

What's On Reading Partner Catch Up and 2023 review

Before we start...

In coming up with the numbers for this year, the new version of Google Analytics has told me that the *old* report I was using was tracking the wrong info for page views, and the figures I gave you all last year weren't the best ones to indicate how well the site was doing.

Fortunately, I **under-reported** last year, rather than over-sold it!

So, last year I said that in 2022 we had 1,317,763 **Sessions**

What I should've been looking at was **Page Views** - 2,880,544!!!!

The number of users for 2022 - 789,664 - remains accurate.

So, how does 2023 compare to 2022?

<i>Year</i>	<i>Page Views</i>	<i>Users</i>
2022	2,880,544	789,664
2023	4,277,404	1,096,431
<i>Difference</i>	+48.49%	+38.85%

So, a bigger increase in usage than users, which suggests those who are coming to the site are using it more frequently.

Growth in 2023

There are currently 276 registered Partner orgs on the site – around a dozen of which were added in 2023, and some of whom finally regained activity after some fallow years and months. There are still some in that number who've remained inactive in the last year (or more) though.

We once again expanded our list of event types, based on feedback from within the Partner network and external suggestions. The new categories are **LGBTQ+** and **Teens & Young Adults**, and both can be used to reflect both the content, creators and suggested audiences of the events or activities in question. Although this was right at the end of the year, so it's not really reflected in the stats for 2023!

The resources hub continues to grow both in terms of content and reach, with figures showing that this section of the site is proving useful for the wider community and for the cultural community too! The funding page in particular is shooting up in terms of content – there are currently 19 funding opportunities on the site!

So, some headline stats

In 2023, we had:

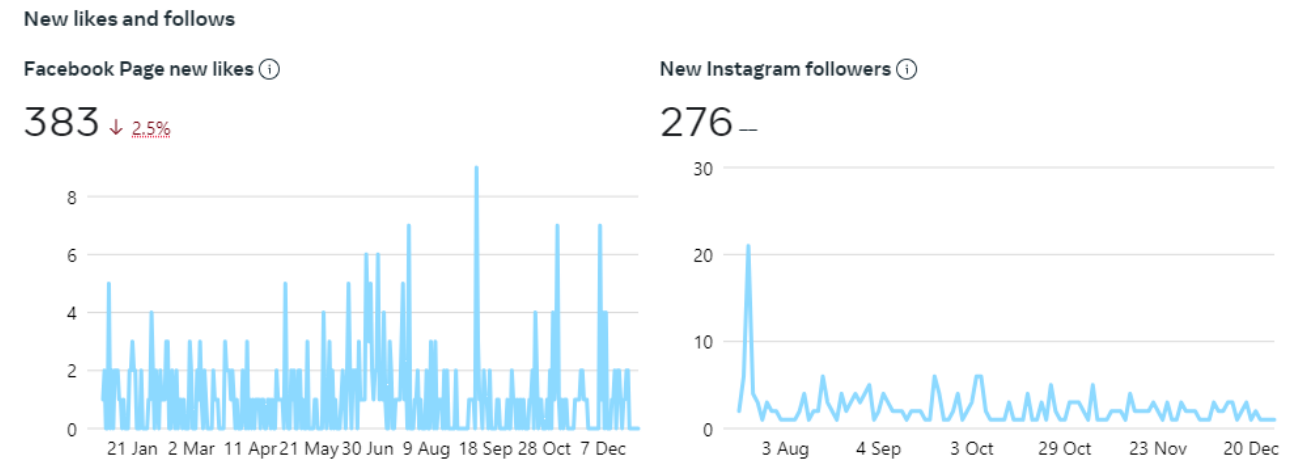
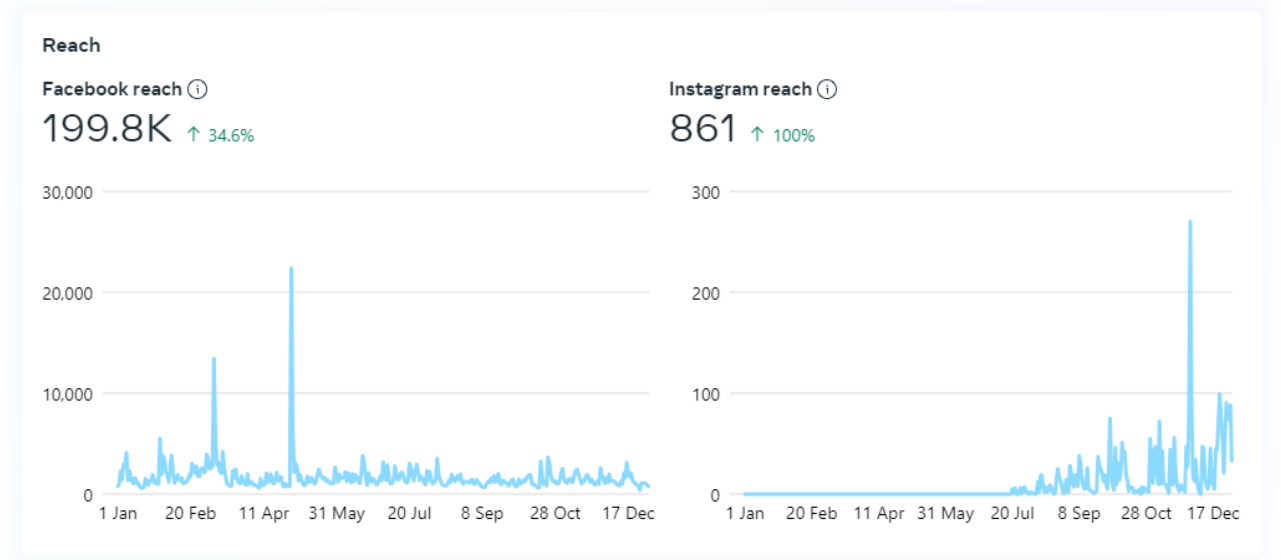
- **An even bigger Christmas list** – 118 events and activities listed on the site, almost double 2022! And once again a great number of events live in time to be listed in the Your Reading residents' newsletter, which went to every household in the borough! The number of visits to that page rose from 15,648 to 21,777 – alas, not quite the same scale as the number of events on there, but still an impressive growth of almost 40%!
- **Our busiest New Year's Eve ever** – even more events than last year, and lots of different types too. And clearly people were more in the NYE mood – visits rose from 2,545 to 7,726... that's an increase of over 200%!
- **More festivals (including the inaugural Walks Festival and Indie Comedy Festival), more school holiday activities, lots of new events of all shapes and sizes**

Twitter's analytics aren't that great, but our tweets were seen by **2,160,357 people**, (up 20% on 2022) and we gained **566** new followers (not bad considering Elon!) – we now have **6075 followers**

So, some headline stats

Facebook continues to be a very useful tool. Our reach was **up 34% to 199.8K impressions**, and we earned 383 new likes and follows (slightly fewer than we did in 2022).

We also went live on Instagram and gained **276 followers in 2023** (and that's already up to 342 by Feb '23!), We're still getting the hang of that, though!



