



Case Study

POLITICO

Must-listen news with POLITICO Europe.

Now Europe's policymakers, regulators and thought leaders can start their day listening to POLITICO Europe's authoritative newsletter thanks to technology from WP Engine and Amazon.

Industry

News media

Site

politico.eu

Challenge

As the first, most authoritative source of information European policymakers, regulators and thought leaders read each morning, POLITICO Europe reinvented their subscriber experience by expanding into voice, offering their flagship Brussels and London Playbooks in audio formats.

Solution

POLITICO Europe used WP Engine and AWS's Amazon Polly plugin for its London and Brussels Playbooks, which converts the written daily briefings into voiced narrations so readers can listen to the reports as they drive or ride the train to work.

Results

Increased readership of both playbooks, earlier in the day.

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POLITICO
Brussels Playbook
Florian Eder's must-read briefing on what's driving the day in Brussels.

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POLITICO Brussels Playbook, presented by the Barilla Foundation: Mario Monti on Italy — EU's spy chief speaks — Ruling Europe
By FLORIAN EDER | 5/7/18, 7:10 AM CET | Updated 5/7/18, 8:16 AM CET

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Voiced by Amazon Polly

POLITICO Brussels Playbook
By FLORIAN EDER
with ZOYA SHEFTALOVICH
PRESENTED BY THE BARILLA FOUNDATION

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ENGLAND LEAVES, LONG LIVE ENGLISH: To French dismay, the tongue of Shakespeare and, um, Nigel Farage, is putting down deeper roots in the EU — and Brexit is partly to blame.

Speaking of which, check out the [barbed historical exchange](#) between the British and French ambassadors to Washington.

ITALY CONUNDRUM: It's another big day in Italian and therefore European politics: Another "last chance" for parties to find common ground in yet another round of consultations held by the president of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella. He has invited leaders of all parties and constitutional bodies to see him individually. Over the weekend, Italian politicians (and the media) went through all the potential coalition scenarios again just to conclude they're still improbable or impossible. Expect a public message from the president tonight or Tuesday.

What now? One of the options is a government of experts under the leadership of an imagined superhero. Think a political figure who's not siding with any

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A weekly intelligence and analysis newsletter on money and lobbying in the EU capital.

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“We want Europe’s policy makers, regulators and thought leaders to read our newsletters as much as possible, as frequently as possible and as early as possible in the day. We’ve found that when people read POLITICO earlier in the day, they’re more likely to read it again later in the afternoon and use us as their primary source of information.”

Etienne Bauvir,
Director of Business Intelligence and
Technology for POLITICO Europe



The challenge.

POLITICO Europe’s motto is to “own the morning”, meaning the publication strives to be the first thing people read when they get up and get informed. As such, its two flagship newsletters—the [Brussels Playbook](#) and the [London Playbook](#)—are emailed to subscribers at 7 o’clock every weekday morning.

“We want those newsletters to be the must-read for the day,” said Etienne Bauvir, POLITICO Europe’s Director of Business Intelligence and Technology. “If you have one thing to read as a policy maker, as a lobbyist or as a government official, this is it.”

But, Bauvir is also aware that 7 a.m. is not the most convenient time for subscribers to sit in front of their computers and read. “At that time, people generally aren’t at work yet,” he said. “They’re either with their families or more importantly, they’re commuting.”

Bauvir and his team needed to find a new way for subscribers to consume the daily newsletters on the go. An audio option, something that would allow people to listen to the reports in their car or on the train, seemed like the most convenient way to reach people while they were in transit.



The solution.

In order to create an audio function for the playbooks, POLITICO Europe leveraged the Amazon Polly plugin for WordPress, which was co-authored by [AWS and WP Engine](#) and allows users to embed a text-to-speech player directly at the top of any article.

“In the past, text-to-speech technologies were reserved for companies with big IT budgets and AI (artificial intelligence) expertise, but this is changing,” said Tomasz Stachlewski, Senior Solutions Architect at AWS.

“Thanks to cloud services, one can simply upload text, choose one of many different languages and immediately receive the audio stream to your application so you can play it directly, or store it in a standard audio file format, such as MP3.”

AWS offers a range of machine learning-based language services that allow companies to easily add intelligence to their applications through pre-trained APIs - without the need for deep AI expertise. According to Bauvir, the set-up needed to get the Amazon Polly plugin up and running on POLITICO.eu was relatively quick and painless.

“All of the admin work needed for implementing the plugin and turning it on was very straightforward,” Bauvir said. Once it was set up, Bauvir worked with Steven Word, WP Engine Innovation Manager, who helped integrate Amazon Polly with WordPress, to customize the player and match it to POLITICO’s brand specifications.

“We added the POLITICO red and made it clearer for users to identify where to click and trigger the plugin,” he said, “That brand change was the only change we’ve made. It’s been very easy to install.”

Bauvir and his team also set the voices used for each playbook—an American voice for the Brussels Playbook and an English voice for the London Playbook. Both voices are male, because the writers for the Playbooks are male, but an option to change and tweak the voices is available.

“The majority of our company is female,” Bauvir said. “So, for upcoming products, if we have a female writer, we can select another voice, which is very convenient.”



The results.

POLITICO Europe is seeing consistent growth across both products.

“We want Europe’s policy makers, regulators and thought leaders to read our newsletters as much as possible, as frequently as possible and as early as possible in the day,” Bauvir said. “We’ve found that when people read POLITICO earlier in the day, they’re more likely to read it again later in the afternoon and use us as their primary source of information.”

Furthermore, the response regarding the plugin has been overwhelmingly positive.

“We’ve had very positive feedback from journalists and from readers as well,” he said, adding that expanding the scope of where the plugin was available was likely on the horizon. “It’s been a perfect fit for the playbooks, and down the line it’s something we’re thinking of rolling out for other products.”

About WP Engine.

WP Engine is the world’s leading WordPress digital experience platform that gives companies of all sizes the agility, performance, intelligence, and integrations they need to drive their business forward faster. Founded in 2010, WP Engine is headquartered in Austin, Texas, and has offices in San Francisco, California; San Antonio, Texas; London, England; Limerick, Ireland, and Brisbane, Australia.