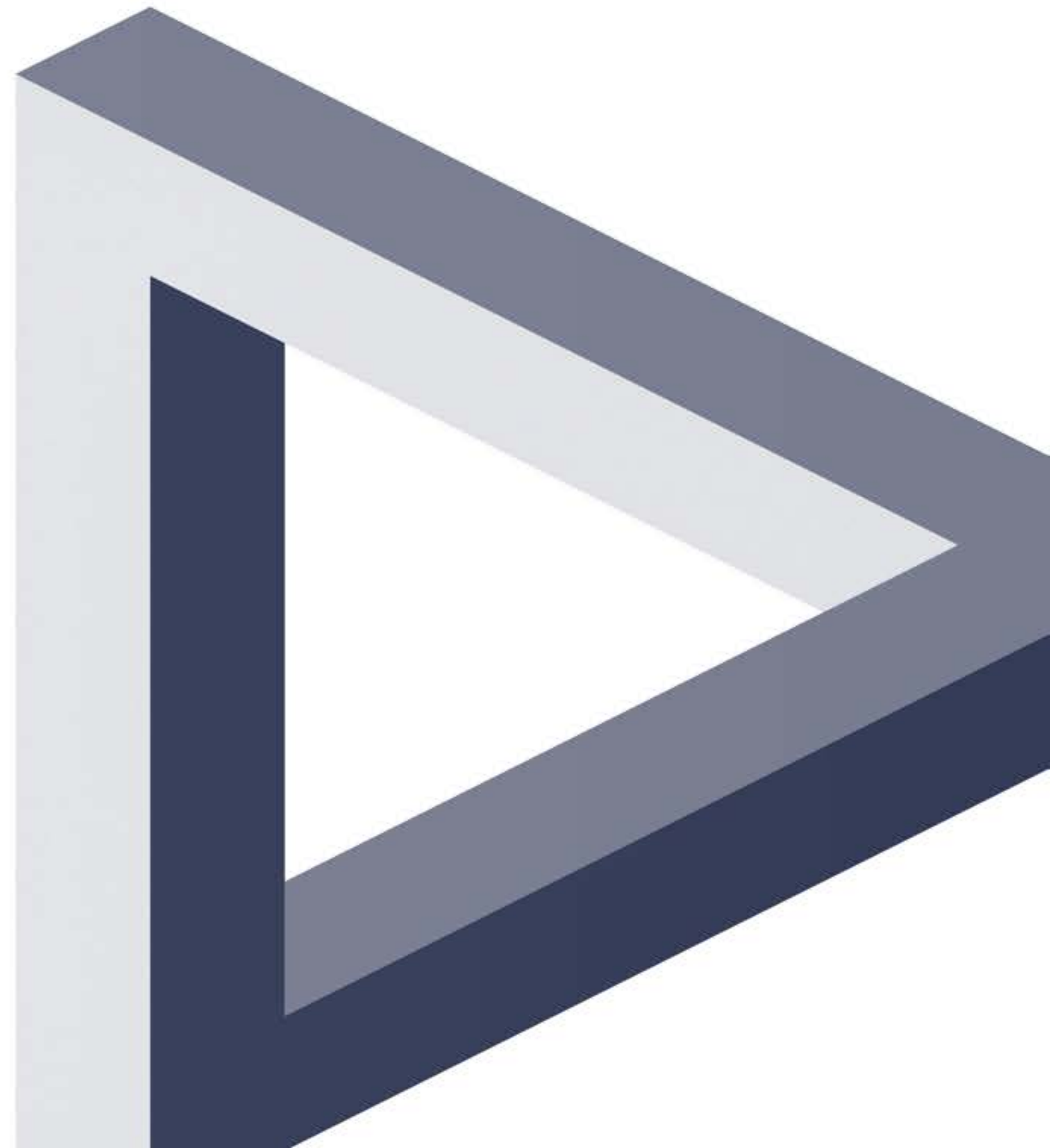


piano | Science

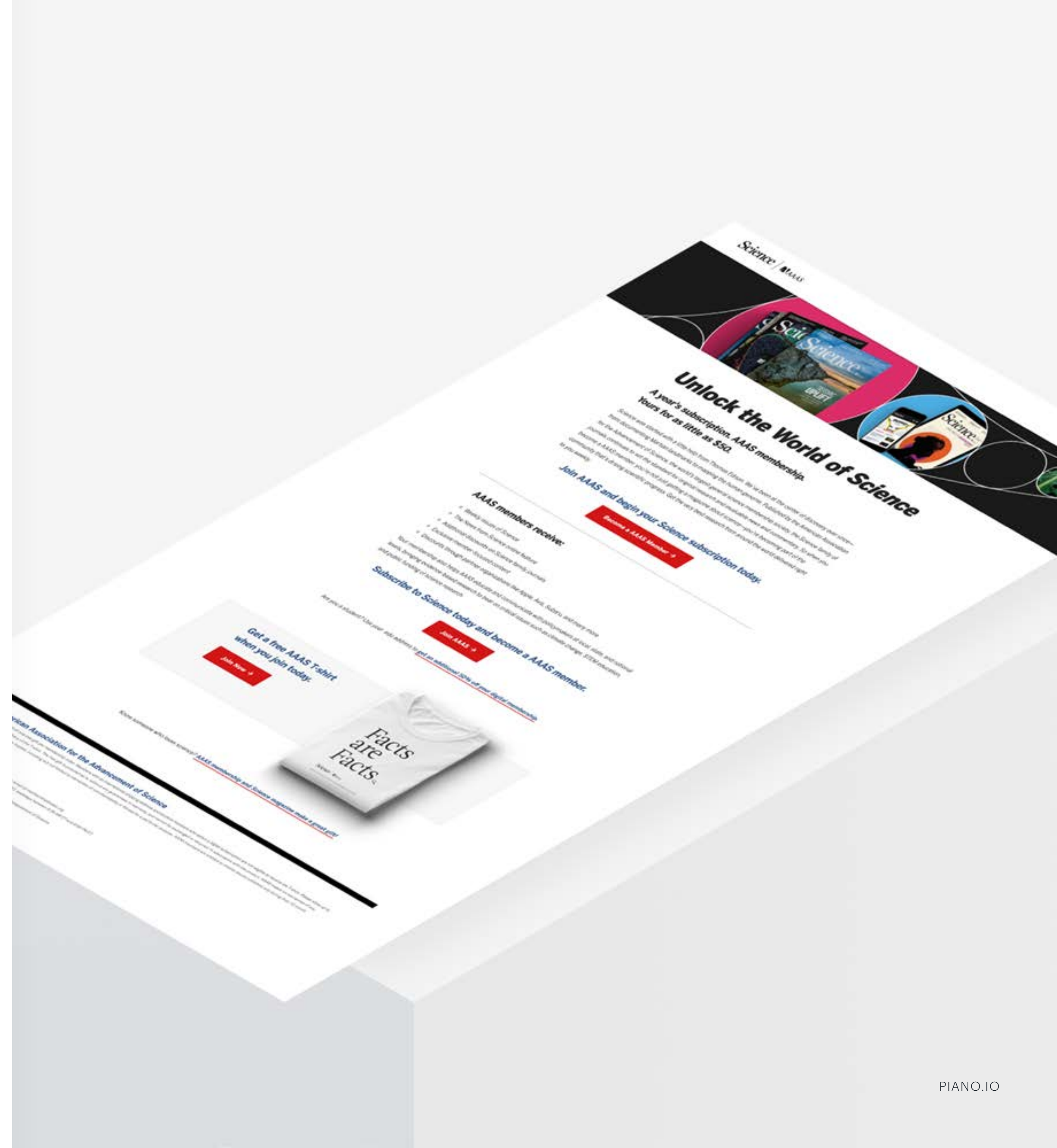
Building the Brand —
Why AAAS Introduced a
Metered Paywall at News
from *Science*



Adding Value

The non-profit organization American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) — the world’s largest multidisciplinary scientific society — publishes six peer-reviewed academic journals, the flagship of which is Science Magazine, distributed to AAAS members and research organizations worldwide. In addition to original scientific research and research reviews, Science offers breaking news as part of News from Science — a section AAAS had been offering for free for 20 years, much of it exclusively online, with award-winning content often found nowhere else on the web.

In 2017, AAAS approached Piano looking for ways to add value to News from Science, motivated by an interest in building the brand and learning more about its users. “One of the challenges we identified early on was communicating the idea of News from Science as distinct from the rest of our product set,” says Michael Hardesty, Digital Product Strategist with Science. “We have been highly focused on testing our assumptions and learning from our readers.”



“

One of the challenges we identified early on was communicating the idea of News from *Science* as distinct from the rest of our product set. We have been highly focused on testing our assumptions and learning from our readers.”

MICHAEL HARDESTY

Digital Product Strategist

Challenges

- Increase the perceived value of News from *Science* among readers
- Learn more about the brand's users and what sets them apart
- Drive newsletter subscriptions and AAAS memberships
- Create a new revenue stream to support the content offered

Powering engagement

