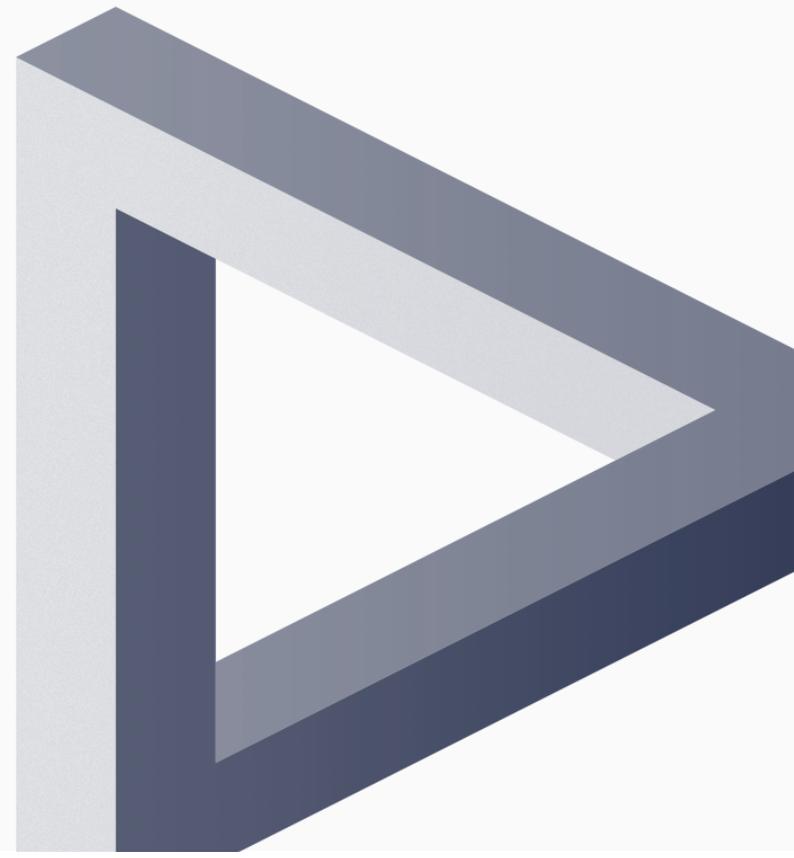
