



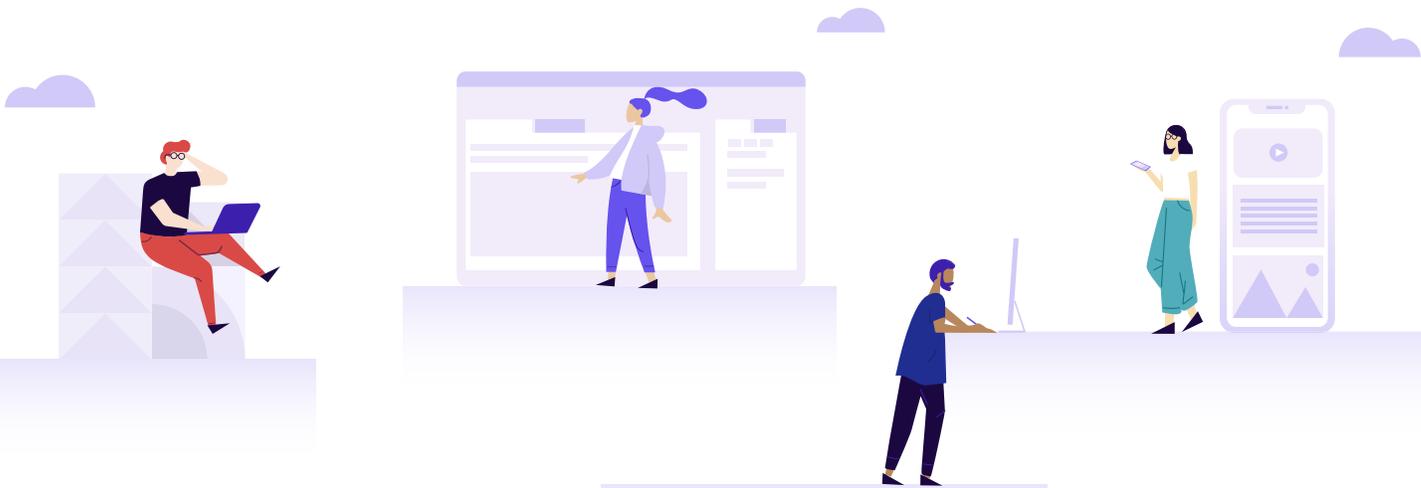
How The Independent Turned the Page on a Print-First Strategy with Naviga's Content Engagement Platform

The Challenge

The Independent South Africa has been a distributor of some of the most prominent newspapers in their country, however, they found themselves struggling to integrate print and digital across their wide portfolio of brands. Many of their competitors had already moved to digital-first workflows and begun collecting digital subscription revenue, while The Independent's group of brands still shared digital space on IOL (Independent Online) with no way to collect digital subscription revenue or monetize beyond ads.

Worse, the publications were stuck in print-first operations that made it difficult to keep up with their competitors. Content was forced to move through two CMSs — one for print, and one for digital — and most of that content could not appear online until after it was laid out for print, and the XML was exported to the digital system.

Recognizing these issues, the Chief Digital Officer of The Independent, Amit Makan, led the search for an all-in-one platform to help transform their business with a digital-first workflow. "Digital transformation means trying to establish a modern tech stack for the publishers," says Makan. "Because most of the publishers in our group are legacy print companies, historically many of them have fallen into print-first workflows. So, my task was to ensure that we achieve a digital-first workflow for the group."



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What The Independent hoped to achieve

The Independent embraced a two-step plan for digital transformation. First, the two-CMS, print-first system had to be replaced with a single, streamlined, digital-first CMS. Second, but just as important, The Independent needed to modernize its digital subscription, engagement, and ad management systems to embrace the full power of today's combined print and digital publishing strategies.

"Ultimately, we need to maximize revenues from digital subscribers," says Makan. "What we're doing as part of the second stage of our digital transformation is breaking up the website into multiple digital properties, and we are aiming to monetize the audience of the specific newspaper brands."

