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# State of Engagement in the Middle East

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## WHO WE ARE

We enable meaningful stories to thrive — wherever they live

700 enterprise publishers

65 billion monthly pageviews tracked

70 countries

6 continents

The National

Le Monde

Clarín

The Telegraph

PBS NEWS HOUR

Khaleej Times

العربية  
alarabiya

The Washington Post

Forbes

EL PAÍS

  
South China Morning Post

UOL

ALJAZEERA

CNN

The New York Times



## AGENDA

We analyzed more than **1.76 billion pageviews** from sites across the Middle East a to understand readership in the region and compared that data to other areas of the world.

This analysis is based on aggregated and anonymized data pulled from global media sites that work with Chartbeat and allow us to use this data for research purposes. The analysis covers the period from March 2020 to March 2021.



## AGENDA

We'll investigate how reader engagement has changed:

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# Traffic & Referrer Trends

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# Engagement & Loyalty

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# Questions?

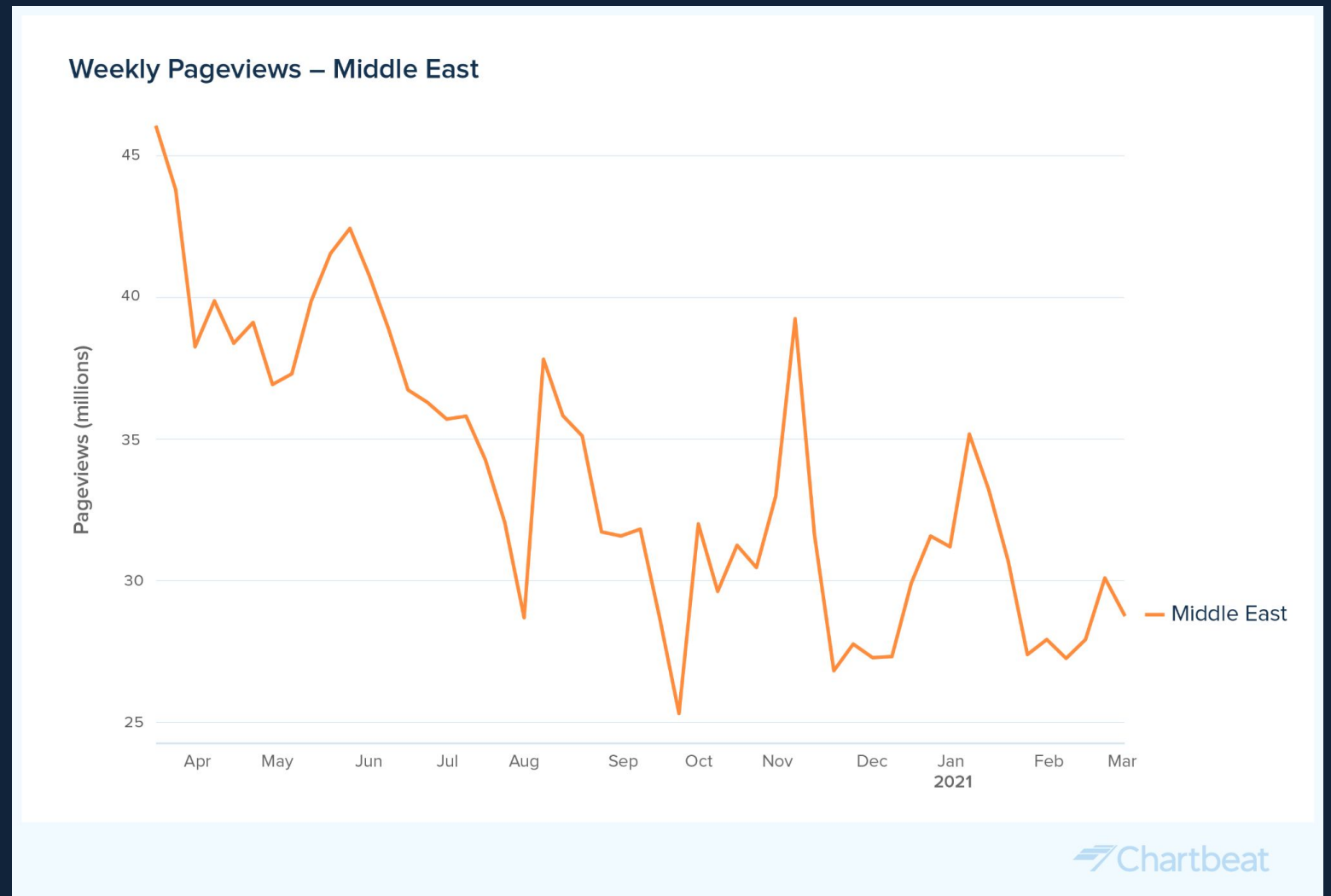


# Traffic & Referrer Trends



## OVERALL TRAFFIC

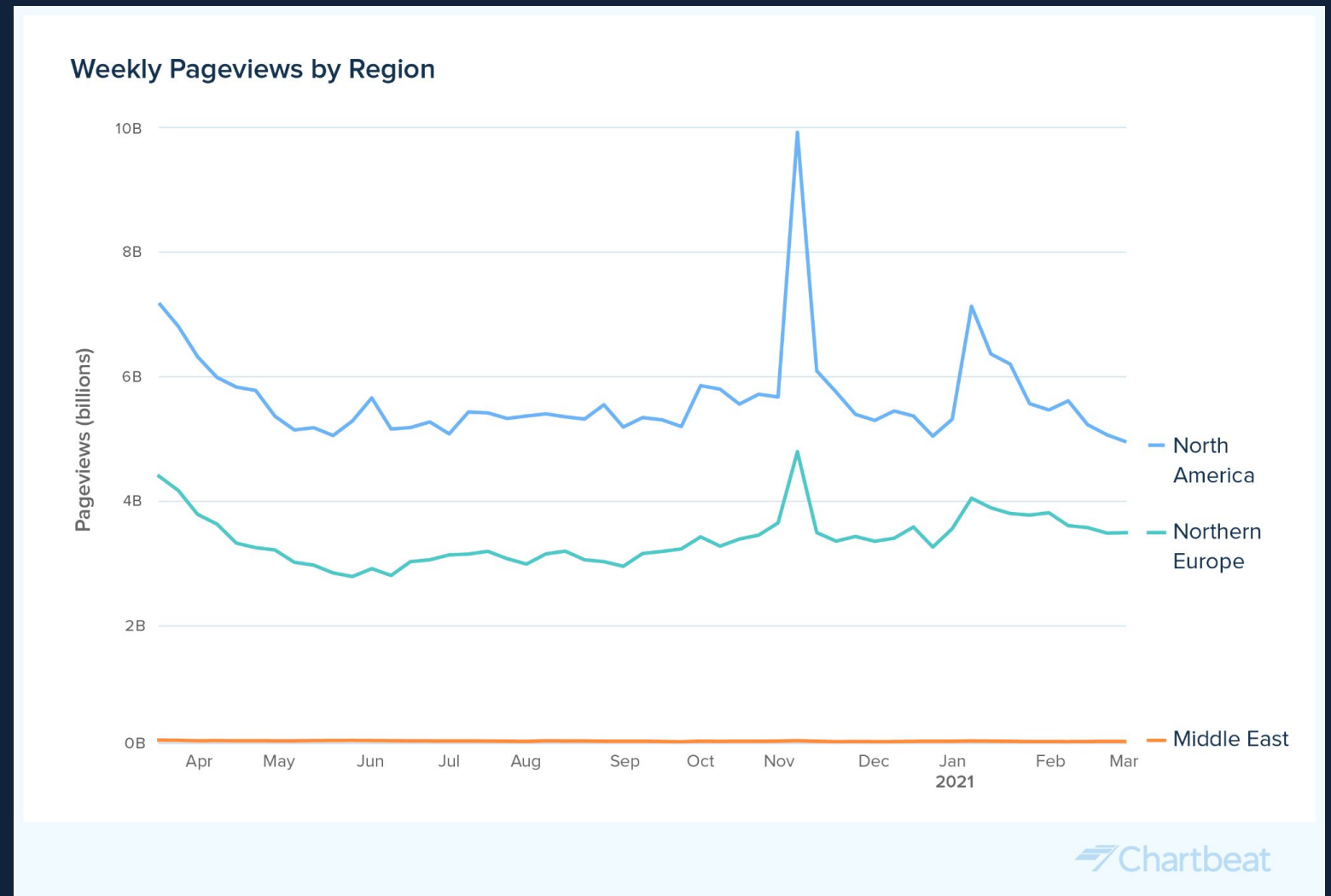
Traffic in the Middle East declined notably in February and March compared to stronger performance in January.



