UNITED FOR NEWS℠

Internews in collaboration with the World Economic Forum

Sustaining Media through Socially Responsible Advertising

United for News is reinvigorating the commercial engine for reputable media through a premium, global advertising system that directs revenue to a vetted index of publishers around the world.

The Challenge

News media around the world is crippled by the transition to digital environments. People are losing the news and information they need to make good choices for their families, to participate in their communities and hold their governments to account. Most at risk, in every country, is local and community media, the connective tissue of healthy media environments. As media struggles, bad actors and information have rushed to fill the gap. There is a global proliferation of misinformation, disinformation, propaganda and hate speech. Trust in media and other institutions is plummeting. This is a shared, global crisis that will only grow in magnitude as the next three billion people come online.

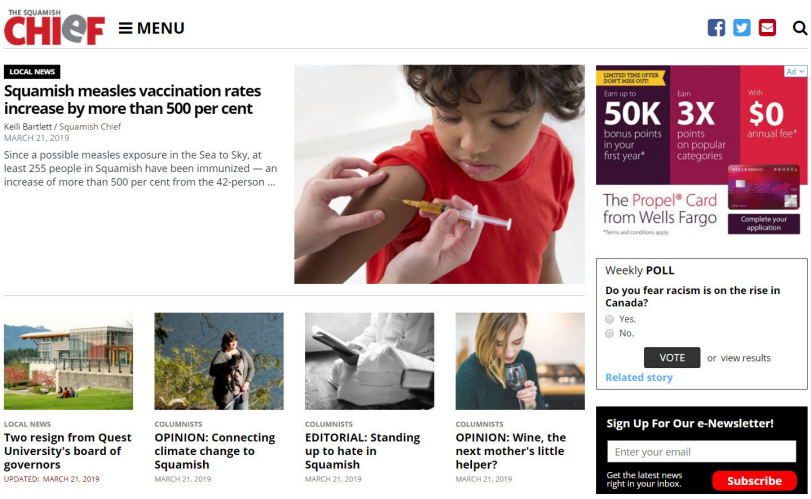
While the flow of digital advertising revenue is steadily increasing, little is making its way to the media organizations who employ journalists and create original news content. While some global news companies have built strong digital advertising infrastructures, the vast majority of smaller and local media organizations do not have the skills or technical knowledge to participate in these fast-moving markets, dominated by increasingly sophisticated technology solutions.

United for News: Generating Sustainable Revenue for Real Journalism

The core intention of our socially responsible approach to digital advertising is to enable brands to use their ad budgets to support reputable journalism, robust democracies and healthy societies without sacrificing performance. The system builds a trusted network of reputable media that delivers brand safe inventory to advertisers around the world. We eradicate spend that gets diverted to extremism, propaganda, hate speech and other undesirable destinations while meeting the business needs of publishers and advertisers.

United for News will identify, index, score and audit reputable digital media through a combination of multistakeholder engagement, purpose-built technology, and market-specific human vetting. Our system will include publishers at all levels of the market to help support robust and pluralistic media landscapes.

Demand for this program is substantial and urgent. The time is now to implement a sustained effort to build a more inclusive and socially responsible digital advertising system. Local publishers need new, high-value digital revenue streams. Meanwhile, many brands are looking for improved access to automated digital advertising systems that can help eliminate fraud, improve transparency and mitigate risk.



A multi-stakeholder coalition delivers unique value. Working with our diverse stakeholders, we will stand up a turnkey system that many brands can access, achieving critical social outcomes while catering to core business needs. Our deep experience on the ground will enable us to curate a custom index that respects local culture, builds trust and has significant first mover advantage. Our status as a non-profit coalition ensures that all revenue will be directed to furthering our mission.

Our approach is sustainable. While investment funds are needed to bootstrap the program and tap into the global $237 billion digital advertising market, the United for News system will ultimately generate revenue to support growth and scaling to additional markets as demand emerges. As a nonprofit, United for News will deliver more actionable media spend to publishers, while all revenue will be re-invested towards expanding to additional, underserved markets, with a focus on onboarding new media.

