



NEW & NICHE PUBLISHERS AUSTRALIAN GUIDE TO DIGITAL ADVERTISING

OCTOBER 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Media content, including digital media content, plays an important role in fostering and promoting diversity in our society. Digital media provides a wide range of perspectives and voices across many platforms, communities and content sites and apps. It is important that content from a range of media owners from the very large to the very small flourishes to ensure continued provision of diverse perspectives. The large range of digital content types, categories and media providers allows people to learn, broadens minds and perspectives and has a number of effects from greater connections between different groups to breeding creativity and innovation.

Small and medium publishers produce digital content that includes local and regional news, magazines, trade journals, and niche interest content. These publishers generally have high knowledge and expertise in a particular area or topic that allows them to produce unique and differentiated content that appeals to narrowly defined audiences.

The publishers of these medium and small digital brands play a vital role in providing specific content and community connection to consumers that may not be otherwise provided by larger media brands. They also present a huge opportunity to advertisers.

Along with providing unique and differentiated content, typically these publishers have a high profile amongst their community and develop close relationships with their audience. They have more flexibility and potential to provide more customised and creative solutions for an advertiser. Small and medium publishers can also have more direct relationships with advertisers and provide more relevant environments for smaller brands and major brands looking for local context. Like larger publishers' content, the contextual environments provided by small and medium publishers are also an opportunity to take advantage of the halo effect that content transfers to the advertising placed within.

MEDIA CONSUMPTION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSE DIGITAL CONTENT

The amount of digital content created, exchanged, and consumed has proliferated as the Internet has democratized access to creation and distribution tools. Australian’s are eager consumers of this content as online audiences and time spent with digital media has increased over time.

Each month, 18.3 million Australian adults spend on average around 97 minutes online from a desktop computer, Smartphone or tablet. Consumers digital time is spread across a range of tools and content provided by an equally diverse number of media owners and publishers.

AUSTRALIANS CONSUME A VAST VARIETY OF DIGITAL CONTENT GENRES

In aggregate, consumers spend about 42% of their total digital time on utility and communication tools such as search engines,

email, messaging, social networking and file storage. The remaining 58% of consumers’ time is spent on sites and apps that provide a wide range of content in text, audio and video format.

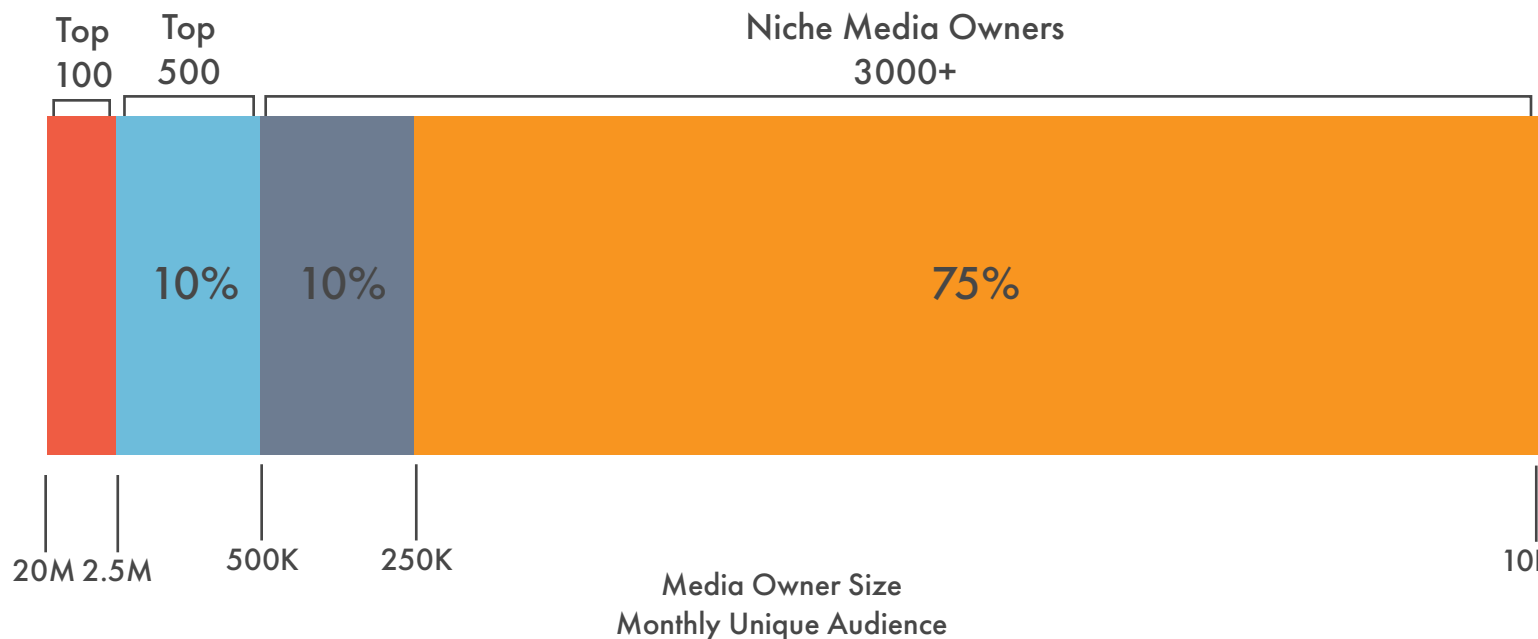
Entertainment is the largest content category of time spent with consumers engaging in sport, music, gaming and video content. Consumer time is also spread across sites and apps providing news, lifestyle, shopping, finance, IT and educational content.

AUSTRALIANS CONSUME DIGITAL CONTENT FROM A LARGE NUMBER OF PUBLISHERS AND PLATFORMS

Nielsen’s digital media panel (passive data input into Nielsen Digital Content Ratings) measures the audiences of about 3,800 global and local media owners with Australian audience sizes varying from the very large (nearly 20 million people a

month) to the small (about 10,000 people a month). Nearly 9 in 10 of these media owners have an audience size of less than 500,000 people visiting per month and three-quarters have an audience size of less than 250,000 people per month.

DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER OF MEDIA OWNERS BY UNIQUE AUDIENCE SIZE



Source: Nielsen Digital Panel text unique audience Parent level June 2020 PC age 2+, Smartphone & Tablet age 18+

