

# Lessons from building a corporate paywall

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# Background

Press release May 2018:

Aller Media to be using Amedias identity service “aID”

To be launched “next Autumn”



Allierer seg med Amedia:

*- Vi er kjemst stolt av aID er markeds ledende innloggingsløsning, og vi er overbevist om at det vil være en løsning som både medlemskrets og abonnenter har store fordeler av. Partneren, sier Aller Media- og Dag-Senshøll.*

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## Aller Media og Dagbladet inngår ny avtale med Amedia om innlogging

# Old system built in 2013

- Inherited a subscription system built for print
- PHP application that ran sessions, paywall, authentication proxies and abandoned code
- Did not scale!!!!







# Requirements for the new setup

- Build it to fit all our sites and brands
- It should have single-sign-on. If you are logged in on one, you are logged in on all
- It must support all new products
- It must be set up so that articles can answer to multiple products
- Be flexible and give us control



# Difference between CRM and Subscription management

Subscription management is about access control

CRM is for customer history - keeping them separate will make your life easier, don't be fooled.

Customer is not the same as Identity



# Development mantra

We would like to build as little as possible ourselves. The three most important elements of the paywall - and to make it scale - is something we would like to buy as shelf-ware. Authentication - Subscription management - Payment. We must however have them loosely coupled so we keep our integrity and freedom to build new products on top. We will build the integration platform. Integration standards shall be met and be a prerequisite together with solid documentation.

Core components in a “paywall system”

# Authentication

aID - Users and authentication

We need to know the identity of the user. Just like - checking their ID.

It can be Facebook, Google, BankID, auth0 or aID.

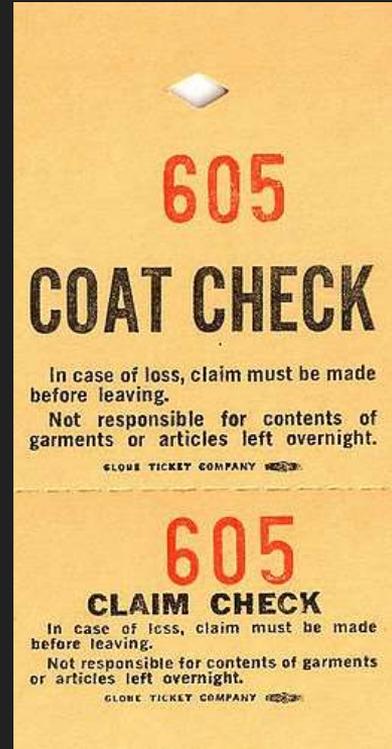
Anything that lets us verify that the user is that person.



# Session system

Ok, we know who the user is - Now we need a service that allows us to know it throughout their visit and if they come back within reasonable time.

Look at it like a Coat check - everything we need to keep for you, we will hang on the hanger, and every time we need to know something we can check it there.



# Access control

We know who the user is,  
and we can remember it.  
Now we need to know  
what she has access.

That is controlled by our  
subscription system - but  
could be any other  
subscription service.

Subscription provider



# Decide what you get to see (aka @therealPaywall)

Based on the users id, and the access that has been loaded from the subscription system, into her session we can decide if they get to see a show, or a line to the club.

We are using Varnish for this.



# Payment and transactions

Payment  
and orders

Payment  
providers

Every day, “something” is checking who we should bill and update the access to a product.

We let our subscription system do that today. They will have to support our needs of payment options but it leaves the risk at their end and not ours.

