FINANCIAL TIMES

FT Target
First Party Context

Benjamin Holt
Laura Stokes

First-party data is in our DNA

2002 — **FT.com subscriptions & paywall introduced**

7 years after launching FT.com, the paywall is introduced. The subscription journey asks users for demographic data.

2012 — **Digital subscribers surpass circulation**

For the first time, digital subscriptions surpass circulation. Think of all that demographic data!

2019 — **1 million subscribers**

The FT hits its 1 million subscriber target - years earlier than anticipated.

202X — **North star: 2.5mn Global Paying Audience**

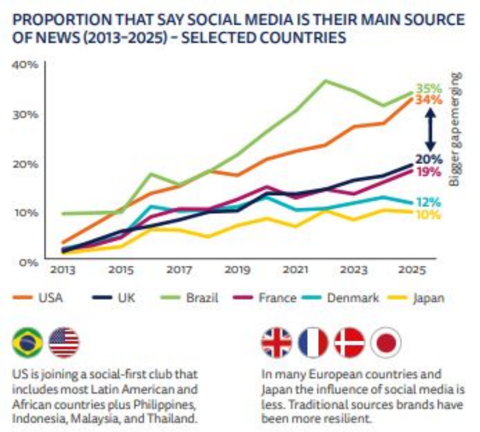
The FT broadens its aim: 2.5mn subscribers across all group titles.

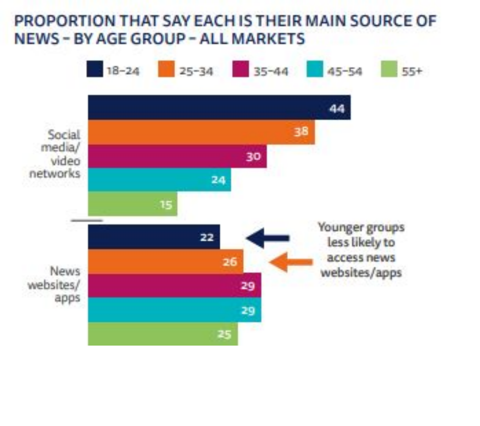
The landscape has shifted

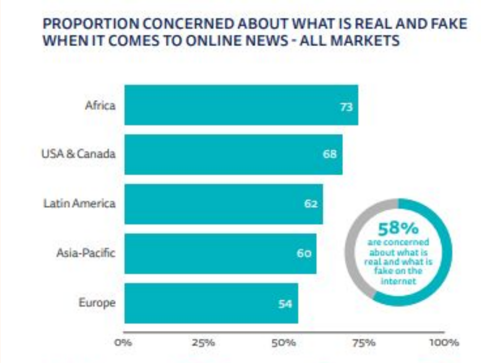
Social media is the main source of news for over ⅓ of people in some countries.

Younger groups are less likely to access news websites or apps. 22% of 18-24 year-olds, vs 29% of 35-54 year-olds.

58% are concerned about what is real vs what is fake when it comes to online news.





