

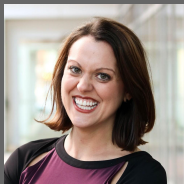
The Paths to Subscription

Center for Cooperative Media
Montclair State University - 2018

AMERICANPRESS
institute

AMERICANPRESS

institute



The American Press Institute advances an innovative and sustainable news industry by helping publishers understand and engage **audiences, grow revenue, improve public-service journalism, and succeed at organizational change.**

The big picture

What's happening

Journalism is moving away from ads, toward subscribers

This is actually GREAT for journalists and the business...

... but requires changes

Implications of the subscriber shift

From: Chasing pageviews and scale

To: Earning quality, substantive, loyal individual relationships



Implications of the subscriber shift

From: Writing lots of stories; or
writing “good” stories

To: Writing the right stories (for the
right audiences) using data and active
listening



Implications of the subscriber shift

From: Newsroom is a cost center
owners need but minimize

To: Newsroom is the engine of our
consumer relevance and loyalty



Major API Focus

With AP-NORC, we've been engaged several studies of why people subscribe

- General population survey
- Human Centered Design personas
- Recent subscribers....



The Media Insight Project

AMERICANPRESS
institute



NORC
at the UNIVERSITY of CHICAGO



The paths to subscription

How we did the study

“Paths to Subscription”

- 90 local newspapers
- 4 circulation categories
- 4,100 recent subscribers
 - Print and digital
 - Subscribed within 90 days

A mix of factors affect subscriptions

Some factors you control...

- Pricing strategy
- Promotions and messaging
- Quality of reporting
- Command of analytics
- Social and mobile platform use

Some you don't...

- Changes in life circumstances
- Their interest in local news
- Friends and family usage

Background

Preconditions that make people open to or willing to eventually subscribe.

Trigger

Specific event or action that caused someone to finally purchase the subscription.

Retention

Sources of value and satisfaction that make subscribers want to continue the relationship.

There are
MYRIAD
background factors

Background factors:

60%

want easy access to local news

Background factors:

40%

notice a lot of useful
or interesting articles over time

Background factors:

31%

feel it is important to
support local journalism

BUT ONE FACTOR

DOMINATES

AS A FINAL TRIGGER

45%

of recent subscribers are triggered
by ***a discount or trial offer***

more than double any other trigger

And after subscribing,
quality matters for
retention

Retention:

78%

of subscribers highly value getting
“reliable, accurate facts”

Retention:

68%

of subscribers highly value the paper
“dealing fairly with all sides”

Most subscribers
walk a long path

73%

of those who used the product before subscribing
did so for at least a few months...

49%

did so for **over a year** before paying

**If you remember
only one thing
from this talk today....
It should be this:**

**There are several
different kinds of
subscribers...**

And many
paths to subscription

**You must have a
varied strategy to
find them....**

And that means
understanding your
audience data
better than you may now

9 paths to subscribing

```
graph TD; A[9 paths to subscribing] --- B[Digital Paywall Converters]; A --- C[Topic Hunters]; A --- D[The Locally Engaged]; A --- E[Social-Mobile Discoverers]; A --- F[Journalism Advocates]; A --- G[Life Changers]; A --- H[Coupon Clippers]; A --- I[Print Fans]; A --- J[Friends and Family Motivated];
```

Digital
Paywall
Converters

Topic
Hunters

The Locally
Engaged

Social-Mobile
Discoverers

Journalism
Advocates

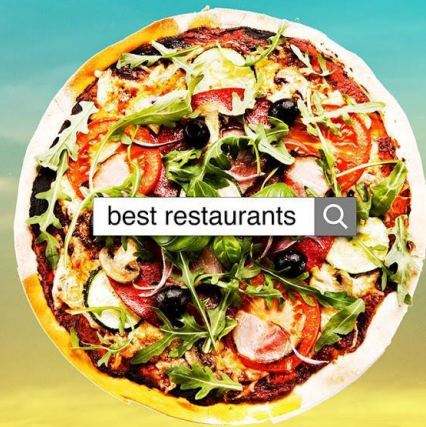
Life Changers

Coupon
Clippers

Friends and
Family
Motivated

Print Fans

TOPIC HUNTERS



Topic Hunters...

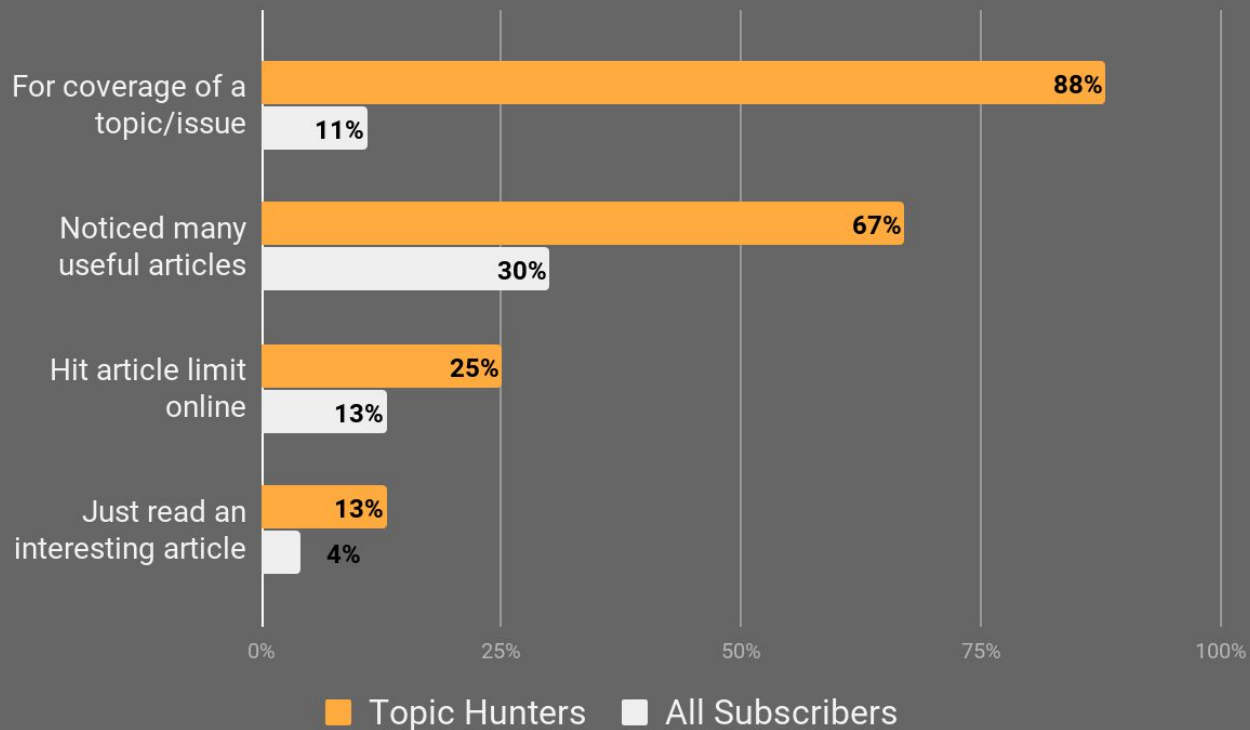
- Are highly interested in 1-2 subjects
- Subscribed because of that coverage
- Follow journalists on social media
- Many convert by meter / great article
- **23% of new subscribers**

“

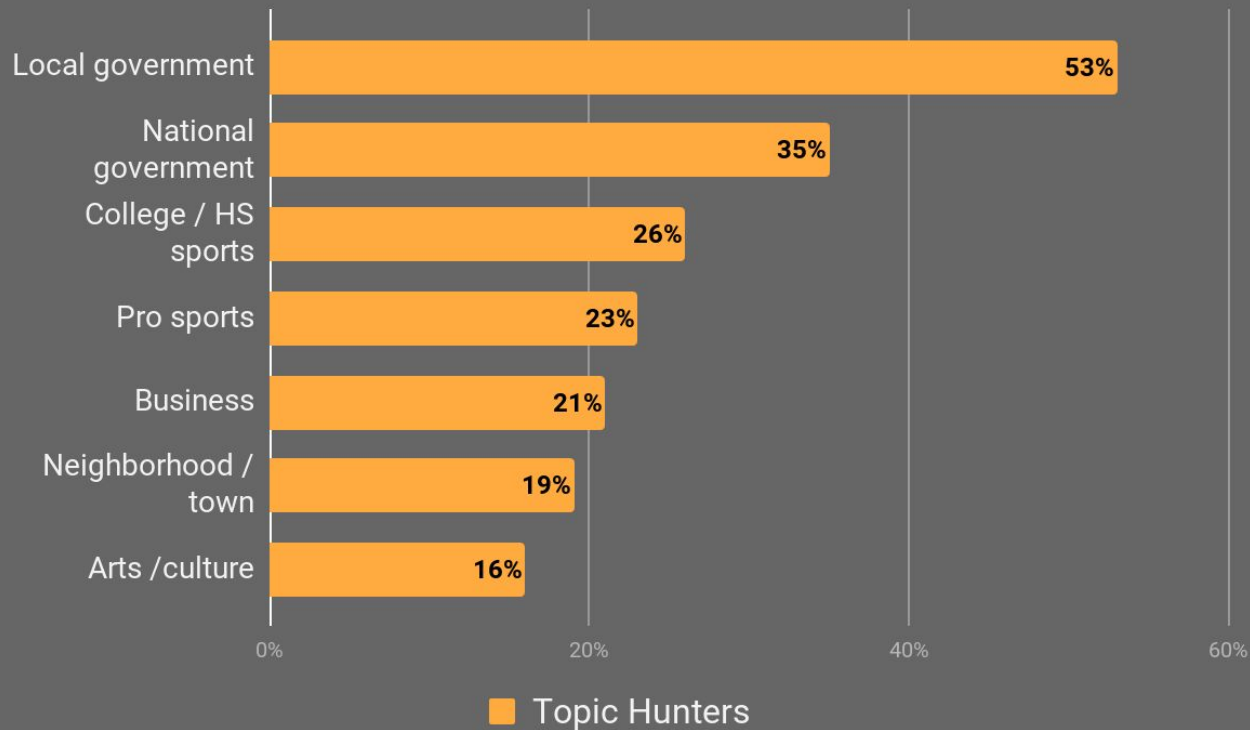
I really liked their election coverage.