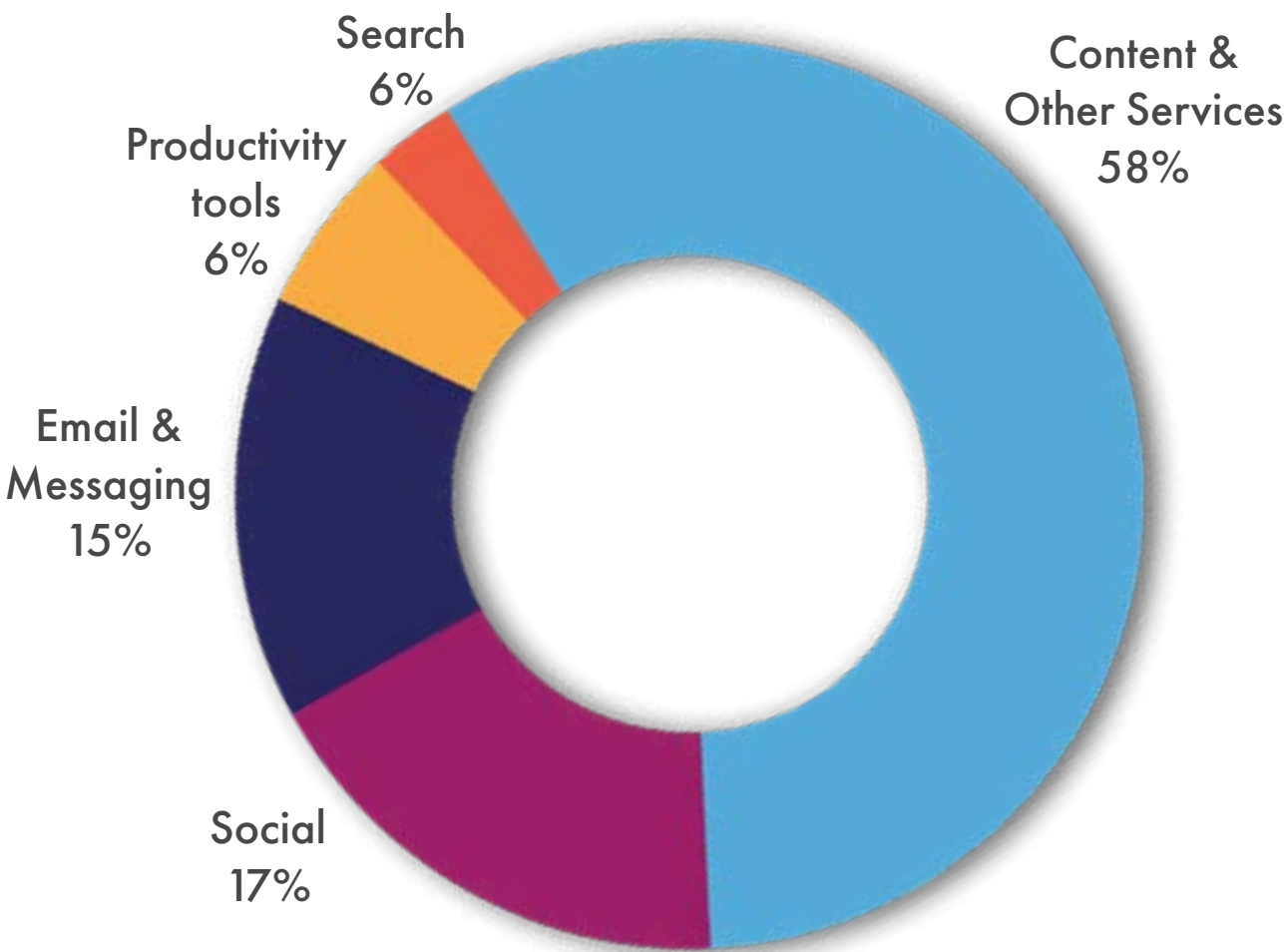
An analysis of local tagged digital media brands participating in the IAB endorsed Nielsen Digital Content Ratings, shows the distribution of total consumer time spent on large, medium and small content brands. While the top 15 digital brands make-up 80% of consumers’ total time spent on content sites, there are a long-tail of 215 brands that make up the rest of consumers’ time spent on content sites.

DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL TIME SPENT ON DIGITAL CONTENT BRANDS - TOP 230 BRANDS



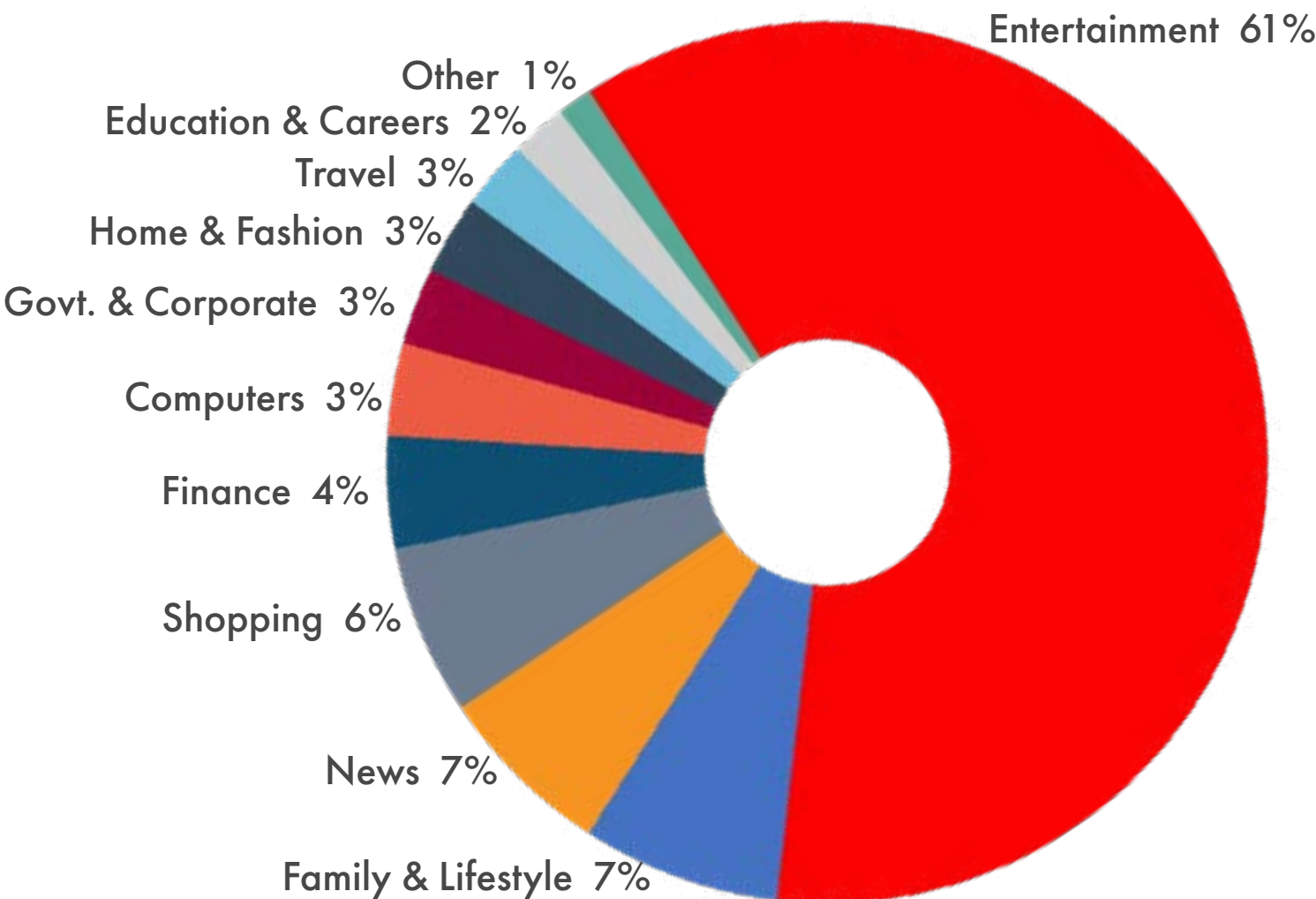
Source: Nielsen Digital Content Ratings Monthly Tagged June 2020, P2+, Digital C/M, Text, All brands, Total time spent

SHARE OF TOTAL TIME ONLINE BY ACTIVITY



Source: Nielsen Digital Panel text total time June 2020 PC age 2+, Smartphone & Tablet age 18+

SHARE OF TOTAL TIME ONLINE BY CONTENT CATEGORY



Source: Nielsen Digital Panel text total time June 2020 PC age 2+, Smartphone & Tablet age 18+

AUSTRALIANS CONSUME CONTENT ON MULTIPLE DEVICES

Australians now spend just over half of their digital media time on their Smartphone, however this can vary greatly depending on the type of content being consumed and demographic targets. Some content categories such as financial news, automotive information and travel destinations are still heavily consumed on desktop, while others such as news are heavily dominated by Smartphone consumption.

Consumption patterns across devices have been disrupted by COVID-19 for some categories. Consumption of news content has been significantly higher during the pandemic and with Australians having less commute time and more time on a computer screen from home, we have reported for the first time in a long

time, desktop usage growth outpaced smart-phone growth. (Source: [IAB Press Release- As we Hunt for Information, Consumption Patterns are Changing](#)).

Smartphone consumption is highest amongst younger age groups with 18-24's spending two-thirds of their digital time on a Smartphone device. While the proportion of time spent on Smartphone declines for older age groups, the proportion of time spent on a tablet device increases.

For all content publishers this indicates a mobile optimised strategy as mandatory and in some cases a mobile-first optimisation.

