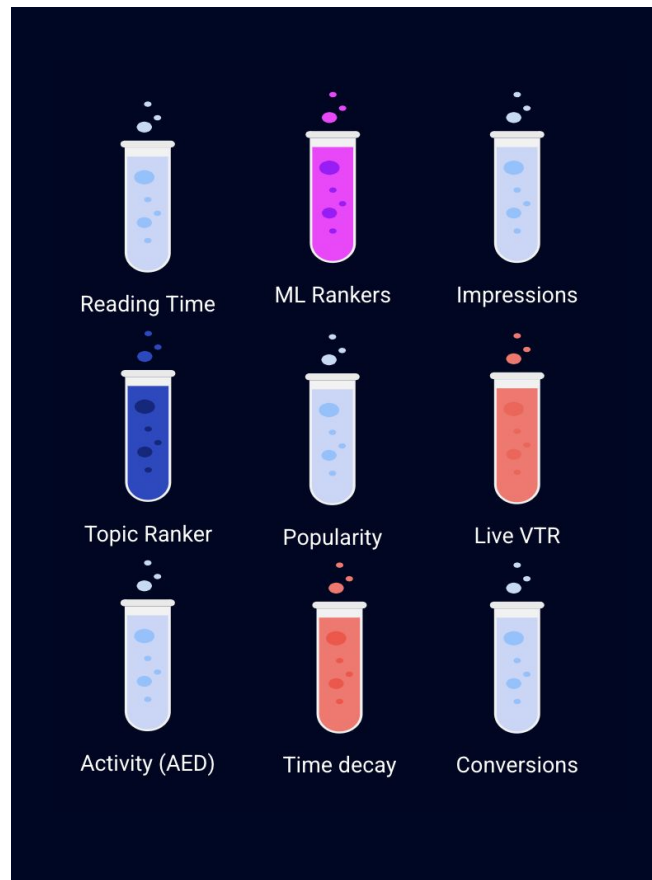


How Aftenposten used a new personalization tool to **boost engagement and subscription sales among younger users.**

A success story, but...

Seven years ago, Aftenposten pioneered its first **automated front-page algorithm**. Leveraging advanced data signals, we have been ranking stories and delivering personalized front pages to our readers through our AI-driven in-house tool, Curate.

But **one major challenge** has always remained...



+ 55



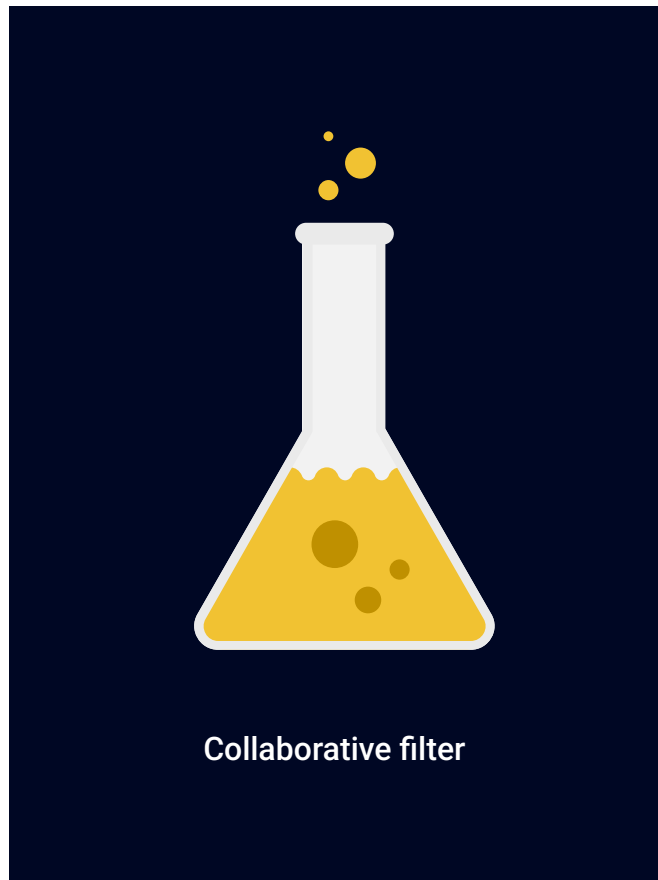
Our average reader is a 55-year-old male, which **naturally skews the algorithm** toward his interests and preferences.

