MEDIAHUIS

Partnership

Mediahuis recognises that content tagging helps readers to navigate a website, and enables the publisher to target specific customer segments based on what tags are included in an article. There was both an editorial and analytical need to extend the previous manual content tagging process with other tags such as; the type of article, sentiment, socio-demographic style, structure, reading level and in-depth journalism versus fast journalism.

"We came to believe that by working together with Google News Initiative we could speed up the process of content tagging and deliver more to our customers." explains Trui Lanckriet, Group Data and Insights Director at Mediahuis. "Article DNA is quite a big topic with a broad set of potential use cases, including content tagging, so we looked into what could bring us direct value. Influencing conversions and retention seemed a natural way to start the project and fit with our objectives and needs for the business." adds Lanckriet.

Overview

Mediahuis is a multimedia publishing company founded in 2013 as a joint venture between Corelio and Concentra, two Belgian companies with a rich publishing history.

Today, Mediahuis is one of the leading media groups in Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland and Luxembourg and has more than 30 brands in its portfolio, including De Standaard, Het Nieuwsblad, De Telegraaf, NRC, The Irish Independent, Luxemburger Wort and regional brands.

The publisher is focussing on becoming more consumer centric, turning its digital strategy into a mobile-first strategy, and aiming for digital advertising effectiveness.

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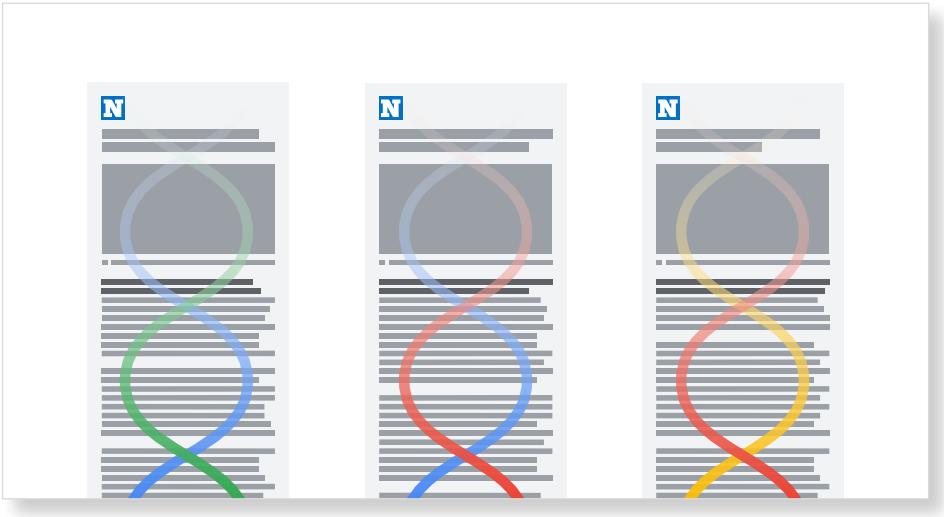
Mediahuis: Enriching article information with Article DNA

How Article DNA is used to influence conversion and retention

The Project

Article DNA is a project that scores articles on a set of specific qualities pertaining to the topics, behaviors, and appeals of that content. The content scores taken from Article DNA provide data that scientists and analysts can use to influence conversion, engagement and retention of subscribers. The project with Google News Initiative saw Mediahuis generate and use Article DNA for two brands in Belgium: Nieuwsblad and De Standaard. They onboarded their first Dutch brands in Q1 2021 and intend to extend the use of Article DNA to several more brands later on this year.



Mediahuis scores its content to create Article DNA

Above and beyond the main aim of making consumer behaviour more accessible to data scientists, the added value of Article DNA is that it gives support to the editorial teams, sales and marketing departments. "The possibilities are almost endless and we're sure Article DNA will help us improve our offering and reader experience in multiple ways." adds Lanckriet.

