

Smartphone App Lessons for Media Companies

Jeremy C. Fox



Author

Jeremy C. Fox

Editors

Dawn McMullan
L. Carol Christopher

Design & Layout

Danna Emde

Jeremy C. Fox is a Boston-based journalist who writes regularly for the Boston Globe and teaches journalism courses at Harvard Extension School. He is the co-author, with Andrew Elder, of the book *Boston's Orange Line*, published in 2013. His writing has appeared in the Bay State Banner, the Boston Phoenix, FilmThreat.com, the Gay and Lesbian Review, the Jamaica Plain Gazette, and the Nieman Reports Watchdog Project.



About the International News Media Association (INMA)

INMA (www.inma.org) is a global community of market-leading news media companies reinventing how they engage audiences and grow revenue in a multi-media environment. The INMA community consists of 8,000+ executives at 600+ news media companies 80+ countries. Headquartered in Dallas, INMA has offices in San Salvador, São Paulo, Antwerp, and New Delhi.

INMA Inc. © Copyright 2015 The contents contained within this report are the exclusive domain of INMA Inc. and may not be reproduced without the express written consent of INMA.

Cover images used in report: Ottawa Citizen, Kompas, Ekstra Bladet, and The New York Times

INMA Partners in Business



Research and Analysis of Media

Table of contents

04 Executive Summary

06 Introduction

12 Chapter 1: Aftonbladet

15 Chapter 2: Dainik Jagran

18 Chapter 3: The Dallas Morning News

22 Chapter 4: Ekstra Bladet

25 Chapter 5: Fairfax Media

28 Chapter 6: Folha de S.Paulo

31 Chapter 7: Gazeta Wyborcza

34 Chapter 8: The Globe and Mail

36 Chapter 9: The Irish Examiner

40 Chapter 10: The Irish Times

42 Chapter 11: Kompas

44 Chapter 12: The Miami Herald

47 Chapter 13: The New York Times

50 Chapter 14: The Ottawa Citizen

55 Chapter 15: The Register-Guard

57 Chapter 16: The Sacramento Bee

59 Chapter 17: South China Morning Post

62 Chapter 18: The Straits Times

65 Chapter 19: Toronto Star

69 Conclusion

Executive Summary

Your audience has a smartphone. Your audience likely has downloaded your app. For many of you, that part of the battle is over. Your challenges now are to draw your readers into using your media company's app or apps and to bring in revenue.

Two facts stand out:

- ▶ 70% of smartphone users have at least one news app; 33% of them actually use it.
- ▶ Readers who use a media company's app are the most loyal and spend the most time with the news brand.

Smartphone readers are the readers you — and your advertisers — want.

At the INMA World Congress in New York in May 2015, 93% of participants declared mobile among their company's top priorities, just behind future digital growth. Two years ago, improving mobile revenue was a priority for 48% of World Congress participants. In 2014, it was 68%. This year, 91%.

We found 10 key takeaways from our research for this report to help news media company's work toward this goal:

- ▶ Focus on your core strengths. If that's one app, go with it. If that's five or 13, that works, too.
- ▶ News is the most popular app with readers, with sports following closely behind.
- ▶ Your niche is your niche. Embrace it. For The Washington Post, that's its connection with Amazon. For Dainik Jagran, it's education. At Kompas and The New York Times, it's a crossword puzzle.

- ▶ Advertisers and media companies are still trying to figure out the smartest way to advertise on a smartphone. “Big,” “high on the page,” and ads that interrupt the reader aren’t working. Neither are banner ads.
- ▶ Be nimble.
- ▶ The customer experience is vital.
- ▶ Failing fast used to be a strategy: multiple apps that worked or they didn’t, quickly. But customers demand too much of apps these days, making them too expensive to fly through like that.
- ▶ Apple’s Newsstand did not work well for media apps. Apple News is yet to be tested, but, in general, sometimes a relationship with Apple has more challenges than benefits.
- ▶ Be fast (to innovate and to update).
- ▶ Success, for now, is measured by engagement more than advertising or revenue.

What will your smartphone success strategy look like for the next year? It’s time to find out. ■