Best practices for driving readership with Adobe Digital Publishing Suite

by David Schmidt

Introduction

New mobile devices present a great opportunity for publishers and advertisers to leverage the strength of magazines' historical reader relationships and also attract new readers. Publishers and advertisers using Adobe Digital Publishing Suite (DPS) have a convenient, portable way to connect with consumers, enhance their experience via interactive content, and monetize in new ways that are more effective than traditional web offerings.

In December 2013, Adobe released data showing a 300% increase in unique monthly readers between October 2012 and October 2013. Adobe has seen the number of publications delivered using DPS climb every week since March 2011 with more than 150 million issues downloaded to date. Over the last two-and-a-half years, what started at around 300,000 issues downloaded per week is now trending towards close to two million downloads per week.

Figure 1. Increase in downloads and readership

DPS-created apps have three times as many unique readers than this time last year.

Since launch less than three years ago, more than 220M digital publications built with DPS have been downloaded to tables and phones.

This is a large opportunity for publishers, but there are also new challenges. A DPS publisher needs to have a plan for driving readership.

There are a multitude of ways for publishers to drive reader acquisition and retention for their DPS titles. Publishers can combine traditional consumer marketing techniques with powerful capabilities provided by DPS to maximize reach, engagement, conversion, and retention. This document provides an overview of all of the readership-related techniques available to DPS publishers, as well as examples of how to combine these tactics together into a comprehensive strategy. It also provides references to “how-to” resources which include implementation guidance as well as sample code and templates.
Reader acquisition and retention

The new world of digital magazine publishing requires publishers to think differently about reader acquisition and retention.

Traditional reader acquisition funnel

For print magazines, the process of acquiring readers is often thought of as a linear effort:

```
Awareness
Consideration
Preference / Trial
Purchase/Subscribe
Loyalty/Renew
```

- Newsstand
- Advertising
- Direct mail/email
- Search engine marketing
- Social Networks
- Web samples
- Free issues
- Blow-ins
- Discounted subscriptions
- Incentives
- Renewal reminders

