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JULY 2024

MEDIA MAKERS MEET

46th FIPP WORLD MEDIA CONGRESS

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Amid profound change, with AI at the forefront, publishers remain upbeat and inspired by the opportunities ahead

KEY THEMES FROM CASCAIS

AI / Monetisation / Print
Storytelling and audiences
Sustainability / DEI
Worldwide entrepreneurship
Targeting generations

INTRODUCTION

A catalyst for growth

Under clear blue skies, the 46th FIPP World Media Congress took place from June 4-6, 2024, in the beautiful setting of Cascais, Portugal, attracting over 450 C-suite media professionals from more than 40 countries.

The event yet again served as a prime opportunity for global media professionals to share insights, network, and establish strategic partnerships across national boundaries. Indeed, it is the vast diversity of perspectives that makes FIPP World Media Congress so utterly unique.

This was reflected in the speaker roster which included Dr. Seth Dobrin, CEO of Qantm AI and former Global Chief AI Officer at IBM; Claire Léost, President, Prisma Media and member of the management board of Vivendi; Motoko Imada, CEO and Founder, Mediagene Inc.; Dr Jon Roberts, CIO, Dotdash Meredith; Xia Fan, Vice President, Huasheng

Media; Sarah McConville, EVP and Group Publisher of Harvard Business Review; and many more distinguished media leaders.

Key topics included AI, tech innovation, revenue strategies, engaging future generations, DEI, sustainability, advertising, licensing, as well as the enduring appeal of print magazines and the rise of creator-led media.

Congress also highlighted FIPP's mission to support media companies in thriving amidst the most rapid change the industry has ever witnessed, as well as providing a hub for industry insights and acting as a catalyst for growth and innovation. As part of this, strong emphasis was placed on providing the space for networking and an environment that encouraged rich conversations between delegates.

But first, a thank you to our FIPP Congress partners... ■

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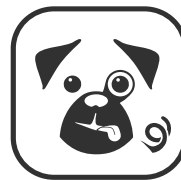
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PUGPIG

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InPublishing

[InPublishing](#) serves the UK newspaper, magazine and online publishing community, through its bi-monthly magazine, weekly email newsletter and website.

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[NLA Media Access](#) is recognised by the UK government as the collective management organisation (CMO) for more than 14,000 UK and international newspaper, magazine, newswire and digital-only news brands – earning and distributing copyright royalties to ensure rights holders are fairly remunerated when their works are used.



[Dotdash Meredith](#) is America's largest digital and print publisher. Our 40+ iconic and fast-growing brands harness the best intent-driven content, the fastest sites, and the fewest ads to help nearly 200 million people every month, including 95% of US women, make decisions, take action, and find inspiration. Dotdash Meredith brands include PEOPLE, Better Homes & Gardens, Verywell, FOOD & WINE, The Spruce, Allrecipes, and more.



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Stibo DX

[Stibo DX](#) works with media enterprises all over the world, from the world's biggest media groups to national broadcasters. Stibo DX's media enterprise platform, CUE, maximizes profitability and scalability by streamlining content creation, asset management, multi-channel distribution, and product innovation.

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A special mention to
the town of Cascais
for hosting such a
memorable Congress.
Thank you!

BOT COM

Eight key takeaways from FIPP Congress 2024

01

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

In an ironic twist of fate, Day One of Congress saw ChatGPT throw a hissy fit and suffer a [major outage worldwide](#). A few ashen faced executives could be seen typing furiously into their mobiles as the realisation dawned that their carefully configured bots had disappeared into the cyber ether.

Welcome to the Age of AI Anxiety. Have your pills ready.

AI was perhaps *the* key theme of Congress, given the waves of disruption, innovation and opportunity it is set to unleash. We are on the cusp of a revolution we can barely imagine, with today's media landscape about to witness the same degree of change that was thrust upon it in the 1990's – and just as with the advent of the internet, the direction of travel won't be linear.

Use case first

Yet barely before anyone had time to get gooey eyed over AI, Congress was brought down to earth with a thump as keynote speaker [Dr Seth Dobrin](#) announced that “AI was a scam” and that whilst, “Generative AI has the potential to transform every industry, most organizations don’t get value from AI.” That perhaps wasn’t the message most delegates had travelled to hear but as the ex-Head of AI for IBM, Dobrin comes laced with serious credibility.

Dobrin doubled down on the message that AI wasn’t a solution in search of a problem and implored media companies to, “Have KPIs and accountability in terms of \$\$” and that, “AI will only inspire staff by delivering clear business value.”



The same message was taken up by [Steffen Damborg](#), CEO and Author of [Mastering Digital Transformation](#), who in a later session added that media companies must, “Start with the problem, not the solution, and please note it might not be Gen AI”.

Lawyer up

With AI still in its early stages, think Internet 1993, Dobrin told delegates in no uncertain terms that, “You can’t use any AI tools unless you’re indemnified” and advised media companies to hire a specialist lawyer who could guide them through the maze of nascent legalities, T&Cs, etc.

A later speaker added, “It’s going to take a long time for the legalities to be ironed out, perhaps even a decade” yet even with that in mind, getting lawyers involved early



Keynote speaker Dr Seth Dobrin

could stifle some future headaches. Who's to know whether images trained on other people's copyrighted images (DALL-E anyone?) could come back to bite them? Buckle up, it's going to get messy.

Humans aren't perfect, and neither is AI

Dobrin told delegates that because AI has been created by humans, it will be flawed, stating, "AI tech in today's form has no way of *not* hallucinating". He then calmed a few fears adding, "when AI makes a mistake, it will be a more precise mistake, and it is easier to deal with inaccuracy when it is precise."

However, it is the biases shown by AI that are the greatest concern. In a separate interview to promote his forthcoming book, [AI iQ for a Human-Focused Future](#), Dobrin said, "AI is developed by white dudes in hoodies in the West, Chinese guys in Beijing, as well as some Indian input too, and a smattering of development in the Middle East."

"There is no representation either from the Global South or from women, and

this is serious, it could easily become an existential crisis – don't forget that bias is a cultural construct."

"Basically, we are in the midst of another industrial revolution yet to participate you will have to use AI models that have other cultures' values baked in. This is colonialism 2.0 driven not by boats, armies or religion, but through technology."

Dobrin concluded by saying, "all companies *must* publish their ethical AI stance."