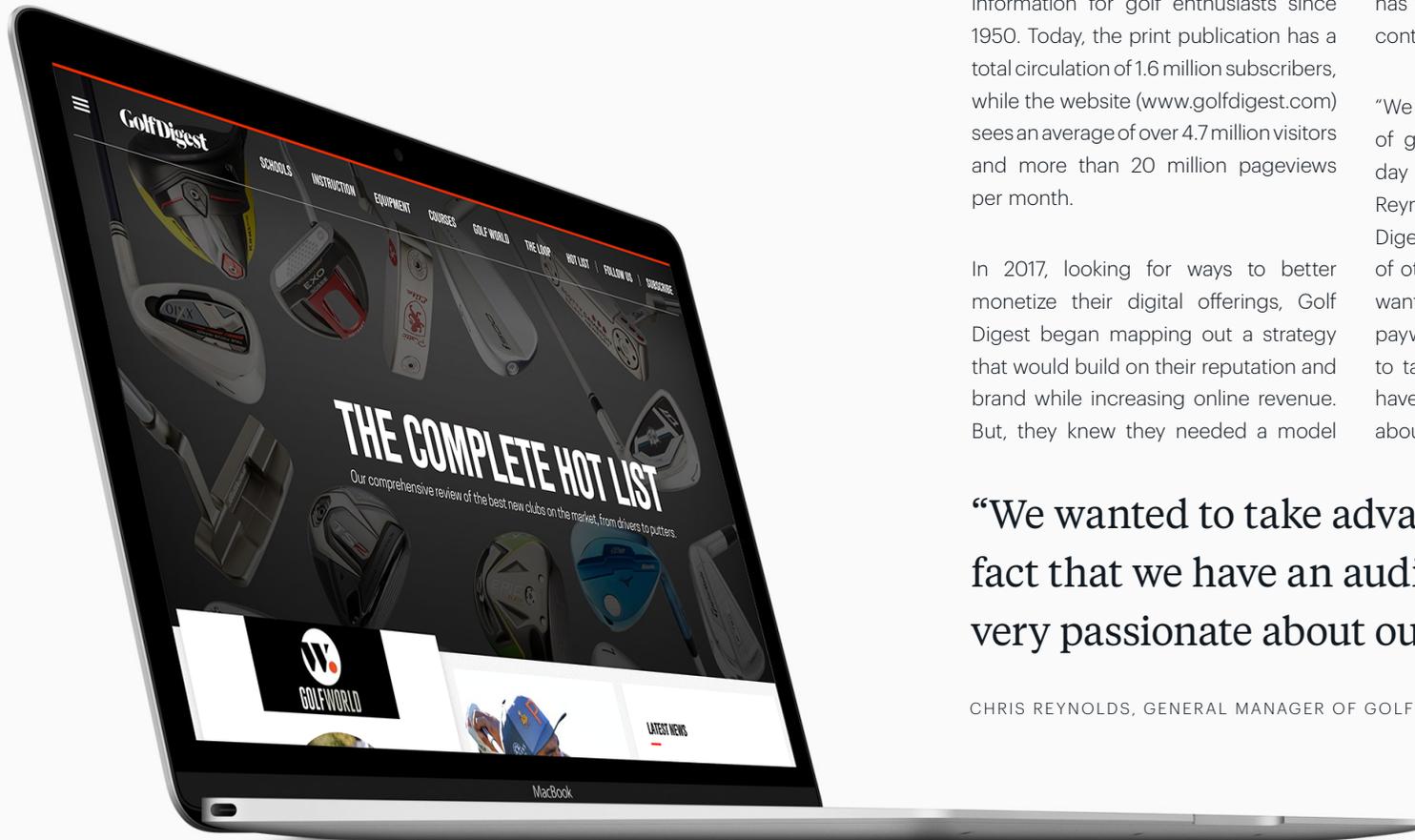




