Case Study: **My Research Subscriptions**

Creating a better financial research experience for the customer

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The Problem

•	We produce	world	class	financial	research.	Lots of it.	
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- Our sales force curates most of it for their clients.
- It's sent and consumed through email.
- It's often poorly targeted.
- They get frustrated. We look bad.
- Managing this is costly.

What we had to work with

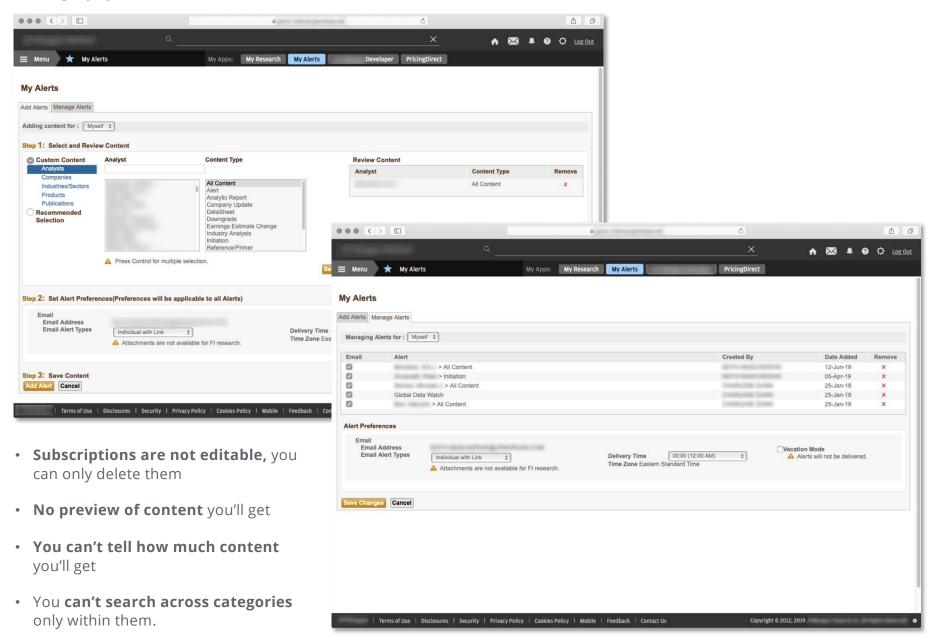
- A subscription control panel
- Email distribution lists
- A content management system
- A CRM system

What we want

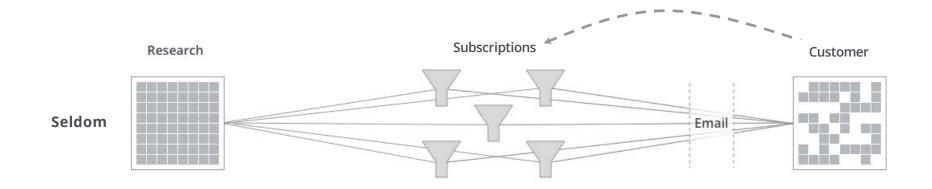
•	More accurate	targeting.	Less	content	sent,	more	read.
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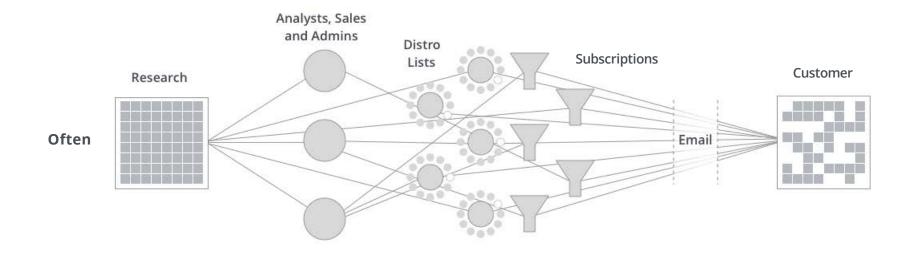
- Understand what research matters.
- Know more about our audience(s).
- Discover ideas for cross channel sales opportunities.

