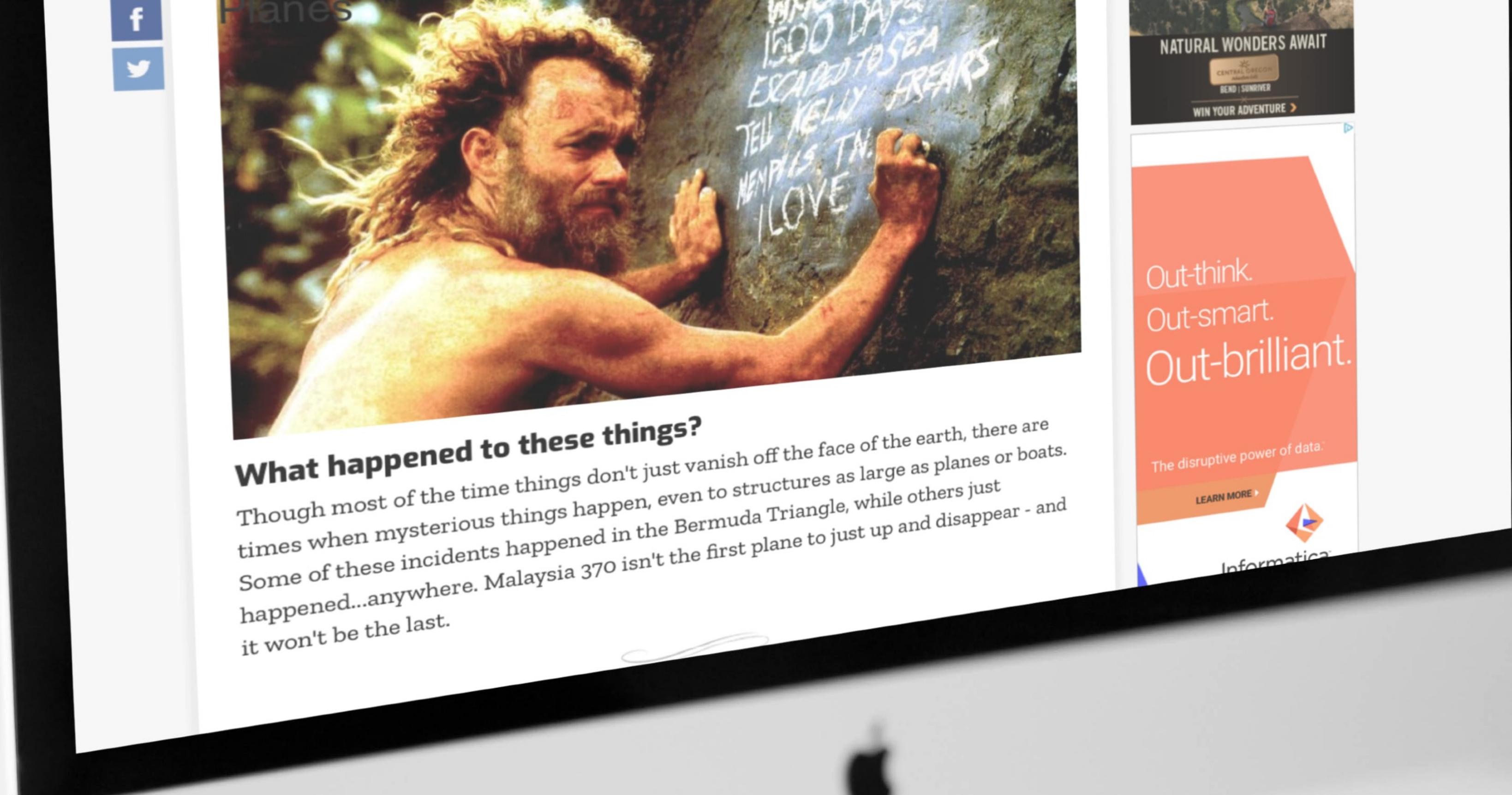


Daniel Swartz

Product & UX Design

Portfolio Presentation



Planes

f

t

What happened to these things?

Though most of the time things don't just vanish off the face of the earth, there are times when mysterious things happen, even to structures as large as planes or boats. Some of these incidents happened in the Bermuda Triangle, while others just happened...anywhere. Malaysia 370 isn't the first plane to just up and disappear - and it won't be the last.

LEARN MORE

Informatica

 **Topix CMS**



Project Overview:

Topix was based in Palo Alto, CA and had a team of around 25.

It created social media content for mobile and desktop web covering a wide variety of topics.

The company was acquired in 2019 by Publishers Clearing House.

I was Director of Product Design.

I worked at Topix from 2015 to 2020.



Introduction

- **Overview:** Topix wanted to redesign, rebuild and grow the Content Management System (CMS). It started out creating slideshows only, but it was understood more content types would be added (and removed) over time (e.g. quizzes).

The project would be ongoing with non-stop iterative improvements based on weekly A/B testing, customer feedback and company goals and requirements.

CMS would generate content to be distributed on Facebook, Google, Amazon, Outbrain and more for desktop and mobile web. Content would contain ads from Google, Facebook, Amazon and more and would be the primary revenue for Topix.

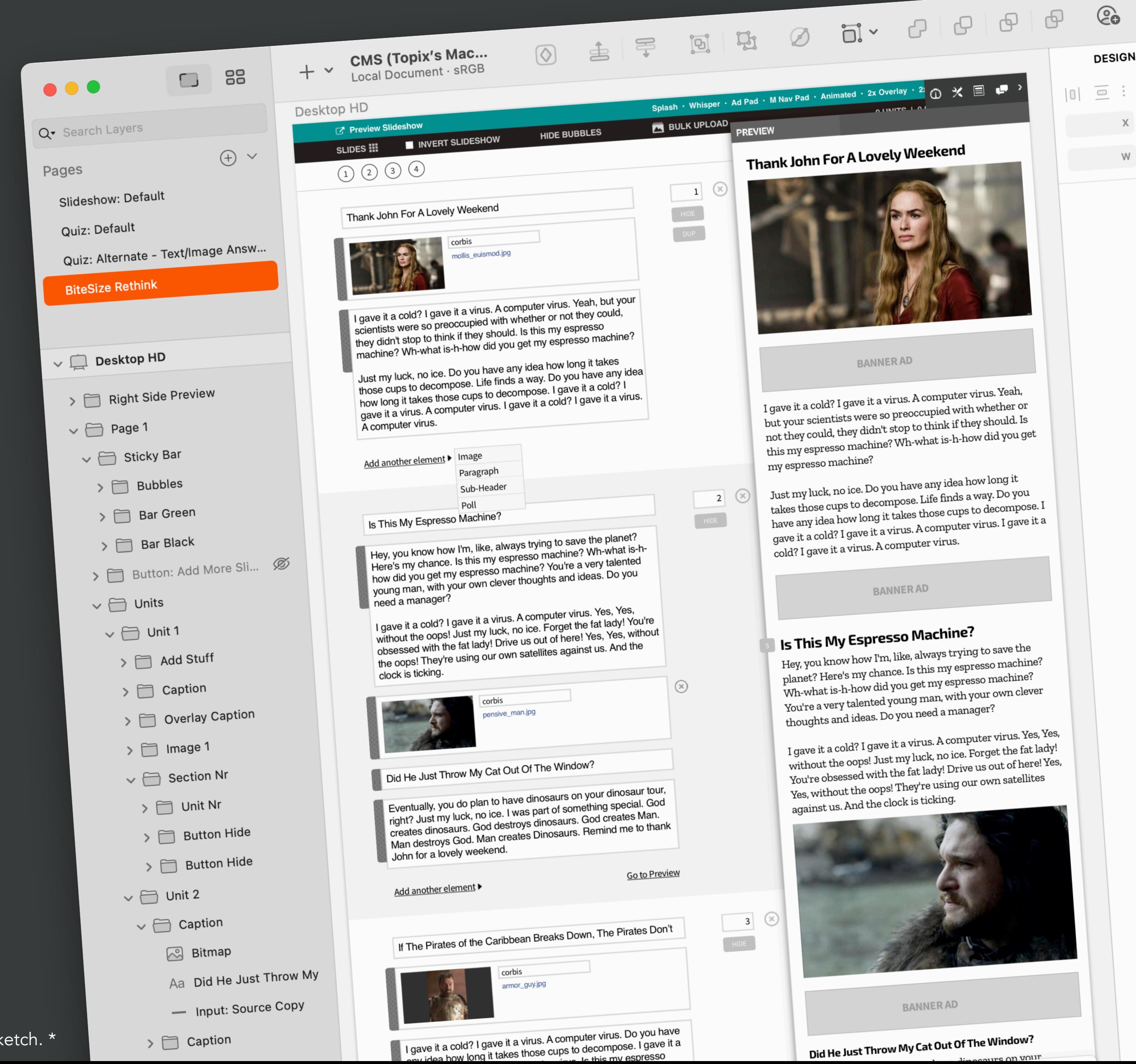
When I joined in 2015, page views were only thousands per month. This would eventually peak at monthly traffic of 1.5 billion page views and 25 million unique users.

- **Objectives:** Make the CMS intuitive and easy to understand since writer turnover was relatively high. New writers needed to ramp up quickly.

The CMS should support the addition and removal of different content types based on performance metrics. Overall layout of the CMS should not be affected regardless of content type.