Water, water, everywhere

If AI biases aren't enough to keep you up at night, the environmental impact of AI is sure to do the trick – to audience gasps, Dobrin told delegates that for every 25 prompts put into ChatGPT, it uses half a litre of water for cooling. With 1.8Bn visits to ChatGPT in April alone, it doesn't take a genius to work out the water consumption. If Greta Thunberg is spotted outside OpenAI's HQ, you'll know why.

The water consumption comes on top of the copious electric generation needed to power ChatGPT, Prometheus, Gemini,

AI platforms should pay publishers for their content and content must be appropriately attributed.

Dr Jon Roberts, CIO, Dotdash Meredith

et al. If AI continues its current trajectory, Iceland (so beloved of Bitcoin miners for its geothermal energy) could be the next investment play. Don't bet against it.

For media companies who have made net zero goals an early 2030 or 2045 target (here's looking at you The Guardian, Immediate Media, and Bonnier AB), the environmental impact of AI will, of course, need to be factored in now.

Money and financials

One of the biggest debates at Congress was whether to jump into bed with AI companies or just sue the socks off any company that comes within a whisker of training it's algorithms on copyrighted content.

Innovation Media's Juan Señor told assembled delegates that Open AI's negotiating deck had been leaked and that it offered both fixed fees and variable fees. He added, however, that, "Publishers are just one third of the AI input – 30% Wikipedia & corporate sites, 30% academia, 30% journalism."

For Dotdash Meredith's CIO, Dr Jon Roberts, partnership was the way forward, as he disclosed how his company's agreement with OpenAI was based on the rationale that, "AI platforms should pay publishers for their content and content must be appropriately attributed."



Juan Señor launches the [Innovation in Media World Report](#) at Congress



He also added how Dotdash Meredith was using AI for D/Cipher, it's ad targeting architecture for ads based on content and not on 3rd party cookies, "We want to move the value of ads back to the content and AI is playing a key part in this".

Steffen Damborg was less accommodating, stating, "There is an asymmetric power balance between Big Tech and publishers. They are our worst competitors and are competing for the same audiences. They are also investing billions in talent and software."

"Only journalism can save journalism. You must be true to your brand, invest in talent, and don't rely too much on GenAI to save your business."

With AI curve balls inbound, perhaps the strongest piece of advice came from David Buttle, Founder of DJB Strategies (and previously a Global Director for the FT) who advised Congress delegates that with AI still in its infancy, publishers must retain flexibility and control by implementing ‘get out clauses’ with their AI partners.

His cynicism is well founded, “Google already scrapes sites in exchange for traffic, but AI breaks this because Google is not delivering the traffic yet you can’t opt out without opting out of its search traffic. So Google is breaking the agreement because it is serving ads against answers created by publishers’ content.”

He has a point.

Who’s next

Perhaps the last words on AI need to go to two of the media industry’s most respected veterans, Colin Morrison and Steffen Damborg.

Damborg stated, “We used to be laggards, but now we’re early adopters” arguing that publishers are stepping up to the plate in their adoption of new technologies and that makes them better placed to be ahead of the curve, not behind it.

With a nod to The Who’s immortal song, Won’t Get Fooled Again, Morrison bluntly



concluded, “We’ve seen what happened over the past decade or two with Big Tech. They drove users at vast scale and just as quickly took them away. Let’s not get fooled again.”

Quite.

The power is in our hands.

02

PRINT

A renaissance in print? You bet.

Considered by some as outdated as a floppy disk, a number of speakers came to Congress determined to put right the perception that printed magazines are an outdated relic from a bygone era. Far from it.

First out of the blocks was Innovation Media’s Juan Señor who announced that print is now a premium product and should be priced accordingly, “In an age of less print, the price must be higher – we’re talking of a multiple of five times the old sale price.”



“Print has become a keepsake, a coffee table item with a luxury, premium feel. No longer are they the disposable magazines of the past.”

Señor also remarked how in an age of less print, supersize magazines were starting to gain traction as, “Print is becoming almost a brand statement, both in terms of visibility and credibility”, before concluding, “Print will remain the flagship and premium proposition in your portfolio.” He concluded, “Print is eternal, it is not being replaced, but it is being displaced.”

What’s the frequency Kenneth?

Alongside the higher price and higher quality paper, a number of publishers were reducing issue frequency to underscore the premium nature of their print magazines.



“Paper is the new yoga - it brings you into the here and now...”



Ntokozo Maseko, Editor in Chief of [YourLuxury Africa](#),

Liz Plosser, Editor in Chief, [Women's Health](#) outlined how they had reduced the number of print issues to just six per year, part of a broader trend adopted by numerous publishers at Congress, adding, "As the biggest women's health brand in the world, I'm so proud that we still have a print product".

This feeling of pride was echoed by Mark Russell, Global Operations Director, [Vogue](#), who told delegates that whilst the publisher was undergoing a profound business transformation, print remained a vital part of their media mix, "Report of print's death are exaggerated; it's a very important part of Condé Nast and we're *still* launching print editions in different territories."

Russell continued, "Being a cross platform publisher is crucial to Condé Nast and

that very much includes print. Indeed, our print editions are performing at the very highest ends of the projections we had both in terms of what we sell and how often we want to print them."

To the surprise of some in the audience, he concluded, "A few Condé Nast brands are selling more print magazines than in previous years – in fact the April 2024 issue of [British Vogue](#) has been the best performing April issue in our history in terms of print revenue."

Echoing [Vogue's](#) success, Ntokozo Maseko, Editor in Chief of [YourLuxury Africa](#), said that luxury brands were still flocking to print, "Luxury brands prefer to be seen in premium print, and this is at the heart of our success as a publisher."

This was underscored by Claire Léost, President of Prisma Media, who told delegates how the publisher had launched [Harper's Bazaar](#) magazine in France with great success. Alongside tailoring the content to a French audience (the award-winning launch cover featured Catherine Deneuve), Prisma Media harnessed social media to funnel audiences to its high-value print proposition.

"Print is cool right now, especially for luxury brands, but it all starts with social media."

Print yoga

In one of the most surprising sessions of Congress, Irene Smit - the visionary behind [Flow Magazine](#) - outlined the surprising connection between paper and mental health, saying, “Paper brings you to the here and now, it stimulates your senses and helps you to focus and better activate the brain”.

Flow Magazine is known for its unique approach to publishing, focusing on mindfulness, creativity, and slow living alongside exemplary production values, design and high quality paper.

