NARRATIVE
REPORT
2018

hostwriter

Our Vision & Mission

Whether the issue is migration, climate change or international crime: in the connected world of the 21st century, events have effects around the globe. To tell the whole story, journalists need to work together. However, young professional journalists often lack the necessary contacts to international colleagues. Hostwriter supports journalists at all career levels to raise the quality of media coverage by providing local contacts around the globe. We see cross-border journalism as a tool to overcome national bias and prejudice, ultimately contributing toward better informed, more accountable and democratic societies.

Looking back and forth

Looking back at 2018, I still catch myself rubbing my eyes in amazement. In January, Hostwriter was a two-woman enterprise, working part-time from a home office and a co-working space. Twelve months later, we had a staff of five employees collaborating at our own beautiful office space in the heart of Berlin-Neukölln. Our monetary funds skyrocketed from less than 90.000 Euros in 2016 up to 250.000 Euros in 2018. And we were able to host our first-ever Hostwriter Ambassador Summit, inviting 30 talented members from all continents to meet in Warsaw.

Clearly, the institutional funding granted by Adessium Foundation in late 2016 enabled us to embark on this journey that has transformed Hostwriter from a voluntary project into a small nonprofit organization. We're thrilled that we won the Jury Prize at the Google Impact Challenge in June 2018 and were awarded 500.000 Euros to put our plans for the development of Hostwriter into practice – plans that stem from the External Advice assignment by Adessium the year before.

We are proud and thankful for a year of incredible opportunities that have helped us develop Hostwriter into what we envisioned back when we started: An open, thriving network that helps journalists to easily collaborate across borders.

Thank you for your support in 2018!

Tabea Grzeszyk, CEO

Highlights

- Created a clear vision statement for Hostwriter.
- Conducted first in-depth survey of members regarding their use of the Hostwriter platform, with 10% of our membership sharing their feedback.
- Received the Jury Prize in Google Impact Challenge Deutschland and were awarded €500.000 for strategic development projects.
- Employed Katja Heitmann (CTO), Bernadette Geyer (Head of Communications) and Tina Lee (Ambassador Network), raising our staff from 2 to 5 part-time employees.
- Held first-ever Ambassador Summit in Warsaw, Poland, bringing 30 Hostwriter Ambassadors together for networking and design thinking idea generation.
- Launched the HostWIRE forum, where members can interact openly among each other, enabling group discussions in addition to 1:1 interactions by email.
- Awarded Hostwriter Prizes to five projects: Three story prizes and two pitch prizes.
- Grew membership to nearly 4.000 members from 138 countries.

4000

Hostwriter Members

138

Countries with Hostwriter Members

30

Hostwriter Ambassadors

5

Staff Members

Our Member Survey

As part of our mid-term evaluation on behalf of our institutional funder, the Dutch Adessium Foundation, Hostwriter conducted its first-ever survey of the entire membership, seeking insights into how our members use our platform and what they need.

We were excited to see the positive results, confirming the value Hostwriter provides to members. Here are some highlights.

Most of our members (75,5%) joined Hostwriter after it was personally recommended to them by a colleague. Approximately one-fourth of our members found us by searching the web for support.

Expanding their professional network was the main objective (75,5%) of our members to join Hostwriter. More than 40% were either looking for co-authors or for advice, and more than one-third of the survey respondents joined so that they could apply for the Hostwriter Prize or one of our other projects.