The legacy system

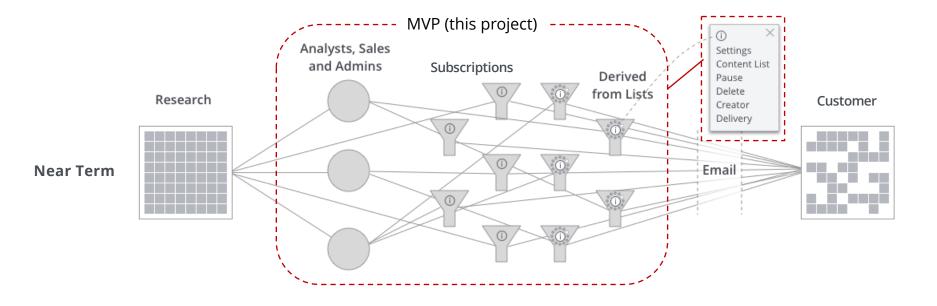


The way things are





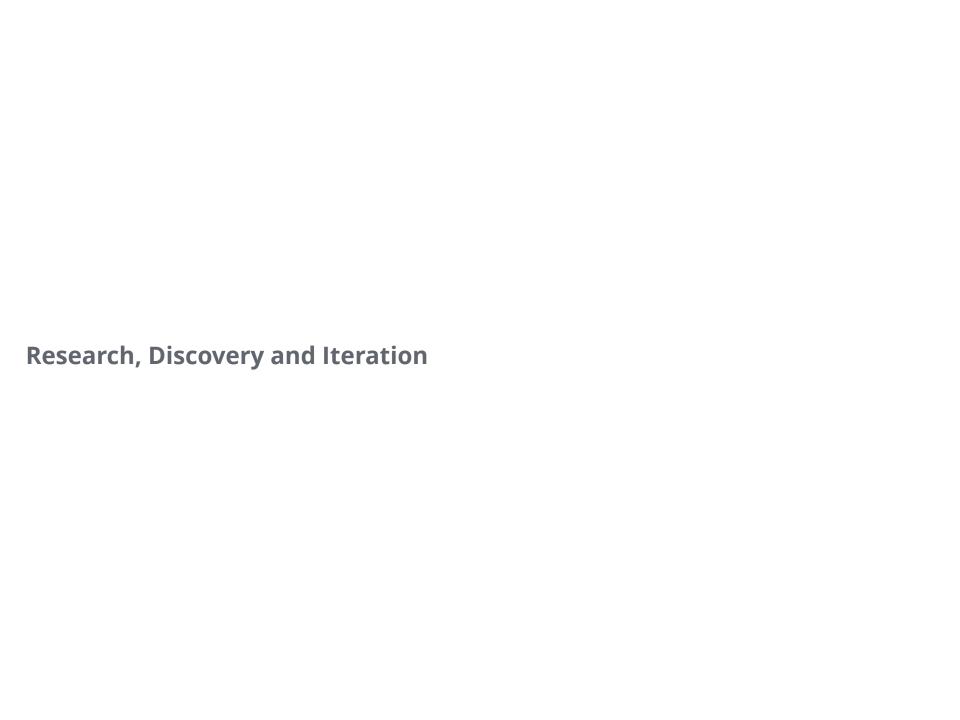
Where things are headed





Project Constraints

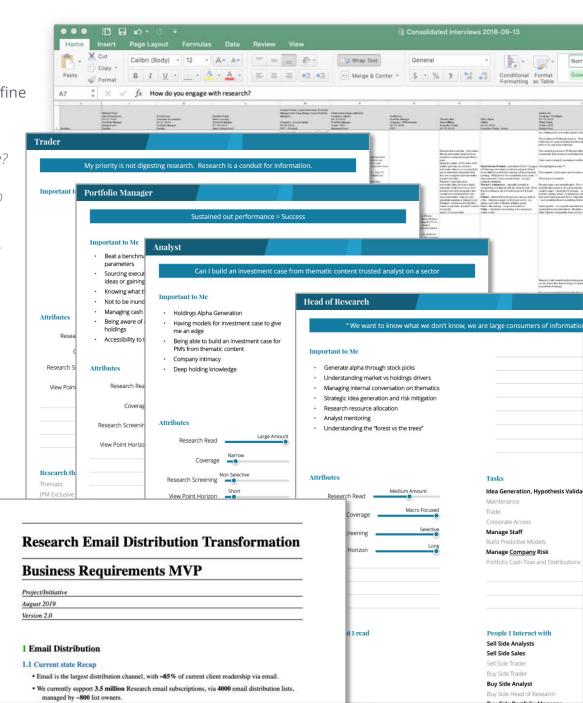
- Lack of frictionless login is a road block for Customers. They call Sales staff to manage their subscriptions, thus no ability to explore and discover research.
- Poor information architecture due to legacy
 content management systems mapped to unfamiliar
 research team and/or publication structures, rather
 than consumer friendly financial industry terminology.
- Search criteria is limited to RIXML database conventions. Lack of ability to search using abstract terms and natural language.
- It's not clear what document types are available for certain research, making it possible for user to create subscriptions that deliver no content.
- Limited UX budget due to substantial backend tech/dev requirements; Limited front end developer, research and visual design resources



Research and analysis*

User interviews and persona definition helped define users' habits, pain points and requirements

- How would you describe yourself to a new colleague?
- When thinking about your role, what is important to you in your day to day?
- What are all the types of Research you know about?
- Describe your day yesterday, starting with "I got up in the morning"?
- How do you engage with research?
- What are your current research challenges?
- Who are all the people you interact with, and what part does research play in those interactions?
- What would an ideal research experience look like for you?
- What would you add to the following statement: "Research is _____ to me"?



^{*} research was conducted prior to my engagement. It was the foundation of my work in redesigning the research distribution platform.

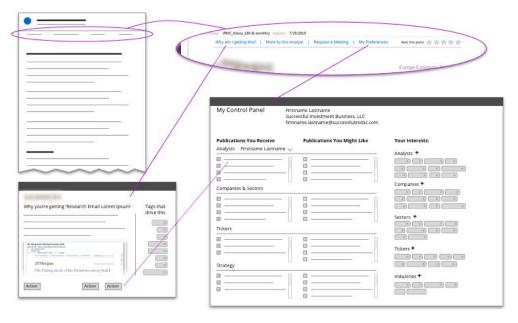
What we learned

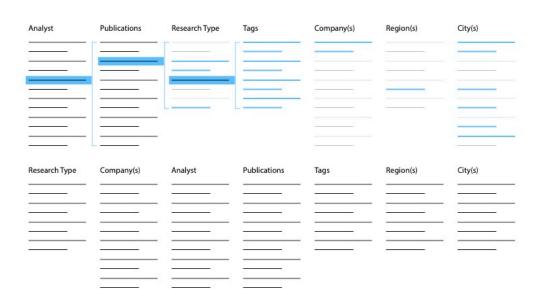
- Clients don't understand why they are getting emails
- · Clients complain they're on distribution lists they didn't ask to be on
- They don't feel they can stop unwanted emails
- Sales is over-taxed managing/maintaining distribution

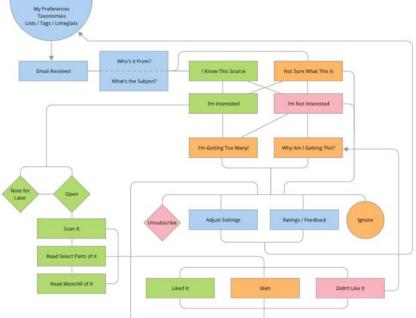
What customers want

- Visibility and Control of what they're subscribed to
- · An understanding of the content that comes from an Alert
- · Customizable delivery times for when they receive Research
- · Make self subscription easier, informative and detailed