Golf Digest swings and wins with a new digital model offering premium content.

Fueled by Piano, Golf Digest All Access sees conversion numbers soar while keeping options open for potential users





A Condé Nast brand, Golf Digest has been a trusted source of news and information for golf enthusiasts since 1950. Today, the print publication has a total circulation of 1.6 million subscribers, while the website ([www.golfdigest.com](http://www.golfdigest.com)) sees an average of over 4.7 million visitors and more than 20 million pageviews per month.

In 2017, looking for ways to better monetize their digital offerings, Golf Digest began mapping out a strategy that would build on their reputation and brand while increasing online revenue. But, they knew they needed a model

that wouldn't alienate their loyal users — a niche golf enthusiast audience that has shown to be hesitant to paying for content online.

“We know we reach a huge number of golfers through the regular day-to-day content we provide,” says Chris Reynolds, General Manager of Golf Digest. “We also felt that, unlike a lot of other publishers out there, we didn't want to do a metered paywall or a flat paywall based on content. We wanted to take advantage of the fact that we have an audience that is very passionate about our product.”

**“We wanted to take advantage of the fact that we have an audience that is very passionate about our product.”**

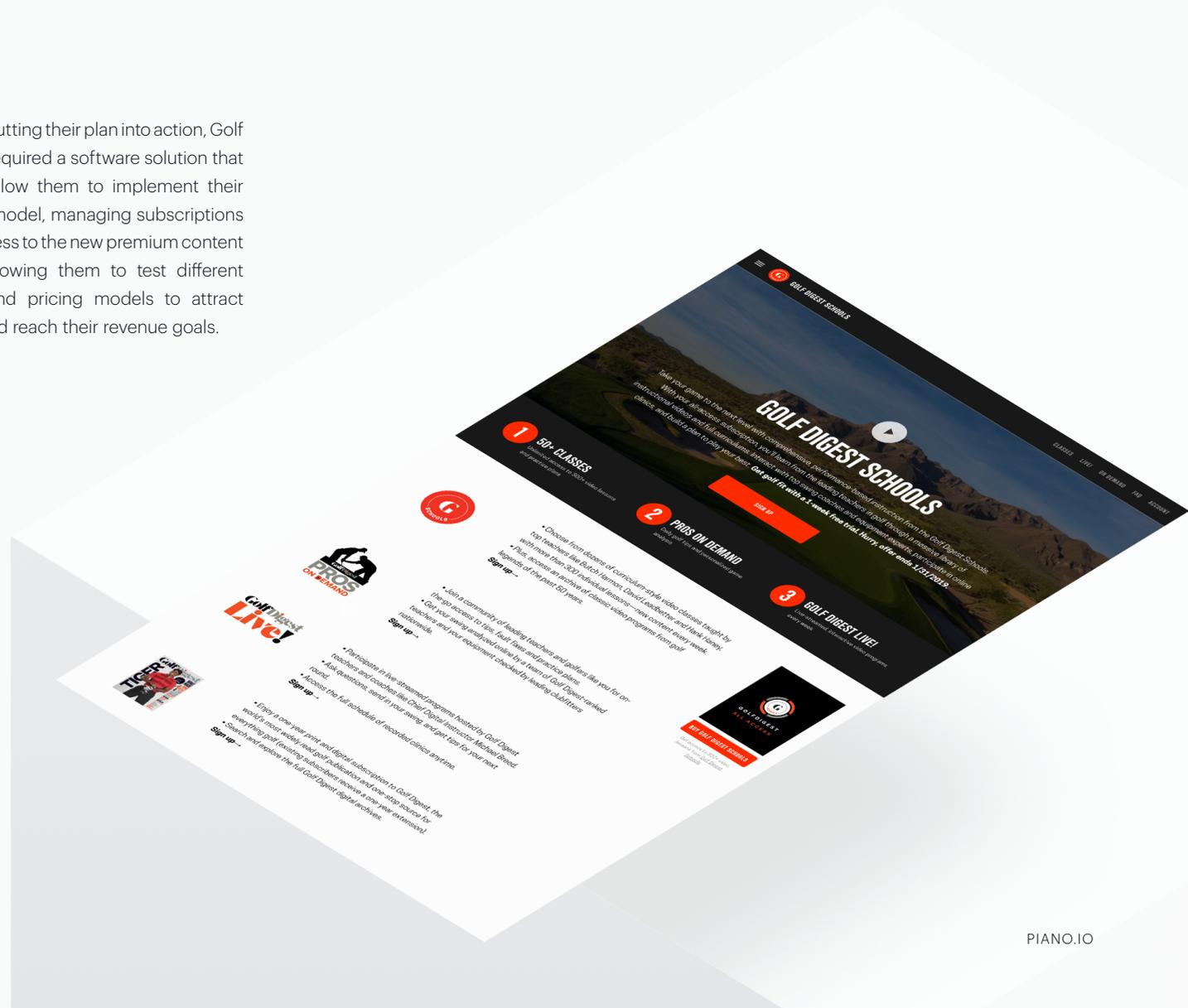
CHRIS REYNOLDS, GENERAL MANAGER OF GOLF DIGEST

# Teeing up for change

To accomplish their goals, Golf Digest focused on giving readers more of what they wanted, rather than taking away what they were already accessing for free. With that in mind, Golf Digest Schools and Golf Digest All Access were created — services that would allow them to offer premium content with a focus on streamed instructional videos featuring the game’s top instructors. The new content would be offered at a premium price, both as a la carte offerings that would allow users to pick and choose based on their needs and interests or through a monthly or annual subscription.