She concluded, “Paper is the new yoga, and in a fast paced digital age, the tactile and mindful nature of paper is an unexpected ally for Gen Z and Millennial’s mental health. It can help to reclaim focus and creativity, and it also makes for a special gift.”

Space calling (Peter) Houston

A passionate advocate of print magazines, the final word should go to the publisher of the [Grub Street Journal](#) and co-founder of Media Voices podcast, Peter Houston.

In a talk labelled ‘Why print won’t just lie down and die’, Houston said that the



death-of-print narrative had finally been put to bed, but he admitted that publishers needed to properly re-engage with the format for the medium to truly make a comeback.

“Print must be repositioned as premium and then be integrated with all other digital channels as part of a cohesive brand portfolio.”

He concluded, “People are now talking much more positively about print, and I need to add that 50% of FIPP members get at least 50% of their revenue from print - the conversation is very much alive, and print is still fundamental to companies’ bottom lines.”

Hear, hear.

03

MONETISATION STRATEGIES

At a time when diversified revenue streams are at the heart of successful media companies, a key focus of Congress was the variety of monetization strategies available to publishers.

Indeed, the only barrier to publishers widening their portfolios is their own imagination and courage to think outside the box. As if to underline this, just 19 miles from Cascais is one of the world's standout examples of media diversification: Time Out Market, Lisbon.

In a specially laid on Congress trip, Time Out International Development Director, Tim Bulley, Cristina Mesquita, and Ana Alcobia, VP Iberia at [Time Out Market](#), explained how the media brand had launched Time Out Market Lisbon in

2014 to such success that it has since led to expansions in New York, Chicago, Montreal, Dubai, with many more planned.

The market's commercial secret? Time Out uses its editorial teams to carefully curate and select only the best of each city's top chefs, restaurateurs, drinks, and cultural experiences and place them all under one roof. Alcobia told us, "It's this curation that is at the heart of our success, and this comes from the expertise of Time Out's editors."

Fast food chains need not apply.

License to quill

With Cascais serving as the inspiration behind Ian Fleming's James Bond, it was fitting that another type of 'licensing' was a key theme. Many publishers shared how they had successfully launched international brands within their own country-specific territories.

Michelle Myers, Global Chief Revenue Officer at licensing specialists Wright's Media, implored delegates to look into how they could leverage licensing, adding, "Everyone has some kind of content that is licensable".

Key to this, she continued, was, "Creating a hierarchy of brand logos to ensure that each logo maintains a clear and consistent relationship with all the others, as well as communicating the mission of the brand and business across all teams and functions, especially editorial."

As Myers highlighted, licensing isn't limited to larger media brands. Congress delegate Lulu Skantze, Co-Founder of niche British children's magazine, Storytime, told us, "Our partners in China know their market really well and what they wanted to create, so our 2021 entry into China was no different from most licensing deals we have done before."

She added, "Children under ten account for approximately 11 percent of the 1.3 billion Mandarin speakers worldwide, so this is definitely a strong market for us."

In a separate keynote Auditorium Q&A, Claire Léost, President of Prisma Media, described how Harper's Bazaar had been successfully reintroduced in France by obtaining permission from Hearst to adjust the licensed brand to give it a more French feel. The localization of content, allied to a strong social media funnel, significantly contributed to the brand's success in the French market.

Cracking the code: Advertising

In a powerful keynote presentation, Dotdash Meredith's CIO, Dr Jon Roberts, outlined how his company was making more money from fewer ads by taking a user first approach, "This is a religion in our business and by ensuring that there are no bad ads on our sites, we have demonstrated that fewer, well-placed ads can generate more revenue."

"The problem with programmatic is that there is someone else telling you how valuable your readers are, which is a race to the bottom and encourages clickbait. Keep in mind that every bad ad on your site prices down all the good ones."

Everyone has some kind of content that is licensable.

Michelle Myers, Global Chief Revenue Officer, Wright's Media.

Dr Roberts went on to highlight how his company's recent partnership with OpenAI allowed its D/Cipher tool to, "Connect advertisers with consumers based on the context of the content being consumed, without relying on third party cookies."

He described how D/Cipher leverages AI-powered capabilities to enhance ad targeting precision and effectiveness, making it a significant advancement in intent-based advertising, before concluding, "We want to move the value of ads back to the content."

The price is 'write'

One of Congress' most insightful sessions came from Julia Petersen, Vice President of Pricing and Sales Business at Axel Springer's *Hy*, the media consulting group.

In a presentation focused on media pricing, Petersen emphasised the need to make product differentiation easy for the customer to understand, warning, "You mustn't overwhelm them with options", adding, "Your default setting must be 'opt-in'."

However, it was bundles where she became most enthused, commenting that Coca Cola's "*Burger, Fries, Coke, I love it!*" was a perfect example of a bundle expertly crafted through its simplicity. Her colleague, Dr Sebastian Voigt, in a pre-Congress interview,



Dotdash Meredith CIO, Dr Jon Roberts

added, "When Telcos introduced bundles and flat rates, most consumers paid more than before but they were also happier because the 'taximeter' per call minute disappeared in their minds."

The theme of bundles was taken up by Juan Señor who stated, "The perceived value of bundles far exceeds their costs." He singled out the New York Times as the clear leader in digital bundles, "With the acquisition of Wirecutter, Wordle and The Athletic, customers find greater value in these comprehensive bundles and are willing to pay more, generating increased incremental value for the company."

Writing in the 2024 Innovation in Media World report launched at Congress, Señor added, "When a reader chooses a bundle, it signals their perceived value of your products and identifies the elements of your offering that are most important to them, effectively segmenting them into customer groups."

MARKET FORCES



In a special Congress trip to Time Out Market Lisbon, Tim Bulley, Ana Alcobia, and Cristina Mesquita showcased Time Out's media diversification achievements. Launched in 2014, the market showcases top local chefs, drinks, and cultural experiences. The curated selection by Time Out's editors is central to its success, and has led to expansion in other territories.

The final word on pricing goes to Dr Sebastian Voigt, "Pricing is always a two-sided sword: if you increase prices, you make more money in 99% of all cases. However, you most certainly will lose a few customers. But examples exist where a price model change improved both profits *and* customer satisfaction."

It's hanging in the balance

In an afternoon panel discussion on publisher strategies for audience monetisation, Atlas UK's Abi Spooner echoed the need to keep things simple, "If you're trying to sell something to a person, make sure you make it easy for them. Reducing churn is simply a matter of understanding

why your audience are there. Think from the customers shoes."