Most activities revolved around the exchange of advice and the search for co-authors. Both giving and taking are reasons for using Hostwriter. About half of the survey re-spondents sought advice/information from other members, and 36% have contacted other members for story collaboration.
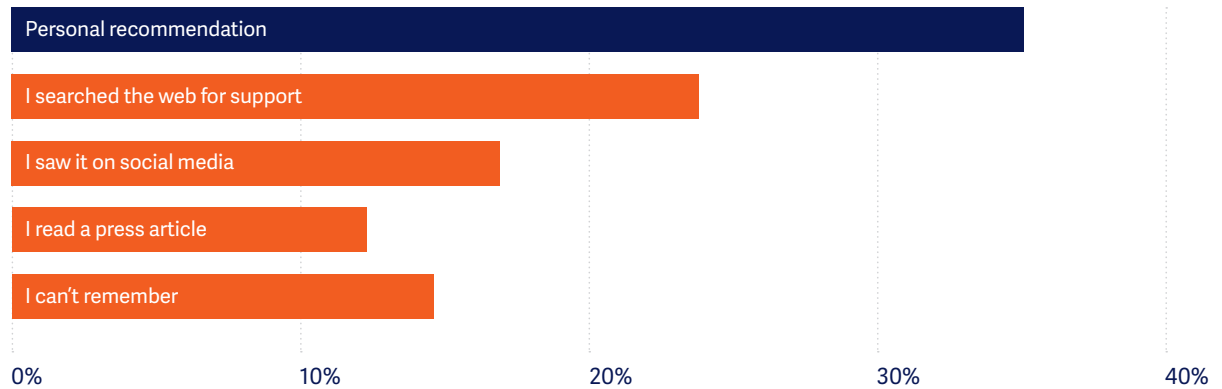
The Hostwriter network is a place to find potential colleagues for story collaborations (47,5%) and it provides advice and information (43,5%). Only a pioneering portion of our members has published an investigation with another Hostwriter member at this point (8,8%). We are exploring ways to increase our enabling, tracking and promotion of collaborations between members.
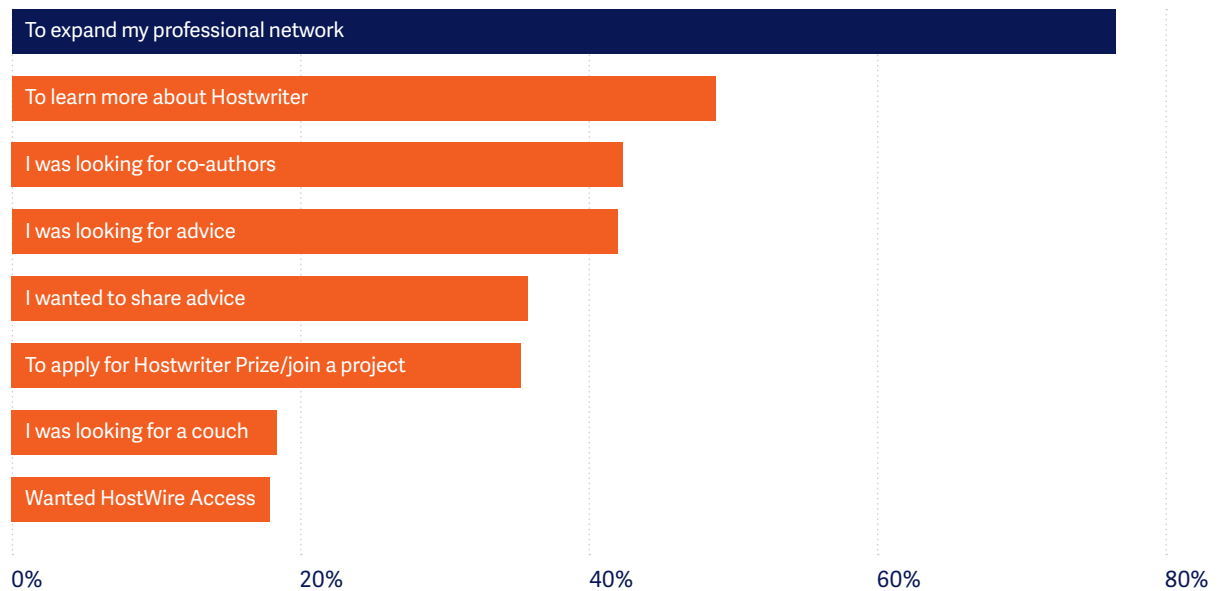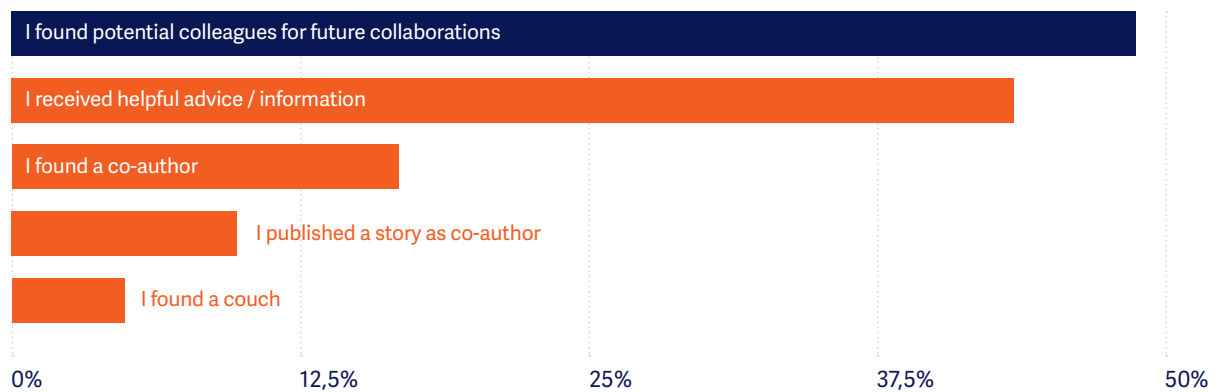
43,5%

Received helpful
advice/information

Access: How did you hear about Hostwriter?

