Instant Articles

GETTING STARTED

We've found that people are less likely to abandon articles on Facebook when they load fast, are more likely to share Instant Articles than mobile web links, and on average read more articles when they see Instant Articles in their News Feed.

Learn how to get started with the product, and use the tools that can help you earn money and drive deeper connections with readers.

BY THE NUMBERS

- In aggregate, Instant Articles delivers **34%** more traffic to publishers on iOS and **55%** more traffic on Android than the mobile web equivalents.

- Instant Articles now pays out more than **$1M** per day to publishers.

- Call-to-Action units in Instant Articles have resulted in over 2 million email sign-ups to publisher newsletters.

- Over **10,000** publishers around the world use Instant Articles.

Source: Internal Facebook Data (June 2017)

# 6 STEPS TO START PUBLISHING INSTANT ARTICLES

1. SIGN UP

2. CREATE A STYLE

3. IMPORT YOUR ARTICLES

4. CONNECT YOUR SITE

5. SUBMIT ARTICLES FOR REVIEW

6. BEGIN SHARING

SIX STEPS TO START
PUBLISHING INSTANT ARTICLES

1

SIGN UP

Sign your publication up for Instant Articles and access the tools you'll use to get started. When you sign up you'll select the Facebook Page you want to use to manage your Instant Articles. You'll find all the tools you need for your initial setup by going to **Publishing Tools** on the top of your Facebook Page and selecting **Configuration** under Instant Articles in the left-hand navigation bar.
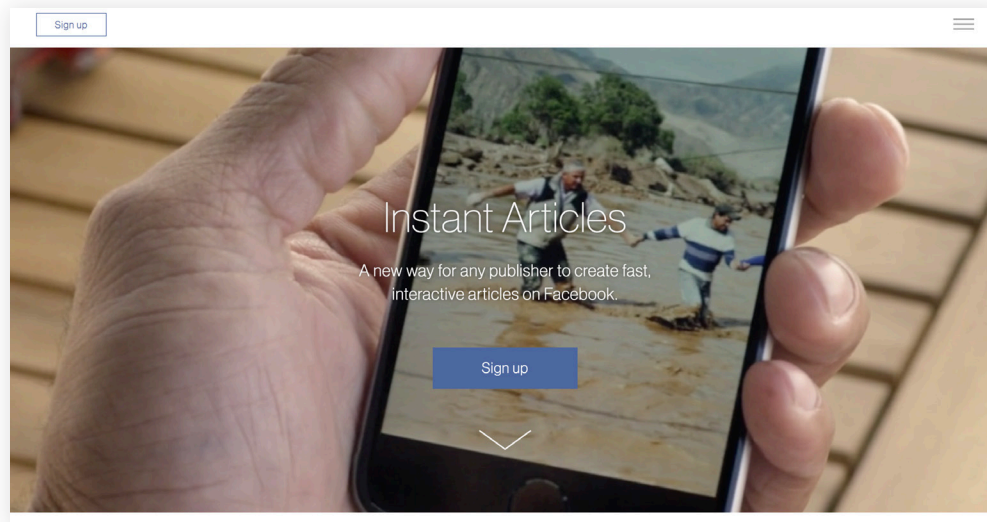
2

CREATE A STYLE

Create one or more new design styles to customize the look and feel of your Instant Articles. You'll need to upload a logo that will appear on all your articles before submitting for review. To create and modify styles, go to **Configuration** in Publishing Tools and scroll down to **Styles**.

3

IMPORT YOUR ARTICLES

Decide how you want to import your articles to Facebook and convert them to Instant Articles. If you use a third-party publishing platform, like WordPress or Drupal, use one of our plugins for the easiest setup and maintenance. Learn how to set up the **Instant Articles for WordPress plugin** and see which other partners maintain **third-party tools** for Instant Articles.