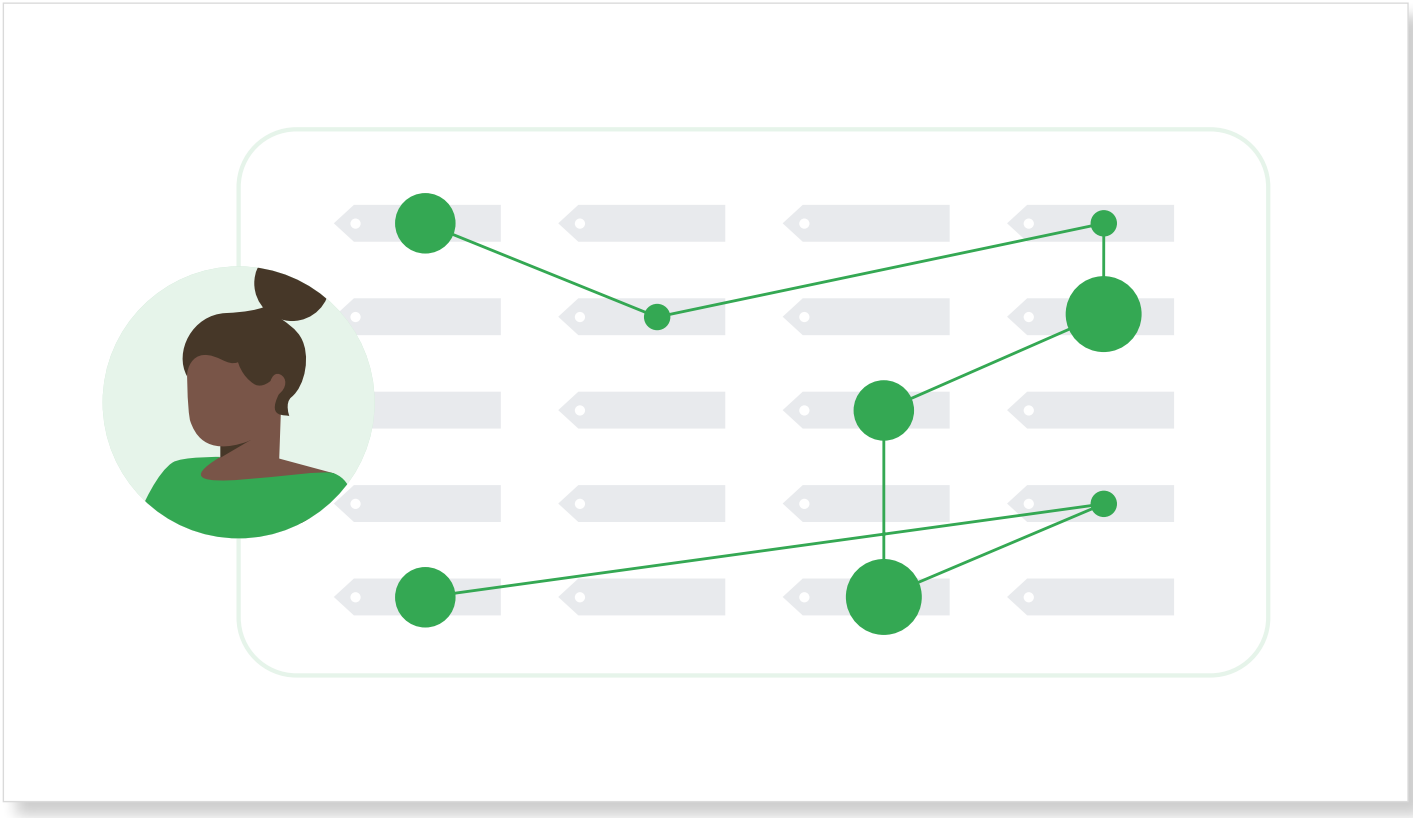
Content tagging is part of the daily editorial process. Before Article DNA, content was tagged manually. Now, with Article DNA, editors get automated tag suggestions from the Natural Language Processing engine. This artificial intelligence capability enables programs to process and analyze large amounts of natural language data.

The editorial team are able to add extra features (eg. genre) which will enrich the Article DNA of each story written. Which features to add and use is part of the development process in order to create a common tagging language for all of the brands.

