

HONOLULU  
**CIVIL BEAT**

### Client Profile

Civil Beat is the largest online news outlet dedicated to public affairs journalism in Hawaii. They focus on investigative and watchdog journalism, in-depth enterprise reporting, analysis and commentary to give readers a broad view on issues in the community.

*"Blast AM is a key partner for Civil Beat. Civil Beat's primary mission is to positively impact our community. It is key for us to not only understand how our readers are engaging with our content, but also how we can grow that engagement. Blast AM has continuously helped us to leverage our analytics in a way that focuses on our mission, as well as our business objectives."*

**Heidi Pliszka**  
Director of Business  
Operations



[www.BlastAM.com](http://www.BlastAM.com)

## Data Visualization Reveals Subscriber Retention and Content Readership Insights

### Overview

Civil Beat wanted to gain a deeper understanding of user engagement on their site, as well as subscriber cohort activity.

Blast Analytics & Marketing recommended custom marketing visualization dashboards using [Tableau](#) as the visualization tool, and Google Analytics as the data source.

### Challenge

One of the challenges for a news/media outlet is to understand content engagement, in order to provide their readers with valuable content that keeps them coming back. These metrics not only tie back to part of their core mission, but are also important to those who are sponsoring specific articles.

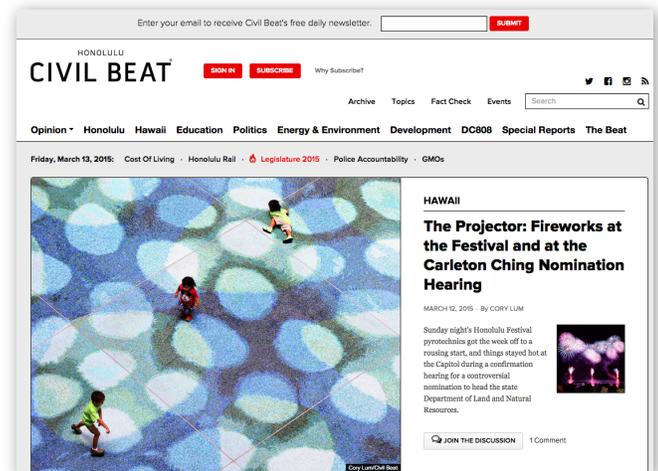
Also, Civil Beat wanted to gain a better understanding of subscriber activity on their site [www.civilbeat.com](http://www.civilbeat.com).

### Solution

Blast conducted a discovery process with Civil Beat to identify questions and metrics that were key to their business. Some important questions Civil Beat was looking to answer were:

- How many times was a specific article read?
- Which categories of articles are read the most?
- How is article X doing in relation to article Y in readership?
- From our current subscribers how many are new and how many are retained each month?
- What is the subscriber lifecycle?
- How do our initiatives affect retention?

After their needs were defined, Blast performed a [custom Google Analytics implementation](#) to enable the ability to track when an article was read or scanned, and individual subscriber activity on the site.



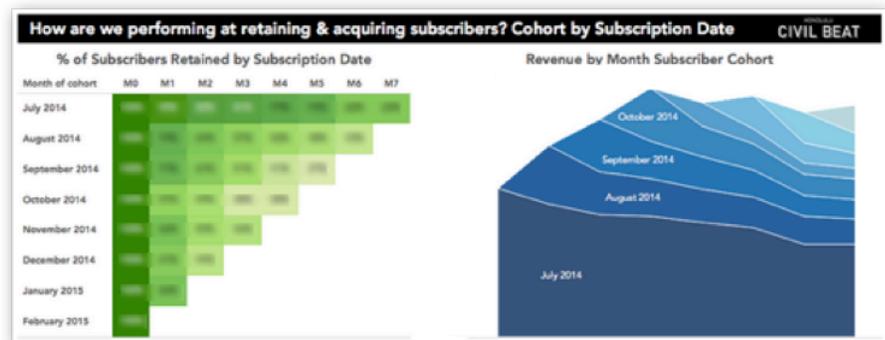
Once the necessary data was being collected, Blast created an automated ETL (Extract, Transform, and Load) process to extract data from the Google Analytics API and store it on Amazon Redshift (a highly scalable columnar database).

For data-visualization and reporting, a Tableau Server was deployed on Amazon EC2.

## Results

By leveraging Google Analytics (Standard via custom implementation) and [Tableau Visualization Software](#), Blast empowered Civil Beat editorial and management teams with actionable and easy-to-understand data.

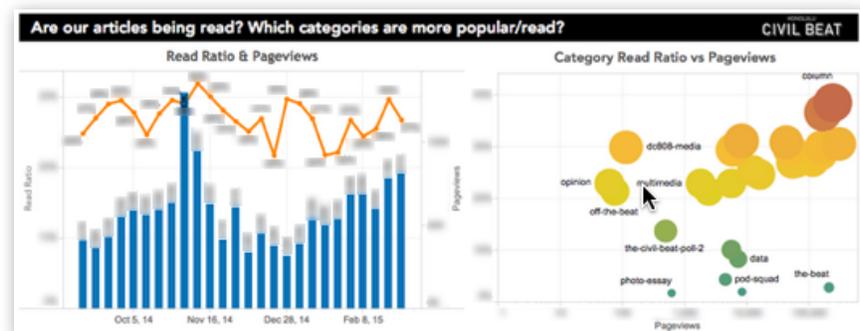
The cohort analysis allowed Civil Beat to better **understand their subscriber cohorts** and **optimize the retention and acquisition initiatives**.



The 'read index' allows the editor and management team to not only see an overview of readership, but also **drill-down into readership by:**

- **article,**
- **category,**
- **and journalist.**

This provided invaluable insights into the topics that resonate with their community.



This automated data visualization/report solution is **now used daily at Civil Beat**. It drives marketers and editors to generate valuable content that engages their readers and improves subscriber retention.



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