They went the extra mile to interview a very high percentage of the candidates, which greatly helped me to decide who to vote for.

Reasons they subscribed



What topics they follow most



Tactics for Topic Hunters

- Track users by topic (it's not as hard as you think)
- Tailor digital messaging to what people read
- Create topic-specific newsletters and podcasts
- Have journalists use social media to engage readers and build following
- Host sponsored events on popular topics

NEW A Philly friend of Ben Franklin may have invented one of the first semi-automatic weapons

Philly Beer

It might be a marketing slogan, but anyone who lives here knows that Philadelphia really is “America’s best beer-drinking city.” The region’s been awash in great independent breweries since the 1990s, and distributors here started importing beer from Belgium before any others in the US. These days, the taprooms that dot almost every corner of the city serve everything great locally, all the best from Europe, and also rare brews from the rest of the country. Plus, Philly is finally experiencing a brewery boom of its own, with more in-city brewhouses opening than ever before (unless you go back to before Prohibition).

Last Updated: Sep 28 2017 · 9:41 a.m.

Get email notifications whenever we write about **Philly Beer**

Follow This

Get Billy Penn
every day in your inbox

- Top news highlights and can't-miss Philly stories
- Upcoming events and activities in your area for you and your family
- Check out a [sample from today's newsletter](#)

Sign Up

Billy Penn — topical news alerts

PMN Events

MONTHLY

Learn about upcoming Inquirer, Daily News & Philly.com events.

Sign Up



Phillies Newsletter

DAILY

The best Phillies coverage every day, from spring training through the push to October

Things To Do

THURSDAYS

Stay up to speed on concerts, exhibits, film screenings and family events.

Sign Up



Dining In and Out

THURSDAYS

Get recipes, restaurant news and the latest from Inquirer food critic Craig LeBar

Sports

DAILY

The day's biggest stories for Philly's biggest sports fans.

Sign Up



Business

WEEKDAYS

Learn about the latest business developments happening locally, regionally and nationwide

Philadelphia Media Network — topical newsletters



On Point

Catch up on insightful commentary and news analysis with this weekly opinion newsletter.

[SIGN UP >](#)



Dallas Cowboys

Stay up-to-date on all things Dallas Cowboys.

[SIGN UP >](#)



High School Sports

Get the scoop on hot topics, story lines, stats, photos and more about Texas high school sports in the D-FW area.

[SUBSCRIBED! >](#)



Dallas Morning News — topical newsletters



Tweets	Following	Followers	Likes	Lists
15.5K	510	2,765	5,504	2

Carlos Frías ✓

@Carlos_Frias

Writer, father, eater, sleeper,
@MiamiHeraldFood editor and author of
"Take Me With You: A Secret Search for
Family in a Forbidden Cuba" Recovering
sportswriter

Tweets Tweets & replies Media

📌 Pinned Tweet



Carlos Frías ✓ @Carlos_Frias · 4 Oct 2017

Still a little dizzy from writing this last night after watching my girls compete on @FoodNetwork's "Chopped"



Promote Star Journalists: Miami Herald food editor



THE LOCALLY ENGAGED

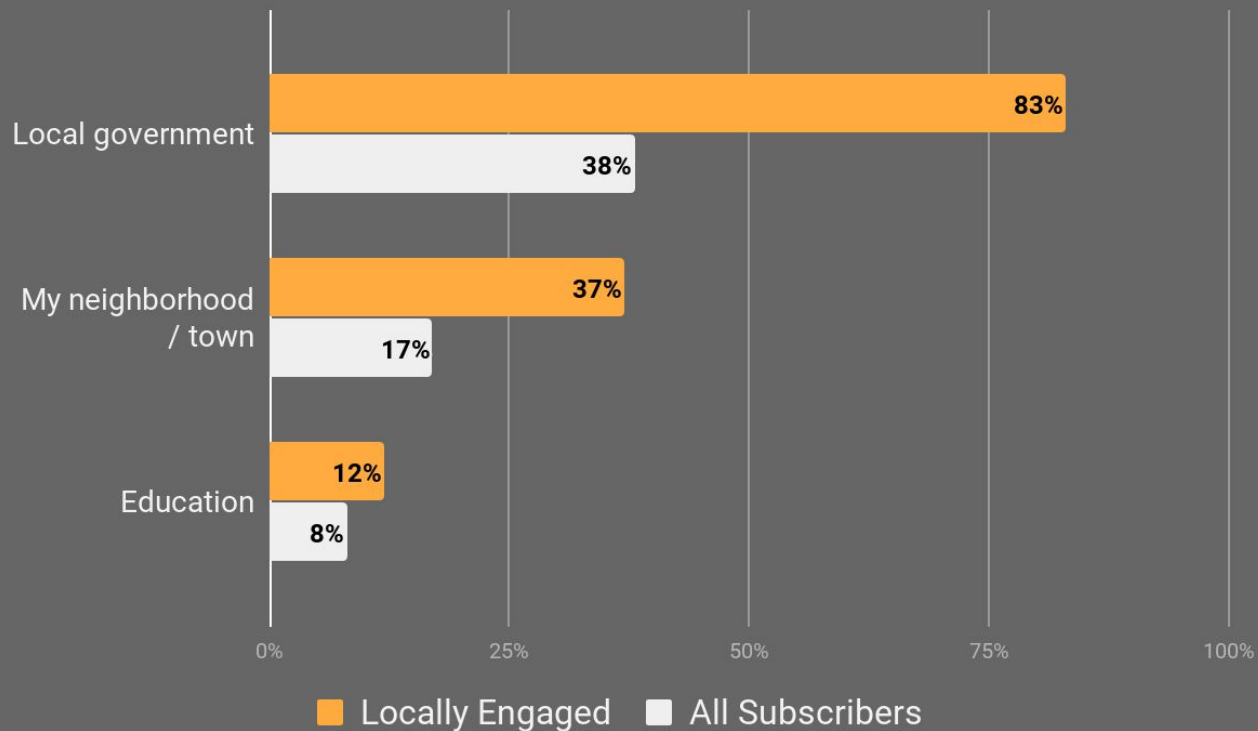
The Locally Engaged...

