STARTUPS FOR NEWS

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Startups
to accelerate
your newsroom

2018 Report

startupsfornews.org

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Let's dive in

by Evangeline de Bourgoing,
Chief Content Officer, global Editors Network

Stuck in the news cycle and struggling with shrinking resources, many newsrooms are unable to look into the future. Amy Webb's 'Global Survey on Journalism's Futures' has shown that newsroom staff between the ages of 44 and 64 tend to be 'nowists': they think about the immediate future and the near-future rather than the long-term. This is a cause for concern as this group of people often hold leadership positions. They make the strategic and operational decisions that affect their own newsrooms and the sustainability of the news ecosystem as a whole.

'If you keep procrastinating and putting off planning for it, the future shows up and you won't have had any part in creating the reality that you now have to deal with', said Webb.

But experimenting with up-and-coming technology is difficult for the many newsrooms that lack technical staff. In the summer of 2017, the International Center for Journalists launched the first-ever global survey on the adoption of new technologies in news media. It received responses from more than 2,700 newsroom managers and journalists from 130 countries. The results show that only 5% of newsroom employees have degrees in technology fields and only 2% of the news organisations surveyed employ technologists.

Furthermore, building your own tech is time consuming, resource-intensive, and the payoff may not be immediately apparent. Is it worth the effort? If every newsroom were to create its own AI recommendation widget, we'd most likely be left with a multitude of almost-identical, half-baked products.

This is why collaboration between startups and newsrooms is critical.

Welcome to the jungle

However, making this collaboration work – or even happen – could be problematic. 'When I was acting as chief digital officer at the Guardian, I could see a million and one problems around me that could be solved internally or through some sort of partnership with a company or a startup. Knowing that I had these problems – a lot of my peers had the same problems – and being aware that there is a company out there that could help solve that problem, did not make finding [the companies] any easier. Interesting startups that can solve those problems do exist; they might just not have got on people's radars yet because they are so small', said Aron Pilhofer during an interview with Global Editors Network last year.

Indeed, the startups jungle can be disorientating for editors and publishers: It is easy to miss startups whose products are promising because they lack visibility. It is even easier to be lured in by startups that are hiding low-grade products behind a smokescreen of marketing gibberish.

The mission of Startups for News, GEN's annual startups competition run in partnership with Journalism.co.uk, is to help our network navigate this jungle. We look beyond the pitch to identify the young startups that will help news organisations produce, distribute, and monetise quality journalism.

GEN's startup radar

Startups for News has proven successful in identifying and promoting high-growth startups, many of which are now ubiquitous in the media industry (think Wibbitz, Storyful, or Datawrapper). Over the past six years, the programme itself has proven visionary: we identified early trends that have now flourished such as news personalisation, data journalism, eyewitness curation and verification, and drone journalism. It has also discovered startups providing tools for newsrooms to work with up-and-coming technology, such as automated content creation, chatbots, and augmented reality.

For the 2017 season, our eligibility criteria are strict. We were looking for:

- startups offering an innovative product or service to newsrooms,
- startups founded no earlier than 2013, and
- startups that have received less than €1 million in external funding.

Despite our strict criteria, we received almost 100 eligible applications from over 35 countries. A jury of editors and media experts presided over by Jeff Jarvis, director of the Tow-Knight Center for Entrepreneurial Journalism at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, selected 30 promising startups whose portraits you will discover in this report.

What are we looking for?

Our selection criteria are based on the following:

- **An innovative solution that addresses the needs of the newsroom**

What do we understand by innovation? As Schumpeter stated back in 1939, 'innovation is possible without anything we should identify as invention and invention does not necessarily induce innovation'. Invention is the creation of a product or a service for the first time, while innovation is the process by which this product or service is improved or scaled to make an impact. When selecting the startups, we deliberately put emphasis on impact rather than on newness; favouring usefulness over glitz.

- **Commitment and capacity to foster quality journalism**

When selecting startups, we are implicitly indicating the kind of journalism we want to foster. We are looking for startups that can build a healthier, more diverse, and sustainable journalism ecosystem that is tuned to the needs of the communities it serves instead of hollow click generators. In short, we are looking for startups fostering the kind of quality journalism Jarvis envisions: 'Rather than merely creating a product called content and attracting an audience to sell to advertisers—our old model—we can now reconceive of journalism as a service to our communities, convening them into informed, civil, and productive conversation and helping them improve their lives.'

- **A scalable solution that in the long run has the potential to serve our global network of newsrooms of different sizes**

With Startups for News, we strive for accessibility and universality. We are aiming to showcase ready-to-implement innovations for our diverse network of newsrooms: not only startups targeting

the biggest anglo-saxon media brands with a high level of technical expertise, but also solutions that can support the small and under-resourced newsrooms that make the media landscape diverse and allows us to hear many voices from, and for, many worldviews.

- **Sustainable business model**

Our definition of success does not mean raising millions and prioritising growth at any cost, but building a robust and sustainable company that provides real value for its customers in the long run.

- **What will you find in this report?**

You will find a mix of tools providing quick fixes to recurrent newsroom challenges and solutions that could have a transformative effect on the way newsrooms work in the long term.

What we think many of these startups have in common is the potential to help newsrooms tackle what has become a central concern: the erosion of trust and the spread of misinformation. Here is how:

- **Pull readers towards data with beautiful designs**

The 2017 winner was Flourish, a platform to produce high-quality interactive content: data visualisations, maps, and explainers. Flourish grew out of the award-winning data studio Kiln. We have always admired Kiln's storytelling talent and its ability to create stunning designs. The team managed to scale and share these skills, thus empowering newsrooms of every size and technical capacity by giving them the ability to produce compelling data-driven stories. Flourish proves that beautiful design, when applied to a solid data story, does not serve as mere decoration, or worse, act as a distraction. It can spark a sense of curiosity and empathy that pulls the reader towards the story.

Beautiful design can act in the same way Alberto Cairo described some successful data visualisations: 'Their appeal is emotional. They prime us to find out what data lie behind them. Their austere beauty prompts us to search for truth.'

- **Empower local journalism with artificial intelligence**

'While there is no evidence yet to directly connect the decline of local news media to the rise in information pollution, when strong local media do not exist other sources will fill that vacuum', explain Claire Wardle of First Draft News and writer and researcher Hossein Derakhshan in a report commissioned by the Council of Europe. Supporting local journalism with technology is the mission of Startups for News 2017 runner-up Urbs Media, an editorial agency that combines human-authored data journalism with automation to deliver local data-driven stories at scale. It exploits the growing supply of open data to uncover local news stories that would otherwise go uncovered. And the technology produces these stories at a scale that can't be achieved through human effort alone. For overloaded reporters, Urbs Media creates a solid base for a data-driven story that can then be enriched by on-the-ground reporting; a successful 'man-machine' marriage.

- **Bring the audience on the ground with you**

According to a report from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism 'Bias, Bullshit and Lies: Audience Perspectives on Low Trust in the Media', video is a key driver of trust. The audience considers TV news as less open to manipulation than online media: live pictures and reporters on location make reports more believable. Although this situation might quickly change as it is becoming easier to doctor visuals, these findings should still encourage newsrooms to push for more on-the-ground reporting. When applicable, newsrooms also need to get better at showing their audience that they do on-the-ground reporting.

'Many readers don't know that a dateline from a foreign city means our reporters are physically in that place, on the ground seeing and hearing firsthand everything they're reporting' wrote A.G. Sulzberger, the new publisher of The New York Times.

The good news is that creating TV-quality, on-the-ground reporting has become much easier and cheaper: mobile journalism technology keeps improving and now it allows journalists to create broadcast-quality content using only a smartphone. RTÉ's Glen Mulcahy even believes that mobile journalism will dominate the news in 2020 when 5G goes mainstream.

Mobile journalism enables newsrooms to report from press-hostile environments; areas where journalists need to be discreet. People are more likely to share their personal stories in front of a phone than a

whole camera crew. Newsrooms should therefore take advantage of mobile journalism's potential. One of the selected startups, BIGVU found an ingenious solution to allow mobile journalists to create more authentic videos. They have built a mobile teleprompter that records and scrolls through your script at the same time. It is a good solution for mobile journalists who want to make sure their reporting is precise and accurate without having the pressure of memorising lines or the fear of making their speech stiff through reading a script.

Curb your hyperlink addiction to make room for a better understanding

According to Craig Silverman, 'misinformation often takes hold because it is communicated in a simple way or through powerful phrases'. To fight misinformation, news must be equally compelling and persuasive. Long walls of texts stuffed with hyperlinks are surely not the most effective way to reach all audiences.
That is why the startup Explaain is a promising one: its interactive fact cards help newsrooms make their reporting more understandable without resorting to hyperlinks, allowing readers to benefit from a more focused reading experience.
Muuze is another startup that tackles a similar theme: bringing context to an article with engaging bite-sized visual embeds. They are building an encoding system that ingests text from sources specified by the author and then annotates and codifies said content using NLP and AI algorithms. Muuze can then match what has already been written with what the journalist is currently writing now and suggest contextual content that the author can embed into their work.

Give readers a better return for their attention

'Every day, Americans consume five times more information than they did in 1986. There is simply no way the human brain has the capacity to process that historic surge, without falling back on the cognitive shortcuts that fuel our biases', points out Mark Little. According to him, information overload has fried the neural switchboard that is managing our attention. News organisations need to help their readers manage their attention – not tax it.

In order to relieve the burden on readers' brains, one solution would be for newsrooms to capitalise more on the progress of AI-driven personalisation. Relying on machine learning and data mining, newsrooms would be able to give readers a better return for their attention by serving them news catered to their interests, activities, location, etc. But AI personalisation can be a double edged sword:

Newsrooms need to be aware of the unfavourable consequence of creating filter bubbles and, in turn, bias.
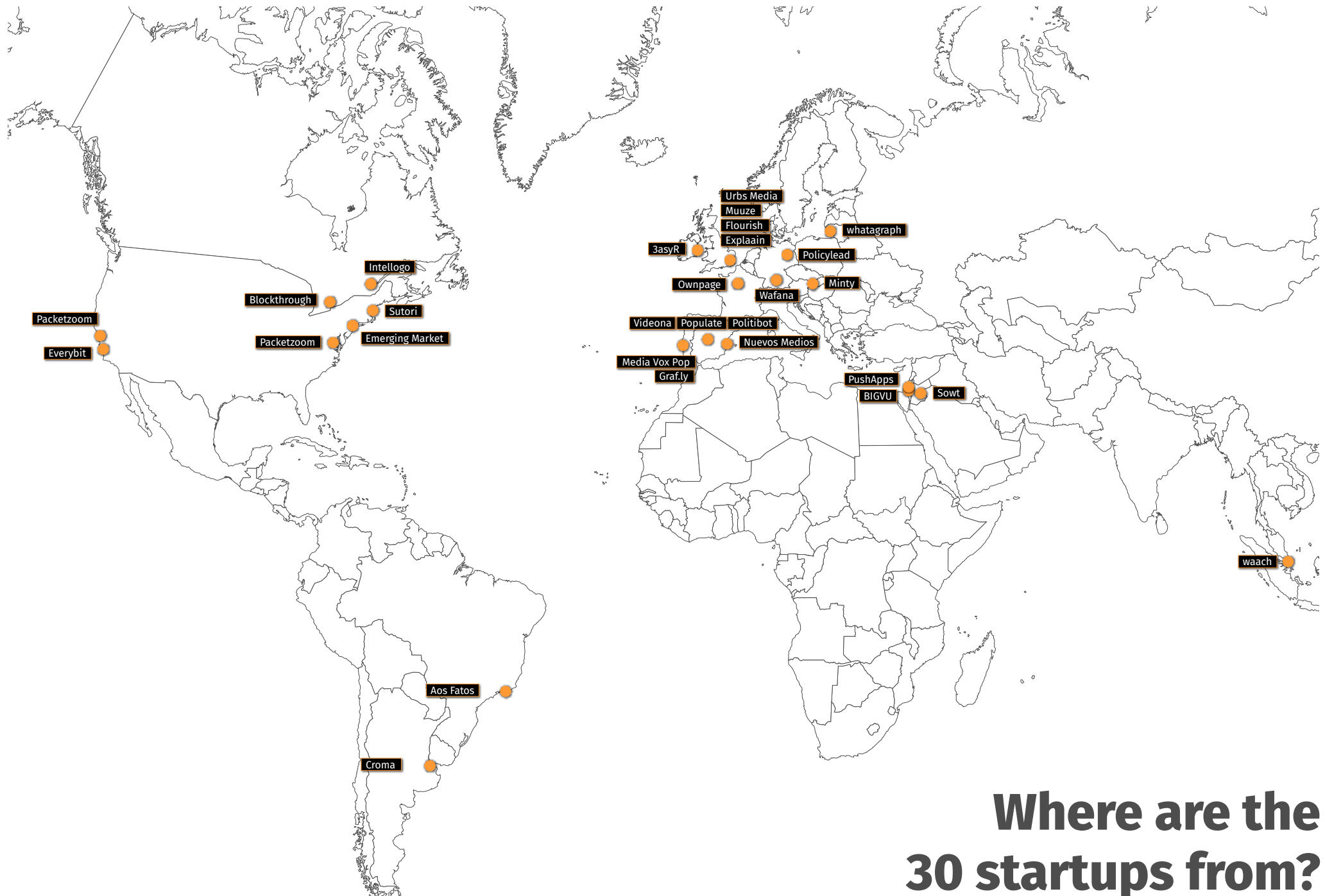
One of this report's selected startups, Ownpage, helps news organisations create personalised newsletters. This curated reading experience ensures that the reader is making good use of their time, in turn leading to increased brand loyalty. The newsletters provide a 'finishable' reading experience: the reader feels the same sense of reward that comes from completing a task, which would encourage them to return.

It is very likely that some of the 30 startups we are presenting here might not take off the ground. Execution problems and a lack of business acumen, in addition to a very tough market, could stand in their way. But they are bringing new perspectives on the industry, and we would do better to keep an open ear.
They are also providing an interesting approach to media innovation: an entrepreneurial, prototype-driven, and 'fail forward' approach that can inspire media executives to make their newsrooms more product and user-centric.

What we are hoping for 2018:

- According to the Future Today Institute, in North America, by 2023, 50% of the interactions consumers have with all computers will be using their voices. It could fundamentally change content discovery, distribution, and consumption. But only few newsrooms seem to be prepared. How could startups help?
- As artificial intelligence progresses, so could its ability to assist journalists. We are hoping to identify more startups providing AI-powered solutions to newsrooms. At the moment, AI technology related to speech tends to be more advanced in English than in any other language (except Chinese), which could potentially widen the gap between anglo-saxon newsrooms and those of the rest of the world. We therefore want to find more diverse, non-English speaking AI startups in order to empower newsrooms globally.
- We are also aiming to identify startups with more diverse leadership to better reflect the diverse communities that journalism should serve.
- Finally, we want to encourage startups to reflect on the notion of 'Datensparsamkeit', a typically German portmanteau word which means only collecting the minimal amount of information necessary to complete a task. We are encouraging startups to be more transparent with their users about the data they are collecting and to be more invested in the security of the data they are storing.

Intellogo

Blockthrough

Sutori

Packetzoom

Packetzoom

Emerging Market

Everybit

Urbs Media

Muuze

Flourish

whatagraph

Explaain

3asyR

Policylead

Ownpage

Minty

Wafana

Videona

Populate

Politibot

Nuevos Medios

Media Vox Pop

Graf.ly

PushApps

BIGVU

Sowt

waach

Aos Fatos

Croma

Where are the
30 startups from?

Visual and interactive Journalism

- Flourish
- Media VoxPop
- Minty
- Sutori
- Vinter

Flourish

—

Flourish allows anyone with a spreadsheet to produce world-class visualisations and interactive stories.

Location
London, UK

Date founded
March 2016

CEO
Duncan Clark

Number of employees
7

Website
www.flourish.studio

Stage of funding
Seed

Main investors
LocalGlobe and Founder Collective

Clients
Google, BBC, FT, EY

Contact
hello@flourish.studio

What problem are you solving?

Interactive content is inefficient to produce in large newsrooms and out of reach for smaller newsrooms. Non-coding journalists mostly can't produce anything without developer help. Developers write too much code that only gets used once. Some newsrooms have started developing tools to solve these problems but they are often very limited.

What solution are you offering?

Flourish makes it quick and easy for non-coders to produce and publish high-quality interactives and stories based on flexible templates. In a few seconds, a journalist can turn a spreadsheet of data into a powerful visualisation, and in a few minutes they can create a structured animated story. Some templates come with the system, but developers can produce their own templates for in-house use or to share with the world. An open-source developer community will also contribute more templates over time.

Why are you better than your competitors?

There are no exact competitors, but compared to projects in a similar space Flourish is better because:
·   It is uniquely powerful and flexible, capable of producing any kind of outputs, from a WebGL globe visual to an image gallery.
·   It is designed for storytelling, allowing efficient authoring of step-by-step explainers, presentations, audio-led Talkies and (in the future) videos.
·   It provides a 'full' solution, including template SDK for developers, easy-to-use editor and publishing system for journalists, and full organisational controls for administrators.

How does your company make money?

We will make money selling the platform to corporations, including associated services such as data storage and database connectors.

What are your the next steps?

The developers launch was in March to kickstart template production. Trials with newsrooms and other organisations are running already, but the full public launch will follow soon. Then we will focus on new features – database connectors and video exports.

Jury member - David Cohn
Flourish

—

It's never a good idea to beat readers over the head with too many facts and figures. Yes, that's our bread and butter - when we are doing our job at our best, but we always need to consider the best way for readers to digest the information. That's where Flourish can help.

We empower publishers and advertisers to stimulate, collect, license and manage User Generated Videos for news purposes and creative commercials.

Location
Lisbon, Portugal

Date founded
December 2015

CEO
Davide Mancini

Number of employees
2

Website
www.mediavoxpop.com

Stage of funding
Pre-seed

Main investors
StartUp Chile, Google Digital News Initiative (prototype), WeAreStarting.it (equity-based crowdfunding platform)

Clients
Público

Contact
Il Fatto Quotidiano (Italy), SWR3 (Germany), Newsday (US)

What problem are you solving?
Newsrooms and brands are looking more and more for user generated video (UGV), but it is hard to find reliable, verified, and licensed material through social networks. Media Vox Pop proposes a simple solution to collect, license, and manage powerful and exclusive UGV using multiple online channels. Newsrooms are also struggling to monetise as advertisers are not looking at them but social networks as a profitable solution.

What solution are you offering?
In order to create more engagement, news websites must have something that stand out and different from social networks. Newsrooms, with the help of Media Vox Pop, can just ask for video content in a seamless and secure way. Users are more engaged with the media they can use freely, such as video content provided by its own community. On the other hand, news companies can promote video contests promoted by brands to increase their monetisation strategy and so attract advertisers.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· Our solution makes use of the latest streaming technology and it works on every device and browser.
· It is extremely easy to install on our clients websites and extremely easy for their users to interact with it.
· Video contests promoted by brands are becoming very common but companies working in the field are not looking at publishers as a powerful partner.

How does your company make money?
Monthly subscription fee and/or share revenue based on branded video contests sponsored by advertisers.

What are your the next steps?
Our next developments will be a proprietary mobile app and SDK to optimise user experience and browser limitations.
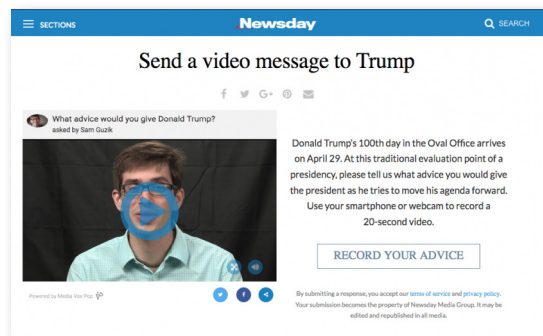
Jury member - Catalina Albeanu
Media Vox Pop
—

Media VoxPop provides an alternative solution for local newsrooms interested in promoting the real voices of people on the ground. By utilising existing social networks within a specific community, their crowdsourcing plugin has real potential for building trust. This type of grassroots audience engagement plays a very important role in promoting quality journalism.

minty

—

Find, contact and hire illustrators for your project. Manage illustration licensing in a single click.

Location
Bratislava, Slovakia

Date founded
2014

CEO
Andrej Kiszling

Number of employees
6

Website
www.tasteminty.com

Stage of funding
Raised pre seed from NMA & Neulogy Ventures, next round in late 2017, early 2018

Main investors
Neulogy Ventures and Next Media Accelerator Hamburg

Clients
Winkreative London, Usborne Publishing UK, Forbes Magazines

Contact
andrej@tasteminty.com

What problem are you solving?
Visuals deliberately placed in stories earn a 650% higher click-through rate on social media. However, professional visual artists are hard to find, the collaboration process is always messy, and image licensing is time-consuming and expensive.

What solution are you offering?
Minty streamlines the collaboration under one link, where all communication, drafts, feedback, and final artwork is stored. The innovative licensing model enables one click license management and vision of passive income for the illustrator.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· Minty launched as a pivot of respected boutique artists representative with award winning illustrators.
· It has seven illustrator submissions per day and had 1160 illustrator registrations in 2016.
· And it is run by a designer couple.

How does your company make money?
We take 10% cut from each commission, 50% from each license.

What are your the next steps?
· This autumn we are launching a comprehensive 'Publishers Dashboard' which would automatically suggest new illustrator talents to art directors and keep track of collaborations.
· A collaboration with APA, Austrian Publishing Agency is in the pipeline for 2018.
· A smart credit system, Minty Credits, to smooth art buying for corporate clients is also in the pipeline for 2018.

Find professional illustrators for your project

Post a job   Search Illustration Stock
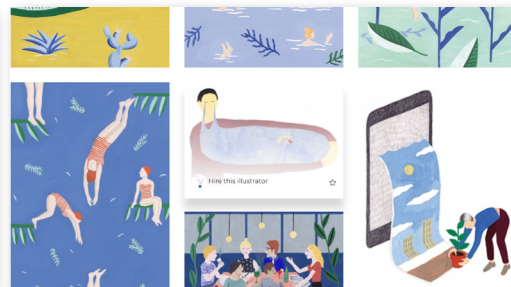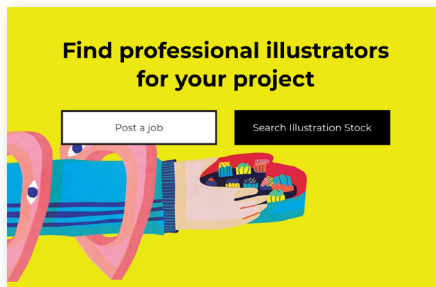
Jury member - Evangéline de Bourgoing
Minty
—

In order to illustrate articles, newsrooms often resort to generic stock images, which have little evocative power and don't help the reader understand the ideas put forward in the text. Minty could provide a solution to this problem by making it easier for newsrooms to find meaningful and compelling illustrations.

Sutori

Cooler than a slide, more dynamic than an essay. Create and share visual presentations with Sutori.

