



Personalization as Driver of Growth

INMA Product & Technology Townhall – November 20, 2024

THE HINDU

Founded in 1878.

Legacy of independent journalism

2500+ Employees, 600+ journalists

45 Editions in print around India

30–40 Million monthly unique users

#1 in subscriptions among general news publications in India

THE HINDU
businessline.

FRONTLINE

SPORTSTAR

Deluge of content

*20,000+ stories a
month in all formats*



Overwhelmed users

*95% of user attention
is on 33% of our stories*

*More stories,
new formats*



The Content Paradox



Underserved users!



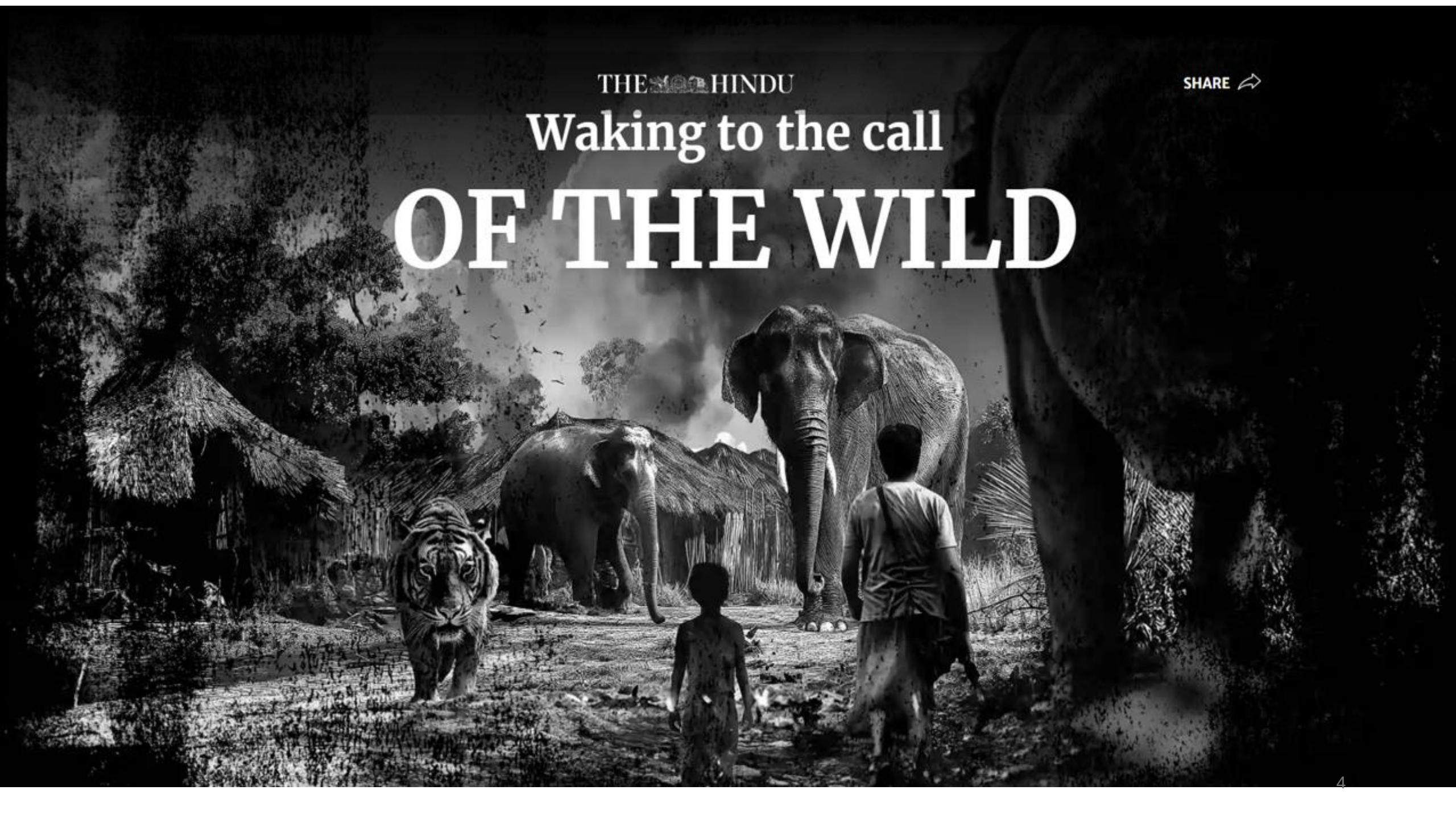
“Nothing to read”

