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# DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

The Ultimate  
Guidebook for  
News &  
Magazine  
Publishers

**Build your email lists, Grow paid subscriptions,  
Create new digital products**



**ZEEN101**

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# Digital Subscriptions: The Ultimate Guidebook for News & Magazine Publishers

## Forward

### What's this book going to do for me?

If you are charging for access to your content through digital subscriptions, my team and I are going to help you grow your revenues.

In this guidebook, you will learn powerful tactics to put to work immediately with your publication. These tactics will help you accomplish three things:

1. Build your email lists
2. Grow paid subscriptions, memberships, and donations, and
3. Build new digital products

We will share with you the strategies that we have learned by working with over [1000 news and magazine publishers](#) to build digital subscriptions and create new revenue streams. We are also a partner with [Tea Journey](#), which allows us to dive deep into the operations of a digital publication.

### What do I need?

This guide is written so you can get started right away to reach more readers, engage them, and build paid subscription revenues. Our focus will be on leveraging:

- [WordPress](#) CMS,
- Our [Leaky Paywall](#) subscription platform, and
- [Mailchimp](#) email service provider

You can put many of these strategies to work with any CMS, paywall service, or email provider. These three systems just make everything possible (and practical).

This guidebook is a type of cookbook that will show you the way to increase your subscriber revenues. You will have access to our “How to” docs that give you step by step instructions to set your paywall up quickly without custom coding. Finding a WordPress developer with CSS skills is recommended and will make your website content and subscription features look great. If you don't have a developer we recommend [Codeable](#).

How to: [Get started with Leaky Paywall](#)

## About the Author

[Peter Ericson](#) is the Founder and CEO of [ZEEN101](#), which develops the Leaky Paywall subscription platform built specifically for publishers that run WordPress. Pete's mission is to help publishers flourish in the digital age by helping develop new revenue streams. He is always up for a chat about how to grow a successful publication (so [get in touch](#), really). When he isn't working he can be found on the tennis court, ski slope, or mountain biking trail with friends and family.



## Some digital publishing terms to be familiar with

- **Content:** Examples include articles, video, podcasts, live streams, webinars, magazine issues, PDFs, flipbooks, databases, among others.
- **Visitor traffic:** Someone who comes from Google search, a social sharing link (Facebook, etc.), your email newsletter or who types in your web address directly.
- **Metered paywall:** A paywall that offers one or more free articles over a period of time (ex: three free articles per month). This kind of access control allows Google to index and rank all your articles in search and encourages readers to share them in social media. This is critical to your success in driving visitors to your website.
- **Subscription message/nag:** The subscribe or login message that displays after the reader's free articles are used up
- **Shortcode:** a bracketed code snippet that inserts specific content. Ex:  
[leaky\_paywall\_login] inserts the Leaky Paywall login form wherever you need it on your website
- **Subscriber/Member:** These terms are interchangeable, although members may have access to a higher level of premium content. Subscribers are registered on your website and logged in to access a set level of content.
- **Premium content:** Typically the content that you produce that you will be charging a subscription for (ex: all news articles).
- **Premium+ content:** A higher-priced access purchase than your premium content (ex: a membership with additional benefits or access to exclusive video or article content).
- **Google indexing:** When Google scans your article text and ranks your articles in search. Metering (with a paywall like Leaky Paywall) allows all your article text to be crawled by the Google search engine.

# Email Marketing

## Building your email list, a critical step

*Every new email subscriber you collect is 10x more likely to pay for a subscription. Capturing email addresses is the most effective way to build subscription revenues.*

Your email list is your most powerful direct marketing asset. That's why we're starting here. All of the strategies that follow are built on the premise that you are growing a robust email list.

Growing your list provides three major benefits:

1. **More subscribers:** Assuming you send your newsletter or new articles to your email list, a larger list drives more readers back to your site to use up their free articles and trigger your prompts to subscribe. Over time, this organic pestering (urging them to pay for full access) converts paying subscribers.
2. **More article views:** A larger list sends more traffic to your website, which advertisers appreciate.
3. **More email sponsor revenue:** The larger your email list grows the more revenue you can generate from advertisers who will want to sponsor your email newsletter itself.

As a publisher, it's easy to attract email signups as many interested readers will offer up their email address in order to stay informed about your content.

Once you capture a new reader's email address, they begin the journey of building a relationship with you and joining as a new audience member.

So what is the best way to grow your email list?

## Capturing emails with a free registration level

We live in a freemium world. This means we are attracted to things that are free, giving us a chance to try them out. You see this across app stores, free trial products and services, and, of course, free subscription trials. Offering some of your content for free is the number one way for you to capture and build your email lists.

If you're ready to set up your free registration level, skip down to the [Subscription Basics](#) section, where we delve into this in more detail.

### **What is a free level subscription?**

A free subscription level (or free registration) allows a casual visitor to experience a little bit more of your content. Your paywall meter lets anyone view one or more articles without any interaction with your website but, after they hit your free metered limit, they must register on your website in order to get additional access to your content.

Example for a news publisher: Meter two free articles per month with no requirements to the casual visitor. Visitors come to your website from a Google search, Facebook, your email newsletter, or other source. They can view two articles in a 30 day time period. On the third article, they are prompted with a message to register for free to gain five free articles per month. They register, are added to your email list, are logged into your website and now have access to five articles every 30 days.

We'll go into this in more detail later, but here's the rundown of free-level subscriber benefits:

1. **Building your email list:** Having that email address gives you a guaranteed way to follow up with your engaged readers, one that they volunteered for.
2. **Relationship building:** Having that channel to reach them, gives you a chance to specifically target your casual reader with content and offers likely to appeal to them.
3. **Running out the meter:** Sending content to the free-level subscriber drives them back to the website where they read enough articles to use up their access, prompting them to upgrade.
4. **Organic pestering:** this cycle occurs naturally over time; as they repeatedly encounter your paid subscription message, they realize the value of a paid subscription.
5. **Reduce friction:** since they have already created a free account with you, their basic information is already pre-filled. The only step left when they decide to upgrade is entering payment info. Reduced friction makes them more likely to follow through on the purchase.

*How to:* [Set up a free registration level to build your email list](#)

## Use pop-ups and embed forms to capture emails

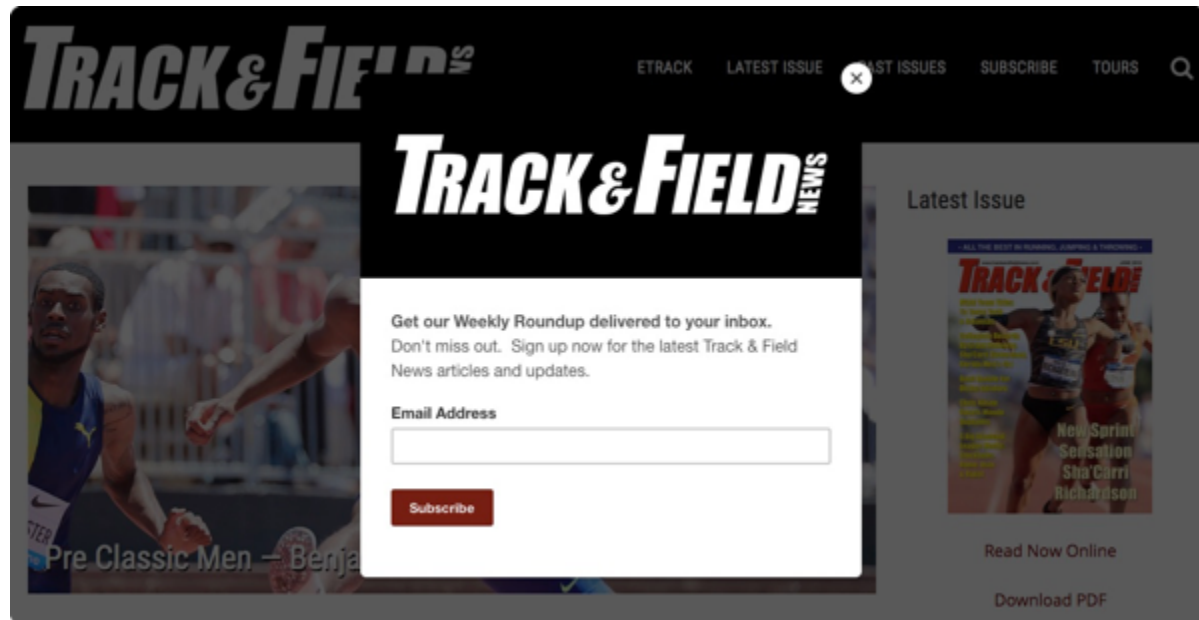
Using pop-ups on your website today is an effective way to capture an email address. It is also a controversial approach. Some publishers feel they are now too intrusive. We would argue that with a free registration approach you will capture more engaged readers.

MailChimp makes it easy to [install a slide-in style pop-up](#) (which we recommend) to capture email addresses. It's free and it is effective. If you go with a pop-up approach you can test the results by comparing a period of time with only the free subscription level versus the same amount of time with the free subscription and pop-up approach.

Another effective and less intrusive way to capture an email address is to [embed the Mailchimp email capture](#) into your articles. Add the Mailchimp email capture embed at the end (or middle) of every article.

Note: Make sure you hide the embed form for free and paid level subscribers. You don't want to annoy readers that are already on your list (see *How to* below).

Take a look at what a pop-up looks like on *Track & Field News*:



It starts with a simple pop-up created using MailChimp's built-in pop-up maker. This pop-up shows up on *Track & Field News*' most popular pages and simply requests that people sign up. It is set to display only once to a new visitor.

## Winning Results

Since *Track & Field News* switched to MailChimp and launched the above pop-up, it has been the single largest source of new email subscribers. (Note: They don't offer a free level subscription.)

They've seen their list triple since that launch. That's a 300% growth rate.

*How to:* [Hide your Mailchimp signup forms from your free and paid level subscriber with Ad Dropper](#) (This will also let you auto-insert your Mailchimp embed into all your content. You can set the insert to occur on each article 'after X number of paragraphs'.)

## Sending your newsletter via email automatically

Imagine if your email service (ex: Mailchimp) could *automatically* send all the articles you publish to your email list. Amazing, right? Well, it already exists and it's awesome.

Automating your email newsletter is a way to save time and energy in pushing your emails out, and with Mailchimp it is very easy to set up. Mailchimp doesn't charge anything extra to use this feature.

The goal of your newsletter is to drive your free and paid subscribers from your email newsletter back to your site so they can read more articles. Automation accomplishes that while reducing the effort of actually sending the articles.

So what are you actually sending to the reader? What you want to send is:

1. The article title
2. An article excerpt (or not, depending on how many articles you send each time)
3. The link to read more on your website (if they tap the article they get taken to the article on your website), and
4. Possibly, a featured image. For higher volume news publishers, you likely would want 1 or just a few feature images. Readers are scanning for what-article-to-click when faced with a high quantity of article options. Having multiple featured images can actually get in the way of fast scanning your articles

Here's great layout if you are a low quantity, long form, publisher:

[AMAZON](#)[APPLE](#)[ENTERTAINMENT](#)

## Why Amazon Is Pursuing MGM—and What It Means for Apple

By Jessica Toonkel and Martin Peers

In the space of two weeks last month, Sony Pictures announced deals to license its movies to both Netflix and Disney. The deals complement each other: Netflix will show Sony movies soon after they've been in theaters and Disney will show them after they go off-net. **2. Article excerpt** One company conspicuously shut out of the deal was Amazon, which was also vying for rights to the Sony movies, according to a person familiar with the situation.

That previously unreported situation could help explain Amazon's interest in buying MGM, as **we reported earlier this week**, in a deal likely to be worth between \$7 billion and \$10 billion. Sony was one of a dwindling number of Hollywood studios still willing to license its films to companies like Amazon, a result of most entertainment companies launching their own streaming services. With Sony's content off the table for several years, MGM, which owns a library of 4,000 movies, including the Pink Panther, Rocky and James Bond titles and a TV production arm, likely looks much more appealing.

**3. Link to article**

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

Here is a clean and effective layout if you are higher volume local news publisher (Note: This layout works. Daybreak grew to over 10,000 new subscribers in just over a year):



## A TREAT TO SEE YOU, UPPER VALLEY!

**Now we're talkin' some heat!** At least, compared to what we've had until now. High pressure continues to build in and we'll probably cross into the 80s at some point this afternoon under mostly clear skies. Breezes from the northwest, down into the mid-50s during a mostly cloudless night.

**Warblers are back.** And here, Bo Hopkins writes from Sunapee, "is a gem: a chestnut-sided warbler politely welcoming with his 'pleased, pleased, pleased to meet you' song. White breast, gold cap, black mask and namesake chestnut-colored flanks."