If you have a team of developers or use a custom content management system (CMS), use the **Instant Articles API**, the **Instant Articles SDK**, or build a dedicated **RSS feed**.
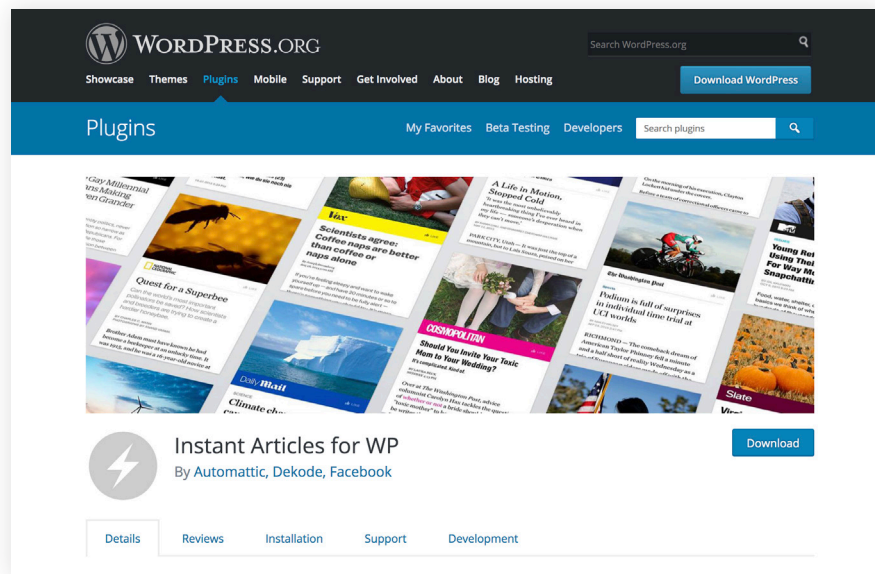
4 CONNECT YOUR SITE

Authorize your site to begin converting your articles to Instant Articles.
To register your site's URL and find the code, go to **Configuration** in Publishing
Tools and scroll down to **Connect Your Site**. If you use the WordPress plugin,
you'll only have to input your URL, which you'll do when setting up the plugin. If
you use our API, SDK or an RSS feed, you'll also need to add a piece of code to
the <head> of your website's HTML.

5
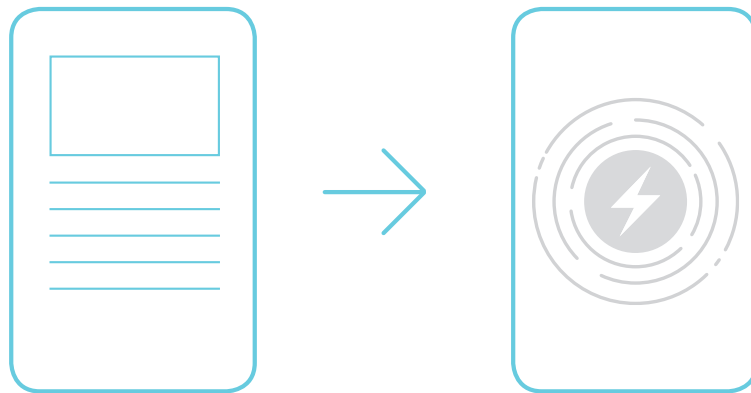
SUBMIT ARTICLES FOR REVIEW

Prepare articles for review, then go to Configuration and click Submit for Review under Step 2. Every new publisher must be approved by Facebook before publication can begin. Review may take 4 business days. Make sure you're ready to submit with our **Submission Checklist**. Use the Facebook Pages Manager app to preview Instant Articles on your mobile device. Download it for **iOS** or **Android** if you don't have it already.

6

BEGING SHARING!

Distribute your Instant Articles as you would with any link:
Just compose a new post, include the article link, and share! Instant Articles are never posted to your page automatically.

DON'T FORGET

We have found that people's propensity to click on Instant Articles is correlated to the volume of Instant Articles they see from a publisher.