“What we wanted to do was not gate off the content,” Reynolds says. “We wanted to continue to provide the same service to our users, but also leverage the strength of our brand and the trust we’ve established, and put a new product in front of readers.”

Before putting their plan into action, Golf Digest required a software solution that would allow them to implement their unique model, managing subscriptions and access to the new premium content while allowing them to test different offers and pricing models to attract users and reach their revenue goals.



## Taking aim at a new online experience

**“There weren’t any other solutions out there — truly none — that offered the ability to sell a subscription, but also individually gate and control each of our products.”**

CHRIS REYNOLDS, GENERAL MANAGER OF GOLF DIGEST

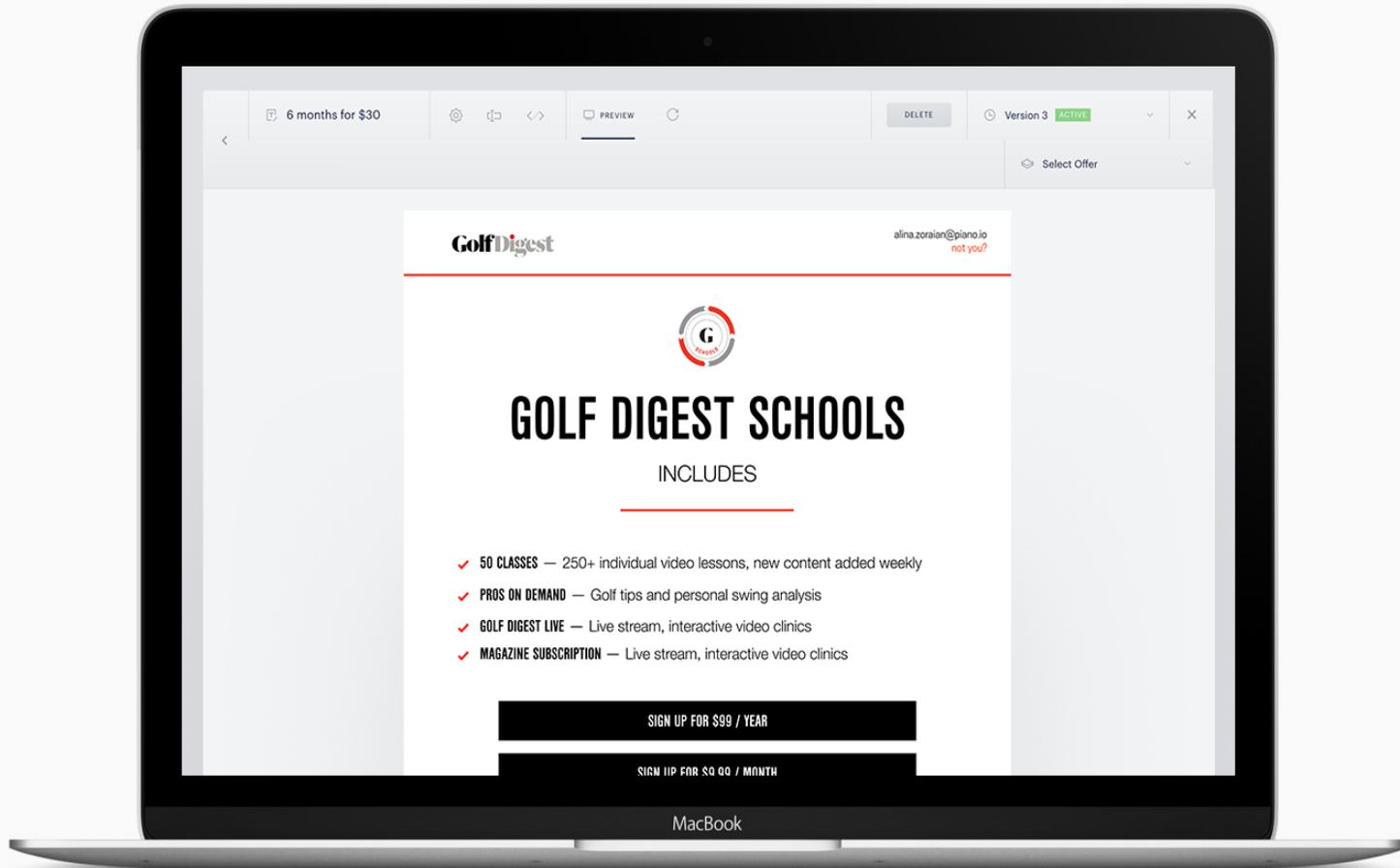
Golf Digest chose Piano to power their digital endeavor. A leading technology provider for media companies wanting to expand their audiences and increase revenue, Piano integrated seamlessly with Golf Digest’s existing user management system and was flexible enough to work with their new pricing strategy.