Location
Boston, MA

Date founded
February 2014

CEO
Thomas Ketchell

Number of employees
5

Website
www.sutori.com

Stage of funding
Received investment from Media Lab Bayern. Generated profits with training courses. Will look for investors in the coming months
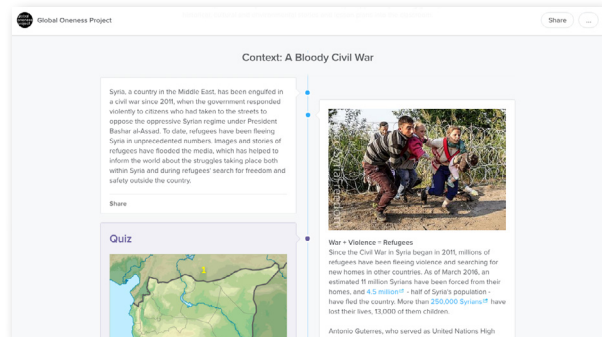
Main investors
Intel Capital

Clients
GBBC

Contact
info@sutori.com

What problem are you solving?
To get information nowadays, we use a variety of sources, from Twitter to news websites. Each source has its own delivery method, its own approach to a story, its own language, and purpose. Navigating between these channels is time consuming and it can also be difficult to have a common thread as information is scattered on the web.

What solution are you offering?
Sutori is the common thread. It enables you to embed an image, a video, a Tweet, an Instagram, or Facebook post all into one easy-on-the-eye and intuitive interface. Being able to easily share and embed a story into any website makes Sutori the platform for the journalists of today and tomorrow. It works on all devices and browsers: all you need is an internet connection.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· Design first approach: everything is done to minimise the number of clicks and be as intuitive as possible
· Simplicity: there is no technical knowledge required. As simple as any native app.
· Beautiful design: in minutes, stories look professional and impressive.

How does your company make money?
We provide custom embeds and stories for a fee. We also have a freemium model for teachers and schools who have access to more features at a rate of $49/year for the Premium plan and $99 for the Unlimited plan.

What are your the next steps?
We would like to make it possible to embed anything into a story (iframes in particular). We would also like to have a presentation mode which enables people to view the story one item at a time, like a slide. Finally, we would also like to implement analytics so that users and business can check up on how much time people spend on a story and how, for example, they answer embedded quiz questions.

Jury member – Catalina Albeanu
Sutori
—

Sutori's storytelling tool aims to help writers present complex information broken down into key story threads, organised for example as a timeline where each point can be a multimedia element or simply text. It's designed to be used by anyone regardless of their technical ability, making it a handy tool for educators and journalists alike.

Vinter

Interactive video app to create interactive stories. Choose your own adventure videos.

Location
Tokyo, Japan

Date founded
July 2016

CEO
Guillermo Garcia

Number of employees
5

Website
www.vinter.tv

Stage of funding
Pre-seed

Main investors
Bootstrapping

Clients
None yet

Contact
guille@vinter.tv

What problem are you solving?
Video is the main medium of media consumption and it will get more and more relevant. There is a need for an interactivity layer on top of video and only advertisers realise this. But soon, everyone will learn about all the other benefits of interactive video, including increasing engagement. Right now only paid services or YouTube annotations allow us to create these types of videos. With Vinter the process is free, fun and easy.

What solution are you offering?
Vinter will allow users to create, discover, and share interactive stories in minutes. They will follow other creators and their videos will be hosted and shown at no cost. Also, users will be able to link their videos with other services like e-commerce platforms, their profiles on social networks, their blogs, and campaigns.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· I come from video games and filmmaking and therefore know how to merge interactivity in videos. I am able to detect drawbacks and opportunities in both mediums.
· I envisioned this before anyone else and have planned everything from adaptation to VR/AR to a dedicated Apple TV channel and the first interactive video festival.
· I am extremely picky when it comes to software quality after ten years of working in the video games QA industry.

How does your company make money?
Ethical ads.

What are your the next steps?
Completing the beta, adding social capabilities, creating interactive video content, VR/AR.

CHOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

select a path | different choices | many outcomes

Jury member - Evangéline de Bourgoing
Vinter
—

By turning news into systems of scenarios and variables, the 'choose-your-own-adventure' format can allow users to understand the intricacies of complex subjects. The free tool that Vinter is building could provide a good opportunity for newsrooms to explore the potential of this format.
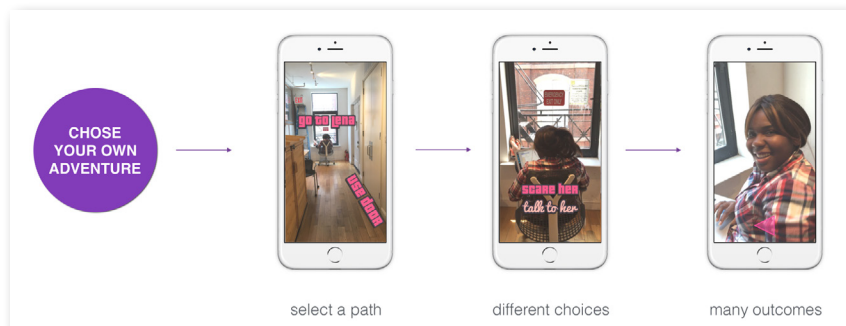
04

Mobile journalism

- BIGVU
- Evrybit
- Videona

BIGVU
POCKET TV STUDIO

—

BIGVU is a TV studio in your pocket. With BIGVU artificial intelligence, anyone can create professional videos in minutes, without having any video skills.

Location
New York

Date founded
March 2016
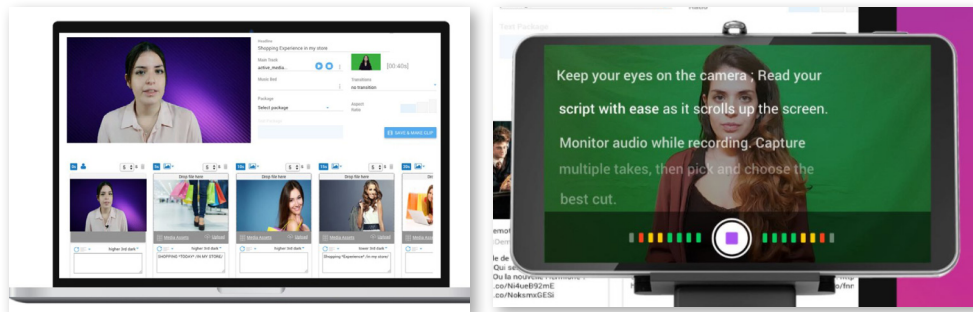
CEO
David Amselem

Number of employees
7

Website
www.bigvu.tv

Stage of funding
Seed

Main investors
Business Angels

Clients
France24, YeNews, Allianz, IBM, Société Générale

Contact
david@bigvu.tv

What problem are you solving?
With BIGVU, anyone with no video skills, can create compelling videos in seconds.

What solution are you offering?
·   A TV STUDIO with just a SMARTPHONE BIGVU provides an affordable and easy alternative to systems that can cost between $10,000 and $30,000, with traditional cameras and video editing suites.
·   All you need is a smartphone, a tripod and a microphone. If you want a more advanced setup, it's better to add professional lighting and a green cloth.
·   All you need to do it talk, no need to memorise lines or glance down to consult written notes. Keep your eyes on the camera – read your script with ease as it scrolls down the screen.
·   You can replace a green screen background using our streamlined virtual studio. The advanced background subtraction algorithm makes any recording location look like a professional studio.

Why are you better than your competitors?
We are the first complete Mobile Video Newsroom.

How does your company make money?
Subscriptions.

What are your the next steps?
In January 2018 we will launch the ability to stream to Facebook Live inserting graphics and images. Anyone will be able to have a TV News channel with just a smartphone.

Jury member - Evangéline de Bourgoing
BIGVU

—

BIGVU's teleprompteur provides journalists with a very easy way to create authentic and compelling first person videos. The composition tool is equally user-friendly, making the BIGVU suite an interesting product for newsrooms looking for time– and cost effective video solutions.

Evrybit

Evrybit is a mobile collaborative storytelling platform that streamlines on-the-ground news production and distribution.

Location
Santa Monica, CA

Date founded
2014

CEO
Eric Ortiz

Number of employees
1

Website
www.getevrybit.com

Stage of funding
Early stage

Main investors
Angel

Clients
Local media, schools (college, high school and elementary school journalism programs and communications departments)

Contact
eric@getevrybit.com

What problem are you solving?
Control over distribution has become almost as important as creating content. This has given technology platforms a lot of power and limited the control and monetisation opportunities for publishers. Mobile multimedia storytelling remains inefficient and lacks context. The ad-driven media model makes monetisation difficult for publishers who have shrinking newsrooms and are often not rewarded for quality content. Third-party agencies cut into revenue: one-size-fits-all agencies price out small – and medium-sized advertisers.

What solution are you offering?
Our app simplifies collaboration so publishers can expand their on-the-ground reporting in real time. Stories are auto-formatted into a stream and each story and piece of media within a story has its own URL, which can be shared via social, email, or message. Stories can be embedded on websites, so publishers control and generate traffic and revenue on their own sites.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· We provide an all-in-one tool for mobile collaborative news production and distribution.
· By creating an embeddable story stream and URLs for stories, we provide more flexibility for distribution and options for monetisation. Non-blockable ads and sponsored media can be inserted into Evrybit stories and viewed in a mobile-friendly stream.
· Anyone can view Evrybit stories with or without the app. Our goal is to drive users to the publisher platforms, not ours.

How does your company make money?
We are a B2B company that offers five paid services: a web dashboard that enables web editing of mobile stories; campaigns that allow users to create a campaign around specific topics or themes; mobile journalism workshops; custom stories created by the Evrybit team; and white labels of the Evrybit technology.

What are your the next steps?
We will build an Android version, refine our iOS app, and enhance the web display of stories. New features will include a messaging notification system, live video, audio streaming, offline production, and editing capabilities. We'll also activate enterprise licensing and individual subscriptions.
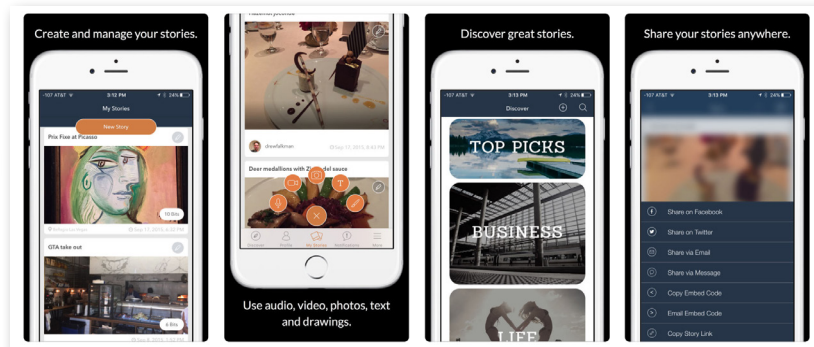
Jury member - Evangéline de Bourgoing
Everybit

Mobile Journalism allows for better reporting: it enables newsrooms to report from press-hostile environments; areas where journalists need to be discreet. People are more comfortable sharing their personal stories in front of a phone than a camera crew making it easier to report on sensitive issues. Newsrooms should therefore tap into mobile journalism's potential some more. Why not experiment with Evrybit?

videona

—

Videona is Breaking the video editing barrier on mobile, with ViMoJo we enter the newsroom allowing anyone to share videos with their mobiles.

Location
Madrid, Spain

Date founded
2014

CEO
Iago Fernández-Cedrón

Number of employees
8

Website
www.vimojo.co/es

Stage of funding
Pre-seed

Main investors
Bootstraped

Clients
RTVE

Contact
infinfo@videona.com

What problem are you solving?
We bring mobile to any professional newsroom, having ready to broadcast videos from the place where the news is happening.

