



The perfect storm is building

How publishers can increase revenue
and survive publishing disruption

by Dr James Jardine & James Lynn
Co-founders at Jamatto

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ABOUT JAMATTO

Jamatto was born from the conviction that everyone should be able to access a broad range of quality news — easily and without paying a fortune for it. While this access was once paid for by advertising, downward pressures on advertising no longer generate enough revenue to sustain quality news. Subscriptions to multiple newspapers are not a practical option either. Jamatto offers a number of solutions for publishers, all powered by the Jamatto button, the smartest way to make small payments online.

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1. Introduction

Upheavals in politics, advertising, regulation and consumer behaviour continues to keep the news and publishing industry on its toes. It's clear that publishing and the news industry in particular is on a pathway of continuous change.

We continue to have encouraging and constructive conversations with publishing executives about how they can utilise our solutions to complement and grow their existing revenues or create new revenue streams in this tumultuous environment. In this document we share the wealth of information we've accumulated from our conversations.

We describe the perfect storm in Chapter 2, which is changing publishing as we know it. This storm is likely to give publishers a run for their money. But those who are agile and put the right tools in place can benefit from many opportunities.

The most successful publishers are future-proofing themselves by implementing solutions which will:

- Create multiple revenue streams
- Monetise content without losing readers
- Keep and grow their subscription customer base
- Help them stay competitive in a cut-throat market
- Supplement income lost to increasing use of adblockers
- Help them maintain quality content
- Help them stay relevant and competitive when players like Google, Apple and Facebook are encroaching on their markets



We're delighted that we have new publications across the UK, Europe, the US and South Africa meeting new challenges using our solutions. You can see the growing list on our website [here](#).

We've compiled an overview of the publishing industry in Chapters 2-6. An important element of this is consumer education, as it seems that readers often don't understand the threats to the industry, even though they're feeling the effects - such as fake news and intrusive advertising. We delve into the crucial disconnection between freedom of the press and free news. We also lighten it up a bit with a tongue-in-cheek online game we've created for the purpose of consumer education.



In Chapters 7-15, we look at the many solutions available to publishers which involve micropayments. We do some micropayments myth-busting, and look at all the reasons they should be considered. Chapter 11 explains our thoughts on whether cryptocurrency can help save the news. Crypto has both optimistic hype and mistrust around it – could it provide a lifeline to the industry in time?

Chapters 16 and 17 debate the ethics of adblocking, which goes to the very heart of questions such as whether news and content should be free, and who should pay for it. We've also laid out some stats around what we've learnt about adblocking from going live on 20 publications.

In Chapters 18 and 19, we share key facts and figures about the Jamatto solutions. We also show some strange and interesting insights from our A/B testing.

These insights come from the sophisticated machine-learning which is built into the Jamatto platform. It helps publishers manage and optimise pricing, revenues, content and audiences. From here you might be surprised to find out some quirky optimisation tricks we're learning from our A/B testing initiatives. This continuous testing means that our solution never stops working for you. Once installed, it only gets better.

At Jamatto we recognise that publishers have many challenges to face, but we're inspired by the people and organisations which are continually striving and adapting to create a better publishing environment. It is for them who we have created our solutions. We hope you can find some take-aways which you can start implementing right now.

Happy reading!



We've included a number of valuable insights for you at various points in this document. The idea is to give you a real experience of Jamatto, as well as all the information you need to understand why Jamatto is such a great solution for publishers. We hope you'll have some fun with it too.

So, wherever you see this icon, just follow the instructions to get the insights.

Note that these insights follow on from each other, so it's important to complete each successive step.

The Publishing Industry

2. A Timeline For The Perfect Storm, Which Threatens To Change News As We Know It

There are a remarkable number of changes hitting the online publishing and advertising industry. They combine to create a ‘perfect storm’ which will cause challenges which publishers will have to adapt to.

The scene was set by publishers doubling-down on their attempts to monetise content through digital advertising. But as their ways and means of advertising targeting became ever more intrusive, readers took it upon themselves to decrease the clutter through adblocking.

Soon the big technology players could smell a marketing opportunity, and started jumping on the bandwagon.

A brief timeline

September 2017 – The pressure started ratcheting up when Apple stepped into the conversation. The latest version of their operating system hit users’ mobile devices with a new default feature for the Safari web browser dubbed [“intelligent tracking prevention”](#). This feature prevents certain websites from tracking users around the net, in effect blocking those ads that follow you everywhere you visit. Bad news for publishers as it limits the advertising targeting they can do, and therefore the effectiveness and earnings of those ads.



December 2017 - The US media regulator the FCC voted to scrap net neutrality. In a nutshell, *net neutrality is the idea that internet service providers (ISPs) treat everyone’s data equally*. Critics warn that this move will hand control of the future of the web to cable and telecoms companies. These large ISPs, who often have local monopolies anyway, have now been handed the ability to discriminate between their own services and those of competitors, and charge other companies for access or bandwidth. Other nations have their own net neutrality

regulations, but the impact will be global as indirect effects ripple around the world.

Early 2018 – Google built an [adblocker into its Chrome browser](#). They explained this move saying that they would only target ‘the most intrusive online adverts’, and that this would improve the browsing experience for readers. Ultimately they didn't want people to install adblockers to block all ads (perhaps because advertising makes up 86% of Google’s revenue!).

Google also found a way to Hoover up some of the revenue from those who have already installed adblockers with a product called ‘Funding Choices’. This allows publishers to show a customised message to visitors running an adblocker - inviting them to either enable ads on their site, or pay for a pass that removes all ads through the new Google Contributor.



Both the Apple and Google stories were widely reported in the media, and had the combined effect of increasing consumers’ awareness of adblocking – which also not good for publishers.

Incidentally, a browser called Brave blocks ads and trackers by default. They plan to release the ability for users to opt into receiving some ads. They will offer this option as another way that users can support publishers. The idea is that when ads do appear, they will be fewer but higher quality. Even if they opt into receiving these ads, trackers will be blocked and privacy will be protected.

May 2018 – GDPR came into effect. These privacy and data regulations have drastically changed how companies collect, handle and store their customer and audience data. Publishers had to rethink how they communicate and collect explicit consent to record and store audience data.

This has changed how publishers use Google, Facebook, and 3rd party providers to distribute and target content and advertising – because broad, non-specific, consent requests don’t meet GDPR requirements.



Mid to late 2019 - EU ePrivacy law is likely to come into effect. This has received less attention than GDPR because the regulation hasn't been set in stone yet. Many hoped they would be able to lobby to dilute it. However these hopes were scuppered late in 2017 when the European Parliament voted to progress it. The core difference between this ePrivacy and GDPR is that cookie use is central to ePrivacy regulation, which is why it's known as the "cookie law." Businesses in Europe will have to get explicit consent to use cookies and provide clear opt-outs to users under the proposed new law. Anyone relying on cookies for their livelihood will be affected when ePrivacy comes in: behavioural testers, advertisers building behavioural profiles and A/B testers.

Mobile network level adblocking momentum is building – The UK mobile network Three trialled network level adblocking late in 2016. The EU's Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (Berec), said at the time that rolling out network level adblocking across the board would raise net neutrality issues, so put a significant obstacle in its place – good news for publishers at the time.

However it appears that Three as well as other operators such as O2 are still pursuing watered-down versions of this network level ad-'filtering', which may still give some control of ads displayed to mobile operators. The timeline on this one is sketchy, but we think it is likely to rear its' head again in some form – especially as opinions change around net neutrality.



The Virtual Private Network (VPN) time-bomb – Consumer concern about privacy is boosting the consumer VPN market because these make tracking of user behaviour almost impossible. To add insult to injury for online news publishers, many VPNs come with built-in adblockers. With consumers becoming more concerned about privacy, more VPN savvy, and with better consumer products hitting the market, the motivation to use VPNs is likely to go up.

Aggregators and social – An increasing amount of content is available free of charge to consumers through aggregators and social media, which is another way for news publishers to reach a larger audience. The flipside is that the aggregators and social platforms take a large chunk of the revenue. This means that the

traditional news organisations not only lose their distribution platform but also control over their content and customers.

In another plot twist, Facebook – arguably the largest of news aggregators – is continually testing its newsfeed. Some tests resulted in newspapers seeing a drop in organic reach of two thirds, with 4 times fewer interactions for some pages. Admittedly this was just a test, but it highlights how much power companies like Facebook have over publishers. Some analysts are even speculating that this might be ‘the beginning of the end’ of organic reach on Facebook altogether.

But there is hope...

Despite these worrying factors, we believe there is reason for hope. Based on the information we have, it is clear that newspapers will have to diversify their revenue streams away from traditional advertising, which is why we’ve put together solutions which will help publishers respond to these threats.

We provide a microsubscription and pay-as-you-go solution, so that publishers can provide the consumer with a simple and fast way to pay for content, as well as a choice to block or allow ads – all on the publisher’s site. So publishers keep their distribution channel, they keep control of their content, and they keep their relationship with their customers.

Consumers now have a viable alternative to paying monthly subscriptions to aggregator sites which compile content from various sources. They have the option to pay a small amount per article, direct to the source.

The payment options are to pay per article, or to pay for access for a period of time – even as little as 15 minutes. We’ve seen some great results from having our solution live on a growing number of publications – and we’re sharing these insights regularly. Be sure to check out our infographics [here](#) and [here](#).

3. Three reasons news is broken. Three things you can do about it.

Most people have no idea that the news is broken. They don't see that they have been shoe-horned into an echo chamber where all the 'news' they read has been specially selected to agree with their world view – which ensures that they continue to support those publications either through subscriptions, the associated advertising that pays for it, or social 'shares'.

Our company was born from the conviction that everyone should be able to access a broad range of news - easily and without having to pay a fortune for it, while providing an honest living for journalists and news outlets.

We have come to understand that news is broken, for three main reasons:

1. **Readers don't understand the complex and interlocking threats to the news.** Most have no idea how seemingly harmless features of the online landscape have decimated quality news. These include adblocking, subscriptions, clickbait, Facebook and Google.
2. **People live in 'news bubbles' of their own making.** In this era of fake news and newspapers with strong political agendas, it is essential that people read more than one source of news to formulate a true and accurate story.
3. **It is difficult to support a broad variety of journalists and news outlets.** Common subscription models keep consumers committed to one point of view. 'Free news' is typically tainted with annoying advertising or funded by hidden agendas. Targeted promotions intentionally keep audiences from stepping out of their bubbles. Donation models relying on consumer goodwill provide an unreliable stream of income at best.

