

"Taboola's Homepage For You acknowledges what our audiences have been telling us: They want news that matters to them, delivered where they are and focused on what they care about most. Personalization at this level is like oxygen: It's invisible, but powerful in engaging our audience at a deeper level."

- Kara Chiles, SVP - Media Product,
USA TODAY Network



NEWS

**USA TODAY Generates 47% Increase
in Click Through Rate with Taboola's
Homepage For You Solution**

+47%

Clickthrough Rate

+23%

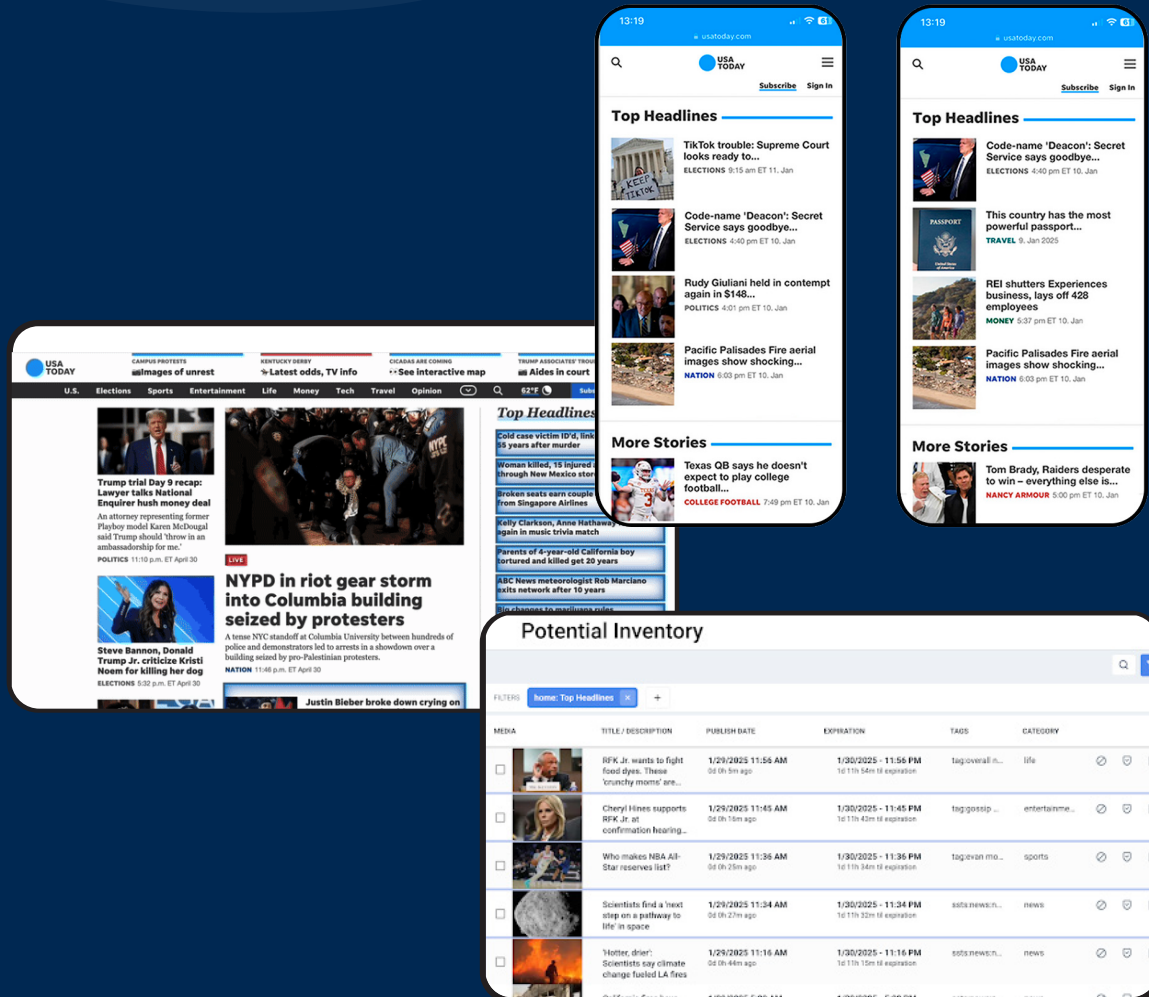
Homepage PVs
per Reader

+13%

Session Depth

+6%

Subscription Rate



USA TODAY Curates Content For Individual readers with **Taboola's** Dynamic Homepage

COMPANY

USA TODAY Network, part of Gannett, is one of the largest local-to-national publishing and digital media organizations in the country, comprised of **USA TODAY**, their flagship national brand, and over 200 local publications across the country.

CHALLENGE

Deliver personalized homepage experiences for each visitor to not only increase key engagement metrics—such as pageviews, CTR, and subscriptions—but also to maintain and grow our core homepage audience.

SOLUTION

Implement **Taboola's** Homepage For You solution across a network of national and local sites, combining editorial curation with AI-powered personalization to tailor homepage experiences to each reader.