Figure 2. The traditional linear approach to reader acquisition and retention

Digital magazine reader lifecycle

For digital magazines, it is more appropriate to think about the acquisition process as a continuous reader lifecycle:

```
Generate awareness
Convert/renew/cross-sell
Engage with content
Collect data
Send targeted communications
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Figure 3. The Digital Magazine Reader Lifecycle

Maximizing acquisition and retention

The goal of the digital magazine reader lifecycle is to:

- Maximize conversion (purchases of single issues and subscriptions, and upselling from single issue purchases to subscription)
- Maximize renewals and minimize the chance that subscribers will cancel their current subscription
- Maximize the ability to cross-sell other publications and apps
- Maximize reader engagement with the publication/brand, leading to more viral sharing of content and advertising views and return visits to the app
The lifecycle phases are summarized below:

- **Generate awareness.** Maximize new reader reach by leveraging DPS capabilities such as social sharing, direct entitlement, and the embedded web viewer in conjunction with traditional methods such as direct marketing and advertising.

- **Engage with content.** Your content needs to be great, and should take advantage of the immersive interactivity that is unique to DPS. DPS enables you to easily include elements such as slide shows, interactive overlays, and embedded video and audio. Pushing further, the sky’s the limit if you incorporate your own HTML5 interactive content. Provide new readers with immediate access to this compelling content by leveraging capabilities such as first issue free and free article preview. Create a DPS custom storefront and provide teaser content, promote subscriptions, and cross-sell other publications and apps.

- **Collect data.** Collect reader contact data via push notification opt-ins and HTML forms throughout your app (optionally offering promotional content in return for data). Also collect subscriber data via iOS marketing opt-ins incentives and the DPS post-subscription form.

- **Send targeted communications.** Leverage reader data to notify readers of new content, drive conversions, drive usage, and cross-promote other titles by leveraging push notifications and targeted emails.

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Figure 4. DPS capabilities for each phase of the reader lifecycle (* denotes features currently available only for iOS Digital Publishing Suite apps, ** denotes features only available in DPS Enterprise Edition)

All of these tactics, combined with compelling editorial content and an immersive, interactive experience, will drive conversions, renewals, and cross-selling. In the following sections, we will dive into each phase in detail.

**Generate awareness**

If you build it, they aren’t likely to come unless you have a way to let them know you’re out there. Simply creating content for tablets and smartphones doesn’t solve the dilemma of how to grow digital readership. You should use everything in your existing marketing arsenal, as well as capabilities unique to DPS, to drive awareness about your digital publications.

**Availability on different devices via multiple app marketplaces**

DPS currently supports iOS, Android™ and Windows 8.1 devices, and DPS apps can be distributed via Apple’s App Store, Google Play, and Samsung’s Papergarden Digital Magazine Service. The same great interactive experience is available across all of these platforms and marketplaces.

It’s important to understand the device and marketplace preferences of your target readers and make your content available to them. Device preference also varies by geography. For example, at this time, the iPad is particularly popular in the United States, while Android tablets have a stronger presence internationally.
Presence in an app marketplace makes your content available to potential readers. The marketplaces also promote and merchandise digital magazine content based on their own editorial process. So, for example, Apple has a "Newsstand" category of their App Store which is dedicated to magazines and newspapers. Each week, Apple chooses which publications to highlight. Note that app marketplaces operate on a revenue share model for magazines sold directly through them.

You should also consider distributing your publication to smartphones, which have a far greater penetration than tablets. For example, Rodale reformulated the layout and design of its DPS tablet versions of Men's Health and Women's Health magazines to create versions better suited for the iPhone/iTouch user experience. For instance, iPhone users like to thumb through content, tend to listen to more audio than tablet users, and carry the device everywhere.

The design modifications for smartphones included large fonts and icons for easy navigation. Signature elements of Men's Health, like workout guides, have been modified for the small screen as well. To replace the posters from the print version, the iPhone/iTouch version of Men's Health uses the slide show function to create full-page animations of exercises. Many articles also include audio overlays, which are intended for people who may take their iPhone when commuting or going to the gym to work out, for example, giving them the opportunity to consume magazine content without having to read or hold the device.

The Vanity Fair iPhone edition also takes user behavior into consideration. The table of contents includes estimates of how many minutes the short, medium, and long reads will take, enabling readers to choose content based on their available window of time.
What’s the lesson? You need to think about publishing to more devices and marketplaces to help boost both access and readership. DPS helps you adapt content quickly to suit the technology needs of multiple platforms, screens, and devices and enable you to easily distribute apps through the leading mobile marketplaces. DPS also provides analytics that give you insight into how readers engage with your editorial and advertising content. This enables you to identify which platforms are the most successful, guiding decisions about how to direct your publishing efforts.

Advertising and direct marketing
Leverage direct mail and email campaigns using existing or purchased lists to promote your DPS publication. You can drive traffic to your app in the app marketplaces or to your website, where you can directly sell subscriptions or provide desktop access to your DPS content using the embedded web viewer (see below). Use print and online advertising to generate awareness. Cross promote your app from your other apps and print magazines.

Use powerful capabilities available within DPS apps via JavaScript to execute intelligent cross promotion campaigns. For example, you can detect if a reader has already installed one of your other apps, and change your dynamic in-app marketing messages appropriately. You can even detect the presence of competitors’ apps on the reader’s device, and based on this, target the reader with different consumer offers. See the article New Consumer Marketing API’s for more information.

You can also leverage Apple’s “Smart App Banners” to promote your DPS app. You can enable these banners to appear for new visitors to your web properties who are browsing using Safari on their iOS devices. This standardized banner will appear unobtrusively on the top of the web page, and it automatically changes its behavior depending on if your app is already installed on the device. (When tapped, it either opens the App Store entry for your app, or opens the app itself.) See Apple’s help document Promoting Apps with Smart App Banners for implementation details.

Figure 7. An example of the iOS Smart App Banner appearing in the Safari browser

Social media promotion
Social media is a powerful way to drive awareness and engagement. According to the Adobe 2013 Mobile Consumer Survey, more than half of all tablet and smartphone owners use their devices for social media. Given this statistic, it’s clear that social media can be a potent way to promote digital editions available on those same devices. It’s also a good way to get to know customers better and find out what they really think.

