The Virginian-Pilot Grows Flourishing Community of Daily Active Users Within Site Paywall

The Client

The Virginian-Pilot is the #1 source of news, information, entertainment, and advertising in Southeast Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina. Pilot Media combines a legacy of commitment to community, ethics, and strong journalism with the strengths of new technologies and experienced thinkers. Available in digital and print formats, The Virginian-Pilot has been informing, inspiring, and improving the communities they serve for over 150 years.

The Virginian-Pilot
PilotOnline.com

The Challenge

The Virginian-Pilot was looking to replace their commenting plugin for a solution that would increase onsite engagement and help them grow their daily active users and paid subscribers. As one of the first newspaper websites in the US, they wanted to continue to grow their audience interactions and revenue on pilotonline.com, while providing a civil and brand safe community.

The Virginian-Pilot needed an engagement and moderation suite that would facilitate real-time conversations, increase user interactions and time-spent on site, while providing a seamless user experience. To do so, the solution needed to integrate with both their identity management, paywall and email service provider, so users could maintain their Virginian-Pilot login, manage their subscriptions for newsletters and alerts and the marketing team could leverage the user engagement, behaviour and preference data to tailor their email strategy.

The editorial team for pilotonline.com needed to reduce the amount of time and effort spent on moderation, so that the newsroom could focus on fostering real-time conversations between their community members and journalists. The Virginian-Pilot needed a solution that would help grow, manage and measure their audience activity and engagement.

The Solution

The Virginian-Pilot is supported by the VIafoura Community Building Suite that encourage user commentary and increased participation, that includes:

Community Moderation
Moderators can ban users temporarily, while users can mute others and flag and dislike comments

Single Sign-On
Allows users to create and use a single identity across all digital properties without re-authentication

Social Login
Creates a frictionless login experience with support for 40+ sign-in options, so users can login using their existing social ID's

Social Share Bar
Makes it easy for users to share the content that matters to them across 35+ social networks

Intelligent Auto Moderation
Automatically detect and eliminate spam, foul language and online harassment

Conversations
Enables real-time conversations to increase interactions across users, authors and content

Notifications Alerts & Feed
Users never miss what's important to them with real-time chronological lists of their chosen content, community interactions and alerts all within their own personalized news feed

User Profiles
Registered users can create an on-site identity and connect easily with other community members around the topics that matter to them

Follow Features & Notification Feed
Users can follow other members, topics and pages to see updates in their personalized news feed

Audience Insights
Displays the impact of on-site engagement on key metrics

The Results

In the second year with the Viafoura Community Building Suite, Pilotonline.com's community continues to demonstrate impressive increases in real time community engagement. Comparing the results from Q1 of 2018 versus Q1 2017, Pilotonline. com's audiences dwell time has more than doubled, from an average of 2.36 minutes per user to over 5.5 minutes. During this period we have also observed a 10% increase in comments and replies, as well as a 19% lift in total likes. More specifically:

2^x
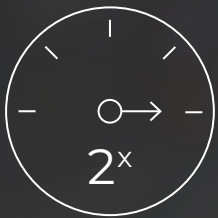
Increase in the time spent on site

39%

Increase in pageviews from daily active users

10%

Increase in comments per article

19%

Increase in overall likes

Viafoura's Community Building Suite lets us be more responsive to our users, and has drastically cut down on time required to moderate comments. We look forward to incorporating new Viafoura features on pilotonline.com, including Live Blogging and notifications, that help us share important news and updates with our readers.

— Erica Smith, Online Editor and Director of Digital Strategy Pilot Media

*Stats tracked from Q1 of 2017 vs Q1 of 2018 (year-over-year results)

The Conclusion

With Viafoura Engagement Cloud, The Virginian-Pilot newsroom is now able to focus on increasing their active users metrics for their captive audience across the site, behind their paywall. The newsroom accesses the Audience Insights Dashboard daily to utilize their first-party data and monitor the steady increases on attention time, comments per page, comments and engagement likes.

The Virginian-Pilot has also been able to drastically reduce their resources invested by introducing Viafoura's Automated Moderation for their community moderation. The auto-mod now provides 24/7 real-time

commenting moderation, using natural language processing and machine learning to detect and delete spam, negative and abusive comments before they are ever seen by an audience, at a fraction of the cost of human moderation. In conclusion, Viafoura Engagement Cloud safeguards Virginian-Pilot's community.

Future plans for the Virginian-Pilot include introducing Viafoura live stories, web push notifications, implementing topic and author follows and continuing to work towards towards full integration with the support of the Viafoura customer success team.

Ready to build a direct relationship with your audience?
Contact an audience engagement specialist today.

viafoura.com   **sales@viafoura.com**   **+1 800 711 4838**