## **Fairlee crash driver pleads not guilty; passenger still in critical condition.**

Jake St. Martin, of Newbury, was arraigned yesterday on charges of driving under the influence with injury resulting and leaving the scene of a crash with serious injury, after his truck crashed early Sunday morning while he was trying to escape a state trooper. Gabrielle LaMotte, 25, of Hartford, who was one of three passengers, was airlifted to DHMC and is still in critical condition, Anna Merriman reports in the *Valley News*. A second passenger has been treated and released. Merriman details the night's events.

**And we have a train date...** Amtrak and the VT Agency of Transportation announced yesterday that passenger service will start up again July 19 on both the Vermonter, which runs up to St. Albans through WRJ, and the Ethan Allen

So how do you automate your newsletter?

You use a function built into Mailchimp called [RSS-to-email](#). It's easy to set up and doesn't cost anything extra. Mailchimp scans your website every day to see if new content has been posted. If it sees new content it cues it up to be sent on the schedule you set.

So, for example, you can set your emails to go out every weekday at 6 AM or every Friday at 11:45 AM. We generally recommend that you send out emails during transition times of the day, when people have time to look at something new. These times include early mornings when people are getting ready for work, just before lunch when your audience is getting ready to eat, and afternoons before heading home.

Mailchimp will also suggest the best times to send your email based on your open rates.

Keep in mind that even though this is a fully automated system you can hop into Mailchimp and edit the template that drives your emails at any time (ex: If you need to update the advertising that is in the email, it's a snap to do).

Automating your email is a huge time- and sweat-saver, allowing you to touch your audience on a regular basis without lifting a finger. All you have to do is focus on creating great content in WordPress and Mailchimp will send your newsletters for you.

*How to:* [Set up automated email blasts](#)

## Drip emails to subscribers after signing up

Once you capture an email address, from either a free or a paid subscriber, consider setting up a drip campaign.

What is a drip campaign? It is a series of emails that are triggered after an event such as a subscriber joining an email list. You schedule out this drip campaign over time. For example, you could send an email every other day for a week, every week for a year, it's up to you.

Some ideas for email content in your drip campaign:

- Point new subscribers to your best content
- Explain your mission
- Encourage them to join a Facebook group you manage
- Encourage them to promote a subscription to a friend (with a coupon)
- Promote a gift subscription (discount with a coupon)
- Ask for a donation to support your mission
- Send them to a survey
- Sell a product or membership, or
- Get creative

How do you set up a drip campaign?

With Leaky Paywall and MailChimp, it's easy to tag each subscription level as it comes in. If someone subscribes under the free registration level, they will be tagged 'free' and you can send out a drip campaign that targets your free subscribers and encourages them to upgrade to full access. If a subscriber comes in as paid, they are tagged in MailChimp as 'paid' and it's easy to set up a targeted drip campaign encouraging them to promote a gift subscription to a friend, offering them a coupon with a small discount if they refer a someone else, or asking for a donation.

Your startup drip campaign can simply be three additional emails that are sent after the new subscriber receives their welcome email. Start small and you can always add emails to the drip campaign down the road, as you think of things to promote to new subscribers.

A simple Mailchimp drip campaign for *Tea Journey* with three emails:

## 3 Workflow Emails

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### 1. Tea Origins/intro

1 day after subscribed contacts join or are imported to your audience

[View subscribers in queue](#)

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### 2. Tea Discovery

1 day after subscribers are sent previous email

[View subscribers in queue](#)

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### 3. Health and Wellness

1 day after subscribers are sent previous email

[View subscribers in queue](#)

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How to: [Get going with Mailchimp drip marketing](#)

## Let your subscribers opt into your other newsletters

Publish multiple newsletters? Consider offering an opt-in to your other newsletters during registration.

Mailchimp uses its Groups feature to let subscribers opt into multiple newsletters. With Leaky Paywall, you can offer those different newsletter options to your new subscriber at registration. This works for both free and paid levels.

### **Niching down with automation**

Consider letting subscribers opt into different news categories such as (for a news publisher) general news sports, obituaries, business, etc..

This lets the reader opt into the news subjects that they are most interested in and you'll find you get a higher opt-in rate with this approach. Subscriber churn will decrease since you're direct-mailing this chosen content to the individual subscriber.

You can even automate sending your article categories using Mailchimp's RSS-to-Email feature. This allows you to send only the categories of content to those that opt-in to receive them...automatically. Once set up, your new subscribers will choose the categories (Departments/sections) they are most interested in and Mailchimp will auto-send articles only from the selected categories.

iPolitics news in Canada is a great example of a publisher that offers a selection of newsletters to opt into upon subscription. (They can also opt into or opt out of the newsletters on their My Account page using the Leaky Paywall Mailchimp add-on). Selecting newsletters on the registration page and the My Account page automatically adds or removes them from your specific newsletters.



## Account Details

Username \*

Password \*

Confirm Password \*

## Please select your email preferences



- ☐ **Morning Brief** — Everything you need to know to get through your day. Delivered at 6 a.m. Monday to Friday, the iPolitics Morning Brief is a complete 360 view of what's making news at home and around the world.
- ☐ **Evening Brief** — End the day informed. The Evening Brief, delivered Monday through Friday between 5:00 and 5:30 pm, catches you up on the news you may have missed today — and tells you what to expect tomorrow.
- ☐ **Lunchbox Brief** — The news by noon. After your busy morning, the Lunchbox is a quick and easy way to get up to speed.

How-to: [Use MailChimp Groups to connect different newsletters to your registration for and my account page](#)

## Subscription Basics

*A highly flexible metered paywall is the foundation of your subscription efforts.*

In this section we're going to show you how to successfully implement these three critical activities:

1. Build your email newsletter lists,
2. Grow paying subscriptions, and
3. Develop new digital products.

We will show you how to set up the following tools to build revenues:

- Metered paywall with free registration (your starting point),
- Donations,
- Membership & Premium+ content,
- Time-based archive access, and
- Pay per article/video/webinar/audio/other content.

Let's get going.

Two things to keep in mind as we begin:

First, your metered paywall is generally going to be your starting point. Once you get traction with paid subscriptions, you're ready to flex your paywall to offer new products.

Second, the ultimate mechanism for building paid subscriptions is an effective subscription funnel. A good subscription funnel uses your valuable content to capture the interest of your visitors and usher them from casual readers to paying subscribers to premium members. The *best* funnels will do most of this automatically.

## Your subscription funnel

### What is it?

Your subscription funnel is really the journey that a visitor to your website will take with you. A new visitor starts out knowing little about your publication. Over time the visitor engages with your publication and you build a stronger and stronger relationship with them. This approach will both build up your email lists and motivate these new readers to pay for your access to your content.

Here's an example of what your subscription funnel might look like:

1. Someone searches for an article with Google or follows a link from an article on Facebook.

2. This produces a new website visitor
3. This visitor registers for free access that gives them 3 premium articles each month
4. They receive your email newsletter that drives them back to your site for new content each week
5. They start receiving your email drip campaign, providing them with additional valuable content and insight
6. Reading more articles engages them and triggers your paid subscription messages
7. Two months later they decide to upgrade to a paid subscription for full access
8. They download your app for easy and fast access to your content
9. They love your content and donate to your publication
10. They refer new subscribers to you
11. They pay more to become a Member and enjoy your additional premium+ content... or ad-free experience
12. You continue to engage these fans to build new products and add new revenue streams

As you can see each subscriber starts at the beginning of your subscription funnel and experiences your content and messaging through the automated systems you set up. In the beginning you will want to focus on steps 3 - 7 to build your email list and create paid subscribers.

## Your foundational metered paywall

Let's get the basics out of the way. What is a metered paywall and what is the best way to set it up?

A metered paywall allows the casual visitor to choose a few free articles to read before the subscription message pops up. (As opposed to viewing only article previews or the specific articles designated by the publisher as 'free'.) So, for example, you could set your meter to: "Allow readers two free articles of their choosing every 30 days."

### Why is the metered approach so important?

It satisfies the three critical requirements that the modern reader demands:

1. **Google discovery:** Each and every article you produce needs to be fully indexed (scanned and ranked) by Google in order for it to show up when readers search for the information you write about. Google will drive a large chunk of new visitor traffic to your site. The meter (even if it is only set to one free article) is ignored by the Google bots and thus Google can 'read' all the text in all your published articles.
2. **Social sharing:** The metered paywall allows every article you produce to be shared on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.. Even if your meter is set to only one free article per month, which is a fairly tight restriction, one article can be read in full by thousands of different readers. It's only when the individual browser starts to read more articles on

your website that the meter starts counting down, eventually displaying the message to subscribe.

3. **Reader choice:** Your paywall meter allows the visitor to choose the articles that are important to them. This generally relieves you of the burden of deciding what articles are premium and what are free (though you can still create a premium+ level of fully restricted content). If a visitor clicks on a link to one of your articles in Google search or on Facebook, the visitor has decided that specific article is important to them. It might even be a quickie article that you published and felt had low value. That doesn't matter when you meter your content. What is key here is that you don't have to guess what might be important to the visitor. The metered paywall supports that certainty by allowing you to simply set a free number of articles over a given time period. Bottom line: set the meter and let the incoming visitors decide what is important to them.

### What about a hard paywall?

The formerly-popular hard paywall was the first iteration of the digital subscription approach for news and magazine publishers. Well-known publishers like *The Wall Street Journal* initially found success with the hard paywall (though even they are now loosening their access). Publishers with such strong brands have large marketing resources and recognition. They can drive traffic to their publications without the help of Google search and social sharing. Most publishers, however, suffered when they turned on their hard paywalls. Their Google traffic would drop dramatically (upwards of 90%) and social sharing would practically stop altogether.

The main issue with the hard paywall is that it blocks more than greedy readers. Google cannot fully index (and properly rank) the text in your articles. Articles with only short excerpts did not get many shares in Facebook and on other social media sites.

The hard paywall has now morphed into more of a metered-hybrid approach. This means that publishers are having more success with a metered paywall that has some additional functionality in order to granularly restrict certain types of content. This works quite well for publishers with multiple subscription products (which we will explore in this section).

Enough paywall history. Let's start learning how to build your email lists and grow paid subscriptions.

## Your first step: Offer a free subscription level to explode your email list

*Again: Readers who join your email list are 10x more likely to become paid subscribers.*

Capturing the email address of a website visitor is priority number one. Building your email list builds your most important direct marketing tool. Email marketing is the primary way to reach your audience on a regular basis.

Each email subscriber you add gives you permission to send your newsletter with your content to them every day, week, or month. This is key to driving these potential paid subscribers back to your website content, and triggering prompts to subscribe. This boosts your chances for them to pay for a subscription by 10x or more.

### **The Free Subscription Level (or free registration) is the start of your subscription funnel.**

We discussed this a little in the email section above, but it bears repeating, simply for the astonishing results:

How would you like to add 1000 new email addresses to your list in a week? Or 7000 in just a few months? This is exactly what happened when *The Business Journal* launched their [Free Registration Level](#), and new readers signed up for their free subscription offer.

What does the free subscription level accomplish?

1. **More paid subscribers:** As mentioned above, once someone registers on your website they gain access to a few additional premium articles each month and are added to your email list. Over time you will be able to send your email newsletter to these new subscribers which drives them back to your website to read more content. After they read their free level allotment of articles they hit your *paid subscription message* which encourages them to subscribe for full access. This is a natural, organic pestering that happens over time and gently reminds this free-level subscriber that your content is premium and requires payment for full access. Experience with your content over time brings them around to the idea that they should pay you to get access to everything you are publishing.
2. **Increased email advertising revenue:** You will attract more paid email sponsors as your list grows and becomes more valuable to potential advertisers. The free registration approach builds your email list faster and with more engaged readers than any other method.
3. **Reduced payment friction:** One of the hidden benefits of having a free registration available is that once a free level subscriber is ready to pay, they are already logged into your website and their personal information is pre-filled on the checkout page. All they have to do to subscribe is enter their credit card information. Since they already filled out their info previously during the free registration, this boosts the chances of a paid transaction.

What we know here is that the larger your email list is, the greater the volume of subscribers who will pay for full access (assuming you are regularly emailing them your teaser content to drive them back to your site).

## How much content should you meter for free?

This is a question we get all the time.

The answer depends generally on your audience, your content type, and the quantity of content you produce each week. If you are a start-up publisher with limited content or you favor long-form content produced less frequently, then your meter should be fairly tight. One to two free articles per month would be a reasonable setting for your meter.

A regular news publisher that produces, for example, ten articles per day would want to offer a more generous number of free articles since the average visitor will consume more. Three to five articles per month would be a reasonable setting for your meter. You want some level of engagement with your casual visitor before you ask them to start a trial offer, or pay for a full subscription.

### **What if I set up a free registration level?**

The meter setting will depend on whether you are offering a free registration level or not. If you have a free registration level (which, *you should*, really) to offer readers a few more premium articles each month, your meter setting should be tight. Allowing one free article before requiring a registration to read a few more articles works very well. (*The New York Times* uses this strategy; one free article before requiring a free registration to view more.)