*1 in 2 users leave our home page
without reading an article*

THE HINDU

SHARE ↗

Waking to the call OF THE WILD

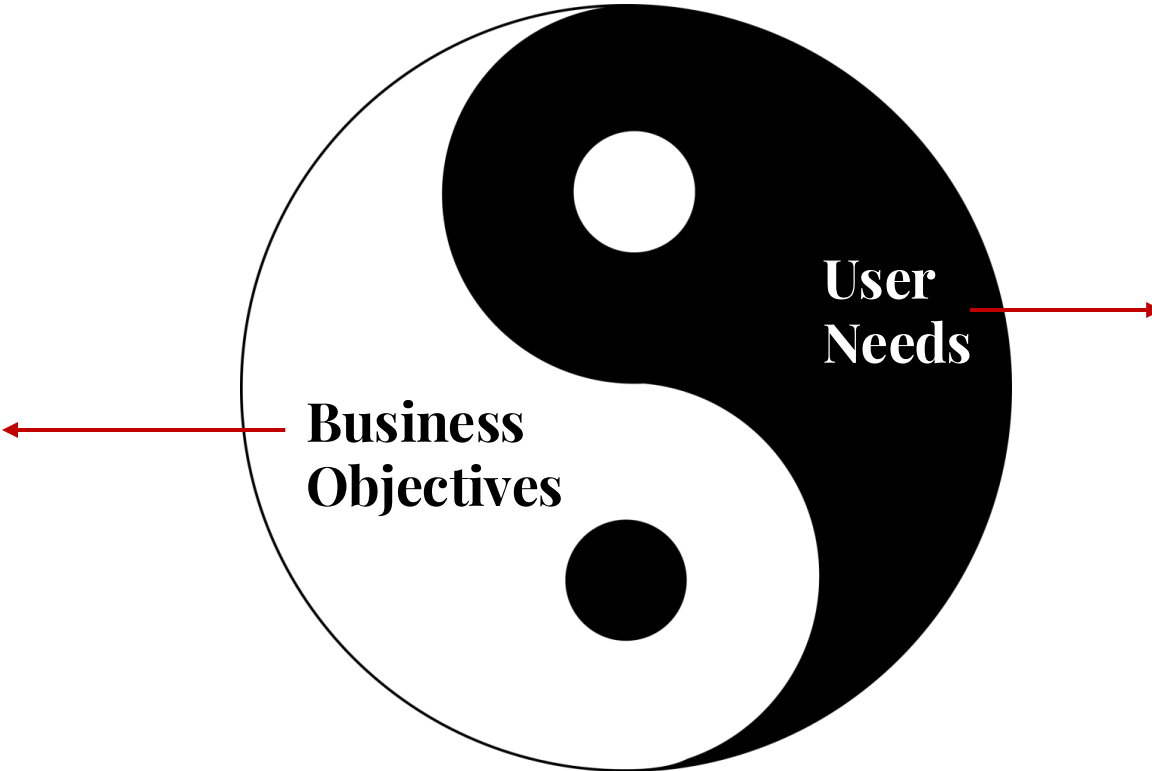


A solution to the content paradox: extreme personalization

The Yin-Yang of ~~Personalization~~

*Product
