

## Is content still king?

Learnings from product and design thinking

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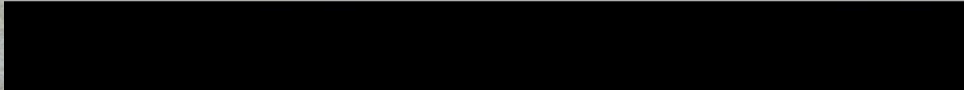
sph

NEWS  
CENTRE

报业中心

Singapore Press Holdings





# Products in four languages: English, Chinese, Malay, Tamil

THE STRAITS TIMES

thesundaytimes

THE BUSINESS TIMES

THE BUSINESS TIMES *weekend*

thenewpaper.

联合早报  
LIANHE ZAOBAO

早 zaobao<sup>sg</sup>  
早晚全新

早报星期天  
zbsunday

联合晚报  
Lianhe Wanbao

SHIN MIN  
新明日報

早报  
EP  
COMM

BUSINESS INSIDER  
MALAYSIA

BUSINESS INSIDER  
SINGAPORE

ZB  
BZ

大烟指  
Number One

Berita Harian

Berita Minggu

தமிழ் முரசு

tabla!

SPHmbo

SPHmagazines

StClassifieds  
BUY IT • SELL IT • FIND IT

asia  
one

STOMP

Straits Times Press

STJobs

newslink

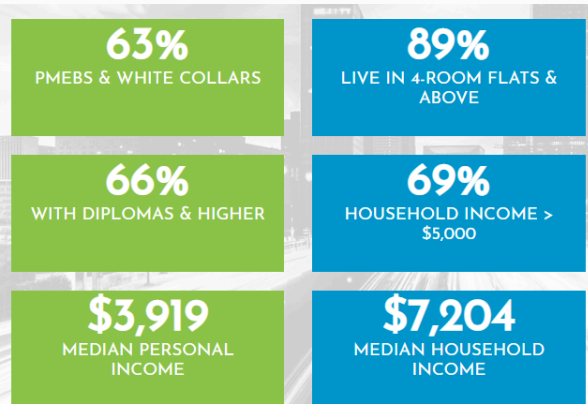
小小相指  
• THE BEST OF LITTLE THINGS •





# THE STRAITS TIMES

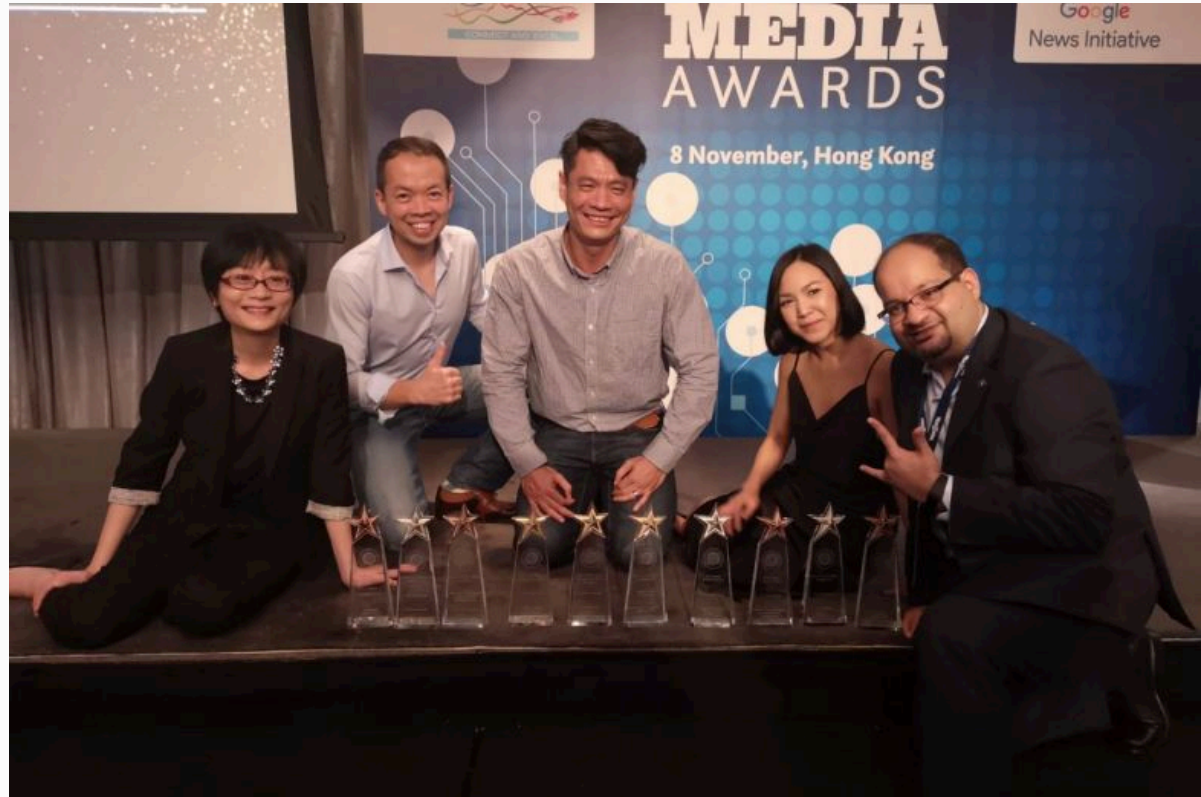
- Singapore's most read newspaper; flagship English daily of SPH, published since 1845
- Daily average newspaper circulation: 370,100
- Daily readers: 597,000 online, 600,000 print (Nielsen Media Index)