Why They Chose Naviga

In order to find the best solution to meet all of these needs, Makan and his team developed a system to compare several platforms, measuring 40 different factors that would be important to them in the CMS. They made a shortlist of 5 vendors based on those attributes, and then gave each one a detailed evaluation, scoring them on every factor.

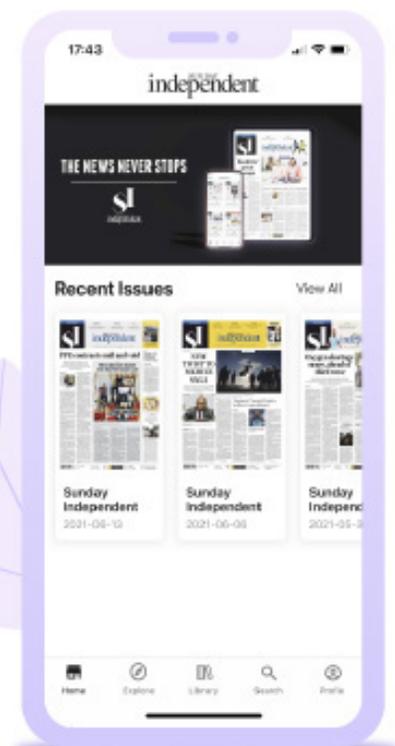
Naviga's score was the highest across the board. The built-in digital marketing and subscription tools, plus an ad management system that fully integrates with Google Ad Manager, gave Naviga the edge.

"The fact that it was one vendor, basically a one-stop-shop for the main technologies we required, was also a big factor," says Makan. With Naviga, all these tools came together, along with a team that was there to support The Independent in any way they needed.

The last feature Makan was looking for was an open, or "headless", CMS that would allow them to create custom tools and integrations to get the most out of the new content management system. "Previous vendors we've worked with have often introduced roadblocks in order to grow their business or to make us more reliant on them," he says. "An open system, an open API, is another part of our partnership with Naviga that's so important to us. There's been a great collaboration between Naviga's developers and ours."

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“Ultimately, we need to maximize revenues from digital subscribers. Naviga Engage and Subscribe are laying the foundation for us to get where we want to be.”



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Outcome

"Despite the fact that last year was one of the worst years we ever could have encountered," says Makan, "we achieved the entire implementation of digital and print remotely." The Naviga team was with them — remotely via Google Meet — every step of the way, just like they would have been in person.

Naviga Content's CMS and Writer dashboard unified print and digital production into a digital-first workflow that has the flexibility to serve both mediums the content they need to thrive.

For their second goal of modernizing digital subscriptions, ad management, and engagement, The Independent turned to Naviga's Commerce, Advertising, and Audience solutions. "We've taken the strategic view that we need to try and maximize digital subscription revenues," says Makan, "and the Naviga platform has helped to lay the foundation for us to get where we want to be."

Naviga Commerce empowered the kind of digital subscription model The Independent was counting on for the next stage of their digital transformation by providing day-zero delivery of digital editions to print subscribers and enabling digital-only subscription offers. Additionally, The Independent utilized Naviga Commerce to power their digital apps, streamlining the production and app development process to alleviate internal resource needs while providing their users a best-in-class reader experience across desktop, mobile, and tablet.

In a market where digital subscriptions are still in their infancy, Naviga Commerce gives The Independent access to the same digital reader technology that already powers hundreds of the top-selling magazines on the Amazon Kindle Newsstand, major magazine brands on Apple News+, several thousand publications in over 10,000 public libraries around the world, and 1,000+ magazine titles on the subscription service Scribd.

A COMPLETE, INTEGRATED, DIGITAL-FIRST SOLUTION

The Independent is using the full suite of Naviga products to synchronize print and digital content, customer journeys, subscription models, and ad management. Some of their biggest advances have come from:

Writer Dashboard: A centralized CMS that empowers digital-first workflows.