Management*

Increase user
engagement
and retention



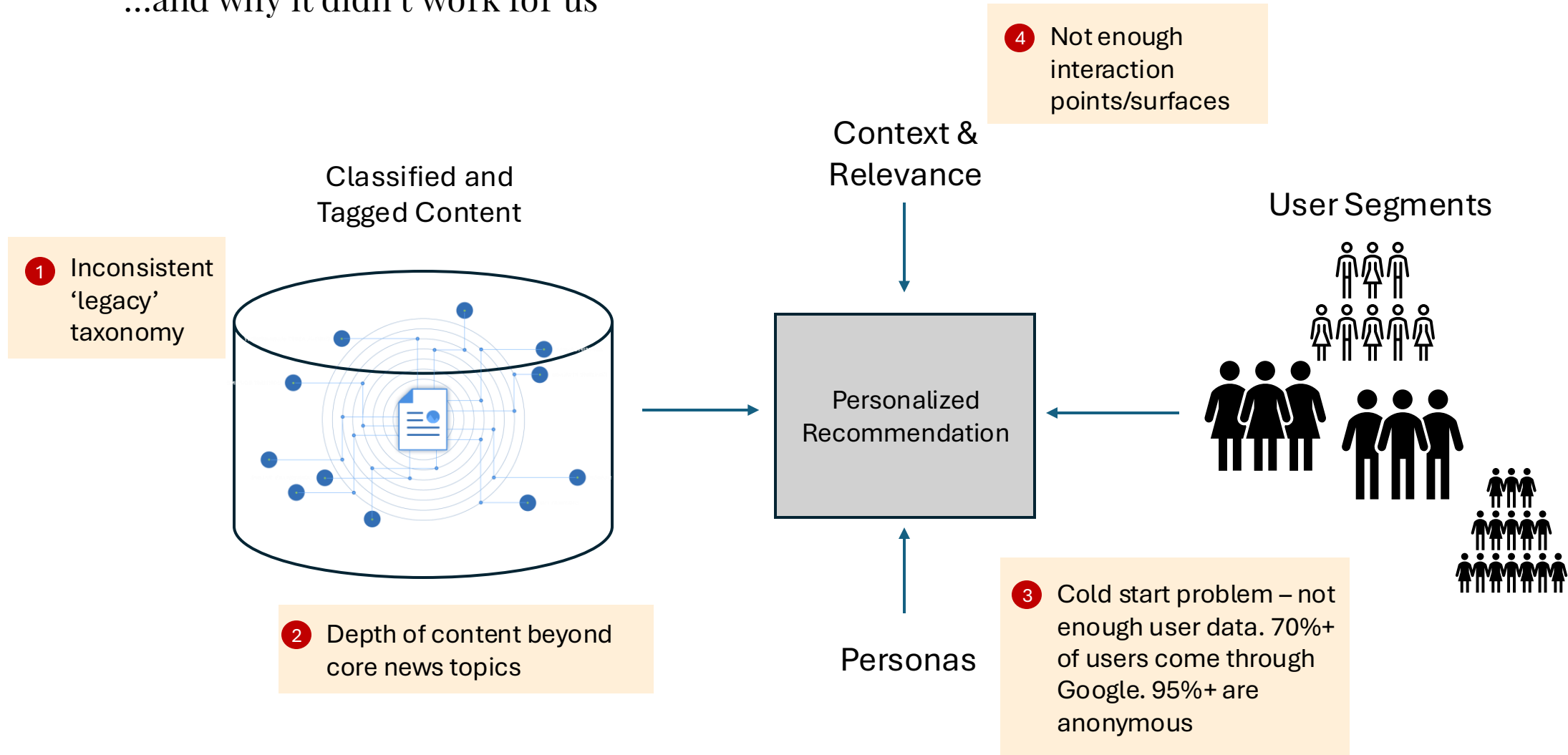
**Business
Objectives**

**User
Needs**

As a user, I want to discover
content that I am
particularly interested in,
when I want it, and in a
format that is convenient
to me