MIT Sloan Management Review's Deb Gallagher added, "You must convey value and explain to your customers clearly and simply the proposition. You might have just one sentence....get it right!"

Suprio Guha Takurta, Subscriptions and Recurring Revenue Consultant and former Chief Strategy Officer, The Economist India, concluded, "You must search for that ideal balance between monetisation and trust."

Exactly.

04

INCLUSIVITY: DEI AND GENERATIONS

For nearly all delegates at Congress, inclusivity has become a central pillar of their business operations, not as a marketing gimmick but in a serious attempt to engage (and respect) the full breadth of their audience.

It was perhaps apt, therefore, that this year's Congress kicked off just days after the start of Pride Month, celebrated each June to honour the 1969 Stonewall uprising in Manhattan.

Whilst enormous progress has been made, more needs to be done, with one Congress delegate rolling her eyes at the news that (yet again) numerous global manufacturing brands had re-designed their logos to incorporate rainbow colours except for in the Middle East – the one territory with no LGBTQ rights.

It's difficult to argue with her comment, "How can it be a moral stance when it is dependent on market conditions?" Ouch. It's a fair point even if the issue is a little more nuanced. Fortunately, there are many attempts to genuinely engage with DEI, as reflected in several Congress conversations in Cascais.

It's about trust

For Liz Plosser, Editor in Chief of [Women's Health](#), the key issue is one of trust, "We celebrate the diverse interests, backgrounds, ability levels, and ages of all our audience. We believe that everyone is welcome, no one is ever judged or shamed, and that everything feels easier with support and encouragement."

For Women's Health magazine, inclusivity is one of three central tenets of its mission, with loyalty and community forming the other key pillars. Plosser added, "Our readers are united by a common passion and are inspired to share, comment, save and amplify our content because it has helped them or inspired them on their wellness journey."

"We like to think of ourselves as 'perfectly imperfect human beings'."

Plosser concluded, "The most valuable signal of success is when a reader returns directly to Women's Health because they trust us implicitly."

Culture is diversity

Speaking on the Specialist Stage, Doni Aldine, CEO of [Culturs Global Multi-cultural Lifestyle Media](#), discussed the importance of reaching 'culturally fluid individuals', defined as people who have

a foot in two or more cultural worlds, including multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and geographically mobile people.

Described as the ‘prototype citizen of the future’, more than 238M culturally fluid people now live around the globe. One of the fastest growing segments of the world population, Aldine told delegates, “What’s needed for the media is market understanding and to embrace the change that’s coming.”

“When people hear diversity, often they say race, which is a problem. It’s really about culture. The cultural in-between are people of culture. It’s not people of colour but includes people of colour.

“This is a very large niche population, a very nuanced population and each sub-segment of this population has its own characteristic that we have to pay attention to.”

She ended with a clarion call to action, “Everyone deserves to feel they are seen. So, embrace that cultural in-between and



Liz Plosser
Editor in Chief, Women's Health

create impact. The media can help our communities by making sure everyone in our community feels like they have a place and a sense of belonging.”

Reflections...

Nicki Murphy, CEO of The River Group, ended Day One on the Auditorium stage describing how she has spearheaded [Reflect](#), the only UK talent management agency in the DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) space that operates as a

We will only work with executives who truly believe in what we’re doing, and who are not just being tokenistic by featuring a minority individual in their campaign.”

Nicki Murphy, CEO, The River Group

community interest company.

Murphy outlined how 21% of the global population is disabled, yet this demographic is not proportionately represented in media, a situation she has been determined to address. Reflect's mission is clear: to ensure that everyone can see themselves represented in the media they consume

She continued, "All our profits are used to find people in socially immobile communities – people of colour, LBGTQ, disabled – and bring them into the world of content and media."

"This might mean we teach someone with ADHD to become a videographer, or

we might put someone through a media journalism course in college, etc."

She also had a stark word of warning for companies wanting to work with Reflect, "We will only work with executives who truly believe in what we're doing, and who are not just being tokenistic by featuring a minority individual in their campaign."

Fake wokeness is out.

Inclusivity and belonging are in.



Doni Aldine, CEO of Culturs Global
Multicultural Lifestyle Media

05

STORYTELLING, AUDIENCES, AND COMMUNITY

Perhaps the most inspiring aspect of the 46th FIPP World Media Congress was the genuine passion and commitment by publishers to engage their audiences more meaningfully.

Yes, commercial considerations play a large part (when don't they?), but it was difficult to find even one Congress delegate who wasn't motivated to connect with their readers more deeply.

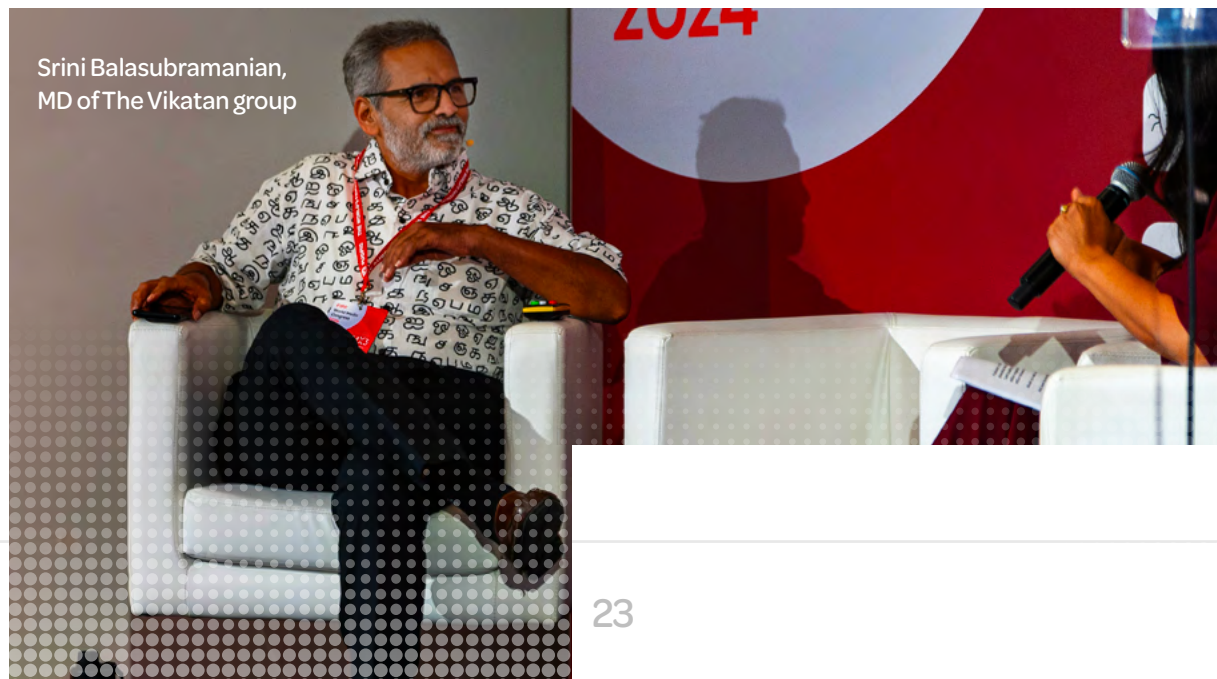
Media has a responsibility to its audience