Workflows and rough concepts explored with stakeholders



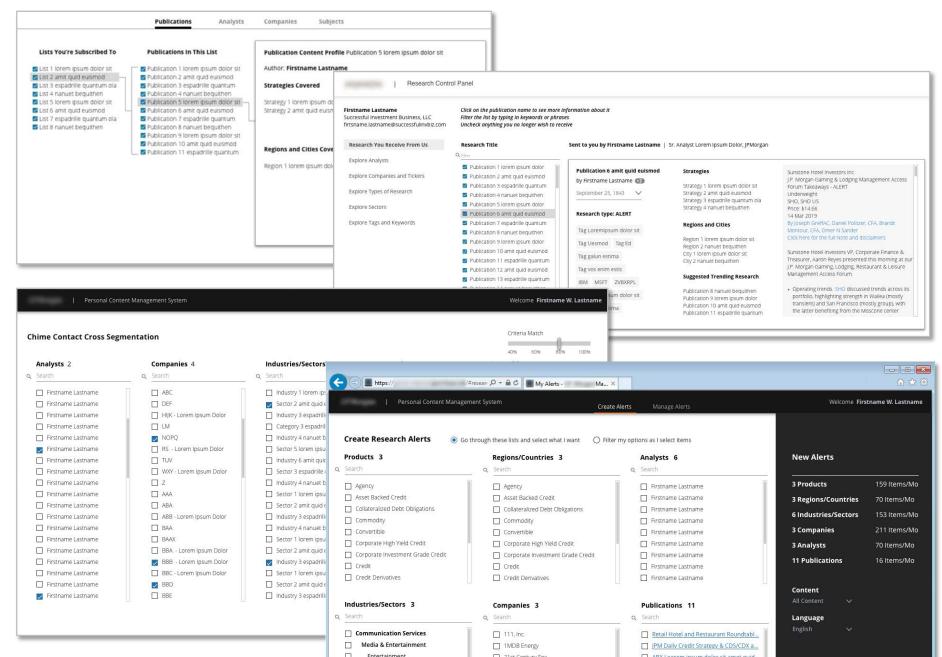








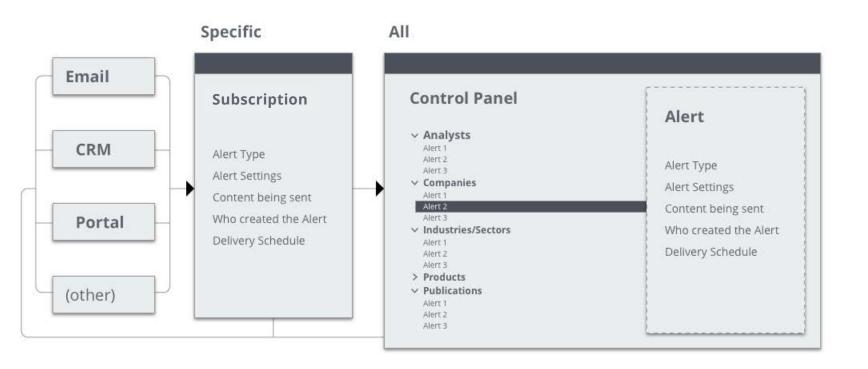
UI concept iterations taken further to explore information hierarchies and navigation



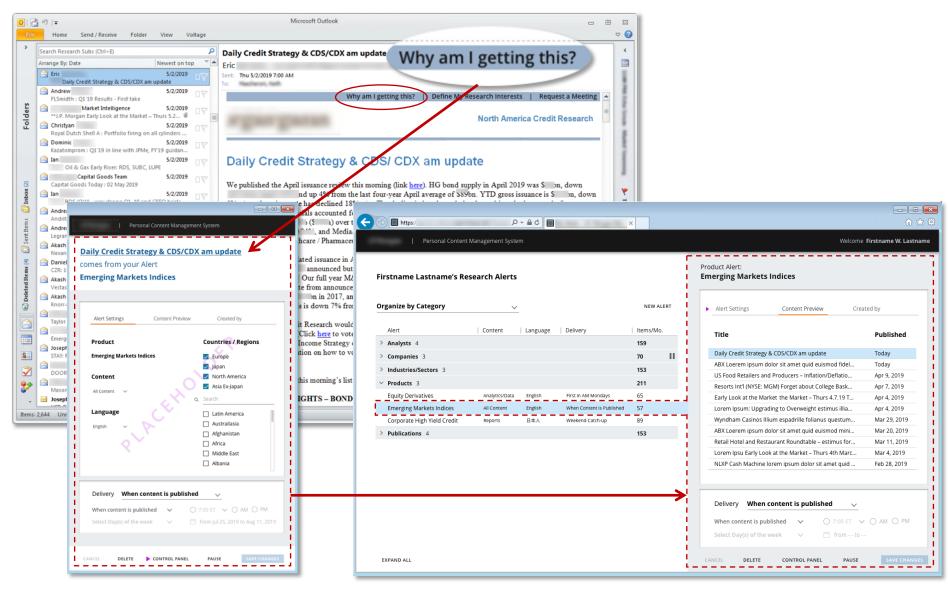
Prototype to MVP

Framework of the solution

- Improve the subscription control panel
- Provide search across categories
- Make subscriptions editable
- Show content a subscription will deliver
- Show how much content a subscription delivers
- Promote discovery of new research
- Provide access to the control panel from CRM