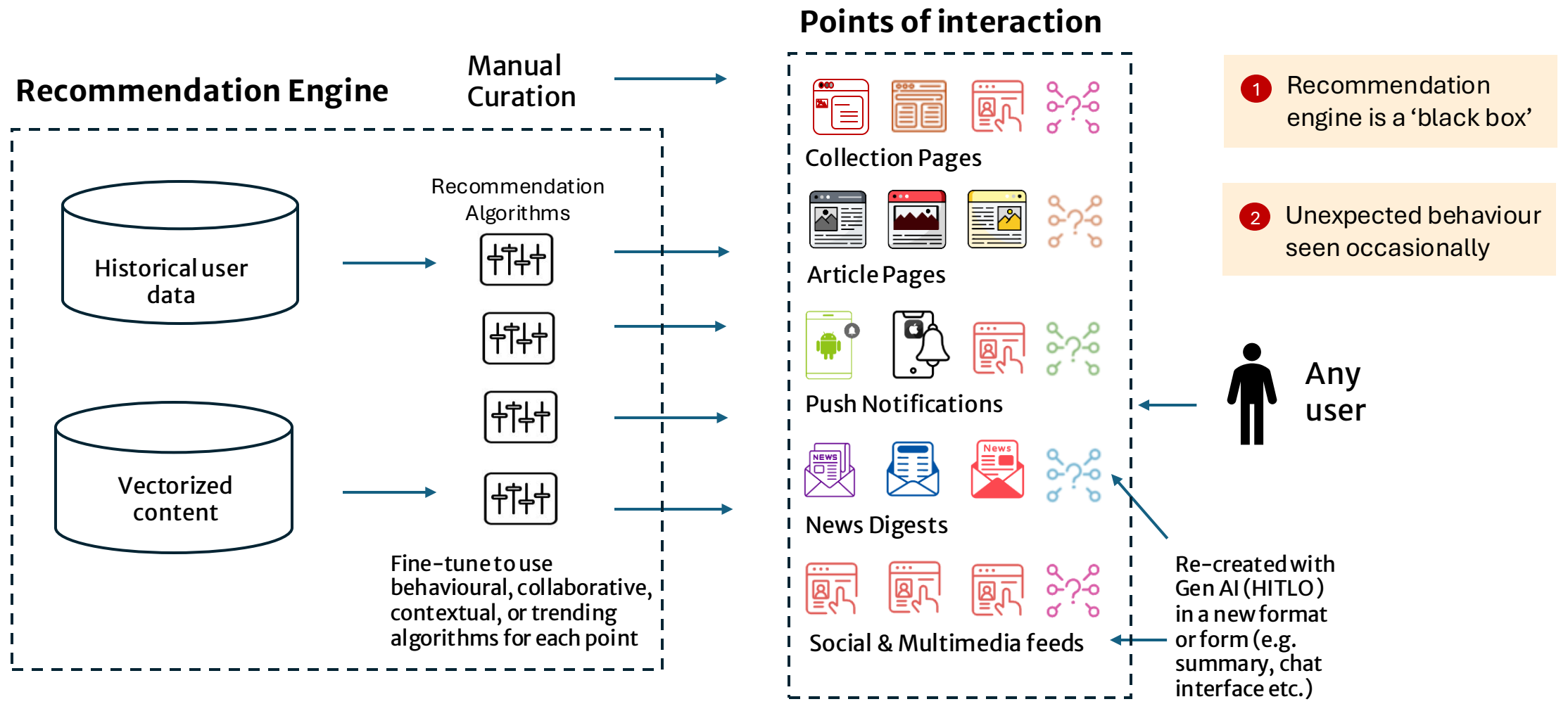
'Old School' Personalization...