## OVERALL TRAFFIC

Traffic in the Middle East declined notably in February and March compared to stronger performance in January.

This decline mirrors a trend we've observed in other regions around the world.



## OVERALL TRAFFIC

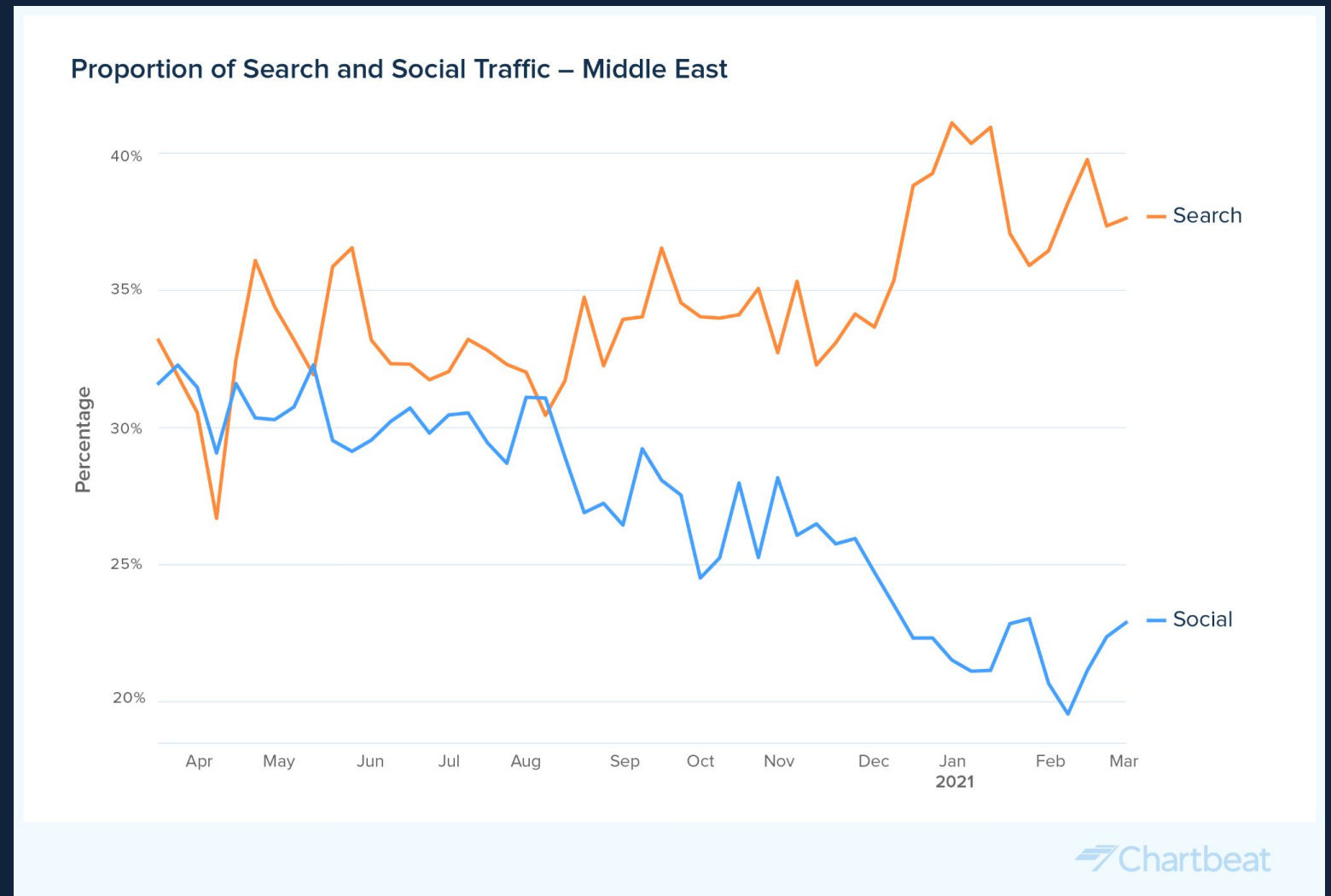
Peak traffic in the Middle East occurred on 4 November, around the time of the US election.