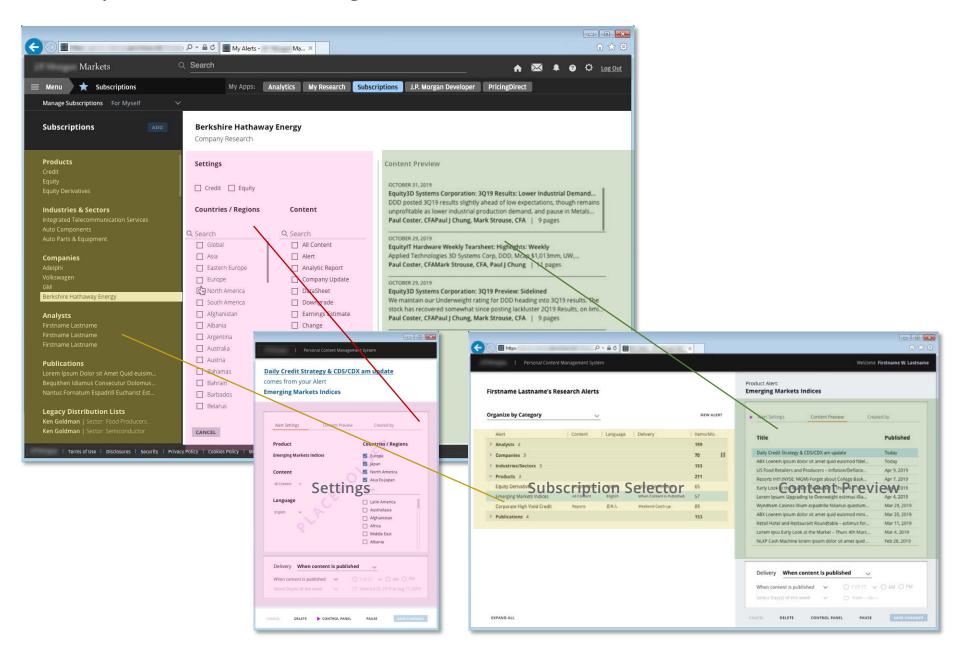
Prototype design, linking email research to Control Panel that docks in All Subscriptions Panel



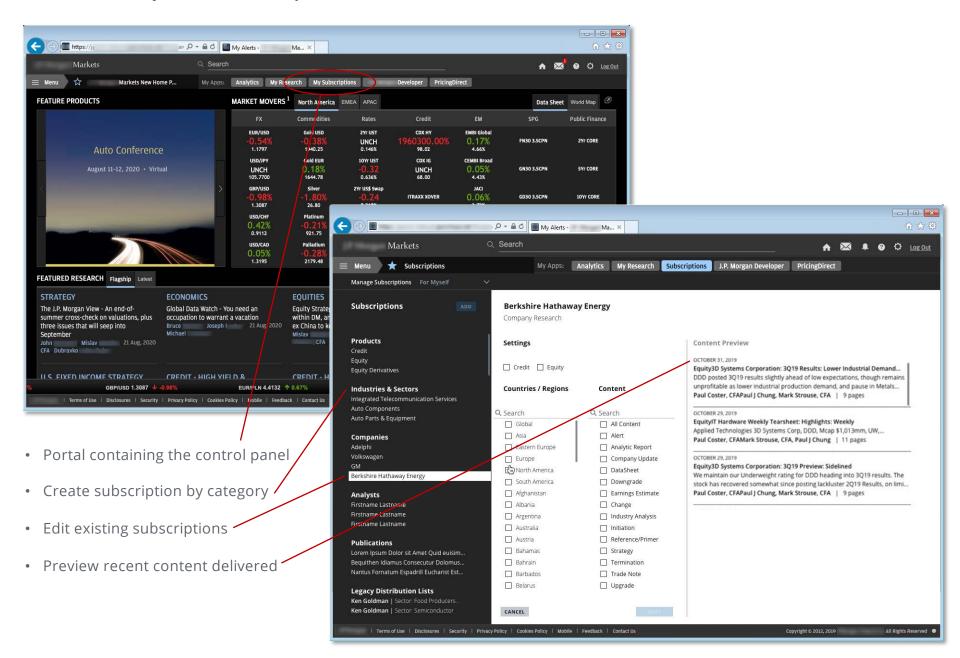
Mini Subscription Panel

As docked in Subscriptions Control Panel

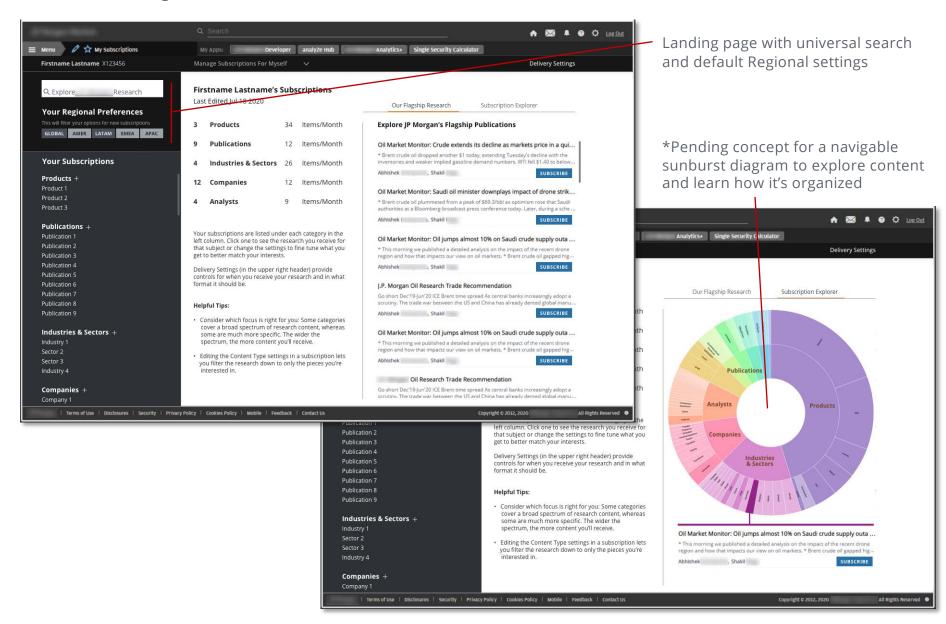
Draft components were factored into a single Control Panel