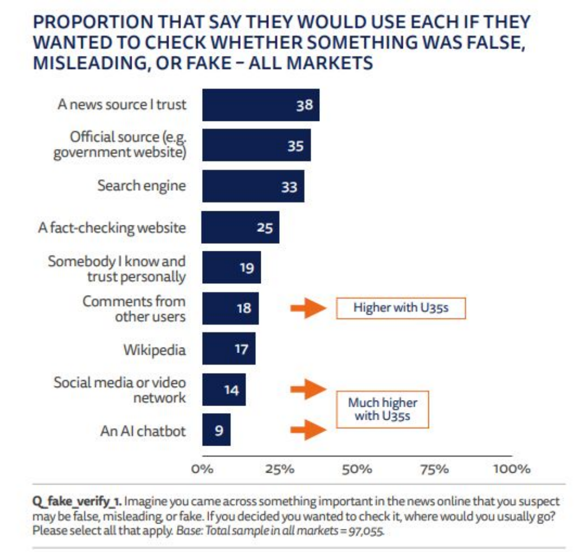


Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2025 | Link

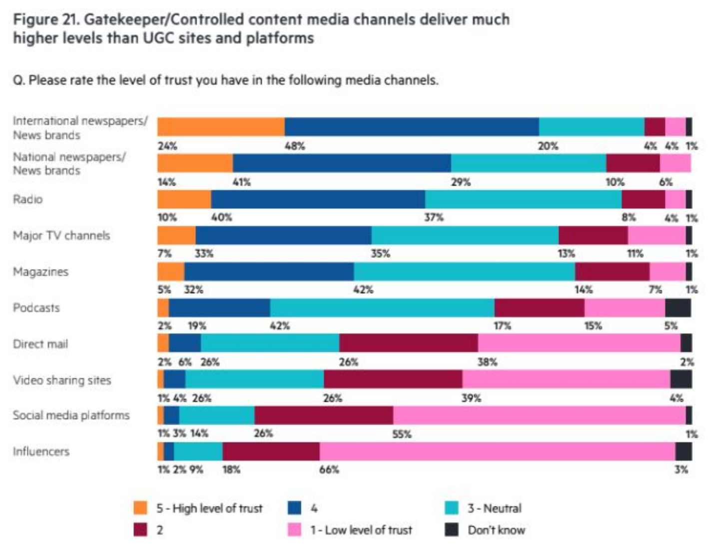
FT

Trust remains the currency

Established news brands continue to be the most trusted sources for fact-checking. Earlier this year, we published the [Bridging the Trust Gap](), a report that explores how trust shapes decision-making, drives brand loyalty, and influences the bottom line.



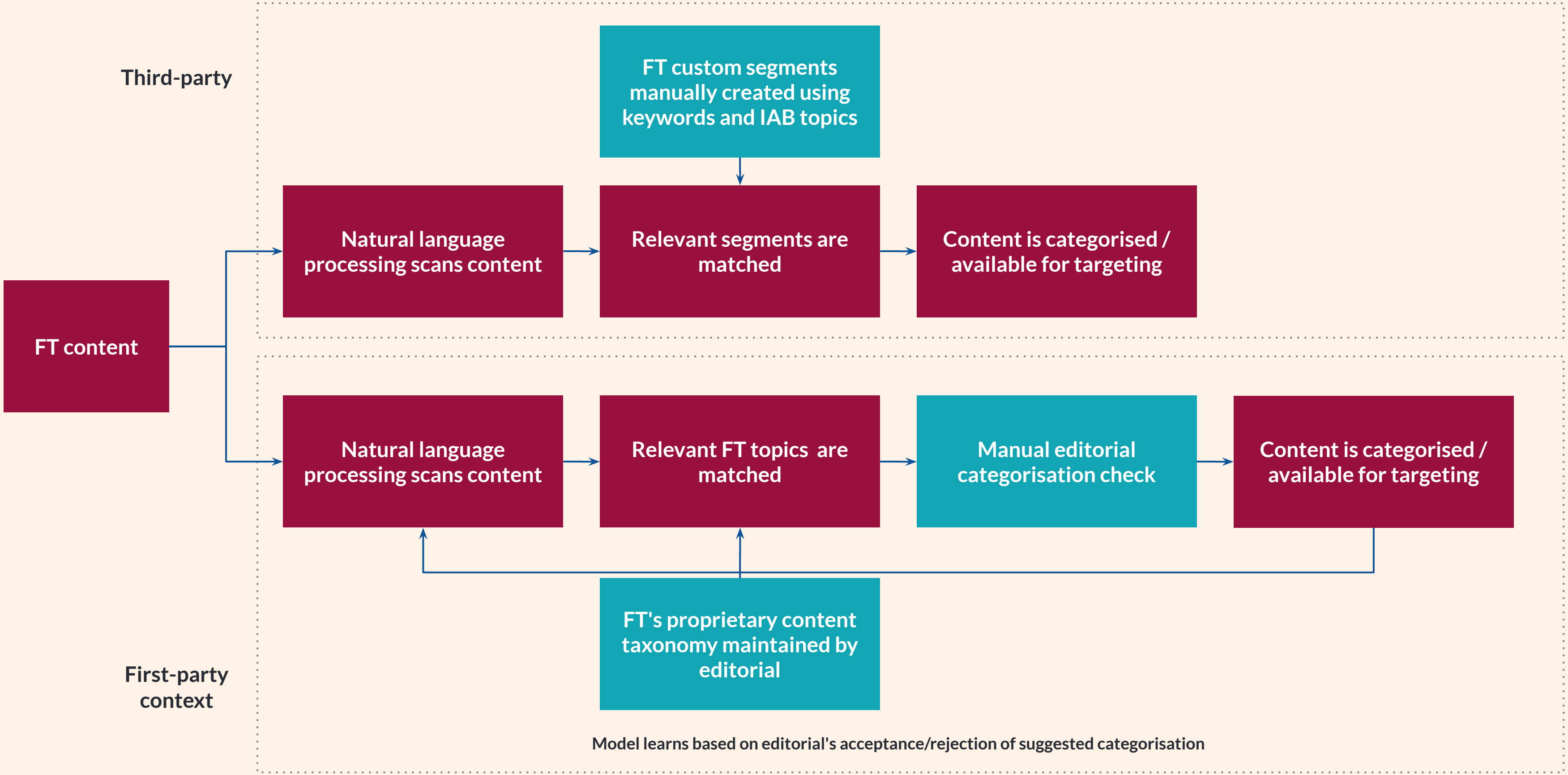
Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2025 | [Link]()