### **So how many articles should I provide to a free-level subscriber?**

Again, this depends on your audience and content. For a niche, low-volume publisher such as *Tea Journey*, the meter is set to one free article for the casual visitor and three free articles per month once they have registered for their [free subscription level](#). If you are a higher volume news publisher you will likely need to provide five to ten free-level articles each month. Start with a best guess and adjust the meter setting every 30 days to test free and paid subscription conversions.

Another approach for the low volume or startup publisher is to set the free registration level to offer an additional two or three premium articles...*period*. Once someone is registered and has read your small batch of free articles, they have no further access until they pay for a subscription. You need the average reader to run out of articles, so that they trigger your paid subscription message.

Here's an example of a free level subscription message that works well:

# Destination Songyang China

October 10, 2016 | Sia Yu | [f](#) [t](#)

Modern Songyang integrates the essence of mountain and river, the taste of the countryside, and the beauty of folk art and local customs.

Read this article NOW for [Free...](#)

...and get **3 Free premium articles each month.**

How? Simply [sign up here](#) (no credit card required) to get access now.



The above subscription message shows up after one free article has been viewed and the visitor clicks to read a second article. The message shows up in-content, which hides most of the article itself.

This approach is compelling as it promises:

1. Instant access to the article being read, and
2. Future access to three premium articles each month

Here is the free registration page that that appears after the visitor clicks the “Free...” link in the above screenshot:



### ORDER SUMMARY

**YOUR ORDER:** Three Articles per Month for Free

**SUBSCRIPTION LENGTH:** Forever

**RECURRING:** No

**CONTENT ACCESS:** 3 Premium Articles per month

---

**TOTAL:** Free

### YOUR DETAILS

First Name \*

Last Name \*

Email Address \*

Password \*

Confirm Password \*

### PLEASE SELECT YOUR EMAIL PREFERENCES

**What are your favorite topics?**

☐ Health & Wellness occasional newsletter

☐ Tea Biz newsletter & Podcast

☐ European Specialty Tea Association

Country\*

Do you drink specialty tea?\*

Excludes herbal teas

**SUBSCRIBE**

This messaging and registration builds *Tea Journey's* email list every day. The key is to offer something of value in exchange for an email address.

Don't sweat the initial setup too much. We recommend you adjust your meter and free registration settings to test what works best for your publication.

Hopefully, you're beginning to realize how important the free registration process is. Capturing new email addresses lets you proactively reach those new readers. This starts them on the journey toward becoming a paid subscriber.

How to: [Set up a free registration wall to build your email list](#)

## The free level ending: Upgrading

Once you have a registered subscriber that has used up their free-level access you will want to display a subscription message to prompt them to pay for full access. Something like this:

Sorry you are out of articles. Can we ask for your support?

**Tea Journey is a digital caravan, arriving from origin, laden with tea and stories to tell. Join us.**

We work hard to bring you tea knowledge from all corners of the globe. With our focus on origin, health & wellness, harvest reviews, and of course tea, we aim to help you understand where your tea comes from, how it was made, and its impact on your health. Make sure you download our iOS or Android app for convenient reading. We would love your support!

[Subscribe](#) or [log in](#) to gain access to a world of tea knowledge.



As with the casual-to-registration message above, this registration-to-subscription message shows up in-text for their selected article, hinting at what they're missing out on.

It also gives them a peak at *Tea Journey's* mission, giving readers another reason to commit to a paid subscription. Plus, reminding them to get the app opens up another channel for gentle reminders to join.

This message is the first step to selling your paid subscription. We'll dive into the next steps in your subscription funnel in [Subscriber Touchpoints](#).

How to: [Customize your subscription messages](#)

## Sell subscriptions, memberships, *and* take donations

Multiple approaches to access mean multiple opportunities for your publication.

Most publishers we work with start by setting up one paid subscription type to access their content, with the option for monthly or annual payments.

Some publishers want to develop a membership-style program to offer additional benefits. (Sometimes publishers simply *call* their subscription program a membership program in order to hone in on the community aspect of their audience.)

Other publishers are more donation-focused, appealing to the generosity of their readership.

### **Implement all three**

We are starting to see publishers meter and sell access to their content, offer a member-level upgrade at a higher price, *and* ask for donations. We find this multi-tiered approach works incredibly well.

Think of your paid subscriptions as your baseline income, the revenue you need to survive.

Member-level access appeals to those super fans that want *everything* you produce. A member level could provide status to your members in your article comments, hide ads, offer direct access to authors, invitations to events, or even just a t-shirt they can wear proudly. Bottom line is: you can charge more for the extra level of connection you provide.

At the same time you should extend the offer to donate. You are likely a mission-based publication, whether you're for-profit or not. A percentage of your audience members will contribute to your cause if you ask them.

Start with recruiting free registrations and sending your newsletter out regularly. Paid subscriptions, memberships, and donations will follow.

To see this setup in effective action, check out [The Western Standard](#) in Canada. They offer a free registration that includes four extra, premium articles per month. Free subscribers have the option of upgrading to a full-access paid subscription, jumping to a higher membership level, giving a donation, or all three. Simply asking the audience to self-select a level of contribution works.

With Leaky Paywall, you can offer access to content with any level of commitment, any contribution type: free, paid, member, or donation.

More on donations in the [Targeting](#) section below. What you need to know right now is this:

Yes, you need donations.

No, they are not hard to set up. It's five minutes of work to increase your revenue with no additional content needed. Donations are simply set up as a new subscription level in Leaky Paywall.

## Subscriber Touchpoints

In this section we will cover growing subscriptions by providing a great digital experience, specifically, the interactions your readers have with your publication.

You've set up your paywall, you're starting to attract free-level subscribers, and you're starting to convert paid subscriptions. How do you improve your reader experience to boost paid conversions? You make sure your touchpoints are effective.

What is a touchpoint? A touch point is:

1. When a visitor lands on your website and they start to read your content,
2. When a visitor encounters into your subscription messages,
3. When a visitor runs into your website notifications: pop ups, header bars, email opt-ins, etc.,
4. When a visitor signs up and receives emails from you,
5. Possible app notifications, and so on.

Make sure these touchpoints are saying the right thing. Every time you review your website and messaging, you will find copy and notifications that are weak and even distracting. Digital subscriptions convert because of the content you produce AND the messaging you deliver at each touchpoint in the subscription funnel.

**Become your own subscriber**

The first thing to do is to test the subscriber experience yourself, both on desktop and mobile. Create a coupon for yourself to test your couponing. Give yourself a gift subscription. Go through the experience as a subscriber and read and edit all your touchpoint content.

Something else you might not know: your article layout is more important than your homepage layout.

Most visitors come into your website from search engines and social media links. These links drive visitors directly to your articles, not your homepage. Generally, less than 10% of visitor traffic lands on a publisher's homepage. It is very common for the archive body of your articles to attract over 95% of your visitor traffic.

So start experiencing your website with any one of your articles.

## Your subscription message/nag

It's time to sign up.

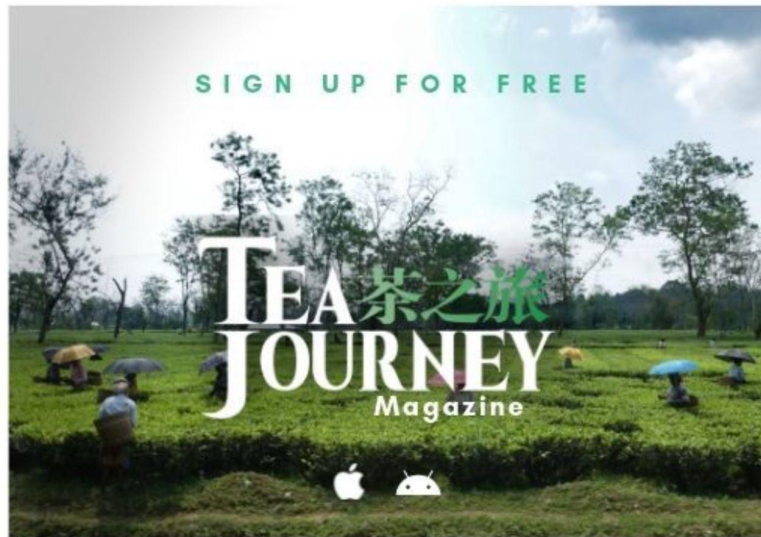
Click around your site and the first encounter with your messaging should be when you run out of free articles (based on your chosen number of metered articles), and trigger your subscription message/nag. What do you see? Is your nag compelling the visitor to take an action, preferably for free (to capture an email address)?

Here again is the highly effective free subscription message on *Tea Journey*:

Read this article NOW for **Free...**

...and get **3 Free premium articles each month.**

How? Simply [sign up here](#) (no credit card required) to get access now.



Why is it effective?

It has a singular goal: To collect an email address so you can send that visitor your email newsletter to them each day or week. This touches your new free subscriber over time and starts building your relationship with them. They get to experience your great content.

Notice the two benefits promised:

1. Read the current article for *free*, and
2. Get more *free* articles each month

Offering free content builds your email list quickly and is the start of the reader's subscription journey and your subscription funnel. Asking to pay for access up front will turn most visitors off and they will generally leave your website.

So what does your subscription message look like? Is it the Leaky Paywall default subscription message? If it is, you have an opportunity to improve it and boost your free registrations.

How to: [Set up a free registration level](#)

How to: [Customize your subscription message](#) (includes the html code for the *Tea Journey* message above)

## Your free registration/subscription pages

When your visitor clicks the 'free' link it should take them directly to your free subscription/registration form. *Do not* take them to your subscription options/cards page as that adds an extra click and forces the casual reader to take the time to understand your subscription options. Typically, these readers aren't ready to pay and need a quick, simple path to follow.

### **Registration page design**

Make sure you keep the registration page clean. The purpose of your registration page is to register and collect the email address of that new user. Nothing else. It's not time to upsell anything. It's not time to run a pop-up to offer something. The focus must be to get that new visitor through the free registration. The visitor wants your content. Let them fill out the form in peace.

Remember, someone on your email list has a 10x higher chance of paying for a subscription than someone who is not on your list.

Here, again, is a great example of a free registration page (which, by-the-by, also happens to be the default Leaky Paywall registration form):



## ORDER SUMMARY

**YOUR ORDER:** Three Articles per Month for Free

**SUBSCRIPTION LENGTH:** Forever

**RECURRING:** No

**CONTENT ACCESS:** 3 Premium Articles per month

---

**TOTAL:** Free

## YOUR DETAILS

First Name \*

Last Name \*

### Offer other newsletters and collect necessary reader info

We just encouraged you to "Keep it simple." But you do have the opportunity to:

1. Capture a bit of additional subscriber information if it's important to your mission, and
2. Offer other newsletters for new subscribers to opt into

As we've mentioned before, the first time someone registers on your website, free or paid, is a honeymoon moment for that visitor. It is a good time to ask for a little more: more information or to subscribe to a different, but relevant, newsletter. You may want to capture location info,

company name, or other demographic info. Try to limit the number of additional fields you add to keep the flow quick and simple. Offering other newsletters to check off is fairly friction-free and will add new subscribers to your other lists.

Here is the bottom section of that same registration page:

First Name \*

Last Name \*

Email Address \*

Password \*

Confirm Password \*

## PLEASE SELECT YOUR EMAIL PREFERENCES

What are your favorite topics?

- ☐ Health & Wellness occasional newsletter
- ☐ Tea Biz newsletter & Podcast
- ☐ European Specialty Tea Association

Country\*

Do you drink specialty tea?\*

Yes ▾

Excludes herbal teas

SUBSCRIBE

It offers both additional newsletters to subscribe to and asks some pertinent additional info of the new subscriber. We have found that, in this case, most new subscribers will choose other newsletters and answer the extra questions.

How to: [Add custom registration fields to your sign up form](#)

How to: [Add additional opt-in newsletters](#)

## Your paid subscription message and registration pages

Now, it's time to pay for access.

So, you have a free-level registered reader. They have been receiving your email newsletter for a few months and reading your content. In fact, they have read enough articles using their free-level access that they run out of articles every month and have triggered your paid subscription message/nag many times.

Once they are considering it, how do you tip them over the edge to pay?

Make it clear what the benefits are to your reader. Here again, is a simple and effective example of a paid subscription nag:

Sorry you are out of articles. Can we ask for your support?

**Tea Journey is a digital caravan, arriving from origin, laden with tea and stories to tell. Join us.**

We work hard to bring you tea knowledge from all corners of the globe. With our focus on origin, health & wellness, harvest reviews, and of course tea, we aim to help you understand where your tea comes from, how it was made, and it's impact on your health. Make sure you download our iOS or Android app for convenient reading. We would love your support!

[Subscribe](#) or [log in](#) to gain access to a world of tea knowledge.