## PLATFORMS

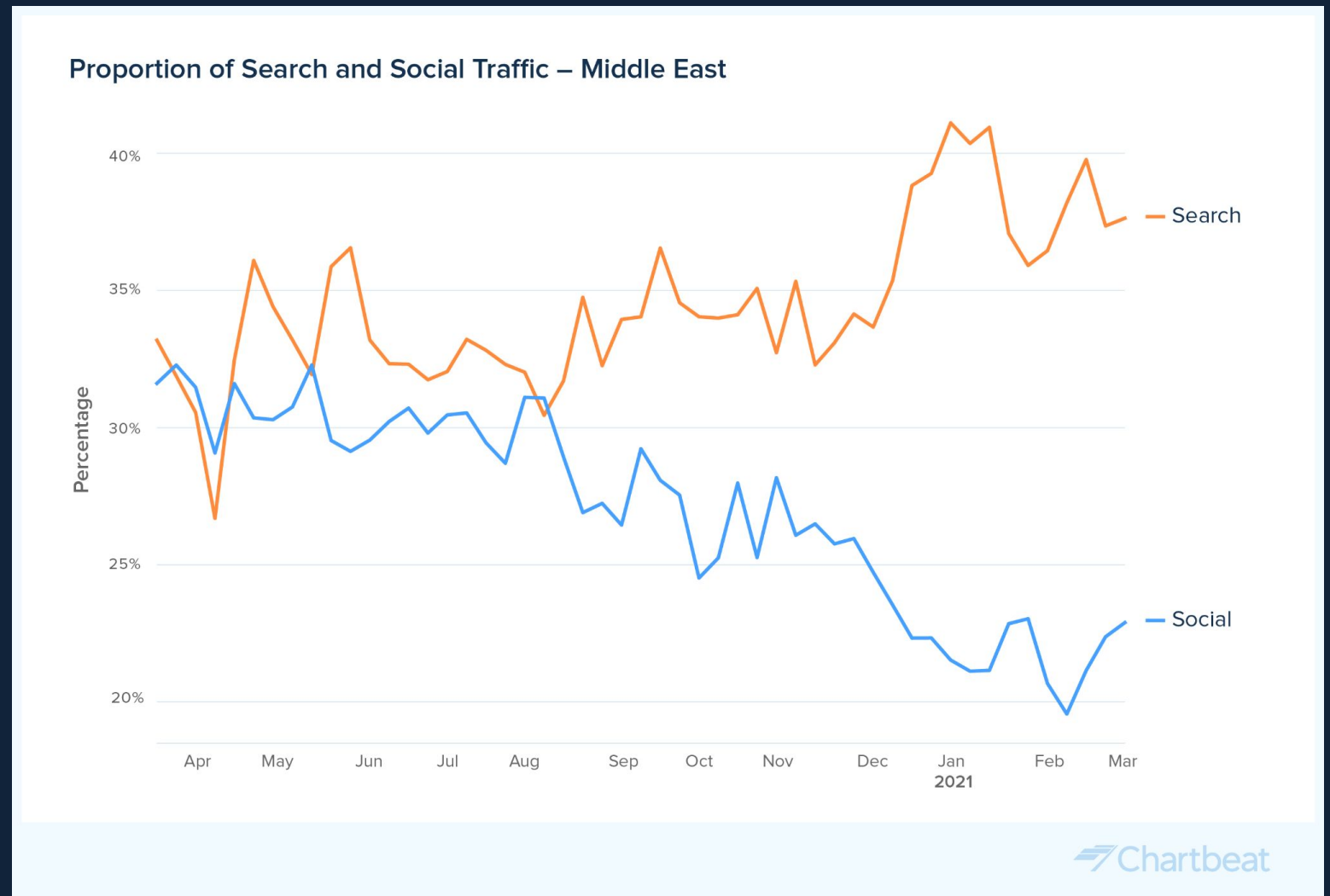
Middle East sites have the largest share of Search referrals compared to sites in other regions, and the proportion of traffic has grown significantly since December 2020.



## PLATFORMS

Middle East sites also have the largest share of Social referrals compared to sites in other regions.

Though overall traffic from Social has been growing, the channel has been declining as a proportion of traffic due to large gains in Search.