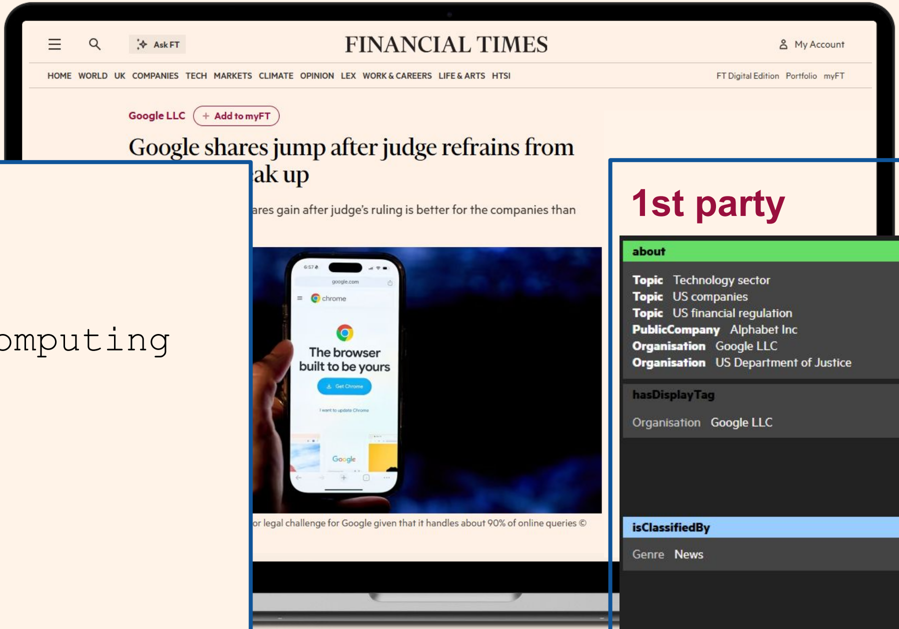
Source: Bridging the trust gap, FT Research | [Link]()