Naviga Ad: Integrates with Google Ad Manager for better ad management and insight into print/digital spending breakdowns for all customers.

Naviga Engage: Audience management software that drives subscriptions, engagement, and revenue.

Naviga Subscribe: A long-term audience engagement platform that delivers the best user experiences across all phases of the customer journey.

Naviga Commerce: Generates tens-of-millions of dollars a year in incremental revenue for publishers through Naviga's many exclusive partnerships and routes to market.

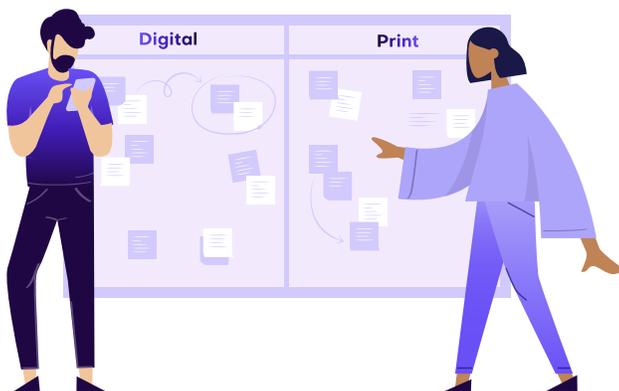
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THE FLEXIBILITY OF AN OPEN CMS

The Naviga CMS has an open API that allows publishers to integrate new tools from Naviga, third parties, and their own in-house developers. So far, The Independent has built or borrowed integrations to layer several capabilities onto its CMS, including:

- ▶ A form field validation tool
- ▶ An auto-tagging solution
- ▶ WordPress plug-in
- ▶ OOVVUU video integration

OOVVUU is a revenue-sharing video distribution platform, and the integration has already shown bottom-line results, allowing The Independent to transform on-site video from a cost center to a revenue generator.



Naviga Audience allows The Independent to optimize and track the end-to-end engagement lifecycle of all of its subscribers. "We are laying the foundation now for a digital marketing and digital subscriber journey using Naviga Engage and Subscribe," says Makan, which are two of the components of Naviga Audience. Engage creates compelling user experiences that drive prospects toward subscribing. Once they do, Naviga Subscribe makes sure they have an engaging and positive customer experience that keeps them coming back month after month.

Behind the scenes, Naviga Ad gives The Independent a centralized system to integrate print and digital advertising. "Due to its compatibility and integration with Google Ad Manager," says Makan, "Naviga Ad provides a centralized system to manage our advertising better. We now can get a complete picture of customers and what their digital spend is in relation to their print spend."

Beyond those tools, The Independent and its sister brands have access to the full support of Naviga and its community of users, who are constantly developing new APIs and integrations that expand the capabilities of all users. The open, "headless" CMS allows almost any tool to be created or integrated to do the job the publisher needs.

What ties all of these features together is the relationship and understanding Naviga has with its customers.

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Despite the fact that last year was one of the worst years we ever could have encountered, globally... We achieved the entire implementation of digital and print remotely.

"I think what's great about our relationship with Naviga and this partnership is that we can candidly raise these matters," says Makan. "When we have an issue, we raise it, and the right channels and the right doors open up. ... That partnership is important to both of us."

With the Naviga suite in place, The Independent and its entire group are ready to take the next step on the path to a modern, digital-first publishing operation.

About The Independent

Independent Online, popularly known as IOL, is one of South Africa's leading news and information websites, bringing millions of readers breaking news and updates on Politics, Current Affairs, Business, Lifestyle, Entertainment, Travel, Sport, Motoring, and Technology.

IOL also hosts the digital offerings of some of the country's most prominent newspapers including The Star and Pretoria News in Gauteng, The Cape Times and Cape Argus in the Western Cape, and The Mercury and Daily News in KwaZulu-Natal, as well as national business publications Business Report and Personal Finance.

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