...and why it didn't work for us



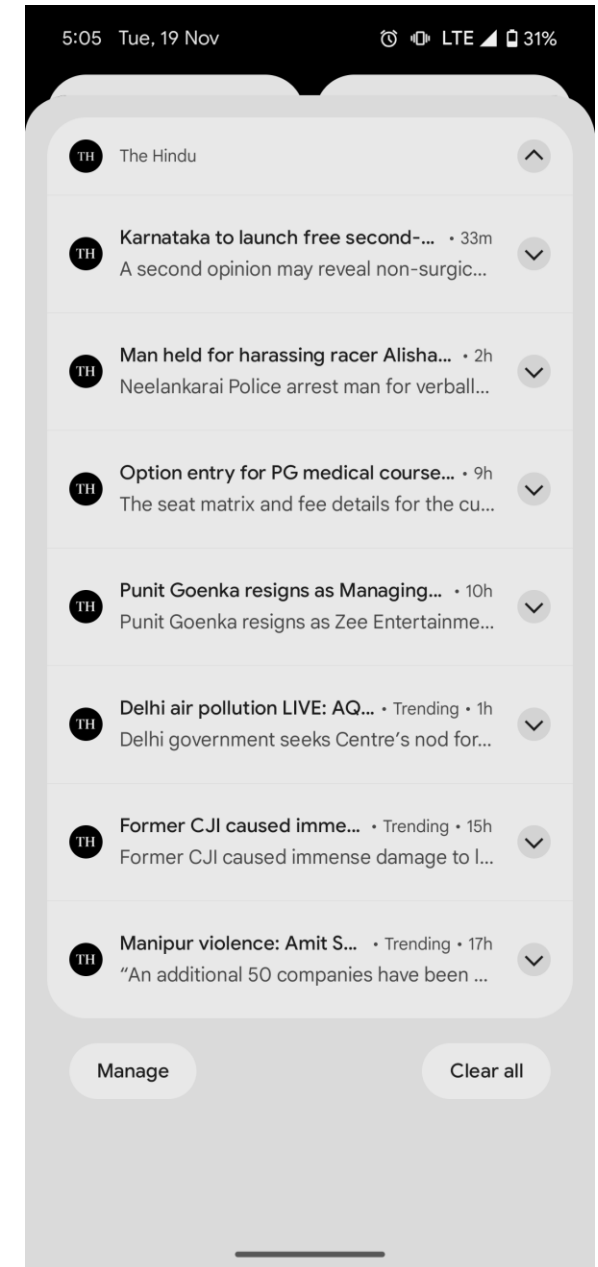
Personalization in the age of AI/ML

There's an app for that



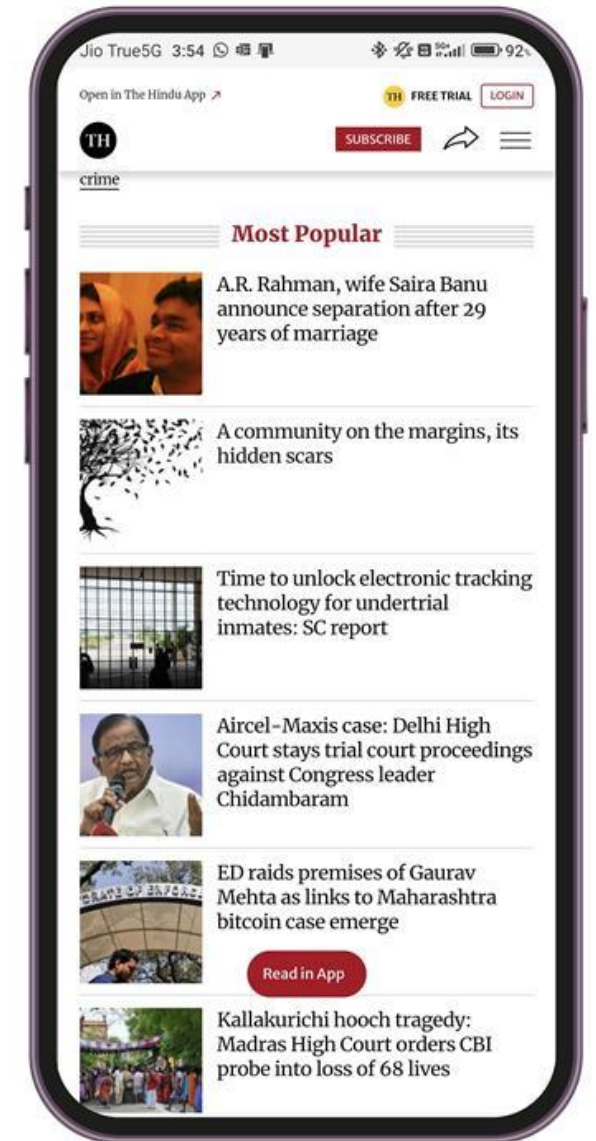
Personalized push notifications in apps resulted in an 8x increase in click through rates