An MPA study on smartphones, Magazine Media Readers and Smartphones, found that 67% of readers who had downloaded at least three apps reported that they have become more engaged with a digital magazine brand via social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, or Pinterest. Another MPA study, Magazine Readers are Social, found that 35% love to share articles or products they see in magazines and 34% interact with their favorite media brands across multiple social media platforms.
You can think of social media as being somewhat equivalent to “pass along” in the print world. What can you do to capitalize? First, you can use social media to promote free downloads, first issue free offers, free article previews, and access to a version of the app embedded on the your website to prospective customers. Reviews and testimonials are another way to tap into the community effect. Posting them on social media can drive traffic to the publication and boost readership. Similarly, posting positive things customers have said via social media within the digital edition itself can serve as an incentive for potential customers to download an article or publication. Publishers should also consider sharing multimedia content. Publications that frequently use audio and video in their digital apps can easily repackage some of it for promotional purposes on social media. But be sure to proceed with caution and don’t overdo it. Social media users tend to be very sensitive about being marketed to.

**Digital Publishing Suite embedded web viewer**

Embed the Adobe Content Viewer for Web directly onto your publication’s website. Use advertising and direct marketing to drive traffic to your website rather than directly to a download link for your app. This will allow you to instantly get your high-fidelity DPS content in front of potential new readers, without them even having to download and open an app.

Embedding the DPS web viewer on your website provides many benefits:

- Dramatically expands discoverability of your app by leveraging traffic to your site
- Introduces your rich DPS app experience to readers without them being on a tablet or having to download and install your app
- Helps you monetize your web traffic by converting web visitors into digital edition subscribers

**Digital Publishing Suite social sharing**

Leverage the viral power of your existing readers sharing DPS articles to friends or to their social networks by activating social sharing in your app. You can enable readers to share articles directly from your DPS app via email, Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest. Recipients of the shared content can read additional free articles in a browser (as specified by the publisher) and then be directed to subscribe. (Note that currently, DPS social sharing is only available for iOS apps.)

**Bundling with print subscriptions**

Many publications launching digital editions start building readership by targeting existing subscribers. They are already loyal to the brand. They already believe in the content. Helping them understand that they can access a new type of experience for consuming information is a way to boost both digital readership and customer loyalty. Using the direct entitlement capability of DPS, publishers can make their digital editions immediately available to print subscribers, who merely have to authenticate their subscription to gain access. For more information, see the article “Leveraging direct entitlement with Digital Publishing Suite.”

Many publishers are bundling print and digital editions to help maintain print subscribers and grow digital readership. It’s a good starting place because it’s fairly simple to market digital editions to existing subscribers. Publishers already possess customer data that enable them to create targeted campaigns for the web, email, and direct mail. Furthermore, the conventional wisdom of bundling is that consumers will pay a higher price for the content they want when given options for content delivery.

*Martha Stewart Living* has seen this wisdom payoff. After offering its digital edition for free for a limited time to print subscribers, at the time of renewal subscribers can choose from three renewal options. They can renew just the print edition for the same cost, the print and digital bundle for $2 more, or the digital edition only for $5 less. The vast majority of subscribers, more than 80%, migrate from print-only to the print and digital bundle, while less than 10% choose digital only, and very few choose print only. In addition, renewal rates of authenticated print subscribers have increased by 20%.
Many in the publishing industry believe appealing to both digital and print readers will increase total readership, which justifies digital publishing efforts and can help support higher ad pricing. Bundling subscription packages also gives publishers the opportunity to offer bi-directional incentives (e.g. print-to-digital and digital-to-print), thus making it easier for readers to purchase and consume content in the way that meets their needs at a particular time.

Finally, bundling helps maintain direct contact with subscribers. Currently, app marketplaces don’t always collect personal information from purchasers and pass it along to publishers. Without bundling, publishers forfeit the ability to maintain ongoing contact with readers, along with the ability to upsell and cross-sell, which can keep subscribers engaged with the brand.

Unbundling, on the other hand, gives publishers an opportunity to cast a wider demographic net. For many publishers, tablet devices are encouraging reading among demographics that fall outside most publications’ target markets. By reaching out to new audiences, publications have an opportunity to increase net new subscribership and boost revenue. It’s also a different way to provide value. Many subscribers also think it’s reasonable to pay a little more to have both print and digital. (Additionally, the direct entitlement capability can be used to facilitate the sale of digital magazines outside of mobile app stores—for example, publishers can sell digital subscriptions directly from their website, and readers can then log in to the free DPS app to access your content).

*Martha Stewart Living* has found that, compared with traditional print, readers of its digital edition are:

- Younger (by about seven years)
- More affluent (30% higher average household income)
- More satisfied by their reading experience (at least 5% to 10% more satisfied)

*Backpacker* magazine, published by Active Interest Media (AIM), only offers its digital edition as a standalone subscription. Speaking at the iMAG conference in 2012, Jonathan Dorn, SVP of content and product development for AIM, said *Backpacker* has determined that digital-only offerings bring net new readers to its business. He added that when surveyed, most customers want print or digital, not both. Based on this information, AIM is able to drive more readership and revenue by staying unbundled.

Based on Adobe’s aggregate data for the 12 months leading up to February 2014, entitled print subscribers are the most engaged type of readers of DPS content. Entitled print subscribers spend an average of 60 minutes in their DPS apps per month, with an average of 165 content views per month. This compares with an overall average of 26 minutes and 86 content views per month across all readers. Thus, bundling with print subscriptions can jump start engagement in your app as you build your digital readership, giving you more analytics data for optimizing your content and increasing your digital edition advertising views.

**Engage with content**

Well-produced DPS publications are compelling, interactive, and beautiful. They provide a cutting-edge tablet experience. To maximize engagement with your DPS apps, you need to provide new readers with quick and painless access to content and wow them with an experience that’s even better than print.

Most DPS apps are delivered through free “shells” that will ultimately provide readers access to your paid content. Users may quickly abandon your app after installation if they are disillusioned that they then have to make a purchase and/or endure a slow download process.