So we came up with three solutions which speak to each of these problems:

[News Blues](#) - a tongue-in-cheek game to educate consumers about the threats to quality news, and how they can help - while



they have a bit of fun dodging the villains.

[Pangloss.News](#) – a site which makes it easy to read different viewpoints about top news stories. Anyone can contribute by posting a story or a point of view.



[Jamatto Micropayments](#) – a means for publishers and vendors to charge small amounts easily, and consumers the ability to make hassle-free small payments.

We'd like readers to know about the threats to news, provide a way for them to access broader views, and to provide news outlets with the means to get support from readers who access their content.



All this talk of micropayments mean nothing if you haven't experienced Jamatto's attention to detail in ensuring a frictionless user experience. So here's your chance – follow this link and make an actual micropayment (don't worry – your first £1 is on the house) to download our latest infographic on what design elements influence consumers most to pay for content.

The first time you use Jamatto, you choose whether to sign in with a social account or with email. On average, a new customer takes fewer than 5 seconds to sign up! After that it's a one-click payment mechanism.

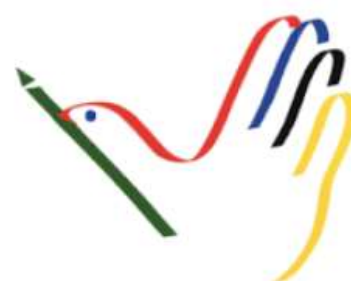
Go to Insight 1 at: <http://bit.ly/2AiU3s5> or <https://jamatto.com/micropayments-whitepaper/insight1/>

4. Believe in freedom of the press? Then news should not be free.

At the time of World Press Freedom day, a number of conversations unfolded in the Twittersphere around the subject of paying for news.

A conversation started with this tweet:

“Wearying of people complaining about journalism being behind the paywall as though it’s a new evil elitism. Papers used to be in a shop called a ‘newsagent’ and if you wanted to read the news you bought one. Radical.”



World Press
Freedom Day

Clearly it is an issue which many have thought about, as replies started streaming in.

Reply: I agree. I can’t understand why people object to paying for journalism, as if the writers who spend their time researching, probing difficult topics, and honing their craft should be doing it for free. If you won’t pay, then advertisers will and we all know where that ends up!

Reply (from a Scottish MP, no less): True, but when you bought a newspaper you didn’t need to give the news agent or the newspaper proprietor lots of private information about yourself that they could sell on to scammers and nuisance callers.

Reply: Same people who expect all entertainment downloads to be free, as if musicians, actors and other performers don’t deserve to be remunerated for their creativity and hard graft.

Reply: I favour the micropayment option: It’s closer to pay-per-view in spirit and is more cost effective for those whose income is limited and therefore see news as a luxury.

Reply: Didn’t have to sign up with each individual newspaper just to buy them though, did you? You paid through one shared mechanism – the newsagent. That’s

the main problem I currently have with paywalls, especially given almost none have a pay-as-you-go option, it's all subscriptions.

Reply: There must be a way for me to read a bonkers article in a rival newspaper without me taking out an expensive subscription.

Reply: I agree with this but in that model people bought a paper on a given day. Current paywalls commit readers to buying all papers for at least a month – which doesn't compare to dropping a quid behind for the news of the day.

It's clear that readers are seeing the limitations of a one-size-fits-all approach. Many don't expect the news to be free, but they want choice and flexibility in how they pay.

So what do we mean by free anyway?

In the English dictionary the word 'free' expresses two different sentiments: It could mean freedom from being coerced or constrained, or it can be in the sense of not having to pay for something.

We definitely want press to be free in the former sense, but not necessarily in the latter.

The French clearly state the difference between the two versions of free - 'gratuit' and 'libre' – and not surprisingly, the propensity of the French to pay for their news is higher than in English speaking countries.



Richard Stallman, a champion of the open source movement, summarised the difference in a slogan: "Think free as in freedom of speech, not free beer."

In many ways the public are used to having access to free news. But they are beginning to experience the implications of not paying for their news directly – it is being funded by bank-rolling billionaires, political parties or by advertising / clickbait, which means it might be biased or distorted in order to make it more sensational or 'clickable'. This is even affecting the course of pivotal events like elections and referendums.

Then when a publication starts to put up subscription paywalls, readers become irate because they have come to believe that news should be free. They may not realise that paying for news gives them a better chance of having quality news which is well-researched, and not influenced by third parties.

Offer a blend of payment options to keep readers coming back

While the subscription model is becoming more popular among well-known newspapers, readers are having to commit to only their favourite publications, as those subscriptions are expensive.

This is where the pay-as-you-go or ‘microsubscription’ model comes in. If more publications gave the option for readers to pay for limited time access (an hour, day or week) to a publication, for an ad-free all-access, it would mean that consumers could read articles across many publications – in return for a tiny payment each. Crucially, this would also give those publishers a revenue stream from the 98% of their visitors that they didn’t have before.

The idea of paying a small amount from 1c / 1p up to up to £1 / \$1 / €1 for short-term access to news is very similar to the old days, when readers could choose what paper they bought from a newsagent on any given day.

Publications have been understandably nervous of the ‘microsubscription’ concept as they fear it might cut into their subscription funnel. However the evidence we are seeing is that it not only HELPS feed the subscription funnel with frequent and loyal users, but also lets them drive revenues from readers who are not willing or able to subscribe, and were never going to do so.



These readers may be willing to pay for short periods of access, or for an ad-free experience – especially if the method of payment is fast and frictionless. In fact these occasional ‘microsubscribers’ might become fully-fledged subscribers, as they have sampled enough of the publications high-quality content in order to make an informed decision.

Publications should still use targeted advertising, but perhaps if they were not so heavily reliant, they could offer fewer and better targeted ads which are more relevant to their readers.

Keeping an eye on the big picture

There is more at stake here than the livelihood of the newspapers. An even greater issue is that having quality news and good journalism is one of the cornerstones of a healthy society. This calibre of news is expensive and time-consuming to produce. It has to be paid for by someone. If it's not the reader, it's going to be advertising (which becomes less and less effective every quarter) or someone with a vested interest.

If news is of an inferior quality because it has to cater to the lowest common denominator (for example clickbait-style news) it means news is over-simplified and badly researched because the 'click' is seen as more valuable than the integrity of the story or the newspaper.

Of course there are examples of good quality free newspapers, but these are dwindling, and worryingly these publications are going to be more at the mercy of corporate or private interests, and the lure of flashy advertising tactics.

Solutions for every type of publication or reader

Our apps are for publications which offer high-end subscriptions, for those who rely on advertising revenue, and for all categories in between. Think about the reader who would like to sample a publication without the intrusive ads, the reader who would like a clean scrolling experience to catch up on the morning's news on their commute, who would like to support a publication with a donation, or would like access to gated content for only a short period of time. We have built out-of-the-box solutions for all of these scenarios, all powered by the Jamatto payment button. In this way, there can be real press freedom, and simple and flexible choices for readers.

5. Three Key Ways Publishers Can Avert Major Industry Threats

Most Jamatto is now live on [titles](#) across the UK, Ireland and South Africa, with more coming online continually. With a single line of code, these titles will begin generating revenue via three new avenues - ensuring that no money is left on the table.

1. **Revenue lost to adblockers** – Many consumers now have adblockers installed on their computers, so publishers miss out on revenue from ad impressions and clicks. Giving the consumer a choice between whitelisting or making a simple payment recovers most of this lost revenue.



2. **Archived content** – This content might have been premium content in the past. Now it's sitting in an archive somewhere, with occasional visits. The interesting thing is that this content has niche appeal – for example to someone who is researching a specific topic – or if it suddenly goes viral for a week because of a freak-mention on Reddit. If they're interested enough to find the article, they're motivated enough to pay for it. Give them an easy way to pay for the information they need.
3. **Premium content** – This content is the reason consumers visit a site for the first time, become regular visitors, and eventually become loyal subscribers. Consumers are also most likely to pay for this content. This is a great way to ensure that you maximise your investment of time and money, and get your consumers to reward you.

Different strokes for different folks

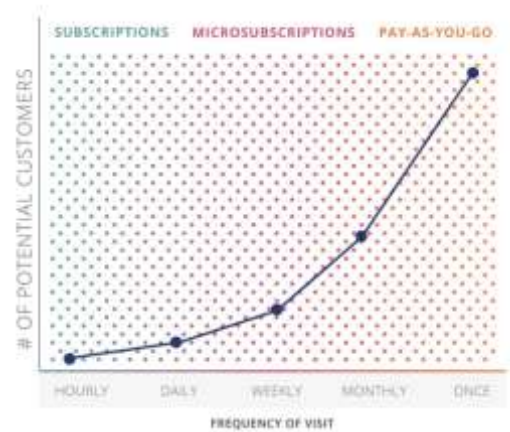
Jamatto offers 3 payment options: pay-as-you-go micropayments, microsubscriptions and subscriptions. Publications offering all three options offer a convenient and compelling option for every type of consumer: occasional visitors, regular visitors and the most loyal visitors.

Pay-As-You-Go Micropayments work for those who like to consume content from various different sources. All they have to do is set up a Jamatto wallet the first time, and then they can make tiny purchases from any participating vendor, at the click of a button.

Microsubscriptions are great for people who want to consume ‘snackable’ content on a particular site for a short amount of time.

After setting up their Jamatto wallet, they can read as many cartoons or short articles as they can during their microsubscription period – which could be anything from 15 minutes to 1 day. This includes the option to make a small payment for an ad-free experience.

Subscriptions are for some of the most loyal micropayment and microsubscription customers who decide that they want to make a longer commitment. With a familiar checkout process, they buy long-term access to their favourite publications quickly and easily.



With Jamatto all your bases are covered

- Publishers can ensure that they maximise their revenue by monetising their different types of content, as well as making up for lost revenue through adblocking.
- Offering 3 ways to consume content appeals to groups which have myriad motivations for visiting a site.
- The Jamatto wallet is completely secure, as well as quick and easy to use – it only takes a quick one-time sign up, and after that purchases are made at the click of a button. In addition Jamatto leverages world-class payment options (like ApplePay and PayPal), so they never need to see or store credit card details.