Note the mission-based approach. This message will be shown many times to the free level subscriber. The interruption and restriction of the article they want to read should be a strong motivator. You need an effective message that recognizes your need for reader support and promotes the benefits of paying for full access.

Another effective approach is to pull the pricing into the paid subscription message:

subscribe or login below to continue reading this article



**\$20.00 = 1 Year Subscription!**

[Click HERE to subscribe](#) and get unlimited digital access to Catch Magazine.

Or, use the Log In below if your subscription is active.

*Paid Subscribers Log In Below*

Email Address

Password

☐ Remember Me

**LOG IN**

[Lost Password?](#)



Note the simple one-price-level approach and the convenient login fields (simply use the Leaky Paywall login [shortcode](#)). You may want a little extra CSS styling to match your WordPress theme. Most WordPress developers can easily handle it.

Here is the registration form that follows the above message from *Catch Magazine*:



Want to purchase a gift subscription? [Please click here.](#)

1

ACCOUNT SETUP

2

PAYMENT

### Your Details

First Name \*

Last Name \*

Email Address \*

### Account Details

Password \*

Confirm Password \*



### Your Subscription

Subscription Name: Digital Access

Subscription Length: 1 year

Recurring: Yes

Content Access: Unlimited Digital Access

**Total: \$20.00**

When your paid subscription message takes the reader to your paid registration form you, again, need to keep the page clean and focused on the transaction.

Consider adding a simple message in the sidebar that promotes the reasons to subscribe. Maybe add a testimonial from a happy subscriber. That's it. Don't clutter your header with unnecessary content. The reader is getting ready to pay, so don't get in their way.

Here is another great example of a simple and effective paid registration page:

# STREET PHOTOGRAPHY MAGAZINE REGISTRATION



## Order Summary

- **Subscription Name:** Monthly Subscription
- **Subscription Length:** 1 month
- **Recurring:** Yes
- **Content Access:** Unlimited Articles, Unlimited Posts

**Total:** \$4.99

## Your Details

First Name \*

Last Name \*

Email Address \*

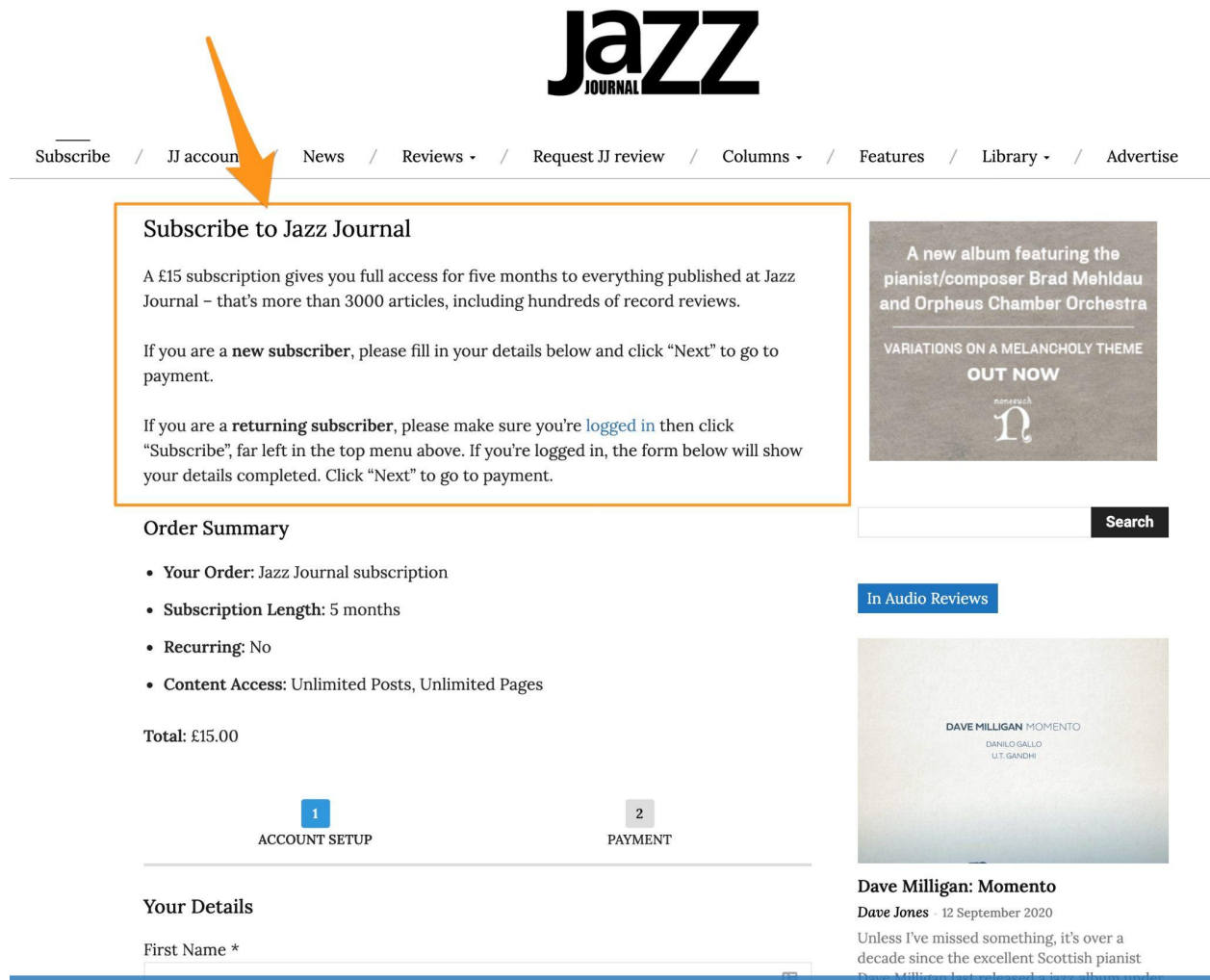
## Account Details

Username \*

## You Are Only Seconds Away From Becoming Part of the Street Photography Magazine Community...

- In-depth interviews
- Photo stories and projects
- Tips and how-to articles
- Full access to past issue archive
- Street photography masters
- Uncover your own style

And another, slightly different approach, with the benefits to subscribing above the form:



**Jazz**  
JOURNAL

Subscribe / JJ account / News / Reviews / Request JJ review / Columns / Features / Library / Advertise

### Subscribe to Jazz Journal

A £15 subscription gives you full access for five months to everything published at Jazz Journal – that's more than 3000 articles, including hundreds of record reviews.

If you are a **new subscriber**, please fill in your details below and click “Next” to go to payment.

If you are a **returning subscriber**, please make sure you're [logged in](#) then click “Subscribe”, far left in the top menu above. If you're logged in, the form below will show your details completed. Click “Next” to go to payment.

#### Order Summary

- **Your Order:** Jazz Journal subscription
- **Subscription Length:** 5 months
- **Recurring:** No
- **Content Access:** Unlimited Posts, Unlimited Pages

**Total:** £15.00

1 ACCOUNT SETUP 2 PAYMENT

#### Your Details

First Name \*

A new album featuring the pianist/composer Brad Mehldau and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra  
VARIATIONS ON A MELANCHOLY THEME  
**OUT NOW**  
nonesuch

In Audio Reviews

DAVE MILLIGAN MOMENTO  
DANILO GALLO  
U.T. GANDHI

**Dave Milligan: Momento**  
Dave Jones - 12 September 2020  
Unless I've missed something, it's over a decade since the excellent Scottish pianist Dave Milligan last released a jazz album under

*How to:* [Create a custom registration page using shortcodes](#)

*How to:* [Set up a free registration on your publication's website](#)

*How to:* [Customize your subscription messages](#)

*How to:* [Add additional newsletters to opt into](#)

*How to:* [Add additional fields to the registration form](#) (to collect demographic data)

### What should happen after the new subscriber clicks “Subscribe”?

The quick answer: Take your new subscriber back to the article they were reading.

Make life convenient for your new subscriber and fulfill your promise of unlocking the article that finally prompted them to register or pay for a subscription.

That's pretty standard practice these days, but we still see publishers that take the visitor to a Thank You page, a My Account page, or some other page. You might think of a Thank You page as a good place to upsell a gift subscription, or promote sharing in social media, but that new

subscriber just wants to get back to reading the article they were restricted on. You don't want to get in the way of the reading experience since you need to continue building the relationship with this new subscriber.

You now also have them logged into your website and have their email address (that is tagged appropriately in Mailchimp) so you can easily target them with promotions and messaging down the road. Learn more in the [Targeting section](#) of this guidebook.

How to: [Take the subscriber back to the article they were reading after registration or login](#)

## Your subscription cards/options page

Ideally you should present as few subscription choices as possible, so as to avoid confusion for the potential subscriber. One is best. Think about Netflix, which offers only a monthly recurring plan, not even an annual option. Even the *New York Times* subscription offering focuses on one subscription level:

### The New York Times

LIMITED TIME OFFER

## Your subscription helps our journalists seek the truth.

Enjoy unlimited digital access to The Times.

~~\$4.25~~ \$1/week

Billed as ~~\$17~~ \$4 every 4 weeks for one year.

**You can cancel anytime.**

**SUBSCRIBE NOW**

**Are you a student? Get a special rate.**

**No commitment required. Cancel anytime.**

Limited time offer. This is an offer for a Basic Digital Access Subscription. Your payment method will automatically be charged in advance every four weeks. You will be charged the introductory offer rate of \$4 every four weeks for the introductory period of one year, and thereafter will be charged the standard rate of \$17 every four weeks until you cancel. Your subscription will continue until you cancel. **You can cancel anytime.** Cancellations take effect at the end of your current billing period. The Basic Digital Access Subscription does not include e-reader editions (Kindle, Nook, etc.), NYT Games (the Crossword) or NYT Cooking. Mobile apps are not supported on all devices. These offers are not available for current subscribers. Other restrictions and taxes may apply. Offers and pricing are subject to change without notice.

A black and white line drawing of a reporter with a microphone and a man being interviewed. The reporter is on the left, wearing a headset and holding a microphone towards the man on the right. The man is gesturing with his hands while speaking. A speech bubble is above the man's head.

## But I need to offer choices

If you need to offer multiple subscription options on your subscription page (digital, print, memberships, donations, etc.), always stick to three. We, as humans, like to choose from three options. Once we are offered four or more options, complexity and indecision sets in, which lowers the chance that someone will pay to subscribe. Read more about [The Rule of Three](#).

If you are a digital-only publisher, your options might look something like this:

1. **Digital Subscription** (monthly + annual)
2. **Become a Member** (costs more and get extra perks and/or content access)
3. **Donate** (pay what you want, gain access to all content)

And yes, you should be selling all three of these options. See the [Subscription Strategies](#) section.

If you are a print *and* digital publisher, your options may look like this:

1. **Digital Only Subscription**
2. **Print + Digital Subscription**
3. **Donate**

Notice what's missing from both of these? *Your free subscription level.*

Why? Because when Leaky Paywall restricts access to new visitors it displays the free-level subscription message first. Your article content triggers your free subscription message, which takes readers directly to the registration page, bypassing the subscription options altogether. Your subscription page should focus on paid options only.

Here is a classic example of the Rule of Three in action from *The Wall Street Journal*:

---

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

**Trust your source. Trust your decisions.**

**Special Offer: ~~\$38.99~~ \$4 per month**

**Last Chance:**

<b>02</b> Days	<b>11</b> Hours	<b>22</b> Mins	<b>23</b> Secs
-------------------	--------------------	-------------------	-------------------

STEP 1 OF 2

What kind of membership are you interested in?

Make a selection by clicking an option below:

**Digital**

SELECT

**Print & Digital**

SELECT

**I'm Not Sure**

(Show me everything)

SELECT

If you need to promote more options, such as corporate subscriptions, promote them in a simple format below your cards so they don't compete with your main offerings. With Leaky Paywall you can also create additional hidden subscription levels that you send potential subscribers to via targeted campaigns. For example, *Tea Journey* [targets subscribers who live in India](#) with a single, special subscription level:

GET THE APP

MY ACCOUNT

SUBSCRIBE

ADVERTISE

**TEA** 茶之旅  
**JOURNEY**  
teajourney.pub



## INDIA: SUBSCRIBE TO TEA JOURNEY

**Subscribe Now!**



**Gain Unlimited Access to  
Hundreds of Articles and  
Special Issues**

Mountainous Manipur is home to wild tea tree forests available for domestic consumption and export. Click to learn

If possible, keep your offerings down to a single subscription option for higher conversions. If you need more, respect the Rule of Three.

How to: [Create a hidden subscription level](#)

## Your welcome emails

When a visitor registers for free or pays for a subscription, make sure to craft a specific email for each unique subscription level. Your free-level subscribers may want to know more about your publication's mission and might be receptive to a discount offer.