- Care about the community
- Strong desire for local news
- Don't demand price discounts
- More common at small or medium papers
- **18% of new subscribers**

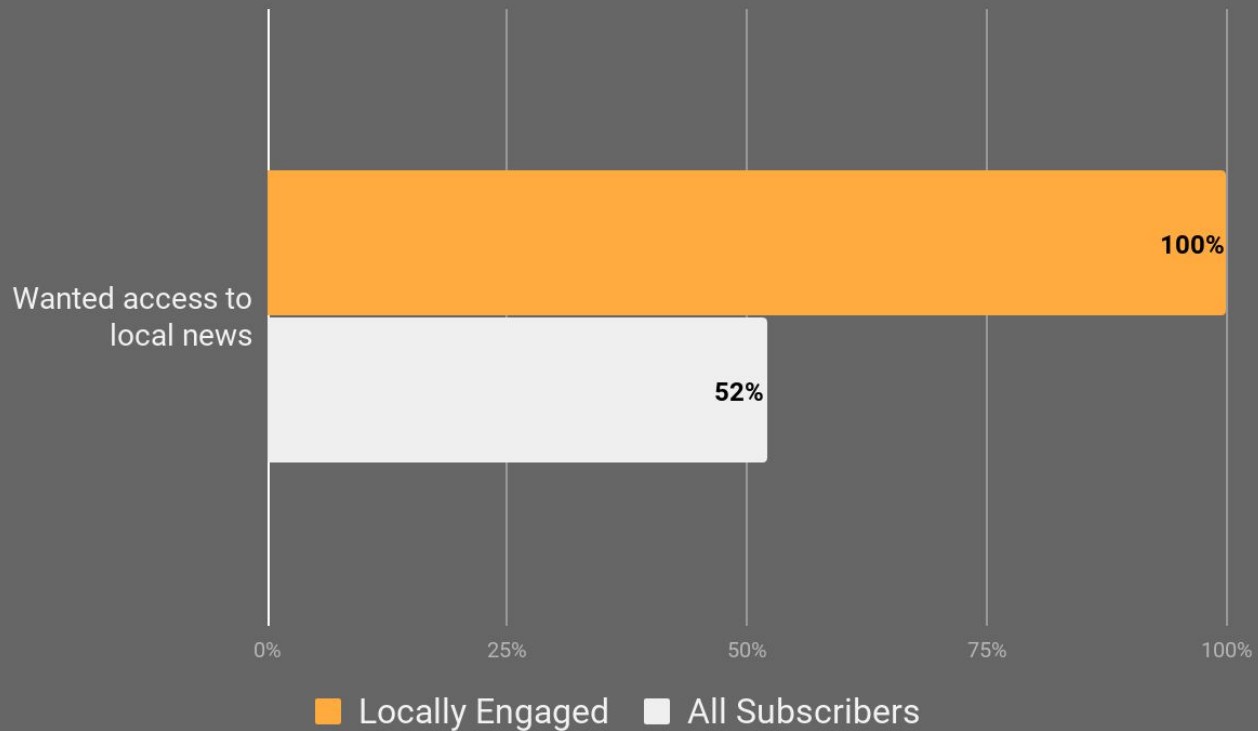
“

It has all the local news and special events for the immediate area, plus good deals for free or discounted food in area restaurants.

What topics they follow most



Why they were willing to pay



Tactics for the Locally Engaged

- Identify through data and participation in civic events and more
- Seek partnerships with local civic-minded organizations
- Create email alerts and newsletters around local civic topics
- Establish bulk subscription packages for schools and universities

Be in the know!

Have PMN Event announcements delivered to your inbox

By signing up you indicate that you have read and agree to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

Sign Up



Concerts & Music >

Free Student Recital Series

Friday, February 16, 2018 8:00 PM

Sporting Events >

Valentine's Day Weekend Kids Lock-In

Gardening & Outdoors >

Winter Tree Identification

Friday, February 16, 2018 10:00 AM

Museums & The Arts >

Not Ready to Make Nice: Guerrilla Girls in the Artworld & Beyond

Philadelphia Media Network — events announcements



Breakfast with Business First | Navigator Management Partners

[Register](#)[Information](#)[Sponsors](#)

Looking for a great networking opportunity? Then join us for our monthly Breakfast with Business First events. Meet other local business owners, executives and entrepreneurs. Get to know our Venue Sponsor and pitch story ideas to our editorial team.



WHEN

Friday, February 23, 2018

7:00am -9:00am

[Add to my calendar](#)

WHERE

**Navigator Management Partners,
LLC**

1400 Goodale Blvd Suite 100,
Columbus, OH 43212

Local in-person networking

SOCIAL-MOBILE DISCOVERERS



Social-Mobile Discoverers...

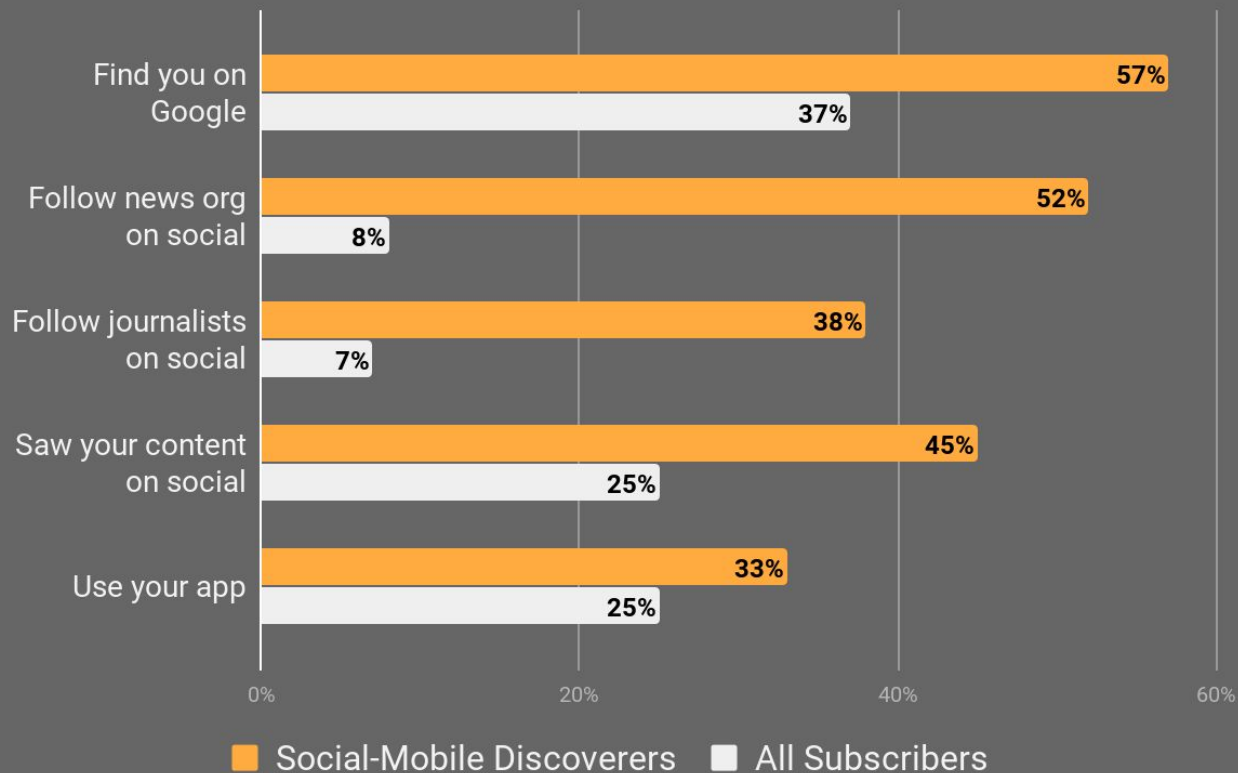
- **19% of new subscribers**
- Get news often on cell phone
- Use social media often
- Follow your journalists on social
- Engagement leads to subscriptions



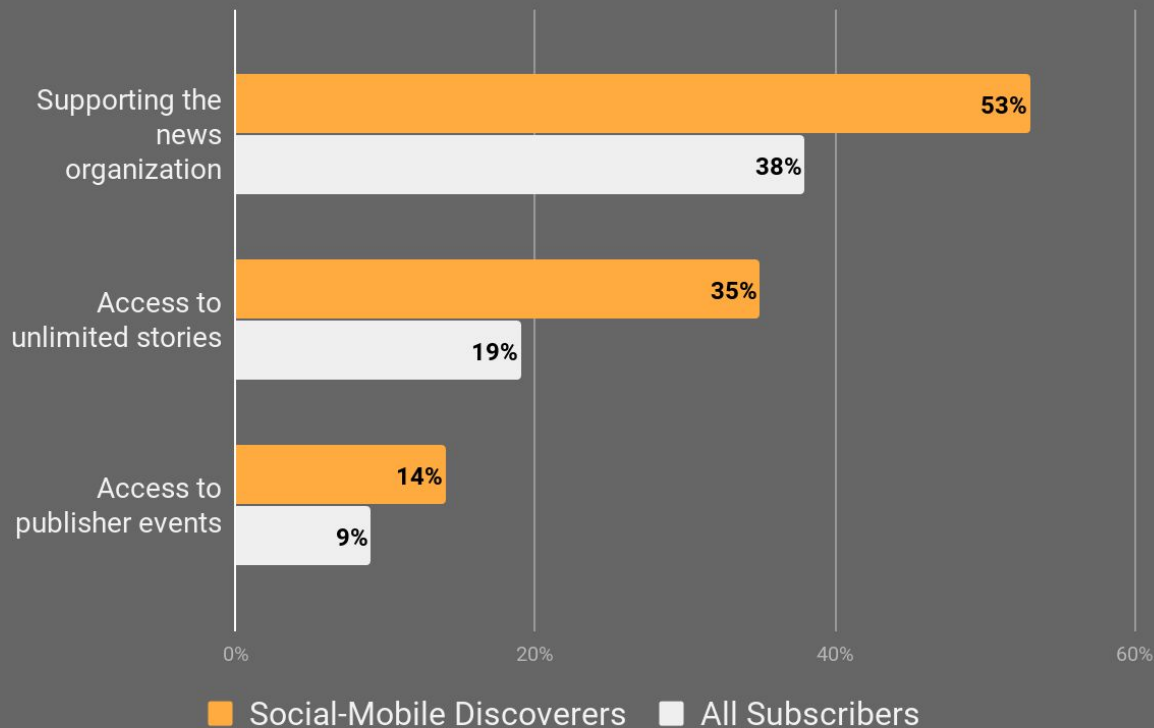
I was reading articles online from following them on social media and enjoying them.