INCREASINGLY A WORLD OF MULTIPLE DIGITAL SCREENS

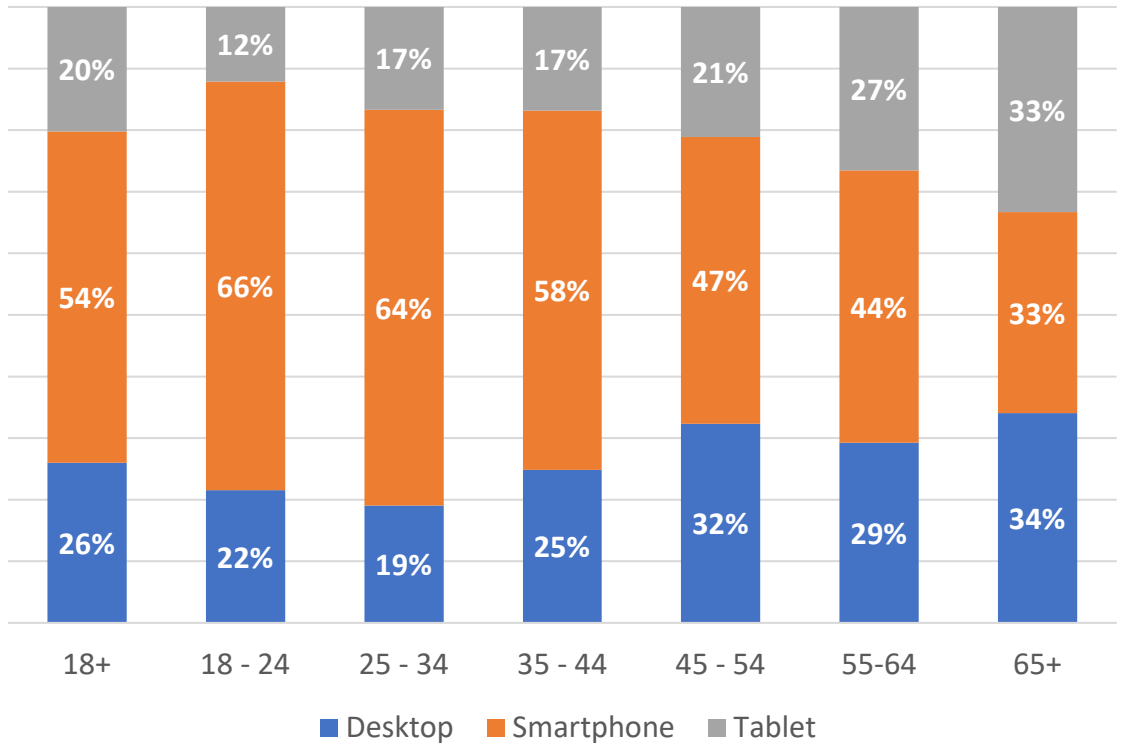
Consumers move between screens to satisfy different needs in our lives and often multiscreen.

Connected TV audiences are increasingly strongly. Data from IAB Australia's enumeration study conducted by Nielsen over the period March to May 2020 reports 6.8 million Australians aged 14+, or 33% of the population are watching internet content on a TV screen everyday.

CTV viewing is becoming more frequent with daily audiences growing 20% over the last year. In particular there is strong growth in daily viewers over the last quarter during COVID lockdown period.

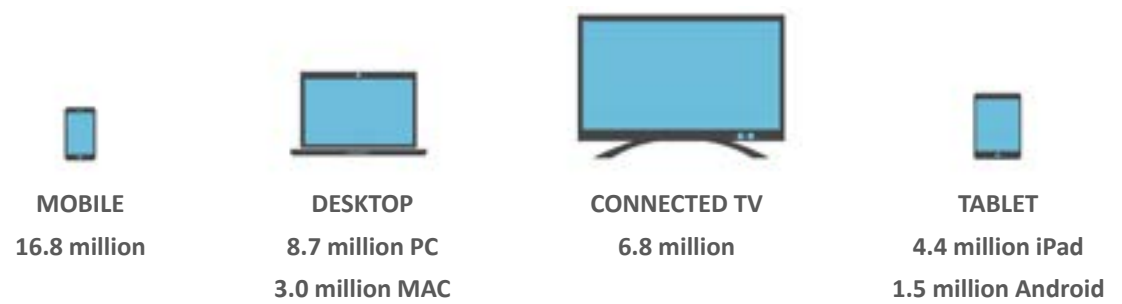
STREAMING VIDEO MORE THAN EVER

DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL TIME SPENT ACROSS AGE GROUPS BY DEVICE



Source; Nielsen Digital Panel text total time June 2020 PC, Smartphone & Tablet age 18+

AUSTRALIANS ACCESSING ONLINE CONTENT DAILY ACROSS MULTIPLE SCREENS



Source; IAB Australia Nielsen Digital Enumeration Study Mar 20 – May 20 quarter ages 14+ n=3000 per quarter

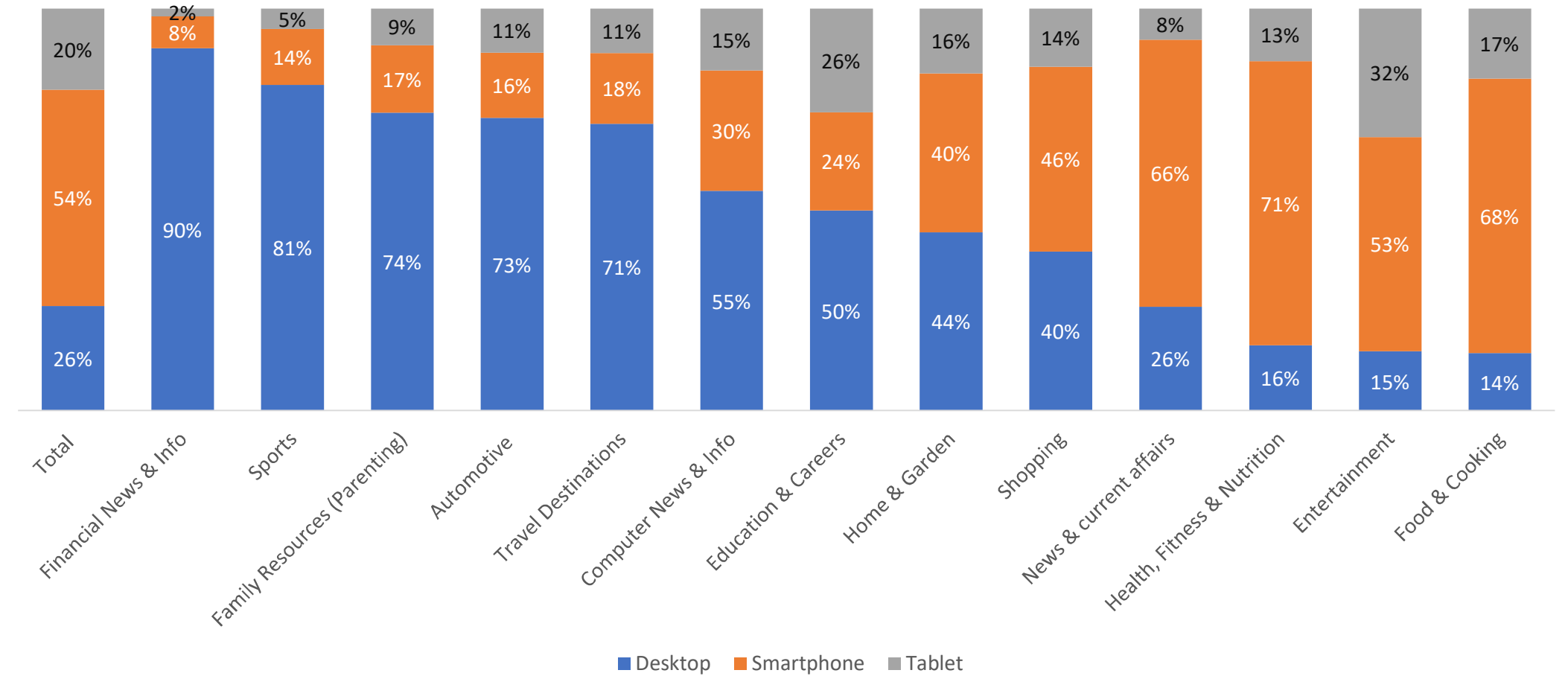
In Australia, more people across all demographics are consuming video. Nearly 17million Australian adults (85%) consume streaming video content on desktop, Smartphone or tablet and on average spend over 40 hours doing so each month. Younger people are spending even more time watching video. Over 90% of all 18 to 44's watch video content on Desktop/ laptop, Smartphone or Tablet each month.