THREE WAYS TO MONETIZE YOUR ARTICLES

1

SELL ADS DIRECTLY, KEEP 100% OF THE REVENUE

If you sell ads directly, **we've built support for a number of different ad formats** to help you increase yield. Publishers keep 100% of the revenue and can use our Automatic Ad Placement feature to make sure they maximize revenue while preserving a high-quality ads experience for the reader. **Learn how to implement ads yourself using our technical documentation** and check out the possible ad sizes below.
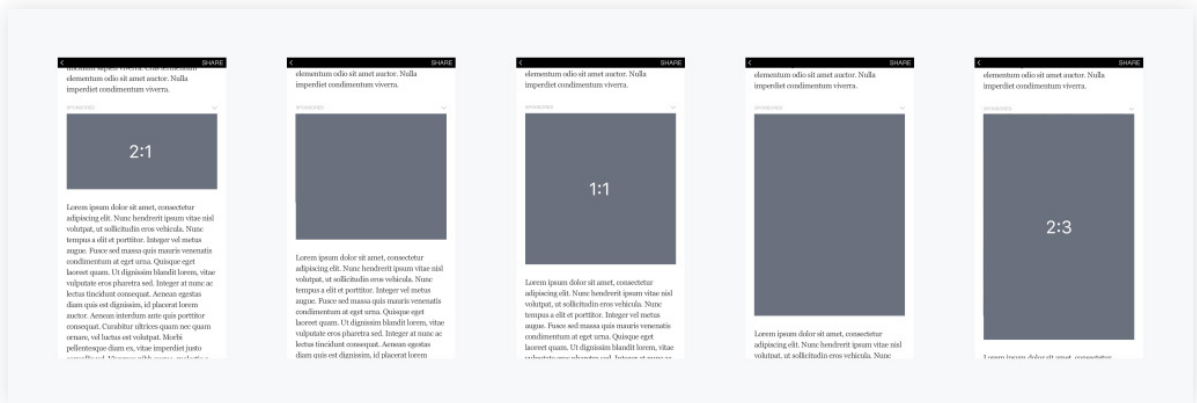
2

USE AUDIENCE NETWORK TO FILL ALL IMPRESSIONS, OR TO BACKFILL UNSOLD INVENTORY

Publishers large and small use Audience Network. It's a turnkey, all-in-one approach to monetizing articles that works well either for a small company looking to monetize all its content without a sales team, or a publisher with a direct-sales program that wants to maximize its ad space. Check out the **Audience Network page** and then look into **implementing it yourself**. And utilize our **Automatic Ad Placement** feature to get the most out of each article.
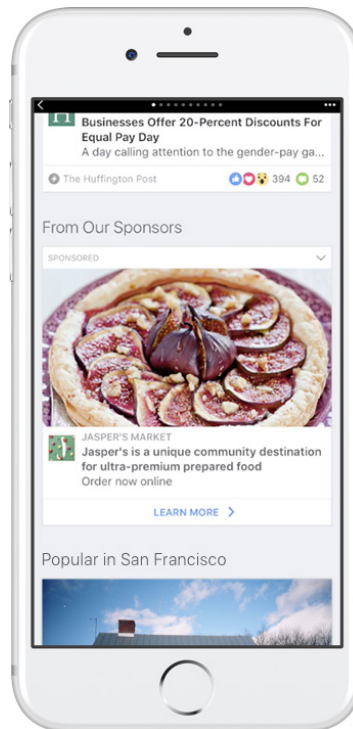
3 LEVERAGE THE BENEFITS OF INSTANT ARTICLES INTO BETTER BRANDED CONTENT

Create branded content-specific style templates using the Style Editor, and easily add a sponsor logo to the byline of an article. **Explore how to implement Branded Content and how to access our Branded Content tools**.
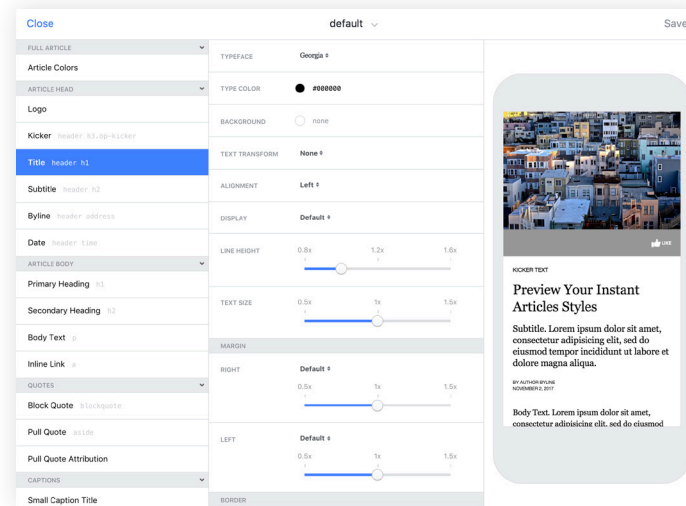
DON'T FORGET