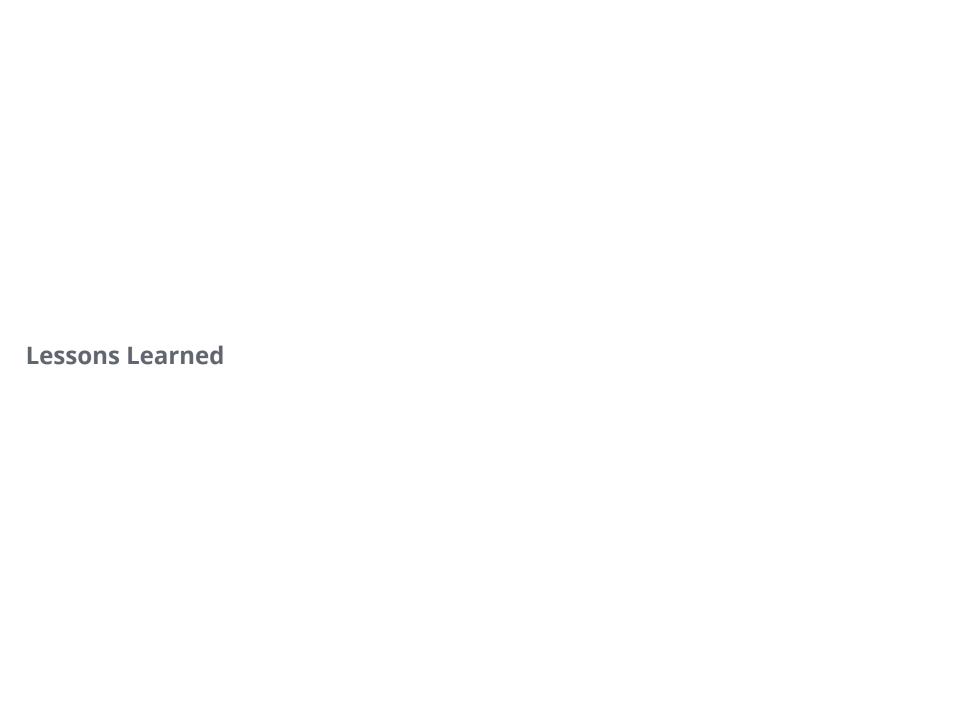


Where it lives: My Research Subscriptions in context to the Research Portal



Finalized MVP Design*





We moved the needle, but there's a lot more to do

We added to what was there

We had to accommodate a lot of constraints that couldn't be solved right away. So we focused on the control panel as the hub into which other features/functions could be incorporated.

Translating distribution lists to subscriptions is more complex than expected

Distribution lists are not well maintained. The same ones are used for many purposes. Heuristic analysis was difficult to achieve. It's a slow, highly manual process with very little tolerance for error.

Analysts sometimes perceive it as a threat

They were loath to allow them granular control of subscriptions to get only what they wanted, and skeptical of using taxonomies to define them

What I wish I had done differently

Pushed to **overhaul the information architecture** as a foundation to improving the subscription workflows.

I might have been **too willing to compromise** with management and tech. I might have achieved more innovative solutions and avoided bad compromises.

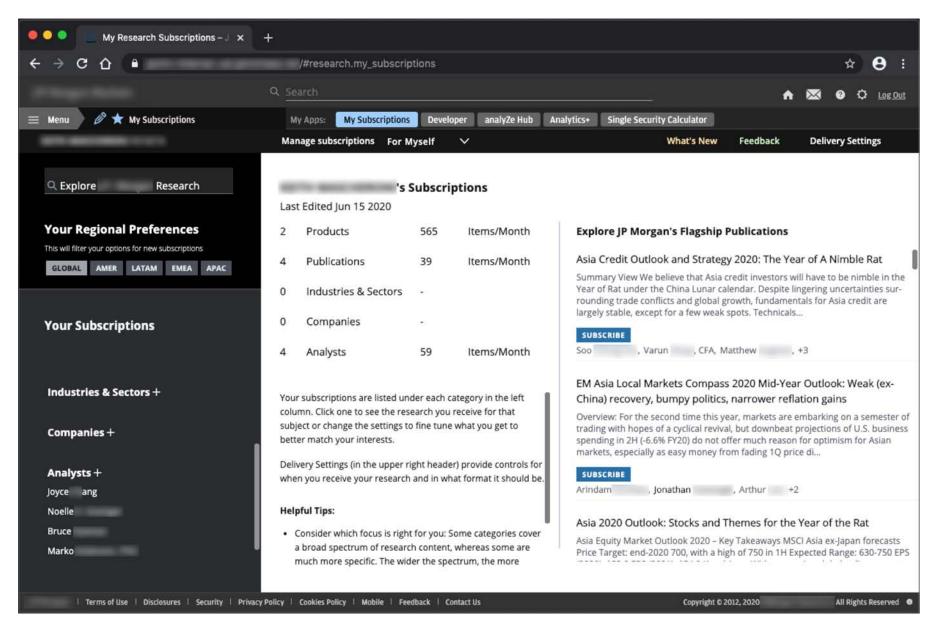
Conducted more user testing of the design. Pressure to demo the MVP build gave users all the answers, overshadowing discovery of where the UI needed refinements

Conducted research with internals – the primary users for the near term – to learn their pain points and ways of curating research subscriptions for customers

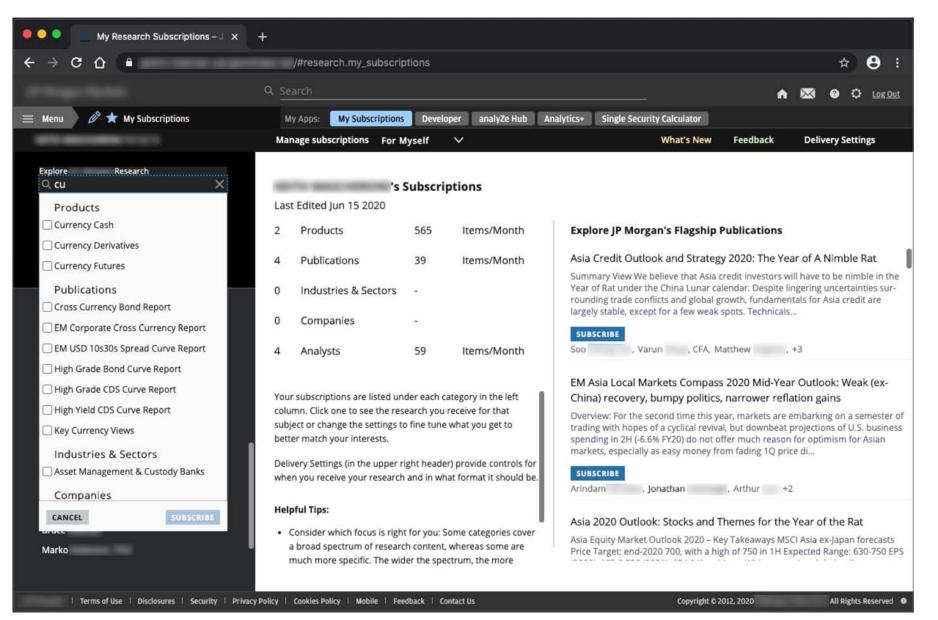
Insisted on funding for a visual designer to collaborate with and hand concepts off to