CONSUMPTION OF STREAMING VIDEO ON DESKTOP, SMARTPHONE AND TABLET ACROSS AGE GROUPS

	UNIQUE AUDIENCE	REACH (% pop 18+)	TIME PP (hh:min:sec)
18 - 24	2,227,650	94%	61:20:12
25 - 34	3,570,830	94%	55:08:58
35 - 44	3,111,371	92%	41:51:52
45 - 54	2,855,855	89%	45:13:06
55-64	2,549,402	87%	20:32:27
65+	2,532,297	62%	12:28:56
18+	16,847,405	85%	40:10:49

Source: Nielsen Digital Content Ratings, Video, June 2020, People 18+, Panel + Census

DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL TIME SPENT ACROSS CONTENT CATEGORIES BY DEVICE



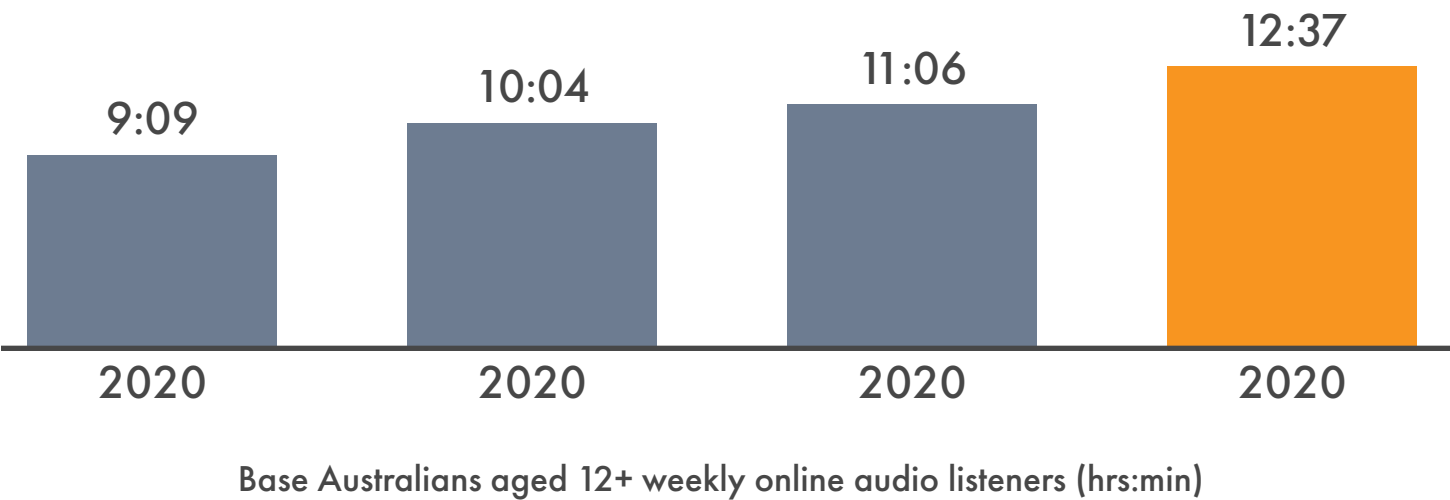
Source; Nielsen Digital Panel text total time Category & Subcategory market lines June 2020 PC, Smartphone & Tablet age 18+

STREAMING AUDIO & PODCAST CONSUMPTION INCREASING

The audio landscape in Australia is evolving with the growth in internet-only audio listening and podcast listening.

The Australian Infinite Dial Study, commissioned by Commercial Radio Australia (CRA), Southern Cross Austereo (SCA) and Triton Digital, reports time spent listening to online audio has increased for the fourth year in a row. Online audio listeners in Australia age 12+ spend an average of 12 hours and 37 minutes listening to online audio per week, up from just over 11 hours last year. The smartphone is the device the vast majority of online listeners use to listen, with 83% of those in Australia age 12+ saying they use a smartphone to listen to online audio. Fourteen percent of those in Australia age 12+ say they use a smart speaker to listen to online audio, up from 8% last year.

AVERAGE TIME SPENT LISTENING TO ONLINE AUDIO

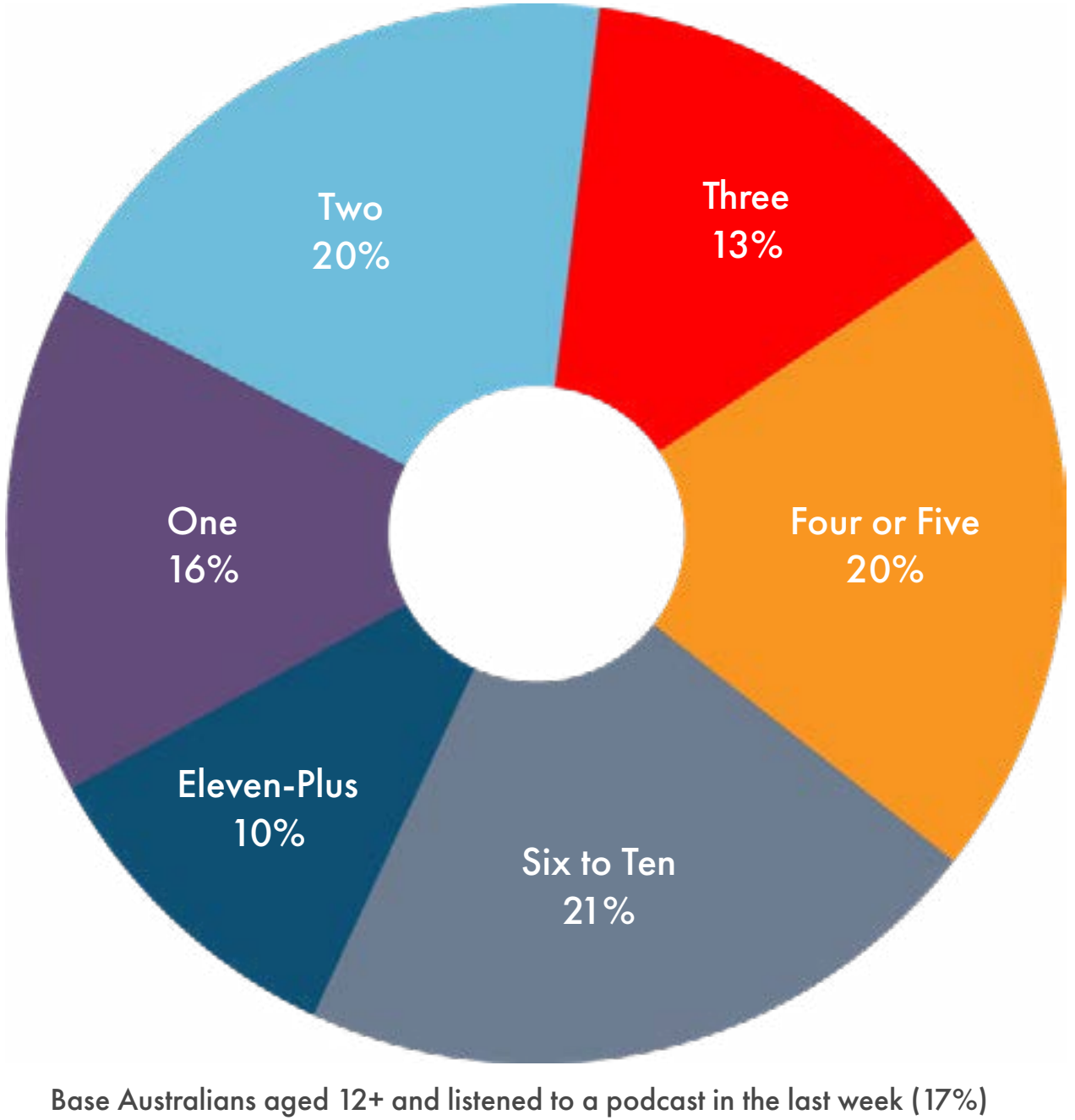


Source: [The Infinite Dial 2020](#), Edison Research

The Australian Infinite Dial Study reports high awareness of podcasting with 87% awareness amongst Australians aged 12+. 25% of Australians aged 12+ have listened to a podcast in the last month, up from 22% in 2019.