6. Why Micropayments Now?

On our journeys in and out of the offices of CEOs of London's largest newspapers, we are often asked - why should micropayments work now?

This is a fair question, because micropayments have had a rather miserable time over the past three decades, with even giants like IBM and the W3C throwing in the towel. So why now?

The reasons are down to changing trends in consumer behaviour, monumental shifts in the industry and giant leaps in development of technology. It's also down to the fact that we have around 20 years of trial and error to draw from.

Consumers' online behaviours and expectations have changed

Consumers expect to be able to pick and choose what they want from where they want it, without being tied in. For example, where we once had 2-year mobile contracts we now have pay as you go. Where we once had annual gym memberships we can pop into a Pilates class with a tenner in hand. Where we once had 5-year auto loans we now pay to zip by the hour. The frequency of consumer transactions has skyrocketed. We hardly even look at the total bill before waving our contactless or jabbing our thumbprint. One-click purchases are not only common, they are now expected.



There are compelling social and industry reasons to make micropayments work

Publishers' advertising revenues are struggling, and the growth of adblocking is compounding this. This is set to get worse, as [Google](#) and [Apple](#) recently announced that Chrome and Safari browsers are stepping up their adblocking features.

Subscription revenues are down. There are more



news outlets than ever, which dissuades people from subscribing to a single news outlet as they might once have in the days of physical newspapers. Collecting small payments from people who occasionally browse a site can create a sustainable complementary income stream.

Free content is leading to a proliferation of fake news. Clickbait and the relentless chase after social shares and likes has led to an explosion of news outlets offering various levels of quality content. A world that is filled with free content is a world that is increasingly filled with shoddy content. We're fast waking up to the idea that this low quality content can be harmful, as it is starting to affect the very fabric of our society. Consumers are slowly becoming more appreciative of the curation and gatekeeping that keeps the low quality content off their radars.



Technology has come a long way

Only in the past few years has it become viable for a [smart, lean, agile business](#) to be able to build a frictionless cross-platform payment mechanism that can handle the billions of transactions a day required by some of the most visited websites on the planet.

The past 30 years were littered with diverse and inventive ways of implementing micropayments. Many have failed because of their own unique shortcomings – but in each case there were important lessons to learn.

Traditionally micropayments weren't easy for customers to use, and this is arguably one of the main reasons why micropayments have been so maligned over the years.

Here are some examples of why micropayments didn't work for users:

- To make your first 5c purchase, you had to enter your full credit card details and home address.
- To make your first 5c purchase, you had to install an application on your computer / install a plugin in your browser / change your web browser of choice.

- To make your first 5c purchase, you had to retype a 16-digit code from your mobile phone to your web browser.
- To make your first 5c purchase, you had to sign a credit agreement.
- To make your 5c purchase, you had to sign up by email (pre-social), waiting for your email to arrive so that you can continue.
- To make your first 5c purchase, you had to learn about crypto-currencies to work out how to purchase bitcoin and make a purchase.
- To make your first 5c purchase, you had to top up \$5 into a wallet that is specific to a website. Now do that again on the 20 websites you use regularly.
- To make your first 5c purchase, you had to go through a sequence of steps that is 4 screens long, taking you far from the content you want to enjoy.



Merchants and publishers tried many different models for their micropayment solutions. Here are a number of examples of what they did (and what didn't work):

- They built their own transaction system, complying with the laws where they're based - but this doesn't always cater to consumers world-wide.
- A transaction system that would need millions of dollars of server investment to cope – up front!
- A system where they weren't able to choose their own prices – it was up to the customer to decide.
- A system where weren't able to choose their own prices – total revenues split across all merchants, so as more merchants adopt, individual revenues are driven lower.
- They gave up 40-60% of their micropayment revenue to the platform operator.
- They spent 6 months and 6 dollar digits integrating a payments platform into their existing IT infrastructure (to find that it didn't work).

- They had all the browser vendors in the world to agree on a common commerce protocol, which jeopardised their individual efforts to defend their own territory.
- They hired behavioural psychologists to determine the right messaging around each type of micropayment – is it a standard ecommerce checkout process, a donation appeal, a purchase of an individual piece of content, a purchase of time, a purchase of convenience etc. A huge waste of time and budget.

It's easy to see why micropayments have had a bad rap in the past and why these are tarred with the same brush to this day. However at Jamatto we've taken all those lessons on board, and come up with a number of solutions which will help publishers [build and complement their existing revenue streams](#). The key is that the experience for both consumers and publishers is frictionless as possible.

Solutions For Publishers

7. Grow revenues & reader engagement – without paywalls

We attended the Global Editor’s Network Summit over the summer, where as one of the nominated ‘Startups for News’, Jamatto had the opportunity to present the cool things we are doing for publishers.

It was clear from the Summit that audience engagement is a top priority, right alongside increasing revenues. The problem is that encouraging engagement isn’t generally compatible with mechanisms like paywalls and gated content.



How many times have you been sent a link to an article, or followed a social media link, only to find a hard paywall – and your only choice was to take out an expensive subscription to read a single article or bounce?

If a reader is enticed by a headline - maybe they’ve seen it via a social media post, or were sent a link by a friend – these are good potential customers. These are people you would like to encourage to come back, and to keep coming back. Unfortunately many of these potential customers are lost at this crucial stage because the publication has a one size-fits-all hard paywall – usually an expensive long-term commitment.

It is our view that metered and hard paywalls as the only options are not the answer. Sure, they should be one of the options for the handful of people who might actually subscribe. But there is probably no single payment model that will work for all publications or for all audience groups, so it’s essential to offer readers a range of experiences to suit their preferences.

On the one end of the payment-for-content spectrum, publishers offer the hard paywall option, which 2-5% of readers take up. On the other end, publishers offer free content supported by advertising, clicked on by only 1 in 1000 readers!

It's the area between these extremes which we're most excited about and where we have an exciting range of Jamatto solutions on offer – without the need for a hard paywall that blocks audiences from seeing content.

- [Zen Mode](#) – Publishers can offer their readers an alternative continuous-scroll, decision-free, ad-free reading experience, in return for a small payment.
- Adblocker Relief - 4-20% of readers have an adblocker installed. Offer them the choice of either switching off their adblocker, or paying a small amount to enjoy their ad-free experience.
- Contributions / Donations – Publishers appeal to their readers to make a small contribution or donation towards supporting more content like that which they have just enjoyed reading.
- A micro-‘pass’ – Readers get the option to purchase access to premium content for a short period of time, for example as little as an hour or a week. They can reject this option – in which case they can see the content anyway, but they are constantly reminded that premium content is expensive to produce. The micropass offers convenience without tying them into a lengthy commitment.

These solutions begin to fill the wide gap between free content and hard paywalls, and caters to different qualities and purposes of content, from evergreen to time-sensitive content, as well as for various types of audiences, from the most loyal to the most transactional. It also works well for social referrals and recommendations.

Many publishers are looking to hard paywalls as the ‘silver bullet’ to save the publishing industry. But we firmly believe that there is no single silver bullet, but rather offering different reader experiences, and encouraging audience engagement by enabling smaller payments and shorter commitments, plays to publishers strengths and readers preferences. This has got to be good for audience engagement as well as revenue overall.

8. We're talking micropayments – not pay-per-article!

When we started Jamatto we were excited about the innovative ways we could make micropayments work for publishers and readers alike. We had spent loads of time thinking about the UX of a product that is super-quick and easy to use, and then we developed a number of applications utilising this mechanism.

In theory our micropayments platform can be used for any small online payment – enabling many novel business models on the Internet – but we chose to focus on the publishing industry. The publishing industry was ripe for change, as online publishers faced many challenges around the question of the best way to get paid for content. Advertising had become increasingly competitive and intrusive (causing disgruntled readers to install adblockers) both of which cut into publisher revenue. Looming privacy and anti-tracking laws made things even more complicated. Hard paywalls often put consumers off, because subscriptions didn't cater to the bulk of consumers who enjoy multiple sources of information.



A tainted concept

We noticed early on that people generally conflate micropayments with 'pay per article' – which many in the publishing industry, academics and researchers have heavily criticised over the past 10-15 years. We don't blame them, because most of these early attempts were badly designed and difficult to use, and they were rolled out at a time when consumers were not as familiar with the concept of online payments - so their experiences were probably not positive.

Hence we often find ourselves having to cut a path through the outdated ideas, misconceptions and lack of imagination around the word 'micropayments'. In contrast, the micropayments we're excited about are a far cry from the micropayments which most people associate with the word.

The apps we've built are ultimately not about paying for content directly – they're more about enabling customers to buy better online experiences using tiny frictionless payments. All it takes is some imagination to see the possibilities.

The time is ripe for micropayments in publishing



The Reuters Digital News Report published recently highlights some key trends which show that this is a good time for micropayments to be included in the mix of publisher revenue streams:

- The average number of people already paying for news is going up. Readers are more comfortable with online payments.
- Most digital news sites are operating at a loss, subsidised by investors, alternative revenue streams, or historic profits from broadcast or print. Readers are mostly not aware of this, however those that are aware are more likely to pay for a news subscription or give a donation.
- Old revenue streams are drying up – while digital advertising remains a critical source of revenue, most publishers recognise that this will not be enough to support high quality journalism.
- It was acknowledged that it will be essential for publishers to employ a number of revenue streams to cater to all audience groups – some are employing up to 6 streams.

In our case, pay-per-article is just one of the options we offer, and we have plugged our micropayments product into a number of cutting-edge apps which do some cool and interesting things.

From Ad-Block to Zen

- Adblock alternative - We developed a solution for publishers which detects when readers have an adblocker installed. A window pops up which asks them to either switch off the adblocker (to give the publisher some advertising revenue) or to make a small payment in return for the

ad-free experience. Many ad-savvy readers are becoming more comfortable with this.

- Donations - For publishers who would like to ask for reader donations, we have a product which asks for simple one-click donations at the end of each news article.
- Pay-per-article or microsubscription – We offer not only the vanilla pay-per-article option, but also the more recommended ‘microsubscription’ which gives readers access to premium content for anything between 15 minutes and a few hours (follow the journey on our website).
- Zen Mode –This app converts any news website from a collection of loosely associated, ad-and-clickbait-heavy pages into a continuous-scroll, decision-free, ad-free reading experience, in return for a tiny payment.