Paid-level subscribers will likely know more about you and may be motivated to promote your subscription to a friend. Member-level subscribers or donors will want to hear from you on a different level. Make sure you target each subscription level with an appropriate message and a promotion that makes sense for that level.

### **Welcome email for free level subscribers: the start of your relationship**

Tell your new reader what your mission is.

Assume new subscribers know nothing about your publication. This is your opportunity to start the relationship off on the right foot. Tell your story. Let the new subscriber know *why* they just subscribed. Reinforcing your mission to them strengthens your connection.

Another option: Consider offering a one month, free trial, limited-time coupon code in your welcome email (and also in your header bar - see the [Targeting](#) section) to your free registered subscribers to motivate a paid subscription. Try different promotions every 30 or 60 days and see what works best. Make sure you promote this as a limited time offer. Deadlines motivate action.

Discounts are easy to set up in the Leaky Paywall coupon section. Set up when each coupon starts and when it ends. Each month, you will need to update that expiration date in your free subscription level welcome email. It's worth the tiny bit of extra effort for the reward of testing new incentives.

### **You welcome email for paid subscribers**

When a new subscriber pays to access your content, you have just discovered a fan. Make sure your welcome email to this new subscriber reflects that. Here are some ideas for your welcome message:

1. Thank them for supporting your mission; remind them you couldn't do it without them,

2. If you have a giftable publication, consider promoting a gift subscription. Take advantage of their honeymoon period with you. You can even include a limited-time coupon to pass on with the gift subscription promotion,
3. If new subscriber is a digital-only subscriber to your print publication, consider promoting an upgrade to your print *and* digital subscription level, or
4. Share a free subscription: give the new paid subscriber a coupon to pass along to a friend for a free one year (or other) subscription. This can be promoted on your subscription cards page. Engaged free subscribers will share your articles in social media and via email, boosting the circulation of your digital publication.

*How to:* [Use different welcome emails to upsell different subscriptions and products](#)

*How to:* [Set up gift subscriptions](#)

## Your drip campaign

An email drip campaign lets you send automated emails to your new subscriber over time. This will help you strengthen your relationship with the new subscriber.

After a subscriber registers on your website, send them a series of helpful and interesting emails over the next few weeks. You can choose how frequently to send each email. We recommend one per day.

Some drip campaign email possibilities:

1. Introduce your mission,
2. Highlight several important or popular articles,
3. Promote special editions,
4. Introduce authors,
5. Throw light on community service,
6. Motivate downloads of your app,
7. Note other newsletters,
8. Promote a main sponsor,
9. Promote donations, or
10. Encourage them to share a subscription with a friend.

Start with three emails that make sense for you. Send them out over three days. You can always add new drip emails to your campaign later.

*How to:* [Set up a drip campaign with Leaky Paywall and Mailchimp](#)

# Your website speed can break you

You need a blazingly fast website to rank higher in search.

This major touchpoint is fundamental to your success. If you make readers wait for your content to load, they will click the back button and go away. Google has also made it very clear that the speed of your website will impact how your articles rank in search and they are penalizing slow websites. Make sure your website runs fast. It takes some technical know-how and you will need IT and developer support to make sure your website is lightning quick. The three areas you will need to look at:

1. **Website hosting:** You can easily purchase more speed, typically by setting up and upgrading a Virtual Private Server (VPS) from your hosting company.
2. **Website theme:** Bloated WordPress themes are one of the main causes for websites to load slowly. If your theme is to blame, it's worth seeking out a lightweight theme that loads quickly. Keep in mind WordPress themes are in charge of *design only*. Plugins should run functions. Avoid themes with lots of features (galleries, sliders, content types, animation, etc.). Also when you re-design down the road (moving to a new theme) you will lose all your theme functions and content.
3. **Plugins/any custom code:** Plugins and code can draw unnecessary resources and need to be reviewed by a developer.

It is well worth the small investment to have a developer and server admin review and eliminate slow loading code on your website.

Check your [website speed](#) now. How did you do? All A and Bs?

## Targeting your Visitors and Subscribers

What is targeting?

When you send a specific message to a specific type of reader you are targeting them. For example, sending a subscription discount code to a free-level subscriber is more effective than sending it to a casual reader who simply landed on your article via Google search.

Why target? If your message aligns with the reader type, it will have a higher level of impact.

Here are your typical reader types:

1. **Casual:** A reader that lands on an article from a social share or web search,
2. **Free-level subscriber:** Someone who has registered to access additional free content,
3. **Paid digital subscriber:** Someone who has paid you for digital access to your content,
4. **Paid print subscriber:** Someone who has paid you for print delivery of your newspaper or magazine,

5. **Member:** Someone who has paid for your highest level of content access, including events, author interactions, etc., or
6. **Donor:** A super-fan who wants to see your mission succeed and has paid to ensure it. (You have a [donation level](#) right?)

Each of these reader types can and should be targeted with messaging that is unique to their current subscription level.

Ever notice that once you donate, you get much more messaging from that organization? They are targeting you since you have donated at least once, and it is very effective at motivating you to donate again.

## Four methods to target your reader:

1. **Your welcome email:** Once a subscriber registers, why not take advantage of that momentum by offering them a promo, right on the spot? Send a unique welcome email that thanks them and offer a promotion.
2. **Email targeting via your Mailchimp list:** Make sure you tag your subscribers appropriately on your Leaky Paywall subscription levels. This will attach the 'free, digital, print+digital, member, or donor' [tag to each new subscriber in Mailchimp](#), depending on what level they came in on. Now you can easily create a Mailchimp campaign at any time and target the specific level of subscribers with a promotion or other message.
3. **Website header targeting:** With Leaky Paywall you can easily target any level of subscriber via a header bar that is visible at the top of your website. With our [Conditional Display Notice](#) you can display a unique header bar only to logged-in subscribers with your promotion. This is, for example, a great tool to reinforce whichever promotion you highlight in your welcome email or email campaign.
4. **Website ad targeting:** Using our [Ad Dropper](#) add-on, you can display a subscription promotion anywhere on your website *and hide these promotions from all paid level subscribers*. Promotions can be automatically inserted into your articles or displayed in header or sidebar widgets. Here is an example of an ad that is *not* visible to paid subscribers:

## Welch DMV Regional Office Will Close at 11 am Friday, June 11th Due to Road Closure

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles announced today...

John Tyson, The Welch News Editor · June 9, 2021 · 1 minute read

MCDOWELL COUNTY, W.Va. — Several McDowell County Municipalities held their local...

John Tyson, The Welch News Editor · June 9, 2021 · 1 minute read

Support local news in your community with a subscription to The Welch News.

starting at \$5.00/mo

### THE LATEST



## HOYAL WILLIAM WOODSON

Hoyal William Woodson, 60, of Johnson City, TN passed away on March...

Tyler Mitchem · June 14, 2021

Casual visitors and free level subscribers will see this ad. This ad will be hidden to all paid level subscribers.

## Targeting strategies for each of your audience levels:

### 1. Targeting the casual reader

Casual readers land on your website from web searches, social shares, recommendations from friends, and paid campaigns. Making sure your website is optimized for SEO and posting your content on social media helps you target casual reader traffic. Paying for Facebook or LinkedIn ads is a sharper targeting tool as you can promote to a specific demographic that matches your publication's audience.

Your main goal for the casual visitor is to capture their email address. The most effective method is by using the [free registration method](#).


If you decide to pay for social media promotions you will want to create a unique landing page that promotes the benefits of joining your publication for free. The mission of this unique landing page is to capture an email address. Giving away a free-level subscription, newsletter, or PDF download are the top ways to do this.

How to: [Create a unique landing page](#) for free level subscribers using shortcodes

## 2. Targeting the free-level subscriber

Once someone registers on your website at the free subscription level, your targeting options increase. At this point:

- A. The new subscriber is going to run into your second subscription message when they run out of their free article allotment. This second message is a great opportunity to offer a promotion. Notice the 'level up' approach in this example:




# YOU'VE UNLOCKED A DISCOUNT


As one of our most loyal readers this month,  
enjoy 10% off your Digiday+ membership.

Use code **PLUS**


**SUBSCRIBE**




Unlimited access to  
all Digiday content



Premium research



Digiday magazine



Exclusive events  
and more

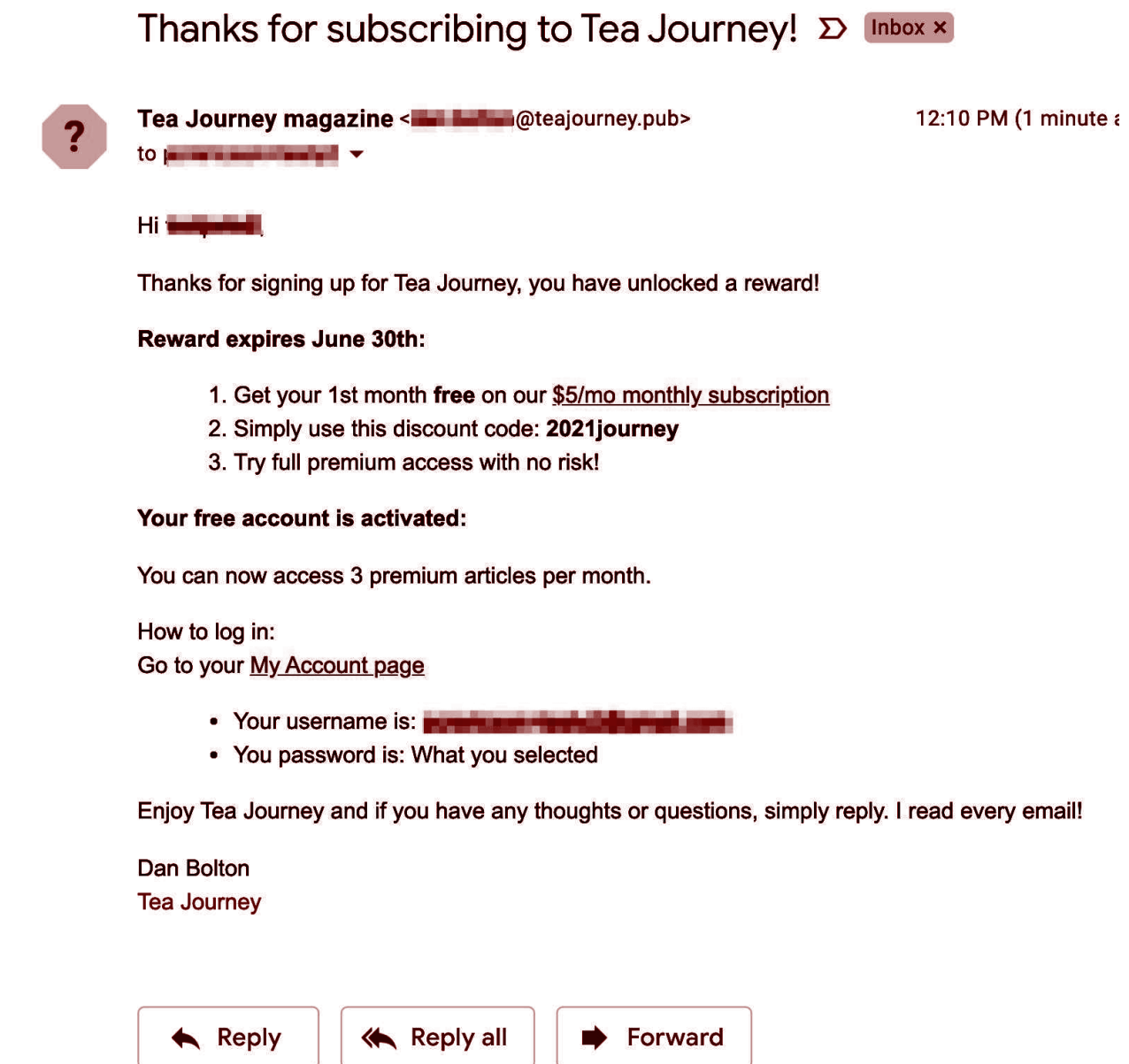
Remember, timing is key. If you offer a discount at moments of action (such as registering, paying, or being stopped by your subscription message), make it a 'leveling up' reward. The subscribers' effort in reading more of your articles led them to this reward.

- B. The new free level subscriber is tagged in Mailchimp so you can email them offers, and
- C. The new free level subscriber is logged into your website so you can also target them there with the header bar and website ad targeting.

## Welcome email

Your welcome email to free registered readers is a great opportunity to move your relationship forward. As shown in the example below, give the new registrant a reason to pay you with a

discount code or free trial coupon. You are in that honeymoon period; take advantage of it.



Again, note the reward approach and deadline for the offer. With Leaky Paywall you can [send a unique email message](#) to each of your subscription levels.




Discount code

Another approach would be to email your 'free' tagged segment in Mailchimp a discount code for a holiday promotion that is valid only for a limited time period. It might offer a first free month of full access or a permanent 10 or 20% discount.