System Overview

The heart of our solution is the United for News Index and Publisher Network. The Index is a dynamically scored database of digital media, organized by market and optimized to ensure that editorially independent, high quality and reputable media rise to the top of the rankings. Building on the Index, the Publisher Network is composed of reputable media who have a data sharing agreement with United for News, that enables us to serve ads on their sites.

The United for News Index and Publisher Network includes three primary elements.

1. Criteria for Indexing: A set of criteria to identify reputable publishers, developed through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process;

2. Core System: A programmatic ad stack using best-of-breed technology that enables both buyers and sellers to connect using their current platforms to trade targeted, premium ads;

Value Proposition

Publishers: New, High-Value Advertising Streams to Support Journalism

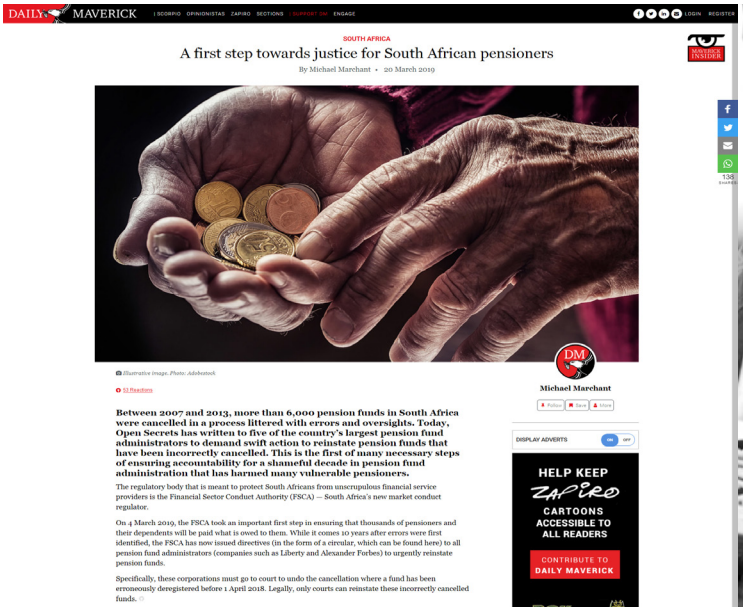
United for News can increase direct access to premium programmatic ad campaigns, generating digital revenue growth and serving as a foundation for a healthy business.

Supporters: Invest in Social Enterprise to Accelerate Your Impact

United for News has the potential to redirect global ad spending away from poor journalism, propaganda, misinformation and hate speech and towards reputable local and national media that strengthens support for communities, societies and economies.

Brands: Ethical, Brand-safe Advertising

United for News offers access to hard to reach, reputable digital publishers that enable advertisers to buy media in the best social interests of the markets they sell into without sacrificing performance. Brands have the opportunity to invest in the long-term health of key consumer markets, while achieving CSR and industry leadership goals.



3. Digital Skills Development Fund: A fund made possible by revenues from the United for News Network will enable our team to support small publishers in need of digital transformation to become “programmatic-ready” so that they can participate in global online advertising markets and create quality journalism.

About United for News

United for News is a non-profit, mission-driven initiative founded by Internews in partnership with the World Economic Forum. We are a diverse coalition of stakeholders from across the media and advertising industries with a shared vision of a world where everyone, everywhere has access to the trusted information they need to make good decisions for themselves, hold their governments to account, and achieve their human potential. The charter partners selected to join the coalition bring the wide-ranging resources and capabilities required to help achieve this ambitious program.

The successful development of the United for News advertising system requires a range of resources that very few initiatives or projects can claim. First are the varied resources of the coalition itself, from deep knowledge of markets and publisher networks to rich relationships with global advertisers and brand leaders. Second is the development of the Index criteria, generated through a transparent, collaborative multi stakeholder process. Third are the trusted working relationships that will allow our system to evolve nimbly and adapt to conditions at the market level. Finally, our system is focused on support for media, ensuring that all revenues are reinvested in strengthening media and its role in healthy societies.