All these mechanisms can sit comfortably alongside a full subscription – giving every type of reader options for consuming content in the way they want.

Alternatives to a hard paywall

In all of these cases, the idea is that publishers give their readers options which fit between a hard paywall (with an associated expensive subscription) and metered-content (which earns them nothing from most of their visitors). It also benefits readers who are frustrated with following links to articles only to be met with a hard paywall. Now they can have the content, the access and experience they want, in return for a small payment of a few cents. Perhaps in time publishers and readers will forget their prior associations of micropayments with pay-per-article and embrace these innovative and flexible versions of micropayments.

Our solutions are already helping a number of publications in the US, UK, Europe and South Africa to get paid for their content.

9. Lessons From The Golden Era Of News Publishing

Newspapers are finding new ways to gain revenue and charge for content, as the mechanisms they have traditionally relied on are changing. Reading news online nowadays can be compared to an inexperienced tourist shopping in a middle-eastern market.

Hagglers constantly grab shoppers' attention with goods they might not be interested in, or offer 'bargains' which the shopper has no way of evaluating on the spot. There are constant decisions to be made which detract from what should be a fun and relaxing experience.



In the same way, when reading an online newspaper, readers brace themselves against flashing banner ads, attention-grabbing take-overs, insistent pop-ups, and scores of suggestions of what sponsored content to read next. Many suggested links even lead the reader away from their chosen newspaper, taking them to less trusted sites which are not always easy to navigate away from. In short, it's often not a great customer experience, and certainly not an accomplishment in brand-building.

What can we learn from the news publishing boom years?

Let's look back and take a few notes from a time when catching up on the news was simple, entertaining, and even a relaxing experience. Readers saw news as a valuable service they were willing to pay for, either on the spot at a newsagent, or via subscription once they had pick their favourites. Advertisers and sponsors had minimal impact on their reading experience.

Information and entertainment went hand-in-hand, as time spent reading the paper was seen as a time to unwind while catching up on the news of the day. A physical newspaper offered an easy way to browse the entire news content of the day – effortlessly moving from one column to the next, and occasionally skipping an article of no interest.

Between a rock and a hard place

There is no doubt that publishers have to balance conflicting priorities as they seek new revenue streams while attempting to improve the reading experience. While advertising remains a viable option for keeping news free, it needs to be deployed judiciously to maintain a quality reading experience. A less enjoyable reading experience has a negative impact on brand loyalty, which in turn drives down the potential of converting readers into subscribers.

At Jamatto, we've thought deeply about this dilemma and come up with a solution that attempts to mimic the experience of reading the day's news as it was in the golden years.

The solution is Zen

Zen Mode, powered by Jamatto, enables publishers to offer their readers a clean and seamless reading experience. The reader can scroll down a seamless sequence of the day's stories, without having to decide what to read next and without being interrupted by ads.

At the click of the Zen Mode icon on supported news sites, and with the purchase of a pass with a frictionless payment of a few pence, readers have the choice to enjoy this alternative reading experience whenever they want. A Zen Mode pass can last anything from 15 minutes to a month, depending on which payment option the reader selects.



As the name suggests, it gives discerning readers a calm, clean and uncluttered journey through the day's news. With no intrusive elements to detract from the reading experience, this means more articles read per visit, and a sure increase in brand loyalty.

Publishers might think that offering this to their readers would involve an expensive website rebuild, or complicated technical work, but the reality is that Zen Mode can be enabled within hours with just one line of code.

You can see Zen Mode live on City A.M. - just click on the blue 'Zen corner' at the bottom left of the page: <https://www.cityam.com/>

In an era of fake news, this is an urgent priority because society needs good quality journalism which is not in the pockets of the advertisers or of entities that fund them.

10. 7 Reasons Newspapers And Magazines Should Consider Micropayments

Newspapers are finding new ways to gain revenue and charge for content, as the mechanisms they have traditionally relied on are changing.

In an era of fake news, this is an urgent priority because society needs good quality journalism which is not in the pockets of the advertisers or of entities that fund them.

Newspapers are trying different approaches, and we believe micropayments (online payments under €1 / \$1 / £1) offer a good complement to other avenues such as advertising and subscription.

There are understandable reasons why this approach has not worked in the past, but consumers, society and technology have moved on so much that micropayments may now be the answer to many problems facing the publishing industry.

1. Newspapers are actively looking for ways to boost revenue

The main ways online media generate revenue are through advertising, payment for content (pay-per-article or subscription), or a blend of these. Lately there are also more instances of publishers asking for donations.

The models used to pay for content are evolving as publishers experiment with these models, for example big names like The Economist, The Financial Times and The Times implemented online subscriptions to various levels of success, and the Guardian is operating a donation model.

In a survey by The Media Briefing*, 27% of the European publications surveyed said that they would invest in subscription and paywall models during 2017, and 21% said that it was their biggest challenge of the year.



2. Adblockers squeeze advertising revenue

Advertising is one of the main sources of revenue for publishers, and this is being negatively impacted by the increased use of adblockers.

A growing number of savvy consumers are installing adblockers – so they are increasingly not exposed to adverts which are the publications' lifeblood. With more than 200 million active users of adblockers around the world, adblocking software will likely cost digital publishers \$27 billion in lost revenue by 2020.

[Readers cannot be blamed](#) – as they are fed-up with annoying ads taking up their screens and using up bandwidth. However this cuts off the publisher's income. Many are probably unaware of this.

To compound this problem, some of the most popular browsers like [Safari](#) and [Chrome](#) have recently been updated with built-in adblockers.

3. Advertising conversion rates are down

For advertising to be effective, and to ensure good customer experience, targeting relevant ads to customers is essential. The ideal would be to display a low quantity of high quality adverts which are well targeted, in order to gain a good conversion rate.

The problem is that newspapers do not have the ability to target their adverts as specifically as Facebook and Google do, but they have been able to do some level of tracking for targeting purposes through their own platforms.



However these mechanisms have been diminished as there is a systematic clampdown on these from a few areas. Examples include browser-level tracking prevention, EU e-privacy rules, GDPR and the rise of VPNs. [We have written more about this 'perfect storm' here.](#)

In addition there are more reports of a slumping advertising industry, with some of the biggest players reporting flat sales and plummeting share prices.

4. Readers' short attention spans

Attention spans have reduced to minutes or even seconds so they will ignore anything that is not directly relevant to them. They also explore many different sources, as recommended through social media, often forgetting the source of the content. If they have to take additional minutes to pay, they will most likely not bother.



Newspapers offer some payment models in which readers are asked to donate or subscribe, but these can take up to 10 minutes to set up – which may result in the reader losing interest and abandoning the publication altogether.

So any payment option which a newspaper adds to its publication would need to be fast and frictionless, rather than some of the longer processes around. It should also allow consumers to be free to browse many options rather than tie them to one or a few subscription.

5. One-click payments are popular and trusted

One-click payments are convenient and easy to use, and are increasingly trusted by consumers, take for example those we see on Amazon or Apple Music.

One-click in-app payments for music are now used without a second thought. While this was met with initial distrust, it is now commonly accepted, and even expected. As a result, consumers are becoming less tolerant of cumbersome sign-up processes.

This sets the scene for the ‘one-click’ approach to be leveraged in payments for articles and content on online publications. The right micropayment solution should offer exactly this.

6. Readers are more accustomed to paying for content

Readers are seeing more subscription paywalls when they visit a website to read an article, which is getting the idea across that it is necessary to pay for content.

Many quality newspapers offer online subscriptions, which their most loyal readers are happy to pay for. However there are other consumers who want to

read content from all over the web, but who don't necessarily want to commit to one publication.

There are also those who can't afford to take out an expensive subscription, but they would be willing to pay a small amount for a one-off read. It is these customers that are being lost to expensive subscriptions and inflexible paywalls, and publishers are losing this potential income.

There is a good chance readers would come back regularly to read one-off articles. Many would eventually convert to a full subscription, because they've had the chance to sample the content and become a loyal reader. Either way, the publisher would have gained the revenue from those singular purchases.

Our [results show](#) that over 7% of micropayment purchasers go on to purchase 1 month-plus subscriptions.

7. Micropayment solutions are better than ever

Micropayments have been expensive up to now because providers levied the same high fixed costs, regulations and security which is required for higher payments, on the lower payments. For example, Paypal still charges 105% for a 5p transaction.

The process for paying a small amount was too tedious – how many people would want to follow a process which takes 5 minutes to spend 5p to pay for an article which only takes 5-10 minutes to read?

Consumers have become used to in-app and pay-as-you go purchases, so publishers should be looking to replicate these experiences. Any publisher that wishes to charge for its' content will have to offer a cost effective and slick solution.

Micropayments enable flexibility in changing times

Jamatto meets all of these requirements. It can be used to boost newspaper revenues by offering it alongside traditional subscription models, and is now live on publications in the UK, Europe, US and South Africa.

It can be used to make up revenue lost to adblocking, to charge per-article, to charge for access for a short period of time (ie. 50p for an hour

'microsubscription') or as a means to take donations. Users set up an account using a social sign-in which takes less than a minute, and after that it's a one-click payment.



Want to see what Jamatto could look like on your website? All you need to do is follow this link and make another micropayment from your Jamatto wallet. We'll then put together a tailored showcase for your publication.

Once you've experienced how easy it is to make your second payment, we'll get in touch with you by email to learn the details of your publication and web address so that we can prepare your showcase for you.

Go to Insight 2 at: <http://bit.ly/2AiGiHF> or

<https://jamatto.com/micropayments-whitepaper/insight2/>

11. Can cryptocurrency help save the news?

Recently cryptocurrency mania went into high gear as many established crypto enthusiasts became millionaires or even billionaires overnight. Many crypto-newbies were inspired to jump on the bandwagon to also get a piece of the pie. Imaginations have been captured by this exciting new technology which promises to unshackle financial futures from dystopian central governments and fee-charging cartels of bankers - and help many get rich quickly in the process.

It's time to get real

As an ex-trader, technologist, machine-learning enthusiast, and generally a fintech geek - I love crypto, I own crypto, and I love the implications of a distributed ledger that no shadowy actor can mess with. But I also understand the realities of where we are at: crypto and blockchain technology today are at the same level of development as electricity was in the late 1860s – a very exciting idea to a few people, but voodoo magic to the vast majority of the population. Or a more recent example - the Internet in the late 1960s: primal, raw, technical, hobbyist, and completely unimaginable to grandma.



