



Launching a Comprehensive Real-Time News Microsite

Johnston Press is one of the United Kingdom's leading news organizations and they faced a unique challenge in reporting on 2014's biggest UK story. How do you effectively report on the story of the Scottish Independence vote, a subject which many traditional news organizations already had a strong opinion about and a news story where the thoughts of politicians, high-profile citizens, and the man on the street were all of equal concern and interest? Partnering with PublishThis, they achieved their goals and more. Here's their story:



JOHNSTON PRESS PLC

"PublishThis gave us a scalable new way to ensure comprehensive coverage of a story that invites differing opinions and requires a variety of voices."

Jeff Moriarty, Chief Digital and Product Officer at Johnston Press

THE CHALLENGE

Jeff Moriarty, Chief Digital & Product Officer at Johnston Press, was already well known as an editorial innovator, having launched unique, hyper-specific regional and interest-based microsites while leading digital publishing at the Boston Globe. His goal was to create an information hub to impartially report on the Scottish Independence vote, an event that they knew would trigger a lively debate so they needed as many sources as possible. He wanted to make sure Johnston Press was creating the ultimate go-to resource for readers interested in a comprehensive view of the developing and constantly changing story.

"We wanted to bring in a variety of voices, show how people were talking about the vote on social media, and really monitor everything that was being said about this historic story," said Moriarty, "We wanted this all in one place so we were the only source needed to find out what people were saying about the vote."

THE SOLUTION

Jeff called upon PublishThis, the industry's most advanced content discovery, curation, and publishing platform, with whom he'd previously partnered on Boston Globe projects. Jeff's team worked with PublishThis' content specialists to set up comprehensive newsfeeds that mixed Johnston Press' own digital news site, along with every major news outlet, blogs, and social platforms.

Jack Karpinski, Web Architect at Johnston Press, quickly set up the PublishThis WordPress VIP plugin so the editorial team could easily leverage the platform's semantic tagging capabilities to organize and select content for use or repurpose with editorial commentary. With PublishThis in place, the Johnston Press team was able to launch the site quickly so they could immediately begin comprehensive coverage despite their small team.

“It’s hard to imagine that the project could have become what it was without PublishThis,” said Karpinski. “Serving up the right content, ready for curation, and capable of being pushed to the website in a few clicks was the perfect solution to help us achieve our goals.”

By curating a cross-section of editorial voices about this important story alongside the ongoing debate on social platforms, and their own original content from other Johnston Press sites, the editors were able to present a comprehensive view of this developing story that would never be out of date. This was **storytelling and journalism at real-time speed**, powered by both seasoned editors and the voice of the people.

“Modern journalism organically includes an element of curation to tell the whole story,” said Moriarty, “If our news platform was going to be the comprehensive source for news about the Scottish Independence vote, we certainly couldn’t limit ourselves to just our own reporting.”

The editors at the Scotsman were excited to find out how PublishThis gave them access to powerful and intuitive tools that let them **gather content and publish from their phones or computers**.

“The project demonstrated how the knowledge and experience of our editors combined with a slick and easy-to-use tool can create a powerful impact,” said Karpinski. “Our editors couldn’t believe that gathering content was as simple as using the PublishThis bookmarklet and then pushing the content to the website with a few clicks.”



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; actors, authors and commentators give their take on
endum in this Observer piece.

itted neighbour against neighbour, young against old
impassioned though generally good-natured debate.
give their views on the outcome and suggest where
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d More at The Guardian

Scotland’s future is bright; the UK’s might not be

COMMENT: Regardless of the outcome of the independence referendum, does Scotland have brighter future prospects than the UK as a whole?

In the run up to the Scottish independence referendum, the large-country voices that dominated the international discussion converged on a near consensus that small countries are inferior to larger ones, with worse prospects and higher risks; that the pro-independence movement’s motivation was cultural nationalism and an angry defensiveness against the world; and that independence would do significant damage to an open, liberal international order.

THE RESULTS

Johnston Press provided the Scottish community and British citizens an ideal resource to understand this important story, including a community full of differing opinions and concerns that drew in the perspective of major media organizations and individuals expressing their thoughts about this important decision on Twitter. In doing so, Johnston Press both built a strong readership for its featured media sites and earned trust from an audience that knows they can rely on Johnston Press papers to deliver them the important stories of the day in a meaningful way.

- **80,000 unique visitors** the month before the vote
- **220,000 page views** in the month before the vote
- **3 minutes** time on site

Johnston Press saw huge audience numbers and success with this format and are now applying the same methodology to more permanent sites that are focused on a specific audiences and geographical locations. Johnston Press will continue to hone this faster, pop-up publishing model with additional sites expected to launch in the near future.

“PublishThis is the perfect solution whenever we’re planning to build a website that covers a popular subject. Our editors are always keen to create original content, but PublishThis makes our projects really comprehensive and helps us cover the subject from every angle,” said Jack Karpinski.

Moriarty added, “With PublishThis, we have created a scalable new way to ensure comprehensive coverage of a story that invites differing opinions and requires a variety of voices. PublishThis is the ideal platform to help content teams to meet the challenges of modern, real-time publishing in this era of information overload and multi-device consumption.”

On the 27 August, a poll following the second debate indicated that Salmond and the Yes campaign had come out on top.

On Sunday 7 September a shock You Gov poll put Yes at 51 per cent and No on 49 per cent – the first time the Independence movement had been in the lead. This illustrated the collapse of a 22-point No lead in just over a month. Salmond was told the news on the golf course and afterwards hits the strongest drive of his game. Cameron was with the Queen at Balmoral, where he may have had some explaining to do.

Gordon Brown, the former Labour Prime Minister, rode to the rescue of the Union by setting out a plan that would see further powers for the Scottish Parliament over taxation, welfare and finance with the draft laws in place by Burns Night 2015. Yes campaigners dismissed this as “panic and desperation”.

In another move that each party leader insisted was not motivated by “panic and desperation”, Cameron, Miliband and Clegg all agreed to ditch Wednesday’s Question Time at



Neil McGarvey: Map shows #indyref Yes vote as urban working-class revolt

ALYSIS: Neil McGarvey looks at the class and demographic differences between those who voted 'Yes' and 'No' in yesterday's independence referendum.

28 of Scotland's 32 local authority areas there was a majority in favour of No. The voting was on the wall as soon as the result was declared for Clackmannanshire in central Scotland.

Yes couldn't win there – an area with a healthy Scottish National Party support base – was not going to come anywhere near gaining a majority.

[Read More at The Conversation](#)



“PublishThis puts the editor in the driver’s seat on a whole new level. They can easily reach into their PublishThis-enriched toolbox and keep our websites fresh and engaging.”
–Jack Karpinski, Johnston Press

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