The MVP is Live July 2020 | A Quick Tour

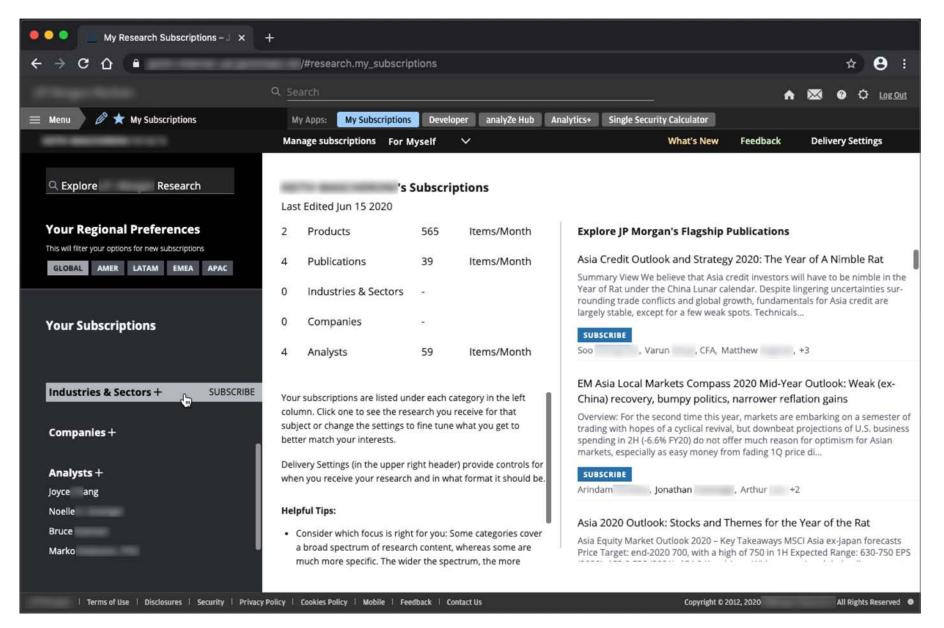
Landing Page showing regional preferences, dashboard, existing subscriptions and promoted content



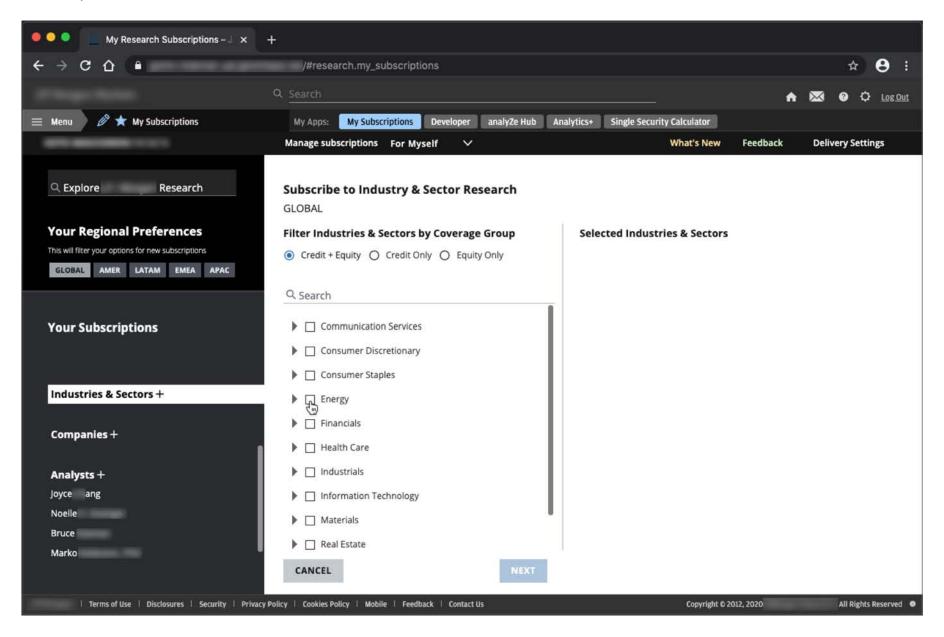
User can search across categories to create a subscription