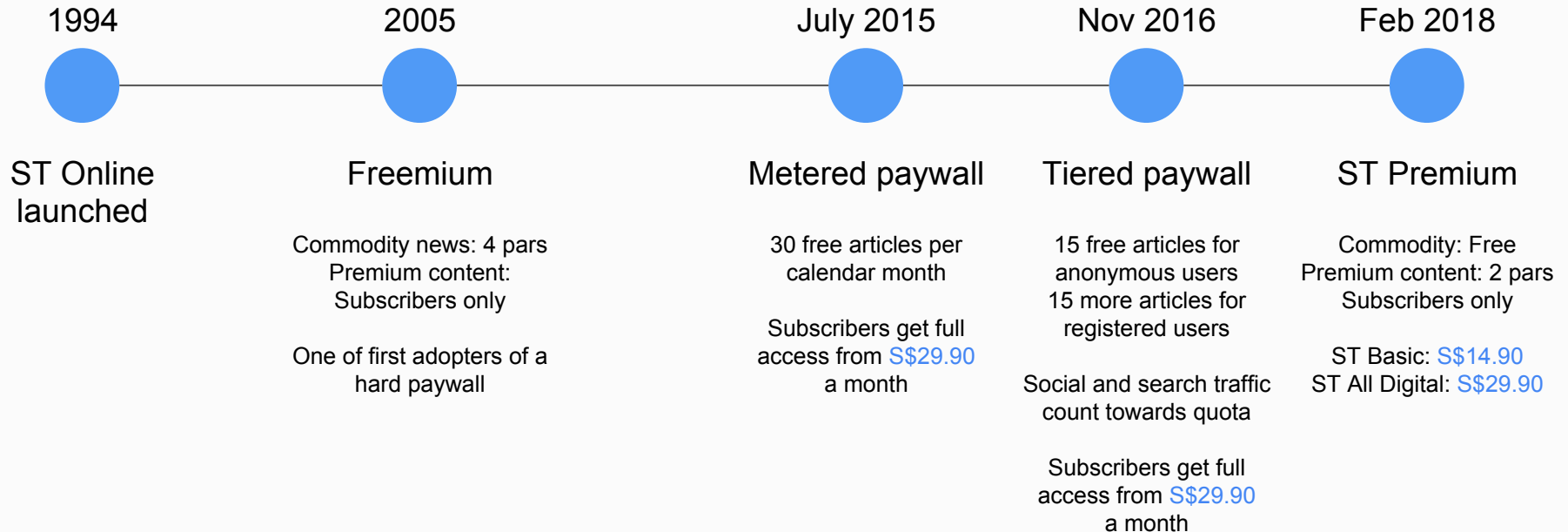


## Awards and accolades

- 9 awards at **Asian Digital Media Awards 2018** by Wan-Ifra, including Reader Revenue Initiative award for [ST Premium](#), and Gold for ST's first augmented reality project, [Asia's sacred art](#)
- 8 awards at **Best Of Digital Design 2018** by Society for News Design, including experimental design for [Are you ready for Smart Nation?](#)
- 2 awards at **Best of Newspaper Design 2018** by Society for News Design