I also started listening to their podcast.

How they engage before subscribing




Subscription benefits they value



Tactics for Social-Mobile Discoverers

- Use social media for deep relationships, not just traffic
- Put best content on social media platforms
- Encourage sharing, following
- Respond to comments, questions and complaints
- Create Facebook groups around topics or for subscribers
- Relax paywall meter to accommodate sharing



The Dallas Morning News 

@dallasmorningnews

Home

About

Groups

Posts

Videos

Photos

Events

Live Videos


Community

Create a Page



 Like  Follow  Share 

Sign Up

 Send Message

Groups



Dallas Parents

Closed Group
638 members

Join



Texana: A celebration of Texas

Public Group
1,195 members

Join



Charlie Scudder posted:

 1 Response



Questions of Color

Closed Group
229 members

Join


[See All Groups](#)


Newspaper in Dallas, Texas

Community

[See All](#)

 Invite your friends to like this Page

 411,664 people like this

 404,025 people follow this

About

[See All](#)

 (214) 977-8222

 Typically replies within an hour
[Send Message](#)

 dallasnews.com

 Newspaper · Media/News Company

 [Suggest Edits](#)

Dallas Morning News — Facebook groups



Tweets **35.4K** Following **950** Followers **22.7K** Likes **1,363** Lists **7**

Carol Rosenberg ✓

@carolrosenberg

Reports on Guantánamo Bay, the place, policy, people and war court for the Miami Herald -- with full confidence that our readers can handle the truth.

miamiherald.com/guantanamo

Joined April 2009

Tweets **Tweets & replies** Media

📌 Pinned Tweet



Carol Rosenberg ✓ @carolrosenberg · Feb 16

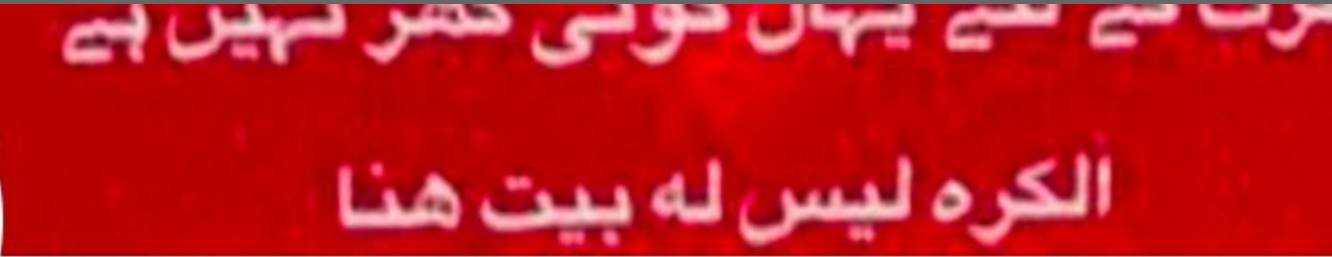
Still scratching your head over today's startling shutdown of the war court's longest running death-penalty case? Here's where it began.



Who to



Miami Herald — Gitmo reporter



Tweets **42.4K** Following **2,484** Followers **8,844** Likes **2,453** Lists **1** Moments **1**

Helen Ubiñas ✓

@NotesFromHeL

Insubordinate. Columnist at
[@PhillyDailyNews](#) [@PhillyInquirer](#)
[@phillydotcom](#), via [@HartfordCourant](#).
ubinas@philly.com

[philly.com/philly/columni...](#)

Tweets **Tweets & replies** Media

📌 Pinned Tweet



Helen Ubiñas ✓ @NotesFromHeL · Feb 8
When I'm lost, I write. I wrote this about my boy.



Philadelphia Media Network – Columnist



LIFE CHANGERS

Life Changers...

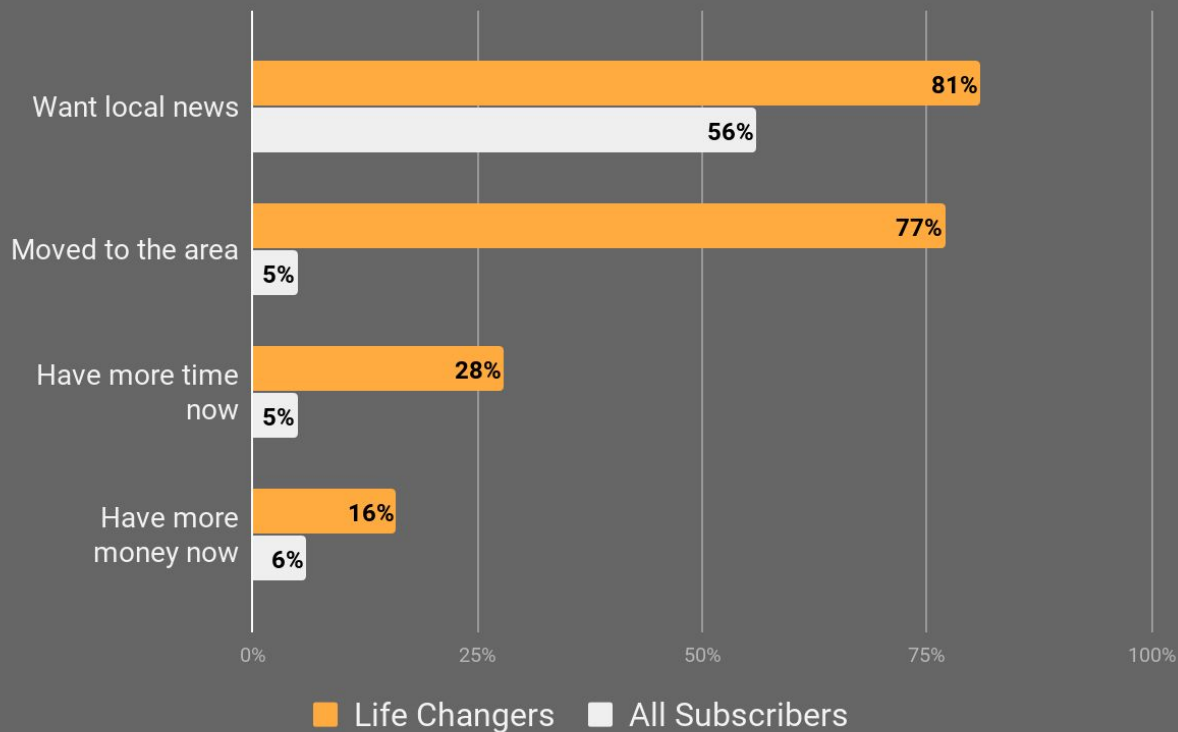
- Recently moved to the area
- New job or other lifestyle change
- Always wanted to subscribe
- Now they became able to
- **16% of new subscribers**

“

I am new to the area.

I want to learn about my new home area.

Why they are willing to pay



Tactics for Life Changers

- Partner with realtors, landlords to make offers to new residents
- Partner with employers to offer discounts to new hires
- Rent or trade mail and email marketing lists for promotions
- Target students and recent grads with newsletters
- Increase retention of retired 'snowbirds' by increasing their digital usage



NEWCOMER'S GUIDE ATLANTA

NEWCOMER'S GUIDE TO ATLANTA ↗

Whether you're contemplating a move or have lived here for years, this guide should have you feeling like a native in no time.

- MOVING TO COBB
- MOVING TO DEKALB
- MOVING TO GWINNETT
- MOVING TO NORTH FULTON
- MOVING TO ATLANTA
- HOUSE HUNTING

MOVING TO COBB



Atlanta Journal Constitution — “Moving to...”