The baton was picked up by Srinivas Balasubramanian, MD of [The Vikatan group](#), a prominent Tamil media company known for its significant social and political influence.

Speaking to Preethi Nallu on the Specialist Stage, Balasubramanian stated, "We've been working very clearly on many aspects of social change. I think it's important for magazines to understand the needs of society."

"We have a student journalist programme, where each year we select 50-75 students who have shown an interest in journalism. Back in 1985, one of our student reporters saw an old lady preparing a concoction for a child. When he asked her what it was for, she said, "She's a girl, so she has to be killed." He reported this example of female infanticide, and it was such a shocking revelation that we received a summons from the Government."

"After much legislation, our chief minister introduced the Cradle Baby scheme, which allowed parents to leave their unwanted children in special government



Srinivas Balasubramanian,
MD of The Vikatan group



Motoko Imada, CEO and Founder,
Mediagene Inc

buildings. More than 3,500 children were saved through that scheme.”

Balasubramanian added, “Most of our magazines are launched based on feedback from our customers. On one occasion, we started a magazine on personal finance and travelled all over with experts to educate people about the importance of shares, stocks, mutual funds, etc.”

“A bus driver who had attended one of our events wrote to us saying that because of what we spoke about that day, he was able to help his daughter become a doctor. These are the reasons we do what we do. These are the things which make you feel alive.”

Community and trust: joined at the hip

Presenting on the Auditorium stage, [Dotdash Meredith's](#) CIO, Dr Jon Roberts doubled down on the need for media brands to leverage the trust they have built up, “It can take 100 years to build a brand and let’s not forget we are providing content to answer questions and help people.”

He added, “Brands matter, and people will trust brands more as we move forward because people are looking for information they trust.”

Continuing the theme, Liz Plosser, Editor in Chief, [Women’s Health](#), said, “Our emphasis has changed, we used to have scale but not many loyalists. We are now focused on loyalists who we define as

Are all eyeballs created equal? Definitely not for a publication like ours. But you must challenge your audience assumptions at every stage with interviews, questionnaires and polls.

*Deb Gallagher, Publisher, MIT Sloan
Management Review*



Wanderlust Chief Operating Officer
Elliot Wellsted-Crook

readers who visit us at least three times a month across multiple touchpoints.”

The importance of reader loyalty was emphasized by Deb Gallagher, Publisher, [MIT Sloan Management Review](#), who stated, “Are all eyeballs created equal? Definitely not for a publication like ours. But you must challenge your audience assumptions at every stage with interviews, online questionnaires and polls.”

She added, “Online events are working well for us, and allow our passionate readers to interact. These events offers real value to readers and our participants are our most engaged and loyal readers.”

Newsletters were singled out as playing a key role in helping to bind publishers

and their communities together, with Liz Plosser adding that, “Our email newsletters have the highest conversion rate to membership.”

14 Million, but who’s counting?

Sarah McConville, Co-President, [Harvard Business Publishing](#), described how the publisher approached its vast audience comprising of the single largest group on LinkedIn with 14M followers, 6M on X, 6M on Facebook, and 14M monthly uniques to its website, in addition to hundreds of thousands of subscribers.

With such a broad audience, surely personalisation is impossible? In a conversation with Kerin O Connor, McConville replied, “As an organization we are working hard to define these different groups more crisply, and first party data plays a big part in this.”

“We are careful about how we manage trust with our first party data and how we can create curated, personalised experiences for each reader – it might be the industry they’re in, their job role, whether they’ve taken courses with us, etc.”

“We make sure that all our teams have the same understanding of their audience psychographics, so that we’re serving our audience’s emotional needs as well as their informational needs. Our audience are lifelong learners and we like to think of

ourselves as a coach that you can really trust and tap into when you need it.”

“For example, we are working on a bot that helps executives have those difficult conversations with staff, especially helping with the emotional side.”

The longest journeys start at home

Over the past three years, Wanderlust, the UK’s longest-running travel magazine, has transformed its editorial, brand, and commercial strategies. Chief Operating Officer Elliot Wellsted-Crook emphasised the importance of specialist teams, “Having people who live and breathe the subject matter, on both the editorial and commercial side, has made all the difference in engaging both audiences.”

The publisher has also doubled down on community, “We now offer three product levels, Club Basic, Club Digital and Club Print & Digital, bundling extra value such as travel vouchers to enrich the membership experience. This shift not only increases reader engagement but also fosters a strong community.”

Aligning storytellers and sellers

Ensuring that commercial teams are equally aligned with editorial was echoed by Canada’s Käthe Lemon, President and Co-owner, [RedPoint Media Group](#), who said that her

company had reconceived its role as a connector rather than a curator.

Known for its flagship publication, [Avenue magazine](#) (Calgary’s premier lifestyle magazine), Lemon said, “Content is the what, connection is the why. Supporters aren’t buying access to content but investing in connecting within the city. This includes reframing the value of advertising from selling ads to selling connections.”

She added, “Our strong emphasis on local engagement is encapsulated in our motto: Live local. Read local. Advertise local.”

The result?

100% YoY increase in page views.



Käthe Lemon, President and Co-owner, RedPoint Media Group

06

TARGETING GENERATIONS

If you thought Gen Z flipped the script on media consumption, think again. By 2025, it is estimated that there will be over 2Bn Gen Alphas globally, the first generation to have grown up in a *highly* digital and technologically advanced world.

The ramifications are profound with media consumption habits undergoing a dramatic, quickening evolution.