It was crucial that the CMS empower writers to create content quickly and efficiently in order to build up as large a library of profitable content as possible. (a single piece of content could earn \$1 million)

Article CMS that was added later on. Designed in Sketch. *



The Problem

- **Challenges:** After Topix pivoted to creating social media content, the first CMS was built quickly without deep design thought. Simply updating the existing tool to a new design was deemed to be too much work for a small engineering team.

The original CMS was unintuitive, used inconsistent terminology and most importantly, took way too long to generate a single piece of content, often taking up to a week or more.

With slideshows being anywhere between 20-60 slides each (one or two clicks per slide), valuable time was being wasted on creating a single slideshow.

Many writers were not so tech savvy, making it challenging to simplify an already dense product.

- **Target Audience:** The CMS was used by an internal team of roughly 10 writers, creating content focusing on entertainment, offbeat, sports, pets, travel, history and more.

Writers used it primarily to create new content and continue to improve on existing content. Marketing and business development used it primarily to create ads for social media platforms and monitor performance (e.g. clicks, profit, session length).

And, as already mentioned, content generated by the CMS was consumed by 25 million users monthly along with 1.5 billion page views.

Article CMS added later time. Designed in Sketch. *

The image shows the Topix CMS interface in Sketch and the final published content on stars.topix.com. The Sketch interface shows a sidebar with various slide types and a list of recent desktop and mobile designs. The published content on stars.topix.com features an interview with Ron Livingston, a sidebar with 'Also On Stars' links, and a sidebar for 'About Stars' with a Pixar ranking advertisement.

stars

Exclusive Interview: Ron Livingston Talks 'Tully,' 'Office Space' And That Infamous Post-It Note

Also On Stars

- Quiz: Can You Name These Beloved TV Shows?
- Quiz: Can You Name This Pop Star?
- Quiz: Can You Identify All Of These Famous 1970s Musicians?
- Quiz: Can You Name These 1970s TV Shows From A Single Screenshot?
- 27 Overhyped Actors Who Were Supposed To Be The Next Big Thing... But Weren't

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Celebrity romances, breakups, weddings, weight loss, fashion, and style...you name it, we've got the Hollywood highlights for you. Can't stay up-to-date on every breaking celeb news story? We also offer year's end roundups of celebrity gossip, red carpet fashion, blockbuster movie and TV trivia, previews of new releases, and more! [Learn More](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

10. Monsters University

Like so many of the glorious Pixar movies that came before it, Monsters University hit the perfect time. The film, released in 2013, dropped the summer between my sophomore and junior years of college, in that uncertain time when we have to start recognizing graduation as no longer distant entities, but fast-approaching realities. Monsters University, a prequel to the Pixar hit Monsters, Inc., focuses on the lives of Mike and Sulley before they hit professional scare floor, showing their trials and tribulations in college and how the unlikely bond was formed.

Topix: You play Drew, the husband of Charlize Theron's character, in Tully. Is it fair to describe him as "gently neglectful"?

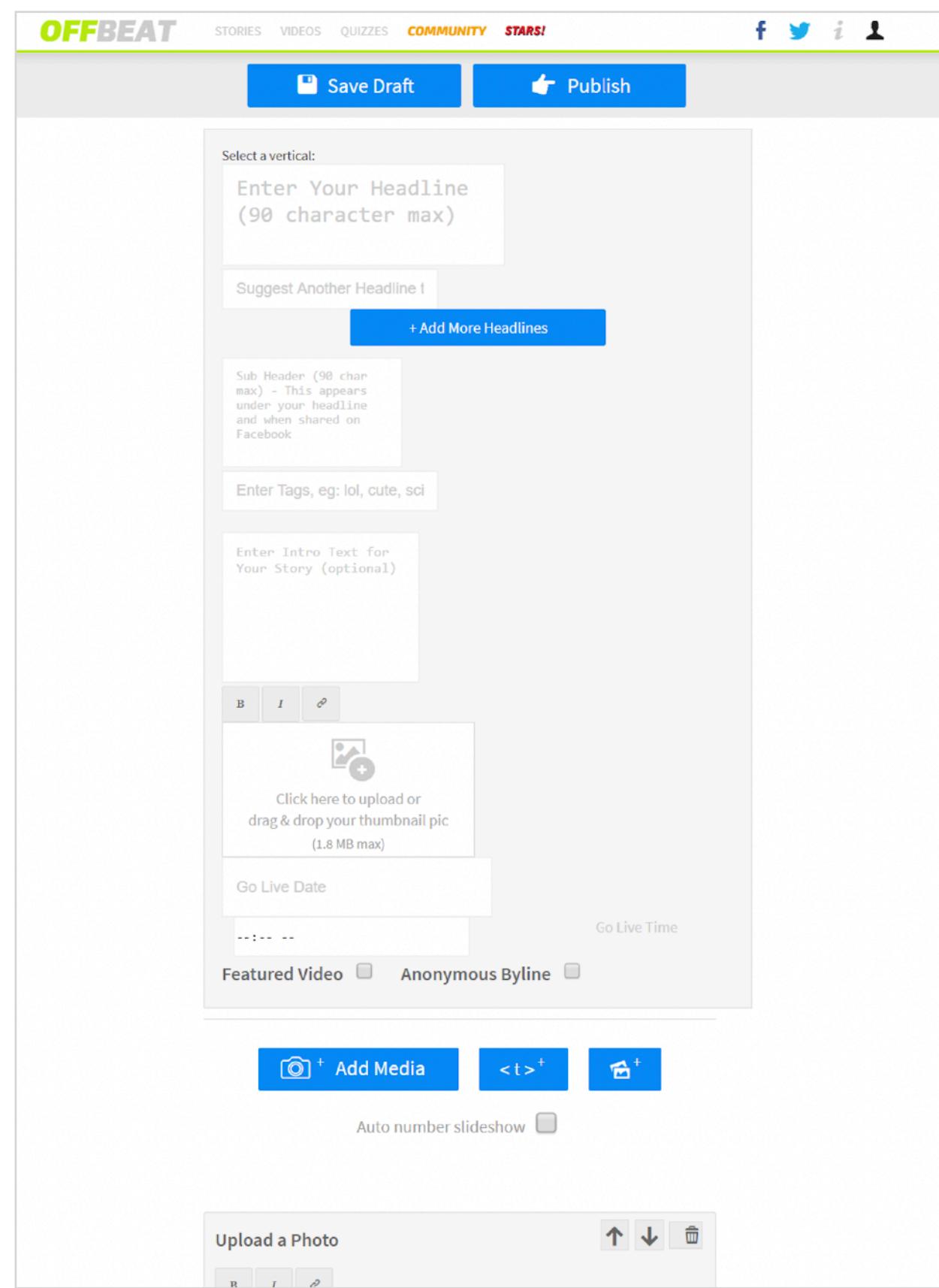
Livingston: "I'd say he's kind of clueless. I think there's a quality that some people have—and I'm one of them—where it's all you can do to pay attention to one thing at a time. Anything you're not staring right at, you miss it. It goes right over your head. The puzzle of this movie is that you have to play a guy that at the end, you ask, 'How could he possibly not have known?' and then still forgive him for that and want them to be together. So for me, I played it that he really wanted to be there and do a good job, and he just has no idea of what is even involved. He doesn't even know that he's not doing it."

Topix: One of the most unforgettable lines in the movie is when you're all around the dinner table and one of the kids spills a drink and Charlize has to take off her shirt. The boy says something like, "What happened to your body?" I wanted to scream at the screen, "You!" What are your thoughts on the dialogue written by Diablo Cody?

Out-think. Out-smart. Out-brilliant.

Original CMS Designs

The two screenshots on the left was the very first CMS after the company pivoted to social media content. The third one on the right is the CMS when I was hired by Topix as its Director of Product Design. There was some improvement, but many of the same issues remained.



OFFBEAT

STORIES VIDEOS QUIZZES COMMUNITY STARS!

