

# How Graham Media's moderation strategy **saved 200 hours/month** and **increased average user lifetime value by 150%**

## THE CHALLENGE

One of Graham Media Inc.'s top priorities is to foster civil conversation across its news sites. However, highly polarizing topics like Covid-19, Black Lives Matter and the U.S. presidential election have made this more difficult. Dustin Block, Audience Engagement Lead at Graham Media, noticed that his news teams had become overwhelmed with moderating offensive comments. As a result, there was no time to engage positive contributors to elevate conversations and increase registrations.

### Stopping The Trolls Is A Full-Time Job

For 22 hours each day, all of Graham Media's newsrooms are open and reporting news. That's a lot of content to moderate under normal circumstances, but amidst a global pandemic and civil unrest, it became an enormous burden. Comment sections were rampant with offensive language, petty disputes and name-calling, and Dustin's teams struggled to manage all the trolls. This left no time to focus on nurturing the far more important segment of productive, civil commenters.

### Missing Engagement And Conversion Opportunities

The inability to engage with audiences in a positive way stunted the growth of registered users — one of Graham Media's central goals. Dustin also recognized the missed opportunities to turn anonymous users into known visitors. More specifically, he quickly realized his newsrooms lacked the tools and time required to focus on engaging and converting the positive contributors, or "pixies" as Dustin has dubbed them.



“Viafoura's moderation services have alleviated a big burden across our newsrooms, saving staff almost 200 hours of work per month. Now we have time to focus on engagement initiatives that have helped us nurture and grow our daily logged-in users by 62% this year.”

— **Dustin Block** | Audience Engagement Lead

## THE SOLUTION

Dustin took action to help both his newsrooms and the underserved positive contributors by turning to Viafoura, a longtime trusted partner. Together, they explored new strategies to promote civil discourse and engagement, ultimately helping Graham Media achieve key business milestones.

### Alleviating The Moderation Burden

Dustin ensured Viafoura's Automatic Moderation Engine, which uses a sophisticated algorithm to flag and remove spam and offensive content in real time, was running across all of Graham Media's news sites. He also enlisted Viafoura's Moderation Services: a team of individuals dedicated to monitoring conversations across news sites and handling the omnipresent trolls. Now, rather than spending the majority of their days moderating negative comments, editors and newsrooms can finally focus on using Viafoura's full suite of tools to engage the pixies. Here are a few examples of what this looks like from two newsrooms:

### WJXT's Exclusive Content For Registered Users

Jacksonville's WJXT is at the forefront of community engagement on [newsforjax.com](https://newsforjax.com), with reporters creating accounts, logging in and interacting directly with users to add credibility and elevate conversations. The newsroom's latest engagement initiative is the *Ask Me Anything* series, which combines Viafoura's Community Chat tool with video. Reporters go online to answer audience questions and participate in authentic, civil conversations. Offered as exclusive content for registered users, this and other engagement-centric programs have increased the volume of registrations (which in turn increases the average lifetime value among WJXT's audience). These engagement initiatives are also fostering a stronger sense of community, elevating conversations and providing a new kind of value exchange with registered users.

### ClickOnDetroit's *Debate Night Live Story*

The team at WDIV in Detroit has shifted their focus to engaging the pixies and are using Viafoura's tools to communicate the facts, build a rapport with audiences and create more civilized conversations — even around a divisive issue like the 2020 presidential election. In a coordinated effort that involved smart SEO and moderation from Viafoura's team, [ClickOnDetroit](https://clickondetroit.com) used Viafoura's Live Stories feature to fact-check the first presidential debate with a reporter in the field. As a consequence, the successful event pulled in a high volume of traffic, caused a spike in daily engaged users and the percentage of known visitors reached an all-time high.

## RESULTS

**200  
HOURS**

of staff time/  
month saved  
with Viafoura's  
moderation  
services

**10-14X  
HIGHER**

Lifetime Value  
(LTV) for  
registered users  
compared to non-  
registered users



average growth  
in LTV across  
Graham Media  
resulting from  
increased number  
of registered users



growth year-  
to-date in daily  
logged-in users  
across Graham  
Media Inc.'s  
properties

**50-100 NEW USERS**  
per AMA or forum on WJXT's website



growth in known  
audience during  
WDIV debate



new registered  
users resulting  
from the Live  
Story covering  
the first debate