Mediahuis continues to develop this product, combining Article DNA with audience behaviour so that editorial teams can manage their audiences better. Mediahuis is also working on innovative approaches towards the ideal content mix for a specific brand and how this can be monitored and evaluated by editors-in-chief. Lanckriet explains, "This rich set of content characteristics will allow us to create deeper insights into our content assisting the editorial teams in writing and promoting new content."

Article DNA allows Mediahuis to make the connection between the type of content being read based on different content features eg. news topic or sentiment. This can then be mapped to historical audience behaviour which allows Mediahuis to personalize call-to-actions, improving conversion and engagement. For example, when a customer wants to read a premium article the paywall kicks in.

Article DNA allows Mediahuis to personalize the message a customer is presented with on the paywall, resulting in a 9% higher subscription hit rate.



Article DNA allows Mediahuis to map historical audience behaviour in order to personalize call-to actions, improving conversion and engagement.

"As we put more focus on the project it was easier to prove the value to other divisions in the company. We were able to embed the project as it's one of the centerpieces in the way of working we envision within the organisation, being more data driven and having more insights for qualitative journalism. Part of the future foundations were laid out by doing this project." comments Lanckriet.

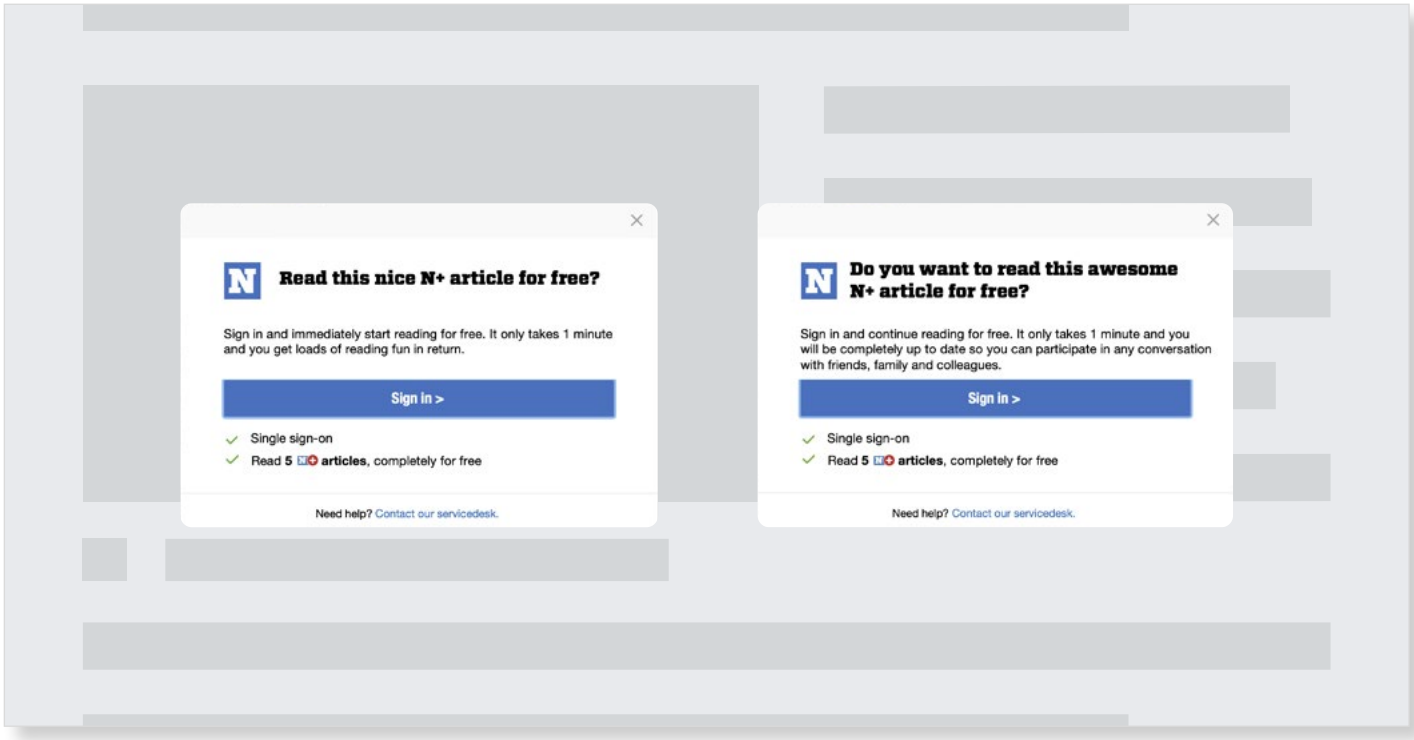
Mediahuis communicated results from the project on a regular basis and within different levels in the organisation. The Google News Initiative project coordinators invested time in promoting the project towards Mediahuis' management which helped to sell-in the idea of utilising Article DNA across the wider roser of brands.