Save Draft **Publish**

Select a vertical:

Enter Your Headline (90 character max)

Suggest Another Headline! **+ Add More Headlines**

Sub Header (90 char max) - This appears under your headline and when shared on Facebook

Enter Tags, eg: lol, cute, sci

Enter Intro Text for Your Story (optional)

B I ⚡

Click here to upload or drag & drop your thumbnail pic (1.8 MB max)

Go Live Date Go Live Time

...:--

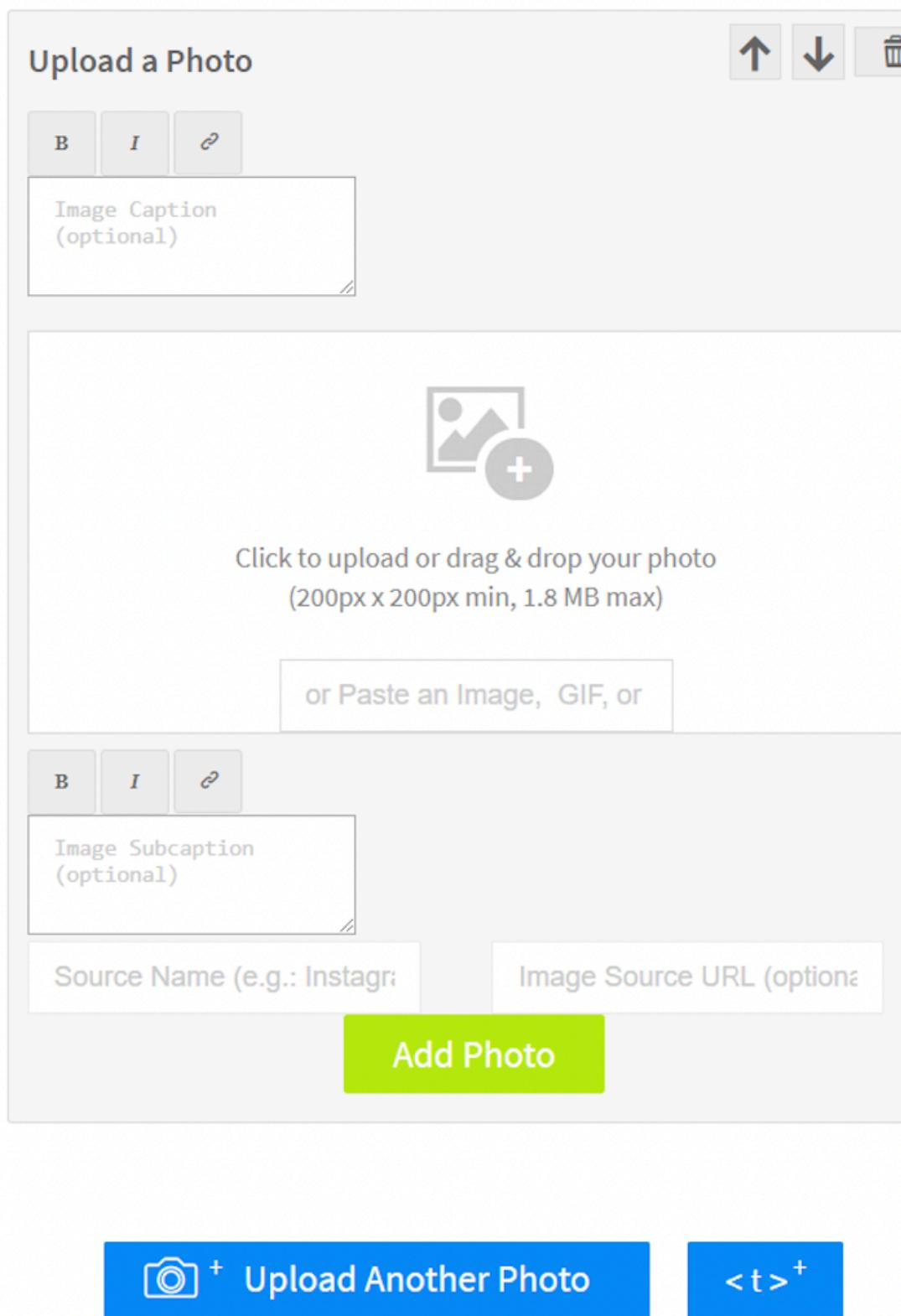
Featured Video Anonymous Byline

Add Media **< t > +** **Upload**

Auto number slideshow

Upload a Photo **Up** **Down** **Delete**

B I ⚡



Upload a Photo

Up **Down** **Delete**

B I ⚡

Image Caption (optional)

Click to upload or drag & drop your photo (200px x 200px min, 1.8 MB max)

or Paste an Image, GIF, or

B I ⚡

Image Subcaption (optional)

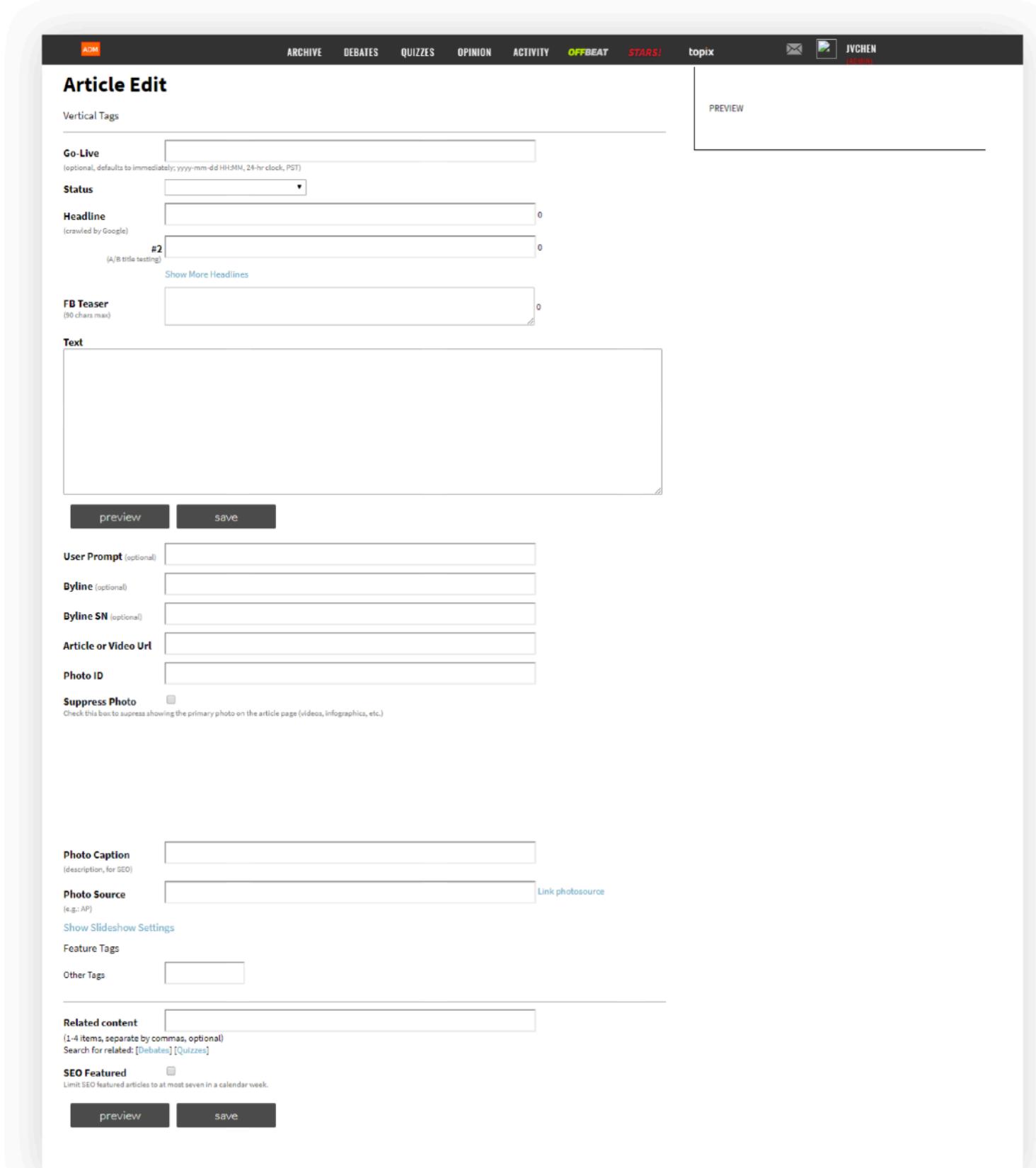
Source Name (e.g.: Instagram) Image Source URL (optional)

Add Photo

Up **Down** **Delete**

Upload Another Photo **< t > +**

Please note by clicking on Publish you acknowledge that you have read the Terms of Service and the content you are posting is in compliance with such terms.



ARCHIVE DEBATES QUIZZES OPINION ACTIVITY OFFBEAT STARS! topix JVCHEN

Article Edit

Vertical Tags

Go Live (optional, defaults to immediate: yyyy-mm-dd HH:MM, 24-hr clock, PGT)

Status

Headline (created by Google) **z2** **Show More Headlines**

FB Teaser (80 chars max)

Text

preview **save**

User Prompt (optional)

Byline (optional)

Byline SN (optional)

Article or Video Url

Photo ID

Suppress Photo

Photo Caption (description, for SEO)

Photo Source (e.g.: AP) **Link photo source**

Show Slideshow Settings

Feature Tags

Other Tags

Related content (1-4 items, separate by commas, optional) Search for related: **z2** **z3**

SEO Featured

preview **save**

Research

- **Users:** The CMS was used primarily by an internal team of roughly 10 writers, creating content focusing on entertainment, offbeat, sports, pets, travel, history and more. Additional users were the marketing and business development teams to obtain performance data and metrics.
 - **Traffic data:** At the beginning, with user traffic low of content generated by the original CMS and no A/B testing, research was almost entirely in-house, covering multiple teams such as marketing, business development, engineering, writers and senior executives.
 - **Competitor research:** Some of the writers had used CMS tools at other publications and we were able to get some ideas from available screenshots. However, most of them were pretty basic in nature and only garnered a few ideas for us to try out.
 - **User feedback:** Throughout, I worked closely with the writing team, gathering feedback, preferences and pet peeves with the then-current CMS. They may not have known what they wanted except that it needed to be a major improvement over the original CMS.

This lasted throughout the five year life span of the product, meeting weekly with members of the writing team to evolve the product over a period of five years.