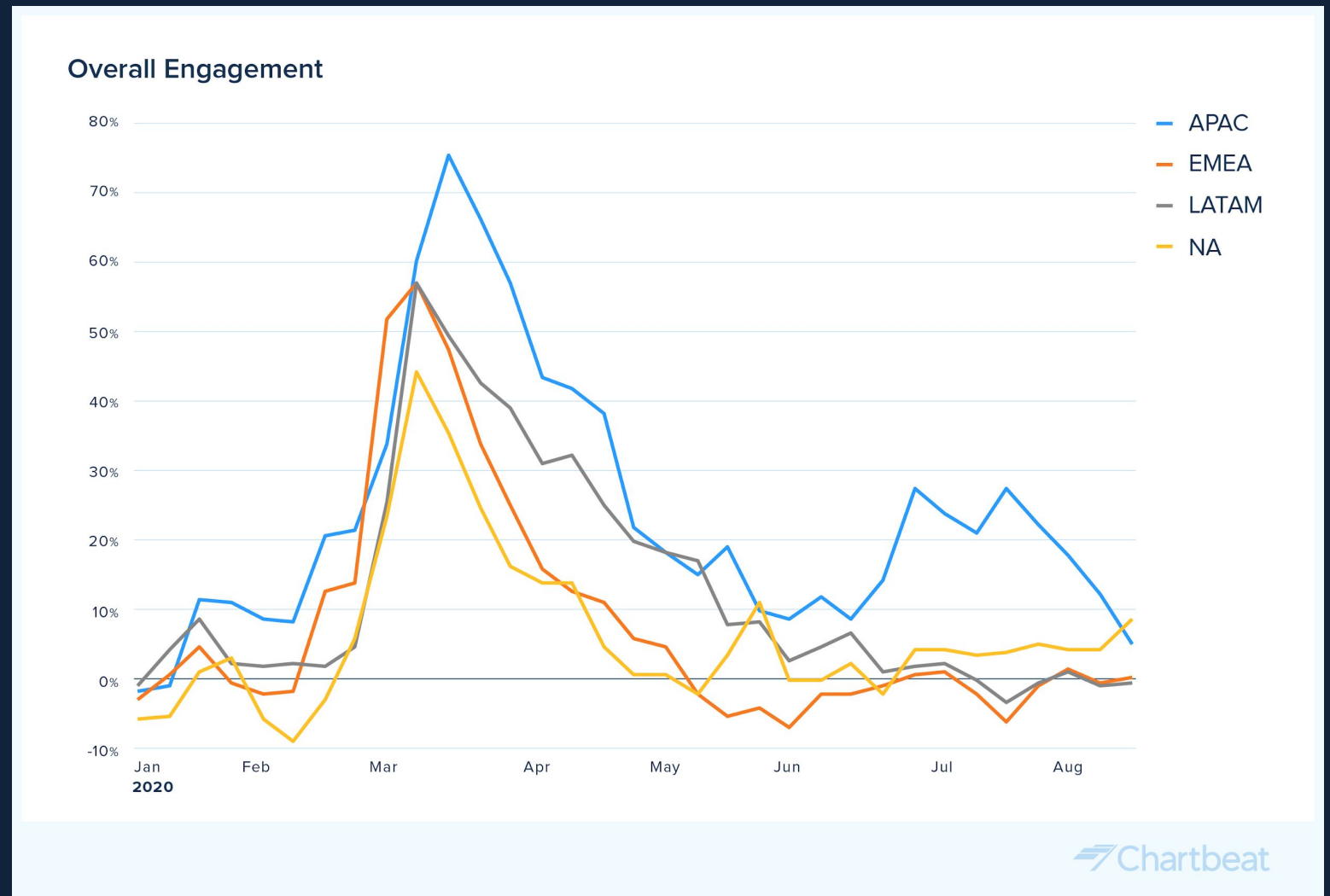


# Engagement & Loyalty



## OVERALL ENGAGEMENT

After rising steeply at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, global engagement levels had dipped below the levels measured in January by late May.



## OVERALL ENGAGEMENT

Engagement per pageview remained flat over the course of 2020.

Interestingly, average engaged time in the Middle East is higher than the rest of EMEA at 29 seconds.