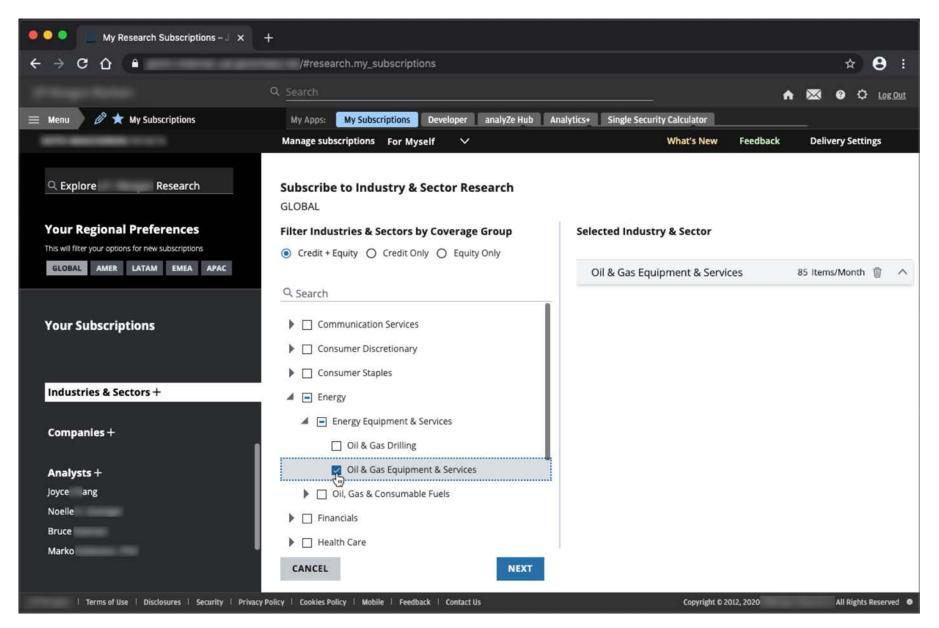
Alternatively the user can hover on a category (eg: Industries & Sectors) to create a subscription



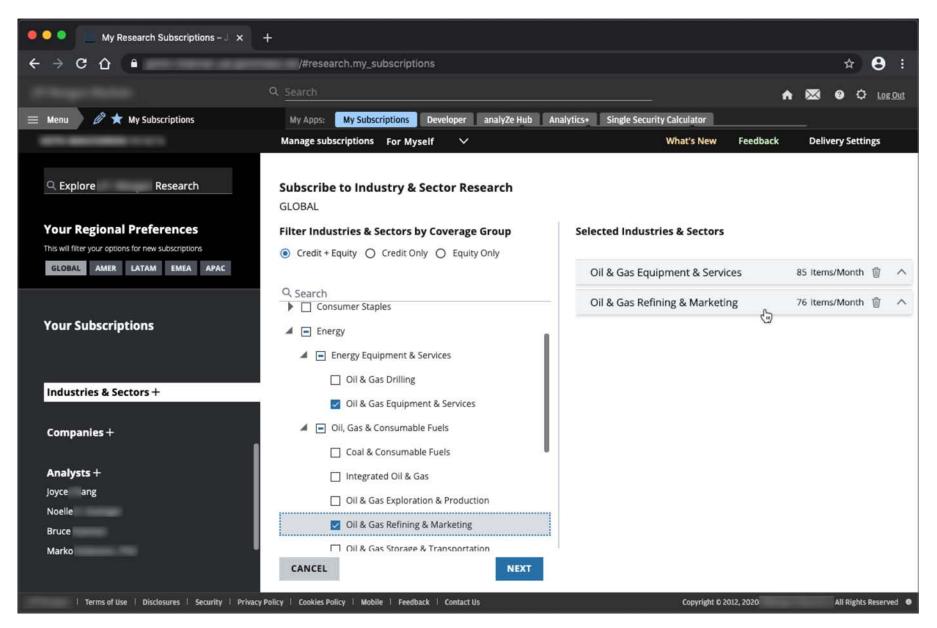
On click, the screen refreshes to show all a tree list Industries & Sectors



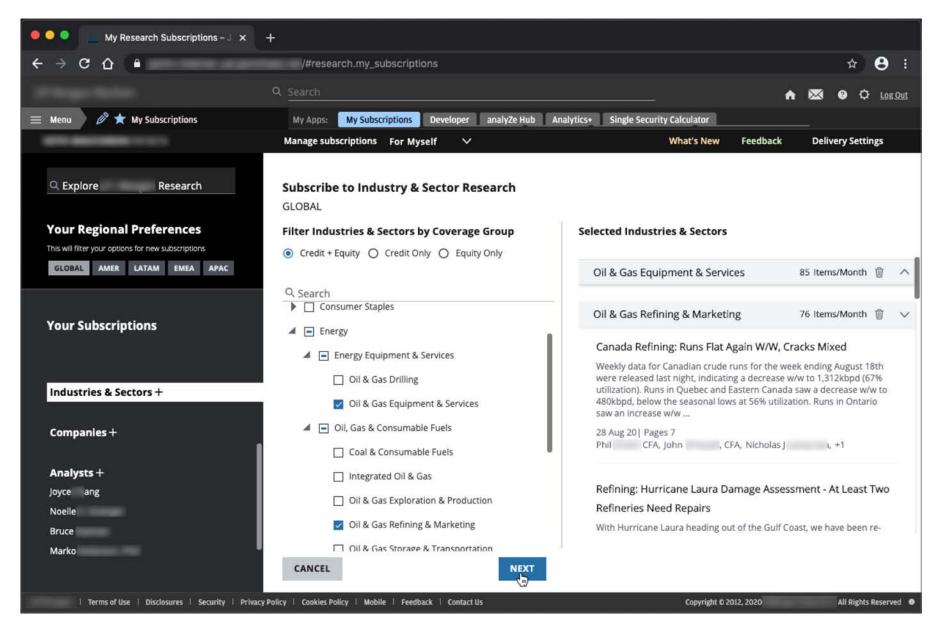
User makes selects an Energy sub-sector, which appears in the right panel, showing approximate items/month