While Bitcoin has dominated the crypto-conversation and is generally accepted as being the first non-governmental world currency, there are some relatively well-known runners jostling for second place – notably Ethereum, Ripple and Stellar. Most people are unaware that there are literally thousands of contenders, each championing the miracle of blockchain technology while trying to carve out their niche as the go-to currency for their particular domain.

This is where many have missed the point about what makes a currency valuable: someone has to be willing to take it from you in exchange for something of theirs that you desire. Even real world currencies suffer this. For example, let's say I'm travelling through a small town in rural Utah with a million Mongolian Tugrik in my pocket; at today's exchange rate that is equivalent to about \$400. What could I get

for it in rural Utah? And would I be willing to part with it for \$300, or even \$200 were I hungry enough?

From the sublime to the ridiculous

As with trying to spend Tugrik in Utah, so too with cryptocurrencies. I'm thinking in particular of the bevy of cryptocurrencies that have been created to utilise blockchain technology to solve some real (and some not-so-real) problems. Here are some illustrative examples:

- LOClcoin – Use these tokens to buy and sell intellectual property via a DIY patent research tool called InnVenn
- Trippki - Offers a coin and a method of earning and spending travel reward points
- BAX - A coin developed by BABB, a bank account based blockchain facilitating a means for anybody worldwide to obtain a UK bank account
- Kitten Coin – dubbed “the world’s cutest cryptocurrency” – dedicated to the love of gorgeous kittens
- Unobtainium – “the rarest crypto-token ever; the platinum to Bitcoin’s gold”
- Coinye – yes, named after Kanye West, and abandoned for trademark-infringement reasons
- Insanecoin – “it’s a state of mind. You don’t have to be insane to be part of our community, but it sure couldn’t hurt...”
- Useless Ethereum – The FAQ on their website says: “Wait ... is this a joke? Is it a scam? Neither! This is real — and it’s 100% transparent. You’re literally giving your money to someone on the internet and getting completely useless tokens in return.”



You get the picture – there are many currencies being created which are not interchangeable, and are pretty useless outside of their networks.

Cryptocurrency in publishing and journalism

Jokes aside, and getting to the point of this article - as the co-founder of a micropayments startup which provides a micropayments platform for publishers, I'm interested in currencies created to solve [the crises faced by publishing and journalism](#) in the Internet Age.



Almost in chorus, there have been - or promise to be - several issuances of 'press related' cryptocurrencies and tokens – Brave BATs, Civil, Conto, PressCoin and Steem are just a handful I have stumbled upon. The problem is, none of them are interoperable, and none of them make a lot of sense as a currency outside their ecosystems. If cryptocurrencies are going to be the answer to publishing and journalism, then there needs to be only one, and better still it needs to be a cryptocurrency that can be used in a broader sense – i.e. not just a 'press related' coin. In the short term, this is critical. In the longer term, interoperability concerns will disappear as exchange fees go to zero and seamless exchange technologies (like Stellar) become broadly adopted across the fiat and crypto-worlds.

But even if there were just a single 'press related' coin, which crypto technology stack could support it today? All the mainstream cryptocurrencies have problems – but the main one is still that the vast majority of people can't yet spend or accept them.

Consumer education is key

In addition to this, one of the problems for publishers is around educating consumers about the importance of contributing financially towards the content they are consuming. [There are a number of ways to do this.](#) But if part of that contribution involves paying small amounts for each piece of content they consume, then that payment mechanism has to be simple, safe, frictionless, low-cost, and scalable to billions of transactions a day.

A cryptocurrency which solves this would be great. But no existing blockchain technology adequately addresses any of those requirements, let alone all of them. And even if there was one that did, it would take quite some time for those already hugely invested in already-legacy cryptos like Bitcoin and Ethereum to adopt a latecomer – no matter how good that latecomer might be.



Let's get back to basics

So let's take a step back. What does the publishing industry need in order to enable consumers to contribute financially to the content they produce? They need a payments system that can take a high volume of tiny payments. It should be simple, safe, frictionless, low-cost, and scalable to billions of transactions a day. A good blend of fiat money and technology can provide that. Today. And currently Jamatto is that blend.

When a future blockchain technology proves itself ready to pick up the workload from the fee-charging payments infrastructure of today, Jamatto will be first in line to embrace that technology with its millions of users.

12. The Surprising Versatility Of Micropayments

The sky is the limit — with just a little creativity micropayments can revolutionise publishers’ business models by providing novel and interesting revenue streams.

Over the past months we’ve written extensively about [how micropayments can benefit the publishing industry](#). Our articles have been mainly focused on charging micropayments for online articles on online newspapers and magazines — those affected by adblocking, fake news, click-bait and aggregators.



We’ve been making a strong case for publishers to consider micropayments and microsubscriptions as a complement to traditional subscription and advertising revenue.

But we’re also excited about how micropayments can be used in other areas, creating new revenue streams for publishers and business owners, as well as providing customers with a quick, safe and easy way to make small purchases online.

Here are some ideas about how online publishers can gain more revenue by being a little creative using micropayments:

Single and album launches — Imagine Adele has just launched her new single, and Rolling Stone magazine is doing a review. The single is available only on radio — not yet on Spotify. How about a 50p charge to listen to the new track right there in the article?

Pre-launch books — Let’s say there is a new Harry Potter novel coming out in a few days, and a newspaper can offer a preview of the first chapter for 20p. Same idea for a film or song.

Competitions — A magazine can offer readers the opportunity to enter a prize draw to win an exclusive holiday — at 50p per entry, paid using a micropayment button.

Dating websites — A dating app which is free to download onto your phone, but every time you’d like to initiate a conversation with someone you fancy — you pay

10p. And then 2p per message back and forth. This way consumers pay to keep their phone numbers private until they are ready to reveal it.

Voting online — You can vote for your favourite TV talent show contestant for a charge of 50p via a micropayment button embedded into show's website

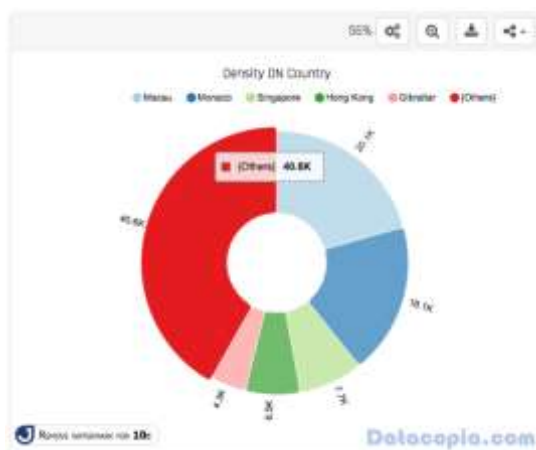
Alternative to video ads — If you currently monetise your videos using pre- or in-roll advertising, perhaps you could offer your viewer the choice of watching the ad, or skipping it for just 5p.

Blogs & micro journalism — There are some very popular and influential bloggers, writers and independent journalists these days. They offer up much of their content for free. It would be great if they could charge a small fee for a premium paragraph in an article.

Lead generation and qualification — You could offer pieces of content to your users at a small charge, as a way to rate the quality of a lead, assure some level of commitment, verify identity and collect their email address.

You can see live examples of some creative ways of using the Jamatto button right here:

Datacopla



Datacopla is a neat tool that instantly transforms data into charts. Users paste in their data, and out pop the charts that describe the data in the most meaningful way. Datacopla is free to use if you are happy to have their watermark on your charts, otherwise you can remove the watermark for just 10c.

See how it works at www.datacopla.com

News Blues

News Blues is a tongue-in-cheek game that educates consumers about the threats to quality news, and how they can help — while they have a bit of fun dodging the villains.

A crucial component of News Blues is that it costs 3p to play if they choose to support the good guys, but it's free otherwise. Perhaps this will appeal to consumers' better judgement...



See it in action here: <http://bit.ly/NewsBlues>



Hexonomy

This website aims to create the world's biggest work of art, and support a charity at the same time. Artists, sketchers and doodlers get to select a hexagon shape and fill it with their own creative idea, and donate a small amount to charity at the same time.

Check it out at: www.hexonomy.com

Chronogram

This local free newspaper encourages it's readers to make a one-click micro-contribution using the Jamatto button:



There are loads more ideas where micropayments up to £1 can be used:

- To purchase micro-insurance
- To purchase carbon offsetting credits
- To make donations to information sources like Wikipedia, or to charity websites
- For access to online courses
- For all kinds of online voting
- To purchase postage stamps & stickers
- To send personalised postcards online or by post
- To place and/or respond to classified advertisements
- To access recipes and how-to's
- To levy a small charge to verify identity for a password reset
- To access forums like Reddit or Stackoverflow
- For recommendations or customer reviews such as Tripadvisor
- To access or purchase company, credit & fraud reports
- To access wifi for example at an airport or hotel
- To make bookings — to prevent no-shows
- To pay for icons or stock photos
- To have television interactions such as posting comments or joining debates
- To place bets, such as for e-sport & indie games
- To access mapping apps like Citymapper
- To combat spam

Micropayments make it possible for publishers to get ahead of their competition by making interesting and creative offers to their customers. In addition the platform can help ensure a measure of commitment from the user, as well as provide some verification of identity.



We think that offering a fast, frictionless and safe way to make small payments is a great option for publishers of all shapes and sizes, no matter what they're selling. It's also a lucrative way to generate new revenue streams, and to give consumers more of what they want.

Can you think of any more ideas? Let us know what you think and find out more at www.jamatto.com.

13. Newspapers Realise Alternative Revenue Streams By Embracing Startup Tactics

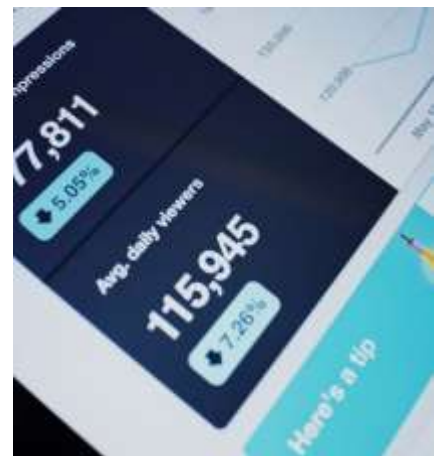
Their lifelines are being squeezed by giants like Google and Facebook advertising, and media-tech competitors serving up adblockers, clickbait and fake news.

