

Bleacher Report reduces time to insights by 95% – from weeks to minutes

Increases conversion and cross-team collaboration with Scuba



Challenge

Bleacher Report needed a faster and simpler way to gain visibility into user behavior for their web and mobile app platform.

Solution

Bleacher Report partnered with Scuba to get immediate insights into user behavior and make data-informed decisions on how to plan, create, and share engaging content with their users.

Benefits

- Streamlined analytics processes and reduced time to insights from six months to minutes.
- Helps to deliver a data-driven culture at Bleacher Report.
- Able to retire several expensive and niche analytics solutions.
- Created function-specific dashboards to increase collaboration between content, sales, and business development teams to better plan and prioritize new content.
- The Bleacher Report growth team was able to increase user conversion by identifying which steps in their onboarding process had the highest bounce rate.



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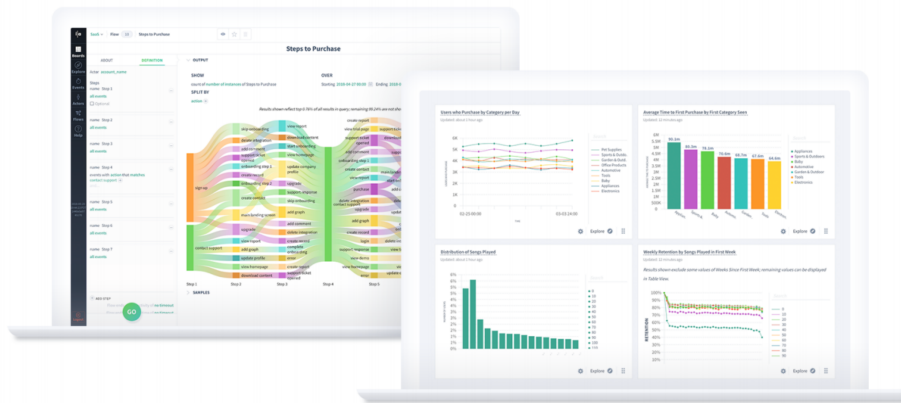
Ross Schwaber

Director of Product, Bleacher Report

Bleacher Report is the leading digital destination for team-specific sports content and real-time event coverage. Every day, Bleacher Report creates and shares hundreds of pieces of content across its website and mobile application, Team Stream™, to provide fans with the most comprehensive experience for their favorite teams and topics across all major sports.

Bleacher Report’s appeal to advertisers is the size of its O&O audience and its social reach. When Bleacher Report noticed changes in user engagement and retention, Ross Schwaber, director of product management, was tasked with delivering a new set of analytics tools to help the product team figure out how best to convert, engage, and retain users.

“You have to be much smarter about regaining and retaining users nowadays, because it’s not always so easy to fill the bucket from the top anymore,” said Ross in reference to the growing competition seen by social media platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn directly placing content in their users’ feeds.



Understanding user behavior wasn’t simple for Ross and the team. The team wanted to build a system to provide industry-leading visibility into critical metrics around user behavior or how well particular pieces of content were driving new users to the site; and with a small data engineering team, wanted to be able to move faster.

Not only did the old process take a long time, but it also diverted the data engineering team from their other critical priorities.

With over five different vendor and homegrown analytics tools, the data team would typically spend months to collect, visualize, and analyze data to get answers about user behavior. Ross described the process: “We’d find a problem, we’d identify it, we’d start collecting data, and then we’d build some kind of visualization layer on top of that. In six months, we’d have an answer.”

The data collection alone required aggregating data from a suite of tools. Not only did the old process take a long time, but it also diverted the data engineering team from their other critical priorities.

Ross knew that he and the team needed something that could scale to accommodate the needs of the business, but that would also be simple and require minimal engineering resources. Ross and the team looked at several other analytics and business intelligence tools like Tableau, Looker, Chartio, and Mixpanel, but found that they required too much technical expertise and lacked the flexibility to dynamically respond to the questions he and the team had about user behavior.

“They did a great job at creating pretty dashboards, but it wasn’t easy to go to the next level and say, ‘This dashboard sparked this question. How do I answer it?’” Ross commented of one of analytics vendors he evaluated.

After looking at Scuba, the decision was easy. Ross coupled Scuba with mParticle, a data pipeline tool for event instrumentation, to streamline the data ingest and analytics processes and free the data team to work on other critical priorities.

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With Scuba in place, Ross was able to retire several niche data analytics tools and reduce time to insights by 95%. Scuba provides Bleacher Report's business units with insights into how people use their applications and their site, as well as the success of the content they create. They use these insights to then plan and prioritize future content for their site. In addition, Ross and the team have also used Scuba to optimize their user onboarding process by identifying which steps had the highest bounce rates.

Said Ross: "The thing that most excites me about Scuba is putting data in the hands of more people. With Scuba, we can share dashboards with our content, business development, sales, and marketing teams so they can quickly get the insights they want when they want them. Then Scuba lets them dig deeper. It's data on steroids."

Scuba also fostered collaboration and assisted in Bleacher Report's goal of building a data-informed culture. Scuba is used by several of the company's departments:

Product	Increasing user conversion by identifying difficult steps in onboarding process Using user behavior data to influence major app and web redesigns to create a more engaging user experience
Marketing	Building out user personas to understand how different personas are affected by different content and streams
Content	Planning and prioritizing new content based on user engagement
Business Development	Tracking referrals to external sites to create and strengthen partnerships with advertisers

What's next for Bleacher Report?

While streamlining processes, reducing time to insight, and fostering better collaboration between business units have been a great start, Ross is already identifying new ways Bleacher Report can drive growth, save money and time. In addition, Ross and the team are using Scuba to make data-informed design decisions to optimize user conversation and engagement to better prepare for a major up and coming platform release. "We're just getting started with different ways we can use Scuba here at Bleacher Report," Ross said.