What solution are you offering?
We have a mobile app for iOS and Android that allows you to record professional video, make quick edits, add some text, and voice over, and connect to your servers or post it to your social networks.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· Addapted to the workflow.
· Tailored app.
· Ready to use professional video (HD, 25fps or 30fps).

How does your company make money?
Subscription model.

What are your the next steps?
We are working with RTVE and we are talking with some broadcasters and media agencies here in Spain. We plan to expand to Europe and we will add live streaming video to our apps.

Jury member - Evangéline de Bourgoing
Videona
—

What is particularly interesting about Vimojo – Videona's mobile journalism app – is that it is being developed in close collaboration with RTVE, the Spanish public broadcaster. We can expect the app's features to successfully meet the needs of newsrooms, easily integrate into their workflows, and fulfill the expectations of broadcasters that are used to high quality audio and video.

Artificial Intelligence services

———————

- Intellogo
- Muuze
- Urbs Media

—

Sentiment Analysis on Steroids. We scour audio, video, and text data to find actionable results.

Location
Berkeley, CA

Date founded
October 2014

CEO
Neil Balthaser

Number of employees
more than 10

Website
www.intellogo.com

Stage of funding
Seed

Main investors
Neil Balthaser

Clients
Undisclosed (over 500 teams on Slack use our Alertsy News bot powered by Intellogo supporting over 30k team members)

Contact
info@intellogo.com

What problem are you solving?
There is an ocean of data locked up in our words: social media platforms, videos, digital content. Most systems understand very little about this content: limited metadata which has been input by humans and is often incomplete and inaccurate. Alertsy via Intellogo unlocks and mines all this data and then sells both its access and analysis.

What solution are you offering?
Alertsy uses machine learning powered by Intellogo to crack open news and automatically tag it with hundreds of data points. Because of the depth of these data points, Alertsy is able to recognise ideas, writing style, and the mood of an article. Alertsy's end users can teach it new concepts to recognise. For instance, Alertsy can be trained to recognise the competition by name, the products and services they offer, as well as their press releases. Then it connects, predicts, and recommends news based on what it has learned. Users are alerted to news directly on Slack.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· Alertsy can be taught new concepts by Slack users quickly and easily. This is useful for tracking the competition or news about new market opportunities.
· Alertsy can filter news based on comprehension level, reading time, points of view, and end users can tell Alertsy how much of a concept needs to be present in an article before Alertsy triggers an alert.
· Alertsy is the only bot available that scans both hundreds of news RSS feeds as well as YouTube channels, constantly bringing our users up to the minute news.

How does your company make money?
Subscriptions for end users and third party developers.

What are your the next steps?
We want to make Alertsy available on other messaging platforms. We will continue to add quality RSS feeds and YouTube channels and teach Alertsy new ways to tag stories. We are also adding books, research reports, and speciality document repositories like the USPTO patent database. We are also working on expanding Alertsy's ability to be able to track and graph mood changes throughout a story and predict how readers will react to a story using digital personas.
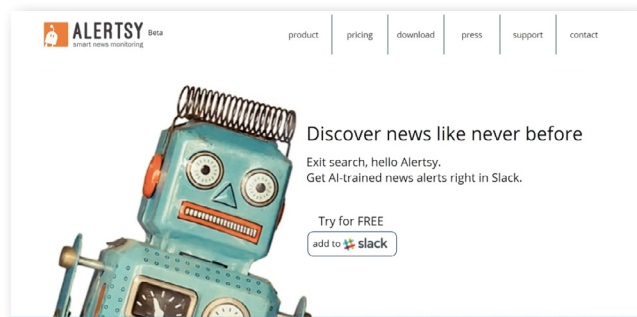
Jury member - Mohammed El-Haddad
Intellogo
—

Anyone who's ever tried to generate a news alert system will know that keyword filtering is just not enough to find real meaning in the news headlines of today. Journalists and editors should not be afraid to utilise the capabilities of machine learning to constantly improve their understanding of what their audience needs. What's exciting about Intellogo is that it understands the importance of context and delivery in journalism and is willing to give the problem a shot.

MUUZE

—

Muuze is an active content enhancement service, enabling the easy creation highly shareable widgets in a range of visual formats.

Location
London and Dnipro (UKR)

Date founded
Legal status obtained
in March 2017

CEO
Andrew Hatcher

Number of employees
6

Website
www.muuze.co.uk

Stage of funding
Received investment from Media Lab Bayern. Generated profits with training courses. Will look for investors in the coming months

Main investors
Founders

Clients
Pilot clients are under NDA

Contact
RaiseROI@Muuze.co.uk

What problem are you solving?
Online content creation is a core element of any marketing strategy yet it remains hard to get key messaging out into the marketplace in a way that engages a specific target audience and provides an effective and easy way of converting browsing into conversions. Readers are not being provided with content that meets their needs or desires, meaning both sides of the content equation are inefficient and under-optimised.

What solution are you offering?
Muuze is a new AI driven approach to creating, publishing, verifying, and tracking content on the web. Muuze enables writers to create more compelling content through intelligent embedding of highly correlated and related information that others have written, allowing that added content to be distributed over the web in a verified and traceable environment.

Why are you better than your competitors?
·   Muuze enables the creation and distribution of fully traceable and trackable content.
·   Muuze provides each writer with access to research, content and data that they would not be able to access themselves.
·   Muuze provides trusted author verification of all content.

How does your company make money?
Subscription model for users from individual through to enterprise licensing.

What are your the next steps?
First usable demo using a year's worth of data from a news supplier from which writers will be offered appropriate quotations, which they can pull out and embed into their content.
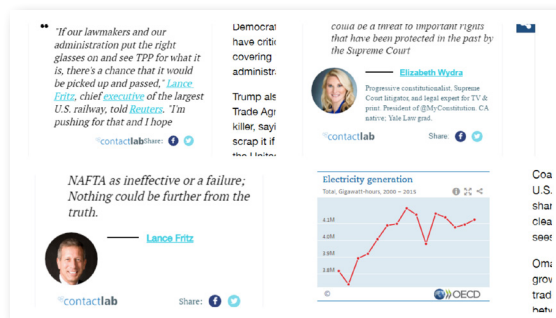
Jury member - Catalina Albeanu
Muuze
—

Adding context to a story, especially using embeds, can be a difficult process of assessing what to include and what to leave out, but also which embeds are likely to stand the test of time as content online gets edited or event deleted. Muuze helps writers surface and choose elements to feature alongside their copy, from research to content and data that is verified and trackable.

URBS.MEDIA

—

Urbs Media is an editorial agency that combines human authored journalism with AI to enable scale production of news content.

Location
London, UK

Date founded
January 2016

CEO
Alan Renwick

Number of employees
4

Website
www.urbsmedia.com

Stage of funding
Early stage investment
Recipient of large scale award from Google Digital News Initiative in September 2017

Main investors
DMA-Media Limited

Clients
Working in partnership with the Press Association in the UK on the Google DNI funded project to provide data-driven stories for local news market.

Contact
Alan.renwick@urbsmedia.com
Gary.rogers@urbsmedia.com

What problem are you solving?
The local media ecosystem is facing growing demand for content but shrinking resources. There is an ocean of important data hidden from citizens and democratic bodies are not held to account. Expecting hundreds of local news outlets to access and analyse the same datasets is duplicative, and not economically viable.

What solution are you offering?
Urbs Media uses the input scalability of open data to find important, fact-based stories and the output scalability of automation to enable mass production. We mine large datasets once, on behalf of all market participants, to uncover mass localised stories that otherwise go unnoticed. Our journalists write stories using natural language generation technology to allow multiple versions of each story for different markets. Urbs provides a large scale/low cost solution for the production of strong, verifiable local news content that would not be possible using human effort alone.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· Urbs has recognised the ignored potential of open data as a scalable and growing source and we have developed an editorial workflow to exploit it in a daily production process.
· We use natural language generation as part of our journalists' workbench to enable them to write multiple (typically 100s) versions of each story for different local markets. No one else is doing this.
· We have a unique market advantage in the UK. In partnership with the Press Association, we received large scale funding from the Google DNI for a project called Reporters and Data and Robots. RADAR will see us develop a data-driven local news service with an automated distribution system that matches content with news outlets across the UK and Ireland.

How does your company make money?
We have sold content to many news organisations and to other companies seeking localised content. During our RADAR project we will trial business models including subscription and metered purchase of content.

What are your the next steps?
Our key focus at present is the RADAR project in the UK. We can replicate this model in countries that have a rich supply of open data and a developed local/hyperlocal news ecosystem. We're actively seeking partners in these markets.

Data analysis and story identification · Story creation and templating · Multiple story production through automation

Jury member - Turi Munthe
Urbs Media

Urbs Media is a brilliant solution to a complex problem: bringing AI and natural language processing both to the discovery of news stories and to their production. We have come miles since the first efforts in this space (around sports journalism) - I'm excited to see what possibilities Urbs and others will discover.
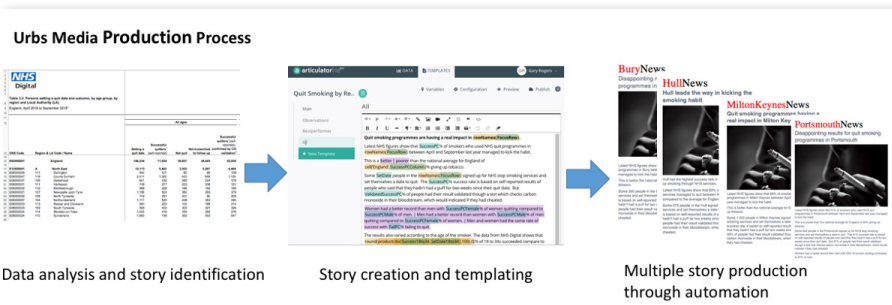
06

Information gathering

- Aos Fatos
- Emerging Market Views
- Policylead
- Explaain
- Wafana
- Populate

Aos Fatos is Brazil's first fact-checking platform, founded in July 2015.

Location
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Date founded
July, 7 2015

CEO
Tai Nalon

Number of employees
4

Website
www.aosfatos.org

Stage of funding
Early stage

Main investors
Crowdfunding, friends and family

Clients
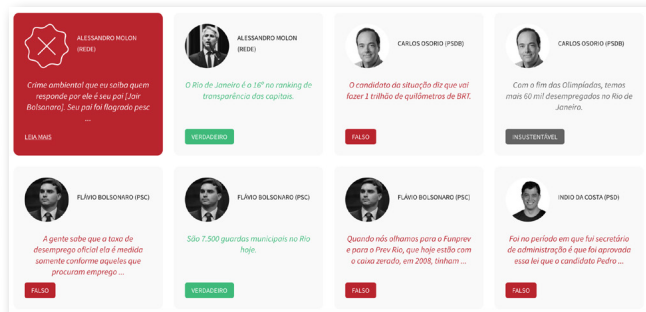UOL, The Intercept Brasil, Open Knowledge Brazil, Transparência Internacional

Contact
ouvidoria@aosfatos.org

What problem are you solving?
Politicians lie and it's becoming somewhat difficult to sort what they say from the truth.

What solution are you offering?
We provide our readers, NGOs, and private companies with trustworthy information about what politicians are saying and what their purposes are. We monitor their claims in order to sort the truth from the rhetoric.

Why are you better than your competitors?
·   We are tech savvy.
·   We are trendsetters.
·   We are independent.

How does your company make money?
Crowdfunding, editorial partnerships, consultancy.

What are your the next steps?
We want to optimise our consultancy arm by developing a smart CMS that our clients can access and consult. We are also trying to develop automated fact-checking resources, such as a browser plug-in that tracks and contextualises potentially misleading information on the web. In another arm, we want to develop a chatbot that helps people factcheck information they find on social media.

