AFW -1: Feature Writing in English  
Assignment 2018 - 2019  
(Based on Blocks 1-5)  
Max. Marks: 100  
Answer all questions.  

1. If you were a journalist writing for a well known national paper, which aspects of your work would need special attention?  
Ans : You might know the feeling. You've spent hours, even days, crafting what you believe is an interesting, insightful or entertaining story. However, when you check the audience analytics for that particular article, you see most people left the page before they even got past the third paragraph.  

Don't despair. According to Chris Moran, digital audience editor at the Guardian, metrics like attention time can be affected by many things, such as what device a reader is using to visit the site. Speaking on a recent Journalism.co.uk podcast, he also noted attention time is "incredibly sensitive" to whether a user comes direct to the site or is referred from a search page or social media post.  

“I think Chartbeat and everybody else is right when they say attention time is a good top level metric for news organisations,” said Moran. “In general, it’s fair to say that if you have good quality journalism, you will see more engagement and more time spent on page than a poor-quality site.”  

However, he added that since the Guardian introduced attention time as a “proper metric” in Ophan, its in-house analytics platform, he had concerns about the best way to interpret it at an article level, and “whether it’s really a pure enough proxy for quality”.  

Up until fairly recently, news outlets tended to measure their success in terms of page views and shares. The problem is, of course, that clicks and shares are not an indicator of high-quality, valuable journalism. Digitally native sites such as Medium and Upworthy, which focus on measuring time on site, are slowly but surely generating a shift in how the industry looks at web metrics. And Chartbeat chief executive Tony Haile declared a new era of “Attention Web” in an article for Time last year headlined ‘What you think you know about the web is wrong’.  

Unfortunately, there's no exact science for increasing attention time. As Dan Valente, a data scientist at Chartbeat, told Journalism.co.uk, "producing interesting, well-researched or entertaining content always wins". "But it really depends on the specific audience you're trying to hit," Valente added. "So some audiences will engage longer if you hit them on social media. Some won’t. Some will engage even less.”  

However, there are a few things you can experiment with in order to increase the chance of your stories being read – all the way to the last line.  

Use more multimedia  
Moran noted that multimedia such as photos and videos can help keep the reader on the page, pointing to the "sheer volume of media" which appears in stories on Mail Online. "They're marker points which they [Mail Online] think offer a reader a nice staging post and something else to keep them on the page at each point,” he said.  

Valente also noted that studies carried out by Chartbeat have shown "a slight increase in engaged time” for stories with videos. “But the effect we've seen so far is quite small, and most likely attributed to the fact there's a video on the page that [users] just have to watch,” he added.  

Add structure with subheadings  
Another technique to add structure to your story is to break up your story with subheadings. Not only is this easier on the eye than a lump of heavy text, Moran also noted subheadings can "help people feel like they can consume it piece by piece, especially on longer reads" and "give the reader a sense of progress".