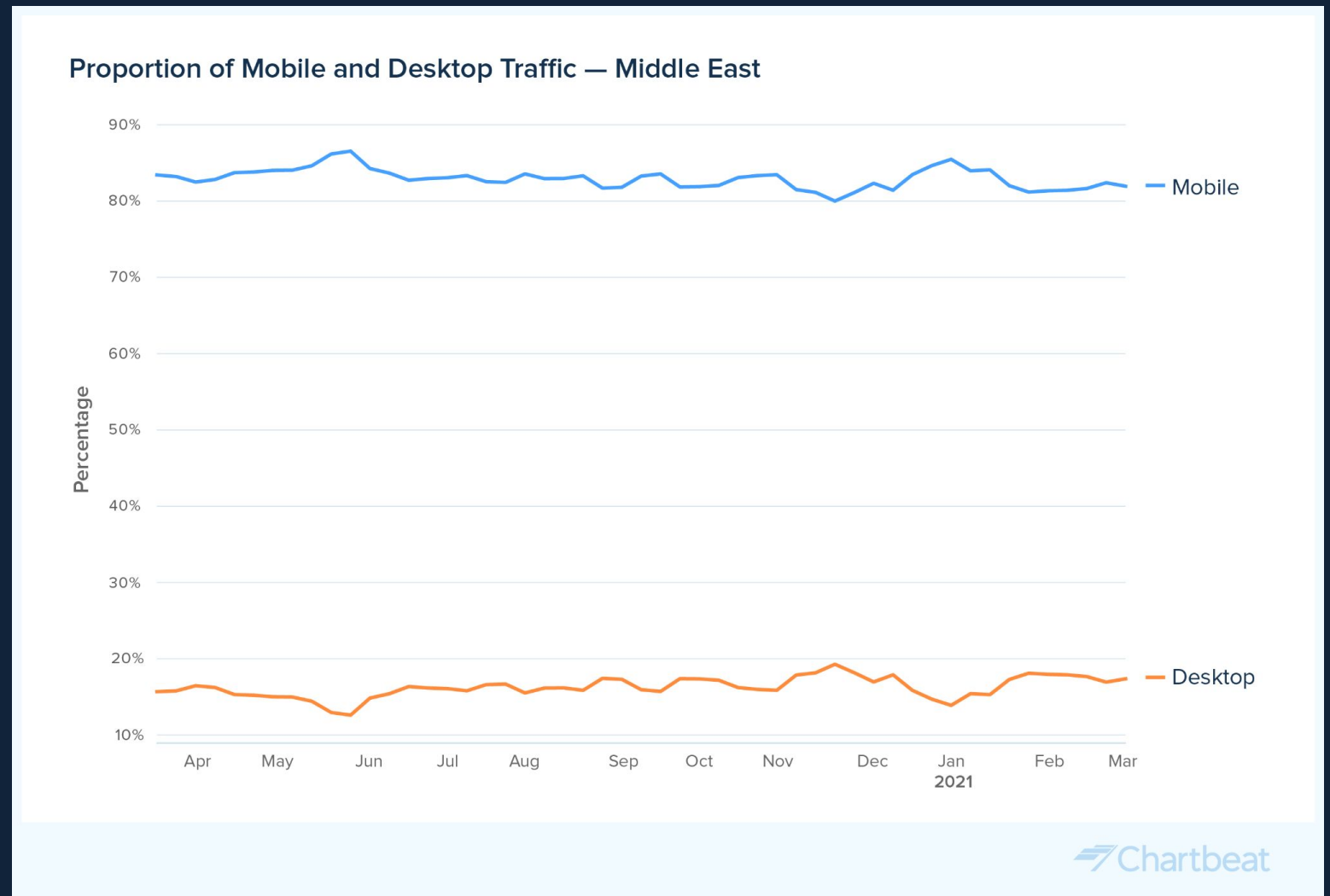
Region	Average Engaged Time	Average Word Count
North America	00:34	455
Latin America	00:33	364
Middle East	00:31	391
Asia Pacific	00:29	706



## DEVICES

Middle Eastern readers record a high proportion of traffic and engagement from mobile phones, accounting for between 80%-85% of traffic in any given week.

The region also sees 16% desktop traffic, much lower than North America and Europe (~25%).



## LOYALTY

In examining reader loyalty, Chartbeat measure the frequency of a reader's visit and sorts those readers into three key categories.

### **New**

Readers who visit a site for the first time in 30 days.