Jury member - Evangeline de Bourgoing
Aos Fatos

Aos Fatos, widely recognised as a pioneer in fact-checking in Brazil, impressed me due to the high level of transparency around its methodology. The effort put into harnessing technological innovation to find new ways of sharing its processes is also notable.

—

A global network of experts and industry leaders within the developing economies reporting to deliver timely and actionable news.

Location
New York City, NY

Date founded
September 2015

CEO
Dawn Kissi

Number of employees
9

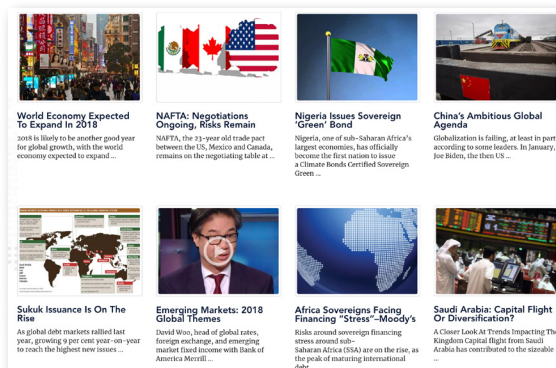**Website**
www.em-views.com

Stage of funding
Pre-seed

Main investors
Bootstrapping

Clients
Undisclosed

Contact
hello@em-views.com

What problem are you solving?
We are striving to deliver actionable, relevant news, analysis, and features on the world's emerging and frontier markets.

What solution are you offering?
Coverage only comes when there is some crisis unfolding or a major coup, etc. Our research and market surveys show that demand for coverage of Africa, for example, is very high, as well as Middle East and China business/economic affairs. Through a global network of seasoned correspondents, we will offer deeply reported and insightful journalism on some of the most under-reported economies and ecosystems.

Why are you better than your competitors?
We don't bill ourselves as 'better'. We are unique, have a clear vision to deliver high-quality journalism to a global, niche audience.

How does your company make money?
Via subscriptions – video, news, analysis (coming soon). Syndication and brand/sponsor partnerships.

What are your the next steps?
· Confirming our first Board of Advisors.
· Launching a new global podcast.
· Kicking off our global events series in 2018.

Jury member - Ricardo Corredor
Emerging Market Views
—

The idea of having an army of experts and leaders at the global level but with a clear comprehensive view of the emerging or frontier economies has an incredible resonance in today´s world, specially when you think about local media around the planet and its difficulties to cover even basic international news.

Explaain

—

A B2B SaaS company that adds news and internal information to your workflow so you can do your job.

Location
London, UK

Date founded
2016

CEO
Matthew Morley (co-Founder)

Number of employees
2 Full time, 3 part time

Website
www.explaain.com

Stage of funding
Pre- Seed

Main investors
Google DNI, EU Horizon 2020

Clients
UniLad, The Tab, 38 Degrees

Contact
att@explaain.com

What problem are you solving?
News publishers are struggling to keep readers from leaving their sites, because the user experience of static articles doesn't live up to the standards expected by today's mobile generation. Readers are also struggling to learn about complex news topics without spending time and effort searching for answers elsewhere. The result is a decline in publisher revenues, public understanding of current affairs, and trust in the news media.

What solution are you offering?
Explaain adds interactive fact boxes to articles, so that readers can click on topics to learn more about them without leaving the page. This improves the user experience, letting readers get more from articles without having to search elsewhere. Publishers get increased engagement and retention rates, increasing their advertising revenues. We offer both a technology and a content solution, so no extra effort is required by journalists.
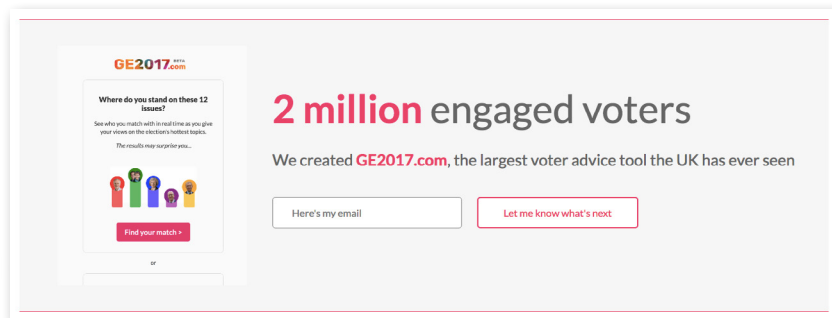
Why are you better than your competitors?
· We're the only solution for increasing engagement that helps readers become more informed at the same time.
· Any type of article on any topic can be made interactive instantly and the tool never looks out of place.
· We let journalists have as little or as much involvement with the content as they like, meaning that each organisation can have the perfect balance of bespoke content and out-of-the-box cards.

How does your company make money?
Explaain is a Software-as-a-service solution for publishers. Our pricing plan is a freemium model, so publishers only pay for premium features such as analytics, custom design, custom card types, and connecting their own archive of content.

What are your the next steps?
With 2.1 million people using our product at the General Election (ge2017.com) and working with publishers including UniLad and The Tab, we have a brand new product line we're introducing to the news ecosystem early next year. You'll see us invest heavily in natural language processing and machine learning as we work on making a 'contextual knowledge' the new norm for the web.

2 million engaged voters
We created **GE2017.com**, the largest voter advice tool the UK has ever seen

Jury member - Evangéline de Bourgoing
Explaain
—

Explaain allows news organisations to provide readers with contextual information without resorting to hyperlinks. With Explaain, news organisations could make their reporting more understandable without worrying about losing readers to other sites, while readers could benefit from a more focused reading experience.

policylead

—

We significantly reduce the time for daily political research and improve the regulatory risk management of lobbyists and policy analysts.

Location
Berlin, Germany

Date founded
September, 30 2015

CEO
Julius Jasso

Number of employees
6

Website
www.policylead.eu

Stage of funding
Next Fundraising 2018

Main investors
WestTech Ventures GmbH

Clients
Samsung Electronics GmbH, Verband der Universitätsklinika Deutschlands e.V., SOLIDpower GmbH, Viessmann Werke GmbH & Co. KG, Randstad Deutschland GmbH & Co. KG

Contact
info@policylead.eu

What problem are you solving?
We significantly reduce the time for daily political research and improve the regulatory risk management of lobbyists and policy analysts.

What solution are you offering?
We deliver all news and analytical insights for specific policy issues. We cover all important information channels: parliaments, administrations, news, associations, companies, and social media; we track those sources on a local, federal, and EU level.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· We provide a 360° monitoring service.
· We bring machine and human intelligence together.
· We have a highly big-data-driven and technological approach to political consultancy. There are few competitors in Europe with the same approach.

How does your company make money?
We sell 12-month-subscriptions for different news and monitoring services (B2B): we send mail alerts, write policy reports, and create press reviews (print and online).

What are your the next steps?
The future power of political monitoring lies in a smart mixture of human-machine-interaction. We will soon release an analytical and collaborative issue management system ('Policylead Digital Dossier') to follow single legislative procedures or political initiatives. Users, researchers, or administrators can edit information, such as up-coming events, or write executive summaries with interactive procedure timelines integrating all our smart data, such as related news, influencers, and parliamentary papers. This will create a 360° picture of a political process. This is something Europe has not seen before! We will release a makeover of our stakeholder management soon: with a few clicks, users will be able to create customised reports tracking the activity of politicians in Germany or the EU. We want to continue revolutionising digital policy monitoring and establish Policylead as a leading provider of political intelligence.
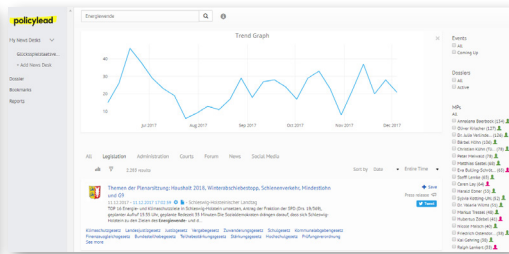
Jury member - Catalina Albeanu
Policylead

—

Policylead helps journalists keep track of the latest news from parliaments and administrations in the European Union, through alerts about the latest decisions, activities and events. Being able to monitor data from the European institutions, and local authorities all in one place means journalists can focus on looking for the stories behind this data rather than try to find their way through throves of documents that may not be relevant to their beat, split across several websites.

populate
tools for civic engagement

—

Populate is a design and technology studio focusing on civic engagement projects, related with transparency, participation and open data.

Location
Madrid, Spain

Date founded
September, 1 2016

CEO
Alvaro Ortiz

Number of employees
7

Website
www.populate.tools

Stage of funding
Not searching for funding. We are funding with consultancy work and with our customers.

Main investors
N/A

Clients
ICIJ (www.icij.org) or local clients in Spain, like media (El Español) or local administrations, such as Madrid or Barcelona city councils.

Contact
lets@populate.tools

What problem are you solving?
Journalists, researchers, and analysts spend too much time searching for data. Even more time is spent downloading, transforming, and putting it in place from many different sources and formats. Only once this is done you can get started with the actual work that generates value: extracting meaning from data. Populate Data saves you from that first phase of the process.

What solution are you offering?
We offer a simple interface that gives you access to hundreds of datasets from many sources and formats in a unified way. We implement a central data index in the cloud with hundreds of open data datasets that are automatically indexed and updated. Data is exposed in the form of datasets with meta information. These datasets can be downloaded in CSV format, or consumed via the JSON API. In the future, teams will be allowed to upload private datasets that can be combined with the Populate Data catalogue and shared with all users.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· Data consumption is really easy using the JSON API or CSV files. The API supports a large number of parameters to customise the queries, and it allows filtering, sorting, and real time calculations.
· Data is automatically updated.. We also have a flexible system to add custom data updaters in the form of small scripts that can be developed ad-hoc.
· Cloud technology gives you the opportunity to use it directly in the media, as a widget, or in a visualisation.

How does your company make money?
We want to help media organisation and analysis by eliminating time consuming tasks that provide no value. We'll charge just a fraction of what currently has to be spent searching, downloading, and cleaning datasets.

What are your the next steps?
We need to stabilise the product and validate the different use cases with real users. We have pretty cool features in mind, such as private datasets for teams, and custom data importer (with format auto-detection, dataset versioning and so on).

Jury member - Turi Munthe
Populate
—

Populate tackles a problem that all too many newsrooms and investigative journalists face. With the right interface and approach, Populate might create something even more powerful: a platform for crowdsourced intelligence emerging out of big data, and a tool for ordinary citizens to question the world around them.

Wafana is the first digital fact-checking news agency in Germany specialising in content from social networks.

Location
Munich, Germany

Date founded
December, 1 2016

CEO
Johanna Wild and Ursula Trischler (2 CEOs)

Number of employees
3 cofounders and 1 freelancer

Website
www.wafana.de

Stage of funding
Received investment from Media Lab Bayern. Generated profits with training courses. Will look for investors in the coming monthsand with our customers.

Main investors
none

Clients
Newsrooms, universities and journalism schools in Germany.

Contact
kontakt@wafana.de

What problem are you solving?
Most journalists in German speaking countries consider the use of social media content as important, but often don't use it in their media pieces because they don't know how to verify it and worry about spreading fake news.