Article DNA provides editors with automated content tag suggestions

> "For most teams and people we spoke to, Article DNA seemed like the next logical step to take within our organisation to boost future growth. The use of data is becoming increasingly important and Article DNA is all about the stories we create on a daily basis so it has its place and roots within the heart of the organisation. Thanks to Article DNA we were able to make a big step forward into becoming a more data and insights driven organisation."
>
> TRUI LANCKRIET, GROUP DATA AND INSIGHTS DIRECTOR

The Results

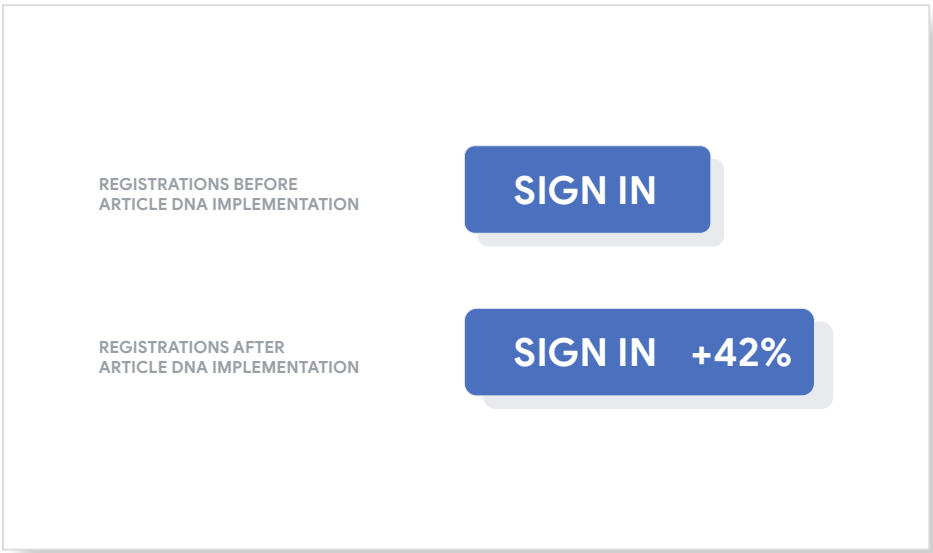
Mediahuis has executed some small-scale A/B tests where they used personalised messages on the paywall. The default call-to-action had a sign-in rate of 1.96% while the overall sign-in rate using the variants led to a sign-in rate of 2.13%. Depending on the call-to-action type there is a statistically significant increase when using these variants.



These two examples show how Article DNA allows Mediahuis to personalize the message a customer is presented with on the paywall

On describing the direct results from using Article DNA, Lanckriet explains "It came as a bit of a surprise that soft features like polarity or the fact that an article was geared towards introverts or extroverts gave a clear signal towards improving acquisition or to reduce churn." Soft features are the non-trivial aspects of an article, and are less clear cut than hard features like topic, person or location.

After the implementation of Article DNA, there was a 42% uplift in the number of registrations per one million page views. Mediahuis aims to further explore different Article DNA characteristics to see which ones can move the needle.



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