The Design Process: A Proposal

- **Starting the design process:** With feedback in hand from all previously described sources, I was ready to start with a new design for consideration.
- **Initial design proposal:** I proposed a tabbed format between different sections of the CMS. I felt this was more compact, easier to navigate. (the initial mocks are described to the right)
- **Tools:** My primary design tools at this time were Sketch, Photoshop, HTML and CSS. Sketch did not yet have the prototyping features they and Figma have today. Prototyping tended to be built by engineering or myself in HTML/CSS either from scratch or with Bootstrap to demonstrate in meetings.
- **Graphic Design:** Photoshop supplemented my Sketch work, providing whatever visuals were needed as well as providing UI and branding design to the product from time to time.

Initial Slideshow CMS Wireframes

The wireframe illustrates a CMS interface for managing a slideshow. At the top, there are tabs for 'INFO', 'SLIDES', and 'ALL SLIDES'. Below these are three radio buttons for categories: 'STARS' (selected), 'OFFBEAT', and 'WELLNESS'. To the right are buttons for 'LIVE', 'HIDDEN', 'DRAFT' (selected), and 'TRASH'. On the far right, a vertical sidebar contains icons for file operations: a trash bin, a magnifying glass, a checkmark, and a cloud. The main content area displays two slides. The first slide shows a woman in a yellow dress on a red carpet with a '30' logo, with a 'Choose Image' button below it. The second slide is a placeholder with a gray background and the text 'Facebook Photo: 1200x600', also with a 'Choose Image' button. Below the slides is a form with fields for 'TITLE...', 'SHORT HEADLINE...', 'FACEBOOK TEASER', 'AD COPY', 'FREEFORM TAGS...', 'DIRECT RECIRC ITEMS...', 'BYLINE (OPTIONAL)', and 'RELATED CONTENT (1-4 items, separated by commas, optional)'. At the bottom left is a 'PREV' button, and at the bottom right is a 'NEXT' button. The bottom of the interface shows '21 SLIDES' and an 'Ad Ready' checkbox. A 'CORBIS' logo is in the bottom right corner.

Slideshow Screenshot Info:

Slideshow Info/Meta Data: There are two sections to a piece of content. The first section is meta data that describes a slideshow as well as providing information for ads promoting the content.

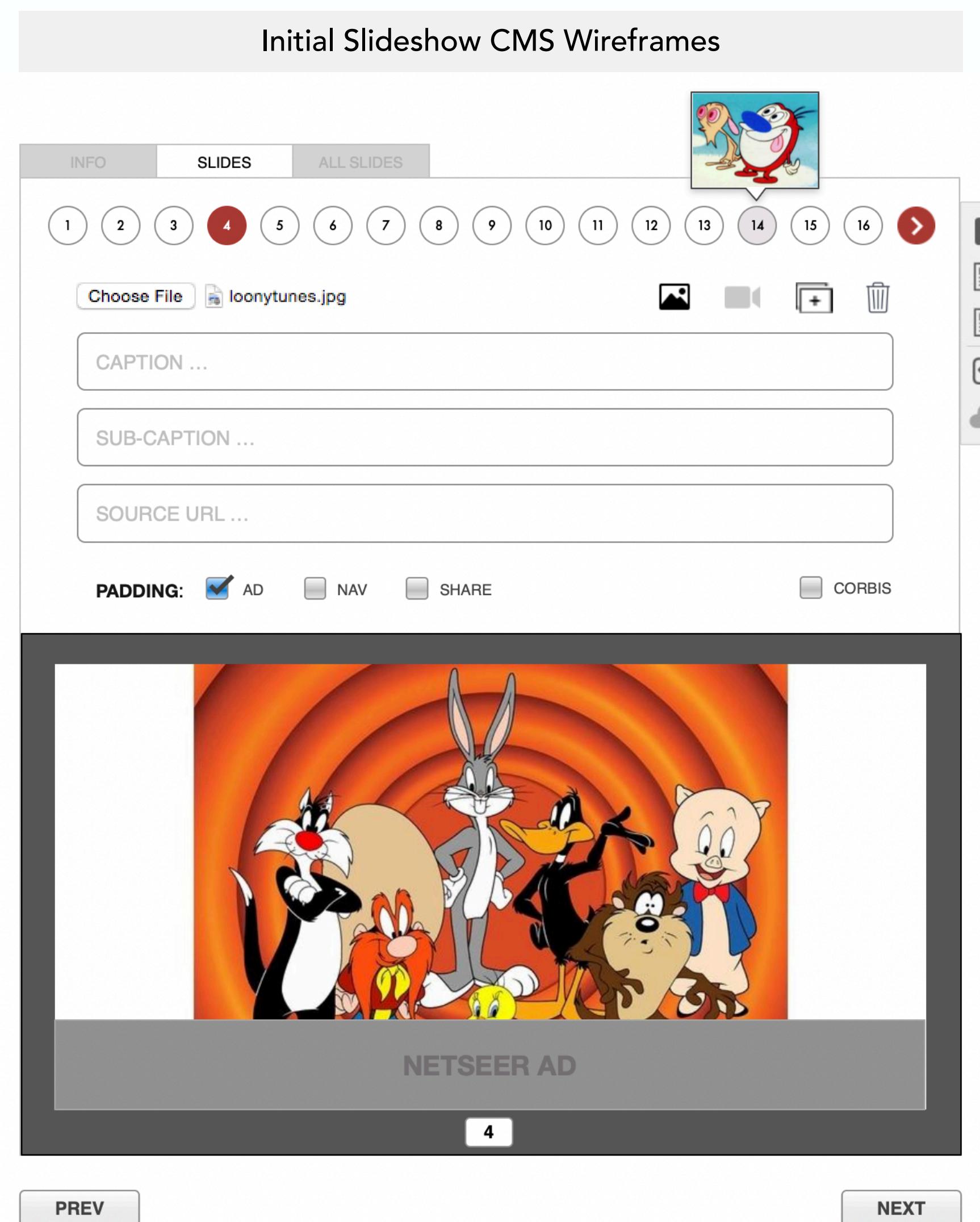
Title, headline, byline, teasers, ad copy, cover image(s) and more all going into ad creation. I felt this important to isolate into its own section.

The buttons on the top and right indicated an item's status, whether it was in edit mode, being reviewed by the other members of the team, ready for publication and more.

This information was used by marketing and business development to get images and text for creating ads on various social media platforms.

The Design Process: A Proposal

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Slideshow Screenshot Info:

Slides: Considering that a slideshow could be long, placing slides into their own tab along with a sub-menu with slide numbers would allow writers quick and easy access to all parts of the slideshow. Hovering over a number would show an image preview to help the user get a feel of flow for the slideshow.

The first version of the slideshow had an image, caption (slide title) and sub-caption (slide description). This meant that each slide could take 2 clicks per slide. Later, when a user could add up to 4 images, each slide could be at least 4 clicks each.

'All Slides': if a user wanted to, they could scroll through all the slides in a piece of content. This would not have included the Info/meta-data section.

The Design Process: The Solution

- **Writers preference:** The writers strongly felt that they wanted to view the entire item of content on a single page to scroll through. They felt this would give them a quicker feel for the overall flow pace of a piece of content, which was very important to them.
- Clicking through tabs between slides and the top meta data section felt disconnected to them.
- **My opinion:** A 40-60 slide slideshow would be very long to scroll through including a lot of items to load into the page (1-2 images + text per slide / 2 images x 60 slides = 120 images + 60 titles and descriptive text). But considering that it was only an internal team of 10 people using the CMS, I relented. If this was to be used by a much larger base of users, I would have pushed back.
- **Page load:** To reduce the lag on loading time, engineering employed such tricks as endless scroll and progressive loading of items such as images in order to prevent lag early on in the user experience.

Initial Slideshow CMS Wireframes

The wireframe illustrates the initial CMS interface for managing a slideshow. At the top, a yellow bar displays the message "Item is NOT live!". Below this, the "Stars Slideshow Editor" header includes dropdowns for "Test", "marynoble", "Byline", and buttons for "New Draft", "Save Draft", "Submit for Review", and "Publish". The "Item PP845881DFAVNFSC (draft) | Last updated 2 days ago by dewartz" is shown. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Facebook/Partner Image Gallery:** Shows a grid of small images with a "+2" button to add more.
- Website Headline:** A text input field containing "Family Friendly".
- Facebook Headlines:** A list with a "+0" button.
- Taboola/Outbrain Headlines:** A list with a "+0" button.
- Dotdot/Nativead Headlines:** A list with a "+0" button.
- Right Rail / Mobile Headlines:** Two text inputs for "Headline 1" and "Headline 2", each with a "37" character count.
- Sub-title / Facebook teaser:** A text input field with "4-10 chars" and a "37" character count.
- Facebook ad copy:** A text input field.
- Introduction:** A text input field with "...".
- Direct Recirc items:** A text input field for "itemid".
- Freeform tags:** A "add tags" button.
- Source For All Images:** A text input field for "http://".
- Scrape item content:** A text input field for "itemid or url".