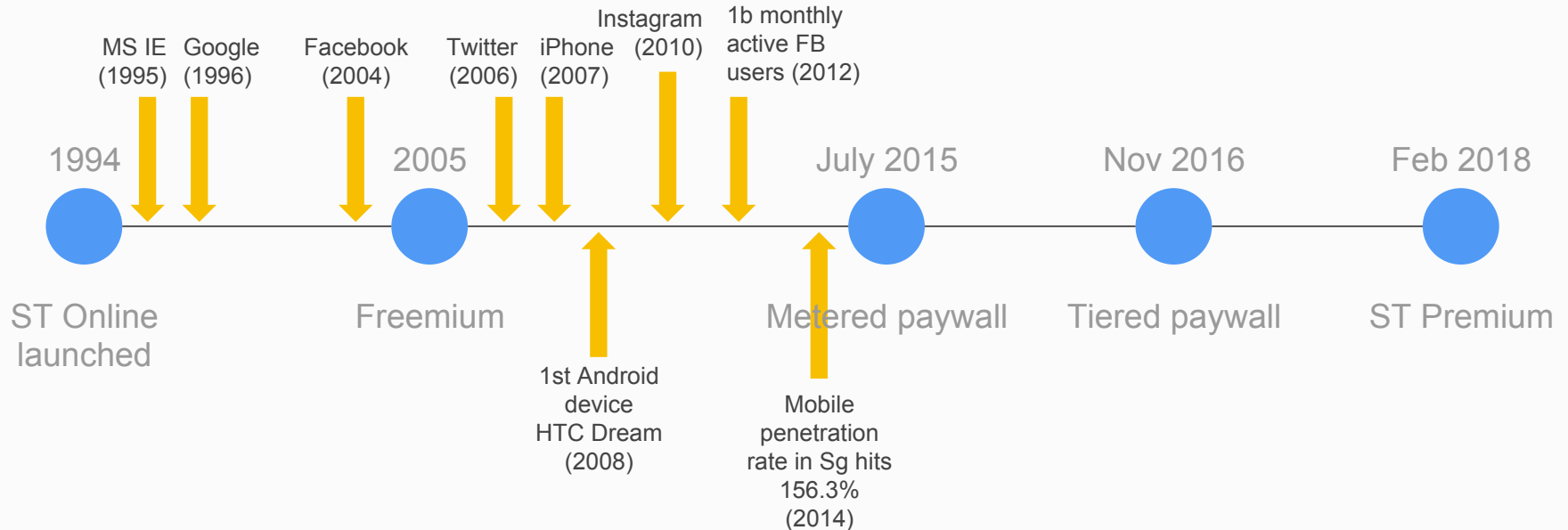


# ST's paywall journey








# Let's put our journey into context



# Why ST Premium?

Criteria	Leaky paywall 	Restrictive metered model (e.g. 3-10 articles) 	Freemium model (Free articles + paid premium articles) 
<b>Brand positioning</b>	Low value provider <span style="color: red;">-</span>	Volume provider <span style="color: yellow;">~</span>	Premium content provider <span style="color: green;">+</span>
<b>Subscription value</b>	Very low <span style="color: red;">- -</span>	High <span style="color: green;">+</span>	High <span style="color: green;">+</span>
<b>Incentive to write premium content</b>	Low <span style="color: red;">-</span>	High <span style="color: green;">+</span>	Very high <span style="color: green;">+ +</span>
<b>Impact on ad revenues</b>	Positive <span style="color: green;">+</span>	Negative <span style="color: red;">-</span>	Neutral <span style="color: yellow;">~</span>
<b>Social media reach/ ability to share</b>	High <span style="color: green;">+</span>	Medium <span style="color: yellow;">~</span>	High <span style="color: green;">+</span>
<b>Technical feasibility</b>	Difficult <span style="color: red;">-</span>	Difficult <span style="color: red;">-</span>	Easy <span style="color: green;">+</span>



# 'It Pays to Know' campaign

Campaign objective: [To connect audience to the personalities and stories](#) behind the best and most exclusive work of the ST newsroom. Series of social media-friendly videos featuring ST writers and their most memorable work, from insights into life in North Korea to candid confessions of a food critic. (Click images to watch the videos)



 **The Straits Times**  
Published by Daryl Chin [?] · February 7 · 

It took 7 months of negotiations with the North Korean authorities before permission was granted for ST's visit.

