is.

Typically, leading edge newsrooms use category and keyword based filters to find emerging and relevant stories. Learn more from TV 2 Norway.
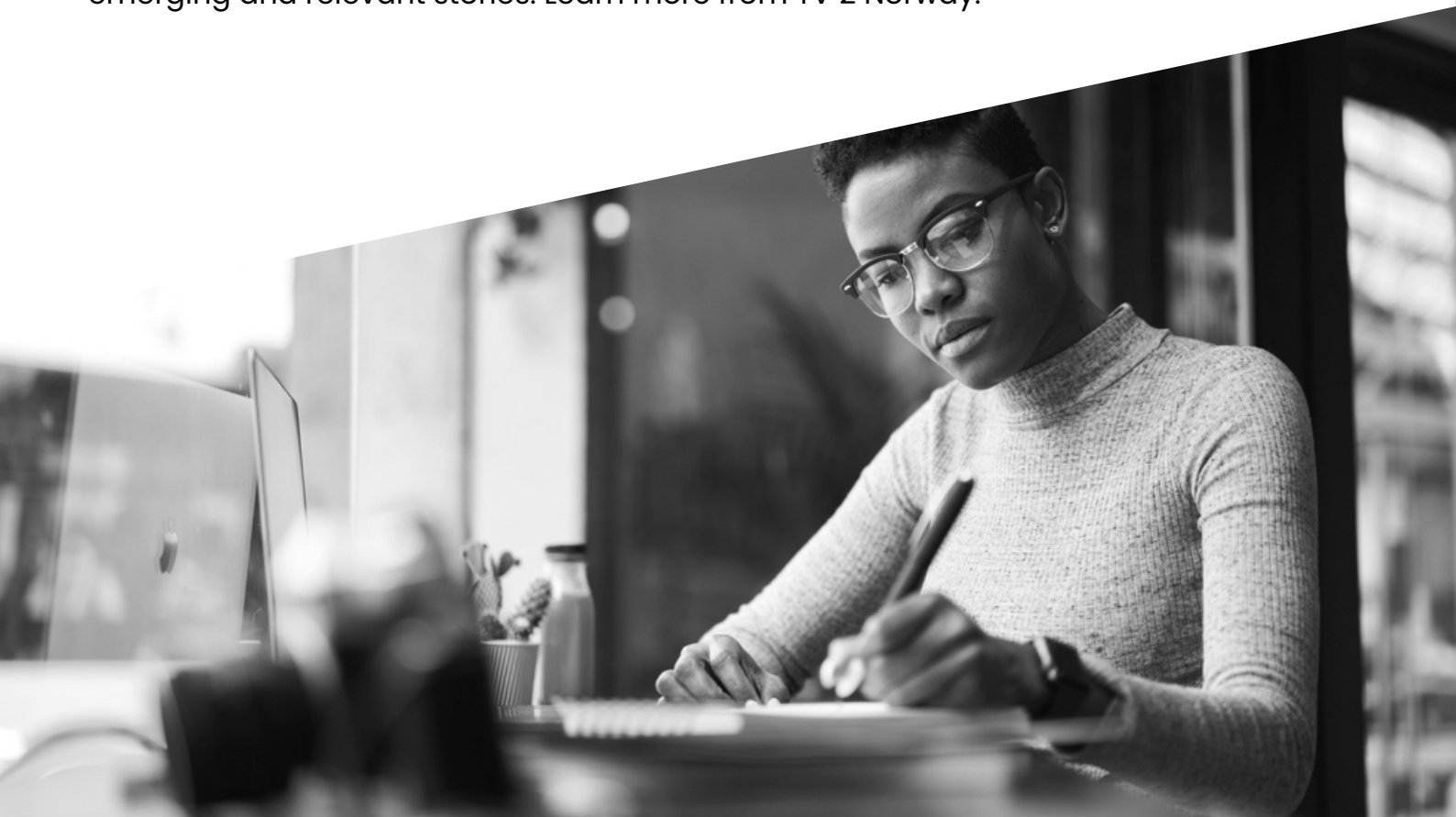
SUMMARY

Are you chasing news or do you let the news come to you?

» News gathering on social media can be heavily automated with commercial tools.
» Newsrooms are slow to adopt new technologies and best practices that help to improve effectiveness and efficiency.
　» Integrate news gathering on social media into roles and responsibilities in the newsroom.
　» Systematically work to convert social media engagement into website traffic.
» Many newsrooms are very successful with automated and efficient news gathering on social media platforms.
　» List based filters - tracking known sources.
　» Category based filters - find emerging stories in specific categories.
　» Keyword based filters - tracking relevant content and related stories in real time - save up to 50 % on time spent on news gathering.

LET THE NEWS COME TO YOU

ABOUT

THE FASTEST NEWS
GATHERING TOOL FOR
NEWSROOMS AND
JOURNALISTS

IMPROVE YOUR
EDITORIAL
WORKFLOW WITH
EZYINSIGHTS

01   EFFICIENT NEWS GATHERING

02   TOPIC RESEARCH AND CURATION

03   KNOW WHEN TO POST ON SOCIAL BASED
ON DATA AND AI

04   PERFORMANCE METRICS FOR SOCIAL AND
DIGITAL

05   BENCHMARK YOUR PERFORMANCE WITH
COMPETITORS

CONTACT

WWW.EZYINSIGHTS.COM
INFO@EZYINSIGHTS.COM

MANNERHEIMINTIE 15 B B
2ND FLOOR
00260 HELSINKI
FINLAND

ezy insights ®

NEVER MISS A STORY.

TO LEARN WHAT EZYINSIGHTS CAN DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS

REQUEST A DEMO

or email info@ezyinsights.com