COUPON CLIPPERS



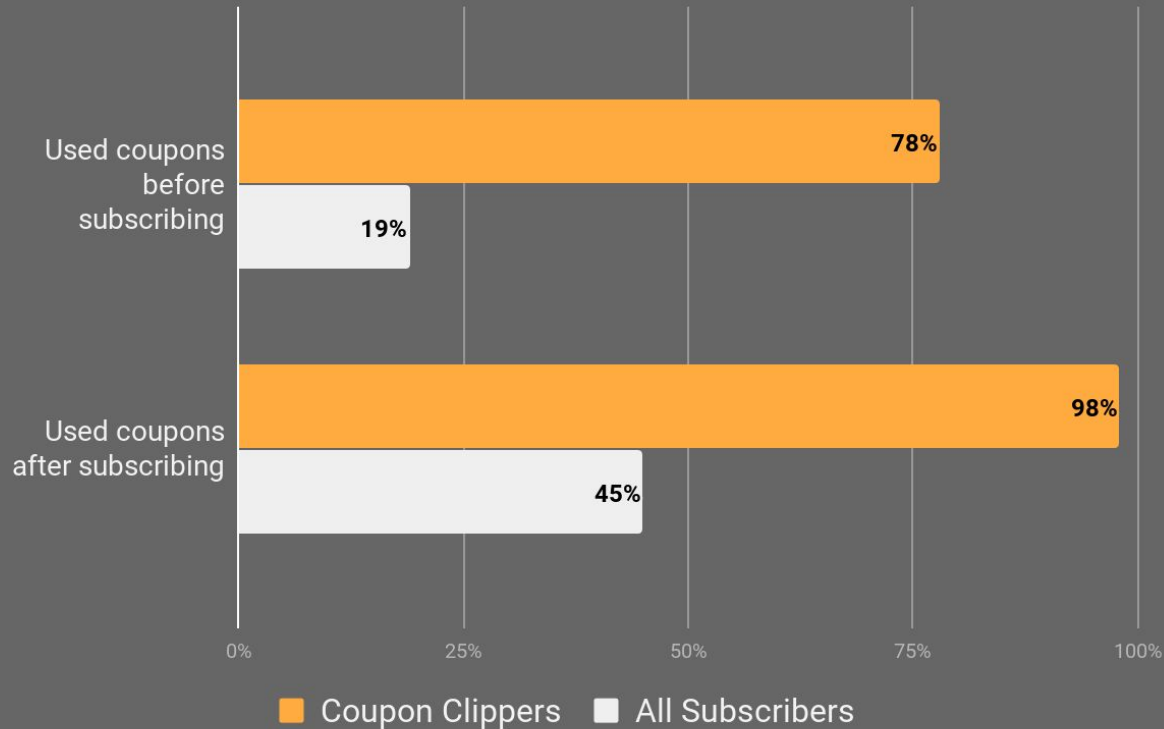
Coupon Clippers...

- Like clipping coupons from print
- Care less about news content
- Bought or borrowed print copies before
- Highly discount-motivated
- **12% of new subscribers**

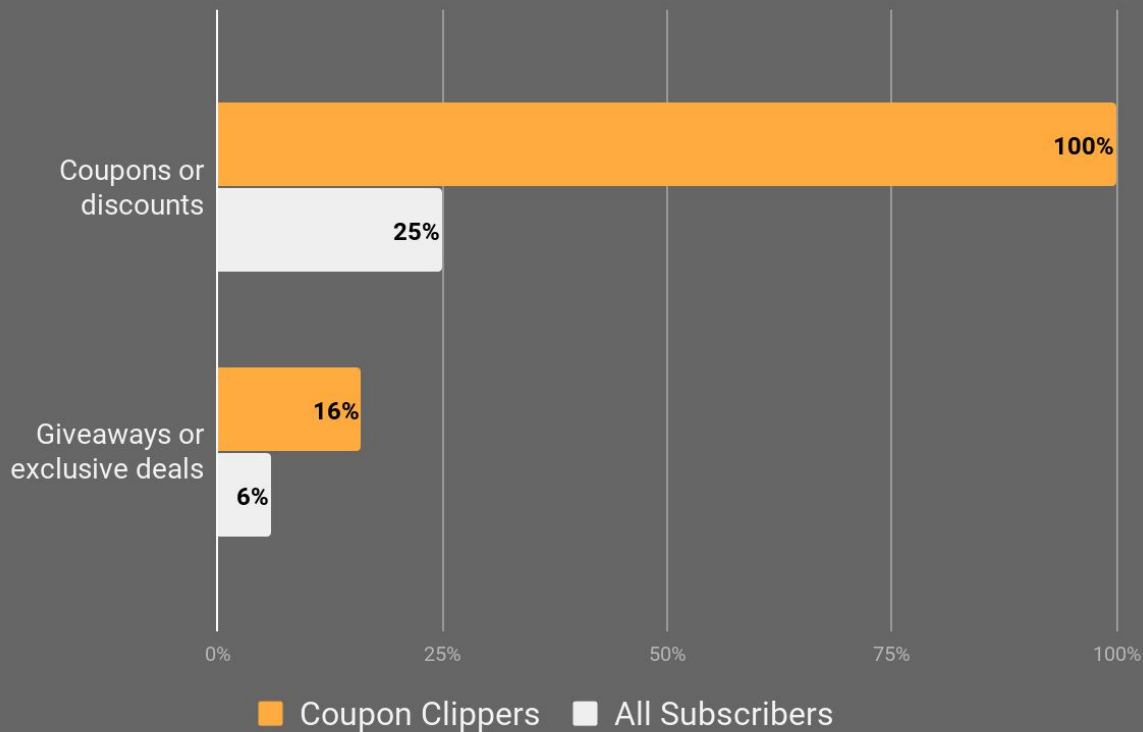


I need to get Sunday coupons for grocery shopping somehow.

When they use the coupons



Subscription benefits they value



Tactics for Coupon Clippers

- Hold workshops to teach consumers how to maximize coupons
- Sell subscriptions at those events
- Promote a specific issue that has a lot of coupons
- Add sticker/wrap promoting to the coupons at newsstands/retail

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FREE Couponing Event in Beachwood

AT THE DOUBLETREE BY HILTON CLEVELAND EAST BEACHWOOD

Learn Extreme Savings, Without Extreme Effort!

[LEARN MORE](#)

[See all benefits](#)



FREE Couponing Event in Middleburg Heights

AT THE CROWN PLAZA CLEVELAND AIRPORT

Learn Extreme Savings, Without Extreme Effort!

[LEARN MORE](#)

[See all benefits](#)

Cleveland Plain Dealer — Couponing events

PRINT FANS



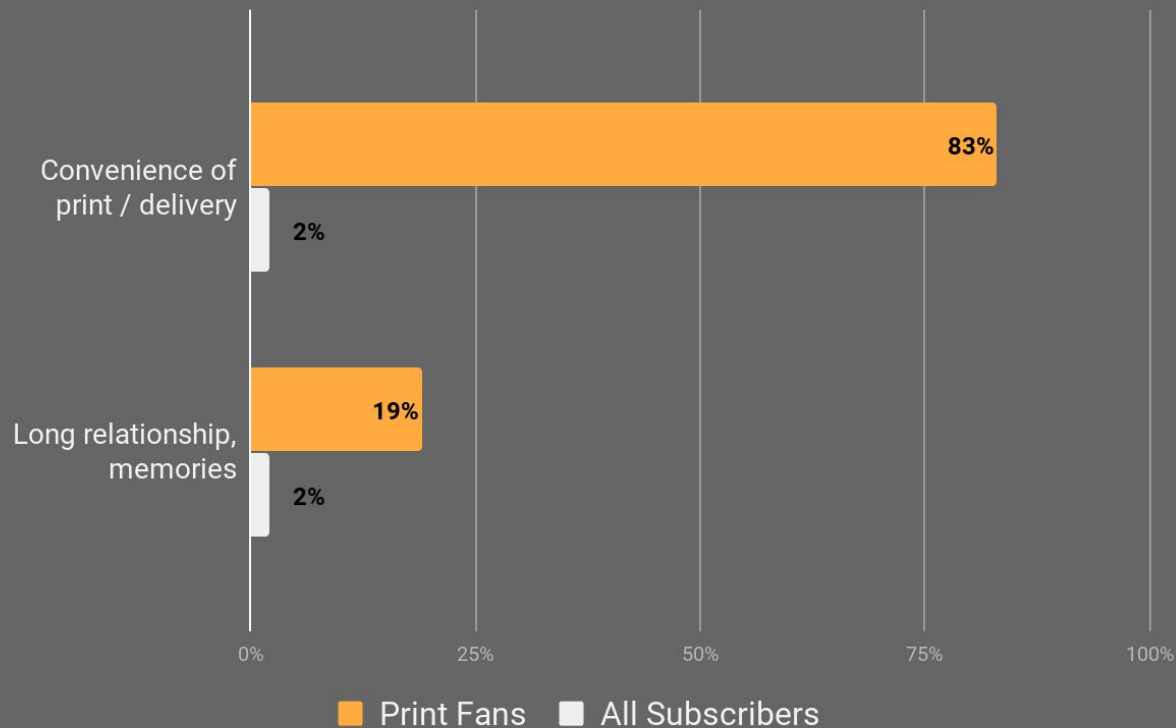
Print Fans...

- Prefer print “experience” to digital
- Like the convenience of print
- Morning ritual
- Nostalgia, memories
- **16% of new subscribers**

“

I love getting a newspaper in my hand in the morning before my day begins.

