Medill Subscriber Engagement Index Platform

Frequently Asked Questions

The Medill Subscriber Engagement Index, will begin publisher onboarding in January 2021, and will launch in March 2021. Media companies will bear no cost for participating in the revenue and engagement benchmarking project for the first year.

This benchmarking project offers game-changing, data-driven reader revenue and engagement trends at your editorial and subscription stakeholders' fingertips.

How is the data collected?
Subscriber data is provided to Mather Economics by our Newspaper clients each week. We will anonymize the subscriber account data and combine it with online activity from subscribers. Mather's Listener™ pixel will capture the subscriber's online activity.

What can participants do with the aggregated data?
Participating media companies can explore the wealth of anonymized data using the data exploration tool, and can also access regular benchmarking reports for actionable analysis on trends and best practices from other participating media companies across the United States. The data tool will be used by editorial and business-side managers to drill down into detailed, customized and anonymized data to assist in making daily content decisions, building products, understanding user behavior and refining subscription strategies.

How will our company's data be protected and governed?
The data from participating news media companies will always be anonymized and will never be identified with media companies' brands. No PII data will be included in the index. Each company's data will be protected by a non-disclosure agreement.

Who has access to our company's data?
Only key executives from Medill and Mather will have access to the data from each company, all of which is anonymized. No outside parties will have access to the data, nor will the data be identified with any participating company.

Is there a cost?
There is no cost to participate in the first year.

Which companies can participate?
Any news media company in the United States that agrees to provide the subscriber data and place the Listener pixel on their website(s) for the purpose of collecting engagement and subscription benchmarking. For those non-U.S. companies, Mather Economics has similar benchmarking projects that media companies can benefit from. Contact Matt Lindsay for more details.

Which companies are participating so far?
Dozens of U.S. news media companies have joined the benchmarking project, including the 29 daily newspapers of the The McClatchy Company; the 10 daily newspapers of the Tribune Publishing; the 75 dailies of Lee Enterprises; The Seattle Times; the Denver Post; Newsday; the Dallas Morning News; The Philadelphia Inquirer; The Advocate; Las Vegas Review-Journal; The Press Democrat; The Spokesman-Review; and Bangor Daily News. Anchorage Daily News and The Gazette - Colorado Springs have recently signed up. More new publishers will be announced soon.

TO BECOME A MEDIA PARTNER,
contact Tim Franklin at Medill, timothy.franklin@northwestern.edu

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?
Attend the webinar on February 18 at 3 p.m ET. **Register here.**

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About the Partners:

About Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications: The Medill Subscriber Engagement Index is part of the Medill Local News Initiative, a research and development project aimed at promoting financial sustainability for local journalism in challenging times. Development of the index is being funded by a grant from the Google Innovation Challenge program. Tim Franklin, senior associate dean for Medill and John M. Mutz chair in local news, heads Medill's the Local News Initiative.

Northwestern University's Medill Spiegel Research Center developed the index. The research center is headed by Jonathan Copulsky, Spiegel's executive director. Copulsky and Franklin share responsibility for the Subscriber Engagement Index Project. Spiegel will work with Mather Economics on the analysis of the benchmarking data.

About Mather Economics: Mather Economics is a global subscription data and analytics technology firm with more than 200 media company clients in North America, Latin America, Europe and Asia-Pacific. Mather will collect content usage, subscriber journey and conversion metrics, and revenue data from participating media partners with their Listener™ data collection platform. The data will be gathered, organized, reported by Mather and analyzed by Mather and the Medill Spiegel Research Center. These media company data will drive the project benchmarks. Matt Lindsay, president of Mather Economics, will work with Spiegel to ascertain actionable insights for the media industry.

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Mather Economics is supporting the Medill Subscriber Engagement Index because we believe understanding how subscribers value content is vital to achieving a sustainable business model for local journalism. Mather is fortunate to work with hundreds of newspapers in North America, and we are uniquely positioned to provide Medill with anonymized data from across the industry with the consistency and quality necessary for academic research. We are also able to help publishers act on the insights provided by the SEI platform.

Matt Lindsay, President
Mather Economics
matt@mathereconomics.com

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