The ultimate goal is to convert a downloader of your shell into a paying customer. But instead of viewing this as a difficult challenge, use your shell as a prime opportunity to market to and engage with a potential new customer.

Some of the most effective ways to engage a new reader are:

1. Provide quick and easy access to free sample content
2. Leverage the DPS custom storefront to customize your app’s user experience and market to readers
3. Optimize folio (issue) downloads
4. Deliver a “better than print” experience by leveraging the interactive capabilities of DPS
Free issue and article content

It is important for publishers to give customers who have just downloaded your shell immediate and painless access to some sample/free content. Otherwise, the consumer acquisition effort and expense could be wasted if a new reader abandons the shell after install because the only option to get access to your content is to buy or subscribe.

First issue free

One of the most seamless ways to engage a new reader is to use the first issue free feature of DPS. This can be configured so that the most recent issue starts downloading immediately the first time a new user opens your shell. The issue can even be set to open automatically within seconds of the download commencing. Giving away your current issue to a reader who has downloaded your shell for the first time is a powerful way to get them directly into your content. This provides a true "one click to content" option that offers the best possible new user experience. (Note that first issue free is only currently available for iOS apps).

Free article preview

In addition to (or in place of) first issue free, you can use the free article preview feature to offer access to select free access in the current issue and/or any back issues. If free article preview is enabled for an issue, readers will see a "Preview" button in addition to the "Buy" and "Subscribe" buttons when browsing available issues.

Once the preview issue is opened, readers can freely access any articles designated as "free" by the publisher. Publishers can also set any article to "metered" to allow preview readers to choose which articles they'd like to view up to the publisher's paywall limit. In this "metered" scenario, publishers can choose to set selected articles to "protected" to prevent previewers from viewing them regardless of the paywall status. (This might be used to protect the issue's "hero" articles so that previewers are compelled to purchase or subscribe.)

In practice, free article previews are driving significant purchases and subscriptions. Based on Adobe aggregate data in February 2014, approximately 14% of readers who accessed a free preview went on to purchase an issue. Approximately 7% of article previewers actually purchased a subscription. These impressive conversion rates make free article preview an important capability to take advantage of as part of your overall strategy to drive readership and revenue.

For a video overview, see the video Free Article Preview - DPS. For implementation details, including sample code for using free article preview within a custom storefront, see the article “Free Article Preview.” (Note that free article preview is only available for iOS apps).

Free issue

Publishers can also set any arbitrary back issue to "free" when publishing them. This can be used to offer readers free samples or special issues.

One interesting use of a free issue could be as follows: If your magazine is published monthly, you could also publish weekly free “teaser” issues. These issues could be minimal in scope, but should be timely, perhaps previewing articles coming in the next monthly issue. The benefit of this is that there is a constant stream of timely, new content for both subscribers and non-subscribers, plus, if your app is in the Apple Newsstand, and the reader has opted in to push notifications, you can notify them weekly via push that new content is available. This could significantly increase engagement with your app and content.

Digital blow-ins

It’s great to give non-paying readers compelling free samples of your content, but the goal of features such as first issue free, free article preview, and free issue is to convert readers into buyers. Akin to traditional print "blow-in" offer cards, you can use the digital blow-ins feature to intersperse subscription and purchase call-to-action messages through out the free issue. Even better, the digital blow-ins are "smart," so you can target messages and offers based on how the reader obtained the issue:

• If the issue was free, the blow-in message could be, "Are you enjoying your free issue? Subscribe now!" with a subscribe button.

• If the issue was a single-issue purchase, your goal is now to upsell. The message could be "Enjoying this issue? Subscribe now at 60% off the single issue rate!"

• If the reader is already a subscriber, you could, for example, cross-promote another title.
The digital blow-in is a fully customizable web overlay or HTML article, so it can be used for anything you could dream up, including data collection forms to collect email addresses and other personal data.

The combination of free sample content and targeted offers within free content is powerful. The MPA study *Magazine Media Readers and Tablets* found that free content downloads are popular, with 69% of those surveyed saying they’ve downloaded free issues. As a concrete example, *Esquire* uses free sample content to get people to interact immediately and then focuses on converting them to paid readers. By messaging people as soon as they access free content, the publisher has seen a 10% to 50% increase in conversion rates. Additionally, publishers can collect readers’ contact data in return for free content, enabling direct marketing and helping to drive additional revenue opportunities (see the “promotional entitlement” discussion in the “Collect data” section below).

**Welcome Screen for iOS apps**

In December 2013, Adobe added the option to display a customizable Welcome Screen the first time a user launches a new or updated DPS app on iOS. This can be used for any purpose, including, for example:

- A welcome screen for new readers, with options for purchasing a subscription or authenticating a previously purchased digital or print-bundled subscription
- A splash screen to let readers know that their first issue is free
- A form for collecting readers’ contact information
- A mechanism to automatically download and view an issue with Free article preview activated

Leveraging this screen can help to dramatically improve readers’ first experience with your app. For implementation details, including a customizable template, see the Developer Center article “Getting started with a welcome screen.”

![Figure 8. Example of an iOS Welcome Screen](image)

**Information Screen**

As of the March 2014 DPS release, you can now drive subscriptions by displaying an Information Screen at any point when readers are consuming content. The Information Screen can be used to encourage readers to create an account, download a companion app, access help content or purchase a subscription via a “transparent Web view.” In this web view, you can display HTML content consistent with your app’s look-and-feel that prompts a user to take action, for example:

- Display a subscription call to action for users that have previewed but not bought an issue.
- Display specific content or promotions for users that have not opened the app in X days.
Display a promotion for related publications if the user is an active subscriber of the current publication.

Display a promotion ("Digital Blow-In") every X pages or swipes.

For more information on how to implement an Information Screen, see the article "New APIs and features in r30."

**Folio Showcase**

As of the June 2014 DPS release, if your iPad app offers subscriptions, the default DPS library on iOS 7 or later will have an updated appearance that promotes the newest content available for purchase or subscription. If a free preview of content is offered, that’s called out too.

