

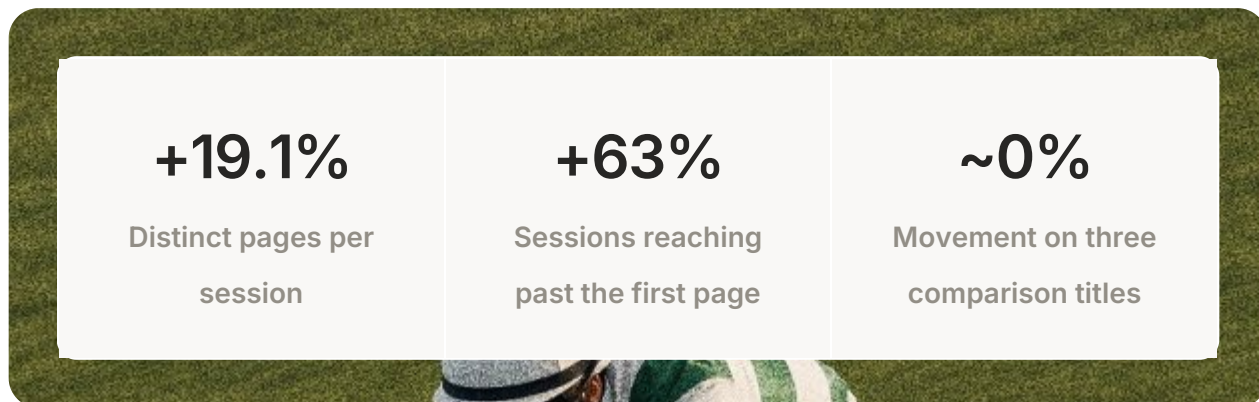
A full-page background image showing a jockey in a green and white striped uniform riding a dark horse during a race. The jockey is wearing a white helmet and goggles, leaning forward in a racing posture. The horse is dark-colored with a white blaze on its face and white markings on its lower legs. A green saddle cloth with a large white number '1' and the word 'WINWICRY' is visible. The background is a blurred green field, suggesting motion.

 Artificial Poets | *Horse&Rider*

CASE STUDY

Horse & Rider Grew Pages Per Session 19% Without Growing Traffic

In the first quarter after enabling the Artificial Poets Platform, **one in six Horse & Rider readers went past the first page**, up from one in ten. Three comparable titles in the same network moved less than a quarter of a point over the identical weeks.



In brief

- Horse & Rider enabled the Artificial Poets Platform on **18 December 2025**.
- **63% more readers got past the opening article.** The share of sessions reaching more than one page went from 10.4% to 16.9%. Distinct pages per session increase 19.1% in the first quarter.
- Three sister titles in the same network never switched it on. Over the very same weeks they barely moved — **less than a quarter of a percentage point** — so the jump is not a seasonal swing or a search-algorithm change.
- Sessions and users did not grow. The entire gain came from depth per visit.

The pressure

Every publisher in this market has already had the conversation about traffic. **Google search referrals to publishers fell roughly a third in the year to December 2025**, and the decline was worst for exactly the kind of title Horse & Rider is: **sites in the 1,000–10,000 daily pageview band lost around 60%.**^[1] Fewer than four in ten news executives say they are confident about the industry they work in, and they expect **search referrals to fall another 43% within three years.**^[2]

What gets less attention is the second problem, which is quieter and more expensive. **The visits that still arrive are worth less than they used to be.** When a reader lands from a search result that now competes with an AI-generated answer, **the path that once produced three or four pageviews produces one or two.**^[3] Publishers are **losing visitors *and* losing depth** from the visitors who remain.

That second loss is the one still inside a publisher's control. Chartbeat's own data puts it plainly: a first-time reader who views a single page has an **8% chance of returning within the week.** A reader who views one more page has a **22% chance.**^[4] **One additional article roughly triples the odds of building a habit**, and it does it on an audience the publisher has already paid to acquire.

What was enabled

On 18 December 2025, Horse & Rider switched on the Artificial Poets Platform: as a reader moves down an article, the Artificial Poets Platform's AI selects and loads related articles beneath it, chosen against the reader's current context rather than a fixed "most popular" list.

There is no redesign, no migration, and no change to how the site is authored. The reader does not click anything. They keep scrolling, and there is something else there.

Adoption was immediate and then settled, which is the normal shape. In the first full week the Artificial Poets Platform was involved in 14.3% of consecutive pageviews on the site, against a pre-launch baseline of 0.7%. It runs at 3–4% today.

What moved

Distinct pages per session increase 19.1%, from 1.11 to 1.33, across the first quarter after enablement, measured against a 20-week pre-launch baseline. Weekly, Horse & Rider climbed from around 1.09 the week before enablement to a peak of 1.57, and stayed elevated through March, while the average of three comparison titles held between 1.08 and 1.14 throughout.

63% more sessions reached more than one page. In plain terms: the share went from 10.4% to 16.9% — before the Artificial Poets Platform, roughly one reader in ten went beyond the article they landed on; after it, roughly one in six did. Those readers enter the part of the session where a publisher's economics actually work: every additional page load is a fresh ad opportunity on audience already acquired, and Playwire's session data puts publishers above the median on page depth at many times the revenue per session of those below it.^[5]

Traffic did not grow. Sessions and users were flat to slightly down across the same period. This is a depth result, not an acquisition result, and it is worth being precise about that: Horse & Rider did not get more readers. **It got more out of the readers it already had.**

How we know

The obvious objection to any result like this is that something else changed: a seasonal swing, an algorithm update, a content push. So the comparison was built to answer it.

Equine Network runs a portfolio of equestrian titles. The Artificial Poets Platform was enabled on two of them and not on the others, which leaves a set of comparison titles serving an overlapping audience, in the same category, over the same weeks, under the same market conditions.

Title	AP Platform	Distinct pages per session
Horse & Rider	Enabled	+19.1%
Equus Magazine	Enabled	+12.2%
Comparison Site #1	Not enabled	-0.2%
Comparison Site #2	Not enabled	-0.0%
Comparison Site #3	Not enabled	-0.1%

Three independent titles, all effectively flat, while the two enabled titles moved 19.1% and 12.2%. Their multi-page session share moved by an average of half a point across the same weeks.

Metrics are counted per site by domain, bots excluded, over identical calendar weeks. Pages per session counts *distinct* article paths, so the figure reflects readers reaching genuinely different articles.



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References

1. Chartbeat data reported in Press Gazette, "Global publisher Google traffic dropped by a third in 2025." [pressgazette.co.uk](https://www.pressgazette.co.uk)
2. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, "Journalism, Media and Technology Trends and Predictions 2026." reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk
3. Nitropay, "Protecting Ad Revenue Per Session in the Age of AI Search." blog.nitropay.com
4. Chartbeat, "Encourage multiple page visits, use social video for successful 2026 publishing strategy." chartbeat.com
5. Playwire, "Content Architecture and Publisher Revenue: Why Page Depth Is Your Most Underrated Monetization Lever." playwire.com

Method: PostHog, all devices, bot-filtered. Baseline 4 Aug – 15 Dec 2025; first-quarter window 22 Dec 2025 – 30 Mar 2026. Multi-page session share compares 4 Aug – 17 Dec 2025 with 22 Dec 2025 – 10 May 2026. Comparison titles are Equine Network properties without the Artificial Poets Platform enabled.