This theme was picked up by [Pugpig's](#) Jonny Kaldor who was at Congress to present The 2024 State of the Mobile Publishing Market Report. Speaking on the Specialist Stage, Kaldor said, "The time spent on mobile continues to grow and is now averaging between 3.5 – 6 hours a day. Moreover, app users are skewing younger in terms of demographic."

"Apps are super sticky averaging 15.7 sessions per user per month for news media alongside session durations of 8.8 minutes. In fact, the top 25% are reaching 17 minutes per session."

Kaldor continued, "Reader revenue remains the strategic priority and apps are playing an increasingly important role."

Turn on, tune in, ~~drop-out~~

Audio continues to soar in popularity for all demographics with research showing the number of global podcast listeners is expected to reach 500M by the end of this year, with significant growth in Latam and China.

Kaldor said, "App features that engage users the most are puzzles, editions and particularly audio - we are seeing audio users spend on average 3 hours per month listening to the medium."

However, audio usage is skewed towards a younger demographic driven largely by those aged 12-34. Indeed, millennials now make up [the largest generation](#) (33%) of US podcast listeners, followed by Gen Zers (29%), and with Gen Z predicted to overtake Millennials in audio usage by 2027.



Pugpig's Jonny Kaldor

There is a significant gap between the news experience the next generation of 18-24 year olds want, and what they are being provided.”

Ben Whitelaw, Manager, FT Strategies

Mind the gap

Continuing the topic of generational shifts, [FT Strategies'](#) Aled John and Ben Whitelaw shared the findings of a ground-breaking research project undertaken in collaboration with Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern.

Entitled, “Next Gen News: Understanding the Audiences of 2030”, Aled John outlined how young audiences filter information through trusted networks and then make sense of that information through private social media groups, community platforms and comment threads.

He said, “Young people are displaying native behaviours that are unique, and whilst social media is important, participation is within private, closed groups. In short, they are trusting their own network.”

Ominously, he added, “They are not proactively going to mainstream sources for information.”

Ben Whitelaw continued, “There is a significant gap between the news experience the next generation of 18-24 year olds want, and what they are being provided.”

“They are looking for information from a trusted, credible source especially people who have lived through the experiences they are reporting on. Transparency of intention and motives is vital because young people will not take information at face value.”

“Young consumers also want to feel connected to the individuals they receive news from, for example, YouTube’s Plain Bagel for economic and investment information. They want information and context driven stories with personal significance, things they care about.”

He added, “There are many opportunities to address this gap – as just one, for example, we recommend you elevate individuals within your organization and encourage them to develop their own individual profiles as part of your brand’s offering.”

Almost there...

One of the most inspiring sessions at Congress belonged to Kassy Cho, Founder and EiC of [Almost](#), an Instagram-first channel providing news in English and Chinese Mandarin.

Aimed at young people, Kassy explained that young people are yearning for global human rights and environmental stories, “Instagram was not considered a place for news, but I saw the gap and started a channel on the platform. It’s about going to audiences where they are, and in the formats that they like, for example Instagram carousels or TikTok-style videos.”

Headquartered in Taiwan, Kassy added, “We are audience first with two distinct groups – Chinese and English speaking – so we take great care to ensure that our content is localized to bridge any knowledge gaps within either group.”

“Embedding educational values in our content has really helped our reach, shares and engagement, but more importantly it has created an active community and facilitated dialogue within our young audience.”

She concluded, “Young people are definitely interested in news – it is our responsibility to facilitate this.”

“We want to create a healthy culture of news consumption where people feel safe to engage with each other, one that fosters learning and community.”

Amen to that.



Kassy Cho
Founder and EiC of Almost

07

SUSTAINABILITY

There's no question that the media industry has made a concerted effort to get behind numerous sustainability initiatives, both industry specific and government led.

Much of this momentum has come from an ethical stance, but also for commercial reasons – advertising brand partners are increasingly demanding transparency about the sustainability initiatives of their publishing partners as part of their own supply chain audits.

FIPP CEO Alastair Lewis noted this in his opening remarks, saying, “You *must* ensure ESG is central to your business.”

That's not to say it's an easy or smooth transition. One of the UK's foremost magazine publishers told us they had reverted to using plastic shrink wrap because the compostable shrink wrap they had been using was causing havoc with local authorities' refuse collection machines.

However, necessity is the mother of invention, and new tech is increasingly focusing on helping publishers make this transition, with Ukraine's [ReLeaf](#) (who manufacture paper out of fallen leaves) a standout example.



UPM has 100% traceability for its wood

Digital developments are also coming thick and fast with TMB, as just one example, announcing a partnership with Theta Labs, a blockchain company with 30,000 nodes that that will improve TMB's video streaming quality as well as offering significant efficiency.

Waiting is not an option

The theme was taken up by Niina Niemelä, Senior Manager of Sustainability at one the world's leading paper producers, UPM Communication Papers, who said, “The role of sustainability is changing, before it was seen as a choice but it is now an imperative. We must act now to save the planet, wildlife populations have fallen two thirds over the past fifty years.”



Niina Niemelä, Senior Manager, Sustainability, UPM

“Businesses must disclose their impact and commit to meaningful action, compliance alone won’t suffice.”

She added, “We are an early adopter of the Climate Pledge and we have 100% traceability for our wood. For each tree we cut, we plant at least one tree (or more) to replace it.”

However, rather than sustainability being seen as an additional cost burden she added a positive note, “Sustainability isn’t just about doing good, it’s also about thriving – companies who embrace sustainable practices typically outperform their peers, as well as improve stakeholder engagement.”

Purpose over profit

Staying on the topic of sustainability and social impact, Archie Carrasco, CEO of AGC Power Holdings Corp. in the Philippines, emphasized the importance of balancing humanity with digital advancement.

By prioritizing social impact over financial gain, Carrasco highlighted how businesses can reshape their values and promote sustainable growth, “In a world driven by consumerism, we as leaders have the responsibility to emphasize the importance of doing things for greater purpose. Focusing on purpose has made our own media brands much more resilient and attractive.”

He added a word of advice for delegates, “People tend to be unhappy when their work no longer matches



Archie Carrasco
CEO, AGC Power Holdings



Alastair Lewis
FIPP CEO

their personal values, especially when work becomes robotic.

“Purpose and enjoyment is essential for GenZ and aligned values will support your long term success. This values include concerns over climate change, social inequality and the mental health crisis.”

Carrasco concluded, “Ensure your company’s mission reflects your purpose, and apply this purpose to every part of your organization”

Note the word, “Every”.