![Figure 9. Example of Folio Showcase in default library view](image)

**Custom storefront**

For DPS Enterprise Edition users, the custom storefront gives you great flexibility to customize the initial user experience of the app. It can be configured to be the first thing that readers see when they open the app, and it allows you to tailor the look and feel to match your brand. The custom storefront is completely customizable via HTML, and can be hosted “live” and updated continuously just like your web properties.

**Showcase recent issues**

One of the primary uses of the custom storefront is to showcase recent issues and offer them for sale, along with information and imagery that teases what’s contained in the issues.

**Marketing messaging**

You can leverage the screen real-estate of your custom storefront to present timely marketing messaging and imagery to your readers, including subscription offers. For example, you could design large HTML marketing banners that animate and automatically slide in and out.

**Live and sample content**

You can embed continually updating sample content right into the custom storefront. For example, you can display video clips relating to the current issue right at the top of the storefront, above the collection of issues that you are offering for sale.

For custom storefront implementation details, please start with the articles "Getting started with the v2 Library and Store API" and "Using the DPS Store Configurator to customize the look and feel of the viewer library."
Back issues
Sales of digital back issues have emerged as a very effective way for publishers to generate revenue. Fulfilling print back issue orders in the past has been cumbersome. But it’s a snap in the digital world. In fact, back issues are big business for many publishers. While news magazines may not have much of a market for back issues, publications with evergreen content are reporting brisk back issue sales. According to the Adweek article, “Tablets Helping Publishers Sell Back Issues,” about one-fourth of Martha Stewart Living single digital issue sales are for back issues. Enthusiast magazines do well, too. Also according to Adweek, back issues account for 40% of single-issue digital sales for Popular Science and 41% of sister publication Popular Photography.

In another example, Martha Stewart Living uses a custom storefront that allows readers to purchase back issues and special issues directly from the app, and features short videos to engage readers and make them want more. Since the launch of the digital storefront, the publisher has achieved a 15% to 20% increase in orders/transactions across all iPad magazines and apps.

Cross-selling
Perhaps one of the most fertile areas for revenue generation within digital publications is the ability to cross-sell and upsell from within the storefront. You can have an entire section of your customized storefront devoted to cross-selling.

You can even cross-sell nonpublishing products and services. For instance, a movie-oriented publication could sell tickets and provide film times and theater locations using devices’ geolocation capabilities. For implementation details, see the article “Getting Started with the geolocation API.”

Surveys
You can use the custom storefront as a vehicle to deliver customer satisfaction surveys. This can help you can gather valuable information about what is working and what can be improved in your DPS app and content. You can deliver a survey via a “slide-up web view” in your custom storefront, or via a web content overlay from within an issue. You can use one of the many available survey services such as SurveyMonkey or ForeSee, or you can host your own custom HTML-based survey. See the help document Web Content overlays for more information about implementing web overlays from within an issue.

Manage download times
One of the promises digital publishing has made to readers is instant access to content. Unfortunately, large file sizes can take several minutes to download, which may be long enough for readers to be discouraged from trying. While publishers want to create digital editions that engage and excite readers, they need to show some discretion when it comes to adding interactive content to keep file sizes smaller.

National Geographic has seen a positive correlation between the decrease in the file size and the download completion rate. Between September 2012 and March 2013, the publication decreased its file size from 567MB to 286MB and download completion rates increased 20%, from 68% to 88%.

![NGM Domestic iPad App: Correlation of Download Completion Rates to Size of Issue](image)

Source: National Geographic

Figure 10. National Geographic’s download completion rate by issue file size
Besides minimizing file size, publishers can also take advantage of features that make high-demand content available more quickly. DPS features such as progressive download can prioritize content by what publishers think readers want most and have it download first. The rest of the app can download in the background. If the app detects that a reader is “dwelling” on an article that is about to download, its priority changes to download before other content. Automatic (background) download, which leverages Apple’s Newsstand and push notifications, also minimizes download wait time for readers.

Daily Mail, one of Britain’s leading newspapers, includes approximately 209 pages per day, and the file sizes average 170MB each. Many Newsstand app subscribers elect to have the publication automatically downloaded to their iPads, so it is waiting for them when they wake up in the morning. The Daily Mail also gains valuable insights from DPS analytics; for example, the average engagement time per reader is 48 minutes, and that figure rises to 56 minutes on weekends.

Better than print

Part of what makes digital magazines so appealing is their ability to deliver an experience that is enhanced compared to their print counterparts. A successful digital publication is more likely to be feature-rich, with many capabilities—such as videos, audio clips, photo slide shows and other interactive elements—that go far beyond the experience of the print edition. The offerings need to be engaging, fun, and useful for readers who enjoy using digital devices. Publishers are already starting to see the positive impacts of delivering enhanced editions. Adobe Digital Publishing Suite Analytics from December 2013 show that subscribers spend, on average, 50 minutes per month with a digital app.

A compelling example of a publisher who integrates powerful interactivity into its digital magazine experience is Top Gear. The publisher recognized early in the development of its DPS offering that there was an opportunity to deliver much more than a replica of the print edition. For instance, Top Gear uses overlay pages with HTML content to keep information current, thus taking advantage of the immediacy of digital. The publisher also uses the digital publication to promote other Top Gear media, such as clips from its eponymous television show. A typical digital issue may include text and photographs, like the print magazine, but those are enhanced with interactive displays that can include video, slideshows, panoramic photographs, and sophisticated computer animations.

Impressively, interactive content in Top Gear has quadrupled the amount of time readers spend with the publication, compared with its earlier, non-interactive PDF “replica” version. The typical replica reader spent about 5 to 10 minutes with the publication. But after Top Gear launched its interactive magazine app, time per reader jumped to 37 to 46 minutes. In the three months following the switch, subscription revenue at the magazine increased 165% and ad revenues doubled.
DPS apps can further increase engagement by including video content, which is rapidly becoming more popular with tablet and smartphone users. The Adobe Digital Index report, *The U.S. Digital Video Benchmark*, found that the amount of video “starts” on mobile tripled year over year from 2011 to 2012, and it currently accounts for more than 10% of total digital video starts across all device types including PCs.