Custom header bar

Update your header bar to match the offer you are promoting through email.  
Here is an example that matches the above email promo sent to a free level subscriber:

**You have unlocked a reward! Expires June 30th:** Get your 1st month free on our \$5/mo monthly subscription. Simply use this discount code: **2021journey**




### The Tea History Collection

May 31, 2021 | [Roopak Goswami](#) | [f](#) [t](#)

Tea History Collection, Oxfordshire, UK English entrepreneur Denys C. Shortt, OBE, left the tea gardens of Assam where he grew up, but he never left tea. The avid collector and student of history continued to gather historical artifacts as he successfully navigated the world of business, founding DCS Group in 1994 and expanding the company into a multi-million dollar

Current Issue:



This 'header bar' is managed with our [conditional display notice](#), which allows you to target specific subscription levels. So in this case, set the notice to only show up if someone is logged in as a free-level subscriber.

Use ad space for your own, targeted ads

You can also set ads in your article content to promote a paid subscription or limited time offer. Use [Ad Dropper](#) to hide the ads from any paid subscribers.

Here again, is an ad that promotes paid subscriptions:



Published on  
19 May 2021

AUTHOR

John Tyson, The  
Welch News Editor

SHARE ARTICLE



The post has been  
shared by 1 people.

WILCOE, W.Va. – With a heavy heart the McDowell County Health Department has confirmed today, the 25th death of a resident from complications related to COVID-19 in the County.

“We extend our heartfelt sympathies to the patient’s family and friends,” said Health Department officials. “This is a tragic development in this outbreak and the McDowell County Health Department continues to ask all citizens to help slow down the spread of the disease and to protect those at greatest risk by following the guidelines.”

The Health Department also confirmed 2 new COVID-19 cases this week, one on Monday and the other Tuesday afternoon.

Support local news in your community  
with a subscription to **The Welch News**.

starting at \$5.00/mo

It matches the brand and the mission of the publication.

Whichever method you use, you are targeting someone that has taken the time to register on your website and has a deeper relationship level with you than a casual visitor. You increase your chances for a paid conversion when offering it to someone who has already begun their commitment to you.

And as a bonus: those who have registered for free will have all their personal info pre-filled on the payment form. All they need to do is enter a credit card.

### 3. Targeting the paid digital subscriber

So what are good approaches for paid subscribers?

Use all the tools listed in the sections above – your welcome email, Mailchimp tagged emails, and your header bar notice – to deliver your targeted messaging to your new paid subscribers.

A paid subscriber is a strong fan of your work. Here are messaging examples that work:

- *Encourage them to share your publication with friends.*  
Craft a welcome email for the paid subscriber that gives them a coupon to give a friend for a free or discounted member subscription. If you offer an additional, free, premium subscription for a friend, you can promote that as a benefit on your registration/sign up page.
- *Encourage them to buy a Gift Subscription.*  
A new paying fan is more likely to purchase a gift subscription for someone else.
- *Allow them to hide your ads at a member price point.*  
You can generate more revenue without creating anymore revenue. .
- *Offer another medium.*  
If you publish a print publication, consider sending an offer to upgrade to a print-level subscription.
- *Offer an upgrade.*  
Upgrade to a premium+ membership for additional content access and benefits
- *Promote donations.*

How to: [Hide ads at a higher subscription price](#)

How to: [Use different welcome emails to upsell different subscriptions and products](#)

## A word on accepting donations

Should you accept donations? Generally, yes. Donations are the third part of your reader revenue trifecta, alongside subscriptions and memberships. With Leaky Paywall they are also a snap to set up.

Subscription-based readers want access to your content. Members want that access (and maybe whatever bonuses you add to the package), but they also want to support your mission.

Your mission is the driving force behind your publication. It can be anything from bringing local news to a vibrant audience, to disseminating information to truck drivers or fishermen, to giving children (or adults) a place to display their creativity, to bringing a specific subculture into broader notice.

Donations come from people who align themselves with the mission first and the specific content second.

[Tea Journey](#) — whose mission is to boost knowledge on tea, its origins, and the culture that surrounds it — has found a simple and effective way to make donations a possibility.

## Targeting potential donors

*Tea Journey* is simply using a new subscription level in Leaky Paywall to accept donations.

The subscription card contains mission-based copy, telling the reader exactly why they collect donations, both on a macro-level ('to bring our unique tea content from around the globe') and the micro ('to pay our writers and staff').

(You'd be amazed how many readers are under the impression that magazine costs come from government grants or other funding. A high school sports news publisher once told us that parents think their revenue comes from the school system. Local news publishers tell us that their readers think the town pays their writers. Gently telling them otherwise can have a tremendous impact. Educate your audience; it's important for them to know that you need their direct financial support.).

The image shows two side-by-side cards on a green background. The left card is titled 'PURCHASE 10 SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR FRIENDS' and describes a program where users can give away subscription 'seats' to friends. It states a price of '\$250.00 every year' and features a green 'SUBSCRIBE' button and a link 'Have a coupon?'. The right card is titled 'DONATE TO TEA JOURNEY' and explains that the publication relies on reader contributions. It includes a green 'SUBSCRIBE' button. Both cards have horizontal lines separating the title, description, price/donation info, and the button.

## PURCHASE 10 SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR FRIENDS

Sign up below and receive 10 subscription 'seats' that you can give away to friends. Simply add your colleague's email address to your My Account page and they will be invited to join for free.

**\$250.00 every year**

**SUBSCRIBE**

[Have a coupon?](#)

## DONATE TO TEA JOURNEY

As a small niche publication we rely on reader contributions for the majority of our income. Please consider donating to help pay our writers and staff that help bring our unique tea content from around the globe. We really appreciate it!

**Donate to Tea Journey (one time)**

**SUBSCRIBE**

Once the reader has chosen to donate, they are presented with a slider (or number field) to set their donation amount. *Tea Journey* has chosen to make the donation itself a one-time gift, but it could also be set as a monthly, recurring donation. The settings also include other options for setting the amount, instead of the slider.

Donate to Tea Journey (one time)

Amount: \$225

CONTINUE

The amount of the donation should start above the price of an annual subscription (for the one-time gift) or a monthly subscription (for the recurring).

Once the donor has chosen their amount, they're directed to a payment page identical to any other subscription level. Let the donor know that their gift comes with a subscription (set the donation subscription level to access your content).

ORDER SUMMARY

YOUR ORDER: Donate to Tea Journey

SUBSCRIPTION LENGTH: 1 year

RECURRING: No

CONTENT ACCESS: Your donation includes an annual subscription. Thank you!

TOTAL: \$225.00

Coupon Code

1 ACCOUNT SETUP 2 PAYMENT

**Why it's better**

The ability to create your own donation package with Leaky Paywall gives you several advantages. Most other donation software are third-party services. They take place on a subdomain (or other website) rather than your own site. And they don't allow you to attach a subscription as a reward.

Tea Journey's way is also as easy as setting any other subscription level. Publishers often ignore donations as a revenue stream because they fear complications for little pay-off.

Within days of introduction, Tea Journey had already seen donations start to trickle in. And all they had to do was click a few buttons to make it happen.

Other methods to target donors:

1. Use your [header bar](#) to display a donation message only to paid subscribers and members, or
2. Create a Mailchimp email campaign that targets anyone who is tagged as a paying subscriber or member.

*How to:* [Set up your donation level subscriptions](#)

## Subscription Strategies

### Your hybrid paywall: Locking down subscriber-only content

Meter your content, sell subscriptions, and when you are ready to get more advanced, consider locking down subscriber-only articles. This can be done via WordPress categories, tags, post types, issues, or for individual articles.

It's important to let Google index your articles and let them be shared in social media, but in some cases you might consider locking down premium articles or categories for subscribers only. This hybrid approach works well when you have content that clearly has a higher value and needs to be restricted to paying members.

Some examples:

- A publication that locks down their special issues/editions for subscribers only,
- A niche publisher that produces shorter news articles mixed in with longer heavily researched content,
- A political news publisher that offers in-depth election coverage during election season at a premium+ level of access, or
- An industry publisher that produces high-value, premium pricing reports.

When you start looking at conversion tactics to push readers from free to paid, paid to member, or paid to premium+, these higher-value content items do the trick. Almost without fail, locking

down content increases paid conversions. Just be careful to balance out your site's visibility for search and social sharing.

[The Carolina Sportsman](#) does this with a strong visual cue. When an article is selected as subscriber-only (by checking off their 'feature' category in WordPress), a lock appears in front of the title of the article:

## TURKEY HUNTING

---



 **Turkey hunting blunders**



**Rectifire offers choke tubes for turkey hunters' shotguns**



**Oven bag wild turkey breast**

This clearly tells the visitor that the article requires premium-subscriber access. (This approach will take some developer effort, as every WordPress theme is different.)

The workflow is a snap as the feature category in WordPress is simply restricted and requires a paid subscription. The visual lock and restriction functionality all works with the click of one category checkbox in WordPress using Leaky Paywall.

### Locking down your magazine's e-editions

*The Carolina Sportsman* also publishes web-based issues using our [IssueM](#) publisher. If you visit their [magazine archives](#), you'll see that their magazine content is locked down and available only to paid subscribers.

Keep in mind that this is a fairly advanced approach. They have built up their traffic over time, which gives them the space to completely wall their editions off from Google search and social sharing. Typically you will set your meter to at least one free article to attract new visitor traffic.

### A good magazine or news edition restriction setup:

Set your meter to allow the casual visitor one free news post per month (WordPress 'Posts').

Set your edition archives to one free article per month (WordPress 'Articles', using IssueM).

If you have a free registration level, you may want to allow free level subscribers one extra 'Article' per month and a few extra Posts.

How to: [Restrict categories, tags, and IssueM editions](#)

How to: [Restrict individual articles](#)

## Sell premium+ access to your archive content

If you produce evergreen content that has value even though it might have been written long ago, you might want to consider selling archive access as a premium+ member level subscription.

A great example of this is the news publisher [Austin Monitor](#) in Austin, Texas.

The *Austin Monitor* is building an archive database of content covering local town hall rulings, commercial news, and real estate transactions. Subscribers can pay for a premium Current News subscription or for a premium+ Archive-level subscription to access (in their case) everything over 90 days old. They have been publishing for years so they have accrued quite a large database of content. Archive access costs almost five times as much as a standard subscription.

## LATEST HEADLINES FOR MONDAY, MAY 24



### ZONING

Monday, May 24, 2021 by Jo Clifton

## Owner withdraws mini mart rezoning case

Although City Council gave preliminary approval for rezoning of the Sunrise Mini Mart at 913 and 915 W. Oltorf St., the road ahead looked bleak to property owner Abdul Patel and his agent, Jim Wittliff of Land Answers. With a...

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 [GO](#)

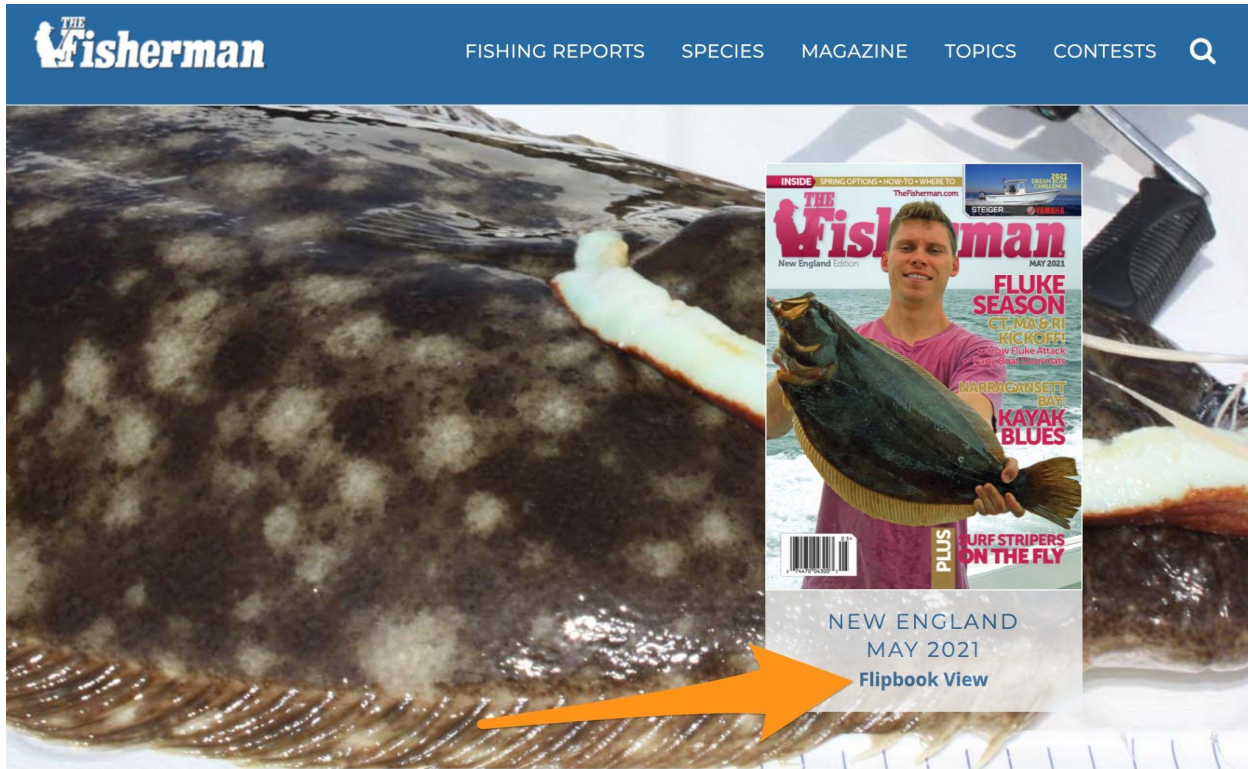
## Magazine archive subscriptions

Selling archive access is also a great revenue stream for veteran magazine publishers with a treasure trove of past issue content. Your years of published content is gold to subscribers. If you are new to publishing your articles in a web-article format, visitor traffic to your site will grow quickly. SEO and social sharing get to work for you when you have individual articles to share.