They are having to compete with new, agile and increasingly experienced digital news players like BuzzFeed, LADBible and BlastingNews - who are able to be quick and nimble, and are rapidly gaining new audiences and revenue streams.

They say desperate times call for desperate measures, and incumbent newspapers are increasingly willing to engage in tactics learned from the more agile, entrepreneurial and streamlined digital players.

"Fail fast"

This is an approach to developing a new product or testing a novel methodology by rapidly deploying a variety of cheap experiments. The idea is that some will work and grow, while others will fail and die. Additionally while many experiments will fail, at least they will fail fast. But the few experiments that succeed provide valuable feedback to fuel a cycle of rapid experimentation, measurement, adaption and then more experimentation.



This is the polar opposite of what newspapers would have considered in the past. Traditionally, changes to newspaper structures involved large scale investment, planning and implementation, followed by years of commitment to the chosen strategy. Not so in this new world, where changes no longer have to be expensive or permanent. Planning and implementation cycles can be short, and learning and iteration timescales even shorter.

Players like Amazon, Google and Facebook adopted this mentality years ago, and at any one time are testing hundreds different versions of their platforms simultaneously. No wonder they're eating everyone's lunch!

But now, instead of spending a large amount of time and money researching revenue models, newspapers can test various models simultaneously, then learn and iterate fast.

Test, learn, iterate

As a tech startup offering a [micropayments solution](#) for newspapers, we often speak to executives about implementing the right payment strategy.

We encourage them to experiment with a variety of scenarios. There are so many variables to optimise when monetising the diverse customers that visit a newspaper. It is encouraging – and sometimes surprising – to see that tiny changes can generate remarkably different results and drastically increased conversions.



We've incorporated this ethos into the Jamatto platform – and it is constantly learning about and adapting to consumer behaviour by regularly making small and large tweaks to user interfaces and price point. This dramatically increases the number of people who pay to read news articles.

Here are some of the different aspects that demand experimentation when helping newspapers drive revenues:

- Different **offers** appeal to different people - for example, a one-off micropayment to read an article versus a microsubscription (say for 20 minutes).
- The **design** of the popup – messaging, price points, shape, size, colour, position and images can dramatically influence conversion.
- The **page** the popup appears on – for example a popup which is effective on a tech page might be less effective on a cookery page.
- Conversions in different **cities or countries** might be different – consider testing different approaches for different nationalities.

- The **wording** of a call-to-action is important – for example the same words may seem pushy or aggressive to one audience, while seeming clever and enticing to another.
- Audiences behave differently at different **times of the day** – it is important to test different strategies at different times.
- **Demographics and age groups** behave very differently – conversion rates benefit from personalisation and targeting.

We've seen some remarkable differences in conversion rates and RPMs from elements as simple as changing the actors in an image, to elements as complex as teasing at quirks in our human psyche. And we're not talking a couple of percent here and there. We're talking hundreds of percent improvements over previous iterations. When we're thinking about newspapers with millions of fleeting daily readers, these percentage changes mean a lot for the bottom line.

The interesting thing is that in the past it was difficult for newspapers – who are not in the business of technology – to conduct these tests. With our solution it is entirely possible.

In the case of newspapers accepting micropayments, testing on small segments of their audience, and being willing to rapidly test, iterate and learn – creates a massive opportunity to create and drive new and complementary revenue streams.

Of course, an agile approach isn't possible for all solutions – especially those that require large, up-front investment of time and money to implement. So it's important to find solutions which are simple to install, customise, measure and remove.

Helping the news is important to us, so we've made it simple for publishers to install our technology, and to test and iterate on all the elements we describe above. At the end of the day, if newspapers can increase and sustain revenue from an appreciative audience, we all win.

14. Dispelling 10 Myths of Micropayments



Micropayments have failed. Micropayments create anxiety and confusion. Users hate them...

These are just a few of the myths we've heard. But the world has changed since the often-quoted [2000](#) and [2009](#) pieces by Clay Shirky where most of these myths originate.

Clay Shirky is a popular and well-respected writer, consultant and teacher on the social and economic effects of internet technologies and journalism. While his views of micropayments might have been true at the time, we can see that these don't apply any more.

At Jamatto we think that supporting real news via micropayments is part of the solution to problems faced by the publishing industry. We're inspired by [the possibilities micropayments offer](#), and keen to clear up some of the myths around this topic.

1. Micropayments have failed



Micropayment solutions have been coming to the market since the late 90s, and it's true that many of these aren't around anymore. But the fact that they have disappeared doesn't mean the whole concept has failed.

Early contenders closed mostly due to difficult execution, low adoption, or after being absorbed into larger tech conglomerates. Others failed [because the time wasn't right](#) or consumers

weren't ready.

The truth is that there are still a number of solutions on the market, aimed at particular vendors and verticals, offering different value propositions.

2. Users hate them

Consumers quite rightly hated some of the micropayment solutions which existed in the past. However the solutions have improved, and consumers have changed too.

Consumers of content have become more sophisticated, and are now used to one-click payments on all sorts of platforms. Platforms like Uber, Amazon, Apple and Google all work on the basis of a first time account set-up, and then one-click payments after that. Users may have found micropayments difficult or annoying in the past, but they are part of our everyday lives now.

The Jamatto micropayment solution is super-quick and easy to set up and use – it is at least as easy as any other one-click payment option.

3. Micropayments do not take user preferences into account



Micropayments can actually enhance consumers' experience by giving them more choice. For example, they can choose whether to pay a small amount per article, for a micro-subscription (eg. 50p for an hour access), or for an ad-free experience. This gives a number of cheaper alternatives rather than only offering only a one-size expensive long-term subscription.

Micropayments also offer freedom. If a consumer has the option to buy articles from all their favourite publications, dipping in and out freely without the constraints of a subscription – this has got to be a good thing. They are still free to take out subscriptions for regularly read resources, and are also free to go around to different outlets and sample content as and when they want it.

4. Micropayments create anxiety

Clay Shirky said in his articles that there is anxiety involved in every online transaction no matter how small. However the world has moved on since this statement was made – as both consumers and payment solutions are different.

Online and mobile users make large and small online purchases every day now. They have one-click purchasing on Amazon, buy single songs or downloads, book Uber rides, pay friends on Paypal, buy gems on Candy Crush... The technologies are super-quick and easy to use, and users are completely comfortable using them.

5. Some transactions are too small to be worth the hassle

In the past this might have been true, for two reasons - it was difficult to charge small amounts because log-in or sign-up was cumbersome and slow - just to pay a tiny fee.



Secondly, it was disproportionately expensive to charge small amounts, because the established payment solutions levied enormous charges. To this day Paypal charges 105% for a 5p transaction.

Quoting Shirky: “A transaction can’t be worth so much as to require a decision, but worth so little that a decision is automatic.”

We would argue that those decisions can, do and have become automatic.

But let’s suppose there was some sort of purchasing tension present - we believe it can be useful. For example, if you were paying to read an article about an important topic – would you be more selective about which source you read? And might this serve to benefit the more high quality news outlets?

In the case of Jamatto, there is a one-off social sign-in, and the flat fee for any Jamatto payment is 20%.

6. Micropayments are confusing

“The very micro-ness of micropayments makes them confusing. At the very least, users will be persistently puzzled over the conflicting messages of - This is worth so much you have to decide whether to buy it or not - and - This is worth so little that it has virtually no cost to you.”

Consumers are more sophisticated than ever, and they continue to evolve. Micropayments can be very simple, even though there are more complicated examples out there. We believe consumers can handle a one-click button to pay a small amount for their content without getting confused.

7. Aggregation, subscription and subsidy are better solutions

Shirky says: “There are three principal solutions to this payment problem offline - aggregation, subscription, and subsidy - that are used individually or in combination. It is these same solutions - and not micropayments - that are likely to prevail online as well.”

We completely agree that those principal solutions work well in the real world.

- Aggregation continues to work well, but only for those publications where content is not available in fragmented form elsewhere – like specialist trade publications. Unfortunately newspapers don't have that luxury.
- Subscription has not translated amazingly well from the real world to digital.
- Subsidy through advertising continues to work well in the digital world – just not for digital newspapers, partly due to adblocking and poor targeting.

Micropayments or ‘microsubscriptions’ (think 15 minutes of access for 15p) can sit alongside these options, or even enable them.

8. Offering micropayments is a sign of desperation on the part of the vendor

“The fact that micropayments have been tried many times in the past and has not worked is unwelcome precisely because if small payment systems won't save existing publishers in their current form, there might not be a way to save them - an outcome generally regarded as unthinkable by existing publishers.”

It's true that newspaper revenues are falling, so they are experimenting with many different options to make this up. Adblockers are having an impact, the proliferation of news vendors and fake news are taking a bigger slice of the pie, and social media giants are having more control over the news scene. The [impacts of GDPR and e-privacy rules](#) are also being felt. We know for sure that newspapers will have to evolve.

In fact, consumers might be reassured by the fact that they have to pay for something rather than receive it for free, as it increases the perceived value of the article and decreases the sense of “what’s the catch?” In addition it gives something back to the publisher, writer, or artist, and that can create loyalty and a ‘feel good’ factor.



9. Micropayment platforms are difficult for publishers to install

Some micropayment solutions are very difficult to install – and perhaps it was worse in the past. The technology has improved now. In the case of Jamatto, it couldn’t be easier. Our solution is a single line of code which can be installed on a site within hours. It can go and has gone live within a day on some of the publications we work with.

10. It is difficult to quantify what constitutes a micropayment

We define a micropayment as something under €1 / \$1 / £1. Currencies and values change over time, so that definition might change. It costs whatever small amount it says on the button. Simple.

Micropayments offer a real solution to a real problem

“What matters at newspapers and magazines isn’t publishing, it’s reporting. We should be talking about new models for employing reporters rather than resuscitating old models for employing publishers; the more time we waste fantasising about magic solutions for the latter problem, the less time we have to figure out real solutions to the former one.”