Active podcast listeners are extremely engaged. Australian weekly podcast listeners (17%) average 6 podcasts each week.

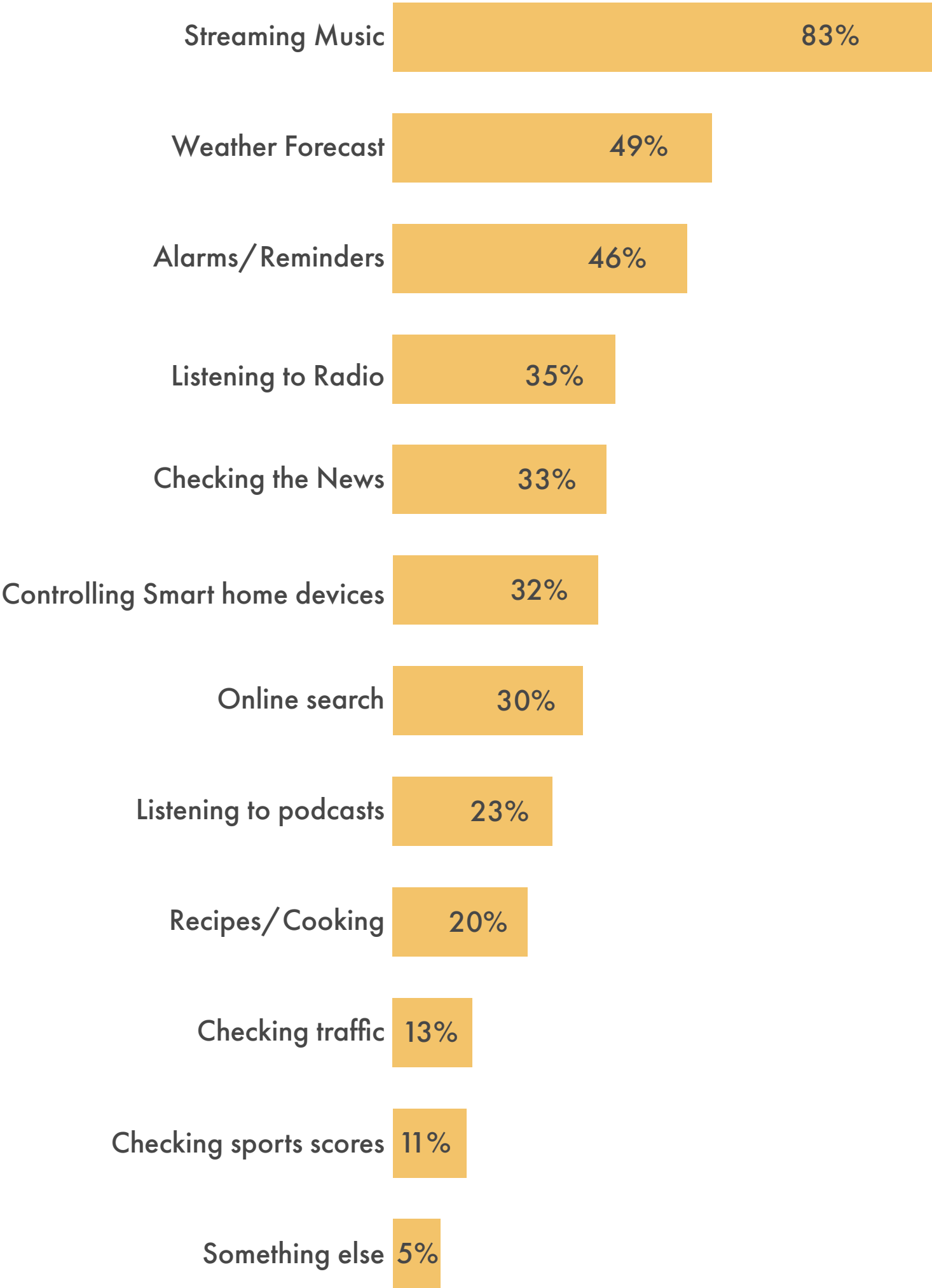
NUMBER OF PODCASTS LISTENED TO IN A WEEK



Triton Digital’s Podcast Reports list the top podcasts in Australia as measured by Triton’s Podcast Metrics measurement service. The entities listed are ranked by Average Weekly Downloads (Monday to Sunday) in accordance with the IAB Tech Lab’s Podcast Technical Measurement Guidelines. Monthly reports are available [here](#).

Audio is changing and adapting to new technologies. Smart speaker ownership is emerging with 18% of Australians aged 14+ owning this device. IAB Australia’s enumeration study conducted by Nielsen reports of the 3.8 million Australians owning a Smart speaker, 64% use it at least weekly and 34% daily. Predominately the Smart speaker is used for streaming music, however other content access such as weather, news, recipes and sport is emerging.

USES OF SMART SPEAKER AMONGST THOSE 14+ WHO HAVE USED THE DEVICE IN LAST MONTH



Source; IAB Australia Nielsen Digital Enumeration Mar 20 – May 20 quarter ages 14+ n=3000 per quarter

DIGITAL PUBLISHER BUSINESS MODELS

Corinne Podger

Director and Principal
The Digital Skills Agency

The publishers core business centers around differentiated content and services, provided at sufficient scale to sustain growth. They strive to achieve a virtuous cycle where their development of content and services can drive increasing audience engagement and revenue, which feeds and funds further development.

Technology and innovation is critical to publisher business activities and meeting today’s user expectations, hence the supply-chain of third-party service providers who help power and monetise their offerings - since publishers generally cannot afford to develop proprietary software to support the entire virtuous cycle.

PUBLISHER LIFE-CYCLE ACTIVITIES

The publisher business model generally has its own set of distinct business activities and when functioning well can result in a virtual network effect.

As more consumers engage with the publisher, this in turn attracts advertisers keen to market their products and services. The increase in advertisers leads to more revenue and, as a result, the publisher can invest and offer more services to consumers - growing the audiences and, hopefully, more advertising.

