

The Globe and Mail: Building a Culture of Innovation With Arc, Powered by AWS



Executive Summary

As mounting challenges confronted the publishing industry, The Globe and Mail, Canada's newspaper of record, needed to control costs while innovating to support sustained growth.

By adopting Arc Publishing, the headless CMS powered by AWS, The Globe was able to reallocate internal resources to build a strong data science foundation which led to the development of predictive analytic tools that continue to drive their business forward.

Fostering A Culture of Innovation

One hundred and seventy-six years after its founding in 1844, The Globe and Mail continues as Canada's newspaper of record. In 2015, as declining print circulation and print advertising revenues confronted the global newspaper industry, The Globe created an in-house development lab, Lab351, to foster a culture of innovation.

To encourage participation, The Globe provided grants ranging from \$1,000 for short-term two-day projects to \$100,000 for long-term projects where an employee could work full-time on an idea for three months, receiving full salary and the guarantee of returning to their previous role at the end of the period.

In 2016, Lab351 took the lead on adopting Arc Publishing as The Globe's digital-first publishing system for all content and digital assets managed across the newsroom. Arc offered two major advantages over previous systems. First, as an AWS-based cloud solution with high SLAs and an aggressive product roadmap, Arc enabled The Globe to reallocate the internal resources previously responsible for platform upkeep to the development of new opportunities.

Second, Arc's robust API-driven architecture let The Globe build services directly on top of Arc APIs and Amazon Kinesis streams, unlike the black box development of other proprietary CMS systems. "Having that confidence with the platform, it allows you to focus your resources, to grow out your capabilities. To be more adventurous," said Alasdair McKie, The Globe's project team leader on the Arc implementation.

As a key strategic initiative, The Globe leaders saw the implementation of Arc as a "green-field opportunity" to completely rethink the way they presented content to readers, reevaluating everything from site design to fundamental data structure.

Creating A Data-Driven Experience

Shortly after the Arc announcement in June 2016, Publisher and CEO Philip Crawley spoke of The Globe's direction at that year's

About The Globe and Mail



The Globe and Mail, founded in 1844, is Canada's foremost news media company and a part of Canada's fabric. Each day, The Globe leads the national discussion by engaging Canadians through its award-winning coverage of news, politics, business, investing and lifestyle topics, across multiple platforms. The Globe and Mail print and digital formats reach over 6 million readers every week, with Report on Business magazine reaching over 1.5 million readers every issue in print and digital. The Globe and Mail is owned by Woodbridge, the investment arm of the Thomson family.



[WAN-IFRA World Congress](#), outlining three strategic goals for the coming year:

- Better user experience for digital subscribers
- Apply data science to storytelling and selling
- Journalism that makes a difference

With an ardent focus on data science, Arc gave The Globe the peace of mind of not having to worry about content management, enabling them to focus engineering resources on data science development. The benefits of this focus led to two of The Globe's most innovative data science products Sophi, a business intelligence tool, and Delphi, a tool built on top of Sophie for predictive analytics.

The combination of these tools has helped The Globe's editors make decisions in real time on how to promote stories, as well as powers personalization logic that ensures each reader who visits the site receives a tailored experience. The results of these innovations have been palpable with insights from Sophi driving a print redesign in 2017 which saved the organization \$1 million in newsprint costs.

Data science continues to be at the heart of The Globe's financial success. "[Sophi and Delphi are] allowing us to better distribute the content, get the right material in the right format at the right time of day, night, and week in front of our readers," [explained](#) Tracy Day, The Globe's managing director/creative studio and ad innovation. "This initiative will continue to enhance the engagement of our readers and increase the value of our audience to our advertisers."

Using Data Every Day, Everywhere

Today, Crawley continues to view Arc as a critical driver of success. "Arc's technology has allowed us to focus and innovate in key areas of strategic importance to our business, including data-science-based design and personalization," says Crawley. "It is the key to delivering the user experience and enhanced storytelling that underpin our primary mission: journalism that matters."

"Our emphasis on using information derived from our reader data made our transformation better," said Creative Director Adrian Norris [to INMA](#) on the value that Arc provided. "More than a content management system, Arc is a tool for high-quality digital storytelling. Underlying our web, tablet, and mobile sites as well as our apps, Arc means that our audience can access the full breadth of Globe news and insights. We've increased engagement more than 30 percent and decreased website page-load speed by almost 50 percent."

Across The Globe, executives see the benefits of the company's commitment to technology. As McKie says: "A better experience for all digital readers has stemmed from our work with the Arc platform."

About Arc Publishing

Arc Publishing is an award-winning, state-of-the-art digital platform and suite of tools that's engineered to meet the demands of modern publishers, brands and broadcasters around the world, providing a competitive advantage enhanced by a set of sophisticated machine learning and AI-powered tools. Built by The Washington Post, Arc has powered the digital transformation of clients both large and small across the globe, currently serving more than 900 million unique visitors monthly. At its core, Arc is about speed and innovation: for readers, newsrooms, brands, advertisers and developers.