We totally agree with Shirky on this one. We believe micropayments can contribute to solving this problem. The way we do micropayments at Jamatto is a simple and compelling model for keeping newspapers in business, and for taking payment for good quality content – without having to rely on intrusive advertising or the giant social media players. In this era of clickbait and fake news we think [micropayments are part of the solution.](#)

15. Publishers Win By Offering A Number Of Ways To Pay For Content



Putting customers first is one of the central tenets of the digital revolution. Organisations from retailers to banks, to travel companies to healthcare providers, are scrambling to give consumers what they want, when they want it - in the form of convenient and frictionless digital experiences on mobile, website or app.

Publishers too need to jump on the bandwagon before they lose to competitors. However while they are having to embrace digital transformation and all it offers, they are also having to guard against several threats.

A large chunk of publishers' income relies on advertising revenue - impressions, clicks and purchases via their websites. An increasing number of consumers run [adblockers](#), which means that their associated advertising revenue disappears. Similarly, as consumers move from print to digital, they discard the idea of subscribing to their favourite broadsheet, and embrace the abundance of the online news.

So while the transition to digital offers publishers new audiences and potentially massive revenue streams, it also creates problems which weren't there before.

Publishers need to offer attractive options to all these types of customers:

- People who visit the publisher's site infrequently to read only one particular article can make a one-off pay-as-you-go payment.
- People who visit a site occasionally for a short period of time, say for half an hour, can take out a 30 minute 'all you can eat' microsubscription.



- People who visit a site daily or several times a week, can take out a more conventional subscription.
- Plus for those running an adblocker, an option to make a small payment for an ad-free experience, which will recover revenue lost to adblocking. We have seen that the RPMs for this option regularly outperform the unblocked ads.

Our company offers a solution for each of these: a micropayment pay-as-you-go, microsubscription and subscription option. We also offer an adblocker monetisation option, which readers using an adblocker the choice between ‘whitelisting’ the newspaper in their adblocker or making a simple payment to offset lost advertising revenue. These options put the customer back in the driving seat, while giving publishers new avenues to collect revenue.

We believe that in the digital age, it’s imperative that publishers give consumers the choice of how they spend their money and what they spend it on.

Do micropayments cannibalise advertising revenue?

Publishers have voiced concerns that offering a micropayment option will cannibalise their advertising revenue. With Jamatto now live on 20 publishers’ websites, we’re seeing that those concerns are unfounded. In fact advertising revenues increase because we see that over 70% of people running an adblocker choose to whitelist ads on their favourite news sites – and therefore see ads again.



This figure is substantially higher than reported by other appeals to adblocker users - probably because by adding a micropayment option, people better understand the monetary value of the ads they are blocking and are therefore more inclined to whitelist.

The remaining 30% who choose not to whitelist produce healthy revenues from micropayments and microsubscriptions of between \$2-\$18 per 1000 page views (RPM).

So it's a win-win! Publishers enjoy increased revenues, while consumers choose how they pay to enjoy their content, and the overall customer experience is improved. Later we include an infographic showing the reasons publishers should consider micropayments.

Adblocking

16. Is Adblocking Ethical?

We can see why online news readers like adblockers. The browsing experience is improved as news articles load quickly without their flashy, bulky ad counterparts; and they help the user maintain some online privacy while blocking the tracking that has proliferated across the internet to support the precision of the advertising industry.

However most consumers don't realise that the growing use of adblockers threatens a key revenue stream for publishers around the world, and possibly the news industry as a whole.

Desperate times call for desperate measures

As advertising revenues dry up for publishers, they are forced to resort to some stronger tactics. First and foremost, the ads that make it through to the consumer need to grow bigger, bolder and more intrusive to squeeze revenues from a shrinking customer base. This practice, ironically drives ever more people to adopt adblockers.

Clickbait and pseudo-truth sensationalism is another consequence of falling ad revenue: consumers are often tricked into clicking on ads that masquerade as enticing articles. This decreases consumer confidence, and may even impact on publishers who don't resort to these methods. (I could give you 10 reasons why clickbait is bad for the Internet – [and you'll never believe reason 8](#) – but let's not digress.)

Starved of ad revenues, newsrooms are steadily shrinking, and many have closed down. So our democracies depend on news providers whose sole sources of funding are agenda-driven billionaires or enigmatic state-actors.

The capriciousness of adblockers

Adblockers had a fitful start at the beginning of this decade as a collection of scripts and browser plug-ins used and supported by a small group of technically astute professionals. They understood the privacy issues around online



advertising, the cost of bandwidth, and the relative simplicity of improving a less-than-perfect browsing experience.

But in recent years, the use of adblockers has risen meteorically – spreading through word of mouth, through promotion by telecoms companies anxious to reduce their bandwidth costs, and through industrial-scale decisions by companies like Mozilla and Opera. Controversially, [Apple](#) and [Google](#) now have adblockers built in to their browsers as standard.

What exactly does an adblocker do?

The first generation of adblockers simply blocked advertising images and videos from being downloaded from specific black-listed advertising websites. This relatively simplistic solution was backed by the highest courts as legitimate behaviour: citizens' rights to choose what is downloaded onto their computers trump publishers' rights to earn revenue by showing ads alongside their content. Publishers quickly reacted to this affront to their bottom line by moving their servers around, starting a cat-and-mouse game between themselves and the maintainers of the black-lists.

At some point, adblockers grew weary of the game, and raised the stakes. They began to reverse-engineer the code behind the newspaper websites to determine exactly where ads would appear on a page, and then to make those ads invisible.

In most jurisdictions, reverse-engineering others' code is illegal, especially when it results in financial loss. After all, if reverse-engineering code to hide ads is justifiable, then what about altering code to circumvent paywalls? This pivot in behaviour certainly throws a shadow across the ethics of adblocking.

All the world is made of faith, and trust, and pixie dust...

So just how much trust should consumers put in the ethics of adblockers - who have already shown their hand in their disregard of the livelihood of the publishing industry. Now with hundreds of millions of people using adblockers, the stakes – and potential fortunes – have risen dramatically. Most adblockers operate as browser plug-ins, and unknown to most consumers, plug-ins have alarming access to their browsing activity, able to record every site they visit and every keystroke.

With a remarkable twist, users of adblockers have handed over their deepest secrets to the producers of adblocking software in their bid to protect their privacy

from the machinations of the advertising industry. This is a significant degree of trust to place in an industry that has not yet worked out how to best monetise their hundreds of millions of users.

What hope for the publishers?

Publishers who rely heavily on advertising as a source of their revenues seem to have an increasingly small voice at the table deciding the future of the billion dollar ad industry. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Adverts are not inherently bad or wrong. Indeed, they serve as an effortless mechanism for consumers to reward publishers for their work without having to pull out their credit cards.



Perhaps the best solution is to give readers a choice. Let those who wish to see reasonable ads continue to do so. And for those who prefer not to see ads, offer an alternative. Subscription models have worked historically for the print newspaper industry, and certainly have some role to play as their readers move online. For those consumers now allergic to annual subscriptions, perhaps offer microsubscriptions (one-off ‘subscriptions’ that last a few hours or days) or even pay-as-you-go purchases.

The verdict

Adblocking isn't all bad, but it isn't all good either. There are two reasonable sides to the story for both the adblocker user and the content publisher. Ultimately, a solution is required that will benefit both parties – otherwise both will lose: one their privacy and their pre-post-truth news and entertainment; and the other their business and their livelihood.



Get a free consultation with one of our founders, Dr James Jardine. Jimme has 20 years' experience in banking and payments, and holds a doctorate in Machine Learning from the University of Cambridge. Having worked with many leading publishers in the UK, Europe, US and South Africa over the past 2 years, he has valuable insights to share with publishers. You will come away with tailored and actionable insights to create new revenue streams for your publication.

Go to Insight 3 at: <http://bit.ly/2zPG25K> or

<https://jamatto.com/micropayments-whitepaper/insight3/>

17. The Jamatto Adblock Whitelist-or-Pay Solution

ADBLOCKING TODAY



PENETRATION OF
ADBLOCKERS
THAT'S 200,000,000
CONSUMERS!
\$27 BILLION IN LOST
REVENUE BY 2020

ADBLOCKING TOMORROW



CHROME ADBLOCK
SAFARI COOKIE
POISON
TELCO ADBLOCK
GDPR PRIVACY
VPN PRIVACY

TURN YOUR ZEROS INTO HEROES



YOUR READERS RUNNING
ADBLOCKERS EARN YOU
\$2-\$18 RPMs
THAT'S COMPARABLE
TO PROGRAMMATIC!

GIVE YOUR READERS A CHOICE



AN ON-BRAND POPUP FOR
YOUR ADBLOCKER USERS
WITH 3 CHOICES:
• WHITELIST
• PAY (Apple Pay, Paypal, Stripe)
• OPT OUT (optional)

WHAT YOU GET



ADBLOCK DETECTION
A/B TESTED REVENUE-
OPTIMISING DESIGNS
5 SECOND SIGNUPS
CUSTOMER EMAILS
CUSTOMER PURCHASES

RISK FREE



TARGET JUST YOUR
ADBLOCK USERS

USED ON
15 NEWSPAPERS
4 CONTINENTS

A SHARED DIGITAL WALLET

7 OUT OF 10
CUSTOMERS
TOP-UP REGULARLY



NO LONG OR EXPENSIVE PROJECTS



WITH ONE LINE OF CODE,
ONE OF OUR CUSTOMERS
IMPLEMENTED JAMATTO
IN A RECORD 3 HOURS

Infographics

18. Jamatto Facts & Figures

IMPLEMENTATION EFFORT

1 LINE OF CODE GETS YOU:
CUSTOMIZED PAYWALL
CUSTOMER EMAILS
& SPENDING STATS
PAYPAL, STRIPE
& APPLEPAY
REVENUE A/B TESTS

TRIED AND TESTED AROUND THE WORLD

4 COUNTRIES
USING
JAMATTO

NO LONG OR EXPENSIVE PROJECTS

 **ONE OF OUR CUSTOMERS**
IMPLEMENTED JAMATTO
IN A RECORD 7 HOURS

TRIED AND TESTED ON ALL NEWS TYPES

15 NEWSPAPERS
USING
JAMATTO

A SHARED DIGITAL WALLET

7 OUT OF 10 
CUSTOMERS
TOP-UP
REGULARLY

MONETIZE ALL YOUR CUSTOMER TYPES



SUBSCRIPTIONS: BOOST CONVERSIONS

OVER 
7% of
MICROSUBSCRIPTION
PURCHASERS go on to
PURCHASE 1MONTH+ SUBSCRIPTIONS

ADBLOCKERS: COMPETITIVE RPMs

 **RPMs COMPARABLE TO**
PROGRAMMATIC ADS
\$2 - \$18
FOR ADBLOCKING

19. Some surprising results from our A/B testing...

Small changes make a huge difference!