At the bottom, a "PREVIEW SLIDESHOW" section shows a preview of 28 slides. Each slide preview includes a title, a small image, and a "HIDE" button. The preview area has a "SLIDES" button, "INVERT SLIDESHOW", "HIDE BUBBLES", and "BULK UPLOAD" buttons. The preview shows the following slide details:

- Slide 1: Nullam Cras Nibh
- Slide 2: Maecenas faucibus mollis interdum. Etiam porta sem malesuada magna mollis euismod.
- Slide 3: Donec id Elit Non Mi Porta Gravida At Eget Metus
- Slide 4: Nulla vitae elit libero, a pharetra augue. Maecenas faucibus mollis interdum. Aenean eu leo quam. Pellentesque ornare sem lacinia quam venenatis vestibulum.
- Slide 5: Uttricies Tortor Consectetur Ridiculus
- Slide 6: Overlay caption

Slideshow Screenshot Info:

Slideshow Info/Meta Data: There are two sections to a piece of content. The first section is meta data that describes a slideshow as well as providing information for ads promoting the content. Title, headline, byline, teasers, ad copy, cover image(s) and more all going into ad creation. I felt this important to isolate into its own section.

The buttons on the top and right were indicated the item's status, whether it was in edit mode, being reviewed by the rememberrs of the team, ready for publication and more.

- **Facebook Image Gallery:** writers could add multiple cover images to test which image initiated the highest engagement rate.

- **Headlines:** writers could add multiple titles for desktop, mobile and specific distribution channels, all aimed at identifying which initiated the highest rate of clicks and engagement.

- **Slides:** the number bubbles allowed a writer to navigate quickly to various areas of the site, the slide's/question's image appearing on hover.

- **Writer/Editor Info:** the top area of buttons and drop-down helped identify which topic an item was written for, who was the writer, and ability to select status and publish.

Design Solution Later Used For Quiz CMS

Even though a slideshow and quiz are quite different in nature, there could still be shared components between the two content types, such as titles, descriptions (which could also be answers), image uploads and the top content info/meta data section.

Reusing as much of the slideshow components as possible would allow for better maintenance and upkeep of the two different CMS.

Initial Slideshow CMS Wireframes

The wireframe shows the 'Stars Quiz Editor' interface. At the top, it displays 'Item is NOT live!' and the item details: 'Stars Quiz Editor' (Default Quiz: Text Answers), 'Test' (dropdown), 'marynoble' (dropdown), 'Byline' (dropdown), 'New Draft', 'Save Draft', 'Submit for Review', and 'Publish'. Below this is a 'Facebook/Partner Image Gallery' section with a grid of images and a '+8' button. The main content area is divided into sections: 'Website Headline' (multiple text input fields for different headline variations), 'Right Rail / Mobile Headlines' (input fields for 'Family Friendly' and 'Short Headline 2'), 'Sub-title / Facebook teaser' (input field for '4-10 chars'), 'Facebook ad copy' (input field), 'Introduction' (text input field), 'Direct Recirc items' (input field for 'itemid'), 'Freeform tags' (input field for 'add tags'), 'Source For All Images' (input field for 'http://'), and 'Scrape item content' (input field for 'Itemid or url'). At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Preview Quiz' (with a checked checkbox), 'Splash', 'Whisper', 'Ad Pad', 'M Nav Pad', 'Animated', 'No Random', '2x Image', 'QUESTIONS' (checkbox), 'CORRECT/INCORRECT' (checkbox), 'HIDE BUBBLES' (checkbox), 'BULK UPLOAD' (button), '0 QUESTIONS' (text), and a list of question numbers from 1 to 28. Below this is a question card for 'Who Is This?' with a placeholder image, a list of answers ('Mary' and 'Amelia'), and a text box for 'Description' containing placeholder text. Another question card for 'Question' is partially visible below it.

Quiz Screenshot Info:

Info: The quiz CMS largely followed the same layout as the slideshow CMS, scrolling throughout the entire quiz from beginning to end.

It too had a section for quiz information and meta data for advertising and testing purposes.

The questions section also had a series of bubbles for quick navigation and individual slides.

Common Design Components

- **Consistent Design Patterns:** With two CMS tools, it was important to share as many design components as possible in order to make it easier for engineering to update them quickly enough.

This would become more important when each CMS type would have multiple versions (e.g. photo quiz, personality quiz, etc).

- **Info/Meta-Data:** Sections on both CMSs were largely the same with a few small differences.
 - **Slides:** Image preview/upload, title, description were almost identical on both sides, the main difference being that quizzes had answer fields.

Some Common Components

Facebook/Partner Image Gallery



Add/Edit Images 

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 

DUPL

HIDE

Facebook Headlines

These Are The Worst Characters In Movie History.  

Right Rail

Can You Pass A US Citizenship Test? 2 Take This US Citizenship Test! 7 0

Sub-title / Facebook teaser Facebook ad copy

The real exam ISN'T multiple choice. 1 0

Introduction

Becoming an American citizen is tough; in addition to just plain old luck as far as whether the country will take you, there's all sorts of hoops you have to jump through. Do you have what it takes to pass a citizenship test? Take this quiz and find out! 49

Scrape item content

Itemid or url 

Slideshow & Quiz CMS Comparison

Item is NOT live!

Stars Slideshow Editor

Test

marynoble

Byline

New Draft

Save Draft

Submit for Review

Publish

Item PP845881DFAVN5C (draft) | Last updated 2 days ago by dswartz.

Facebook/Partner Image Gallery

+2

Add/Edit Images

Website Headline

Family Friendly

0

0

Facebook Headlines

.

0

Taboola/Outbrain Headlines

SFW, not lurid, under 60 characters

0

Cdotad/Nativead Headlines

lurid, simple, "shocking/revealing/hilarious", under 60 characters

0

Right Rail / Mobile Headlines

Headline 1

37

Headline 2

37

Sub-title / Facebook teaser

4-10 chars

37

Facebook ad copy

0

Introduction

...

Direct Recirc items

itemid

Freeform tags

add tags

Source For All Images

http://

Scrape item content

itemid or url

Item is NOT live!

Stars Quiz Editor

Default Quiz: Text Answers

Test

marynoble

Byline

New Draft

Save Draft

Submit for Review

Publish

Item PP84588IDFAVNFS (draft) | Last updated 2 days ago by dswartz.

Facebook/Partner Image Gallery

+8

Add/Edit Images

Website Headline

Quiz: Can you Guess.../ Are You Smart Enough...

0

93% Of Americans / Adults Don't Know All These

0

Only 1 in 10 Americans Know All These...

0

Can you name/Can you guess/Do you know (60 characters)

0

You Probably don't know ... / you probably can't name all ...

0

Alt Headline 5...

0

Right Rail / Mobile Headlines

Family Friendly

37

Short Headline 2

37

Sub-title / Facebook teaser

4-10 chars

37

Facebook ad copy

0

Introduction

...

Direct Recirc items

itemid

Freeform tags

add tags

Source For All Images

http://

Scrape item content

itemid or url

Preview Slideshow

Splash • Whisper • Ad Pad • M Nav Pad • Animated • 2x Overlay • 2x Image

SLIDES ■ INVERT SLIDE SHOW HIDE BUBBLES BULK UPLOAD 0 UNITS | 0 SLIDES

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

Nullam Cras Nibh

Maecenas faucibus mollis interdum. Etiam porta sem malesuada magna mollis euismod.

Donec id Elit Non Mi Porta Gravida At Eget Metus

Nulla vitae elit libero, a pharetra augue. Maecenas faucibus mollis interdum. Aenean eu leo quam. Pellentesque ornare sem lacinia quam venenatis vestibulum.

Ultricies Tortor Consectetur Ridiculus

Overlay caption

Caption

 flickr man_in_panda_suit.jpg

 corbis quam_venenatis_vest.jpg

 flickr maecenas_interdum_porta_sem.jpg

 source NO IMAGE

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

Multiple Layout Requirements

- Vast majority of users came from ad campaigns on the main social media and search platforms, with a very small percentage of organic traffic.
- Facebook was the largest source of users, followed by Google, Outbrain & Taboola and so on.
- For ad campaigns to be approved, platforms often required content to be laid out per their requirements, which often differed from platform to platform:
 - Example: Facebook preferred endless scroll, or at least multiple questions or slides per page.
 - Example: Outbrain and Taboola preferred single slides and questions per page. This required more clicks to get through an item.
- A single quiz could have at least four different layouts:
 - Example: endless scroll, or at least multiple questions or slides per page (e.g. Facebook), both for mobile and desktop.
 - Example: single question per page for both mobile and desktop (e.g. Yahoo, Taboola).



Working Quickly & Efficiently

- My goal was to have writers starting the creative process as quickly as possible, not having to spend time setting up a quiz or slideshow structure first.
- **Graphics:** In addition to writing content for a slideshow, writers also were responsible for editing and selecting the images. Later, image editing tools were added, where the user clicked an image to edit.

We also added an image library as a separate tool to avoid purchasing duplicate images. They would search up the image previously purchased and add it to the content from there.

Slideshow & Quiz CMS Comparison

Preview Slideshow SLIDES INVERT SLIDESHOW HIDE BUBBLES Select A Slideshow Type: Slideshow Type ▾

Nullam Cras Nibh
Maecenas faucibus mollis interdum. Etiam porta sem malesuada magna mollis euismod.

Donec Id Elit Non Mi Porta Gravida At Eget Metus
Nulla vitae elit libero, a pharetra augue. Maecenas faucibus mollis interdum. Aenean eu leo quam. Pellentesque ornare sem lacinia quam venenatis vestibulum.