Why they subscribed



Tactics for Print Fans

- Underscore the print experience and convenience in promotions
- Implement account activation campaigns to increase digital usage
- Use e-edition as a bridge to engage print subscribers online

Be at Home in the World with Home Delivery. 50% off for 12 weeks.

Get The Times Print Edition, The Times Sunday Magazine, T: The Times Style Magazine and The New York Times Book Review delivered right to your home.

You'll also enjoy unlimited app and online access plus Times Insider access, which provides firsthand accounts of Times journalism direct from Times staffers.



Explore delivery options.

Home Delivery is available in most major markets across the United States. For availability and prices in your area, please enter your ZIP code.

[View Subscription Options](#)

Special rates for [Students](#), [Faculty](#), [Teachers](#)

New York Times — “Be at home in the world”

The Kansas City Star Digital Newspaper

E-STAR



The Kansas City Star Digital Newspaper is an exact replica of the daily paper, available on PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone, Android and most other smartphones and tablets. You'll love the convenience, at home or on the go.

Read today's paper

[Desktop and Laptop users: click here](#)

[Tablet and Phone users: click here](#)

5 Reasons to Subscribe

- **Convenient:** Get the paper anywhere you have a computer and Internet access, anytime of the day or night.

Kansas City Star — Digital newspaper

FRIENDS AND FAMILY



Friends or Family group...

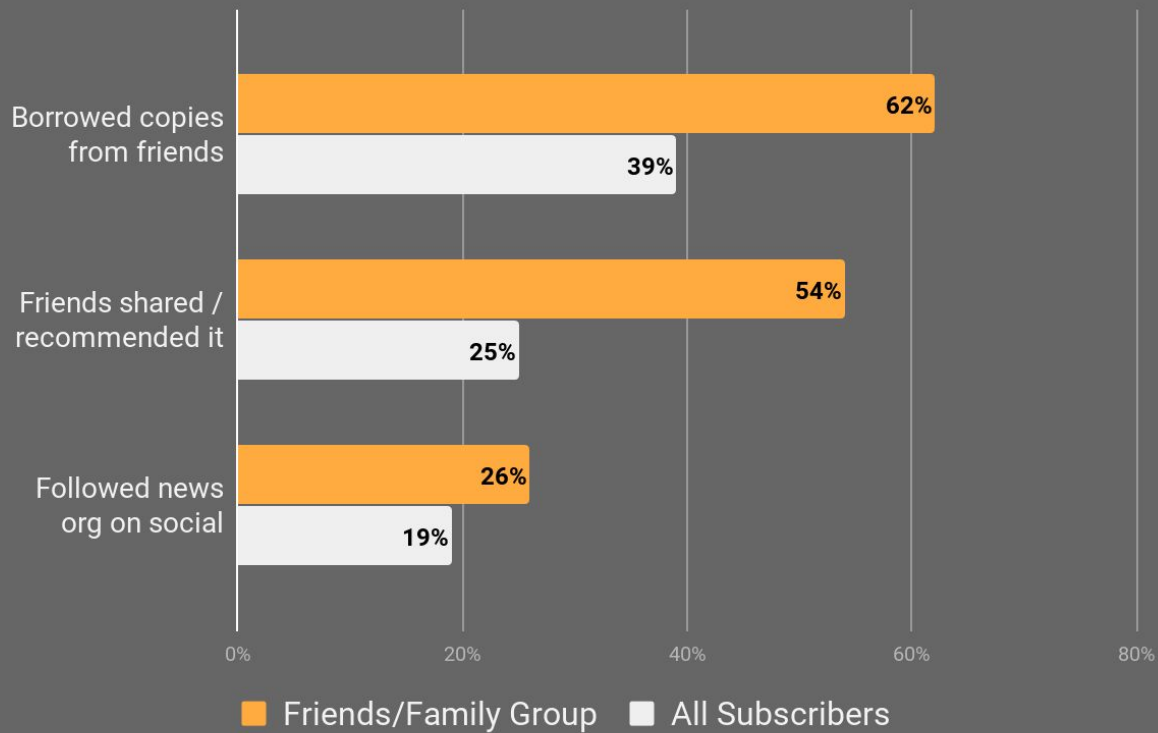
- Friends/family use the same source
- Talk to friends about the news
- See friends sharing the news
- Friend encouraged subscribing
- **15% of new subscribers**

“

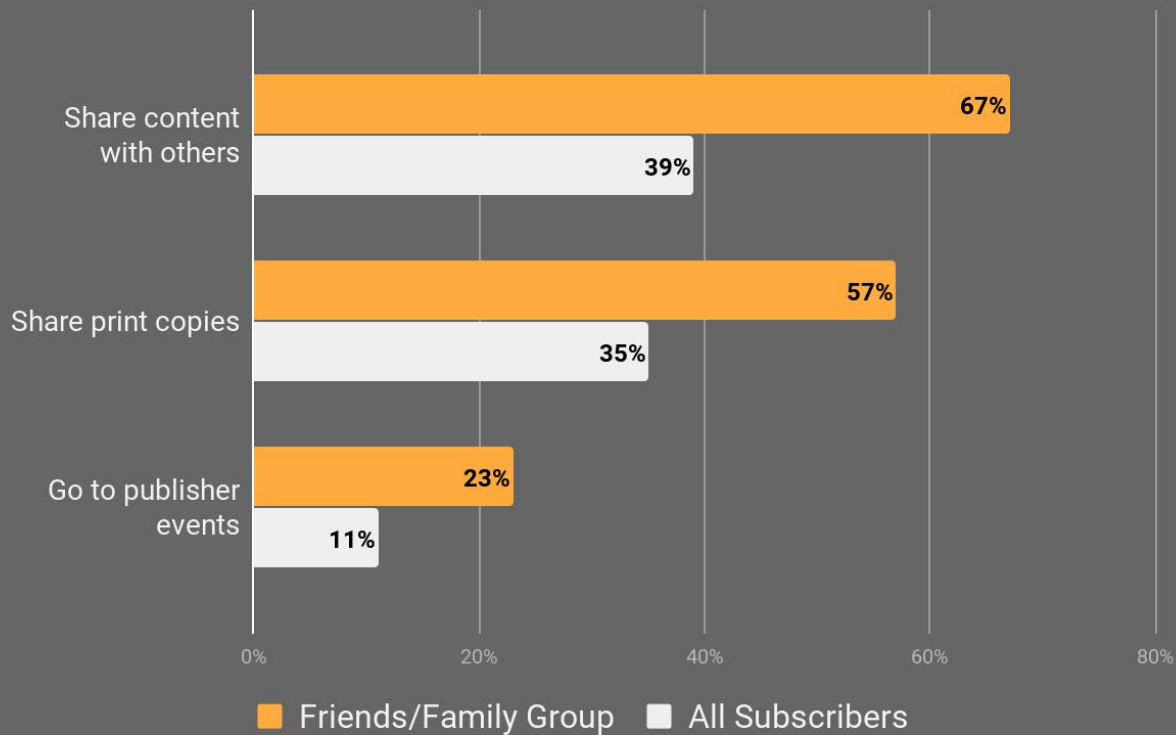
My parents read the LA Times religiously.

I took over their subscription upon their death. It speaks to me and to my community.

How they engage before subscribing



How they engage after subscribing



Tactics for Friends and Family

- Implement a “refer a friend” program
- Offer and promote gift subscriptions
- Offer “family plan” subscription with extra logins for introductory period (more than two people)
- Bundled subscription packages including print and digital

GET IN-DEPTH COVERAGE FROM THE LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Print + Digital



- Get unlimited access to local and breaking news at home or on the go.
- Log on from any device, and immerse yourself in the Las Vegas Review-Journal's exclusive interactive multimedia stories.
- Read today's paper in a page-by-page format with the eEdition.
- Plus, get exclusive digital extras every day and share your subscription with up to 4 household members.
- Sign up for one or all of our FREE newsletters. [Click Here.](#)

Digital Only



ACTIVATE DIGITAL ACCESS

Las Vegas Review-Journal

Las Vegas Review-Journal — “Share with 4 household members”

Unlimited Digital Access

When you sign up today, you'll get full access to our premium website HoustonChronicle.com and have the daily eNewspaper delivered to your email every morning. Plus, you'll receive our iPad® app, all included with your subscription.

Like to share?

- Have a family member in the military, away at university, or at the same dinner table? Share digital access with four additional family members.
- Like starting conversations on social media? It's easy to share articles and discuss them with your friends and family.

Sunday Home Delivery

For a limited time, we're offering to subscribe at a special rate just for you!

- Save hundreds of dollars with coupons and inserts — the Sunday print edition is so packed with value, your subscription practically pays for itself!
- Get in-depth coverage of issues that affect you, your family, your community and Houston — from local news, arts and healthcare, to the best coverage in town of your favorite professional, college and high school sports teams.