“There weren’t any other solutions out there—truly none—that offered the ability to sell a subscription, but also individually gate and control each of our products,” Reynolds says enthusiastically.

As Golf Digest rolled out the new model, Piano’s Composer and VX solutions helped drive sales for Golf Digest All Access, and manage and bundle content within the Golf Digest Schools. Piano’s experienced services team — which has worked with leading media companies around the globe — assisted in establishing the right subscription offers and helped provide the functionality needed to execute timely promos, gifting offers, and free trials. Each iteration was tested to maximize results, while user analytics allowed the publication a clear view into

what was working and what wasn’t along the way.

In fact, Reynolds names the services team’s “creativity and flexibility to execute what we needed” and “the flexibility of the platform as a whole to handle the product that we created” as two of the three components of their success — along with their ability to “manage and talk to customers in a meaningful way” — that led to Golf Digest’s overall success in introducing their new digital strategy in April 2018.



## Driving for results

Golf Digest's new strategy and partnership with Piano paid off when their digital endeavors, fueled by the right subscription offers, led to an overall 2018 conversion rate of 1.06 percent.

Since then, the publication has been able to expand online revenue both during peak times and within their traditionally slow winter season. A promo code offering 20 percent off Golf Digest All Access the week prior to the 2018 Masters saw a 400 percent lift in revenue, while a special gifting offer led to a 185 percent boost in online conversions between September/October and November/December

2018. Free trial offers have also proven successful, and the team plans to test them further in the future.

With more data available on what individual offerings work best, the publication has been able to continue to tweak both the promotions it offers, and the content itself, to create a product they know their users will want to buy. Whether it means creating longer videos, adding more audio or fitness-oriented content, or offering more from the instructors that best resonate, they've continued to listen to user feedback each step of the way.

**“Even when you have a pretty good concept and you’ve been working in the space for a long time, you have to listen to your customers about what it is that they actually want.”**

CHRIS REYNOLDS, GENERAL MANAGER OF GOLF DIGEST

↑ 400%

Lift in revenue for Golf Digest All Access the week prior to the 2018 Masters

↑ 185%

Boost in online conversions between September to October and November to December 2018