RESULTS

USA TODAY achieved a **47% increase in CTR**, **13% uplift in session depth**, and **23% increase in homepage pageviews per reader**. Across the network of local sites, Gannett measured a **25% average CTR increase**, **5% uplift in session depth**, and **6% increase in subscriptions**.

Introduction

USA TODAY Network is the largest local-to-national publishing and digital media organization in the country. **USA TODAY**, the national flagship brand, sits at the center of the network, surrounded by more than 200 local media properties reporting on the stories and cultural moments happening in communities across the country.

USA TODAY captures the pulse of the nation with original, on-the-ground reporting that highlights diverse perspectives. Its newsroom is dedicated to bringing clarity to the day's news, inspiring both conversation and reflection.



USA TODAY Network Balances Editor Curation and AI-Powered Personalization with Taboola's Homepage For You

In today's competitive landscape, publishers must deliver highly personalized experiences that both inform and deeply engage readers – encouraging them to return. To support this goal, the **USA TODAY Network** sought innovative solutions to enhance editorial homepage curation and improve efficiency across their national and local news sites.

With more than 200 publications across the country – including the Arizona Republic, Columbus Dispatch, and Des Moines Register – **USA TODAY Network** editors are uniquely positioned to surface the most timely and impactful stories for the millions of readers visiting their homepages each day.

However, given the scale of content Gannett | **USA TODAY Network** produces, it's impossible to showcase the full breadth of its journalism using a one-size-fits-all homepage. Readers also expect something fresh and relevant every time they visit, making personalization essential. To address this challenge, **USA TODAY** developed a sophisticated, two-tiered strategy for their Dynamic Homepage product:

- Editors curate the fast-moving, must-know news of the moment, that lives at the very top of each homepage.
- **Taboola's** Homepage For You powers supplemental sections of the page with an AI-driven, personalized mix of articles, forecasts, guides, investigative reports, opinion columns, and more from across the **USA TODAY Network**.

With a large and diverse homepage audience and extremely robust production of journalism spanning a broad range of topics—**USA TODAY** had all the building blocks to create a successful personalized experience.

To understand the time-savings and value lift, we can look at the impact of Top Headlines, a prominent module on desktop and mobile. With AI personalization, **Taboola's** Homepage For You technology can feature as many as 300 different articles in any given day, from a broad range of categories in the Top Headlines module. An editor would need to fully reprogram Top Headlines with 8 new articles every 40 minutes to achieve this degree of article diversity manually.

Extensive AB testing revealed significant gains in both session-level and loyalty-focused metrics such as CTR, session depth, return frequency, and subscription rate. The initial test on **USA TODAY** was a success! The next step was to test the strategy far and wide.



USA TODAY Network Personalizes Homepage Across 100+ Sites with Taboola's Homepage For You Solution

Homepage For You was first implemented on **USA TODAY** in 2023 and eventually scaled to more than 100 local sites in the **USA TODAY Network** over the rest of the year.

Each site followed the same strategy of having local editors program the top few article slots with must-know news while relying on personalization to match readers to articles of interest on the rest of the page.

Gannett's product and content strategy teams used **Taboola's** Policy Builder tool to create detailed rules for each region on each homepage to ensure that all personalized

recommendations aligned with editorial requirements. Policy Builder's detailed rules govern whether to include, exclude, boost, or deboost articles that match certain criteria based on categories, subcategories, content formats, locality, and premium articles status, and much more. Local editors could also remove articles from personalization at any time through a centralized moderation dashboard.

For homepage editors, these customized modules freed up valuable time. Without having to manually update as many featured stories, they were able to focus on other high-impact tasks, like sharpening headlines, updating breaking news, crafting thoughtful promotion for enterprise stories, scanning for hidden gems to feature, and pinpointing trends across the Gannett network and beyond.



USA TODAY Achieves Increase in Reader Loyalty with Taboola Homepage Personalization

Each site went through the same rigorous A/B testing process – comparing a static, one-size-fits-all version of the homepage to a version that included Homepage For You – to ensure the Dynamic Homepage solution could deliver results for small as well as large markets.

The results were clear: Homepage For You increased key metrics for the flagship **USA TODAY** site as well as local market sites. By delivering curated homepage content, **USA TODAY** saw a **47% increase in CTR** and **13% uplift in session depth**. Across the network of sites using Homepage For You, Gannett also measured an **average CTR increase of 25%** and **session depth lift of 5%**. Meanwhile all sites saw strong indicators of audience loyalty gains with a **23% increase in homepage pageviews per reader** on **USA TODAY** and a **6% increase in subscriptions** on local sites.

Ultimately, **Taboola's** Homepage For You helped the **USA TODAY Network** improve editorial efficiency and boost reader engagement across its owned platforms—delivering a more personalized, relevant experience for readers every time they visit.

Building on the success of this initiative, the **USA TODAY Network** now plans to expand its use of **Taboola's** personalization solutions on other platforms—such as native apps and in-article recirculation widgets—to further boost engagement and deliver richer, more relevant experiences to its audience.