

South African digital publishers make clean sweep of Wan-Ifra Digital Media Awards Africa 2024

South African digital publishers and publications made a clean sweep of the Wan-Ifra Digital Media Awards Africa 2024, with *Daily Maverick* and the Food for Mzansi Group both bringing home three awards and *Network24* winning two.



Source: © [Food for Mzansi](#) The Food for Mzansi Group won three Wan-Ifra Digital Media Africa 2024 Awards

Wan-Ifra's Digital Media Awards honour African news publishers whose projects and products showcase creativity and service to their readers.

The winning projects of this year's competition showcased outstanding innovation, ranging from tools that track inflation to new travel tours.

These initiatives placed their audiences at the centre of their work, resulting in increased engagement and positive feedback from readers. These projects provide a winning strategy for any initiative.

The winners of each category will now be automatically entered into the 2024 Digital Media World Awards, where they will compete with the top projects from other regions around the globe.



Wan-Ifra Digital Media Awards Africa finalists

9 Apr 2024



Winners

Best Data Visualisation

- Project: Perfect Storm
Company: Media Hack Collective, South Africa

After deadly storms hit Durban in April 2022, the team at Media Hack Collective wanted their journalism to showcase

potential solutions to mitigate future climate disasters instead of just documenting the devastation they produced. They dove into data about the city's coastal resilience, academic literature, case studies and more to create a deep dive with explainers, data analysis, visuals, and a resource guide for other journalists.

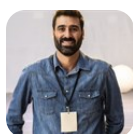
Judges said: "It's no mean feat to compile such a detailed report packed with meteorological and socioeconomic data in a country where weather-related reporting is nearly always superficial at best. To then also present the facts in such a way that a compelling narrative unfolds – from a night of watery terror to a major city's long-term survival plans – is even better. While the research is top-notch and the story-telling engaging, the digital presentation is equally well done. The reader doesn't feel overwhelmed and the mix of static and interactive graphics is well balanced."

Best in Audience Engagement

- Project: Inflation basket – Survey and Special project
Company: *Netwerk24*, South Africa

Using a gamified survey to collect information about consumer finances and shopping habits, the team at *Netwerk24* used the nearly 4,000 responses received to create a "shopping list" of the most regularly purchased items and tracked their prices on a monthly basis. Showcasing this data in an interactive infographic on a special microsite, the team also included expert analysis and commentary from the Inflation Basket panel – a group of *Netwerk24*'s readers who shared comments and tips. By sharing price trends and comparisons, they allowed readers to shop smarter and created a helpful tool for their audiences to better handle the economic situation.

Judges commented: "Such a brilliant project that illustrates how useful journalism can be when it focuses on addressing actual problems people face."



Daily Maverick has shut down

Daily Maverick 15 Apr 2024



Best News Website

- Project: *Daily Maverick* website
Company: *Daily Maverick*, South Africa

A masterclass in being audience-centric, working to help readers navigate their daily lives, not just in the newsroom, but as an entire organisation. Using data to better understand their audiences' needs, *Daily Maverick* made updates across the board including an auto-login feature, a daily crossword, a topic page specifically for good news, short summaries of articles, new video content, a career guide and more. These changes have helped them double their

monthly readership, increased membership acquisition by 50% and grew the number of registered users by a remarkable 150%.

Judges said: “What has stood out for me is how the audience is at the centre of everything the *Daily Maverick* does. Particularly is the idea of asking audiences what they want to know and going ahead to deliver on it. They have included the audience's voices in journalism, and in return, audiences have become loyal. I also like the idea of an audio version on the website.”

Best Use of Video

- Project: Urban Oasis
Company: Media24 – News24, South Africa

This six-part video series, which highlights community-driven food gardens in areas that are typically featured in media more about violent crime and gangs, seeks to put the spotlight on the hope and opportunities of urban agriculture. The profile series, filmed during a seven month period, has amassed nearly 10,000 views on YouTube and more than 34,000 page views, affirming the importance of these community and sustainability initiatives during times of economic hardship and food insecurity.

Judges said: “This is a unique story highlighting how urban people are trying to reconnect to nature through gardening or being in touch with nature. The short series format makes the story easy to consume for online audiences.”