The goal of the “engagement” phase of the reader lifecycle is to delight readers with compelling content to inspire them to:

- Continually return to the app in a predictable fashion
- Buy and subscribe
- Maintain their subscription
- Share articles with friends
- Purchase cross-promoted products
- Give you some of their personal data so that you can more effectively market to them

**Collect data**

Once you get a new reader to download and install your shell, there are a number of opportunities to collect consumer contact information. This data will enable you to develop an ongoing relationship with both paying readers and non-paying “browsers” and it will allow you to run targeted marketing campaigns. The primary ways to directly contact DPS readers are via push notifications and email, but you could also collect phone numbers for text messages or calls, and mailing addresses for sending traditional mail. You can collect this data as part of the in-app subscription process as well as from within your custom storefront or the folios themselves. This section outlines all of these methods.

**Push notification opt-in**

Push notifications are an effective way to send custom text alerts directly to readers’ devices and are also used to notify readers of new DPS issues available in the iOS Newsstand. Newsstand notifications also automatically initiate background downloads of the new issues, making the new content more readily available to your readers.
The first time a reader opens a DPS app, they are presented with a push notifications opt-in dialog box.

![Push notification opt-in](image)

**Figure 13.** Push notification opt-in

Per Apple’s iOS architecture, the push notifications opt-in dialog box will only be shown once for an app. As this dialog is shown only at first launch, before readers are “hooked” on your content, opt-in rates may be lower than desirable. Additionally, the only way for readers to opt-in after the initial opportunity is for them to dive deep into the iOS Settings.

To increase opt-in rates, you may want to consider reminding readers to opt-in at various places throughout your app and content—but give them a good reason for opting-in and clear instructions about how to do so. For example, you could use a digital blow-in with a message like, “Don’t miss future issues—make sure notifications are enabled for this app!” accompanied with screenshots of exactly how to turn on notifications.

![Managing notifications after initial push notification opt-in dialog box](image)

**Figure 14.** Managing notifications after initial push notification opt-in dialog box

Push notifications are a powerful way to directly target readers with on-device alerts and background downloads. Do everything you can to maximize opt-in rates, and then leverage push notifications to communicate with your readers to further drive engagement and conversion (see “Send targeted communications” section below).

### Collecting reader data throughout the app and folio

You can collect reader contact information via various mechanisms throughout your DPS app and folio content.

#### Collecting data in the custom banner within the standard library

In a DPS app, you can insert a custom banner onto the top of the standard library. This banner can be a image with a marketing message, or it can be active HTML that can include the ability to collect reader data. The banner is hosted by the publisher, and data from an HTML form is posted to a database hosted by the publisher. You supply a backup "offline" banner which is displayed if the device is not connected to the Internet or it cannot connect to your web server.

You can measure your app’s push notifications opt-in rate if you are an Adobe Analytics customer. See the [Adobe SiteCatalyst Digital Publishing Report Guide](link) for details about all the analytic metrics available.
The banner could, for example, encourage readers to supply their contact information so that you can provide them with exclusive offers and updates about when new content becomes available. The information collected could include First Name, Last Name, and Email address, or anything else pursuant to your privacy policy. DPS enterprise apps can also capture a unique identifier that is unique to your app on a specific device. This identifier can help you map an individual reader to a specific tablet or smartphone, allowing for additional ways to slice and dice reader data and do more sophisticated target marketing (see “Send targeted communications” section below). DPS Professional viewer apps do not have access to the Digital Publishing Suite JavaScript API that enables you to capture this unique identifier.

Figure 15. Collecting data via a custom HTML banner on the library screen (data entry form at top)

Offer a free issue in return for an email address: promotional entitlement

DPS Enterprise viewer apps can leverage the direct entitlement capability. By adding some custom logic to this process, a publisher could offer a free issue in return for providing them with a valid email address via an HTML banner in the library. A reference implementation of this can be found in the “Promotional Entitlement” article.

Figure 16. Using a custom HTML banner to offer a free issue in return for supplying an email address, using the Promotional Entitlement reference implementation
Collect data from within your custom storefront
A custom storefront is completely customized HTML developed by the publisher. Therefore, you can collect reader data via HTML forms in any way you choose, with the same kind of flexibility that you have on your website.

Within the folio
Just as you can collect reader data in the library and storefront, you can also collect information via HTML forms within your folios themselves. There are three basic opportunities to do this:

- **Web content overlays**: Embed HTML offers and forms within overlays which collect and post reader data to your database.
- **Digital blow-ins**: Similar to web content overlays, but you can also intelligently target these offers and forms based on whether the reader is a subscriber, the current issue was purchased, or the current issue was acquired for free.
- **HTML-based articles**: If your article was created in HTML format (as opposed to PDF or PNG), you can embed a data collection form directly in the article itself.

Collecting reader data during the subscription purchase process
If your reader is in the process of purchasing an in-app subscription, congratulations! But don’t forget to use this opportunity to collect their contact data so that you can market to them. There are two opportunities to collect reader data during the subscription process.

iOS marketing opt-in incentive
Apple offers the ability to allow readers to share their personal information (name, email, and zip code) with you after confirming the purchase of a subscription. This is the easiest way for readers to give you their information—they do not have to type anything into a form. Instead, the reader’s personal information associated with their Apple ID is given to the publisher. In return for this information, the publisher must offer the reader an extension to their paid subscription.

A publisher can enable the marketing opt-in incentive in Apple’s iTunes Connect portal. The publisher then selects the incentive duration (seven days, one month, two months, three months, six months, or one year). Opt-in can also be enabled for publications with free subscriptions, but no bonus duration is added.

![Figure 17. Enabling the iOS Marketing Opt-In Incentive and selecting the incentive duration in iTunes Connect](image)

To further entice readers to complete the subscription purchase, combine the opt-in with an iTunes free trial. A free trial adds a publisher-specified duration to the reader’s paid subscription, and if combined with an opt-in, the incentive duration is added to the free trial duration. The iTunes free trial is also enabled in the iTunes Connect portal.
On the user experience end, when opt-in is enabled, readers see a “Share Your Information?” dialog box after confirming subscription purchase:

If a reader taps the “Allow” button in the dialog box, their personal information is delivered to the publisher via the iTunes Connect portal.