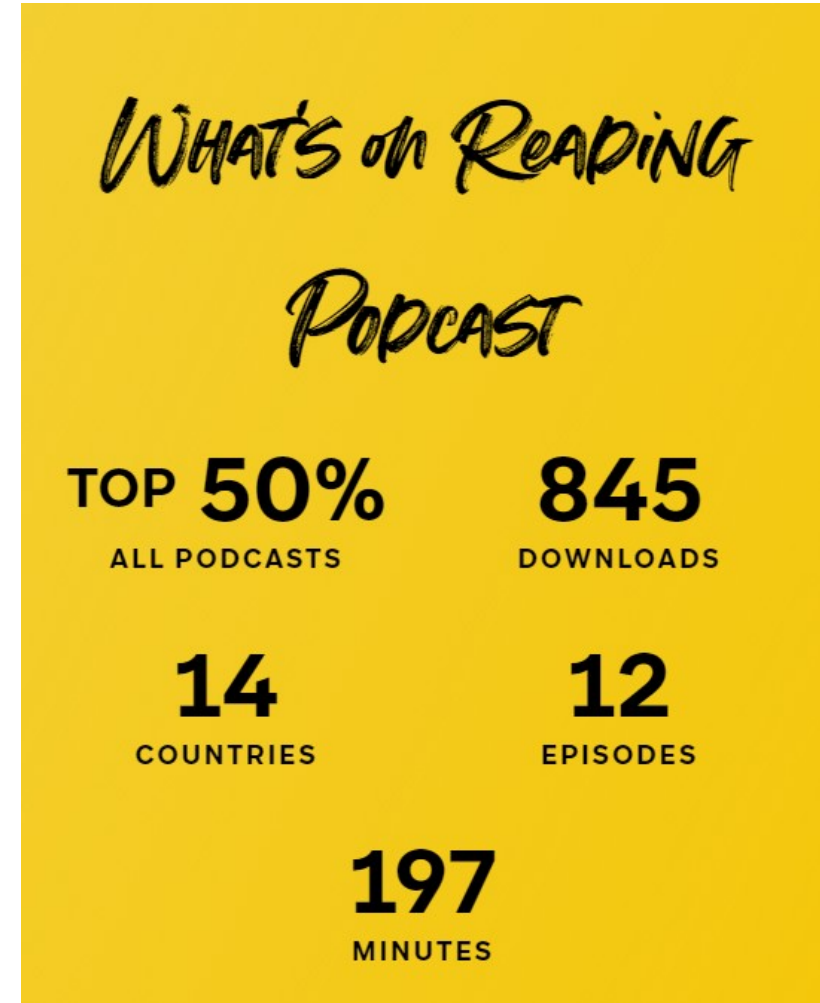
So, some headline stats

And the podcast continues to be heard by a lot of people, too!

The Top 5 episodes were:

1. What's on Reading Oct 23
2. What's on Reading May 23
3. What's on Reading Mar 23
4. What's on Reading June 23
5. What's on Reading Dec 23

We also continue to have a monthly highlights list on visit-reading.com, REDA's site aimed at those visiting Reading.



So, some headline stats

Top Ten pages on the site

	Page	Views	Users
1	/hexagon/whats-on	628,453	292,174
2	/	445,895	264,052
3	/whats-on	150,286	86,467
4	/venues/hexagon/whats-on/sleeping-beauty	75,526	44,500
5	/venues/south-street/whats-on	61,841	29,182
6	/whats-on/this-weekend	43,737	26,757
7	/whats-on/this-month	42,692	24,256
8	/whats-on/by-date	31,637	12,776
9	/whats-on/next-month	29,482	18,315
10	/gaia	26,669	15,901

So, some headline stats

Reading Arts content, the homepage and navigation pages once again unsurprisingly took up the lion's share of the views and of the most frequently hit pages. But there are once again some good stats for the rest of us.

In the top 500 pages, **109 were non-Reading Arts events** – 21.8% (up on last year), reaching 133K visitors

And in total, over **150 non-Reading Arts events got over 500 page views, with 26 getting over 2,000 and a further 40 getting over 1,000 views**

The top genres were once again:

- **Comedy**
- **Children**
- **Music**
- **Theatre**
- **Art & Exhibitions**

People are using the main navigation and clicking out from events to browse by genre, so that's all definitely working!