Best Digital Subscription / Reader Revenue Project

- Project: Farmer’s Inside Track
Company: Food For Mzansi Group, South Africa

A membership model that centres around and empowers its community through exclusive content, a personalised experience, priority access and events and an online space to connect with other members. This membership club is a brilliant example of putting your audience at the heart of your strategy and not only increasing reach to new members, but creating strong engagement with your loyal readers. The club, which launched at their 2023 Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba, is a proven hit, with more than 1,100 members signing up, far surpassing the original goal of 250.

Judges commented: “It’s a project that goes beyond contributing to readers’ revenues. By creating this membership strategy, Food for Mzansi is creating a permanent panel to question and refine its services and content, and is building an excellent loyalty and conversion tool.”

Best Newsletter

- Project: Money Cents
Company: *Daily Maverick*, South Africa

This personal finance newsletter, evolving from a column in the weekly print paper, was created to help spread better financial literacy in a country that struggles with high income inequality, inflation, unemployment and debt. The lack of financial education left a big gap in audiences’ needs that “Money Cents” fills through helpful money tips, bite-sized information presented with infographics, and a light and humorous tone. With 90,000 subscribers and an average open rate of 61%, this newsletter is a clear winner with their audiences.

Judges said: “The tone is conversational and friendly, inviting commentary and feedback, and the personalisation of content invites an element of trust. A diverse range of topics, all informative and practical, adds further weight to what

is clearly a valuable brand extension.”

Best Podcast

- Project: Farmer's Inside Track
Company: Food For Mzansi Group, South Africa

Seeing a gap in access to information for new commercial farmers in South Africa, Food for Mzansi created this podcast to engage better and inform this community. The team developed a user-centred podcast with a range of topics delivered through three distinct weekly episodes, focused on mentoring, farming issues and how-tos, and native content. With over 85,000 downloads in 2023, they have clearly met their audiences' needs and created an important resource that engages and empowers the South African farming community.

Judges remarked: “Farmer's Inside Track could serve as a case study to serve up niche content that will appeal to all. Agriculture is, to many, a dry but vital subject matter; served here, it could be anyone's cup of tea.”

Best Fact-Checking Project

- Project: *Daily Maverick* article summaries Company: *Daily Maverick*

South AfricaBeyond ensuring their readers trust that what they read has been fact-checked, *Daily Maverick* further empowers their community to question and accurately identify misinformation. Readers send in questions or concerns around fact-checking topics, from which a video and article are produced to answer and educate about those issues. The videos, which average between 10,000-50,000 views, are created weekly and create both a crucial trust and a dialogue between *Daily Maverick* and its audience. Along with the article and the video being shared widely on social media, this project is a great example of both educating and empowering readers in an environment where disinformation can feel intimidating.

Judges commented: “A very well-planned project that uses visual media for engagement. It has deployed users cleverly as ambassadors for amplification on social media, further adding to the enhanced reach and trust.”

Best Innovative Digital Product

- Project: Camino: From vlog series to bespoke walking tours
Company: *Netwerk24*, South Africa

Inspired by the popularity of the vlogs following a *Netwerk24* colleague's Camino de Santiago pilgrimage, *Netwerk24* partnered with travel guides to create real-life tour packages in which groups could embark on the journey with them. They created a microsite and ran a live blog and tracker of the trip alongside picture galleries, videos and highlights. This innovative product adds another revenue stream to *Netwerk24*'s business model, while both engaging current subscribers and increasing subscription numbers. With tours sold out months in advance and the microsite generating 1.1 million pageviews, their audiences have clearly embraced both the idea and the content.

Best Native Advertising Campaign - Honourable Mention

- Project: Meadow Feeds
Company: Food For Mzansi Group, South Africa

Animal nutrition solutions expert, Meadow Feeds to create a campaign that would serve this need. The collaboration was incorporated into their newsletter, podcast, technical articles and social media strategy to maximise reach and engagement with their community. The campaign generated more than 700,000 ad impressions on Food for Mzansi's website, increased newsletter performance, and an impressive reach of 600,000 across Facebook and Instagram.

This project showcases the power of a strong partnership aimed at serving the needs of audiences to better engage and empower communities.

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