Plus Unlimited Digital Access

When you sign up today, you'll get full access to our premium website HoustonChronicle.com and have the daily eNewspaper delivered to your email every morning. Plus, you'll receive our iPad® app, all

Houston Chronicle — Share with four family members

Give the Facts. Give the World. Give The Times.

Save up to 50% on gift subscriptions.

Choose your billing preference:

26 Weeks

One Year

Basic



\$143 (reg. \$195)

All Access



\$195 (reg. \$325)

Home Delivery + All Access



\$241 (reg. \$468)

New York Times — Gift subscriptions

DIGITAL PAYWALL CONVERTERS



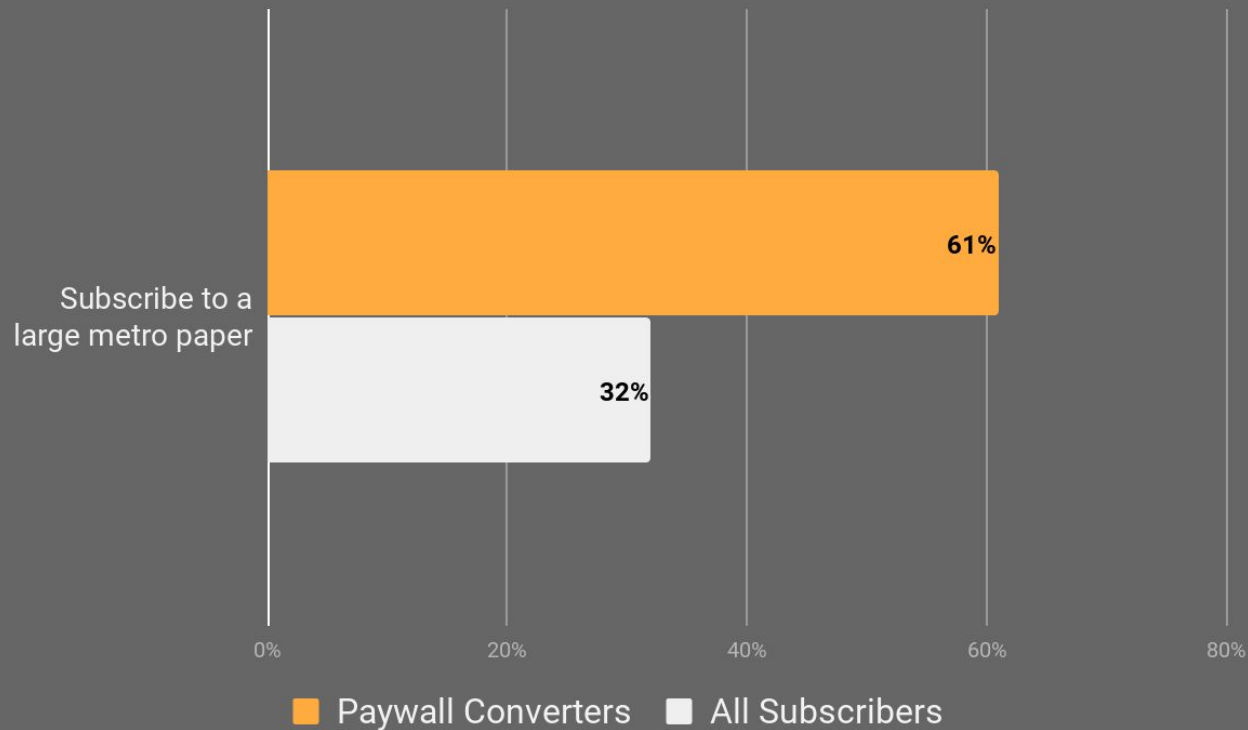
Digital Paywall Converters...

- Hit a limit of free stories online
- Wanted unlimited access
- Driven by seeing interesting articles
- Also want to support local journalism
- 21% of new subscribers

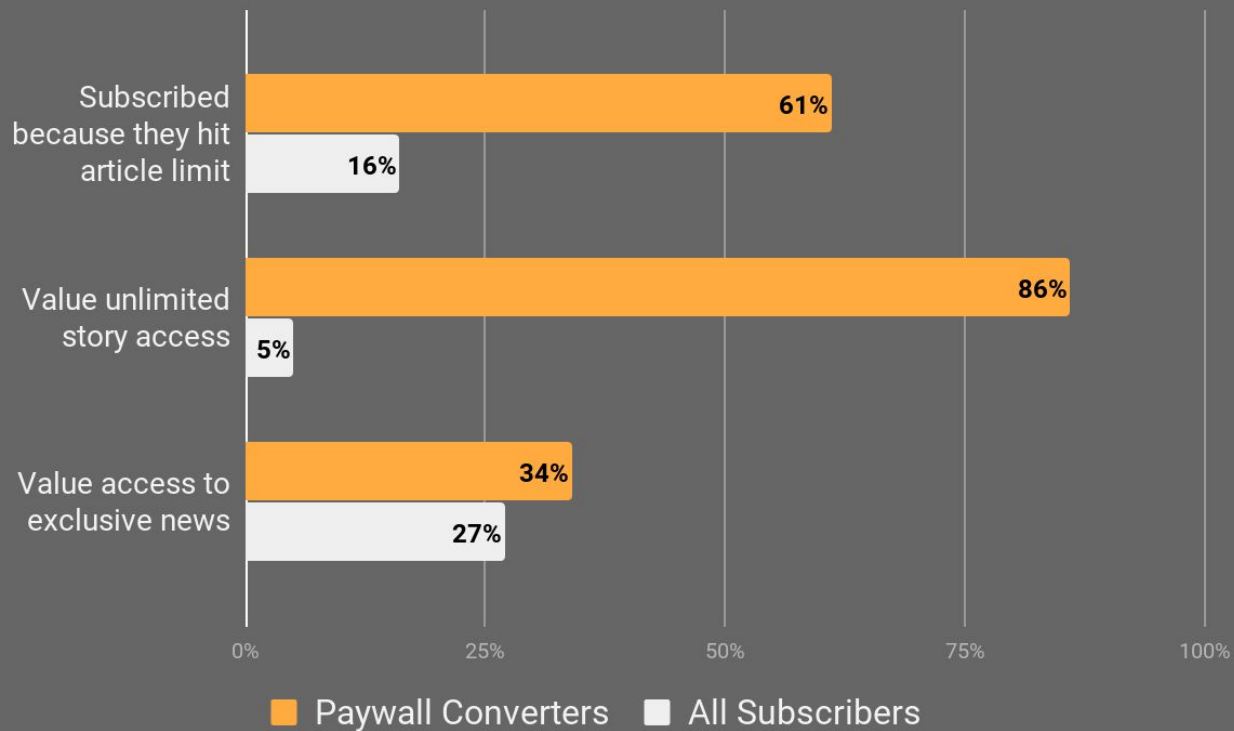
“

I found myself continually hitting my max free online articles and thought it was about time to subscribe.

Most common at large metro papers



Motivated by access to content



Tactics for Paywall Converters

- Improve UX of subscription signup page
- Experiment with dynamic meter that adjusts to individuals
- Use data to find signals or models of likely converters
- Target ad-blockers with subscription messaging

Step 1 of 2

Create Your Account

Already have an account? [Log in here](#) »

Use Facebook



Use Google



OR

Email Address

Create Password

[Show Password](#)

- You agree to receive occasional updates and special offers for The New York Times's products and services. You may opt out or contact us anytime.

By creating an account, you agree to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

[Create Account](#)

Get Started Today!

YOUR ORDER

Basic Digital Access **\$8.00**

You will be billed the following amount every 30 days. Unlimited access to all NYTimes.com content, and the NYTimes smartphone and tablet apps.

Sales tax may apply.

Total ~~\$16.00~~ **\$8.00**

Some friendly reminders:

- Your payment method will be charged \$8.00 every 30 days for the first 12 months.
- It will then be charged \$16.00 every 30 days thereafter, starting on February 11, 2019.
- Your subscription will continue until you cancel.

New York Times — Simple signup

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

Premium Digital [Change plan](#)

\$1 for the first 4 weeks
then just \$15 every 4 weeks

~~\$195~~ \$150 a year
Best Value

Your contact info

Email address

You'll use **your email address** to sign in on washingtonpost.com and Washington Post apps. If this is a new account, we'll ask you to set a password later.

Payment method



Washington Post — Simple signup

The Boston Globe



Finish signing up for Globe.com.

Whoops. It seems your checkout was interrupted.

Allow us to take you back to where you left off. Finish subscribing to Globe.com today and gain unlimited access to Boston's best-read content.

Don't worry, we're holding onto your offer for you:

Pay just 99¢/week for the first 4 weeks

[Finish Signing Up »](#)

Boston Globe — Catch people who didn't finish signup

How to turn off ad blockers

The Seattle Times depends on ad revenue to produce our news, and keep subscription rates reasonable. We ask non-subscribers to turn off ad blockers when accessing our website and mobile apps.