You can set up archive subscriptions very quickly even if you don't have your old issues digitized. We have worked with publishers that rented or bought high-resolution digital scanners, cut their magazine bindings, and scan all of their back issues.

These new PDFs are uploaded to their website, converted on the fly to flipbooks, and added to their issue archives using our [IssueM](#) web-issue publisher and [flipbook integration](#). The audience can access that content right on your site, preserving a consistent subscriber experience. You no longer have to send readers off to third party flipbook sites.


Below is a web-issue and flipbook example in action. [Choose an issue](#) and click the Flipbook. Flipbooks are restricted to paying subscribers, but those subscribers will view the flipbook in their current browser tab, on the publisher's website.



The screenshot shows the homepage of 'The Fisherman' website. The top navigation bar includes links for FISHING REPORTS, SPECIES, MAGAZINE, TOPICS, CONTESTS, and a search icon. The main content area features a large, detailed image of a fluke. Overlaid on the right side of this image is a thumbnail of the May 2021 New England issue of the magazine. The thumbnail includes the magazine title, issue date, and several headlines: 'FLUKE SEASON', 'CT. MA GRI KICKOFF', 'How Fluke Attack', 'HARRAGANSETT BAY', 'KAYAK BLUES', and 'PLUS SURF STRIPERS ON THE FLY'. Below the thumbnail, the text 'NEW ENGLAND MAY 2021 Flipbook View' is displayed with an orange arrow pointing to it.



EDITOR'S LOG  
JIM HUTCHINSON, JR.



Editor's Log Bluefin Accountability  
BY JIM HUTCHINSON, JR.  
[READ MORE](#)

May 2021

IN THIS ISSUE:

FEATURES

- Go Big, Go Often: Catching A Personal Best
- Where Are They Now?

Note: the website visitor can choose to read the web based articles or read the flipbook. We find 10-15% of subscribers will read a flipbook version depending on the audience. The majority of readers will choose the web article, since they likely directly landed on the article via a Google search or social share (on their mobile device). Flipbooks are also tough to read on phones.

How to: [Set up premium+ archive access subscriptions](#)

How to: [Make flipbooks part of your digital marketing strategy](#)

## How to sell individual content purchases (and subscriptions at the same time)

Leaky Paywall lets you easily sell high-value pieces of content as individual purchase or part of a full subscription. You can attach access to an existing subscription level. You can even create a brand new premium+ or member level of access. This allows your audience to decide whether they simply want your individual content items or full access via a subscription.

Selling individual articles has been a dream of publishers for many years. It hasn't gained mainstream popularity for the simple reason that purchasing anything online involves a fair amount of friction. It takes time to fill out a registration form and enter your credit card information. Because of this, purchases have been mostly about subscription access to groups of content, like Netflix, HBO, and, of course, publication content.

But paying for individual content can work, and work well, in certain situations.

*Tea Journey* provides a great example of this. In addition to long-form articles, they also sell premium [Tea Price Reports](#). Paid subscribers have access to all their written content except the price reports. If someone wants access to a report they can purchase it individually, regardless of whether they are a subscriber. A logged-in subscriber will experience less friction in the process. All they have to do is enter their credit card information and check out.

But there is another option. Individuals can pay for a subscription that includes the price reports as well. This gives the reader a one-time friction point (paying with a credit card) and then full access to all the price reports down the road. (And it's easy to set up.)

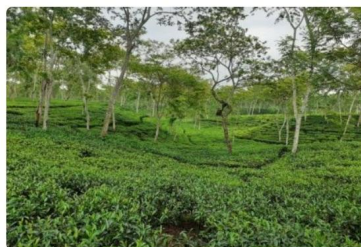
### TEA PRICE REPORT



#### China Tea Price Watch – April 28, 2021

Tea Price Report Price volatility is an ongoing concern, which is why Tea Biz publishes the weekly Tea Price Report. [...]

BY DAN ROITON



#### India Tea Price Watch – April 24, 2021

India Tea Price Watch April 24, 2021 The week was dominated by the raging second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic [...]



#### China Tea Price Watch – April 20, 2021

Tea Price Report Price volatility is an ongoing concern, which is why Tea Biz publishes the weekly Tea Price Report. [...]

BY DAN ROITON

Other uses for (using our [Pay Per Post](#) add-on) selling individual pieces of content are with video and live streaming. Universal Music's [DG Premium](#) offers limited-time classical concerts

that are streamed live. Since these are desirable concerts they have found fans are willing to pay for individual access to the page where the streaming feed lives. (They can also access the recording for three days afterward.)



How to: [Sell access to individual premium content](#)

## Grow revenues by hiding ads for premium+ members

Are you looking for a simple and fast way to generate additional revenue for your publication? You don't have to create any extra content. Consider adding a premium+ or a membership-level subscription that hides your ads.

Ads can cause more problems than they're worth. Depending on the website, ad displays can visually inhibit the reader's experience pretty dramatically. You're already losing ad visibility, since 40% of readers on the web use ad blockers. And ads, especially, third party network ads, can slow down the performance of your website; site speed is critical for SEO visibility.

So why not turn those disadvantages into revenue?

### Income impact example

Let's say you run a business-to-consumer publication. Your monthly recurring subscription is \$5.

Create a membership or premium+ plus subscription level at \$7 per month. (That's an additional \$24/year or a 40% increase in subscription revenue per new member.) This outperforms the income that you would receive from most network advertising. You would need thousands of ad

impressions, per subscriber, each month to equal the extra revenue you generate. You will also be giving your best fans a better experience.

### **So how do you hide ads from my members?**

With our [Ad Dropper](#) add-on you can easily hide all ads that you publish on your website from specific subscription levels. (And you can publish banner ads, text ads, video ads, and embed network (Google or other) ad code.)

Simply choose which subscription levels automatically hide your ads. This means your casual visitors and free level subscribers would still see the ads on your website. Keep in mind the bulk of your website traffic is from your casual (not logged in) visitors...so the impact on ad revenue is minor.

If someone is logged in as a premium+ or membership-level subscriber, they will not see any ads and they are paying you for that privilege. It's a win for everyone.

#### **Ad Display**

**Hide all ads from Leaky Paywall subscribers for the following subscription levels:**

- ☐ Annual
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Three Articles per Month for \$
- ☒ Tea Journey Membership




*How to:* [Hide ads from member level subscribers](#)



Grow revenue by letting subscribers post classifieds

## Featured Classifieds


Place a Classified Ad



Trinka 10 Yacht Tender ready with Motor, Oars and Sail package

 Powerboats /  North America / 145 views

\$3,000.00



If you run classified ads on your site or are thinking about it, letting paid subscribers post unlimited classifieds will make it easier to create new classifieds, attract more paying subscribers, and increase the volume of classifieds you post.

### A case study

[Small Boats Monthly](#) saw the benefit of simply letting their paid subscribers post unlimited classified ads.

Classified ads seemed like an obvious inclusion for a web-based publication geared toward small craft aficionados – the type that collect or build their own boats, only to trade them in for a new challenge when they're done.

### The problem

*Small Boats* originally required advertisers to create specific Classified accounts and pay separately to post their ads...a pretty typical setup for most publishers. Registering and paying

to complete the classifieds transaction caused a lot of friction. They ultimately found it was harder to grow than they expected.

They just weren't attracting many ads.

## The solution

The answer turned out to be simple.

Instead of running a separate, third-party payment for classified ads, they could fold the whole thing into the subscription service provided by Leaky Paywall.

Setup was easy: any paid subscriber can post an ad for no additional fee. That's it.

With the click of a button, Small Boats Monthly (with Leaky Paywall) restricted access to the 'Place An Ad' page. Every visitor to that page is now given the option to either log-in or become a subscriber.



## Place your Classified Ad

Username or Email Address

Password

☐ Remember Me

LOG IN



Subscribers of *Small Boats Magazine* may post unlimited classified ads. This is a great opportunity to offer your used boats and gently used gear that meet the spirit of *Small Boats Magazine* to like-minded enthusiasts. Please note this service is limited to private sales.

## The results

Before they made this switch, *Small Boats Monthly* only had about three or four people who posted ads each month. In their first month they had more than 20 (and growing) – all subscribers posting interesting, relevant classified ads.

It was, according to CFO Justin Jamison, “A fantastic move for us. In fact, some people have become subscribers specifically to post their ad. They couldn’t be happier.”

Here are the benefits:

1. It’s easier for ad-posters to use,
2. It’s easier for *Small Boats Monthly* to manage,
3. Subscription revenue is up,
4. The number of classifieds posted has grown, and
5. It opens up a whole new readership for them. People who just wanted to place ads now have access to their content... and are added to the Small Boats email list.

In one easy stroke, they’ve opened the door for a more robust classified section and more paid readers to enjoy and share their content.

*How to:* [Set up a paid subscription requirement to post unlimited digital classifieds](#)

## Make gift subscriptions 20% of your subscription revenue

If you publish a B-to-C magazine or news publication, you need to aggressively promote gift subscriptions. Gift subscriptions should be at least 20% of your overall subscription revenue.

Where does the 20% number come from?

In the last few decades, the print magazine industry has proved that publishers who aggressively go after their subscribers for gift subscriptions can achieve a 20% revenue gain.

Take a look at your gift subscription percentages, what are they at? This is low hanging fruit if you haven’t been promoting gifts.

### **How do you go after gift subscriptions?**

Look to your current paid subscribers. They are your biggest fans and will be most willing to refer new subscribers to you. You can target your paid subscribers via email and also via your website when they are reading your content.

### **Email targeting**

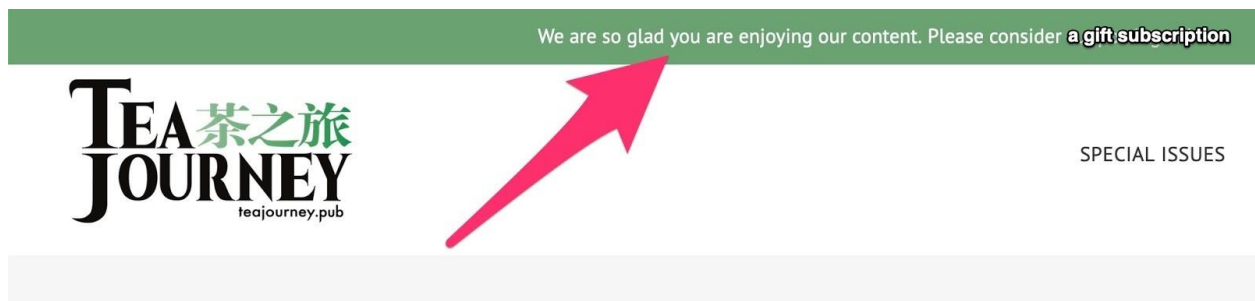
Assuming you are tagging new subscribers to your Mailchimp list, you have an easy way to reach all your paid subscribers. As soon as somebody comes on board and pays for a subscription, follow up with a pitch for a gift subscription. They are in their honeymoon period with you. If you immediately encourage them to pass a gift trial or promotion to friends there's a good chance they will do so. Consider adding the gift promotion to your welcome email or followup drip campaign.

Holidays are another natural gift subscription time. Make sure reach out to your email list during appropriate holidays to promote your gift subscriptions. Use a free trial or limited-time coupon, they are powerful motivations.

### Website targeting

With Leaky Paywall, it's also easy to target your logged-in paid subscribers while they are experiencing the content on your website. One way is to use our [Conditional Display Notice](#) which allows you promote simple messages via a header bar to a specific subscription level.