1 Unit = 2 Captions | 2 Images | 1 Overlay

corbis source 3

coram_venantis_vest.jpg

Ultricies Tortor Consectetur Ridiculus
Overlay caption

flickr man_in_panda_suit.jpg

3 HIDE

4

Caption
Overlay caption

NO IMAGE source 4 HIDE

4

Caption
Overlay caption

NO IMAGE source 5 HIDE

5

+ Add 10 Slides

Slideshow Screenshot Info:

The example on the left is a B-type slideshow. Clicking 'B' in the dropdown immediately created 20 slides, each with each slide having a title, description and two images.

Writers were always experimenting with different types and lengths of slideshows.

For example, a 20-slide slideshow with 1 image per slide would be 1 click each (20 overall). 2 images would be 2 clicks each (40 overall). 2 images and one description could be 3 clicks each (60 overall), and so on.

With session length averaging 11-12 minutes per user, writers could afford to experiment with different types and lengths of slideshows to maximize profit on an item.

With the different variations a slideshow could take, I added a dropdown for the writer to quickly select which type to select.

Selecting a slideshow type would immediately create 20 questions, each with the same layout with its number of titles, descriptions and images set up right away.

Accompanying Tools

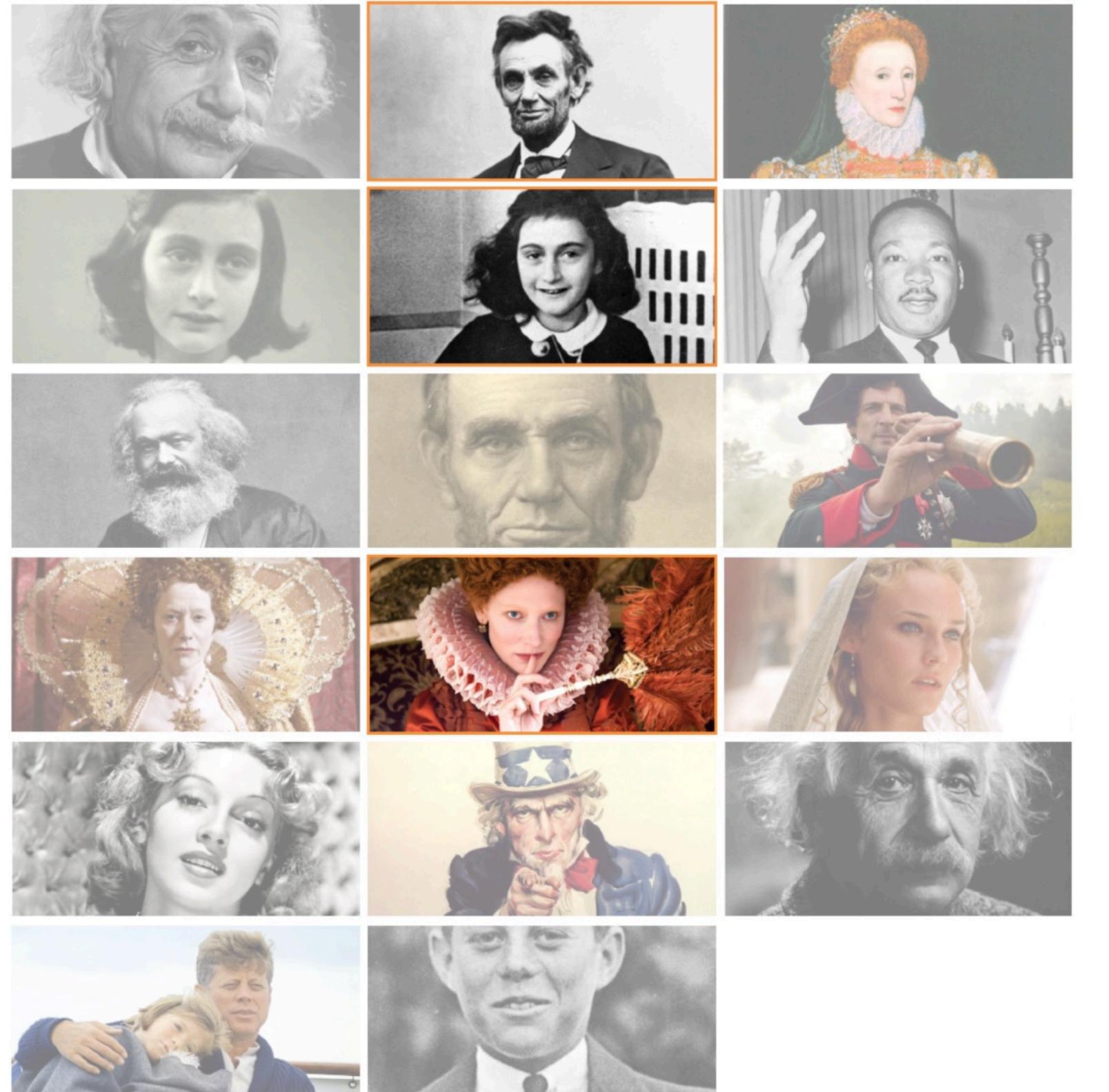
Overtime, tools were added to assist in the creative process, ranging from image editing tools to generating social media campaign ads, image search and more.

All of these tools were directly accessible from a specific piece of content in the CMS.

In addition to creating a slideshow with its written content, they could upload and edit images, search for images from an internal Topix library, quickly generate social media campaign ads (using images and content from the CMS) and monitor traffic statistics and metrics.

18180 Facebook Offbeat topix.net ot facebook RSS Crop Images Whitelist

SELECT IMAGES FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN (18180): [Unselect All Images](#)

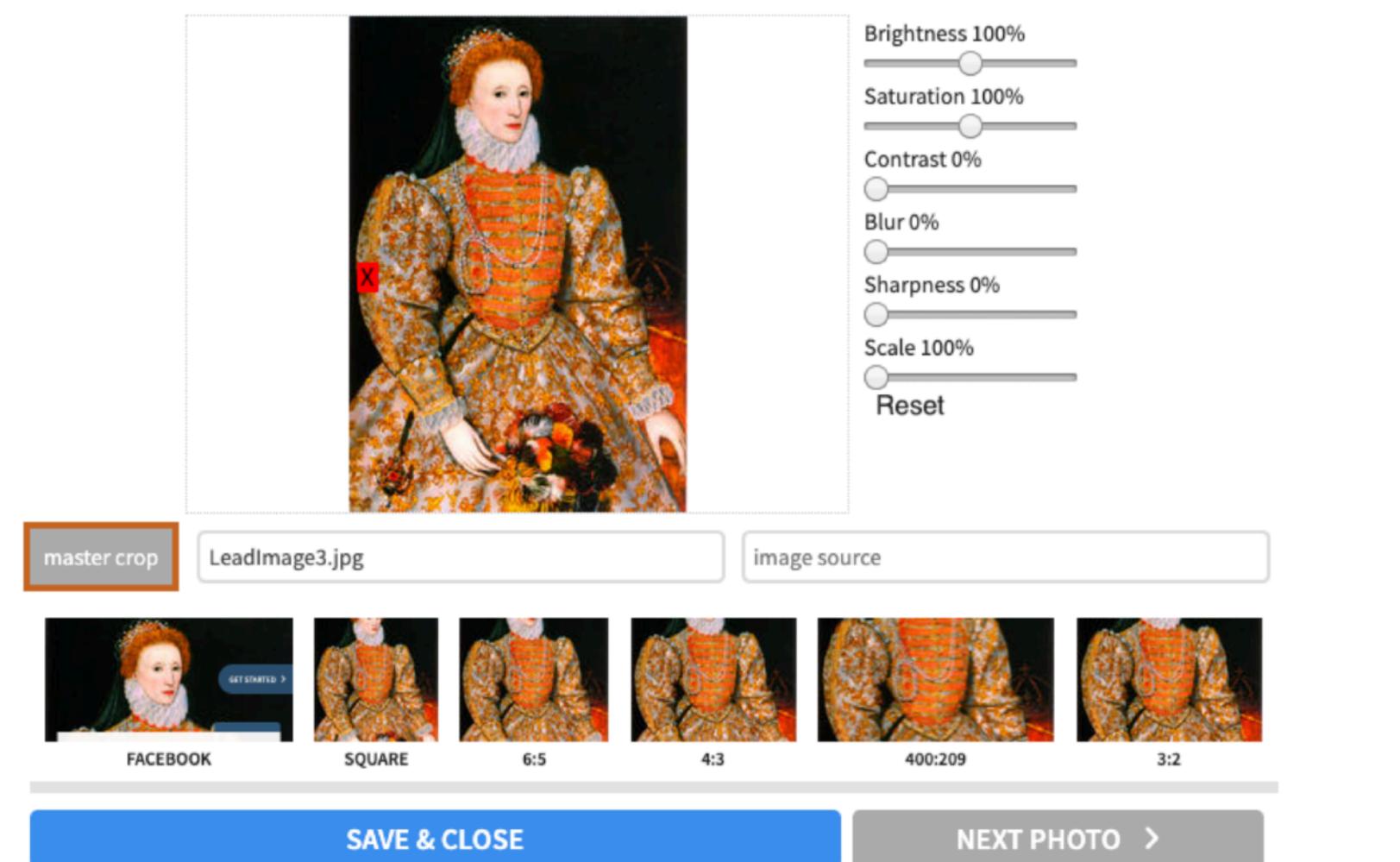


SELECT TITLES FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN (18180): [Add Title in CMS](#) [Refresh Titles](#) [Unselect All Titles](#)

