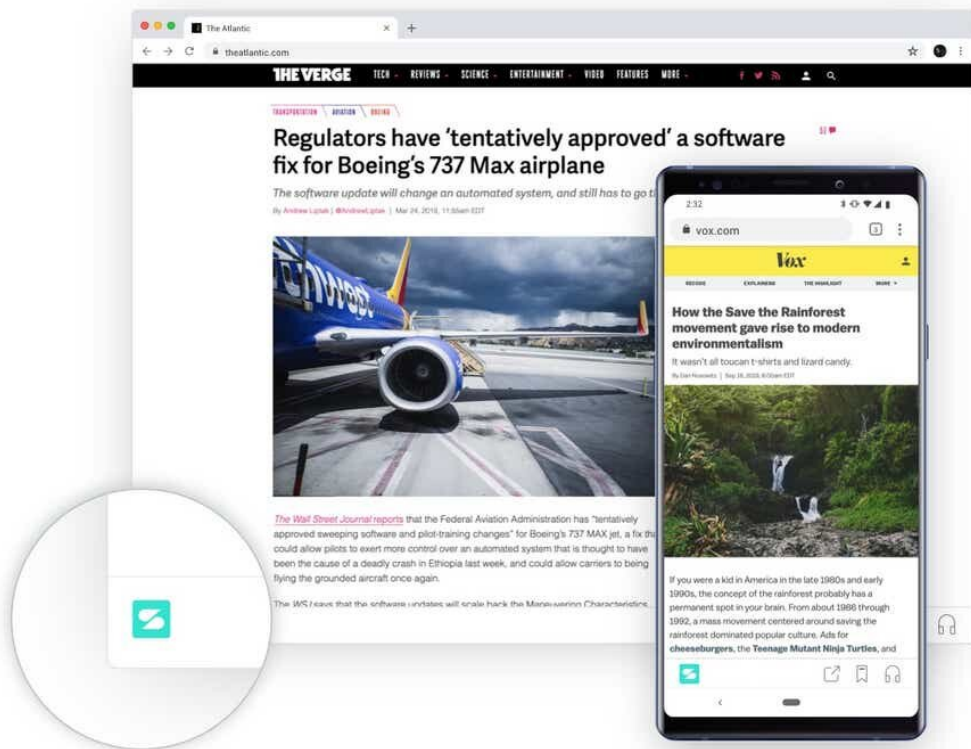


Gannett-backed Scroll launches subscription service for ad-free journalism

January 29 2020, by Nathan Bomey, Usa Today



A new service called Scroll is offering readers of participating news websites an advertising-free experience for \$4.99 per month. the revenue is shared with the news companies. Credit: Scroll

Frustrated with online ads?

For several dollars a month, a new [service](#) is offering the opportunity to remove ads from your [news](#) reading experience and still support the journalists who create the content.

Scroll—a start-up whose investors include U.S. TODAY owner Gannett, the New York Times and Samsung—debuted its ad-avoiding [news service](#) on Tuesday.

Co-founded by Tony Haile, the founding CEO of online metrics tracker Chartbeat, Scroll costs \$4.99 per month after an introductory rate of \$2.49 per month for the first six months. It works with more than 300 sites, and more are being added.

Media analyst Ken Doctor once called it "an iTunes for news."

Initial participants include U.S. TODAY, BuzzFeed, Vox, The Atlantic, Business Insider, Slate and The Verge.

When a subscriber is logged into Scroll, they won't see ads of any kind when they visit participating websites on any browser on their phone, tablet or computer.

Scroll keeps 30% of the [subscription fee](#) and distributes the other 70% to the participating sites based on which articles users visit.

"Your money is only distributed to the sites you go to and love," Haile said. Scroll's model will provide [news sites](#) with substantially more revenue per view than they would otherwise receive from digital ads, he said.

The idea came from a desire to help identify a sustainable business model to support journalism while removing the digital clutter that can annoy readers.

"It's a future where users don't get pissed off and journalists don't get laid off," Haile said. "That's the dream."

The service, which has been [beta testing](#) for the last year, is aimed at providing content that keeps readers coming back instead of running away to avoid ads.

"The future of our industry is going to be based upon our relationship with our audience, how strongly we can build those bonds of affection," Haile said. To sign up for Scroll [click here](#).

To be sure, the \$4.99 fee doesn't get you a subscription to sites with a paywall. But if that paywall allows a metered number of free clicks before payment is required to see more, you won't see any ads on those initial free stories. And if you do have a subscription to the news site, you'll have the extra benefit of no ads.

Asked whether Scroll would consider adding the capability for its users to subscribe directly to news services, Haile said he's had discussions with various sites about the possibility, but there are no plans to add that feature at this time.

For years, the journalism industry has been seeking solutions to replace the print revenue losses that have undermined its finances and led to substantial job cuts.

Other services are also launching services to reduce the effort required for readers to access paid [news content](#).

On Monday, subscription commerce and tech provider Piano launched Piano Frictionless, which uses ApplePay to enable users to purchase limited access to news sources with a scan of their finger or face.

Michael Silberman, senior vice president of strategy for Piano, said the company hopes the service appeals to users who "are interested in a brand but not quite ready to commit to a full subscription."

"While our clients can use it for subscriptions if they want, we're most excited about the idea that this can replicate the experience of buying a single issue of a magazine or newspaper on the newsstand—buying 30 days of access for \$3.99, for example," Silberman said in an email.

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