The publisher business model traditionally

involves the following core life-cycle activities:

- Content / service development
- User acquisition
- Personalisation and delivery
- Monetisation
- User re-engagement and retention
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CONTENT / SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

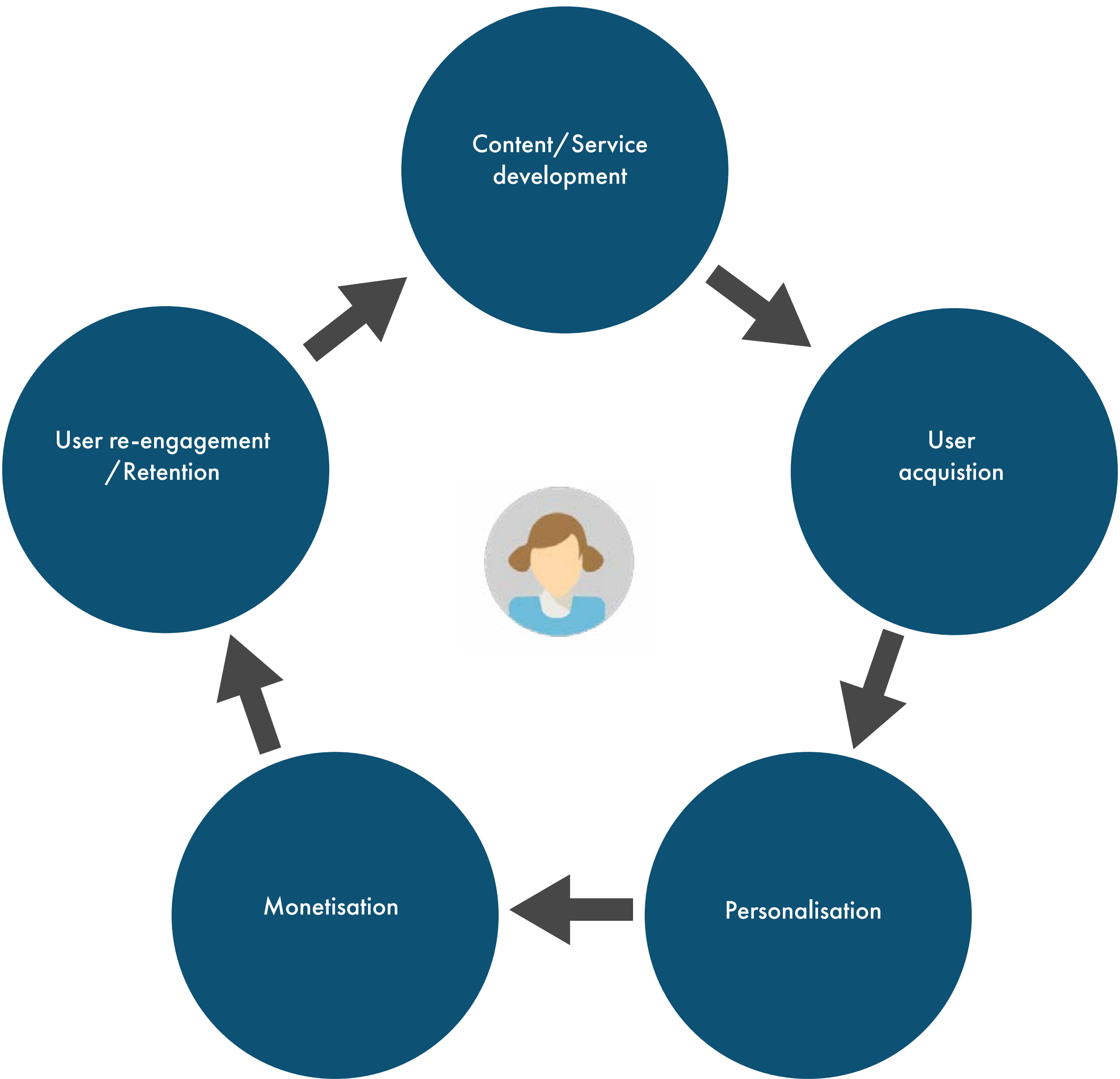
Whether it’s publishing content, or delivery of internet-enabled services, the publisher business must differentiate itself with unique, timely, useful and/or entertaining B2C or B2B offerings. This requires them to intimately understand their audiences in order to determine whether the content/services they offer are driving a virtuous or vicious cycle of engagement and monetization.

USER ACQUISITION

Publishers rely on a variety of strategies and tactics to attract new audiences, on top of and incremental to organic audience growth. These audience acquisition strategies can include paid tactics (advertising, paid placement, search engine marketing, etc.) and “earned” (SEO, social, etc.). Each user acquisition method is evaluated for effectiveness, generally by measuring the cost of consumer/customer acquisition against the lifetime value of these consumers/customers.

PERSONALISATION AND DELIVERY

Publishers are under increasing pressure to



deliver personalized experiences for consumers/customers; it's not only conventional, it's expected by consumers. Personalization may come in the form of recommendations, customizations/preferences, or other conveniences, and may also involve strategies to limit access to publisher content/service until certain conditions are met (such as a subscription, the collection of personal data, filling out a survey, reaching a level of game play, etc.). Personalisation may also utilize current context or prior behavior to improve content relevancy for audiences. In all cases the purpose at this stage is to delight the end-user, develop brand loyalty and trust, and otherwise sustain continued consumer/customer engagement and revenue.

MONETISATION

Publishers fund the development of content and services in a number of ways, including advertising sales, subscriptions, data sales, and affiliate sales partnerships. They often optimize their advertising yield across many different demand partners and channels. When a publisher has valuable first party audiences, that publisher can make incremental revenue by acting like a marketing platform and selling ads to reach those audiences across non-owned and operated third party properties via programmatic channels. The more accurately marketers can measure and control their media spend on one publisher and the marketers' own websites, the greater the monetary value they will pay the publisher. Along these same lines, the more marketers can measure and control their media spend across multiple publishers and the marketers' own websites, the greater the value they will pay each publisher.

RE-ENGAGEMENT / RETENTION

In addition to new audience acquisition, publishers often focus strategies around re-engaging those who already engage with their content or services, whether consumers use the publisher's app, visit their website, or otherwise utilize their service. Tactics can include email, online ads and notifications targeted to specific audiences, perhaps with coupons, promotions or other incentives and premiums. The more personalized the matching of content to consumers, the more relevant the consumer experience.

REINVENTION OF PUBLISHERS REVENUE MODELS

Corinne Podger

Director and Principal
The Digital Skills Agency

The global impact of Covid19 on ad spend has devastated both the advertising and media industries.

The disaster has generated fresh and urgent impetus to the search for ways of making quality journalism financially sustainable. What is it, the industry as a whole is now asking, that has enabled some outlets to weather the pandemic storm, despite taking a bruising, when others are being washed away?

Answers are emerging to that question that challenge the leitmotif that journalism’s business model is irreparably broken. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and each outlet will have its own threats and revenue-making opportunities to contend with. But those opportunities are becoming clearer, and processes for implementing them are now more widely understood. They include an increasingly sophisticated ecosystem of subscription models, traditional and emerging forms of advertising, branded content and sponsorship, the sale of goods and services, e-commerce, ticketed events, and access to government and funding from public and private donors and philanthropists.

This chapter provides a short overview of some of these income-generating pathways, with a focus on those best suited to new and niche publishers.

Persistent challenges remain. The greatest of these is the skills and experience to identify, test, pilot, implement and adjust new sources of revenue, while maintaining a business as usual for existing audiences and users. At the recent WAN-IFRA Asian Media Leaders’ Summit, 75 percent of attendees said they wanted to introduce e-commerce programmes in the next 12 months, and that their greatest obstacle was access to the

right skill sets and experience to support this shift.

Larger outlets can afford to hire in skills they currently lack, such as design thinking, product and e-commerce design, and business development management. For new and niche publishers, such skills may need to be built collaboratively or acquired in-house. Some training is available, but more is needed, and it needs to be affordable and accessible.

Nevertheless, our centuries-old industry is making ever more rapid progress towards sustainability, and this should be celebrated. Newcomers to revenue diversification were still navigating relatively unexplored waters when the current crisis blew us all off course. But the passion and commitment of journalists to finding sustainable ways of serving and informing our communities remains unbowed and there is now a rich chorus of voices with stories of new currents and channels that might yet lead us to safe harbour.

Here is an overview of income-generating pathways suited to new and niche publishers:

ADVERTISING NETWORKS

Smaller and niche publishers can leverage higher charges from ad clients by forming ad network consortia. Examples include Regional Media Connect in Australia, and the Local Media Consortium in the United States. Podcast networks are another route to upscaling audience reach and advertising income. Big publishers with multiple podcasts can create their own networks, but smaller publishers can add their shows to networks run by companies like Whooshkaa, PodcastOne, or TWiT.