Associate editor Rahul Pathak shares what he saw during the trip, and what went into the making of this story: [str.sg/otherkorea](http://str.sg/otherkorea)



243K REACH

 **The Straits Times**  
Published by Gregory Phua [?] · February 20 · 

"I keep my ear to the ground... to give voice to forgotten historical figures and everyday people with stories to tell." - Melody Zaccheus, ST heritage reporter. Find out more: <http://str.sg/melody-zaccheus>



146K REACH

 **The Straits Times**  
Published by Daniel Wong [?] · March 1 · 

Being a food critic doesn't come with the perks most people think of, says ST's Wong Ah Yoke. But the biggest job hazard? An expanding waistline. <http://str.sg/oS49>



154K REACH

# SPH-Google tie-up

- We offered **Google Home and Google Home Mini** to new and existing subscribers
- Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) offers **four native audio feeds** on Google Home
- Part of SPH's efforts to continuously innovate and connect newsroom personalities to audiences on emerging platforms



## HEARD THE NEWS?

Get the news from The Straits Times read to you, when you want it

- Listen to The Straits Times in audio\*
- Enjoy four concurrent logins on your mobile devices
- Access the e-paper edition and receive exclusive subscriber rewards

\*Users need to change their Google Assistant language setting to English (Singapore). A step-by-step guide will be given upon redemption.



Receive a  
Google Home Mini  
when you subscribe\* now

Google Home Mini  
worth \$79

- Voice-activated speaker powered by the Google Assistant
- Get answers and personalised responses from Google
- Listen to music, podcasts, radio and audiobooks, hands-free\*\*

"Hey Google, play KISS 92.FM"



"Hey Google, what's the weather  
like this afternoon?"



"Hey Google, play me the  
news from The Business Times"

"Hey Google, read the latest news  
from The Straits Times."



"Ok Google, play some  
pop music!"



"Hey Google, when is my  
first meeting tomorrow?"



# Results

- 90% increase in monthly new digital subscribers
- Less than 10% churn
- Minimal impact on ad revenue
- More data-driven approach to content production
- Greater flexibility with **event-driven promotions**:  
During first Trump-Kim summit in Singapore, we pivoted paywall for lead generation rather than direct subscription.



Which articles got us  
new customers?



# Bread and butter: health, housing, education, transport, jobs, money

☰ THE STRAITS TIMES

SINGAPORE > Courts & Crime Education Ho

化子 天比 2019  
National Chinese Challenge 2019  
Organisers: 新加坡中華總商會 Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry 新加坡中華總商會 Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Co-presenter: ICBC 中国工商银行

PREMIUM

## Under-16s can still ride e-scooters under new rules




☰ THE STRAITS TIMES

BUSINESS > Companies & Markets Economy

DBS 新加坡中文大書 聯合華報  
Organiser: 聯合華報 LIANHE ZHOUBAO

PREMIUM

## Tech firms hiring varsity students to beat talent crunch




☰ THE STRAITS TIMES

SINGAPORE > Courts & Crime Education Ho

Send in your entry now!

## No asbestos found in Johnson & Johnson's baby powder in Singapore: HSA



# In-depth: Pieces that cover newsy topics

THE STRAITSTIMES

BUSINESS > Companies & Markets Economy

马上报名! 联合早报 新加坡 主要赞助商: UOB 战略合作伙伴

PREMIUM

## Going overseas to be farmers: Driven by worry over Singapore's food security



THE STRAITSTIMES

OPINION > ST Editorial Cartoons

DBS 新加坡文明大獎 Supporting Partners I.O.S.

PREMIUM

## When weddings become displays of wealth

John Gapper

PUBLISHED DEC 20, 2018, 5:00 AM SGT

Facebook Twitter WhatsApp Email More

Social media and globalisation are turning private celebrations into aspirational events

THE STRAITSTIMES

ASIA > East Asia SE Asia South Asia Aus

LEARN LIFE-SAVING SKILLS

PREMIUM

## PM Mahathir and his old-style politics are back with a vengeance in Malaysia



Shannon Teoh

PUBLISHED DEC 18, 2018, 9:24 PM SGT

Facebook Twitter WhatsApp Email More

KUALA LUMPUR - Cries of Malaysia Baru

# Quirky, human-interest

☰ THE STRAITS TIMES

SINGAPORE > Courts & Crime Education Ho

I toured the home of master potter Iskandar Jalil. Toh Wen Li Journalist The Straits Times 

## Woodlands resident does it again with latest festive project - a Christmas log cabin with 'snow-capped' roof



☰ THE STRAITS TIMES

LIFESTYLE > Entertainment Travel Fashion

 National Chinese Challenge 2019  
Semi-Finals & Finals:  
17 April (Wednesday) 1pm - 5pm  
Bugis+ Atrium, Level 2