08

WORLDWIDE ENTREPRENEURSHIP, INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMATION

The transformation and evolution of media is speeding up, with Generative AI acting as the warp drive. Despite the shifting sands, the zeitgeist at Congress was of excitement at the opportunities that lay ahead rather than fear over what could be potentially lost.

This mood was perfectly captured by Innovation Media’s Juan Señor who reminded everyone that, “You will not be replaced by AI” before adding, “But you will be replaced by someone who can use AI”.

One Congress delegate remarked how it reminded her of the mid 1990’s, “I remember lithographers, typesetters and designers fearing for their jobs at the dawn of the internet age, but those who adapted to use Adobe, Quark and InDesign flourished.”

With thirty years of digital transformation under our belts, publishers are better placed than ever to seize opportunities, act quickly and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. We know the drill.

There's a huge opportunity for media companies who can identify creators that are still on their way up and partner with them to help bring their businesses to the next level.

Simon Owens, media industry journalist

How creators are shaping the new economy

By the very best estimates, from Goldman Sachs no less, the Creator Economy is estimated to be worth upwards of \$250Bn and is set to double to almost \$500Bn by 2027.

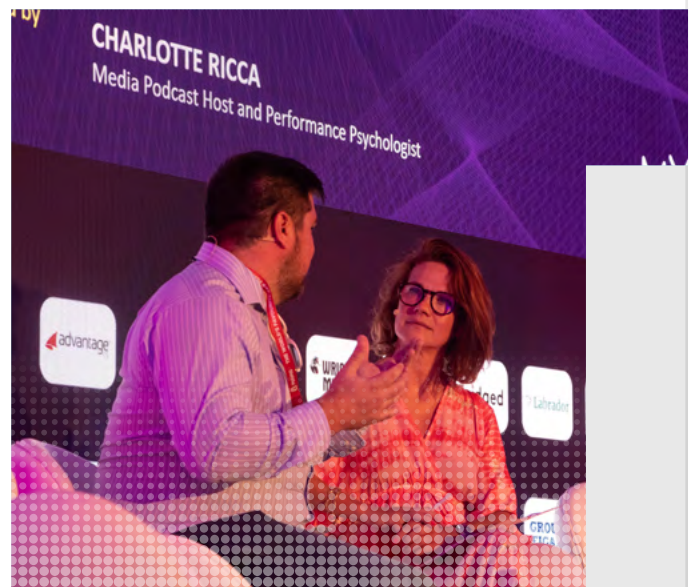
This transformation is happening in front of our very eyes, and on the Auditorium stage, media analyst [Simon Owens](#) explained that creators are collectively, "Pulling down tens of billions of dollars which would otherwise have gone to newspapers, magazines, and TV networks."

He added, "Creators are competing with media companies on everything from advertising spend to subscriptions, yet they're still treated as strange curiosities, as if hundreds of millions of consumers aren't relying on them heavily for their entertainment and news. Patreon alone is paying \$1 billion a year in subscription revenue to creators."

Owens urged media companies to collaborate with creators for mutual benefit, "There's a huge opportunity for media

companies who can identify creators that are still on their way up and partner with them to help bring their businesses to the next level. Media companies need to start thinking of themselves as talent agencies. With the right incentive alignment, both sides can benefit in a huge way."

He ended with a warning to legacy media companies, "The biggest threat is that star journalists will leave just when they reach maximum value", adding, "Create better



Simon Owens in conversation with Charlotte Ricca

financial incentives for your talent, then journalists will stay and help you grow.”

Wizards of content: Reinvention is obligatory

In terms of adaptation and continuous evolution, few media companies worldwide can measure up to 7awi, one of the Middle East’s leading digital media platforms.

Founded in late 2012 by [Anas \(Andy\) Abbar](#), the platform’s success lies in its relentless adaptation to ongoing market changes. Today, 7awi owns and operates 18 verticals, attracting millions of monthly visitors and boasting a social media reach of over 100M monthly followers.

To a surprised audience, Abbar said, “We don’t care about traffic and we don’t care about advertising” but he added, “We’re fully transparent and each month we publish our numbers, our demographics, etc, so our brand partners know exactly our reach.”

“We focus on our strengths - content creation and content curation – and we are essentially both a publisher and a content agency. This unique positioning has allowed us to differentiate and stand out in our market.”

He concluded by disclosing how 7awi is approaching AI, “By the end of this



Anas (Andy) Abbar, Co-founder and CEO, 7awi, UAE

year, 90% of our evergreen content will be AI generated alongside a clear, transparent disclaimer. Only our Editors-in-Chief will be allowed to publish this AI generated content.”

Waterfall, Agile or Lean?

Numerous methodologies exist to help media businesses navigate organisational change, with ‘[agile project management](#)’ as the front runner because it can at short notice move in different directions to those initially envisaged. However, effective oversight and governance must be a top priority.

The theme was taken up by [Sarah McConville](#), Co-President of Harvard Business Publishing, who said that the advent of generative AI would, “Result in



Mark Russell,
Global
Operations
Director at
Vogue

major cultural shifts happening that media organisations need to be ready for.”

She continued, “Organisational changes are coming to media brands that are starting to grapple with these AI tools and use them in different ways. It’s important that companies understand this and identify leadership roles to help drive it forward rather than just back into how you’ll be using these tools.”

Mark Russell, Global Operations Director, Vogue, explained that when it comes to business transformation, media companies must understand it’s not about final goals, “Don’t expect to complete the transformation, it’s a process not an end point.”

Referring to the profound business transformation occurring at Condé Nast he continued, “Progression doesn’t have to mean perfection, and please note that resistance comes from unlikely sources – turn them into your champions. At the heart of our business transformation is our cultural transformation.”

He concluded his presentation by saying, “Ultimately, there are far greater opportunities now for media brands, and our people, than at any stage before.”

He’s right.

STRONGER TOGETHER

Final thoughts after an inspired 46th Congress

The 46th FIPP World Media Congress was a great success and feedback has been universally positive.

Despite serious disruption and uncertainty across the spectrum, along with numerous headwinds, the optimism at Cascais was palpable, as was the excitement at the many opportunities that lie ahead. If there was one takeaway it was this: have no fear and seize the moment.

Congress also underscored the importance of networking and the opportunity to meet with peers, share

insights, discuss challenges, and negotiate enduring partnerships.