What solution are you offering?
wafana helps newsrooms and journalism schools gain the verification skills they need when using user-generated content from social media. wafana's Social Listening Tool Crowdalyzer is designed to find newsworthy eyewitness posts on social media that have not yet been widely used. It automatically checks whether posts have been published by a bot or a real user. It also indicates current and future trends among a specific media brand's fans and followers, which enables newsrooms to identify topics best suited to their target group. The results are checked for fake news stories.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· The founders are experienced journalists and verification experts who understand the needs of newsrooms. Our software developer has experience in social media tracking techniques and big data.
· No other social listening tool finds user-generated content, analyses the topic trends among a specific media brand's fans and followers on social media (we can analyse public Facebook posts from normal users, not only from Facebook pages like all the other available tools!) and checks the results for bots.
· Online verification companies and social listening tools often focus on English content. The wafana team knows the specifics of social media habits in Germany and provides customised solutions for content in German.

How does your company make money?
Subscription for the social listening tool and we provide customised verification training courses for newsrooms.

What are your the next steps?
We want to set up our own newsroom to clean the data that our social listening tool Crowdalyzer provides in real time: We also want to sort out fake news and spam links manually and partly automate those tasks and develop other verification tools.

Jury member - Evangéline de Bourgoing
Wafana

Wafana has the ambition of becoming the Storyful of the German-speaking world. At a time where mis- and disinformation techniques are becoming increasingly sophisticated, we can only encourage them to take this project further.

Analytics

————————

- Croma
- Graf.ly
- Whatagraph

CROMA

—

Croma is a machine learning engine that helps news publishers identify patterns, trends, and connections between stories.

Location
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Date founded
August, 1 2015

CEO
Juan Melano

Number of employees
4

Website
www.croma.io

Stage of funding
Seed

Main investors
500 Startups

Clients
BBCNews, Huffpost, La Nacion, La Tercera, BuenaVibra among others

Contact
jm@croma.io

What problem are you solving?
In the news industry, analytics tools focus on performance data. What gets tracked is either how many page views, referrals or unique users an article gets on the website, or how much engagement a social post gets on the publication's Facebook page. The problem with this approach is that you lose the context of how the news performs as a whole: you miss what's engaging your potential readers and how you are performing compared to other publications.

What solution are you offering?
Croma gathers all data from third party APIs, and applies machine learning techniques to help publishers take a holistic approach to content analytics and increase readership and revenue on their websites. Croma helps editors and journalists apply machine-intensive data processing in content distribution, content benchmark, and content Intelligence.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· We connect publishers' websites with several APIs – not only social networks, but Google Analytics, Parsely, and ad servers – to surface their trending news articles and match the context of social engagements with their website activity and ad revenue.
· 2. We help editors and journalists understand their competitive landscape in real time by benchmarking their performance against competing publications.
· 3. We interconnect every single story of a newspaper archive so that an editor can pick any person, organisation, or topic and surface the hidden connections between each other in any given period of time.

How does your company make money?
We offer our partners a yearly subscription plan to access our analytics service. We provide more value to larger publications, especially those targeting different markets and audiences spread across different verticals on social media. The cost can vary depending on the publication needs and content volume.

What are your the next steps?
We are trying to solve the problem news organisations have with their archived content and historical data. We are automating the retrieval process and connecting current affairs with historical events in real time.
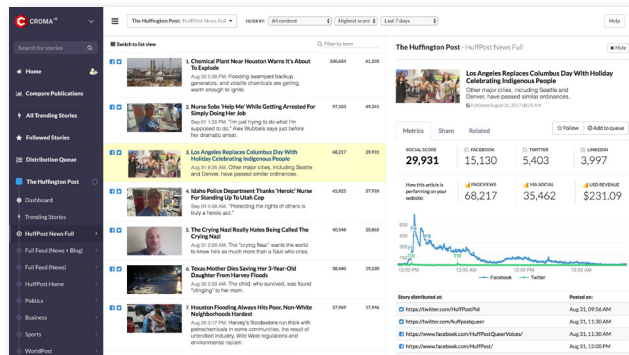
Jury member - Ricardo Corredor
Croma

—

In an era when «information overload» sounds prehistoric, Croma helps the newsroom connect the relevant dots in a digital universe so vast and inmense that automatization is the only way to bring an efficient solution. The idea is simple yet developed with great vision and relevance for the newsrooms of today.

@graf.ly

—

 Grafly is a new approach to content creation in the newsroom, focused on providing a cleaner writing experience for journalists and editors, along with useful content performance insights.

Location
Lisbon, Portugal

Date founded
April, 20 2016

CEO
Isa Costa

Number of employees
4

Website
www.graf.ly

Stage of funding
Pre-seed

Main investors
Bright Pixel

Clients
Público

Contact
hello@graf.ly

What problem are you solving?
Current tools are hard to use and are also inefficient and inadequate for a newsroom. It's hard to incorporate new rich and interactive content, that can help readers engage more with news stories. Once published, journalists don't always have easy access to quantitative and qualitative data about their content's performance.

What solution are you offering?
We want to give content creators the best writing experience tailored for journalism. We want to give journalists the tools to add more rich and interactive content to their stories and a way for them to be published on any medium (web, mobile, print). We also want to give journalists useful insights on how their content is performing with qualitative data like reading heatmaps. We also support offline writing, collaborative writing, and spell-checking tools.

Why are you better than your competitors?
·   We provide a great user experience for content creators, simplifying the writing process and workflows.
·   Writers can introduce widgets into their articles. Our widget library may contain interactive maps, charts, timelines, etc. Each publication can develop their own widgets and in the future sell them to other publications.
·   We also give content creators a complete view of how their content is performing. Journalists and editors can see how readers are reading their content with reading heatmaps and other useful insights.

How does your company make money?
We charge a monthly subscription per user inside the news organisation.

What are your the next steps?
Content creation helper tools like grammar and linguistics, fact-checking, storytelling, content performance metrics, and integration with third party services, tools and other publishing platforms, plug-ins, and widget marketplaces.

Jury member - Mohammed El-Haddad
Graf.ly
—

A lot of newsrooms are limited by their very rigid CMS's. As a result, most news articles end up as a wall-of-text with little or no attention to the importance packaging has on readability. Graphly's platform is elegant and straightforward. It tackles the problem of content creation by giving journalists just the right tools for publishing their stories across multiple platforms. It's very encouraging to see an authoring platform that puts the user experience first.

whatagraph.com

—

Whatagraph connects digital marketing channels into one seamless platform, automatically pulls their performance results, and delivers engaging infographic reports.

Location
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Date founded
2015

CEO
Justas Malinauskas

Number of employees
12

Website
www.whatagraph.com

Stage of funding
Seed

Main investors
Private angel fund

Clients
Triple 888, Furla, University of Washington, Reign Creative, FCDM, Flip Lab.

Contact
hi@whatagraph.com
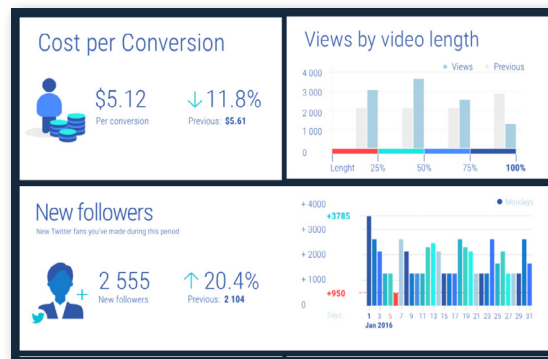
What problem are you solving?
Marketing agencies spend at least four hours in collecting their clients' marketing performance data from a number of marketing channels. They also spend hours building one comprehensive report where traditional presentation still makes it hard to understand the data and make informed decisions.

What solution are you offering?
Whatagraph simplifies the process of collecting marketing performance data, visualising it, and sharing it with clients and between departments. Visual multi-source reports allow better understanding of key analytics data and empower efficient business decision making even for less tech-savvy users.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· Visualisation and easy to understand reports: at this point, Whatagraph infographic reports are the most visual and engaging in the market.
· Multi-channel reports that offer the most comprehensive selection of stats for both web and social media analytics, custom data widgets for internal data visualisation, and intuitive drag n drop for easy report generation.
· Improved client reporting workflow through automation, commenting and a home screen view that makes it easy to manage client accounts, their reporting, and accountable team members.

How does your company make money?
By selling monthly and yearly subscriptions.

What are your the next steps?
Data segmentation and filtering, editable report widgets and new integrations.

Jury member - David Cohn
Whatagraph
—

Analytics are a means to an end, having actionable and timely information. If it's accurate, easy to digest and fast - then that's how I want my analytics. WhataGraph will help marketers get that information. This can always be a sore point, especially for middle managers. It's one of those areas that can quickly become busy-work, but it's also integral to the bottom line and future sales. A tool that has the potential of consolidating that work will free up important resources to execute on the things that help boost performance, rather than just try to understand how past performance was.

08

Monetisation

————

- Blockthrough
- Nuevos Medios

BLOCKTHROUGH

Blockthrough helps publishers recover the revenue they lose to adblocking, while solving the UX problems that drive people to block ads.

Location
Toronto, Canada

Date founded
2015

CEO
Marty Krátký-Katz

Number of employees
8

Website
www.blockthrough.com

Stage of funding
Seed

Main investors
Angel investors

Clients
We don't publicly name our clients, but they include two publishers with websites in the Alexa 100 rankings.

Contact
info@blockthrough.com

BENEFITS FOR **PUBLISHERS**

EASY TO IMPLEMENT

FAST AD DELIVERY

ALL AD FORMATS AND CHANNELS

PATENT-PENDING TECHNOLOGY

RICH ANALYTICS

What problem are you solving?
20–30% of Internet users use an adblocker. Currently, online publishers have no reliable way to monetise such users. Instead they lose money because of the costs associated with serving content to these users.

What solution are you offering?
Blockthrough delivers ads in a way that makes them undetectable to adblockers. Of the approximately 80% of users who are unwilling to pay for an ad-free experience, over 90% are willing to see ads if they are served in a way that solves the following user pain points: disruptive ad experiences (pop-ups, unskippable pre-roll videos), slow ad load times, risk of malware, privacy concerns. Blockthrough allows publishers to monetise their adblocked traffic while addressing the pain points that drive users to block ads.

Why are you better than your competitors?
·   Easy setup & virtually no maintenance.
·   Many competitors offer the ability to monetise, but rarely have enough demand to provide a 100% fill rate across a publisher's entire adblocked inventory.
·   User-friendly: Solves the pain points of all stakeholders in the value exchange.

How does your company make money?
Publishers can choose between a revenue-share model or flat CPM rate for ads successfully delivered to users of adblocking technology.
We only charge the publisher when we monetise their adblocked inventory, meaning that all revenue generated by our product is purely additive.

What are your the next steps?
·   Building an ad exchange for the adblocked web (doesn't exist yet).
·   Building a self-serve signup process.

Jury member – Catalina Albeanu
Blockthrough
—

Blockthrough promises to solve one of digital publishers' main challenges – recovering the revenue they lose because of adblockers. As a worrying number of people use adblockers to avoid disruptive ads, Blockthrough has focused on developing a user-friendly solution that brings benefits to all parties involved. Working with the startup, publishers could have an opportunity to monetise the traffic they would otherwise lose to adblocking, and maintain a non-disruptive browsing experience for their readers.

OBSERVATORIO
NUEVOS MEDIOS

—

All the team are subcontracted until we have the project complete and have an income. While we are sponsored with grants, all the staff is external or scholarship. Ideally we would need: a designer, a communicator, a programmer, and a journalist.

Location
Gandia, Spain

Date founded
April 2017

CEO
Marga Cabrera

Number of employees
No employees

Website
www.nuevosmedios.es

Stage of funding
Finished first round

Main investors
A grant from the BBVA Foundation

Clients
Newsrooms, universities and journalism schools in Germany.