PREMIUM

## Actor Lawrence Wong's life upended after success of Story Of Yanxi Palace



☰ THE STRAITS TIMES

SINGAPORE > Courts & Crime Education Ho

 2019年《联合早报》财政预算案商业论坛  
与财政部长王瑞杰对话 

## Causes Week - ANGELS IN HOMES AND HOSPITALS

### Causes Week 2018: Contribute towards new pillows for the elderly



# Explanatory: what the news means and how it affects readers


☰ THE STRAITS TIMES

SINGAPORE > Courts & Crime Education Ho

DBS 新加坡中文大書 Competition Categories  
1 Graphic Design

PREMIUM

## Fines v fees: What your condo management can do if you break rules



☰ THE STRAITS TIMES

SINGAPORE > Courts & Crime Education Ho

化文 National Chinese Challenge 2019  
Organisers: 新加坡中文大書 Co-presenter: ICBC 中国工商银行

PREMIUM

## Under-16s can still ride e-scooters under new rules






# Transgressions: Courts, breaking rules

☰ THE STRAITS TIMES


SINGAPORE > Courts & Crime Education Ho



Delight your wedding guests with personalised messages in The New Paper


PREMIUM

## Harsher punishment for security officers who sleep on the job, act unprofessionally from Jan 1



☰ THE STRAITS TIMES

SINGAPORE > Courts & Crime Education Ho



Delight your wedding guests with personalised messages in The New Paper

PREMIUM

## Bomb hoax, car breakdowns, rampant queue-cutting all add to last weekend's Causeway jams



☰ THE STRAITS TIMES

SINGAPORE > Courts & Crime Education H



2019年《联合早报》财政预算案商业论坛  
与财政部长王瑞杰对话

PREMIUM

## Court rules estate agency director liable for botched NZ deal, to pay \$210,000 in property investment losses



COURTS TODAY

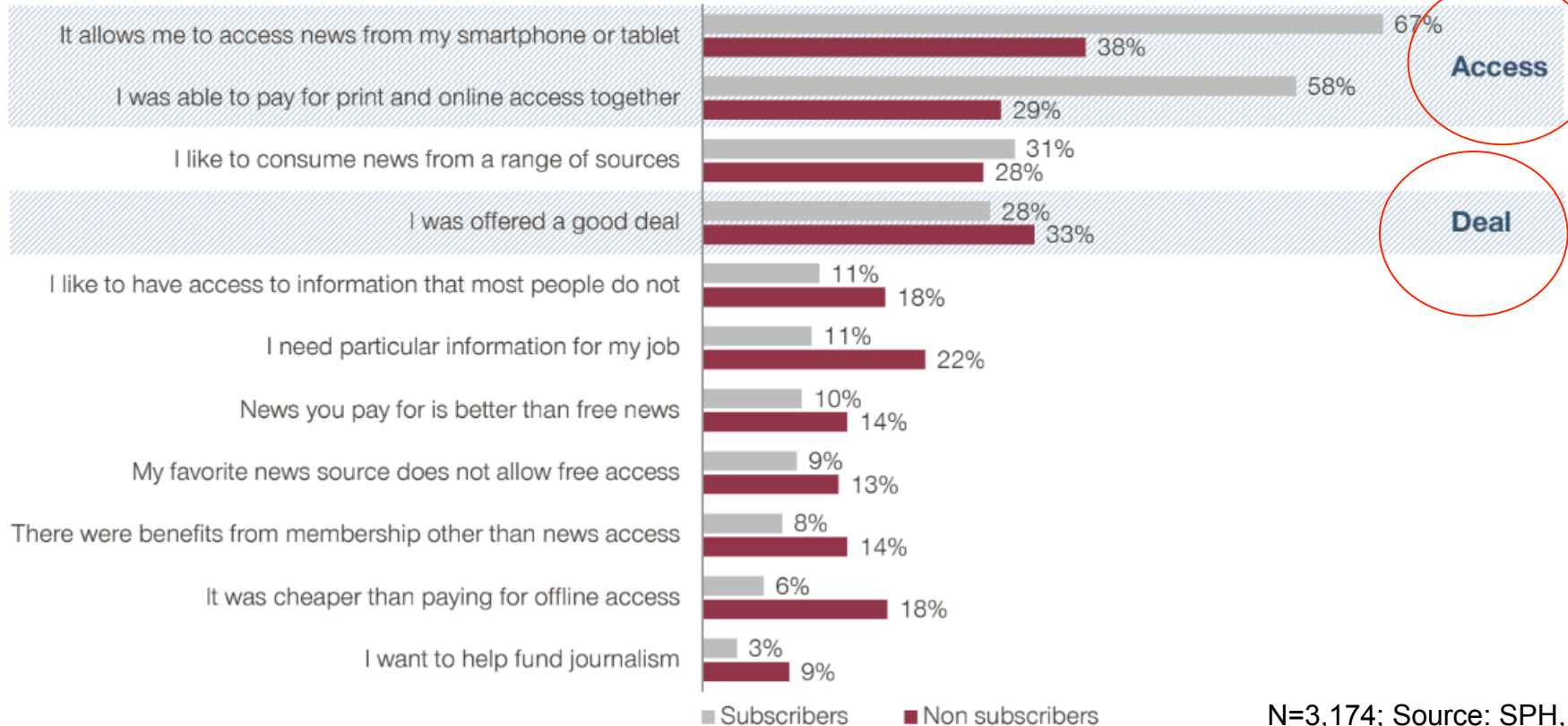
# Lessons

- Premium means different things to different people: Journalists think about 'premium' differently from consumers
- Evergreen archives are just as important as news to consumers
- Besides premium content, there are other factors at work ...

Why do they pay?

# Why do customers pay for online news?

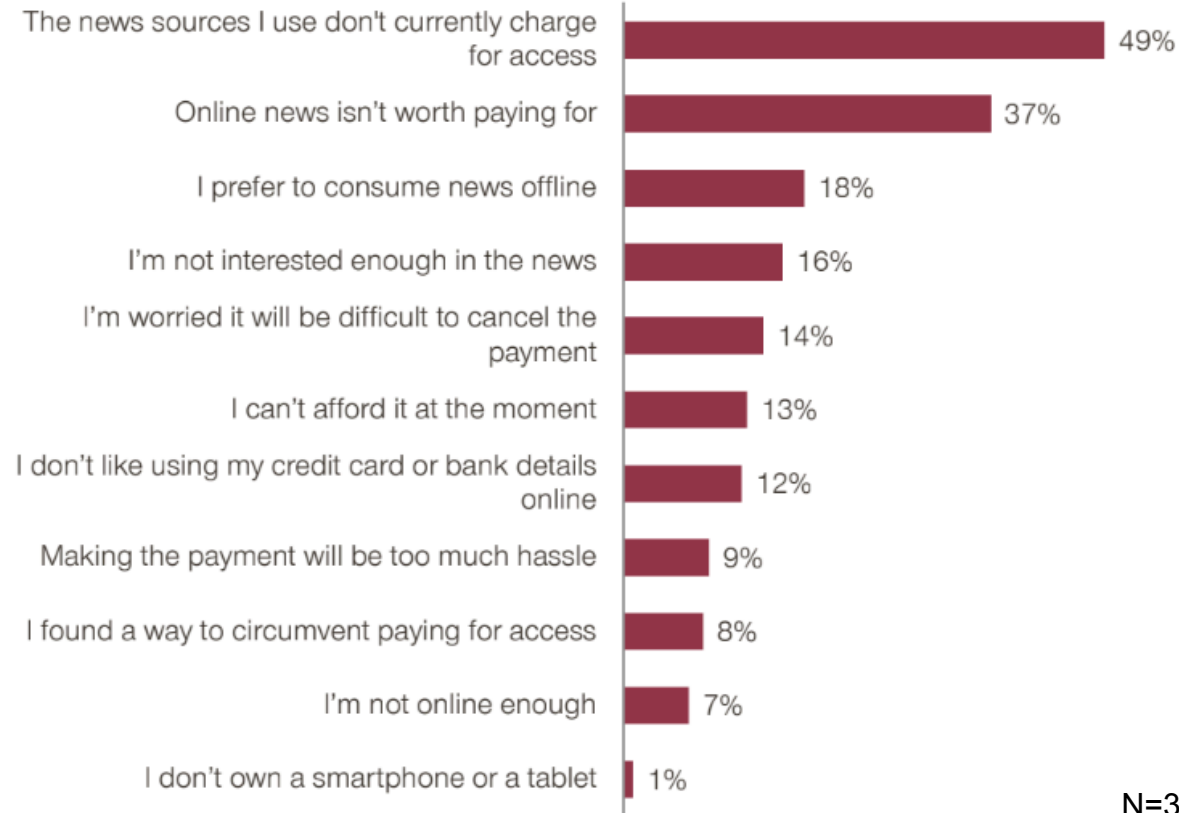
## Reasons for paying for news (subscribers and non-subscribers)