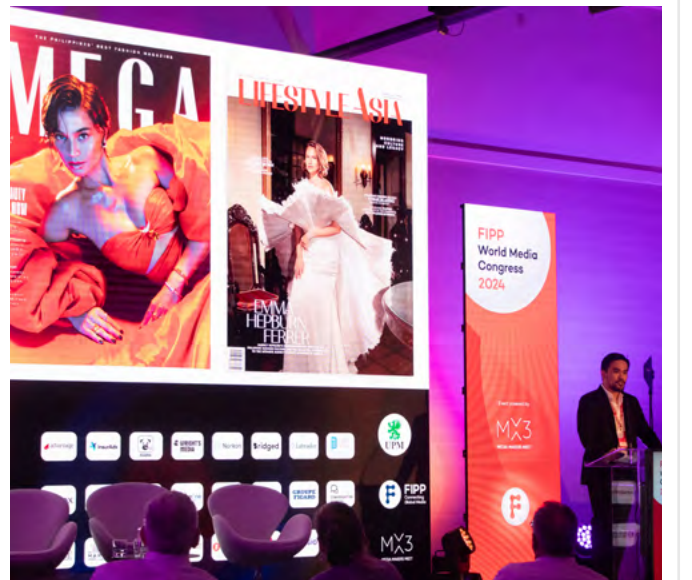
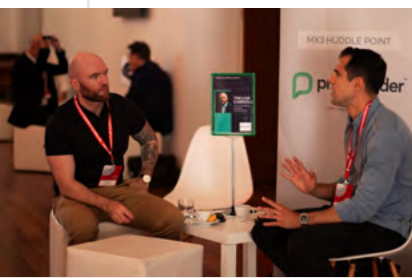
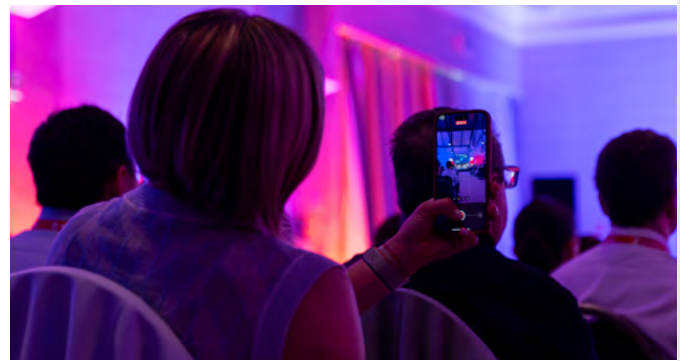
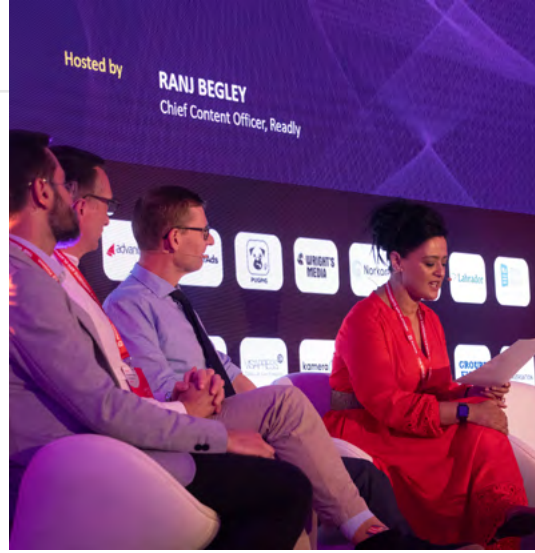
Indeed, aside from the world class speaker agenda and beautiful setting of the Portuguese Riviera, the 46th Congress saw great emphasis placed on creating an environment where peer-to-peer conversations could thrive. It worked, and this momentum will be taken forward.

Finally, a shout out to our Congress partners and sponsors who were essential in making the event such a success.

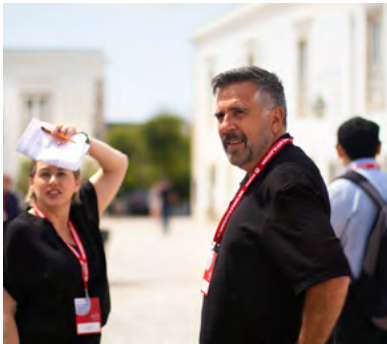
They deserve your support.



FIPP CONGRESS



FIPP CONGRESS



QUOTE WALL

Overheard in Cascais

"If you're trying to sell something, make sure you make it easy. Reducing churn is simply a matter of understanding why your audience is there. Think from the customers' shoes."

"Only journalism can save journalism. You must be true to your brand, invest in talent, and don't rely too much on GenAI to save your business."

"Use smart defaults to sell more: default setting is 'opt-in'."

"Ultimately, there are far greater opportunities now for media brands, and our people, than at any stage before."

"Google Glass was set to disrupt the industry in 2013 but it didn't, so that was a lesson (of many) that all the shiny new things don't always disrupt our industry."

"You'll always be able to discover new creators. If you can't afford the A list, look for the upcoming creators."

"AI regulation will come too late and behind development. Let's try and self-regulate as much as we can. It's an uncertain area."

"Take a user-first approach – this is a religion in our business."



The **46TH FIPP WORLD MEDIA CONGRESS** concluded with a post-event networking evening that lasted well into the night and perfectly captured the spirit of what was a memorable event.

Our thanks once again to all the speakers, delegates, sponsors and media partners. And, of course, Cascais itself.

Media Makers Meet – Mx3

Written and produced by Jez Walters.

Designed by Ian Crawford.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

REVENUE EUROPE

Berlin (Oct 1)

Our next event offers an immersive dive into media monetization for a limited number of media revenue leaders. Gain tangible strategies from stage sessions and conversations to drive revenue and forge long-term partnerships.

[More details.](#)

REVENUE NORTH AMERICA

Austin (Oct 9)

A week later we will be in Texas as we focus on media monetization with a special emphasis on the U.S. and Canadian markets. Explore innovative revenue strategies and build invaluable connections. Places are limited.

[More details.](#)

MX3 CONVERGE

London (Nov 4-7)

Join media and tech leaders for immersive discussions, hands-on demos, and in-depth networking. Choose from four themes: content, audience, monetization, and AI. Attend all four days or select specific ones.

[More details.](#)



MEDIA MAKERS MEET

Media Makers Meet - Mx3 is an international media and intelligence network for indie creators, consumer and B2B media companies, and media-tech and other industry service providers focused on engaging and enabling well-defined communities around enthusiast and professional topics of interest.

[See more here.](#)



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