Can you delve into the psyches of millions of newspaper readers and guess what messaging appealed to them most?

As a micropayments and microsubscriptions provider, we have seen some remarkable differences in the way consumers respond to different conversations around payment. These could be as simple as changing pictures, fonts and colours, and as complex as appealing to detailed behavioural psychology.

A/B testing is often used in marketing and UX design to work out which of a number of options is the most effective in terms of encouraging audiences to behave in a particular way. In our case, we set up variations of a popup, display each of them to a different segment of our millions of consumers, examine the effects on conversion, learn from that, and iterate, iterate, iterate!

When we're working with a newspaper with millions of readers, small changes to a popup can have huge effects on their digital revenues – we're talking hundreds of percent!

Constant testing and iterating is a key part of the Jamatto product – to ensure that publishers continue to attain the best conversion rates possible.

The results of these A/B tests can sometimes be very surprising and somewhat counterintuitive. Check out some of our real examples below and see if you can guess which tests worked best. Answers below!

1. Consumers can find some ads annoying, which drives them to using an adblocker. Here they have the option to buy an ad-free experience while still supporting the newspapers they love.

Match your mood. We experimented with 6 different image and wording combinations to find the most compelling tone for readers. Which was most successful? Try to ignore the redaction clouds...

a.



You're using an adblocker! Using an adblocker hurts our livelihood. You can continue ad-free with a very small payment. Your **first €1** worth of articles **is free** and it takes just seconds to do.

Otherwise, please whitelist us (how?).

Enjoy 1 page for **2c**

1 hour **10c** 1 day **20c**

b.



Oh no, you're using an adblocker!


As your paper is funded by advertisers, please support us by paying a small amount. It takes seconds and you get your **first €1** worth of articles free.

Alternatively, whitelist us (how?) and support your favourite paper.

Enjoy 1 page for **2c**

1 hour **10c** 1 day **20c**

c.



Whitelist us or pay us.

You'll be granted free access to our articles if you whitelist our ads (how?) or pay a small amount below. Purchases can be done in a few seconds and your **first €1** worth will be free.

Thank you for your support.

Enjoy 1 page for **2c**

1 hour **10c** 1 day **20c**

d.



Your adblocker hurts our livelihood! Without ads, we need a new way to continue paying our staff. Help us by paying a small amount. Your **first €1** is **free** and it takes seconds.

Otherwise, please whitelist us (how?). Thanks for your support.

Enjoy 1 page for **2c**

1 hour **10c** 1 day **20c**

e.



Oh no! You've blocked our ads. Don't like seeing them? You can continue ad-free by paying a bit towards the quality work our editorial staff do. It'll take seconds and you'll even get your **first €1** free.

Otherwise, please whitelist us (how?). We value your support.

Enjoy 1 page for **2c**

1 hour **10c** 1 day **20c**

f.



Think adblockers are harmless?

Wrong. It costs you nothing, but it costs us everything. It costs us jobs, quality, and hurts the community. Please whitelist us (how?) or pay a small amount for the work we do. It takes seconds and you get your **first €1** free.

Enjoy 1 page for **2c**

1 hour **10c** 1 day **20c**

2. Here's another whitelist vs adblock combo.

Which is more likely to entice you into buying an ad-free experience - appealing to your ethics, comparing it to the price of a coffee or receiving a free gift?

a.



b.



c.



3. All or nothing, it's got to be...

What's more likely to convert - clicking on an article and finding the whole screen covered, or just the article itself? Which one convinced more people to pay for an ad-free experience?

a.

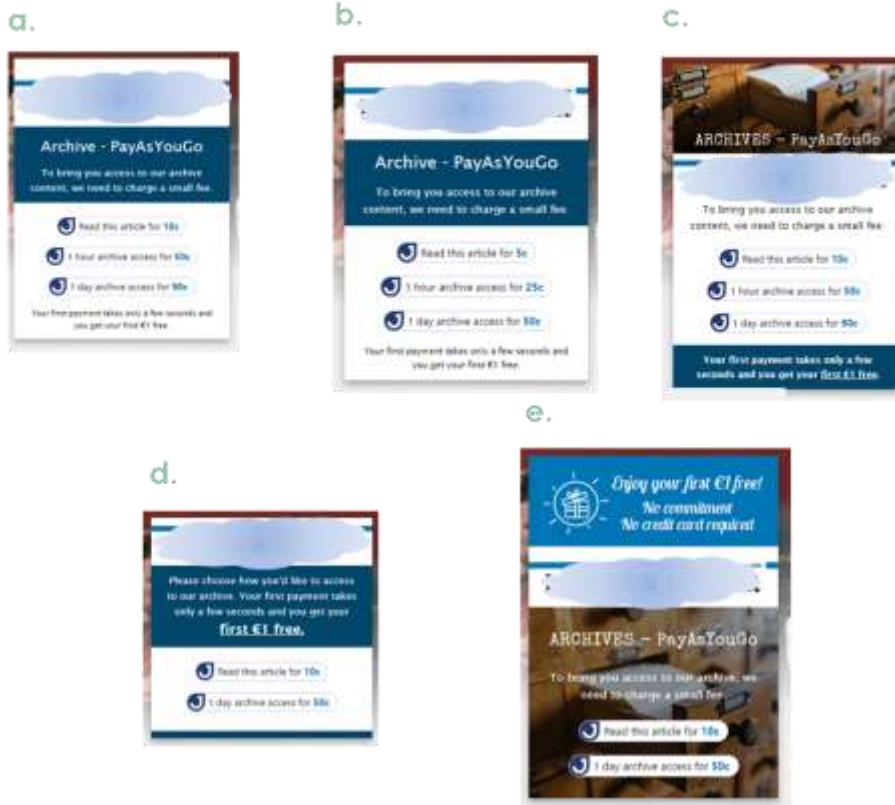


b.



4. Newspapers often have lots of interesting content in their archives. And consumers are willing to pay for it!

Wording, imaging, choosing, or pricing – which one encouraged the most people to pay for access to the newspaper archives?



5. The devil is in the detail.

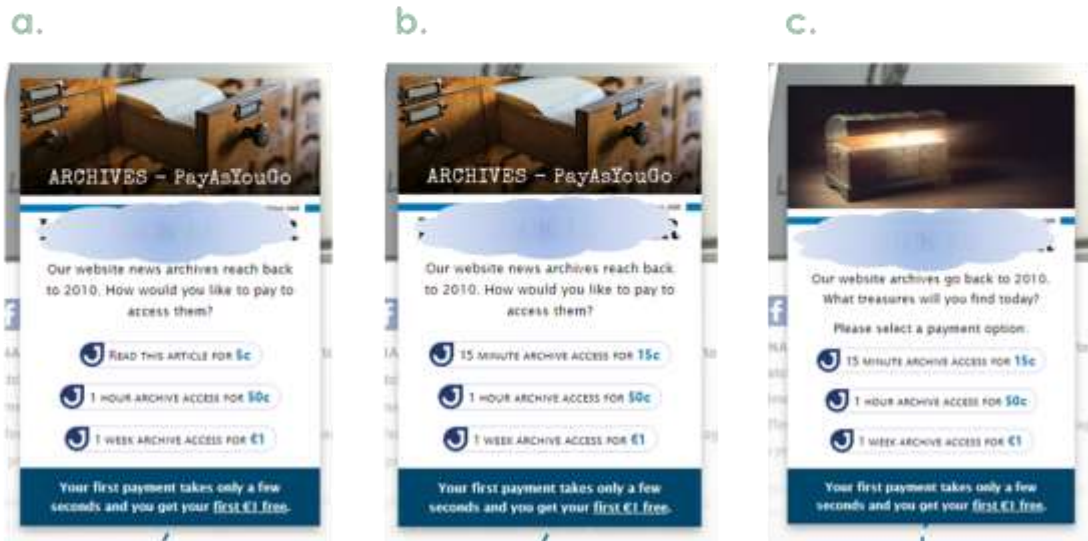
Exposing some of an article entices people to pay for access to it. There was a clear winner here – how much of an article should you show for maximum conversion?

- a. 0% b. 20% c. 40% d. 60%



6. You might find treasure in the archives...

Pay-as-you-go vs. microsubscriptions, or the lure of treasure...
Which one worked best for our readers?



CURIOUS TO KNOW THE ANSWERS?

1. **Option f** was a clear winner – being almost twice as good as the next best **option b**.
2. **Option a** was the most successful overall, being double the conversions of **option c** and a third more than **option b**.
3. **Option a** and b were similar in terms of getting people to whitelist. However **option a** resulted in 30% more purchases subscriptions.
4. **Option d** was the best of those offering the article at the 10c price point – 50% better than the worst, **option a**. Overall **option b** resulted in the most single purchases, but as the cheapest option its revenues were not as compelling as those of **option d**.
5. There was a clear winner here: **Option b** beat the next best by 100%.
6. Treasures and microsubscriptions work a treat! **Option c** was around a third better than **option a**, and 10% ahead of **option b**.

20. In Conclusion

While there are plenty of changes for publishers and the news industry in particular to contend with, there are many opportunities, as well as technologies available to benefit from these.

We've created solutions which help publishers respond to changes – for example by installing our adblock, donation, microsubscription/pay-as-you go and 'Zen Mode' apps. They are then able to cater to the preferences of every type of reader, and access multiple revenue streams as a result.

Readers get simple and fast options to read content in the way they want, while they reward publishers for good content.

We've already seen some exciting results from having our solution live on sites across the world. Be sure to check our website from time to time for updates and new infographics.

We can only guess at what further disruptions may be in store for the publishing industry. However we believe that publishers will future-proof themselves by providing consumers with quick and easy ways to pay for the experiences they want. These novel ways of giving readers what that they want may even set them apart from their competitors and put them ahead of the game.

Please note that all facts and figures are correct as of July 2018. Find our latest news and insights on our website at www.jamatto.com.