

THE TABLOID EFFECT

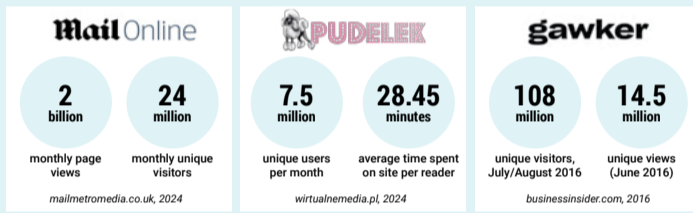
READERSHIP | SHOWBIZ | EMOTIONS | ACCESSIBILITY | TRUST | COMMENTS

Who would have thought?! Guilty-pleasure online tabloids predict political outcomes where traditional broadsheets fail

In the run-up to both the Brexit referendum and to Trump's US election win in 2016, online tabloid newspapers, including the UK's *Mail Online*, the US's *Gawker* and Poland's *Pudelek*, accurately anticipated voting outcomes, whilst broadsheets failed to capture the public mood.

Dr Helena Chmielewska-Szljajfer's analysis of over 2,000 online articles, and over two dozen interviews with tabloid journalists, reveals how the tabloid penchant for celebrity gossip, sensationalist copy and forthright political opinion, often dismissed as lowbrow and far removed from traditional political surveys and expert analyses, actually helped tabloids to engage and align with the views of the general public.

READERSHIP Online tabloids have a huge readership, despite a common misconception that they cater solely to the non-elite, or underrepresented.



SHOWBIZ In online tabloids, political coverage blends with celebrity gossip and sensational human-interest stories, grabbing attention and blurring the lines between entertainment and politics for a compelling read.



EMOTIONS Where broadsheet political analysis may focus on higher-level policy and ideals, tabloids tap into, and leverage, individual experience and emotional responses.



ACCESSIBILITY Like many tabloids, the *Mail Online* credits the secrets to its success with:

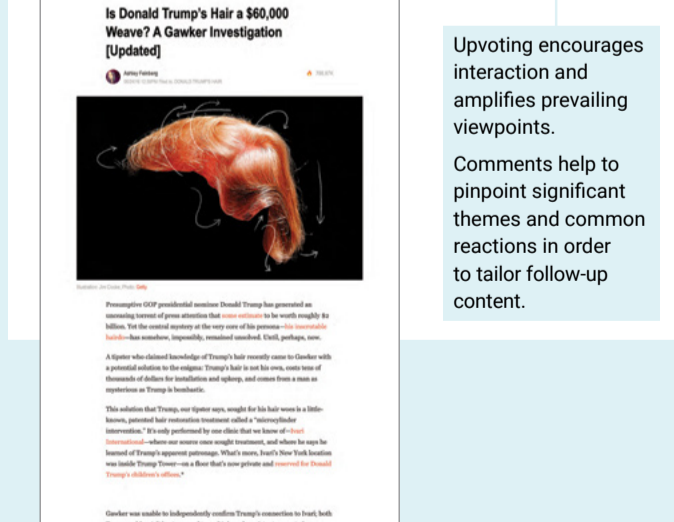
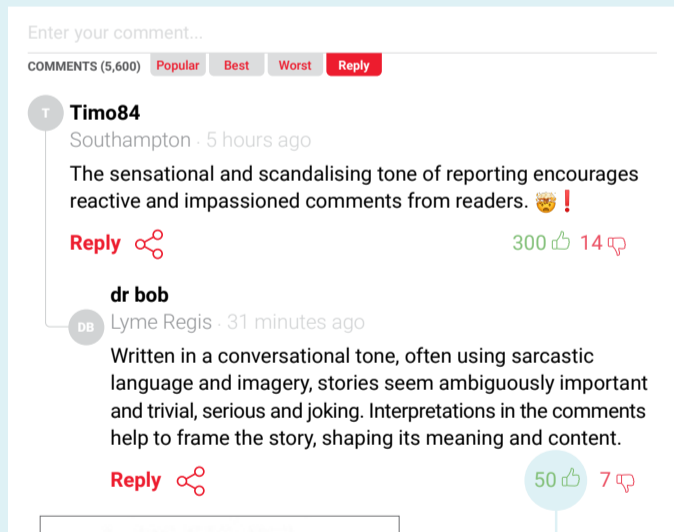
"editorial excellence, dynamic and engaging content, and a picture-led, easily navigable format available any time, anywhere, on any device."



TRUST Articles in online tabloids are written by professionals and are bound by standard press regulations. Professional titles such as "Political Editor" and the inclusion of comments from industry experts help the stories to carry authority and journalistic weight.



COMMENTS In the US elections and UK referendum of 2016, tabloid comment sections were forums for a range of viewpoints. In contrast to more traditional surveys which tried to solicit opinions from members of the public, readers used online platforms to actively volunteer their views.



WHAT THE JOURNALISTS SAY ...

MailOnline

"We're all in the business of trying to make stories interesting and exciting to read."

"The *Mail* more so than anyone, I think, tries to frighten its readers. It tries to make the world look like a scary place, and that [people] need to read the *Mail* so they know just how scary it is."

gawker

"I think that politics is a very superficial kind of world."

"[readers] spent an insane amount of time leaving *Gawker* comments, which seems annoying when it's happening. But then you look back, it's better than other sites where there's no comments, and you just shout into a void."

PUDELEK

"The topics that were the best in terms of clicks were those which allowed people to vent, to voice their hate because they either envied someone for having something, or they loathed someone, or they noticed that someone was dividing them."

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