Personal recommendation	
I searched the web for support	
I saw it on social media	
I read a press article	
I can't remember	

0%　10%　20%　30%　40%

Motivation: Why did you join Hostwriter?

To expand my professional network	
To learn more about Hostwriter	
I was looking for co-authors	
I was looking for advice	
I wanted to share advice	
To apply for Hostwriter Prize/join a project	
I was looking for a couch	
Wanted HostWire Access	

0%　20%　40%　60%　80%

Results: How did you benefit from the network?

|	
I found potential colleagues for future collaborations	
I received helpful advice / information	
I found a co-author	
I published a story as co-author	
I found a couch	

0%　12,5%　25%　37,5%　50%

Google Impact Challenge Deutschland

Hostwriter was selected as one of ten Lighthouse Project finalists in the Google Impact Challenge Deutschland, and we received €250.000. At an exciting award ceremony in Berlin, we also received the Jury Prize and an additional €250.000.

The funding has already supported our first in-person meeting of Hostwriter's Ambassador Network (more on that later!) and it will support our efforts to diversify and reach journalists from all continents and to both relaunch our website as mobile-first and add new trust features.

"In preparation for the redesign of our website as mobile-first, we spent 2018 really building our visual brand. We want the design to be consistent and recognizable across all channels in the future, to broaden our credibility as a trustworthy and supportive community for journalists around the world."

Andy Wilke, Lead Designer
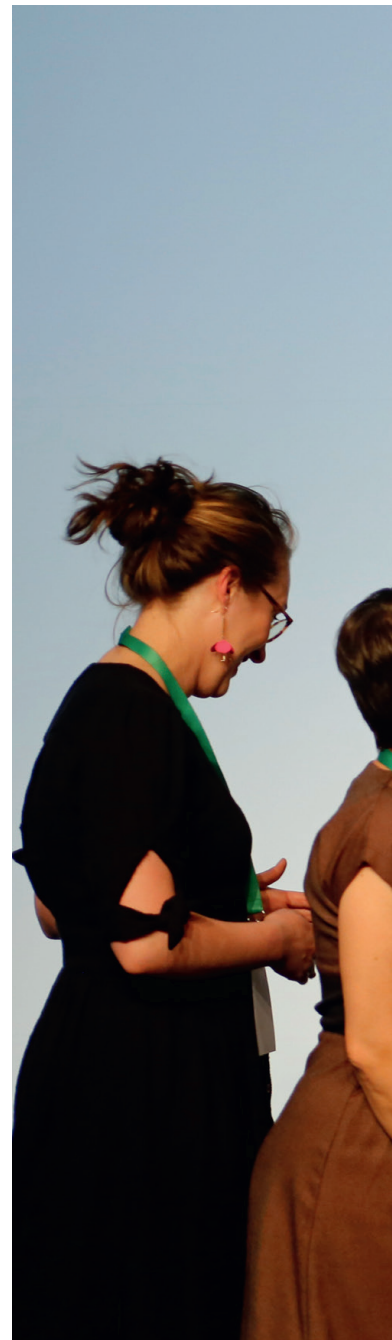
From Left to right: Tina Lee, Bernadette Geyer, Waffaa Albadry, Katja Heitmann, Olalla Tuñas Martinez, Andy Wilke, Tabea Grzeszyk, Verena Bentele (President VdK), Jacquelline Fuller (President Google.org), Philipp Justus (Vice President Google Central Europe)

Building Our Ambassador Network

In 2018, Hostwriter focused efforts to build our Ambassador Network, putting into practice the recommendations from the 2017 External Advice assignment.

Tina Lee was employed to build the program, starting with the organization of the first-ever Ambassador Summit.

Following a call for applications, we selected 30 Hostwriter members from all continents to attend the Summit, which was held from 25-29 September 2018 in Warsaw, Poland. This was our first time assembling all these minds together to talk candidly about the challenges faced by journalists around the world and how Hostwriter as an organization can help. Through various exercises, our ambassadors brainstormed lots of great ideas and feedback on Hostwriter, its value to members and what we can do to improve our work.

Following the Summit, we developed guidelines for becoming an ambassador and an application process, and we launched a special page on our website for the Ambassador Network, including photos of our 30 current ambassadors.

"It has been extremely rewarding to watch the Ambassador Network grow. Not only is it a valuable resource for improving Hostwriter, but the members are a great reminder about the amazing journalists we, as a team, are working to bring together."

Tina Lee, Ambassador Network Lead

Technical Developments

In 2018, Hostwriter launched its HostWIRE chatroom – a new global crowdsourcing tool for journalists with the help of a € 10.000 development grant by Rudolf Augstein Foundation, one of Hostwriter's most loyal partners that has supported us right from the start.