To reach its goals, AAAS made the decision to put News from Science behind a metered paywall, but wanted to ease readers into the new experience first. With that in mind, they introduced registration access in late 2017, collecting email addresses and key demographic details to drive their audience engagement goals. After seeing the success of the new endeavor, they launched the metered paywall in June 2018 — first with a meter limit of 10 pageviews, then moving to five pageviews in January 2019. Subscriptions, which include access to both new and archived content, were priced at \$1.50 a month, and are available for free to AAAS members.

Piano Composer, VX and ID successfully fueled the project, proving “the perfect partner for the pilot,” Hardesty says. “The major appeal of Piano was the lightweight integration with our existing infrastructure — we liked the plug-and-go nature of it,” he adds. “It was very intuitive and powerful in terms of what kinds of experiences we could create for our readers without any sort of technical learning curve.”

Results

- Experimented with various meters and experiences, gathering insights into audience engagement
- Took the initial steps necessary to communicate value and build brand awareness of News from Science as distinct from the Science family of journals
- Ensured a friction-free user experience that serves the organization’s multiple audience segments
- Demonstrated a steady growth in subscriptions, with an average 55% increase between October 2018 and February 2019
- Saw conversion rates in keeping with the team’s initial goals

With Piano’s help, AAAS has made strides in accomplishing its goals, and continues to test and experiment with the experience they’re offering.



piano

Join the world's leading digital business platform.

Visit piano.io or start a conversation with us at hello@piano.io