How we automated our website
How much is automated?

At least 99 per cent of what you see on the Globe and Mail’s website is placed there by an AI algorithm.
But what about clickbait?

If you focus on pageviews, you will get clickbait.

But if you examine what your readers truly value, you won’t.
Building a Sophi Score For Every Article

Advertiser Revenue
- Visits*
- Engagement
- Recirculation
- Advertising Value (eCPM)

Subscriber Revenue
- Subscriber Acquisition* (LTV)
- Subscriber Retention* (ARPU)

*Adjusted for promotion bias
Eliminating Promotion Bias

How do you compare metrics for a story at the top of the homepage... to one that spent most of the time near the bottom of the homepage?
How do we use Sophi for automation?

We asked our editors to:
- Train the algorithm
- Set parameters for it to operate within
- Slowly and carefully test and measure; gradually expand the test
For example:
Considerations

• We have different types of widgets, and different articles. Each has its own specifications about what we can place
• We don’t want the whole front page to be different articles about Trump
• News has a best-by date
• We can’t show an article more than once
• We have a brand to uphold
Newsroom Training

Our editors were provided with a snapshot every 10 minutes of the live page that they produced next to the page that Sophi would produce, to ensure that the page looked and felt the way it should.
Sophi-driven section pages outperform human curated pages by a significant margin and free up newsroom resources so that they can focus on finding the next story that matters.

Editorial curation
Sophi-driven section pages outperform human curated pages by a significant margin and free up newsroom resources so that they can focus on finding the next story that matters.
With a mix of Editorial input and Sophi scores, 2 hours of pain each day can be replaced by an automated 10-second optimization process.

If the newsroom decides to add new constraints, they can shuffle the rest of the paper in another 10 seconds.
Sophi Paywalls

Content-based paywall:

Sophi weighs the opportunity for subscriber revenue against expected advertising revenue for every single piece of content.

It presents a paywall accordingly.
We consider user characteristics and also their interest in different types of content.

By combining the strengths of content-propensity modeling with user-propensity models, our fully dynamic paywall maximizes the optimal mix of business outcomes in real time.
SONALI VERMA
SENIOR PRODUCT MANAGER, ANALYTICS
THE GLOBE AND MAIL

P: 416.585.5573
E: SVERMA@GLOBEANDMAIL.COM