- Before:
 - Notifications were sent sporadically
 - Manual curation of content by editorial staff
 - Focus on the web rather than mobile app
 - Sent when content is published rather than when users read them
- After:
 - Sent at specific times in the day
 - Based on users' past consumption behaviour on our site and apps as well as similar users' behaviour (behavioural + collaborative)
- Outcome:
 - Increased engagement – 8x increase in click through rates
 - More stories are getting exposed to users



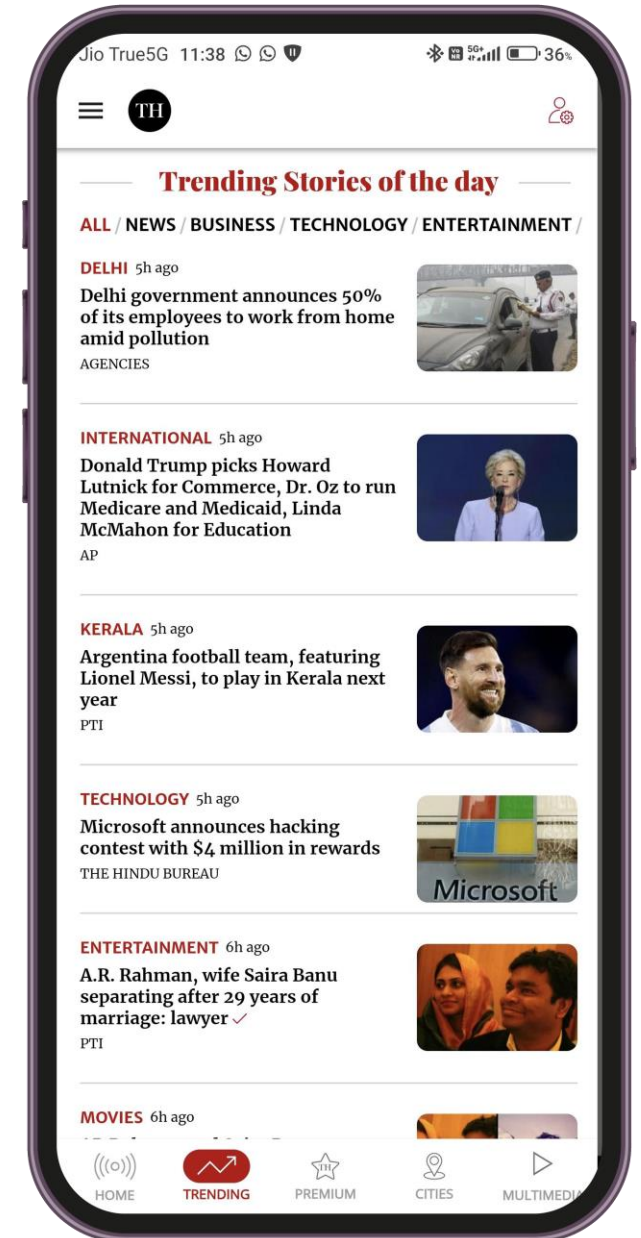
Personalized article page recommendations increased session duration and CTRs