HostWIRE is a chatroom where journalists can interact quickly and easily with other Hostwriter members, enabling them to find and share journalism knowledge and resources.

This new interaction tool has benefitted other aspects of Hostwriter, such as leading to improvements in member engagement.

We're also hard at work on development of a web-app, which will be launched in early-2019, making Hostwriter's platform easier to navigate for our members in areas with poor data service.

"The idea behind HostWIRE is to be each other's 'eyes and ears' on the ground: If journalists from all over the world share and exchange opportunities, the whole network wins, and we can all benefit from this shared information in the end."

Tabea Grzeszyk, CEO and co-founder

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🔍 ☰ ⬤

Here is where you can share resources for other journalists, including jobs, grant opportunities, calls for applications, tips and tools, and news about upcoming journalism conferences and events.

| Resources for Journalists ▸ | **Latest** Top | | | | 🔧 Edit | ➕ New Topic | ○ |

☰ Topic	Users	Replies	Views	Activity
📌 About the Resources for Journalists category Here is where you can share resources for other journalists, including jobs, grant opportunities, calls for applications, tips and tools, and news about upcoming journalism conferences and events.		0	6	Oct 10
Tips and tools for journalists		11	45	23h
Funding sources, grants and awards		21	51	23h
Job opportunities in multi-media / journalism sectors		28	82	2d
— last visit —				
Fact Checking for Journalists		1	15	21d
Conferences and Summits for Journalists		5	29	21d
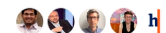
The Hostwriter Prize

80 participants submitted applications for the 2018 Hostwriter Prize, which awarded €6.000 to 5 projects. The Story Prize 1st Place – €2.000 – went to Ingrid Gercama and Nathalie Bertrams, for their story, "Vanilla fever: Fear sours the sweet scent of Madagascar's success." Ingrid and Nathalie's article explores how the "vanilla fever" fuels a spiral of crime, money laundering, speculation and corruption.

There were two 2nd Place prizes of €1.000 each. One went to Kolawole Talabi and Arthur Debruyne for their story, "Fish for cash: How the EU robs Africa of its seafood," which looked at the harm of EU Fishing Partnership Agreements on the African fishing industry.

The other 2nd Place prize went to Irene Caselli, Mariangela Maturi, Claudia Jardim and Emil Staulund Larsen for their story, "A woman's game: The first naturalised Dane female soccer player with Afghani roots." The story focuses on Nadia Nadim, who started playing soccer in a refugee camp and is now a strong role model for young girls in Denmark.

Hostwriter also awarded Pitch Prizes of €1.000 each to two stories. One went to Taras Zozulinskyy and Márton Sarkadi-Nagy for their pitch, "Ukraine: Illegal timber export to the EU," which is an ongoing cross-border investigation to unveil an illegal network of wood trade, which is using Ukraine as a hub to introduce wood from protected species into the EU. The other Pitch Prize went to Patrick Egwu, Annie Njanja and Mamadou Lamine for their pitch, "Female Genital Mutilation in Senegal, Kenya and Nigeria," which is a cross-border solutions journalism piece reporting on initiatives working to eradicate female genital mutilation in Senegal, Kenya and Nigeria.

The Hostwriter Prize is donated each year by Otto Sprenger Foundation. The foundation honors the work of German journalist Otto Sprenger through supporting collaboration in journalism and social engagement.

"Vanilla fever: Fear sours the sweet scent of Madagascar's success." by Ingrid Gercama and Nathalie Bertrams (The Story Prize 1st Place)

Irene Caselli awarded with the 2nd place in Warsaw at the Outriders Summit 2018

Cross-border
Journalism as a
Method

hostwriter|

Cross-Border Journalism Training Materials

Hostwriter took its first step in the direction of becoming the "go to" resource for trainings in the Cross-Border Journalism Method, along with our partner Brigitte Alfter from "Arena for Journalism in Europe".

Encouraged by Brigitte Alfter as a mentor, Tabea Grzeszyk has started to investigate the aspect of "Cross-Border Journalism as a Mindset," which focuses on the necessary "soft skills" for cross-border journalists who wish to collaborate at eye level, including intercultural communication skills and diversity training.

With the publication of a dual-sided booklet – "Cross-Border Journalism as a Method / Cross-Border Journalism as a Mindset" – we now have a great resource to hand out when we give workshops to groups of journalists in an office-based setting or when we attend conferences. Hostwriter staff members pro-

vided trainings and workshops on cross-border journalism to visiting journalist delegations from Southeast Asia and Eastern and Western Europe, as well as several student groups from journalism programs at educational institutions. The booklets are based on the workshop presentation materials.

