



A personalization engine implemented on Blick.ch

The personalization engine implemented on Blick.ch homepage enriched the selection of trustworthy news created by top-quality journalists with more content carefully selected by AI algorithm optimizing for user interests.

It helps achieve outstanding results measured by CTR and session duration growth, and provides interesting content insights for editorial offices, relieving them of repetitive tasks.



○ Why did client decide to implement personalization?

- News sites' homepages deliver identical content to every user – disregarding interests.
- People are different, but they fall into groups that share common interests.
- The space at the top of the frontpage is limited, so the editors decide which content users get to see.
- By serving more personalized content, brands aim to engage their users and encourage them to stay longer and come back more often.
- Algorithms applied in journalism can work together with humans, not replace them.
- To free up time and to allow journalists to focus on stories and their mission to inform the public about unfolding news.
- Quality of journalism and brand integrity is top priority.
- A clever mix of personalized and manually curated content increases both KPIs and brand value.

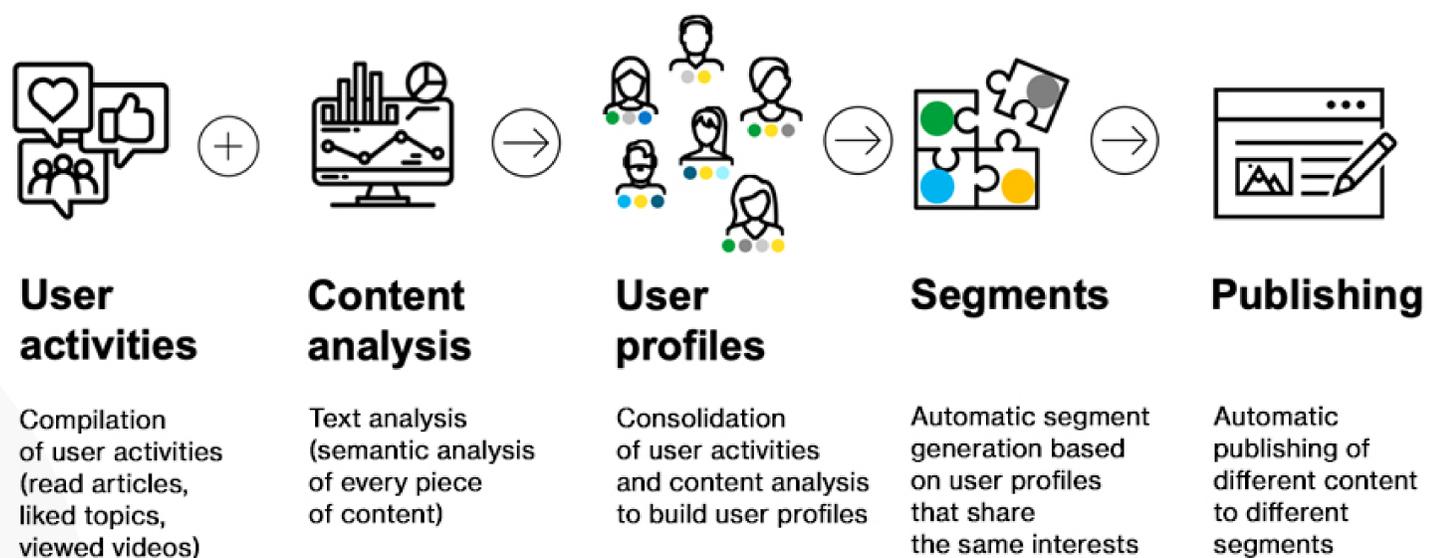
○ How did it happen?

The personalization engine tracks all user activities (what was read, liked, watched), and a semantic engine analyzes all new content to understand what it is about.

Combining data about user on-site behavior with content data analysis made it possible to build multiple user profiles. Consequently, AI models built user segments based on user profiles who share interests.

The automated process of publishing is able to serve different content to different segments. It gathers data about user activity, and runs an ongoing “popularity contest” to achieve the best performing versions of the home page at a given time for every user segment.

There are still dedicated areas on the homepage where automation algorithms don't interfere with editors' choices.



○ What was achieved?

The whole main page is divided into sections. Some sections contain fixed content shown to all users, others are personalized areas, but publishing tools allow editors to take control and pin important information or editors' choices to every section to be visible to all users.

○ Results from the product perspective

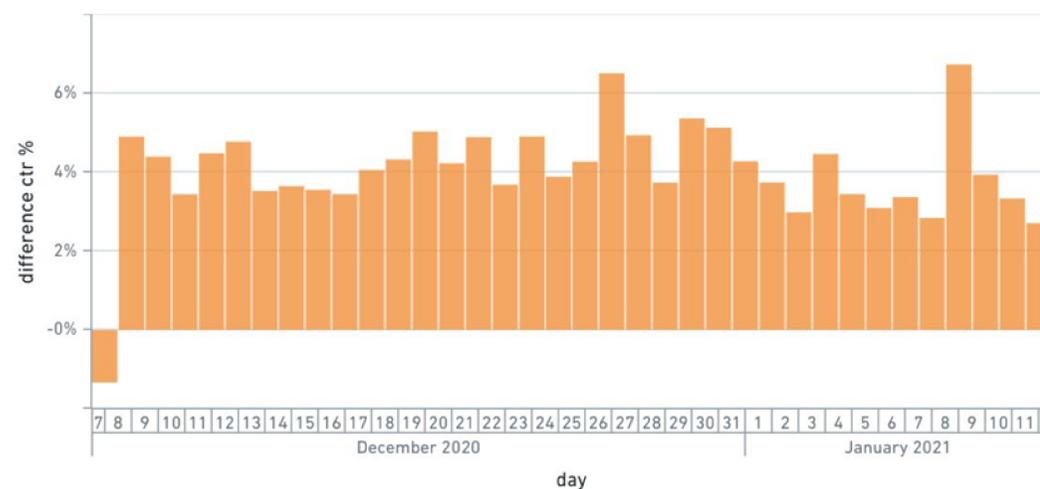
The overall success of the personalized positions in all segments was compared with the manually curated version, and the presented results were achieved 3 months after implementation of the personalization engine.