FT

Making the most of our data



Making the most of our data



3rd party

Business
Legal issues
Technology and computing
Web search

1st party

about

- **Topic** Technology sector
- **Topic** US companies
- **Topic** US financial regulation
- **PublicCompany** Alphabet Inc
- **Organisation** Google LLC
- **Organisation** US Department of Justice

hasAuthor

- Person Michael Acton
- Person Stefania Palma
- Person Stephen Morris

hasDisplayTag

- Organisation Google LLC

implicitlyAbout

- Location US
- Topic Companies
- Topic Financial & markets regulation
- Topic Markets
- Topic Technology
- Topic World

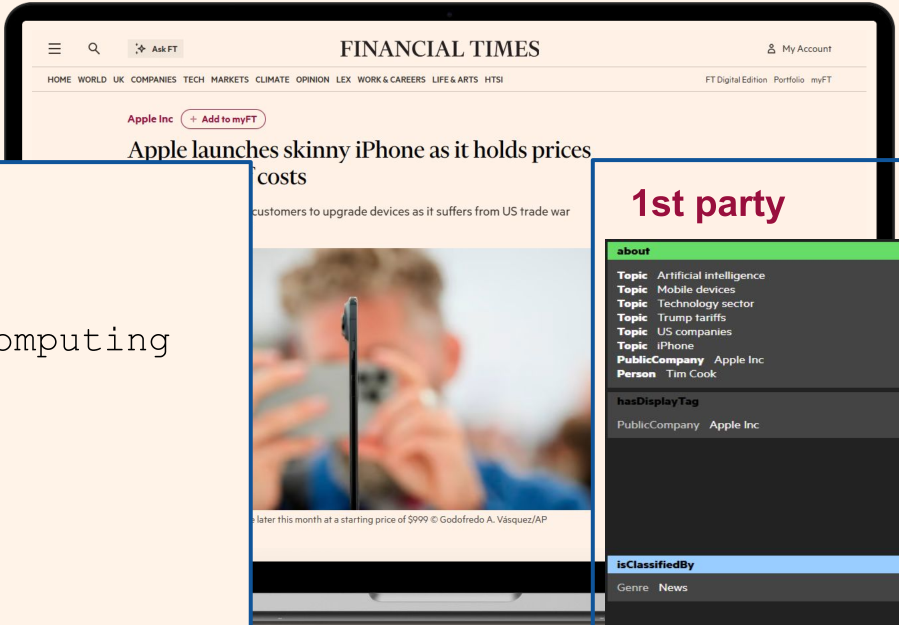
isClassifiedBy

- Genre News

mentions

- Topic Artificial intelligence
- PublicCompany Apple Inc
- Organisation Nasdaq 100
- Organisation OpenAI
- Organisation US Government
- Organisation Wedbush Morgan Securities
- Person Dan Ives
- Person Gail Slater

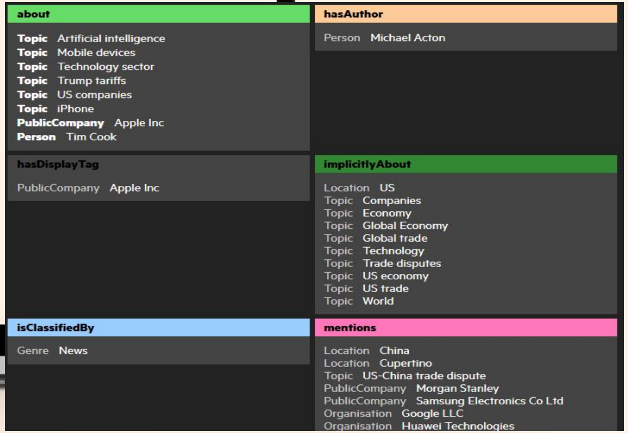
Making the most of our data



3rd party

Business
Smartphone
Technology and computing

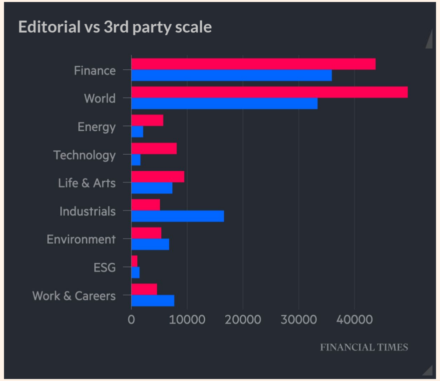
1st party



Putting 1st party context to the test

Testing for accuracy is hard!