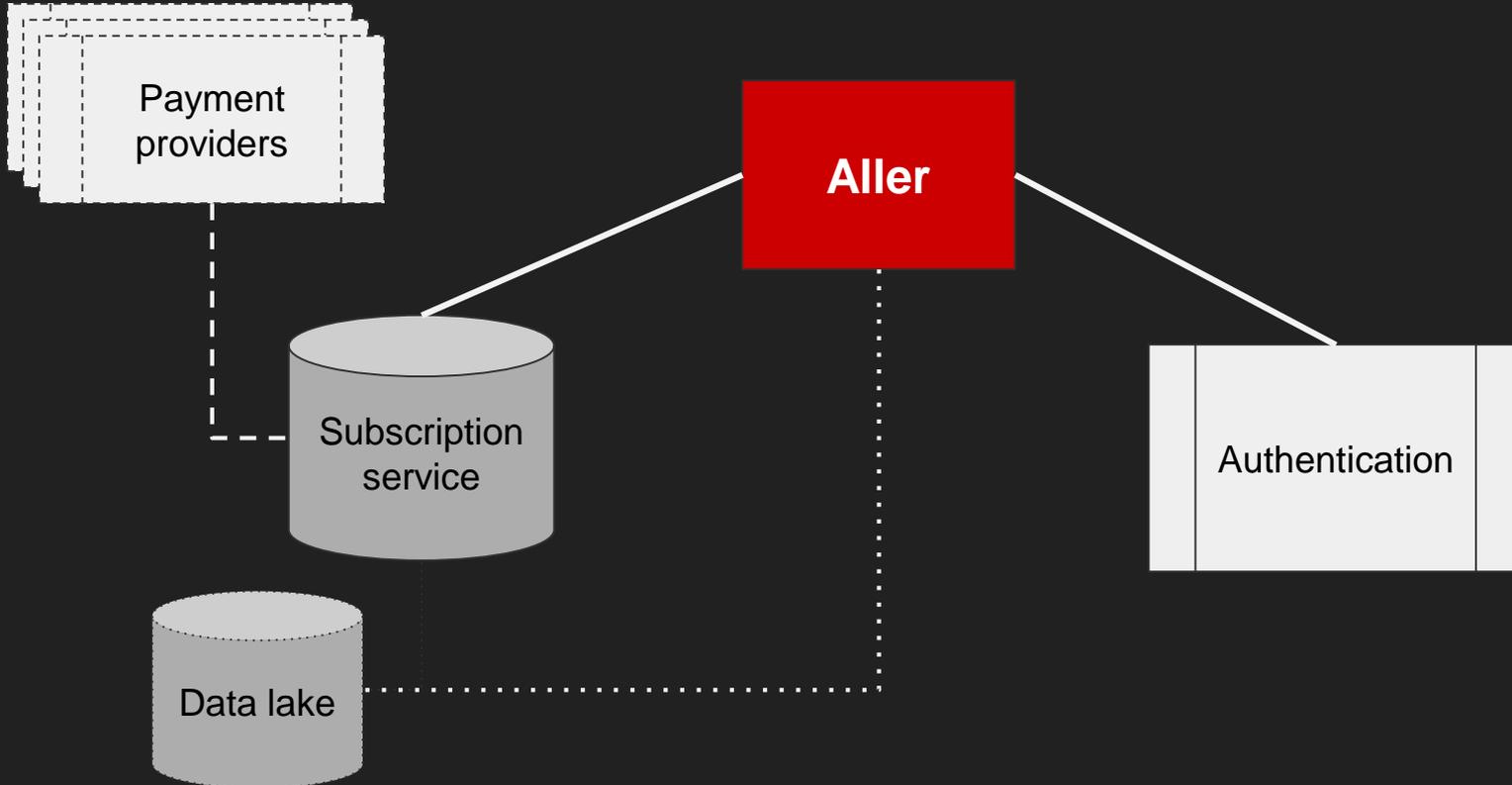
If we wanted full flexibility we would have to do that ourselves.