For example, display a message promoting a gift subscription only to paid subscribers who are logged in:



Targeting this way lets you send your paid subscribers personal messages to motivate the gift of sharing your content. Keep in mind that your mission-based publication needs their help. Don't be afraid to ask them for it. Subscribers and members love to help if you ask them.

## Sell a premium email newsletter

Publishers are discovering the email newsletter as a major revenue-generating medium with their digital subscription strategy. Let's take a look at three viable tactics for premium newsletters:

### 1. Send exclusive articles via email only to paid subscribers

A premium newsletter can be the primary distribution source for your exclusive articles, as it is for the [Tracinski Letter](#).

The *Tracinski Letter* is a thoughtful collection of analysis articles from the individualist perspective of writer/publisher Robert Tracinski. Most of his articles are not published on his website and are reserved for his paid readership via email.

Tracinski managed his newsletter subscriptions manually and needed to automate subscriptions. Now, with Leaky Paywall, he has set up his premium email newsletter to send only to his paid subscribers on payment. When a credit card fails or a subscriber cancels, that subscriber is automatically removed from the recipients.

With Leaky Paywall and Mailchimp, your premium newsletter is easy to set up. We also recommend setting up your website articles to be *automatically* picked up by Mailchimp and delivered to your premium subscribers for full premium email automation.

How to: [Create a premium email newsletter](#)

How to: [Automatically send your website articles via email using Mailchimp](#)

## 2. Sell early access to your premium full text newsletter

There are two things that many of your subscribers want... and you can charge them extra for it:

- Have your news delivered early morning before work, say around 6 a.m., and
- Have a full text version of all your articles in the newsletter for convenient reading

Let's take a look at [iPolitics](#), a Canadian digital news publisher. They offer an Early Edition that automatically pulls all new articles into a single email in full text and ships it to all paid subscribers by 6 a.m..

# Subscribe to iPolitics

**Individual account registration below. [Click here to register multiple users.](#)**

Exclusive membership benefits include:

- Unlimited access to daily iPolitics news, opinion and analysis
- iPolitics daily news Briefs (Morning, Lunchbox, Evening)
- iPolitics daily sector-specific Briefs (Net Zero, The Sprout)
- iPoliticsLIVE event invites & podcast alerts

This allows members to easily consume, in one click, all the news that *iPolitics* has published since their last email. This is a big convenience for their subscribers as they can simply open their email and read all the new articles without having to click to the *iPolitics* website and potentially login.

If the subscriber cancels or if their credit card fails, their access is revoked automatically. Think about this approach for your own newsletter. It's an easy way to offer up a premium+ subscription without doing any extra work, beyond the initial setup.

That initial setup is easy and you can automate the entire process. With Leaky Paywall and Mailchimp, the newsletter can be handled as a subscription service all on its own (or as part of your main offering), complete with automated payments and expiration cut-offs.

### **3. Subscribers get instant email blasts when articles goes live**

[\*Risk Reversal\*](#) is a financial news publisher. It is crucial to their audience that they receive the financial analysis as quickly as possible.

*Risk Reversal* has set up Leaky Paywall to meter access to their content and motivate subscriptions. Although access to the financial analysis on their site is worth subscribing to, the real power for them is in the email: as soon as an article is published, all paid subscribers can immediately find the article in their inbox.

If a subscriber cancels, they no longer receive the instant email blasts. This helps their audience make faster trading decisions. If you publish content that is time sensitive, you can deliver it instantly via email.

This is easily set up with Mailchimp and the help of the [MailOptin](#) plugin.

How to: [Set up your paid email newsletter in Leaky Paywall](#)

How to: [Set up you automated newsletter in Mailchimp](#)

How to: [Provide instant email blasts exclusively to your premium subscribers](#)

## **Sell bulk subscriptions to groups**

If the enduring success of Costco has taught us anything, it's that there is value in selling things in bulk. This applies to subscriptions for your digital publication as well, whether you're selling to locations, organizations, or groups of any size.

That's why we've set up four different ways to set-up/sell/manage a cluster of subscriptions through Leaky Paywall, depending on the needs of your customer.

All of these methods offer the same functions that Leaky Paywall provides to single subscription sales: searchable, shareable content with as many tiered access levels as you choose to set up.

With these four methods we have found publishers can now satisfy most organizations' access needs. Generally, you would need to invoice individually, and set each new client up manually as needed. With Leaky Paywall, you can offer all four methods of bulk access:

## 1. IP Exceptions (physical location-based access)

[IP Exception](#) access is perfect for organizations that want to allow access to your publication at their physical location — schools, libraries, and so forth.

The IP Exceptions add-on allows access to the range of IP addresses belonging to that organization. Any visitor logging on from one of those IP addresses can access your publication without having to subscribe. Simply enter the IP range of the physical location. Your client's IT person can provide this to you.

Leaky Paywall - IP Exceptions

Allowed IP Addresses

192.168.0.0  
192.168.0.1

Examples:

192.168.0.0  
192.168.0.0-192.168.0-192.168.0.254  
192.168.0.\*  
192.168.0.x  
192.168.0.0/24

Save Settings

## 2. Corporate Subscriptions (access via a company's email address)

Give anyone at an organization access via their email address.

Any organization that uses 'name@company.org' email addresses can use the [Corporate Subscriptions add-on](#) to manage their access.

Once configured, anyone who has a @company.org email address can register their personal log-in via their email account.

# Corporate Subscriptions

**Account holders with approved group access can register below.**

Enter your details to start your subscription:

**Username**

**Email**

**Password**

### 3. Group Accounts (access managed by an admin)

Sell access to a group owner that will then manage individual access. This is good for smaller groups and organizations.

[Group Accounts](#) are for users who have a scattered group of people with whom they wish to share their subscription — small groups with a shared interest in your publication.

Take a look at [Soccer Coach Weekly](#). They sell group subscriptions to towns, schools, etc., to provide content access to soccer coaches.

INSPIRATION | CONFIDENCE | SUCCESS
LOG OUT
MY ACCOUNT
SUPPORT

FOLLOW US




SHARE

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The Group Accounts add-on allows one group owner to manage a subscription containing a designated number of seats. The owner can then invite whoever they'd like to join their group until all the seats are filled.

SESSION PLANS FROM A WHO'S WHO OF COACHING




## My club

Club Status: active

You are currently using 1 out of 8 seats available on your account.

### My Club member

Name	Role	Status	Actions
McKinley 	owner	active	

### Add My Club member



First Name

Last Name

Email Address

Add

### Club Settings

Club Name

Update Club Settings

## 4. Bulk Import for large clients

The final way to sell a bulk subscription is for high-volume clients without a shared location or email domain. This is accomplished by creating a hidden subscription level specifically for a large organization and importing subscribers into it.

This creates a large group subscription without having to add each subscriber one by one.

### **Getting started with bulk access**

The best way to get going is to not set up anything at all...simply start promoting bulk access. Once someone takes you up on getting bulk access for their organization you can set up the access type you need.

*How to:* [Set up email based corporate subscriptions](#)

*How to:* [Set up group accounts with limited seats](#)

*How to:* [Manage large group accounts using the Leaky Paywall Bulk Import tool](#)

*How to:* [Set up IP \(location\) based access to your publication](#)

## **Increase subscription revenues by offering iOS & Android apps to readers**

### **Added Revenue Without Added Effort**

If there was a way to increase your paid subscriptions by 10-30%, wouldn't you jump at the chance?

Because that's exactly what iOS & Android apps can do. If you're looking for the best content and subscription experience for your audience, consider adding apps for your publication.

### **Compelling Numbers**

We already know apps provide the most convenient and best reader engagement available today. What's more interesting is that publishers now find that a significant number of their subscribers are coming from the app stores. Apps are boosting subscriber revenue streams by 10, 20, 30+ percent.

Let's look at three examples:

1. **Le Parisien** is a print and digital newspaper reporting on French local news, as well as wider global happenings. They recently conducted a study on the efficacy of the strategies they've employed to increase their paid subscriptions.

The results, published on [the blog of the World News Publishing Focus](#), revealed that apps are a huge driving force for their success.

“More than 50 percent of subscribers are coming from the apps,” reported Sophie Gourmelen, *Le Parisien*’s Managing Director and Publisher, “so the apps are crucial to our subscription success.”

2. **Tea Journey** launched their publication with an app already in place in 2016. Within a few months, they’d amassed 1500 paid subscribers...and 500 of those came from the app.

That’s a [solid third of their readership coming directly from their app](#).

3. **Street Photography Magazine**, a digital magazine celebrating the work of street photographers, reports that, in 2021, [they received over 25% of their new subscribers from their apps](#).

If anything, projecting a 10% increase in subscriptions is underselling the possibilities.

### **Untapped Potential**

But here’s the real kicker: readers who purchase in the app store tend to *discover* you in the app stores.

These aren’t subscribers who found you on the web and just happened to feel like subscribing through the app instead of the web that day.

These are people who wouldn’t subscribe at all, if there was no app to subscribe to. They first learned about your publication in the app store.

App subscribers are a whole new pool of readers.

### **Benefits To the Reader**

It’s not entirely surprising that publishers are seeing such positive results to app publication. Apps aren’t just great for the publisher. They’re great for the readers, too.

With the ubiquity of smartphones, people are spending more and more time on their mobile devices.

In fact, our publishers are reporting that mobile devices generally account for over 70-80% of their views. And studies show that [over 80% of phone time is spent in apps](#).



This is because apps save readers time and can greatly enhance the reader experience and their overall appreciation of your publication. App articles load quickly and can be made available with offline reading.

In addition to the convenience and portability, apps reduce frustration and Help Desk queries by keeping readers logged in to their account. Instead of having to re-enter their credentials every time (with all the attendant possibilities about forgotten passwords or incorrect usernames), readers open the app and have instant access to the content.

Plus, apps launched through [UniPress](#) (our app platform), support publishing via issues or editions.

That means that instead of a long list of collected articles, readers can browse each issue of your magazine in the app, just like they would on the web or off a newsstand.

### **Streamlined Workflow**

A popular question we get from publishers is: how will this impact workflow?

With the right tools, launching and maintaining an app doesn't need to disrupt your workflow. You have a few options for this:

1. **Custom-built app integrations designed for your specific publication from scratch by a programmer:** This will most likely meet all of your needs but is likely to be expensive and possibly time-consuming to create.

2. **Tools like Mobiloud which migrate your content into a pre-built app for you:** Mobiloud and others similar to it (App Presser, App Boss, Presspad) will send your WordPress content to a good-looking app for you. The downside is that none of them fully connect to your subscription system. They run separate, app-only subscriptions (or generate revenue from ads alone). It's not the best choice for workflow efficiency.
3. **UniPress:** This works with Leaky Paywall and IssueM to funnel your app content and subscription management through your WordPress dashboard.

[UniPress](#) is the tool used by both *Tea Journey* and *Street Photography Magazine*, above. As the name suggests, it was designed to work with WordPress with no more than the touch of a single button.

Which means that when your app enhances the reader experience and provides you with access to that glorious untapped pool of potential readers...

...it does it without any effort from you.

The API automatically moves your content into the app once you publish on your WordPress website. You can also automate any and all push notifications through WordPress. Set them up and let them run.

UniPress also integrates seamlessly with Leaky Paywall, which will meter the content on your app. This means that your content is just as protected on the app as it is on the web.

### **Extra in-app ad revenue**

Some of the tools listed above will allow you to run ads in the app. UniPress allows you to integrate Google's DFP and Admob ads into the apps. You also gain access to a new app-wide ad zone that you can use for app sponsorships. In fact, most publishers find that their sponsored ad pays for the app service fee.

Either way, whether through ad revenue or new paid subscribers, the app essentially pays for itself.

## **In conclusion**

Hopefully, your brain is overflowing with ideas for growing your subscription revenues and you're itching to get started.

But just to really cement it in your mind, here are the highlights to remember:

- Your email marketing is the driving force behind your subscription funnel - it keeps everything moving forward in your growing relationship with your reader. Concentrate on building your email lists
- Your metered paywall is going to be the foundation of your efforts to grow paid subscriptions. It gives your readers an incentive to engage with you, it allows them to decide what content is valuable, and it allows your content to be both searchable and shareable.
- If you don't have a free registration level, today is the day to set it up, before you do anything else
- Frequently review your site's interactions with the reader – from the reader's point of view.
- Be sure to target and optimize your messaging at each subscription level
- You already have more revenue streams than you know. Think outside the box for the things readers will pay for (save time, convenient delivery, hide ads, etc)
- Don't stress out... most of these tools and strategies can be automated. Set it up and let it go. If you need help please get in touch below

Ready? Go build your email lists and new paid revenue streams!

## We would love your feedback

If you made it this far and have comments, suggestions or would like us to cover a specific topic please let us know. This guide was made possible from years of feedback from publishers we work with. Please reach out and say hi!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pete Ericson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pete Ericson

Get in touch at:

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