Contact
mcabrera@upv.es
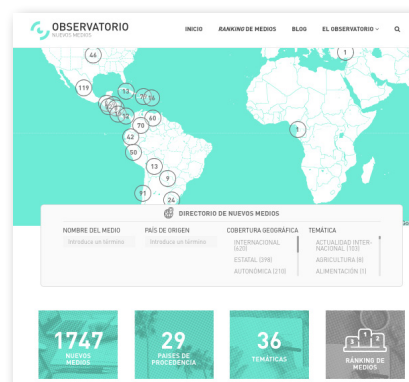
What problem are you solving?
New digital media are born everyday, we collect and analyse them through data. We can detect best practices all around the world and we can use all of the data to sell advertising campaigns.

What solution are you offering?
We want to analyse what's behind the historical data compiled by the Observatory, and also be able to generate predictions about what lies ahead, trends, and best practices that are popular internationally. All this information is presented in a very simple format through data visualisations.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· We don't have a real competitor.
· There is another project: www.sembramedia.org, but they don't work with data, they just recollect the names of the new media and talk about them.
· There is practically no information on new media in Spanish.

How does your company make money?
At the moment we're not making money, a big Spanish bank paid for the first part (as a grant). We have applied for another grant from the Ministry of R&D (not yet evaluated). We need to implement the tool a bit more in order to be able to make predictions. In the future we want to generate sponsored reports on the state of the media and its predictions. Also we can generate an intranet to give agencies access to different media and themes, with annual payment.

What are your the next steps?
I would like to improve it with more data: Facebook, Instagram and Youtube. I also want to make the predictions. And I would like to monetise it.

Jury member - Angela Oduor Lungati
Nuevos Medios
—

It's clear that our capacity to collect data has vastly increased over time. However, our capacity to make sense out of it, draw out trends, and especially from social media is something we still need to work on some more. Nuevos Medios provides an interesting opportunity on this front.

Delivery

- Bloom
- Packetzoom
- Pushapps
- Sowt
- Waach

bloom

Bloom is the geolocation platform for local journalism that makes local news more accessible to communities.

Location
Washington, DC

Date founded
March 2015

CEO
Stephen Jefferson

Number of employees
1

Website
www.bloom.li

Stage of funding
Bootstrapped

Main investors
none

Clients
None

Contact
steve@bloom.li

What problem are you solving?

WLocal news content has an accessibility problem. Residents, tourists, businesses, and software applications are eager to read and analyse news by location, but they cannot easily gather this content in real-time. This limits readership and engagement for local newsrooms, leading small and large publishers to abandon local reporting in their communities.

What solution are you offering?

Our platform enables publishers to geotag content based on where the story took place. Our services then distribute the geotagged content in a personalised feed to local residents and businesses. We work closely with local publishers to find new distribution channels in their neighbourhood and present their content on interactive maps, mobile applications, and community-based websites.

Why are you better than your competitors?

· Our team reviews and verifies publishers before they're able to work with Bloom. This eliminates fake news on the platform and builds trust with the publisher's communities.
· Our geotagging process uses precise geographic data that is manually confirmed by the publisher to ensure that the story's location is accurate. Other services use automated geotagging or hashtags that are unreliable.
· We don't restrict content to be displayed only on Bloom's website, but we encourage other websites and software to query and embed the publisher's local content as well. We make sure that the publisher maintains full control of their branding and content's presence when it is distributed to third-party services.

How does your company make money?

We charge businesses to use our content distribution services. The money is shared between Bloom and the publishers who contribute to that local distribution channel.

What are your the next steps?

Our geotagging tools and embeddable plugins are available on our website and as a Wordpress plugin. We're currently testing pilot projects for our distribution service and plan to launch the service later this year. We are also experimenting with how Bloom can personalise and distribute local content to email newsletters in a similar manner.
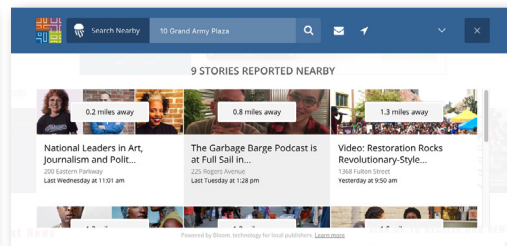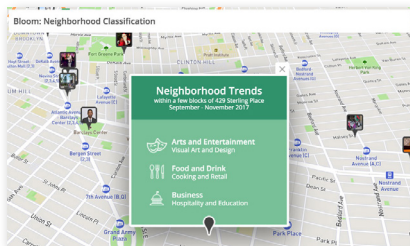
Jury member - Catalina Albeanu
Bloom

In many regions, local news has been eroded as publishers struggle to stay afloat. As news production that would have historically taken place in the heart of the community has been centralised, it can be difficult to reach readers with news and services that fit their needs in a contextualised way. Bloom's promise is to better combine geolocation with news delivery to provide stories when and where your audience needs them.

PACKET ZOOM

—

PacketZoom increases mobile app engagement through superior in-app networking technology. PacketZoom accelerates download speed by up to to three times, reducing network errors by up to 90%, and reducing CDN costs.

Location
San Mateo, CA

Date founded
2013

CEO
Shlomi Gian

Number of employees
18

Website
www.packetzoom.com

Stage of funding
A Round

Main investors
Baseline Ventures

Clients
Mobile Applications, mainly from Gaming, Travel, Retail and News categories: Sephora, Glu Mobile InShorts, Upwork

Contact
daniella@packetzoom.com

What problem are you solving?
Mobile apps that rely on traditional web technology end up with a user experience that is inferior and frustrating, often resulting in user frustration, mobile app abandonment, and bad reviews. The speed and reliability of content delivery for mobile apps is a problem that affects the user experience, but is not addressed by legacy solutions or traditional CDNs.

What solution are you offering?
PacketZoom is the only end-to-end mobile platform that allows mobile app developers to analyse, control, and optimise their app performance issues in real time. PacketZoom Mobile Expresslane is a software-defined solution customised for each end user. By removing roadblocks in the mobile last mile, PacketZoom is able to significantly accelerate the performance by two to three times, rescue up to 80% of the sessions from TCP connection drop, and reduce CDN costs.

Why are you better than your competitors?
·   We've had apps in production for almost three years.
·   We re-created the entire networking stack for mobile, building something that works for modern mobile apps.
·   We made the integration experience incredibly simple so our customers can, not only integrate in minutes, but also have full control over what content we impact. They have the ability to turn PacketZoom on/off or run A/B test via our dashboard.

How does your company make money?
PacketZoom's model is based on daily active users. Customers aren't paying for users who don't see direct benefits from their service and didn't have to commit to volumes of data.
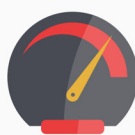
What are your the next steps?
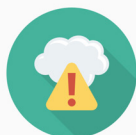Continued feature development and scaling our targeted sales and self service onboarding.

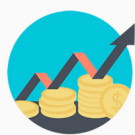| Analyze	Optimize		Reduce Costs
Real time analytics	3x faster	90% Error recovery	90% savings

Jury member - Angela Oduor Lungati
PacketZoom
—

Packetzoom stood out for me as it boosts mobile apps efficiency, and ensures a better engagement of the end-user.. The key to success for any application is making sure you keep users at the heart of it all, and they're doing just that. Its a win-win situation from all angles.

PushApps

PushApps specialises in interactive push notifications, turning boring push messages to more valuable ones for the user and more profitable ones for the publisher.

Location
Tel-Aviv, Israel

Date founded
November 2015

CEO
Eliran Lazar

Number of employees
4

Website
www.pushapps.mobi

Stage of funding
Raised our seed round, looking for round A

Main investors
OurCrowd First, MoonBow Ventures, AJJS

Clients
Der Spiegel, Die Zeit, PressePortal, SVZ, SHZ, Skai.gr, Hay Market etc.

Contact
eliran@pushapps.mobi

What problem are you solving?
On one hand push notifications are one of the most important tools for publishers to make their users re-engage with their app, but on the other hand, the common phrase for the end users is, 'I hate push notifications'. PushApps solves this by making push notifications more valuable for the user and at the same time more profitable for the publisher.

What solution are you offering?
Without replacing the push service, we managed to make the push notifications more personalised, engaging, and interactive. Each user receives content based on their profile and usage history, while automatically putting content from inside the app into the push notifications. It is also more interactive with our unique polls and feedback features.

**Why are you better than your competitors?**
The push notifications services—You don't need to replace your push notifications service to use PushApps. Your push notifications service doesn't offer you ways to monetise your push notifications. Monetisation platforms—You can find monetisation platforms for an app, but PushApps is the only platform that can monetise your push notifications.

How does your company make money?
Our business model is revenue share. The publisher doesn't pay us for using our service, but we will pay the publisher once a month based on his push notifications traffic. In some cases, we can offer the publisher guaranteed revenue-per-thousand notifications (RPM) no matter the click-through-rate (CTR).

What are your the next steps?
After raising our seed fund, now we are now concentrating on growing our network both in Europe and the US.
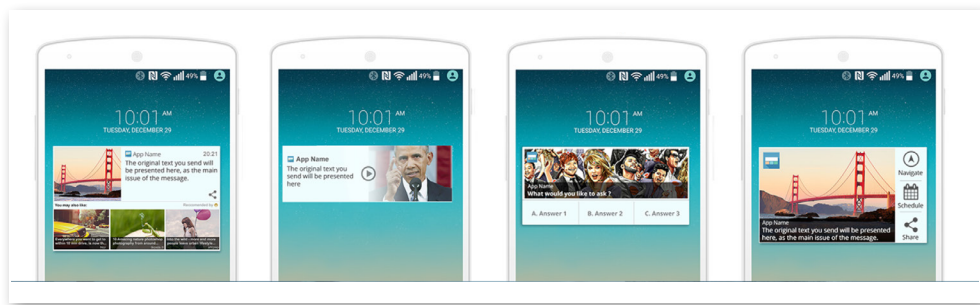
Jury member - David Cohn
PushApps

In a world where your phone is the home screen, PushApps will help publishers stand out. It's a complex and changing space. The relationship between users and their phones is intimate and represents an opportunity for news organisations to enter into reader's lives in a whole new way.

صوت

Sowt is a podcasting platform and production house that is providing Arabic-language audio content for an international audience through mobile and web delivery.

Location
Amman, Jordan

Date founded
2016

CEO
Ramsey Tesdell

Number of employees
5

Website
www.sowt.com
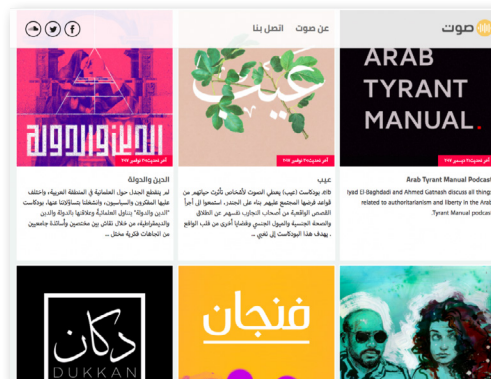
Stage of funding
Angel

Main investors
Partners and various grants from international organisations

Clients
Médicins Sans Frontier

Contact
ramsey@sowt.com

What problem are you solving?
Discovery of Arabic-language audio content.

What solution are you offering?
Curating and producing high quality Arabic content in one place to allow users to more easily discover content.

Why are you better than your competitors?
·   Sowt is the only one curating content.
·   We have a focus on news, journalism and storytelling, not just interviews.
·   We are building an independent and transparent structure to support a sustainable organisation.

How does your company make money?
Sowt will generate revenue through sponsorships, grants, licensing content, and ad sales.

What are your the next steps?
We launched three new shows in 2017 and hope to launch 4-5 more shows in 2018. While we are prioritising content production, we are also developing a database and technology platform that will allow for others to engage with our content in various ways.