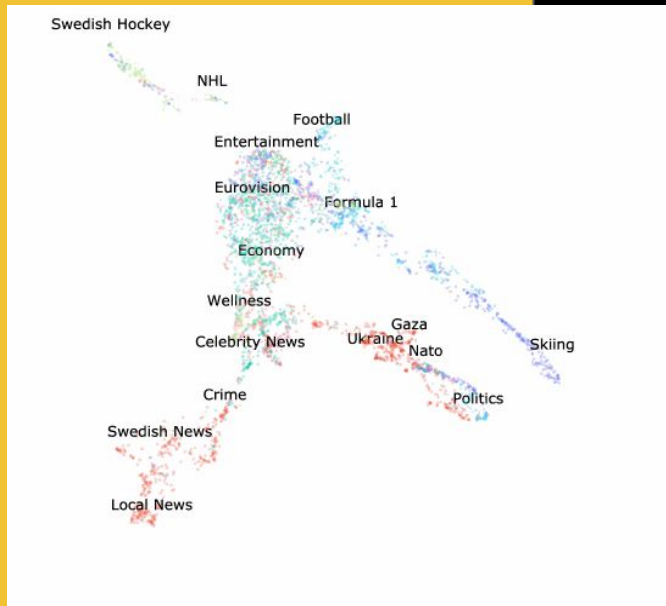
As a result, content favored by this demographic tends to rank too high on the front page, **creating a mismatch** for other user groups and their needs.

We had to add a new ingredient!

How could we reduce the dominance of the *male_55* popularity signals while still delivering real-time, personalized recommendations? And how could we do this without creating *metaesque* rabbit holes!

The solution was the colab filter.





So, what is it?

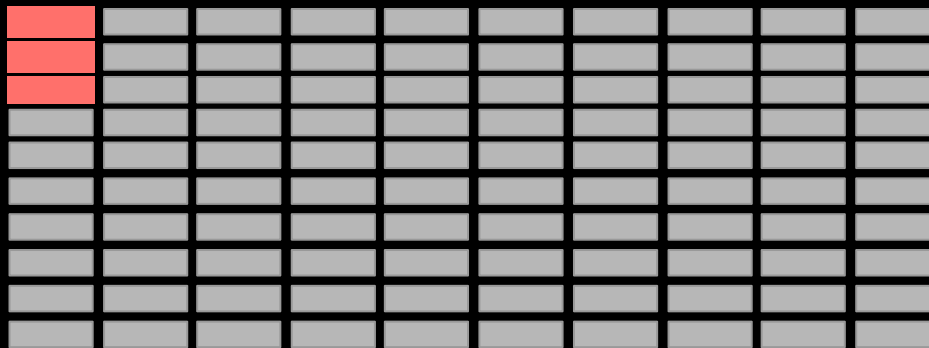
The collaborative filter is a signal in our front page algorithm, designed to identify shared interests among users by **analyzing millions of interactions**. This allows us to understand user preferences and match them to content, without relying on predefined sections or tags.

By learning from a user's reading history, we can recommend new articles that align with their interests and those of their 'twin' users. Or, put simply...



If two users have similar reading histories, the articles one has read but the other hasn't will be recommended, based on the high likelihood that they share similar interests.

The output



100 stories on the front page:

3 manually edited teasers everyone sees

97 personalised teasers ranked with the collaborative filtering as the dominant signal in the algorithm

In February 2024, a cross-functional team from Aftenposten and Schibsted, including data analysts, the editor-in-chief, data scientists, machine learning experts, a product manager, and developers, began testing different ranking formulas to explore how this new personalization signal could revitalize our seven-year-old algorithm.

Over a 10-month period, we worked iteratively, fine-tuning various signals and analyzing their impact on key metrics such as CPT, CPU, and sales.

One of our early insights was that the new challenger algorithm delivered more relevant content with fewer attempts, leading to a higher CTR. Additionally, the effect was most pronounced among our smallest user groups, especially younger users. We started with a modest 20% collaborative filtering signal and gradually increased it to 40% by the end of the year.

How did it end...

CTR uplift subs

23.5%



Total growth in CTR for the automagic part
of the front page (97/100 teasers).

Previous year on year growth was 3.6 %.

CTR non-subs

57.9%



Total growth in CTR for the automagic part of the front page (97/100 teasers) for logged in non-subscribers.

CTR sales teasers (subs sales)

32.2%



Total growth in CTR for teasers for logged in non-subscribers. We changed from showing same sales winners to everyone to personalised sales teasers.

CPU uplift

65.2%



Total growth in CPU for the automagic
part of the front page (97/100 teasers)
for all users in average.

And the most interesting part!

CTR YOUNGER USERS (20-30 YEARS)

(Average subs 23.5%.)

CTR SALES TEASERS (20-30 YEARS)

(Average non subs 32.2%)

29.2%!

34.3%!

Key iteration results

1

We boosted engagement among underserved user groups, including young users aged 20-30, by...

2

...expanding the reach of our niche content to a broader audience while still...

3

...delivering the most essential journalistic content to all users!

Aftenposten

INMA Global Media Awards 2025: **Best product iteration**