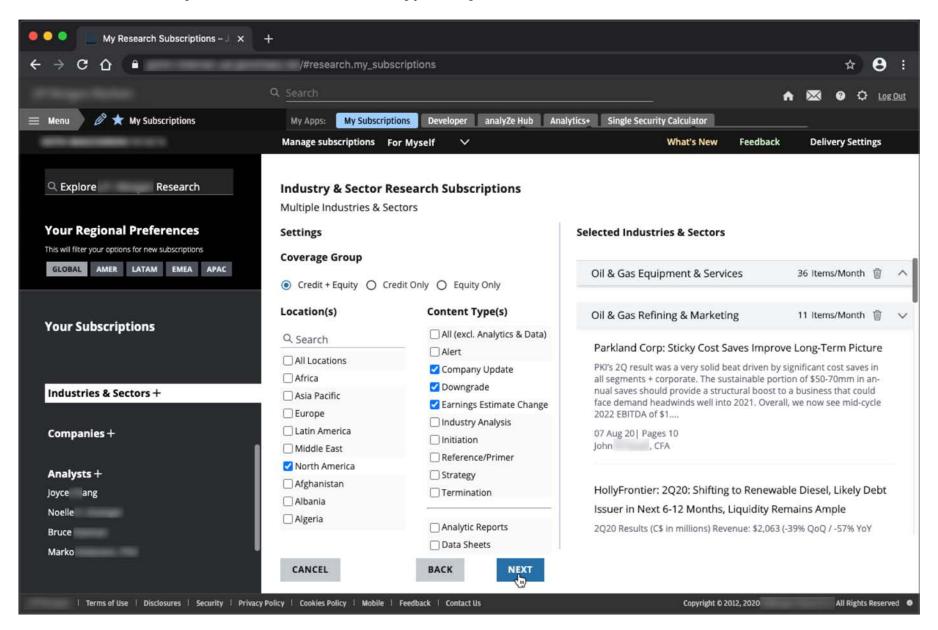
User selects another sub-sector, which appears below the first as a collapsible row



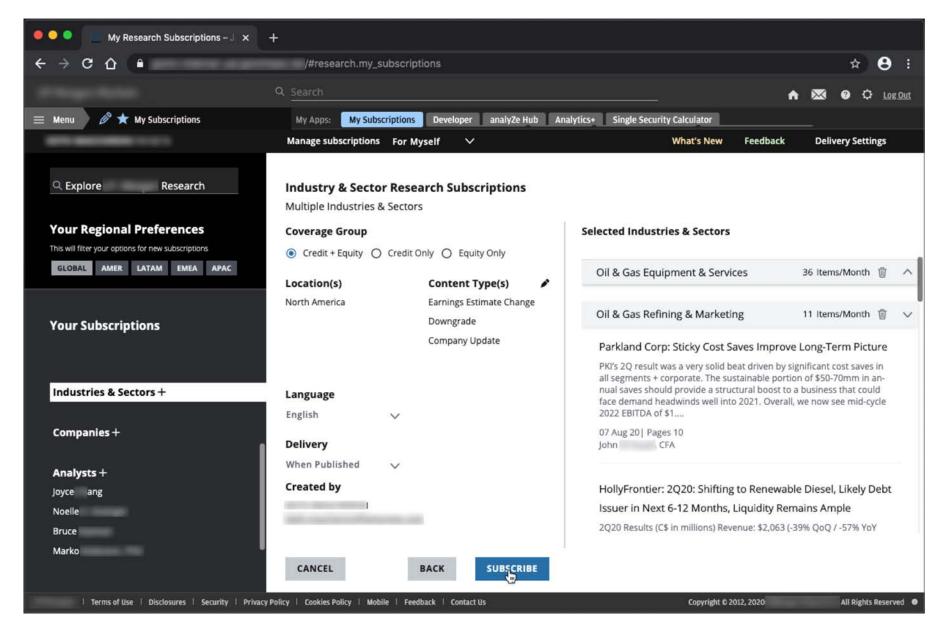
Each row can be expanded to show clickable examples of recent content that subscription delivered



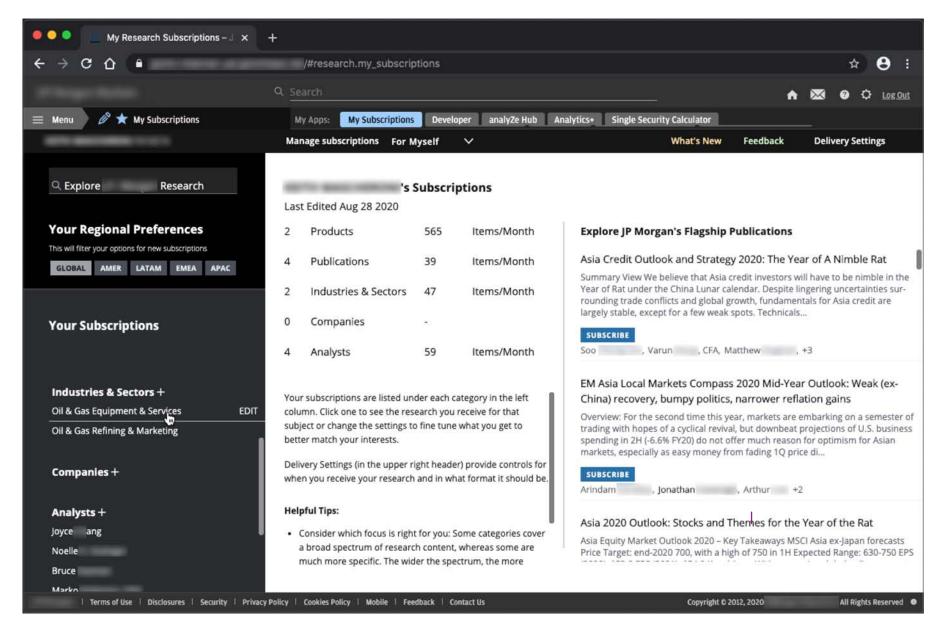
User then chooses only the locations and content types they want (which also reduces the content count)



User finalizes language and delivery choices, then clicks subscribe



The new subscriptions appear in the left panel, where they can always be accessed to make changes



Measuring Success

What we achieved

It's **easier to discover** new research

Content can be previewed and users are able to understand the **content count** a subscription sends

Subscriptions can be fine tuned to improve relevance

What we're seeing

Direct access from CRM is a big hit

Editable subscriptions **inspire dialog with customers**

Subscription **content count is helping** avoid oversubscribing and make more tailored choices for customer subscriptions

Pilot users are happy

What success will look like

Fewer emails will be sent

What's sent being opened more

Fewer calls/less time spent by staff managing subscription issues

More subscriptions created by customers

Comprehensive insights to customer interests

Long tail marketing opportunities