We consistently saw that using first party contextual tags were more accurate and offered larger scale than our legacy approach.



Gains in partner content, CTR, attention and recall

We carried out a series of A/B tests with several partners, ensuring a spread across sectors. From this, we saw:

+5.5%

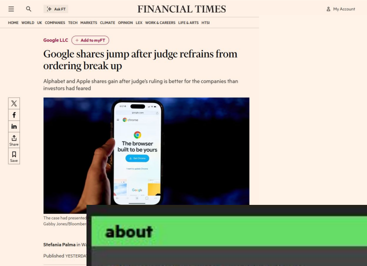
+70%

+17%

FT

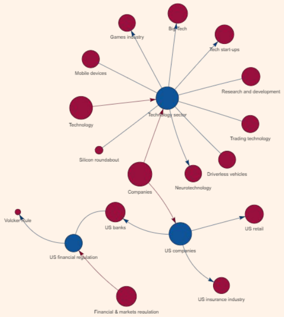
The FT's article metadata

Article & metadata



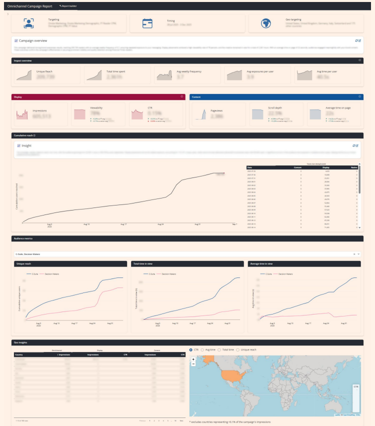
about

Topic Technology sector
Topic US companies
Topic US financial regulation
PublicCompany Alphabet Inc
Organisation Google LLC
Organisation US Department of Justice

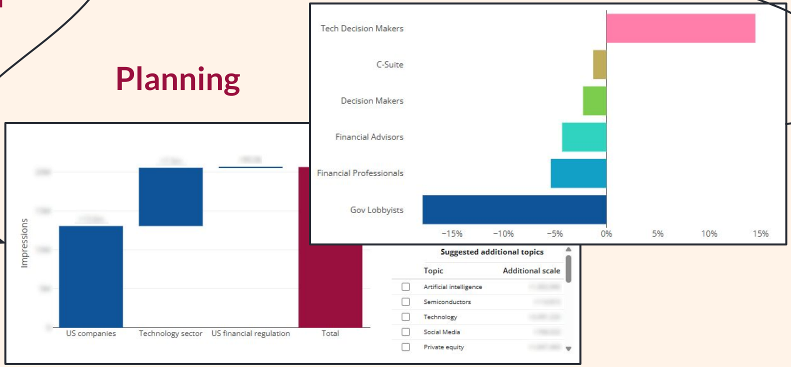


Data ingestion

Reporting



Planning

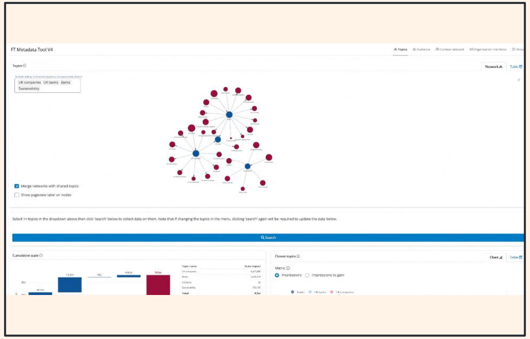


FT

Operationalising metadata

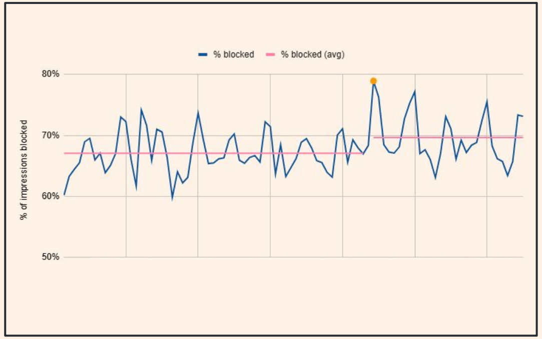
Content planning

Investigate related topics, articles and audiences related to one or many topics.