Jury member - Turi Munthe
Sowt
—

Across the world, podcasting is booming. In the Arabic-speaking world, where radio already plays a significant media role, the possibilities for podcasting are immense if 'discovery' is properly addressed. Sowt's approach sits at the very heart of the issue.

waach

—

waach is an online video and social media distribution and management platform that helps content creators get maximum reach with minimum effort.

Location
Singapore

Date founded
June 2015

CEO
Petrina Soh

Number of employees
3

Website
www.waach.com

Stage of funding
Late Seed

Main investors
Golden Equator Capital

Clients
6800+ sign ups, Dailymotion Effro Pte Ltd - talent management agency, Little Tree House, NGOA Stark, A Luna Blue, World Press Photo
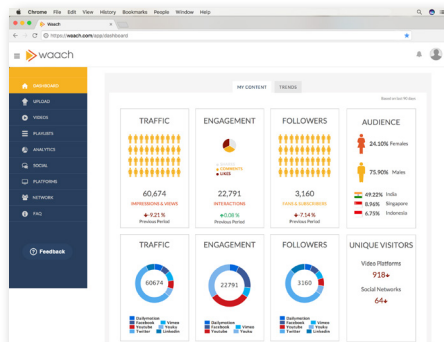
Contact
feedback@waach.com

What problem are you solving?
Publishers are leveraging on video content to increase user engagement and retention rates on their properties. However, finding the right videos among the millions for their content can be challenging. Creators also find it difficult to reach their potential audiences due to the increasingly competitive market.

What solution are you offering?
Our publisher solution identifies and matches the right videos to their content, by running semantic and audience analysis on the content. The most accurate videos are shortlisted using our competitive analysis and can then be displayed in customisable widgets. For creators, our end-to-end video management solution helps them distribute and share videos to their audiences on multiple platforms in a single click. We also aggregate analytics from all platforms to ease day-to-day performance tracking. Our competitive analysis also provides them with actionable insights to help them understand their market and their performance.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· Our publisher solution has video at its core. Other recommendation solutions are usually only suitable for dealing with articles with video being an add-on feature.
· Recommending relevant videos helps publishers increase user engagement for sustainable revenue. Other solutions tend to focus only on monetisation but not on accuracy for video recommendation.
· Our creator solution provides access to cross-platform publication and analytics from a single location. Our competitors are optimised for single platforms, usually YouTube. Creators currently need to use several tools to distribute to and retrieve analytics from all their platforms.

How does your company make money?
Our publisher widgets are free to use, under a revenue share model. Publishers can also customise our tool with access to our API, charged by usage rates. Creators can use our creator solution on a freemium basis (with monthly subscriptions).

What are your the next steps?
Improving our analytics and decision tools.
Expanding our ecosystem of partners to provide more value-added services to creators and publishers, such as a creator marketplace to produce videos or DIY websites.

Jury member - Evangéline de Bourgoing
Waach
—

As newsrooms invest more in videos, we need better tools to distribute them and analyse their impact. Could waach become the hootsuite for video? An indispensable tool to streamline the work of mass video producers? We will keep an eye on the development of this startup.

10

Personalisation

_____

- 3asyR
- Ownpage
- Politibot

3asyR

make your reading easier

—

3asyR is a web app that helps dyslexic people or people with learning difficulties to read easily online.

Location
Dublin, Ireland

Stage of funding
Self funded

Date founded
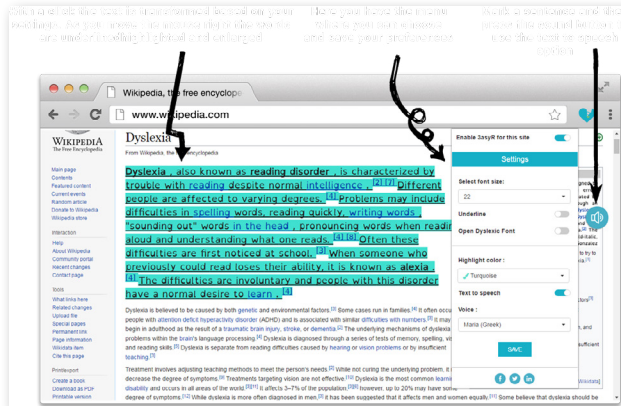August, 9 2016

Main investors
none

CEO
Maria Tsiana

Clients
Clients 500 users, 2 b2b client

Number of employees
5

Contact
info@3asyr.com

Website
www.3asyR.com

What problem are you solving?
There are more than 700 million dyslexic people on the planet and many more with other kinds of learning disabilities. Being a dyslexic myself, I have always struggled with reading, which discouraged me from reading a book for a long period of time. I needed to make double the effort. Nowadays, with technology being part of everyday life, all these people face the same difficulties with online texts.

What solution are you offering?
My goal has always been to be able to carry over to online reading the tools that helped me read on paper, such as using a marker to highlight, underline, and take notes. 3asyR is an attempt to give people with similar struggles the opportunity to customise and make their online reading experience easier. They can spend less time and effort and simultaneously have a better understanding of what they read or learn.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· There is no similar tool on the market right now that allows the user to highlight words on their own by clicking on text and moving the mouse to the right, just like a marker.
· In the business version, there are more colours and font size options for the user to choose.
· The tool saves all changes automatically to the websites the user visits, offering a customized experience.

How does your company make money?
We have identified two sales channels:
B2C – For dyslexic people willing to pay and install the process.
B2B – Publishers or enterprises that pay an annual fee (social responsibility) and will offer the services labelled 'Dyslexic-friendly' to their sites. This will make the sites more accessible, while encouraging and providing people with dyslexia and other kinds of reading disabilities with the right means to better their reading experience.

What are your the next steps?
Creating an application for Android and iOS and 3asyR for PDF files.

Jury member - Evangeline de Bourgoing
3asyR
—

About one in ten of the global population are known to have dyslexia. 3asyr has the potential to help those affected by making their reading experience easier and faster and improving their understanding of the news. For news organisations, 3asyr could become an efficient and cost-effective solution to increase reach and impact of stories, as well as better representing readers' interests.

ownpage
technology

–

Ownpage provides to publishers a personalised newsletter service which increases the newsletter's CTR up to 120%.

Location
Paris, France

Date founded
2013

CEO
Stephane Cambon

Number of employees
3 cofounders and 1 freelancer

Website
www.ownpage.fr

Stage of funding
Already raised €800,000 of seed. The next step may be an A round.

Main investors
Sofimac Innovation, Shéhérazade Semsar de Boisséson (Politico.eu MD)

Clients
Euronews, 20Minutes, L'Express, Le Monde, Le Parisien, Les Echos, BFMTV, La Croix, Condé Nast, Prisma Media

Contact
scambon@ownpage.fr

What problem are you solving?
Today, about 84% of the traffic of publishers' websites comes from intermediaries (Google, Facebook). Intermediaries make the most profit in this business model. Ownpage gives the power of distributing content back to publishers.

What solution are you offering?
We develop a recommendation engine specifically designed for publishers. We personalise content for each reader according to their interests. As the traffic on homepages continuously decreases, we choose to distribute the content suggestions on push marketing channels. This is how we automatically generate direct access traffic. Our first service, the personalised newsletter is used by a significant number of major French publishers, such as Les Echos, L'Express, LCI, 20 Minutes, or BFM TV. The click-through-rate of the personalised newsletter is about twice as much as the publisher's other newsletters. Ownpage is the audience engagement automation company.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· Ownpage works only with publishers. Consequently, our technology is specifically designed for them and our account management team drives the projects with a sharp expertise in the media industry. For each publisher we work on the technological aspects as well as the product aspects (design, monetisation, etc.).
· After more than four years of R&D with French researchers, the Ownpage technology is really performing. We can adapt our core algorithms to each publisher's content to reach the optimal performance.
· Ownpage delivers turnkey services. For our personalised newsletters solution, we handle every aspect of the project: from product design to email routing.

How does your company make money?
We offer a subscription model to publishers. In the case of personalised newsletters, the price mainly depends on the volume of emails sent.

What are your the next steps?
We are working on extending the range of services: personalised mobile push, personalised desktop push and personalised messenger push.
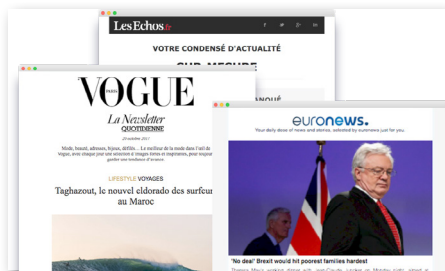
Jury member - Evangeline de Bourgoing
Ownpage
—

Ownpage's personalisation solutions could allow newsrooms to better cater for their audience's specific needs and help them manage information overload, thus increasing reader loyalty to a brand. Their solution allows for a mix of automated and manual curation: a successful 'man-machine marriage' that combines the best of humans and algorithms.

Politibot

–

A platform that allows every journalist or news outlet to build its own bot in an easy way.

Location
Madrid, Spain

Date founded
January 2017

CEO
No CEO. 8 co-founders: journalists, developers and political scientists.

Number of employees
0

Website
www.politibot.io

Stage of funding
Funded by Google DNI.

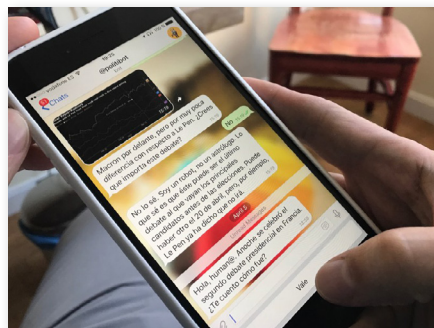**Main investors**
Founders

Clients
LaBot, a bot created by three Chilean journalists. More info here: http://www.labot.cl/ In conversations with several news organisations in Spain, Argentina and the Netherlands.

Contact
e@politibot.es

What problem are you solving?
The advertising business is no longer a monopoly of media organisations. The industry is suffering from the influence of intermediaries and the rise of ad blockers due to the terrible user experience of news content on all devices.

What solution are you offering?
Chatbots on messaging apps allow us to enter the most intimate environment of our audiences: where they talk to friends and family. They spend more time on these apps than on any news website and this offers an opportunity to build trust. It's valuable to set daily routines with your readers and to establish a link to build a community through their smartphones. You can use a chatbot to engage with a younger audience or to give an exclusive service to subscribers. 60% of Politibot users talked with the chatbot at least once a day during the Spanish election campaign: this loyalty is extremely valuable in a time where engagement is so important for news outlets.

Why are you better than your competitors?
· Our natural language processing system provides a tool for more personal communication with the audience. The chatbot is able to conduct a basic conversation and this will improve over time.
· We offer our partners many options to personalise their content and to target different clusters of users with different advertising.
· We give our partners analytics tools to track the behaviour and interactions of their users and features to easily process and examine answers. The chance to ask your users questions about every topic could help with content recommendation.

How does your company make money?
Subscriptions: we adapt our pricing to the size of the audience and the needs of the outlets we are working with.

What are your the next steps?
Our platform is now available on Telegram and Facebook Messenger and soon on Slack. In April 2018, we will add new features to the platform regarding analytics, automation, and natural language. Companies in Europe and the US have expressed already interest in our product.

Jury member - Catalina Albeanu
Politibot
—

Chat apps provide an intriguing opportunity for news organisations – a channel to communicate with their audience directly, joining the ranks of a person's family and friends, but also a challenging platform to get right and not overwhelm your user with notifications. Drawing from the team's success with its own chat bot during the Spanish elections, Politibot aims to bring its expertise to newsrooms elsewhere and give a helping hand to others who'd like to build a closer relationship with their audience.

Contact

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Chief Content Officer
edebourgoing@globaleditorsnetwork.org

Catarina Falcão
Startups for News Programme Manager
cfalcao@globaleditorsnetwork.org

2018 Report

startupsfornews.org