1. Turning on Automatic Ad Placement will help you maximize the return on your ads.

2. Videos can have preroll ads if you insert your own video players into articles.

3. Insert ads into recirculation units to create another spot for monetization.

ADD CALL-TO-ACTION UNITS

You can add **Call-to-Action** units to your Instant Articles to help create deeper direct relationships with your most loyal readers on Facebook. These units appear inline in your Instant Articles and feature the same speed and responsiveness readers enjoy among all Instant Articles. We currently offer CTAs to drive:
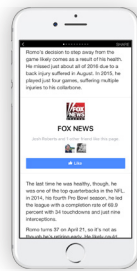
1. Page Likes
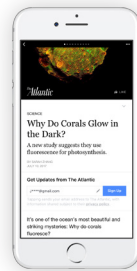
2. Newsletter Subscriptions
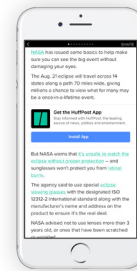
3. App Installs

To set up your CTA units so you can start building greater reader loyalty, and driving direct connections, go to your Page's **Publishing Tools** and scroll down to **Call-To-Action units**. All you need is your logo to start building them today.

DON'T FORGET

You can monitor the performance of your Instant Articles Call-to-Action units on the insights page. Compare clicks and impressions over time and see demographic data on audience age, gender and location. The insights tool delivers data for call-to-action units in weekly segments, with the previous week's results becoming available on Mondays.

HELPFUL RESOURCES
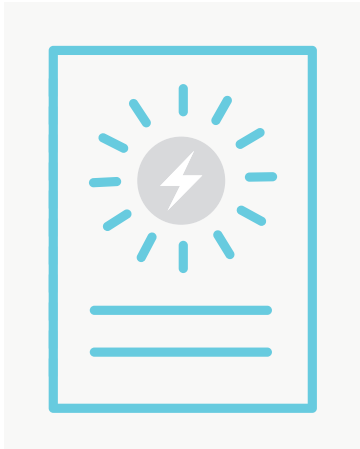
INSTANT ARTICLES DOCUMENTATION
developers.facebook.com/docs/instant-articles

SIGN UP FOR INSTANT ARTICLES
instantarticles.fb.com

INSTANT ARTICLES PRODUCT UPDATES
media.fb.com/blog

RECENT INSTANT ARTICLES UPDATES HELP THE ATLANTIC IMPROVE MONETIZATION AND GROW TRAFFIC

Instant Articles first **launched** in the summer of 2015 with just a handful of publishers. The Atlantic, as one of the first nine, is among the platform's longest tenured partners. During that time they've provided ongoing feedback on relative performance and have been a frequent beta tester for new features. More than two years later, The Atlantic remains committed to using the format as a core part of their distribution strategy.

The Atlantic has seen a year over year increase in mobile unique visitors of more than 40% and Instant Articles has been a significant part of that growth. "In the frantic world of publishing, we often expect to see immediate results or we move on. In the case of Instant Articles, the evolution has been slower than expected but the product has improved," says Kimberly Lau, SVP of Digital and Head of Business Development at The Atlantic. "By staying with it and continuing to put resources into the partnership, we're seeing increasing traffic and revenue. I think this is the result of the user behaviors evolving and the product evolving."

By staying the course in some areas and tinkering with their strategy in others, The Atlantic has seen increases in revenue, traffic and newsletter signups coming from Instant Articles.

We'll take you through some of the adjustments they've made and new products they're using, in addition to what long term strategies they stuck with to achieve their recent results.
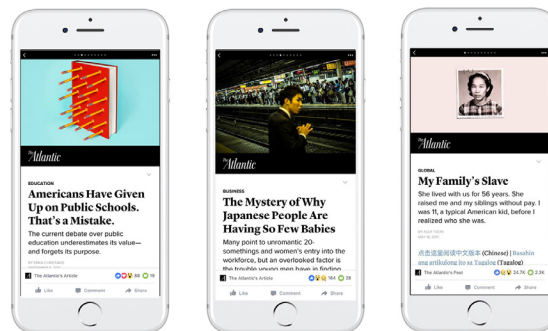
THE ATLANTIC cont.