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### **Returning**

Readers who have visited a site more than once per months, but not often enough to be considered Loyal

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### **Loyal**

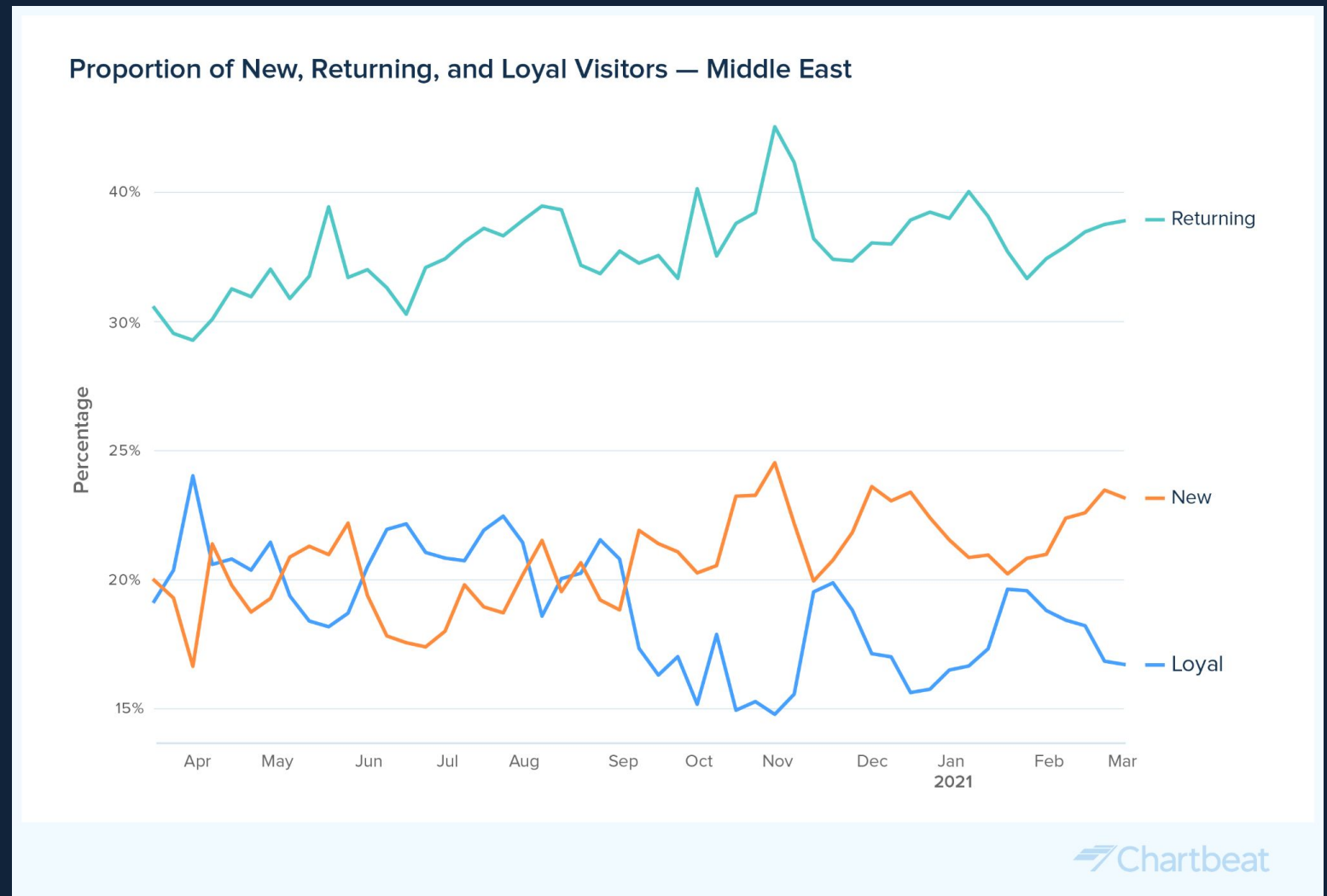
Readers who visit a site every other day or more often.



## LOYALTY

Sites in the Middle East have seen a declining proportion of traffic from Loyal\* readers, with most visitors accessing a single site more than once per month, but not frequently enough to be considered Loyal.

\* A Loyal reader is someone who has visited a site every other day or more often.