**Post-subscription dialog box**

DPS offers publishers an additional way to collect reader information during the subscription process. Publishers can create a custom HTML form that can look like a device dialog box, which displays when the reader completes the subscription process. This form can make an offer and request any data you wish pursuant to your privacy policy.

One approach is to ask readers to create an account with you (for example, requiring an email address and password). This account can be used to give readers access to bonus and/or archive content on your website.
Like other HTML data collection forms, this dialog box must be hosted by the publisher and must post the data to your database. When building your DPS viewer app, you specify the URL to this HTML form in the DPS App Builder tool, in the “Optional remote custom dialog URL” under “Subscription Details.” See the help docs for creating custom viewer apps for iOS and Android for additional details.

Send targeted communications

Getting readers to install your app is the first hurdle, but it’s imperative to keep them coming back. Publishers who do not leverage the techniques discussed in the “Engage with content” section above and the targeted communications techniques described below may find that an unacceptably high number of new app installers never come back to your app.

By using push notifications and emails to readers who have installed your DPS app, you have powerful tools to:

- Remind readers to re-engage with your app
- Target readers with custom marketing messages and promotions
- Inform readers when you enhance your app (for example, if you upgrade from print replica to interactive content, or if you upgrade to high-res “retina” content)
- Cross-sell your other offerings

Particularly for subscribers, it is critical to keep them active in the reader “lifecycle” by continuing to market to them and engage them so that they do not cancel their subscriptions. Increased renewal rates will dramatically reduce your overall reader acquisition costs.

Push notifications

There are two basic types of push notifications that can be made to DPS apps on iOS devices: Newsstand push, which notifies subscribers of new content and initiates background downloads of new issues, and alerts, which are text notifications to the reader. (Note that push notifications are only currently supported on iOS).

Adobe DPS currently supports Apple’s standard Newsstand push and text alerts for iOS devices, but you can also use your own push server (or a third-party service such as Urban Airship) to send alerts. Push notifications are generally sent to all subscribers of your app, but we will also describe advanced ways to segment your subscribers and send targeted alerts to a subset of subscribers.

Newsstand push

There are several important advantages when you enable your DPS app for Apple Newsstand:

- Improved discoverability of your app to potential new readers in the Newsstand section of the app store
- Notification to reader when a new issue is available:
  - Incremented red “badge” number on reader’s Newsstand icon
  - Updated cover image of app in reader’s Newsstand collection
- In iOS 5 or iOS 6: a blue “New” sash over the app cover image in reader’s Newsstand collection; in iOS 7: a light blue dot under the app cover image
- Automatic background downloading of new issues

Note that a new issue notification and background download will only happen if a reader has subscribed to your app, has opted-in to push notifications, and his/her device is on Wi-Fi at the time the notification is received.
For DPS apps that have been enabled for Newsstand, a publisher can initiate a Newsstand push via the "Notify" button in the DPS Folio Producer tool.

Publishers can also initiate Newsstand push notifications via their own push server, or a third-party service such as Urban Airship.

Text push notifications (alert)
An alert is a push notification that displays a text message of your choosing on the devices of your app’s subscribers. A common use of text-based notifications is to market new content contained in your new issues. These types of notifications are separate and distinct from Newsstand push, but you can sequence both types when you publish a new issue.

For example, when a new issue is published, you could initiate a Newsstand push to trigger background downloads, and then send an alert with a message such as, “Now available in the August issue of Magz Magazine: an exclusive interview with James Dean.” You can also send alerts independently of publishing a new issue.

You can initiate a text alert from the DPS Folio Producer, or you can use a third party push provider. Watch a video about DPS push notifications here, and see the article "Using Apple push notifications with Digital Publishing Suite" for additional information. For implementation details about how to use Urban Airship to send push alerts to iOS DPS apps using your own web infrastructure, see the article "Using Urban Airship as a Digital Publishing Suite Push Provider." For a preconfigured set of web tools for integrating with Urban Airship using Amazon Web Services instead of your own web infrastructure, see the article "Using Amazon EC2 as a Digital Publishing Suite Push Provider."
Push Notification Deep Linking

Get users into your app content quicker, drive deep engagement with your brand, and drive new revenue and subscriptions with new Push Notification Deep Linking in Digital Publishing Suite, available as of the June 2014 DPS release.

When users tap on a text notification, Push Notification Deep Linking allows them to jump directly to a pre-defined article within your app, in order to drive more direct engagement with new or featured content. Drive new revenue and subscriptions by also linking directly to the app library, a Custom Slot, or a URL from a text notification using an intuitive workflow within DPS. Combine with targeting functionality in DPS and Adobe Analytics (available as a separate subscription) to drive sophisticated upsell and cross-sell campaigns to your reader base, as well as engagement with app content.

Targeted (segmented) push notifications

Standard push notifications go to every subscriber of your app. But what if you want to send a targeted message to a specific sub-set of subscribers? For example, you might want to send a specific alert message only to subscribers who haven’t opened your app in the past month.

Segmented push notifications are available within DPS as of the January 2014 release. See the article Segmented Push Notifications for more information. We’ve also made available an example implementation that publishers can use and modify that provides some additional capabilities around segmented notifications. This example must be hosted and configured by a web developer, and it requires that you have an Adobe Analytics account, but it illustrates how you can query your app’s analytics and create a list of readers’ devices (using app-specific device IDs) for the segment of interest. You can then load that list of devices into your push provider (e.g., Urban Airship) and send a custom alert message to just those devices.

Scheduled Push Notifications

As of the March 2014 DPS release, you can set up notifications in advance, and schedule to push them out at a specific date and time for maximum impact on your audience. Additionally, you can now measure results through new functionality allowing review of sent notifications. For more information, see the article Segmented Push Notifications.
Email

Email blasts
Email is a powerful direct marketing tool. If you have collected email addresses from readers via the methods described earlier in this document, you can run email campaigns to do things like cross-promote your other titles, make special offers, and notify readers of new content. Emails can be very useful to drive traffic to your website where you have much more flexibility and control over digital subscription offers than you do within your app (leveraging direct entitlement so that you can sell subscriptions directly to readers).

Targeted email