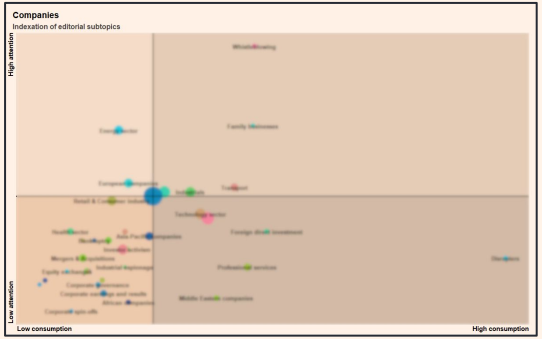
Keyword blocklist scale estimates

Scan client-supplied blocklists and estimate the volume and type of inventory that would be lost.



Whitespace analysis

Find areas of content that are underserved, or find trending topics and ride the wave.



FT FINANCIAL TIMES
Human-in-the-Loop AI
AI categorisation reviewed by newsroom editors.
Consultative Tools
Identifies top topics for smarter targeting.
Unmatched Relevance
Targets 700+ FT-specific topics with precision.
FT TARGET
First Party Context
Increased Reach
Recovers content wrongly blocked by third-party tools.
Enhanced Engagement
Boosts CTR by up to 50% for content drivers.

Results

Revenue Uplift

15% uplift in revenue per campaign for campaigns with First Party Context

Campaign Engagement

- **50%** increase in CTR for branded content traffic drivers
- **5.5%** increase in partner content scroll depth post-click
- **17%** increase in attention (universal interaction rate)

Unlocked Valuable Content

Up to **70%** previously blocked content unlocked by analysis of Keyword Blocklists

FT

Why this matters beyond the FT

For publishers

Move beyond subscriptions and unlock ad value with first-party data.

For advertisers

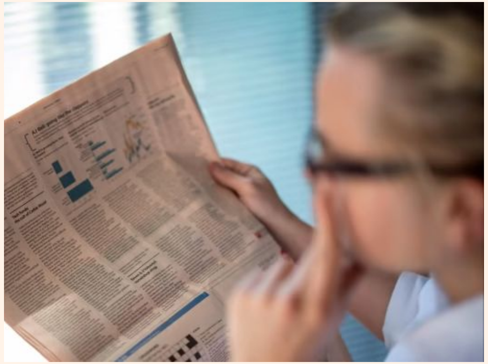
Privacy-first ≠ performance loss.

Context + first-party = stronger outcomes.

For audiences

Better ad experiences:

Relevant, uncluttered, and trusted.



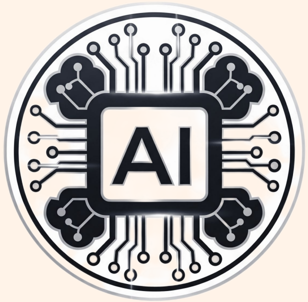
"94% of consumers prefer contextually-relevant ads over those based on browsing history"

1. ExchangeWire | GumGum Study: 94% of Consumers Across the US, UK & Canada Prefer Contextual Ads Over Identity-Based Ads | Link
2. IAS | Undercover Context: Driving consumer engagement through non-obvious contextual links | Link

What's next for FT Target?

Age Inferrer

Salary Inferrer



Enhanced Optimisation & Insights

Campaign Planning Tools

First-party data + context = sustainable revenue

📊 Heritage

🎯 Performance

🔑 Trust

🌍 Impact