BRANDED CONTENT AND NATIVE ADS

Advertising content that mimics an outlet’s editorial style and format gives businesses access to an outlet’s audience in a

tone and context they will trust. Examples include Guardian Labs, Reuters+ and T-Brand. Your outlet might also establish a branded content studio, providing support with design, UX, and multimedia content. Branded and journalistic content and teams must be clearly demarcated and kept transparently separate, to preserve public trust.

E-COMMERCE

E-commerce is a step up from advertising, where outlets directly sell their own products. Newsroom products can include media training and masterclasses, datasets and software, and archived photos, video and audio. You could also partner up with a brand to sell their products. Examples include local produce, regional goods and services, real estate, and tours and hotel stays. Niche publishers like PopSugar sell beauty products, Dennis UK sells cars. In China, the Zhejiang Daily Press has a live-streaming shopping channel to help promote regional businesses. E-commerce partners must be chosen carefully. Look for solid alignment on brand values, and trustworthy content that serves your audience and respects their trust.

NEWSLETTERS

Thousands of newsletters have been launched in the past few years so do some market testing to establish demand and potential revenue opportunities for any new ones. Ads or sponsorships offer solid income opportunities. Audience subscriptions tend to be low unless your newsletter offers robust and exclusive value to a niche audience. Advertising revenue pathways include links to a brand’s goods, services or external content, and banner ads. Small and niche publishers monetising newsletters include Women’s Agenda Australia, Southern California Public Radio, and freelancers like Matt Navarra.

READER REVENUE

There are at least 13 different reader revenue models for publishers to try. These include print and digital subscriptions; and subscription models include freemium (Le Monde), metered (Boston Globe, Sydney Morning Herald) a hard paywall (Financial Times), or a hybrid (Kauppalehti). Subscription models can be further diversified to attract new users (student discounts) or to add an exclusive VIP tier (Digiday+, New York Times Premium, Tortoise Media). Any subscription model can be adjusted to allow for front-of-paywall content, which should be accompanied by clear, simple methods for users to subscribe, and a reason why they should.

MEMBERSHIPS

Memberships tend to go hand in hand with subscriptions, and leverage a sense of shared values between your outlet and its users. This can include a shared value of the journalistic mission (Guardian). It can also take the form of exclusive or specialist clubs that give members early or exclusive access to specialist content, member-only meetings with journalists, and discounts or special offers on products like events, books, wine, holidays, or regional businesses. Paid membership examples include Slate Plus, the New York Times Premier, The Times UK, Ars Technica, and the US regional Charlotte Agenda.

SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsors are often associated with events. But they can also help pay for verticals or services that offer win-win value to your audience and the brand, or pay for specific rounds reporters. Examples include the UN’s sponsorship of a Food vertical for Trust.Org, sponsorship of community forums like Slack channels (Boston Globe) or Facebook Groups, podcast mentions, live-streams (New Scientist), and links to sponsors’ external events and jobs boards for their target audience.

EVENTS

Online events are cheaper to run than face-to-face. They offer a potentially global audience, and the ability to run events over days or weeks. Done well, this can result in higher margins for publishers, drawn from a wider pool of potential sponsors, some of whom may be willing to pay more than for a physical event. Ticket prices may be low, but value-add can be sought through access to recorded content and VIP access to speakers. Think beyond journalism; paid events run during the pandemic include a global conference on education run by the South China Morning Post, and professional networking events run by Forbes. Free events can also generate revenue if a free subscription trial is included in your ticket, and links to relevant stories are shared during the event.

SERVICES

Newsrooms are home to specialist skills that may be offered as a paid-for service. This can include app development, web design and hosting, guest speakers, white-paper and report writers, podcast producers and presenters, commemorative book and website creation, printing, niche content syndication or on-selling, video and audio editing, training or consultancies on SEO and UI/UX, and writing e-books. As always, look for the win-win-win: commercial activities must work for your brand, the brands you work with, and must maintain and ideally strengthen the trust of your audience.

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT

Philanthropy takes many different forms. It can include cash donations using tools like Patreon and Tip Jar. It can extend to in-kind donations of office space and equipment. And it can include skills as well as substantive donations from your community. A great Australian example is the business management support the NSW Barrier Daily Truth received, which has helped it stay in print during the pandemic.

DONOR FUNDING

Setting up as a non-profit is harder in Australia than, say, the US. But you might partner up with an eligible non-profit to bid for funds to support the information needs of specific regions or communities, such as migrants, children, the elderly, Indigenous communities, or an international diaspora. An Australian example of a non-profit newsroom is Croakey Health Media. Australian donors include the Walkley Foundation, the Regional and Small Publishers Innovation Fund, and the Judith Nielsen Institute. There are dozens of international donors, and a round-up of current grants and opportunities is published monthly by the International Journalists’ Network.

PORTFOLIO INCOMES

Relying on one income source, one platform, or one format, is high-risk, and a combination of these – or other – income sources may be best for you. You might combine subscriptions, branded content and e-commerce; or build a branded content studio and offer consultancies. Review current and emerging pathways at least once a year, and before adopting a new income stream wholesale, pilot and test it as much as possible. Benchmark “what good looks like” and set Smart, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Specific (SMART) goals. This will help you choose the best moment to scale up or pull the plug, without damaging the rest of your business and other income sources.

ADVERTISING REVENUE LANDSCAPE

DIGITAL ADVERTISING REVENUE

The IAB Online Advertising Expenditure Report the financial year 2020 reports the total online advertising market is \$9.1 billion. Although not as heavily impacted as other advertising channels, the data reflects the impact of the nationwide COVID-19 lockdown on the total online advertising market, particularly during the April to June quarter. Annual growth in online advertising spending slowed to a 1% increase year on year in FY20.

Spend slowed for all advertising types in FY20 with Classifieds recording the biggest

decline, reflecting falls in consumer confidence and spend. General Display was up 0.8% year on year at \$3.4bn, Search and Directories up 3.1% to \$4.2 bn, Classifieds down 3.9% to \$1.6bn.

Video is the biggest growth category, continuing to achieve double digit growth, up 15.4% to \$1.7bn. This growth offsets declines in other formats of general display.

Expenditure moved from desktop to connected TV during FY20. Connected TV accounted for 38% of content publishers video expenditure by device, with Desktop at

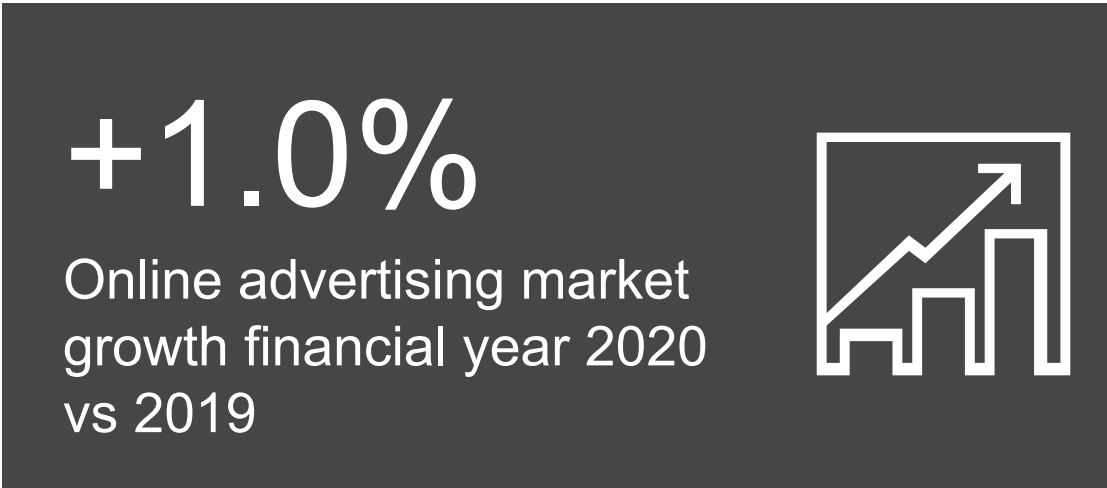
35% and mobile at 26%.

The top five industry categories for online ad revenue are Automotive, Retail, Finance, Travel and Real Estate.