The booklet has also been turned into two separate digital downloads that are available from the Hostwriter website. Creating the PDF downloads was another step toward Hostwriter's ultimate goal of having an official training website with downloadable resources and training videos.

Membership Growth

In 2018, Hostwriter hired Bernadette Geyer as Head of Communications. One of Geyer's first tasks was to update the spreadsheets tracking Key Performance Indicators to establish a process for monitoring the organization's progress toward goals.

Hostwriter's membership grew by more than 20% in 2018, from 3.259 members to 3.919 members. Our membership also grew more diverse, increasing the number of countries represented by our members from 127 to 138.

"It was a great opportunity to see the story of Hostwriter's growth written out through the numbers. We not only grew our membership, but also broadened the number of countries represented in our network. However, these numbers are more than just mathematics to us – they reflect the beauty of the real-life interactions between members, which result in story collaborations and the exchange of helpful advice."

Bernadette Geyer, Head of Communications

3.919

2018

3.259

2017

19
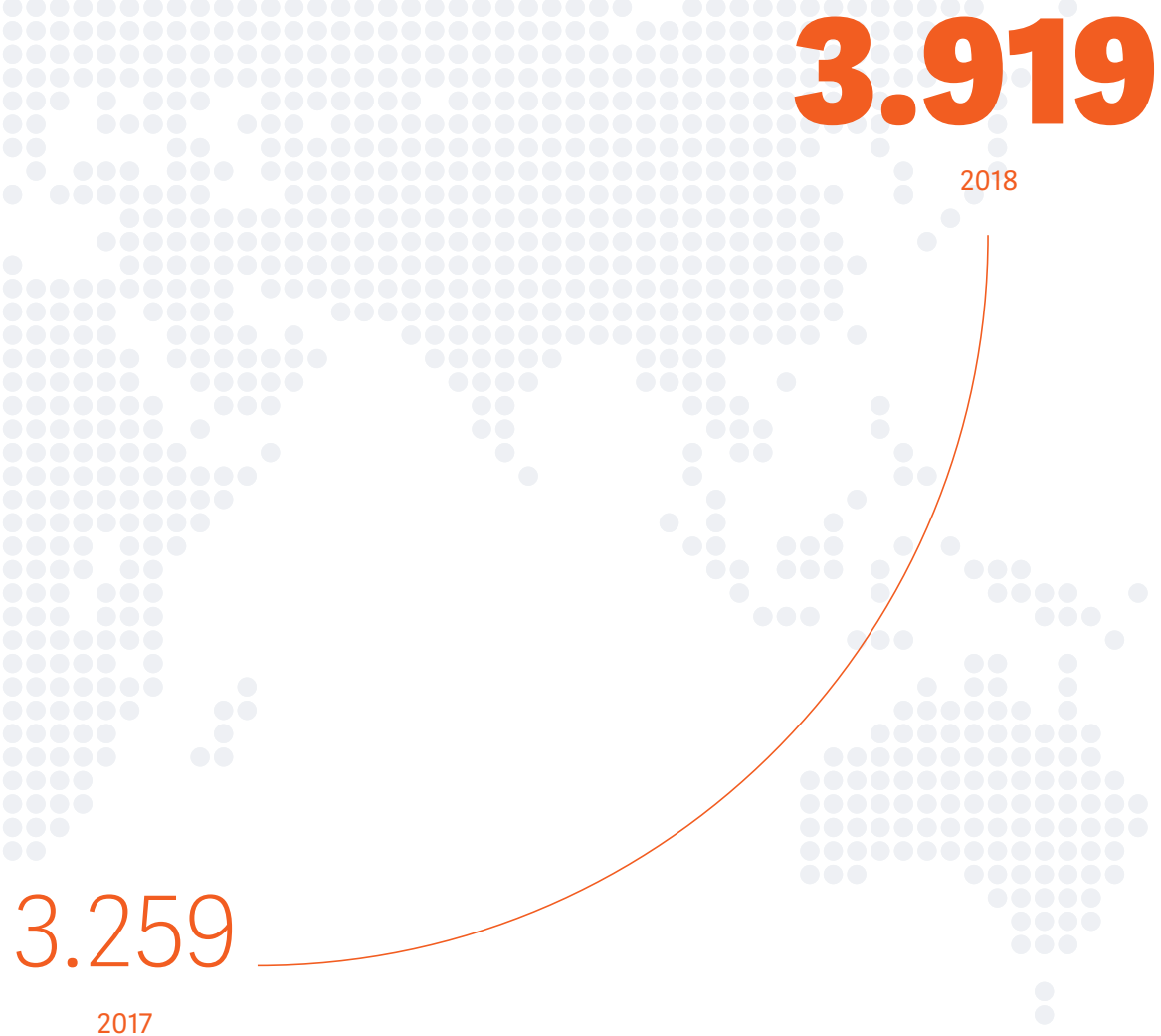
Platform Interactions

With the mission of helping journalists to easily collaborate across borders, it is our goal to make sure our platform fosters and increases interactions between members.