- Before:
 - Article recommendations were automated based on the sections
 - Low engagement compared to peers
- After:
 - Personalized recommendations introduced at the end of each article based on a balanced algorithm that takes
 - On swiping right to left optimizing for context
- Outcome:
 - Session duration increased by 10%
 - 200% increase in website click-through for a similar implementation on web



Creating new points of interaction to enable discovery

- Before:
 - Manually curated home page feed doesn't offer sufficient inventory for the range of stories
 - Home page focused on the most important issues of the day but not the latest trending news relevant for that user
- After:
 - Created a new surface in app – “Trending”
 - Focused on stories with best traction in the last 24 hours
- Outcome:
 - 20% increase in app pageviews



Personalization has driven important business outcomes for The Hindu

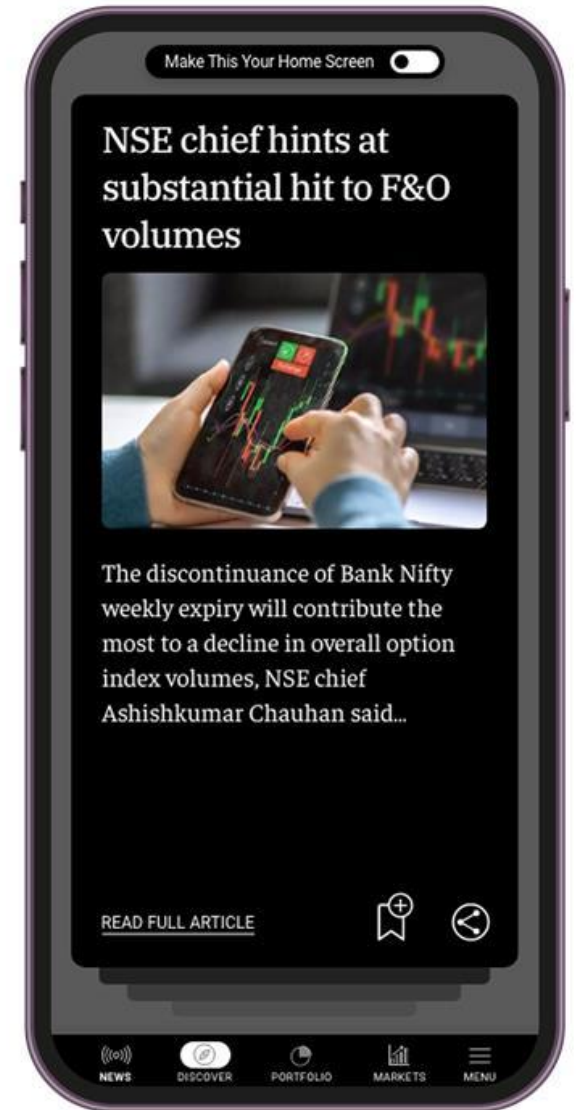
- Monthly Unique Users in app increased 2.5x
- Pageviews in app increased 4x
- Known users are consuming a wider variety of stories:
 - 95% of anonymous traffic comes to 35% of stories
 - 95% of known user traffic comes to 55% of stories
- 40% of subscriptions now happen in our app

What else are we doing with personalization/discovery?

- GenAI based content recommendation to improve context awareness
- Expanding personalization across other channels e.g. newsletters/digests, WhatsApp
- A GenAI summary or article “teaser”
- Creating more interaction points e.g. companion home page
- Audio news summaries



In an early trial of this format with manual summaries we see users scrolling through ~20 stories, but CTRs are still low



Key Takeaways

1. Personalization greatly increases the depth and breadth of content consumed
2. There's an app for that!
3. Creating more surfaces/points of interaction on- and off-platform are important for the success of personalization
4. Retention and conversion are directly impacted by personalized user experiences
5. Current generation of AI/ML recommendation engines reduces dependency on manual taxonomy, tagging, user segmentation; GenAI will further improve this
6. Asking users what they like does not work 😊