# Why do customers NOT pay for online news?

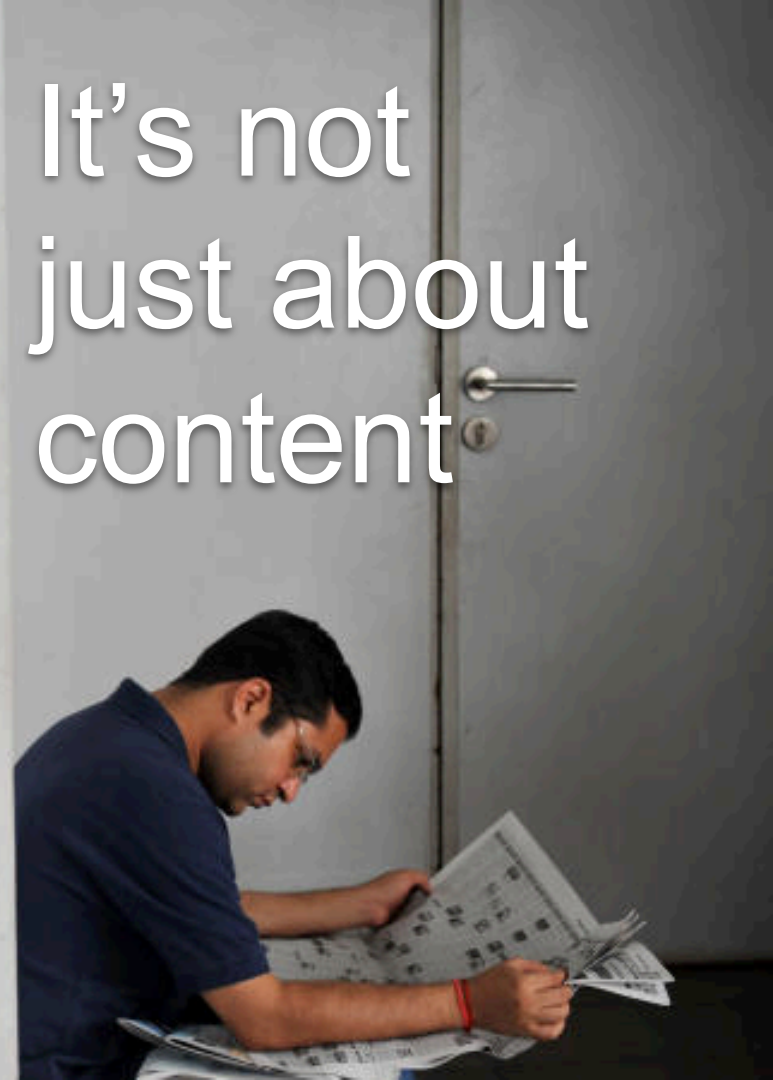
## Reasons for non-subscribers for not paying for news



So what does **your** customer want?



It's not  
just about  
content



A large, diverse crowd of people is walking on a city street. The individuals are dressed in a variety of casual and business-casual attire, including shirts, blouses, dresses, and jackets. Some are carrying bags, and one woman in the center is holding a small cup. The background shows greenery and a purple bus, suggesting an urban environment. The overall scene is busy and represents a wide range of customer demographics.

Know your customer





Convenience

## Millennials in Singapore spend almost 3.4 hours a day on their mobile phones: Study



MRT commuters using their mobile phones while waiting for the train at City Hall station. ST PHOTO: NEO XIAOBIN

🕒 PUBLISHED NOV 19, 2015, 11:12 AM SGT

## Digital habits in Singapore

## People in Singapore spend over 12 hours on gadgets daily: Survey



Singaporeans spend an average of 12hr 42 a day on digital devices. PHOTO: ST FILE

🕒 PUBLISHED APR 3, 2017, 5:00 AM SGT



A photograph of a market stall. A woman in a purple shirt is standing behind a counter, weighing produce on a scale. She is handing a small white bag to a customer in a blue shirt who is standing in front of the counter. The counter is filled with various fresh vegetables, including green onions, corn cobs, and asparagus. The background shows a large window with a grid pattern, suggesting an indoor market setting. The word "Value" is overlaid in large black text in the center of the image.