EXPANDING AUDIENCE REACH AND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH FACEBOOK INSTANT ARTICLES

Strategy:

- Publish as much as possible to Facebook as Instant Articles.

Results:

- *Average monthly Facebook Instant Article page views up 66% in 2017 compared to same months in 2016.*

- *27-33% increase in traffic from Instant Articles compared to mobile web versions of the same articles in recent months.*

Lau believes that consistently publishing Instant Articles has led to a change in user habits, and fostered a loyalty over time to the platform. "Publishers can have a short term focus on product development. With this product, we've committed for a longer horizon, and we've seen behaviors and results evolve," she says.

When The Atlantic first joined the program, they expected an immediate big jump in traffic, then for it to flatten. Instead, they've seen slow and steady growth of the format over time.

In May 2017, The Atlantic broke single-day and concurrent traffic records with its June Atlantic cover story, "My Family's Slave." The piece took off, getting more than 12 million page views to date, almost 50% of which were on the Instant Articles format. Lau said: "When a story is as compelling as this one, it travels easily across many platforms, but our experience with Instant Articles suggests that the mobile friendly format helped it travel further."

THE ATLANTIC cont.

MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO IMPROVE MONETIZATION

Strategy:

- *Turn on **Automatic Ad Placement** to optimize placement of ads.*

- *Turn on ads in the **recirculation section**.*

- *Backfill using **Audience Network**.*

Results:

- *Audience Network eCPMs increased 60% year over year.*

- *Turning on Automatic Ad Placement led to 15% increase in impressions per page.*

From the beginning, The Atlantic was focused on optimizing monetization on Instant Articles. They employ a combination of direct-sold ads and Audience Network, Facebook's programmatic solution. For any ad space that isn't sold directly, The Atlantic uses Audience Network to backfill.

In the spring 2017, The Atlantic and Facebook began a series of discussions around gaps in monetization and opportunities to improve the performance. Two initiatives came out of that discussion - the adoption of Instant Article Automatic Ad Placement and testing of new recirculation units below the article body. When The Atlantic first launched on Instant Articles in 2015, they employed an ad injection logic based on a minimum level of words between ads. Limits for ad placements were reduced over time, and they updated their rules; however, ad placements still lagged behind their own mobile site. Facebook recommended that The Atlantic turn on Automatic Ad Placement — a feature that automatically optimizes your ads for optimal performance. While skeptical, The Atlantic replaced their ad logic with Facebook's Automatic Ad Placement in June. On

THE ATLANTIC cont.

average, the change resulted in a 15% increase in average monthly impressions per page in the 3 months following the change.

Separately, at the end of March, The Atlantic became an early tester of **new ad recirculation units**. On average, eCPMS for Audience Network increased 60% year over year following that implementation.

UTILIZING NEW TOOLS TO MEASURE VALUE AND BUILD READER ENGAGEMENT

Strategy:

- *Insert Call-To-Action units to drive newsletter subscriptions.*

- *Use traffic lift tool to see difference between Instant Articles and mobile web.*

Results:

- *15% of new Page followers come from Instant Articles Call-To-Action (CTA) units.*

- *Instant Articles accounts for 20% of daily newsletter subscriber growth since February.*

The Atlantic was an early tester of the **Call-to-Action units on Instant Articles**. They started first with email newsletter acquisition and Page likes and more recently adopted the app CTA, directing people towards downloading their mobile app.

The addition of CTA units have helped The Atlantic convert readers into the funnel — from casual readers to followers and newsletter recipients. Since launching in early 2017, newsletter CTAs have become one of the top three sources of signups for them, and are responsible for about 20% of each month's growth. When an article goes viral and reaches new readers, it's proven to be a useful driver of pulling new readers into The Atlantic's orbit. "For each of these CTAs, we see greater benefits when we have viral content that reaches new audiences that might be engaging with us for the first time," Lau says.

A source of frustration for Lau had been that it wasn't always clear how to measure the impact of the product. In July, we added **a new tool for publishers** to measure how their Instant Articles perform compared to the mobile web equivalents. This new tool, along with other Instant Articles updates, has given The Atlantic an improved outlook on the product.