So, some headline stats

- 37 theme pages were in the top 500 – and 6 of them were in the top 100:
 - /christmas-in-reading – 21,777 page views from 16,628 users (11th highest reach of the year)
 - /themes/cracking-comedy – 9,678 views, 7,922 users
 - /readings-festivals – 8,639 views, 6,921 users
 - /themes/new-years-eve-reading – 7,726 views, 5,622 users
 - /themes/half-term-reading – 5,366 views, 4,066 users (this was re-used each half-term)
 - /coronation – 4,858 views, 4,217 users (this was a re-skin of 2022's Jubilee page, bringing with it the authority that page had built up)

All of these were “evergreen” pages, live all year long and building up SEO authority

- The public-facing side of the hub is proving to be a great resource for the people of Reading
 - The Volunteering page was ranked more than doubled its reach, jumping from 1520 in 2022 views to 3369 in 2023
 - The auditions page had over 1,300 views and paid jobs over 1,000!
 - Various news stories and PR announcements once again reached multiple hundreds of people

But what does this all mean?

The site has good authority within Google (and other search engines). It's a reliable source, with the right balance of words and pictures, consistent and fresh content, and good links in and out and a decent bounce rate.

All of which means our site will always rank well within Google.

Some of the highest-ranking event/landing pages were ones that relied heavily on our site authority – newer events/orgs whose own online presence was too new or too small to rank higher than ours in searches.

- In short, the strength of the site will continue to be a benefit to the events listed on it, especially for newer events/orgs when it comes to Google listings

I noticed when going through the stats how many inactive Partner pages and older events were getting a dozen or two hits. These aren't pages that any of us were pointing people to in the last year, but rather suggests that people are finding them through organic searches. People want to know "what's on at..." or find out if this year's version of this festival or that event is on sale yet.

But what does this all mean?

- While “this weekend” is still the most popular “when” page, the others are much closer than in 2022
 - /whats-on/this-weekend – 43,737 views
 - /whats-on/this-month – 42,692 views
 - /whats-on/by-date – 31,637 views
 - /whats-on/next-month – 29,482 views
 - /whats-on/today – 16,637 views
 - /whats-on/this week – 15,228 views
 - /whats-on/tomorrow – 13,641 views

“By date” didn’t even rank in the top 500 last year – this year it’s shot up!

On the whole, it looks like people are planning a bit more in the medium–long term and thinking much less immediately than in 2022.

Things we talked about last year

Finding ways to better get People to meet People – promoters who need venues (and vice versa), charities in need of folk to do fundraising events, that sort of thing.

- There's not an easy answer to this. I'd say we could try doing a "Partner's fair" or something, but it's tricky trying to get everyone together. I'm always happy to try and broker conversations about helping people work together if you don't know who to ask!

Genres – are they right?

- We've expanded the list again in the last couple of months, but there will always be limitations

Is everyone getting my newsletters?

- I tried a different mail platform, and the read vs not-read stats were roughly the same, just different people getting it or not! I had to manually chase up over 100 invitees for this event because there'd been no reply to the bulk emails.
- Could you all add readingarts@r1.arts-mail.com to your safe lists?

Things we talked about last year

Site updates

- Homepage redesign hasn't happened – there are some bigger-issue things that are linked to the migration of the Town Hall website that need to be ironed out first. But it's still a top priority
- Partners' area of the site – on our developers' long to-do list...
- Search – old events no longer showing up in the main calendar – hooray!

Shared volunteering platform/portal

- I know there's been some other conversations about this, but I don't think anything's really come out of it. The current volunteering page is doing well, though – please do continue to let me know about stuff to go in it.

Is it time we started sending our own What's On newsletter.

- Yes, I really think it is.

What's next?

- We've grown in 2023 and will continue to grow – more Partners, more events, and hopefully more users!
- We continue to touch base with our developers to improve the site
 - Homepage redesign
 - Building sub-venue functionality in for when the new space at The Hexagon is ready
 - Better presentation of accessible/assisted performances
- We'll continue to add content to the resources hub.
- Working with more groups like the Reading Independent Festival Forum to help the work they do.
- And aim to do more events with Partners and the cultural community – smaller, focussed sessions and workshops, informal gatherings and hopefully make this an annual event!
- We're in the early stages of looking at resurrecting the Cultural Awards...

But in all this, the question remains – how is it helping you? Is it helping you? And what else can we do to help?