

Redesigning 24-hour news for a changing world

 By Leigh Andrews

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News24 has had an innovative start to the year. Here, editor Adriaan Basson lets us in on their new app Edge, as well as their Project Rise initiative and how they provide more than just the standard packaged news.

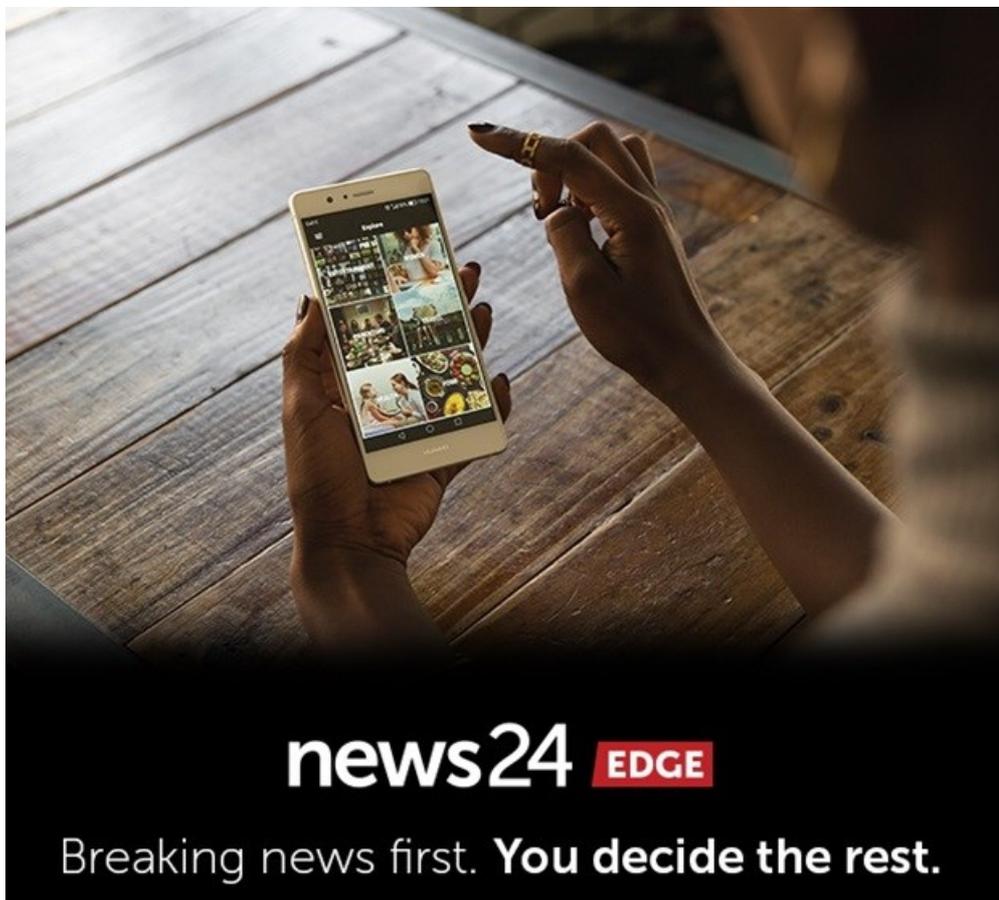
Back in January, News24 announced they had good news for news junkies with the introduction of their [Edge](#) app, which lets you select specific interests from a list of topics, and the more you read, the more you'll receive the news you prefer down the line.

On the appeal of letting readers personalise the news they receive, Basson says: "We live in a personalised world. When you open Facebook, it knows what you were shopping for a few minutes ago and that's okay. We are no longer freaked out by machine learning. It removes clutter and noise. If I am really not interested in rugby or food, why should I see articles on it in my content stream?"



Now, News24 Edge makes it possible for the first time in South Africa to choose the news you want to read about. Basson.

In the style of those old-school TV infomercials, Basson says, "But wait, there's more." Because earlier this year, even before the launch of News24 Edge, they announced they were challenging the status quo with the launch of [Project Rise](#), an online platform that exists to facilitate a solution-focused nationwide debate on what South Africa should look like post-#FeesMustFall. This is in partnership with the Nelson Mandela Foundation and came about after former Public Protector Advocate Thuli Madonsela posed a question to us all at the annual Ahmed Kathrada Foundation lecture last year: "What must rise? What will rise after fees have fallen? Is free higher education a possibility and at what cost? What does the university of the future look like?"



News24 Edge.

Here, Basson explains that the time has come for a different discourse and how News24 will help shape the future with these two innovations.

■ Tell us about the importance of offering readers more than just ‘news’ in today’s connected age.

Basson: Social media has to a large extent replaced daily reporting. Twitter has become the medium of record. Whether it’s an accident, veld fire or protest, the first “reportage” of news events take place on social media by citizen journalists. We can no longer just report the news; we have to interpret, explain, analyse and interrogate. This will lead to deeper, more meaningful journalism.

■ Linked to that, talk us through Project Rise and how the platform facilitates debate.

Basson: Project Rise was born in the aftermath of #FeesMustFall, when we realised the national discourse was stuck in a violence narrative. Every story was about police action or court appearances of teargas. With Project Rise, we wanted to elevate the conversation to future thinking. What should the future of decolonised, free education look like? The response was overwhelming. Not only from authors, including academics and students, but also the Nelson Mandela Foundation, which came on board as a partner.

■ Why is future-based discussion so important?

Basson: Without it, we get stuck in obsessing about the present, not thinking where we want to go. The media should increasingly create opportunities and space for future thinking to be expressed. The media is the ideal platform for a country to debate, think and innovate about what and who we want to be.

It’s easy to get involved: Engage with the debate on News24’s social media platforms with the hashtag #letsrise and submit

your own Project Rise contributions, between 750 and 1,000 words in length, to Alet Janse van Rensburg at aletjvr@24.com. Alternatively, click [here](#) to download News24 Edge for Apple devices and [here](#) if you prefer **Android** – the choice is yours.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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