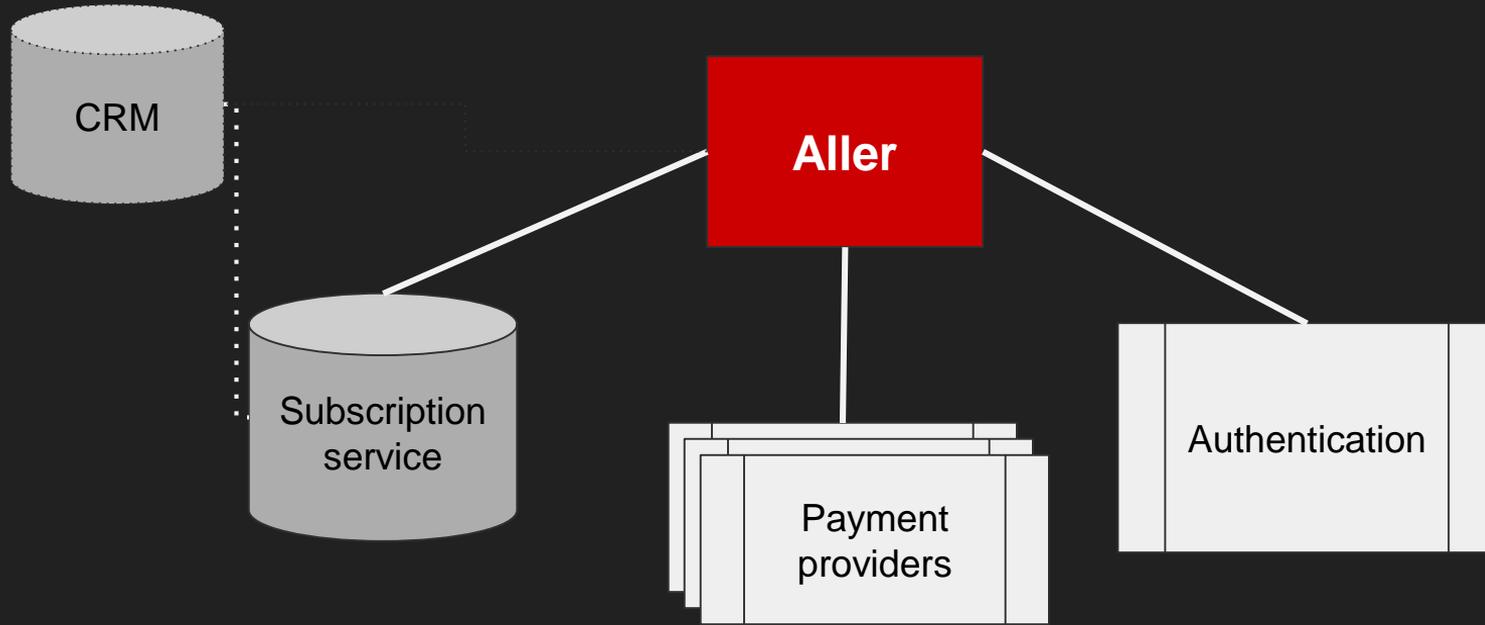
Task: Update “the lists”