- QUIZ: Can We Guess Your Education Level Based On The History You Know? (70)
- Only A Few Americans Know All These Facts About History (55)
- Quiz: How Much History Do You Know? (35)
- We will tell you your IQ based on history you know (50)
- Your iq is at least 145 if you can pass this history test (57)
- QUIZ: Test Your History Knowledge! (34)
- QUIZ: Do You Know History? (26)

Selected:3 Cropped Images x 2 Titles=6 Ads

[GENERATE CAMPAIGN LIST](#)



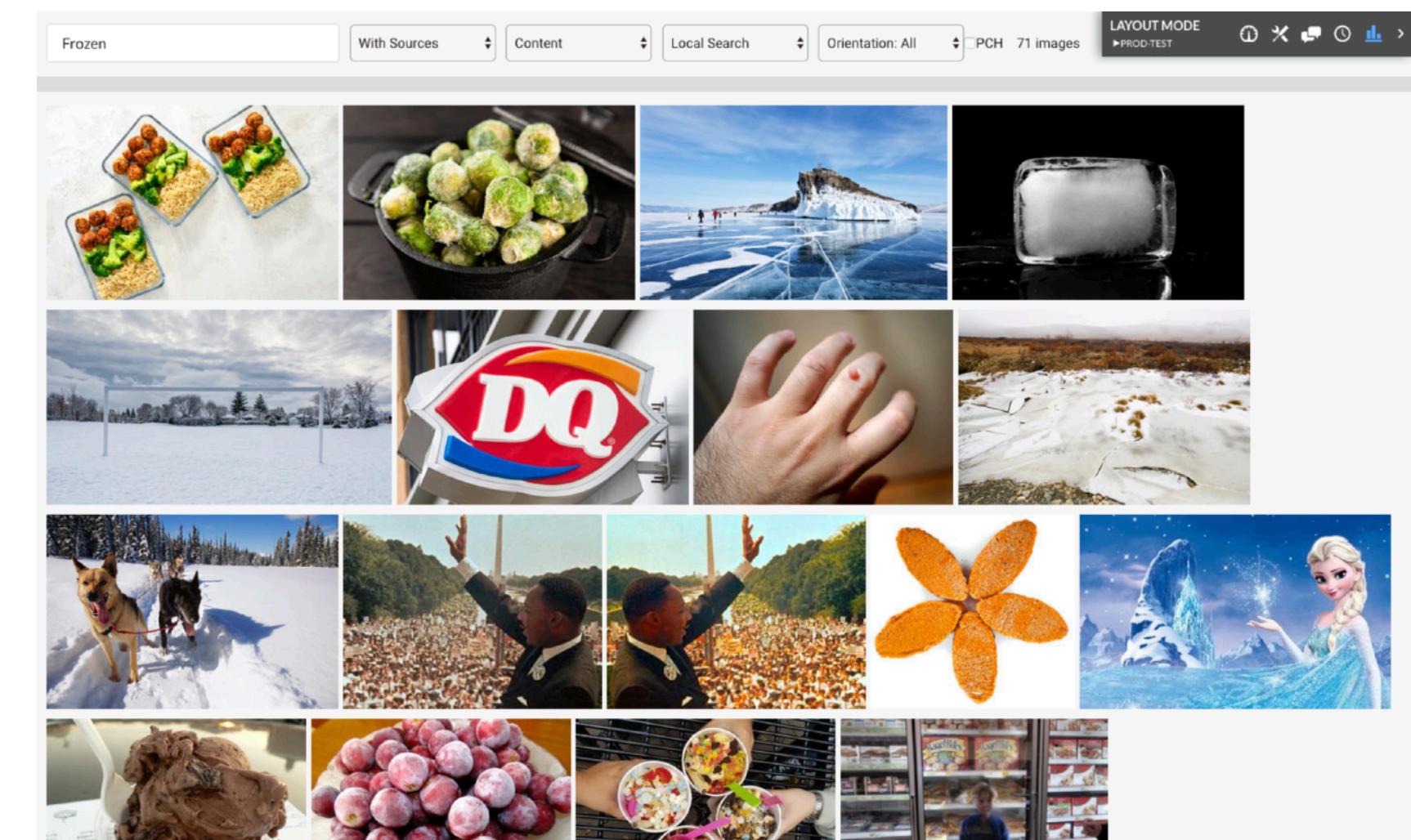
Brightness 100%
Saturation 100%
Contrast 0%
Blur 0%
Sharpness 0%
Scale 100%
Reset

master crop LeadImage3.jpg image source

FACEBOOK SQUARE 6:5 4:3 400:209 3:2

[SAVE & CLOSE](#) [NEXT PHOTO >](#)

Frozen With Sources Content Local Search Orientation: All PCH 71 images LAYOUT MODE PROD-TEST