Between April and December of 2018 (after tracking of actions within the platform was enabled), there were 56.365 total actions on the Hostwriter platform, for an average of 205 actions per day – including logins, page views, platform-based mails and site searches. Our goal is 10% year-on-year growth in actions on our platform.

Our announcements regarding offline projects – such as accepting applications for the Hostwriter Prize and for the Ambassador Summit – directly resulted in increased numbers of interactions on our platform, as can be seen in the chart.
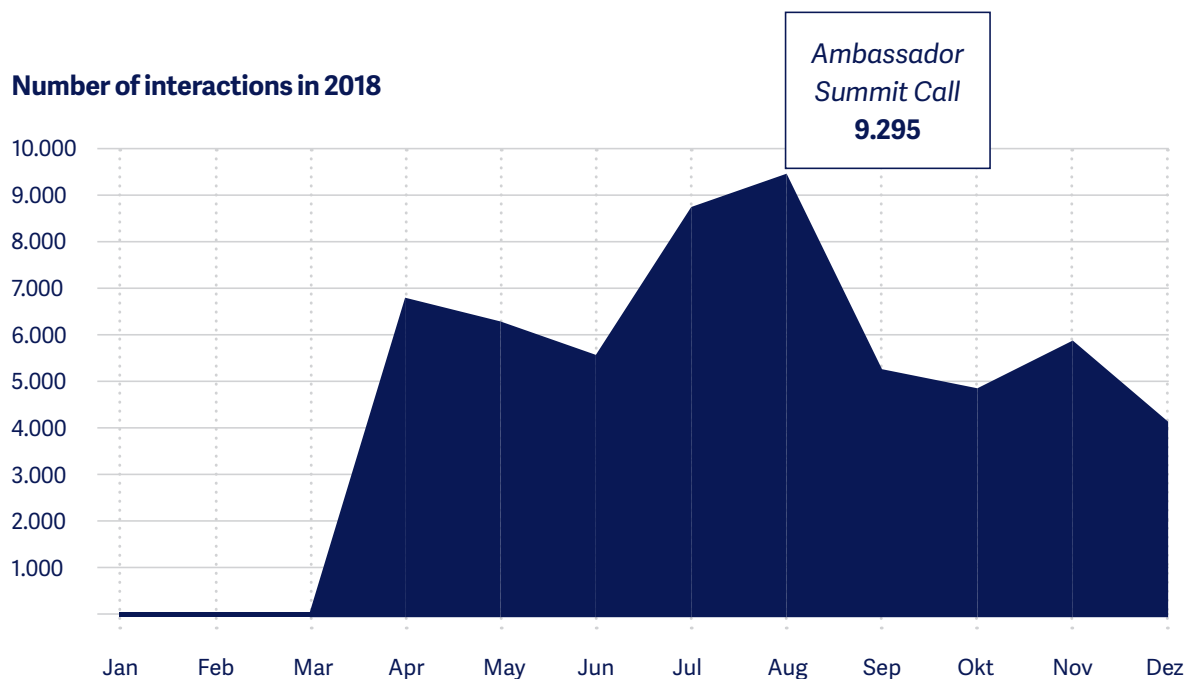
56.365

Total Actions
April – December 2018

205

Actions per day

"The positive response from members to our launch of our HostWIRE forum shows that we are on the right track in creating more ways for our members to interact. Hostwriter's mission is to encourage collaboration between journalists, and we're making sure the technological features we offer reflect that mission."

Katja Heitmann, CTO

Number of interactions in 2018

Ambassador
Summit Call
9.295

10.000											
9.000											
8.000											
7.000											
6.000											
5.000											
4.000											
3.000											
2.000											
1.000											

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Okt Nov Dez

Community-Building on Social Media

Hostwriter employed Olalla Tuñas Martínez in late 2017 as Head of Community Engagement. From 2017 to 2018, the number of followers on Hostwriter's Twitter account grew by 48,5% (from 2.286 to 3.394), and the number of likes on our Facebook account grew by 14% (from 3.296 to 3.758).

Social media plays a large part in community-building for Hostwriter. It is one of our primary vehicles for communicating opportunities and news, such as when Hostwriter opened the period for submissions for the Hostwriter Prize, was named the Jury Prize winner for the Google Impact Challenge and when we announced that we were accepting applications for the Ambassador Summit.