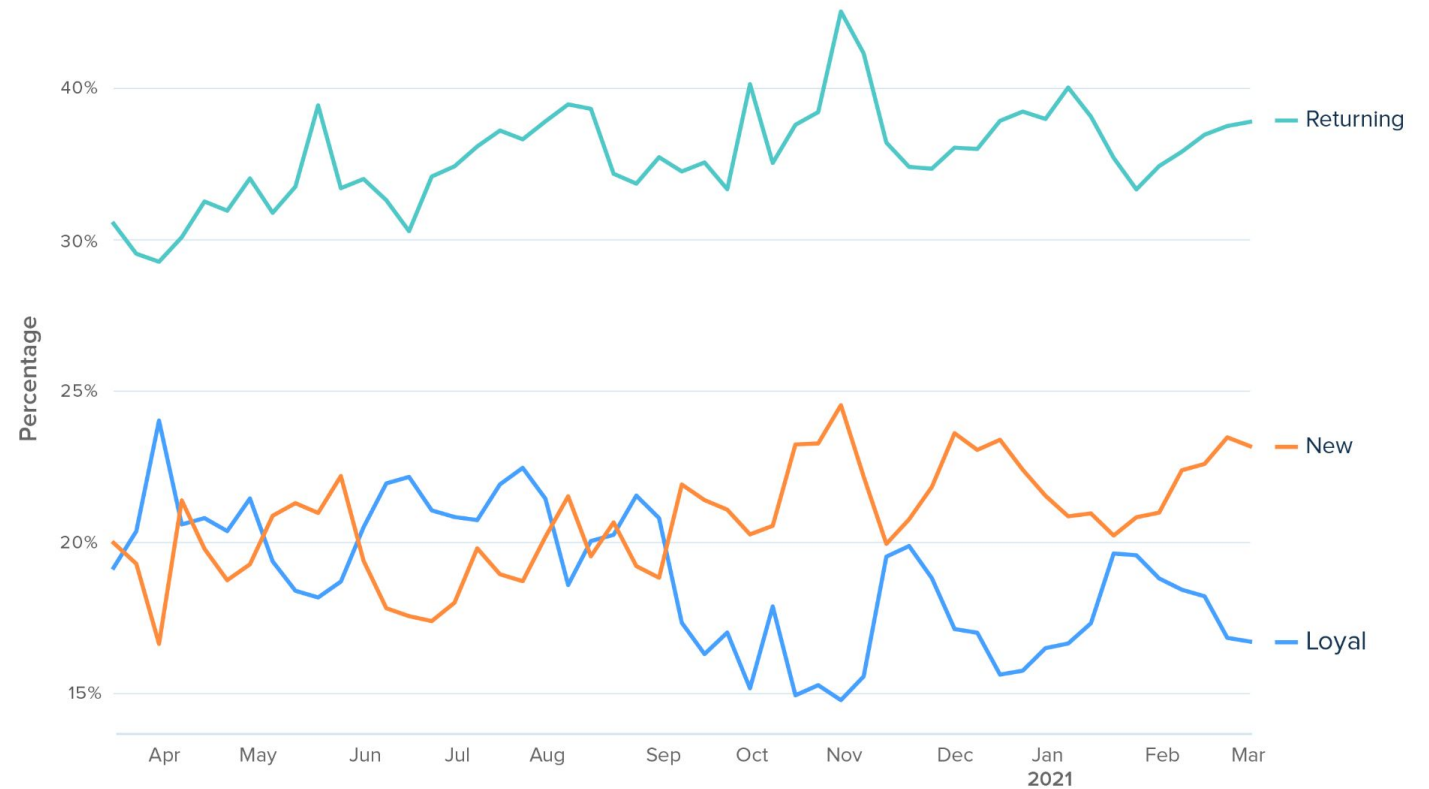




## LOYALTY

The proportion of new readers has been increasing steadily since last summer, showing strong acquisition in recent months.

Proportion of New, Returning, and Loyal Visitors — Middle East



\* A New reader is someone who is visiting a particular site for the first time in 30 days.

## LOYALTY

In fact, the region sees the lowest percentage of Loyal traffic globally, indicating that there is significant opportunity to move readers deeper into the engagement funnel.

Region	Loyal Visitors	New Visitors
Latin America	35%	15%
North America	34%	17%
Europe	45%	10%
Middle East	24%	25%



# Key Takeaways



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Traffic in the Middle East has declined in recent months, largely because of lower traffic from direct and internal sources.
2. Referred traffic from Search and Social has increased, though Search has grown as a faster pace.
3. Average Engaged Time per article was stable last year, but Middle Eastern sites have a clear opportunity to engage readers more deeply.
4. 4 out of every 5 visits are taking place on a mobile device, and a higher priority should be placed on mobile optimization.
5. While reader acquisition has increased, Middle Eastern sites only see 24% of traffic from Loyal readers, indicating a need for stronger retention strategies.



## RESOURCES



Scan to download:

- A copy of this presentation
- The free guide: Navigating the New Reader Journey



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# Thank you.

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