↑ 1.06%

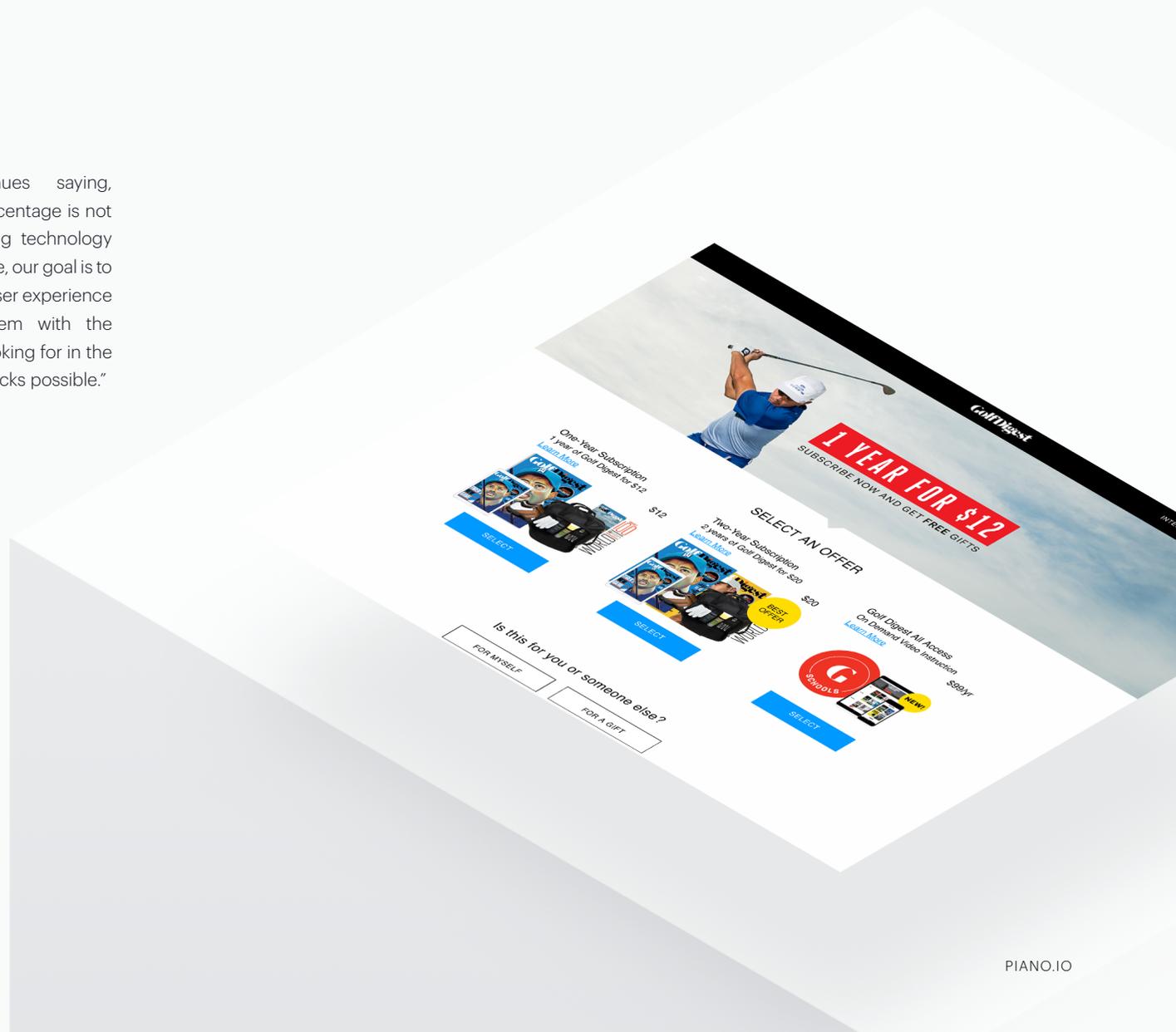
Conversion rate overall in 2018

## Playing the long game

While user feedback has been positive, Golf Digest plans to continue building out their online model with the help of the Piano platform and team. Expanded content options and a more personalized experience — with content suggestions and offers based on users' reading habits — are both priorities. Reducing friction points along the sales journey will also continue to be a primary focus for the team.

"I think the user experience, in general, is the biggest challenge," Reynolds says.

Reynolds continues saying, "Since a large percentage is not used to integrating technology into their golf game, our goal is to create a positive user experience that provides them with the content they're looking for in the least amount of clicks possible."



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by emailing us at [hello@piano.io](mailto:hello@piano.io)

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