Our social media followers were also very engaged with us in 2018. On Facebook, we had a total of more than 4.300 engagements on our posts. On Twitter, we had more than 5.500 total engagements on our posts.

"It's very exciting to see how the community engagement within Hostwriter is growing, especially with our new crowdsourcing tool for journalists: HostWIRE. I have such a great sense of achievement when meeting teams of journalists connected through Hostwriter and hearing about stories enabled by our platform!"

Olalla Tuñas Martínez,
Head of Community Engagement
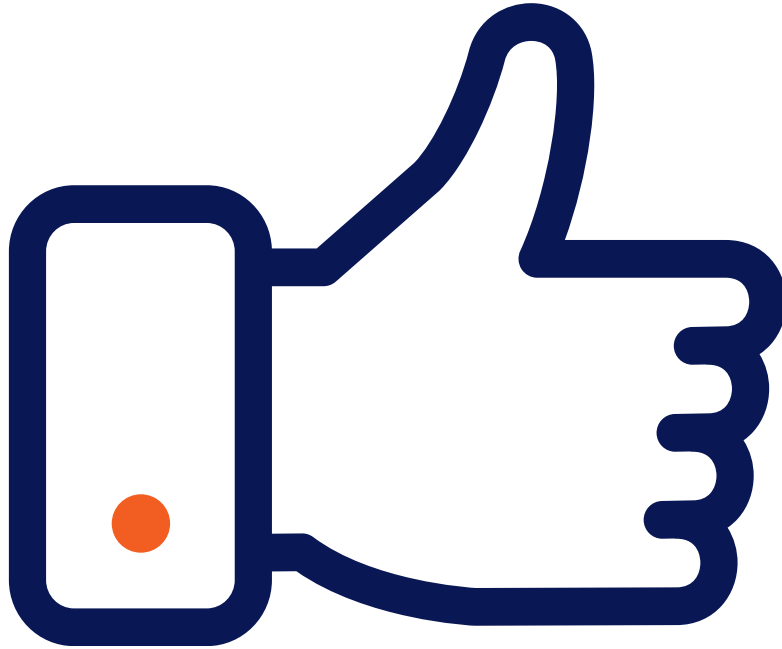
48,5 %

Growth on
Twitter 2018

14 %

Growth on
Facebook 2018

Presentations, Workshops & Panels 2018

Young Journalists in Exile - Mentorship Program Workshop. 2 March.
Berlin, Germany

Hostwriter and Neue Deutsche Medien-macher hosted the kick-off workshop of the new mentorship program for young journalists with diverse immigration backgrounds.
https://bit.ly/2aRuGgJ

International Journalism Festival. 11-15 April.
Perugia, Italy

Hostwriter co-founder Tabea Grzeszyk together with Brigitte Alfter from Journalism-fund.eu, Professor at the Freie Universität Berlin, Annett Heft, and the director of Center for Cooperative Media Stefanie Murray discussed best practices and knowledge gained through both research and experience in a panel titled "Cross borders! How to put collaborative journalism into practice."
https://bit.ly/2JzUYGy

NewsImpact Academy. 18-19 May.
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Tabea Grzeszyk spent two days at the #NewsImpact Academy in Amsterdam, learning about "Design Processes for News".
https://newsimpact.io/academy

8th European Investigative Journ. Conf. & Dataharvest. 24-27 May.
Mechelen, Belgium

Tabea Grzeszyk spoke on a panel - Networking the Networks: How Journalists Meet Across Borders - with Gian-Paolo Accardo (VoxEurop), Brant Houston (Knight Chair in Investigative Reporting, Univ. of Illinois), Anne Koch (GIJN), and Adam Thomas (European Journalism Centre).
https://bit.ly/2SsLOUa

**Google Impact Challenge Award Ceremony.
7 June.**
Berlin, Germany

Received Jury Prize. Tabea Grzeszyk presented a short speech about Hostwriter.
https://impactchallenge.withgoogle.com/deutschland2018

Tech Open Air. 21 June.
Berlin, Germany

Tabea Grzeszyk was interviewed by Digital Innovation Expert Anita Zielina at the Google booth at TOA on the topic "Collaborate or Die! Working Together to Save Journalism."
https://toa.berlin/program-2018/

Netzwerk Recherche 2018. 30 June.
Hamburg, Germany

Tabea Grzeszyk led a panel, "Start-ups in Journalism: hype or a real opportunity," which included as panelists: Media start-up researcher Christopher Buschow, Lutz Frühbrodt who investigated the role of foundations in financing journalism and Nicola Kuhrt, co-founder of MedWatch.de.
https://bit.ly/2Bu9RYD