- In the personalized positions, the uplift is around 10%, measured via clickthrough rate (CTR).
- The clickthrough rate for the whole homepage has increased on average by 4%.
- The session duration of the whole homepage has increased by roughly 5%.
- Users get to see more of the editorial content of Blick (35 items as opposed to 20 items on the manually curated baseline version).

Summary: more clicks, more published content and longer session time

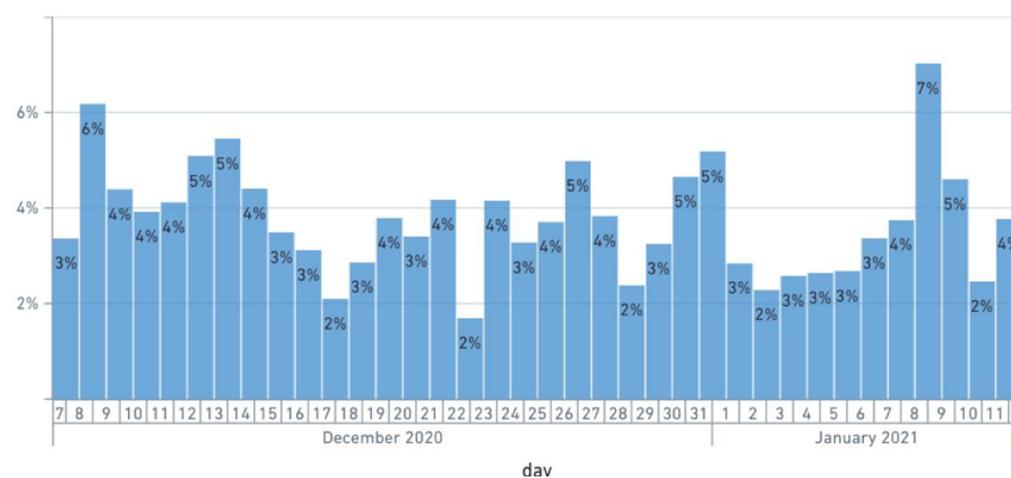
Difference in full home page CTR

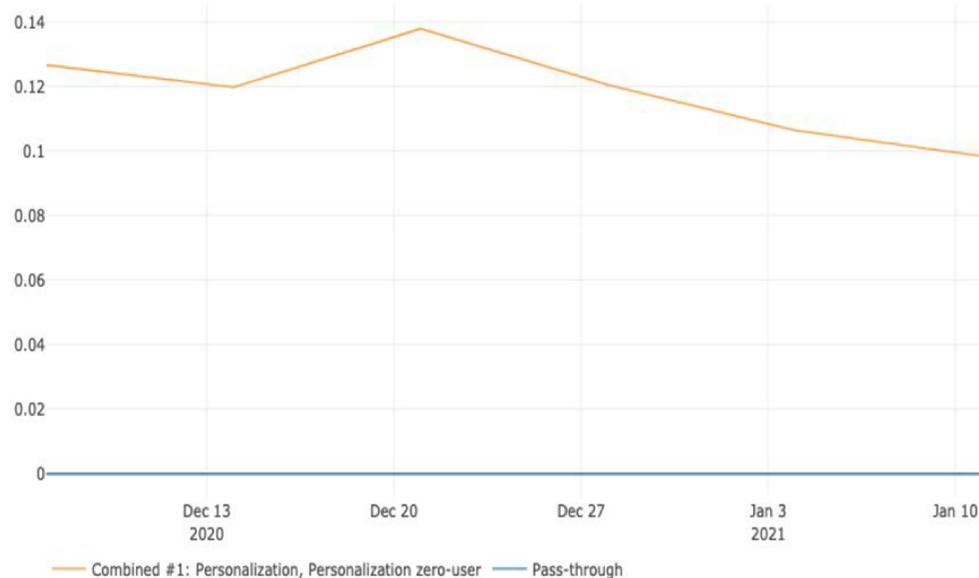
Start Date: Dec 9, 2020



Difference % of sessions durations

Start Date: Dec 9, 2020





○ Results from the newsroom perspective

- Personalization doesn't only benefit traffic. The newsroom can also use the gathered data to discover hot topics.
- By monitoring the personalization engine in real time, website editors can identify content which is unexpectedly sought after – and react accordingly.
- Personalization relieves site editors from micromanaging the homepage, saving time for quality assurance on the stories and creative work

Summary: better content identification and more time for quality stories



Blick was established in 1959. Today Blick.ch is the leading news portal in Switzerland, with 2.8 million users visiting the website every month. It is a very successful example of digital transformation, with a 68% increase in user visits monthly from 2016 to 2020.



The Ring Publishing all-in-one digital publishing solution helps media brands succeed in the digital age. In addition to providing tools to monetize media products, the platform supports content creation, management, and distribution.



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