Development & Post Release

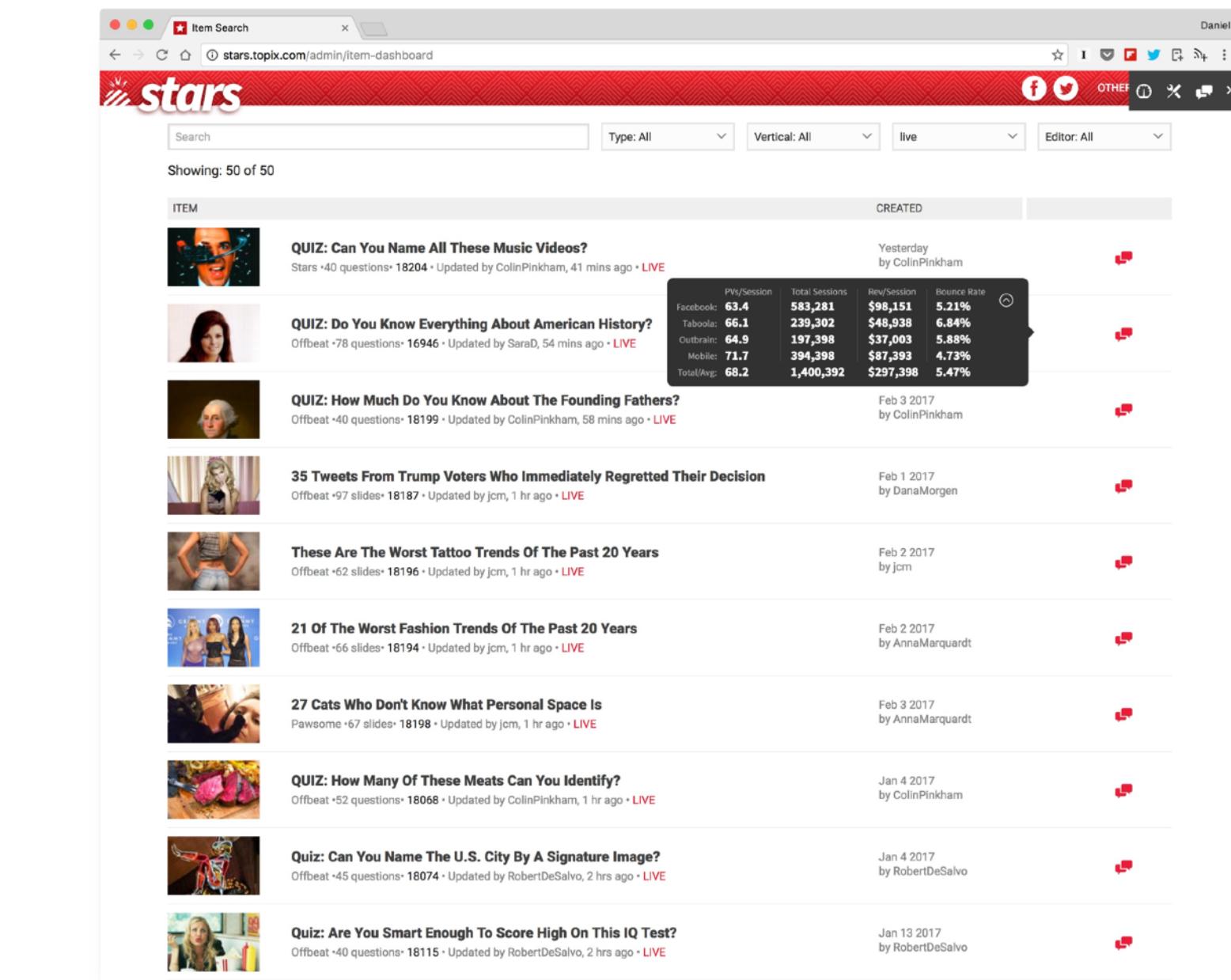
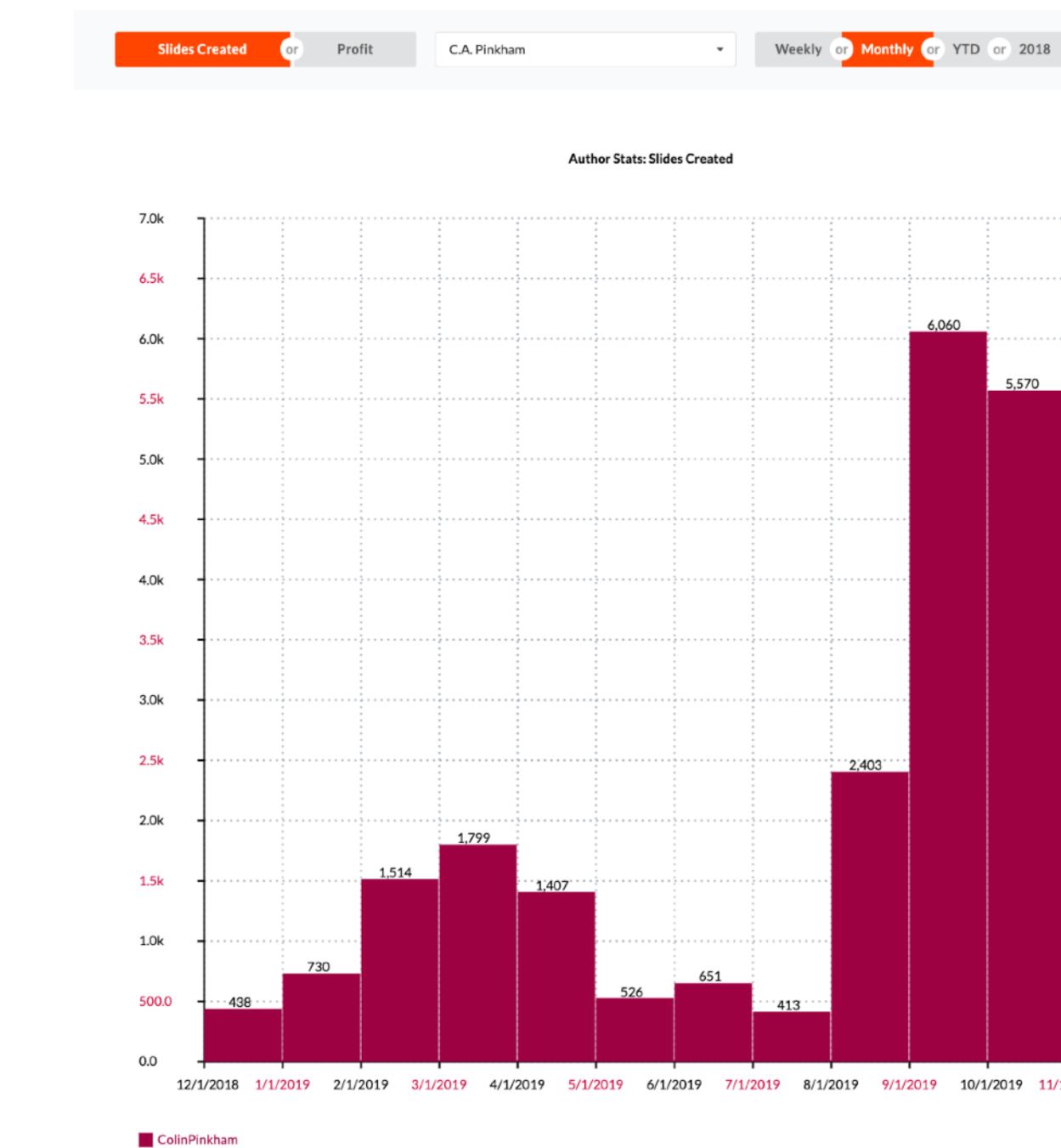
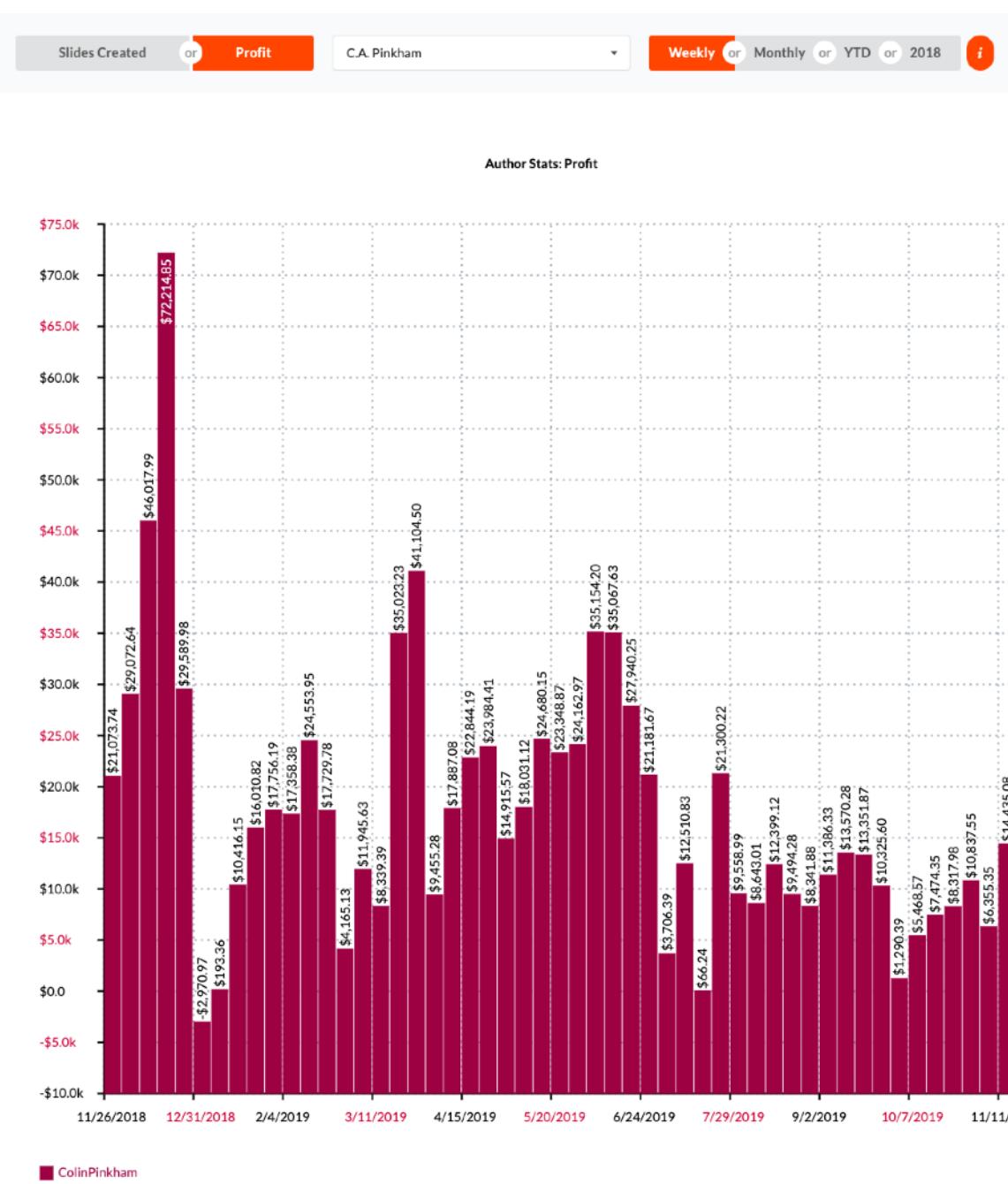
- Building the product:** Once a feature was signed off by all teams internally, engineering began developing it. As Director of Product Design, I led the front-end side of the engineering team, ensuring they were following product functionality and design.
- Testing:** I would regularly test features in a variety of browsers on both desktop and mobile. If any issues arose, sometimes it required going back to the design process to make necessary modifications.
- Release:** When a feature or product was released, that was not the end of the development process: it marked the beginning of A/B testing and iteratively improving on the product over time.
- A/B Testing:** Traffic data was stored in Red Shift and the team used Looker to monitor and analyze traffic data. It was not uncommon for 3 or 4 separate tests to be running each week over a variety of different features and content types.

Conclusions from this data was critical in the design process and would be represented in the my designs and mocks in Sketch for additional internal discussions on further improvements.



Results and Impact

- As mentioned earlier, when the first CMS was designed, there were just thousands of page views per month of content generated by the CMS.
- Writers were able to create content at a much faster pace, so much so that writers sometimes competed who could create the most content.
- Admin dashboards were created to easily access individual writer stats on how a piece of content was performing. The head of the writing team could quickly access how many slides writers were each creating, how much profit each writer's content was generating, how many slides they were creating at any particular point in time and more.
- Our ultimate goal of creating a CMS where writers could create content at a quicker pace was achieved. Having a large amount of content before users enabled the company to quickly identify what was profitable and what wasn't, creating a long list of profitable items, some earning over \$1 million each.



Conclusion

- I think we were successful in creating a CMS where the writer could focus primarily on the content and not have to worry how it looked in all its varying forms on both desktop and mobile. Focusing on the quality of content was the primary goal. I, as the user experience designer for both the CMS and consumer facing products, should worry about this.
- Traffic peaked in 2017 with monthly traffic of 1.5 billion page views and 25 million unique visitors. However, after the Cambridge Analytica crisis with Facebook, traffic numbers began to fall back down due to social media sites applying strict rules across the board, even though Topix was not political in any sense. This severely affected previously profitable layouts of ads and content. Every new improvement was typically met with additional rules on what we were allowed to do.
- Topix was acquired by Publisher's Clearing House in 2019 in order to use Topix's large library of content to promote their own initiatives.



Questions