**European Journalism Centre Bootcamp.
17 August.**
Berlin, Germany

Bernadette Geyer gave give a presentation on Hostwriter, what it does, etc.
https://bit.ly/2TDRojc

**Campfire Festival Düsseldorf.
31 August – 2 September.**
Düsseldorf, Germany

Tabea Grzeszyk presented on Hostwriter and how journalists can cooperate internationally.
https://campfirefestival2018.sched.com

**Mercator Forum Europa.
6 – 7 September.**
Essen, Germany

Bernadette Geyer participated in the Forum.
https://bit.ly/2Dwxm3v

**Fundraising for Journalists Webinar.
11 September.**
Online

Tabea Grzeszyk spoke to Bosch alumni about fundraising tips and recommendations specifically for journalists. The webinar was part of Bosch Alumni Network's "Fundraising Webinar Series."
www.boschalumni.net/events/9998

$\longrightarrow$

Südostasien-Workshop 2018. 13 September.
Berlin, Germany

Bernadette Geyer gave a presentation on Host-writer and cross-border journalism for group of journalists from Myanmar, Malaysia and Cambodia. Sponsored by TAZ Panther Stiftung.
https://bit.ly/2MXTM1E

Journalismus? Nicht umsonst!
Fachkonferenz zum gemeinnützigen
Journalismus. 21 September.
Berlin, Germany

Tabea Grzeszyk was on a panel titled, "Die Millionen von Google und Facebook: Soll ich mich bewerben? Oder soll ich nicht?"
https://bit.ly/2RUKnc4

Jugendmedienttage Bremen. 5 October.
Bremen, Germany

Tabea Grzeszyk presented a panel: "Panama Papers" für alle – So funktioniert Crossborder Journalismus.
https://bit.ly/2E5h6YD

Alternative Finanzierungsmodelle für
Journalisten. 13 October.
Berlin, Germany

Tabea Grzeszyk hosts a workshop, "How Can I Live from My Idea." for the Bosch Alumni Network. There will be a publication about it as well.
www.boschalumni.net/events/9826

Wechange Conference: Civil Society - Ready
for the future? 31 October-3 November.
Berlin, Germany

Tabea Grzeszyk and Bernadette hosted workshops on the journalism track on Cross-Border Journalism as a Method and Cross-Border Journalism as a Mindset.

Vocer Innovation Day #VID18. 10 November.
Hamburg, Germany

Tabea Grzeszyk participated as a jury member for the "Netzwende"-award & gave a workshop about Hostwriter in the afternoon.
www.vocer.org/vocer-innovation-day-2018

Germany's evolving media ecosystem in the
Digital Age. 14 November.
Berlin, Germany

Tina Lee presented to a group of South Asian journalists, sponsored by Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung.
www.freiheit.org

Researching and Reporting about Germany
from Berlin and the U.S. 16 November.
Berlin, Germany

Tina Lee presented to this group sponsored by Fulbright Germany's Young Professional Journalists Program.
https://bit.ly/2GlY8zl

Seminar at Hochschule Darmstadt (Bachelorstudiengang Online-Journalismus). 23 November.
Online

Bernadette Geyer presented via Skype to the class. Teacher: Julia Monge Duarte. Presented "Cross-Border Journalism as a Method" and "Hostwriter in a nutshell".
https://oj.mediencampus.h-da.de

taz Panther Stiftung: Endangered Freedom of the Press. 6 December.
Berlin, Germany

Bernadette Geyer presented to a group of 15 journalists from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia and Russia.
www.taz.de

Mundus Journalism Students. 7 December.
Berlin, Germany

Olalla Tuñas Martínez presented about Hostwriter to a group of students from the Mundus Erasmus Journalism school.

SALTO-YOUTH Participation and Info. Resource Center. 13 December.
Berlin, Germany

Olalla Tuñas Martínez presented about Hostwriter and the cross-border journalism method to a group of participants organized by SALTO-YOUTH PI. Media studies, media literacy and fake news study visit to the Germany.
www.salto-youth.net/rc/participation/events

Universität Hamburg, Journalistik & Kommunikationswissenschaft. 18 December.
Online

Bernadette Geyer presented via Skype about Hostwriter and Cross-Border Journalism as a Method to a group of Masters students.
https://bit.ly/2gBL3BO

Thank You!

The whole Hostwriter team would like to thank its 2018 supporters and project partners, without whom none of this would have been possible to achieve:

ADESSIUM
FOUNDATION

Gewinner der
Google.org Impact Challenge
Deutschland 2018

RUDOLF AUGSTEIN STIFTUNG

ndm
neue deutsche
medienmacher*innen

Hostwriter is an open network that
helps journalists to easily collaborate
across borders.

Initiative
Transparente
Zivilgesellschaft