Value



# Experience





Ideas,  
hypotheses

**BUILD**

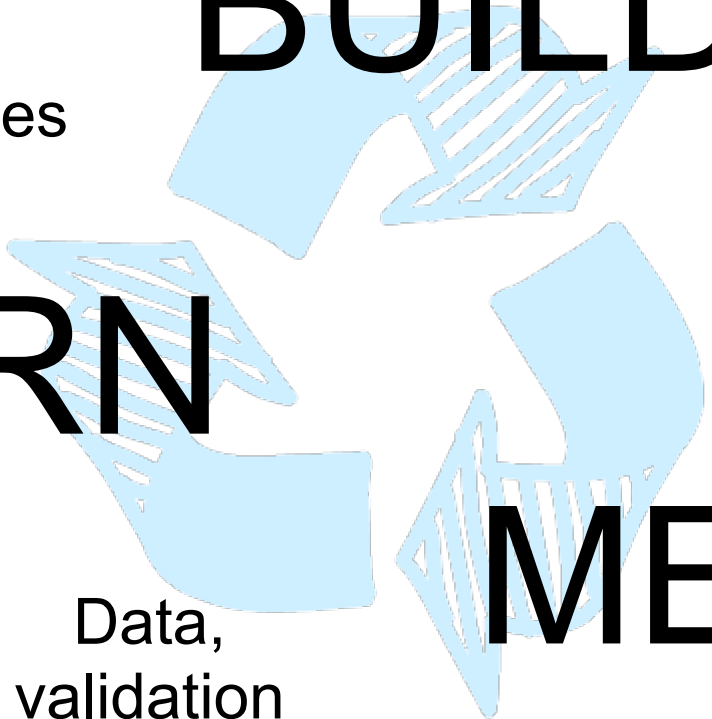
Product,  
experiments

**LEARN**

Data,  
validation

**MEASUR**

**F**





Let data drive decisions, not the Highest Paid Person's Opinion.

Make it  
easy





Email > Anonymous



The future

# How come Netflix can convert more? 30+% of its audience (NYT 2-3%)

Customer-centric business

Use of algorithms

Personalisation

Reduce churn

Convenience

Be where our  
customers are





Personalise





We are social

Other revenue





E-commerce,  
affiliated  
marketing



# Events







Entertainment

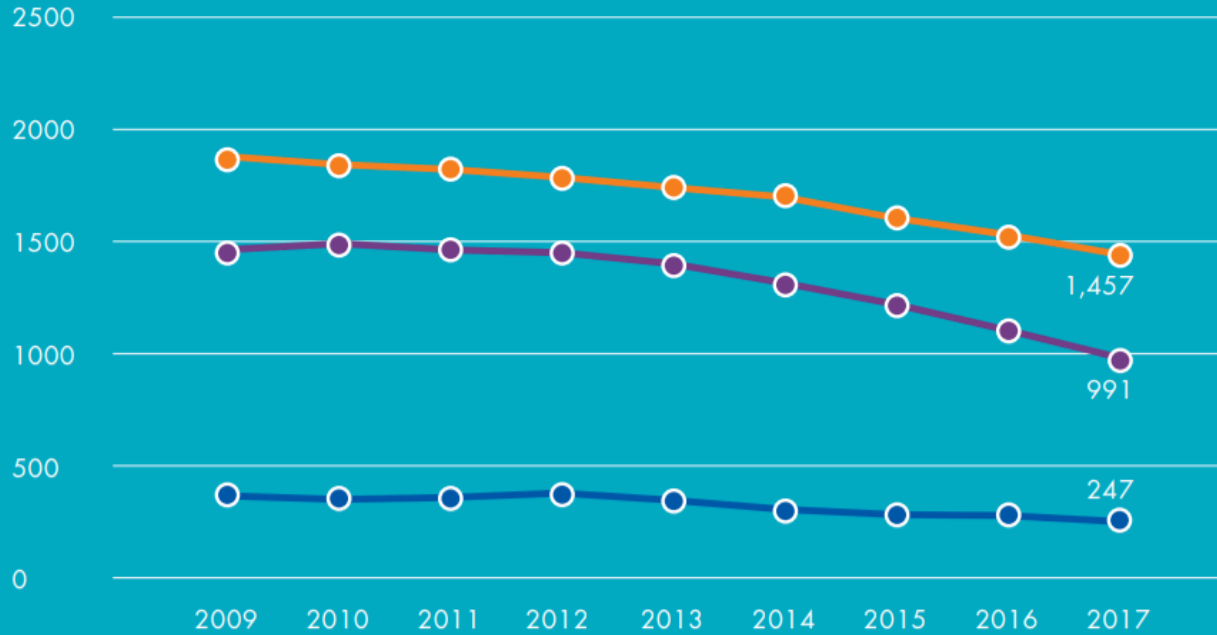
Content is king, but value, distribution,  
and experience are queen and she  
wears the pants.



Thank you!

[vming@sph.com.sg](mailto:vming@sph.com.sg)

## SPH Newspapers (Print + Digital) Readership Trends ('000)



- English-Language Papers
- Chinese-Language Papers
- Malay-Language & Tamil-Language Papers



# Segmental Operating Revenue and Profit Margin