For your convenience, we've provided instructions on how to disable popular ad blockers for seattletimes.com. You'll still be able to block ads on other sites. If you need further instructions, or don't see your ad blocker on this page, please refer to the Support or Help area of the browser or operating system you are using.

Instructions

Quick reference guide

[Google Chrome](#)

[Firefox](#)

[Internet Explorer](#)

[Safari](#)

Quick reference guide

Quick reference guide for whitelisting seattletimes.com on ad blocker software:

1. Open the browser that has ad blocker installed
2. Go to seattletimes.com and click on the ad block icon
3. Click "Don't run on pages on this domain," then click "Exclude" or "Disable on seattletimes.com" depending on the AdBlock you are using.
4. Click "Options" on the previous menu to manage your exceptions. Applies to Adblock and Adblock Plus.
5. Refresh the Seattle Times page you were reading.

Seattle Times — Nonsubscribers can't block ads

JOURNALISM ADVOCATES



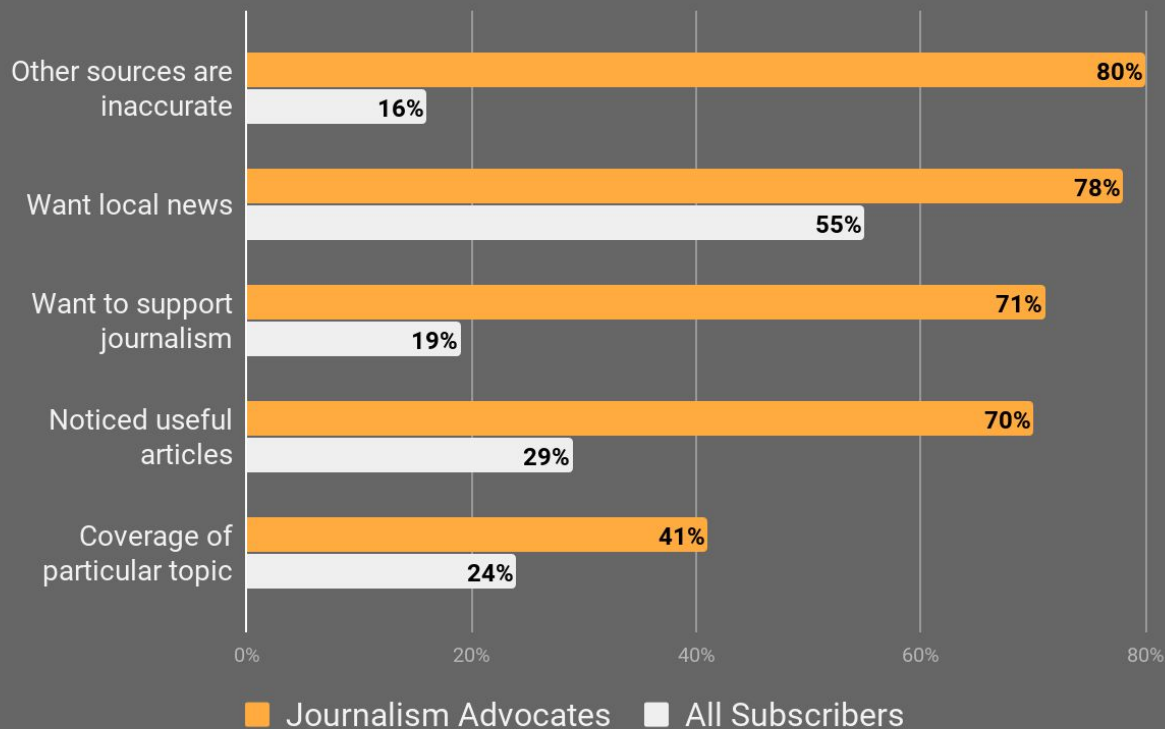
Journalism Advocates...

- Want to support journalism
- Concerned about attacks on press
- Care about quality, accuracy
- Highly educated, Democrats
- **9% of new subscribers**

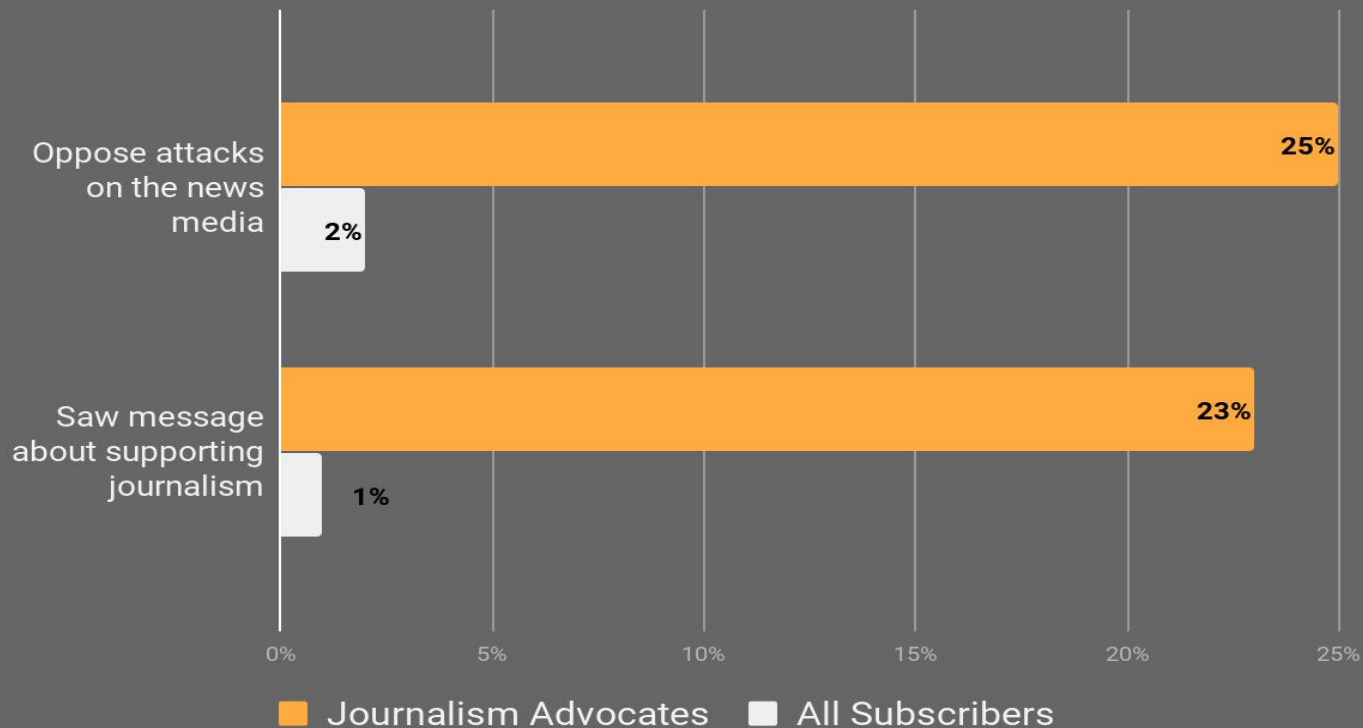
“

I think it's important that we support our news organizations, both local and national, in order to maintain strong and unbiased news sources.

Why they are willing to pay



What triggers their purchase



Tactics for Journalism Advocates

- Take advantage of moments when press is attacked
- Create content specifically to appeal for reader support
- Appeal to their sense of civic duty, First Amendment
- Don't base all your messaging on this, other subscriber types won't respond

It's a Perfect Storm for Destroying Journalism

Economic threats or political attacks are bad enough by themselves. But together they are incredibly dangerous.

MONIKA BAUERLEIN DEC. 5, 2017 12:30 PM



Looking for news you can trust?
Subscribe to our free newsletters.

We've known for a while that the news business is in trouble. Long before Google and Facebook started gobbling up advertising revenue, newsroom hiring froze and investigative teams were dissolved as corporate and hedge-fund owners sought ever fatter quarterly returns. Eric Klinenberg laid it all out in *MoJo* in 2007: As far back as the 1980s, he notes, corporate owners had begun to “buy up local newspapers, crush the competition, jack up ad rates, downsize the editorial staff (and, if required, break the union), then watch earnings soar.”

Mother Jones — Journalism under threat

Support Local News!

Subscribe for \$5/month

Believe in local journalism? Subscribe to BKLYNER.

Reporting on this site is funded by 1,874 of our readers, who have chosen to pay for local news, and companies like Two Trees Management, who took out 500 subscriptions. To keep our small, high-impact newsroom sustainable, **we calculate that we'll need 3,000 members** — less than 1% of our readers — to support us at \$5/month. With everyone's help, we are on our way. Thank you for your membership subscription:



Bklyner — “Believe in local journalism?”

Replied

- Sunday home delivery

Replied

- 7-day home delivery

\$1 for 4 weeks

\$3.99/week after trial period

\$1 for 5 weeks

\$3.99/week after trial period

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