The same example implementation referenced above for segmented push can be leveraged for targeted email. The list of emails that you collect via HTML banners, from within folios, or via the post-subscription dialog box can be segmented based on your criteria and then imported into your email campaign system.

Note that all of the email collection forms in your app need to be integrated into the database used by the segmentation example implementation. Any emails that you collect outside of this system will not be tied to a Device ID, and therefore will not appear in any of the segments you define. See the article "Digital Publishing Suite Notification Station" for more details.

Campaign tracking and Coupon Codes
Measuring the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns can be challenging, and this can be even more difficult when you try to tie, for example, email campaigns to successful DPS app installs. The company eMagazines offers a solution called eMagazines Insight, which employs tracking links in your campaigns and JavaScript code in your DPS app. It can help you measure app downloads, in-app purchases, and engagement by each of your specific marketing campaigns.

You can now also leverage the new Consumer Marketing APIs to pass custom parameters into your app using your own JavaScript coding. This can be used to track email or social media campaign effectiveness, by tracking which clicks lead to app opens and/or purchases.

You can also use this parameter-passing capability to offer coupon codes. For example, a code can be embedded in a link to your app. This code will be passed into the app when clicked, and it could unlock a special discounted subscription price. This could help to convert readers who have downloaded the app but not yet subscribed.
Pricing and subscriptions

As print circulations have fallen, so have subscription prices. But increasing dependence upon advertising revenue has resulted in a more volatile business environment for publishers. Digital editions have given publishers an opportunity to tap into new revenue streams, thus creating a healthy debate among publishers whether to adopt a subscription business model or a product business model. Subscriptions even out cash flow and build solid revenues. The app play aims to reset the expectation among readers that content should be free. The tablet study by the Online Publishers Association, A Portrait of Today’s Tablet User, found that 72% of app downloaders have paid for apps, making it more likely that these same tablet owners may be willing to pay for digital magazines. Adobe found that in February 2013, 82% of consumers who downloaded an app created with DPS paid for content, with 35% buying print and digital bundles, 34% digital subscriptions, and 10% single issues.

Currently, publishers are trying to develop brand relationships with readers in which they subscribe and buy stand-alone products and services marketed by the brand. For example, publishers can sell publications on the iPhone, iPad, and iPad Mini using the Apple in-app payment system. Publishers can also sell publications from within an app using the Android app payment system.

Even though long-term subscriptions are desirable from a cash-flow standpoint, publishers are experimenting with multiple options, such as month-to-month, three-month, and six-month durations. Using shorter subscriptions to entice readers works for digital publications because they don’t include the added printing and fulfillment costs of their print counterparts and often have a higher per-issue price point than the longer-term subscription. The one drawback is lack of direct contact with subscribers, unless you leverage something like the iOS marketing opt-in feature.

Combining tactics into a strategy

This document has described all of the tools available in the DPS consumer marketing toolbox. You can use any combination of these techniques to help drive reader acquisition and retention, but, in general, the more of them that you utilize in a coherent fashion, the more likely you are to maximize readership. Every DPS publication has different characteristics, but this section will suggest a couple of ways that these techniques could be used together to optimal effect.

Strategy 1: Give away some high-value free content and deliver a great user experience

This strategy is ideal for a publisher who is very confident about the quality of their content, wants to deliver the best possible user experience, and is not hesitant to give away some of its highest value content to new readers in an effort to convert them to paying customers.

1. Activate first folio free and set your app to open directly to the current free issue upon first open
2. Intersperse digital blow-ins throughout the issue, which detect context, and change messaging accordingly:
   a. First folio free or free article preview: “Enjoying your free issue? Subscribe now and get a 30 day free trial!”
   b. Single issue purchase: “Enjoying this issue? Subscribe now and get a 30 day free trial!”
   c. Subscription or print entitlement: “Thanks for being a subscriber. You may also enjoy one of our other titles...”
3. Use free article preview (without metered articles) in back issues to further entice readers to pay by offering select free articles. Also include digital blow-ins within these preview articles
4. Enable social sharing and encourage readers to virally share content to onboard new users into your app
5. Use iTunes free trial to minimize the hurdle to subscribe
6. Don’t use any HTML forms to collect user data—focus on the best possible user experience by only asking for data via the iOS marketing opt-in, which doesn’t require the user to type in their information
7. Target subscribers with Newsstand push, text alerts, and emails, to keep them engaged in your content and cross-promote other titles
Strategy 2: Give away back issues but limit free access to current content

This strategy is appropriate for publishers who are hesitant to give free access to their most valuable current content, but have a robust set of back issues that may generate minimal single-issue sales.

1. Enable free article preview for your current issue, plus several recent issues (perhaps for the last three months).
2. For issues with preview enabled, set your highest value articles to "protected" so that they cannot be accessed for free. Set other articles to "metered" and set a paywall limit to allow readers to choose a number of non-protected articles to view until they have to buy or subscribe.
3. Insert digital blow-ins as described in "Strategy 1" in the preview articles to help drive conversions.
4. For issues older than, say, three months, set them to be free issues. Market free access to back issues in your custom storefront, as well as in digital blow-ins and email communications. Alternatively, develop a custom promotional entitlement implementation which gives new readers free access to all older back issues in return for a validated email address, which you can then use for targeted marketing communications.
5. Leverage social sharing, iTunes free trial, iOS marketing op-in, as well as push notifications as described in "Strategy 1."

Where to go from here

Tablet and smartphone ownership is increasing rapidly. Readers like having easy, anywhere/anytime access to digital magazines and are spending more time with them. Publishers want them to engage with their content, and are looking for ways to drive readership. To reach the largest audiences, publishers have to consider all phases of the customer relationship, from initial discovery and downloading of digital editions, to creating engaging experiences that keep them coming back.

This document has provided an overview of all of the capabilities and techniques available to DPS publishers to help drive reader acquisition and retention, along with best practices for leveraging all of the tools available to you. To dive into the implementation details for executing on these techniques, follow the links supplied throughout the document.

Also see the document User interface best practices for building iOS Digital Publishing Suite apps for recommendations for taking advantage of DPS features to provide an effective, consistent, and user-friendly experience for your readers.