"We can now see the lift we're getting and better understand the impact Instant Articles has on traffic," she says. "And when you combine that with our increases in impressions and backfill eCPMs, we now have a much clearer picture of the value Instant Articles is providing to The Atlantic."

TRIBUNE BROADCASTING FINDS THEIR SWEET SPOT WITH INSTANT ARTICLES

Facebook's Local News Partnerships Manager, Josh Mabry, chatted with Steve Baron, Vice President/ Head of Product, Tribune Broadcasting to discuss the company's strategy with Instant Articles.

Why did you decide to start using Instant Articles on Facebook? What does the format do for your audience?

We are always looking to put our content in places users expect to see it with the fastest loading, best presentation possible. When Facebook announced a plan to help fix one of our long-standing problems (slow load times for articles tapped from the Facebook app) we were eager to give it a try. Our native apps for iOS and Android have always had a lightweight template and ad layout and we look at Instant Articles as a nice way to bring that experience to the web as well.

When did you first begin publishing stories as Instant Articles? How have you seen Instant Articles change over the last 6 months?

We launched Instant Articles as soon as they were fully available for general use in **spring of 2016**. Initially we published all Tribune Media content as Instant Articles (over 30,000 links a month) but after a few months, realized we had to be smarter about what content was

enabled as an Instant Article to bring revenue in line with mobile web. Mind you, this was over a year ago when Instant Articles was a very new product. After testing many variables we settled on only enabling Instant Articles for articles that are longer than a few paragraphs. We found that as the 'sweet spot' where the amount of ads in an Instant Article equaled or exceeded performance on mobile web. Our team built a 'publishing checklist' in our CMS to determine what posts would be eligible for publishing as Instant Articles based on six criteria – articles meeting all six criteria get an Instant Article created – those that don't meet all six open in our responsive website when viewed from Facebook.

You're utilizing the new ads in recirculation units within Instant Articles. What have you noticed since testing and implementing this feature?

Our revenue operations team says they are very happy with the performance of the new ad units below the content area where the related stories are, and the additional revenue from them brings mobile web and Instant Article revenue to at least an equal point.

How has adopting Instant Articles impacted your business?

Content producers across Tribune Media love Instant Articles as users of Facebook personally, so they like to see their work featured in them as well. The way our CMS is set up it kind of nags you to make your article 'perfect' and earn a '6 out of 6' in our publishing checklist, which in turn unlocks the Instant Article template for any given story. So, there's actually a little game going on there. The publishing checklist requires an article to have a featured image, text, no extraneous code (div's, etc) and a few other things – which quite honestly make both Instant Articles and regular web stories more readable and sharable.

Do you have any best practices you can share?

If and when Facebook offers any new features or tips on how to optimize – listen carefully and do your best to adopt them. Also, don't be afraid to reach out and ask for help either from peers in the industry or to take advantage of Facebook's resources, like the **News Media & Publishing on Facebook Group** and the **Facebook Media Portal**.

We know you're utilizing the new Call-to-Action Units in Instant Articles, what kind of results are you seeing so far?

We launched the new call-to-action units as soon as they were announced; we started to turn them on for our main brand Pages right away. At the time, those brand Pages had around 10-million fans in total. Facebook Insights show we have added around 100,000 new fans via the 'Page like' Call-to-Action unit inside of Instant Articles in the three months since then, so it definitely works. It's interesting to note – most of these new fans are in the same geographic area as the brand, which is great because finding new fans inside of your own local market is challenging.

What best practices do you recommend?

1. Always consider creating Instant Articles for stories that are longer than a few paragraphs.

2. Use the '**Automatic Ad Placement**' feature for all units except the last unit in your article, which you should hard-code in place.

3. If you use DFP and have a local or national sales team of your own, set up DFP inside of Instant Articles.

4. Take advantage of all the features Facebook offers; use the Call-to-Action units to gain new Facebook fans and to collect user email addresses.

5. Integrate Google Analytics, Chartbeat, and other tools into your Instant Articles.

What else would you encourage local publishers to think about as they start using Instant Articles?

Don't treat it as an all-or-nothing approach, but at the same time don't try to hand pick stories you think will perform well as Instant Articles. Spend time testing, do the math, and come up with something that works for your business and your readers.