

How The Associated Press Expanded Direct Audience Strategy with Viafoura

The Associated Press has seen meaningful results working with Viafoura to help turn high-intent visitors into registered, returning audience members. For a news organization of AP's scale and standing, the goal wasn't to fix what was broken. It was to expand capabilities: develop more direct, first-party audience relationships through on-site participation, configured to align with AP's editorial standards and moderation practices.

67%

Q1 registrations influenced by Viafoura

~21%

avg Q1 monthly growth in UGC contributors

01/ THE CONTEXT

Built on Centuries of Trust - Growing Into a New Era



Over four billion people see journalism from The Associated Press every day. AP's accurate, fact-based, nonpartisan journalism has powered the news and information ecosystem for nearly two centuries. Its reach is broad, its editorial voice well established, and its traffic substantial. But even at that scale, the industry's structural shifts raised a question every major media brand is navigating: how do you build a deeper, direct relationship with an audience that mostly arrives, reads, and leaves?

Traffic patterns tied to the news cycle. The AP News audience typically grows around major stories and normalizes between them, reflecting the nature of authoritative, fact-based journalism. Building compounding audience value across the full calendar year required a new layer of direct engagement.

Evolving discovery dynamics. AI-driven changes to search and platform distribution were making on-site, direct audience relationships more strategically important.

Limited registration moments. Without meaningful on-site touchpoints, converting anonymous visitors into registered users (and supporting AP's first-party data strategy and broader monetization efforts) required new value exchange moments.

02/ THE APPROACH

Build a Safe, Trusted Community Before Scaling It

AP worked with Viafoura to build the infrastructure for more directly engaging with AP News audiences, deploying community engagement capabilities across its properties. These capabilities created meaningful participation moments that are helping turn anonymous readers into registered, returning audience members.

The rollout was phased and deliberate. AP's editorial standards are exacting, and moderation demands on high velocity political and breaking news are among the most rigorous in media. That's why AP and Viafoura first deployed and stress tested Viafoura's engagement and AI-powered moderation products and human moderation services. AP assessed how the technology and workflows performed in supporting constructive and safe discussions. Following this evaluation, AP expanded implementation of Viafoura's products across much of the AP News site.

Engagement features were then layered progressively:

- **Commenting:** enabling reader discussion on selected stories and breaking news
- **Staff Badging:** highlighting AP journalists to support direct audience engagement
- **Personalized feeds & Trending Conversations:** surfacing active discussions and helping keep readers connected to topics they follow
- **Engagement Starter:** supporting AP's on-site polls and creating participation moments beyond commenting
- **App SDKs:** extending community engagement capabilities to AP's mobile audience

Each feature was designed to do two things at once: deepen audience engagement, and create natural registration moments to convert anonymous readers into known, addressable users.

“The Viafoura team was there every step of the way during our technical integration, providing excellent onboarding documentation and responsive support whenever questions arose. Their platform made it easy for us to build the experience we envisioned for our users.”



Sean McCorkle
Director - AP News Product, The Associated Press

03/ THE RESULTS

Engagement Initiatives Correlated with Revenue and Audience Growth



The collaboration has been associated with improvements across several key metrics, including return reader engagement and more consistent audience activity beyond any news cycle.

Viafoura helped drive 67% of all registrations on apnews.com in Q1 2026

Viafoura's engagement products were associated with a substantial portion of new registrations on APNews.com, contributing to the growth of AP's registered user base in support of its first-party data strategy.

Contributing community grew 21% on average month-over-month in Q1

AP audience participation increased each month with the help of Viafoura's capabilities, encouraging the audience to stay engaged with stories.

“As audience discovery continues to evolve across search, social, and AI platforms, building direct audience relationships on owned platforms becomes increasingly important. Viafoura helped AP create participation experiences to deepen engagement, encourage repeat visitation and re-engagement, and strengthen long-term first-party audience relationships.”



Paul Simoneschi
VP, Consumer Business, The Associated Press

“For trusted news organizations like The Associated Press, building direct relationships with audiences is becoming one of the most important strategic priorities in digital media. As search, social, and AI reshape how audiences discover news, publishers need new ways to bring readers into deeper participation on their own platforms. We're incredibly proud to be working with AP to help transform anonymous readers into active community members and build more durable, direct audience relationships.”



Mark Zohar
CEO, Viafoura