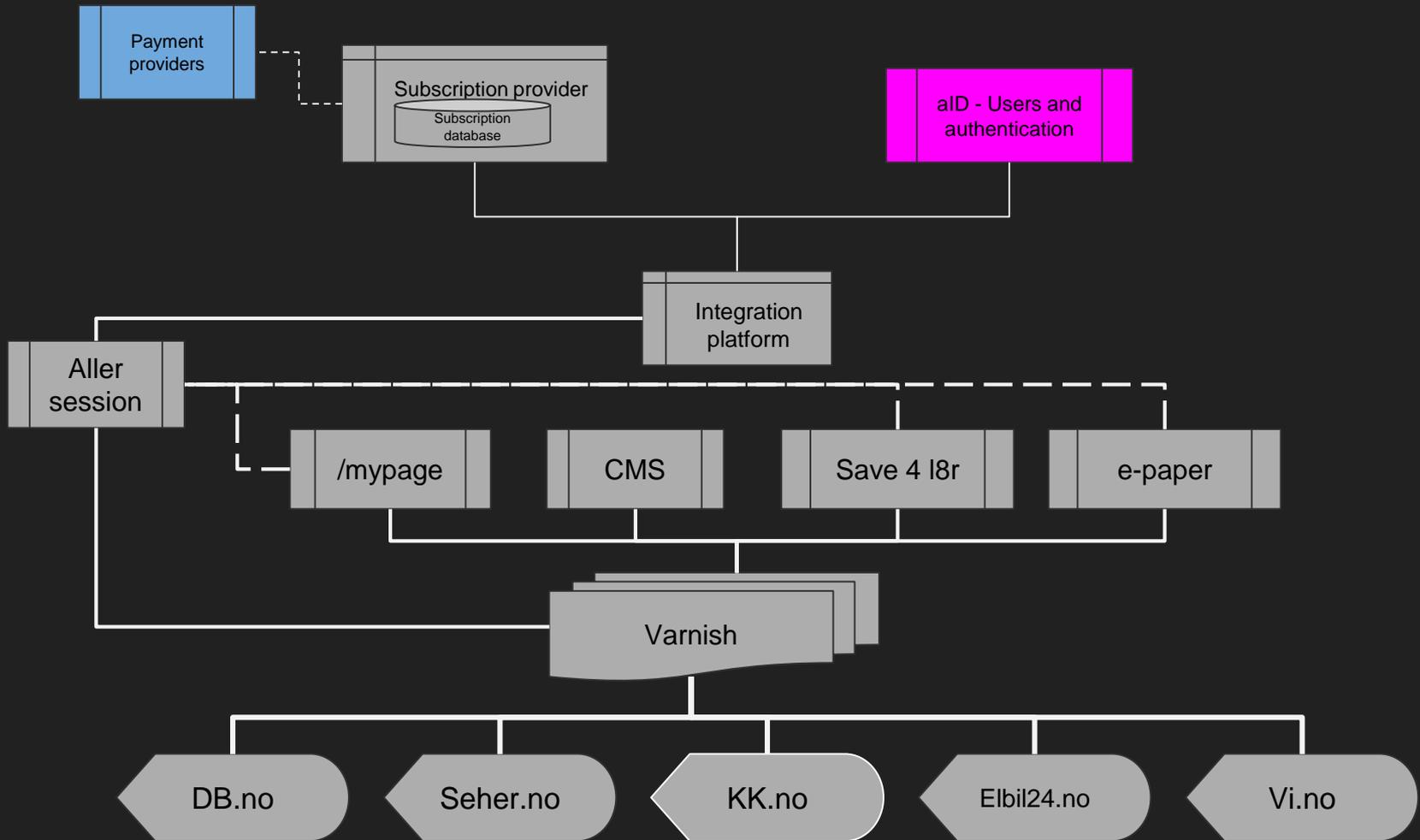


# Where we are now



# Conceptual target





# Lessons learned

Have your best developers doing customer support after launch. They will squish bugs at record speeds



# Trust your developers on this

This is the core of your service-  
charging for content and  
delivering it to your customers. If  
it had been print your operation  
would have been rock solid.

Make sure that this is the same.  
It is a tedious and complicated  
task, and worse if matching on  
low-quality data.



# Allow significant time to add tracking and metrics

Nothing is as frustrating as searching for bugs in the blind and the anxiety when something is wrong, somewhere, you just can't figure out how and where.

Spending time on adding the metrics, setting up tracing and allowing the developers to get the time needed to be sure that it is trackable is an investment that pays off.

You need to invest slightly more than what you can afford.

You do pay insurance on all your physical assets, right?



# Make sure you care about the user experience

You, and only you care about you changing a subscription service.

Everything in the UX should reflect that what you are about to do is considered as nothing else than useless, untimely hassle for your customers!



If possible - try to migrate or roll out to some users at the time

Big-bang launches are tough, because they limit the time you have to fix bugs.

By migrating it step by step, you will have more time to fix any bugs or leakages before it all goes wrong.



# Watch your payment setup!

Company structure and who owns the different brands might have an impact on what you are able to achieve on a one-corporate-level.

Card Merchants are linked to the organizational number of the brand and will impact the setup.

Scaling needs some planning... Rules are stupid!



# Lessons learned

- Do it right
- Take your time
- Have a plan
- Wear both a belt and braces
- Set some standards