



# Novaya Gazeta Europe

# CASE

**NOVAYA GAZETA  
EUROPE**

“**Video Explainers:  
Russia Analysis for a  
Younger Generation**”

# STUDY

## IN SHORT

Novaya Gazeta Europe created a four-part video explainer series that breaks down Russia's post-Soviet economic evolution for younger audiences. The project aims to counter widespread misconceptions about the Russian economy, connect historical developments to the present, and deliver complex analysis in an accessible content.

## ABOUT THE NEWS OUTLET

Novaya Gazeta Europe, based in Riga, was founded in April 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the imposition of wartime censorship that forced Novaya Gazeta's editors and journalists to leave the country. It reports on Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus and publishes in both Russian and English. The newsroom continues the legacy of Novaya Gazeta, a leading voice of independent journalism in Russia since 1993.



## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

To clarify misconceptions about Russia's economy and make complex historical developments understandable for younger viewers through accessible video explainers on YouTube.



## IMPLEMENTED SOLUTIONS

Produced a four-episode explainer series, tested formats using audience feedback, and boosted reach with short Instagram reels tailored to younger audiences.

Transitions

## WHY THIS PROJECT?

One of Novaya Gazeta Europe's core missions is to raise awareness about the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. The team observed misconceptions about the state of Russia's economy, with many predicting its collapse while the reality has been more complex. To address this gap, they produced a series of video episodes tailored to explain to the younger generation the history they have not lived through, connecting the past to the present. To reach this demographic more effectively, they chose YouTube as a more accessible and engaging platform.

## HOW DID APPLYING DESIGN THINKING PRINCIPLES HELP?

Applying design-thinking principles helped the newsroom improve video performance. By using an iterative approach, they tracked audience engagement and incorporated feedback, which led to enhancements in content and structure. They also responded to their audience preferences by experimenting with various hosts for Instagram reels to identify which ones generated more engagement. Moreover, they consider the entire project to be a prototype that enabled them to better understand how to attract and retain younger audiences.

## DID NOVAYA GAZETA EUROPE'S APPROACH CHANGE ENGAGEMENT WITH ITS AUDIENCE IN ANY WAY?

After the release of each episode, the newsroom reviewed audience feedback and adjusted the style and structure of subsequent explainers accordingly. Every episode was accompanied by Instagram reels to increase engagement and reach younger audiences.

## WHAT CHALLENGES DID NOVAYA GAZETA EUROPE ENCOUNTER AND HOW DID IT ADDRESS THEM?

The main challenge was the Russian authorities' slowing down of YouTube, which was Novaya Gazeta Europe's main platform for distribution. Although individual videos performed well, reduced visibility had a detectable impact. The newsroom was also intent on reaching younger audiences, which proved challenging. Analytics showed that younger viewers rarely watch full-length videos, highlighting the need to focus on short-form content tailored to each platform in the future. Creating sufficient amounts of short-form videos to accompany the explainers was difficult due to the lack of editorial and production resources.

## HOW WAS NOVAYA GAZETA EUROPE'S PROJECT RECEIVED BY ITS AUDIENCE?

The final episode, focusing on Russia's post-2014 economy, received particular praise, reflecting a strong interest in the current situation and its causes. Additionally, the newsroom considers it a success that the videos started conversations in the comment section, with viewers debating their views and sharing experiences.

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## WHAT INSIGHTS OR LESSONS DID NOVAYA GAZETA EUROPE GAIN FROM THIS PROJECT?

Novaya Gazeta Europe identified several key takeaways: most notably, the importance of integrating audience feedback into the production process and understanding which formats and hosts best engage with younger viewers. This project also raised a broader strategic question that the team continues to discuss: whether they should prioritize engaging a younger audience or focus on their loyal, long-standing audience.

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## WHAT DOES NOVAYA GAZETA EUROPE PLAN ON DOING NEXT?

Moving forward, Novaya Gazeta Europe plans to incorporate what it learned into strategy to solidify its YouTube presence and viewer retention, and reach audiences inside and outside Russia. The team also intends to apply these insights to future videos, particularly those targeting younger audiences. They are considering turning the series into a recurring format to explore the society and politics in Russia through similar accessible storytelling.

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## WHAT ADVICE WOULD NOVAYA GAZETA EUROPE GIVE TO OTHER JOURNALISTS OR ORGANISATIONS CONSIDERING A SIMILAR PATH?

Be open to feedback. For Novaya Gazeta Europe, even though some comments were negative — often because people did not want to confront the harsh realities presented — the videos were able to spark meaningful conversations among the audience. The viewers shared their own stories and experiences in the comment section, which enriched the dialogue and deepened engagement.

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Novaya Gazeta Europe's video explainer series breaks down Russia's economic crises with accessible visuals and expert analysis designed to engage younger audiences across platforms