



# Making Big Data Smarter for Media Companies

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## About the International News Media Association (INMA)

**INMA** ([www.inma.org](http://www.inma.org)) is a global community of market-leading news media companies reinventing how they engage audiences and grow revenue in a multi-media environment. The INMA community consists of 6,800+ executives at 600+ news media companies 80+ countries. Headquartered in Dallas, INMA has offices in San Salvador, São Paulo, Antwerp, and New Delhi.

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## INMA Partners in Business



# Executive Summary

While Big Data is technically about complex data sets that require sophisticated methods to leverage, the bigger ethos for news publishers is about culture, strategy, personnel, and foundations for future growth.

The evolution of data in the media industry has gone from research to database marketing to customer relationship management (CRM) to Big Data.

What has changed for publishers is:

- ▶ The amount of data.
- ▶ The real-time nature of data.
- ▶ The need to optimise consumer engagement.
- ▶ The shift in advertiser mindsets to metrics-based media.
- ▶ New growth paths that require Big Data.

A Big Data strategy and ethos are expensive, complex, and time-consuming. While one can imagine a commoditisation of Big Data over time, the fact is that there are big walls separating media companies with the capital to invest now from those that lack that resource.

In practical terms, news publishers today aim to leverage data for insights into:

- ▶ Editorial purposes.
- ▶ Audience marketing.
- ▶ Advertising solutions.

Publishers are drowning in data, yet not capitalising on it.

Boiled down to its essentials, the meta-issues entering 2015 with Big Data are about:

- ▶ Ad-serving software.
- ▶ CRM.

Actionable strategies and principles about Big Data are emerging. They include knowing who accesses your Web site, personalised content and advertising, increasing engagement with transient visitors, developing new revenue streams, and stopping data leakage. This requires centralising data, content and knowledge profiles, a data team, and data products.

How a media company manages Big Data is an evolving topic. Among the issues faced by publishers are:

- ▶ Why data matters.
- ▶ What is vital and actionable.
- ▶ What are you doing with the data, internal communications, and more.

Centralising data is a minimum requirement of leveraging for sales and engagement, as is reversing data leakage. The people hired to manage and leverage data operations are a new genre of employee never previously needed at media companies.

As if the pressing need to transform media companies into analytics-obsessed cultures isn't enough entering 2015, the emergence of the "Internet of Things" — and its need for identity and signals — will further change the ecosystem in which publishers operate.

There are many practical examples of Big Data emerging, ranging from editorial to advertising to product development to audience and paid content applications. Among the trends are data visualisation, converting user behaviour to action for advertisers, and next-generation testing to optimise subscriptions.

Big Data is a foundation for emerging platforms such as mobile and programmatic buying. Key for mobile is the fast-developing world of location data. Key for

programmatic buying is the ability to target an advertiser's desired audience, notably with real-time bidding.

What news media companies worldwide are on the correct path for Big Data?

In this strategic report, INMA profiles [Aftenposten](#), [Aftonbladet](#), [Ekstra Bladet](#), [Fairfax Media](#), [Financial Times](#), [O Globo](#), [Grupo Clarin](#), [Hindustan Times](#), [Hürriyet](#), [The Irish Times](#), [Media 24](#), [The New York Times](#), [News Corp](#), [Postmedia Network](#), [Ringier](#), [Schibsted](#), and [Torstar](#). Many others are mentioned.

Among the most mature cases is the Financial Times, which began transitioning to Big Data staffing five years ago. Most major media companies are only now hiring their first data scientist or developing their Big Data road map.

In conclusion, these are early days for Big Data in the news media industry. Given the dominance of Google and the emergence of young media companies based on data, the slow pace at which legacy publishers are embracing Big Data is worrisome for some.

This report aims to be a snapshot of Big Data for publishers as they enter 2015. Big questions remain. What are the parameters? What are the costs? What are the practical applications? How much of this is operational vs. cultural? ■