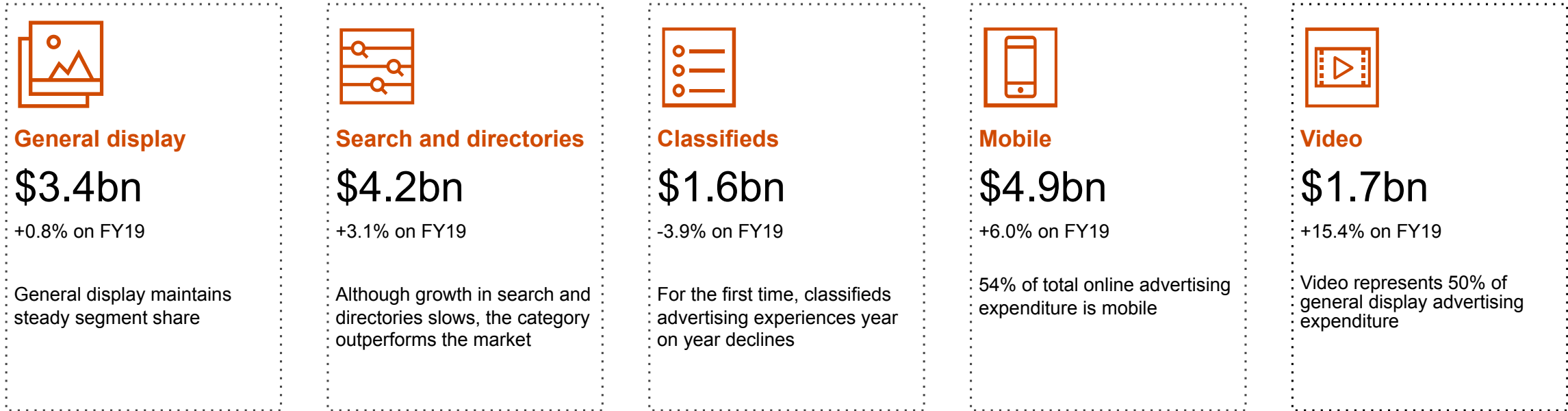
TOTAL AUSTRALIAN ADVERTISING MARKET

PWC’s Entertainment and Media Outlook provides industry forecasting for consumer and advertising spend across 12 media segments. This resource helps navigate the challenges and opportunities of the contemporary Australian entertainment and media landscape. The unifying theme of last year’s Outlook is the search for growth. Across the 12 segments PWC forecast in the Outlook, all players are united by an urgent search for growth and implementing the organisational transformation necessary to deliver it.

For more information and to download advertising expenditure forecast data by media segment, see the Entertainment and Media Outlook 2019 - 2023 at PWC.



Spend has slowed for all advertising types in financial year 2020



Source: IAB Australian Online Advertising Expenditure Report, compiled by PWC for the financial year and quarter ended 30 June 2020

AD MONETISATION PRODUCTS

In 2017 the IAB Tech Lab released the final version of the new IAB Standard Ad Unit Portfolio, featuring ads that allow for creative to adjust to a variety of screen sizes and resolution capabilities. The IAB New Ad Portfolio defines ad units based on aspect ratio and size range. This is a big transition from ad unit recommendations based on fixed pixel sizes. Flexible sized ad units provide several benefits over fixed pixel ad units:

- Publisher content delivered to multiple screen sizes requires ads that can respond to multiple sizes and integrate with a responsive website design.
- Creative design needs to scale to different sizes without losing its original message and impact.

This new ad portfolio is based upon HTML5 technology and also includes guidelines for new digital content experiences such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), social media, mobile video, emoji ad messaging, and 360-degree video ads.

[For more information on the New Ad Portfolio click here.](#)
[For more information for Publisher on Flexible Ads click here](#)

Additionally, we have categorised the most prevalent digital ads by type within the six sections below:

- 1.Display
- 2.Programmatic
- 3.Native
- 4.Video
- 5.Audio
- 6.Affiliate

DISPLAY

Harley Ramien

Director - Publishers & Partners
Bonzai

How do you balance the user experience with making the most revenues possible per page and/or per user?

You can now have both your UX and revenue cakes and eat them too. Historically higher revenue ad units were highly intrusive, (think back to OTPs/Popups) but thankfully there are premium UX friendly ad products based on site experience research that deliver outstanding performance at the same time. This is also possible today via programmatic, not just direct.

I'd recommend not to go crazy with ad formats, but to concentrate and experiment on the functionality within a smaller set of formats that speak to your advertiser's campaign goals. For instance, a larger skin format with high viewability might be a go-to for awareness but could also house a video to drive views.

Take a read through the Coalition for Better Ads research. Many old solutions aren't ideal anymore. For listings or classified sites, UX is king, so navigating internally for approval for new ad product offerings can bring significant resistance. You might not be surprised at the findings around the least preferred experiences but you might find some surprises on the most preferred experiences for mobile and desktop. There are modern solutions that do work well and allow you to monetise across both these channels.

Site design is becoming more responsive and with niche publishers there tends to be a want to look more native. If you are running multiple site layouts, consider the trade-off using

responsive ad products as they can keep the look and feel premium and can give you scale and time to run across for multiple sites. Often times you might not have a lot of resource to execute and it could introduce more complicity initially, so find a solution or a process that makes this manageable to avoid saying no to time sensitive or higher value opportunities.

Consider the power of relevance and context. There's no protest from magazine readers being bombarded with ads because they're all highly relevant. With the fading away of the cookie, context will be more and more valuable.

CONTEXTUAL TARGETING

(Source: [IAB UK How to Harness the Power of Contextual Targeting](#))

Contextual targeting is a form of advertising that chooses to serve an ad based on the content and environment that the ad will appear in, as opposed to data on the user that the ad is being served to. Nowadays this may extend beyond just content and keywords on a page; today contextual targeting solutions can be used to serve ads based on several factors that define a page beyond just the content itself. For example, you can target ads based on the sentiment of the content i.e. if it is positive/negative, happy/sad, the placement of the ad, the device it's being viewed on, the time of day, type of ad, and several other factors. The power of contextual targeting is in delivering ads to users who are more likely to be interested in a related brand's message based on the content they are viewing at that moment.

Although contextual targeting has always been a fundamental part of the marketing mix, it is regaining particular interest in today's environment for a number of reasons, some of which stem from consumers becoming more conscious of and protective over their online data and privacy. This change in attitude

has developed alongside increasing regulations in this area and the deprecation of third-party cookies by browsers (also being driven by privacy regulation).

Publishers are beginning to form alliances that enable contextual targeting at scale across their collective properties, while other industry consortiums are providing identity alternatives. Most importantly, there is more willingness among publishers, media buyers and tech providers to work closely to address these issues. With identity challengers on the horizon, and advertisers seeing the growing importance of first-party data, publishers are in a strong position to leverage their direct relationships with users to enable better, more personalised ad experiences for their users.

Looking to the future, the possibilities that contextual targeting will bring across screens and formats is exciting. While likely that regulations and consumer viewing habits will continue to shift and evolve, contextual targeting - capable of delivering scale across a range of KPIs - will remain a safe bet for technology platforms, advertisers, publishers, and ultimately consumers. Continued industry collaboration will be key to the development of contextual targeting

PROGRAMMATIC

Considerations for niche publishers starting out selling inventory programmatically

For small and niche publishers, it can be daunting when it comes to selling your inventory programmatically. With so many different options and players in the market, it’s often hard to know where to start. IAB members provide their tips below for new starters selling inventory programmatically.

Heath Irving
Head of Programmatic and Partnerships
Unruly ANZ

PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS

For a small or niche publisher, your main strength is that you are not mass reach. Good traders are like, media connoisseurs, knowing where to target specific audiences or content that specialist media can facilitate. If you can tie that in with above benchmark health metrics like viewability, completion rates, CTR’s, and engagement then you’re onto a winner.

WHAT FORMATS DO YOU HAVE?

Monetising via bespoke ad formats can differentiate you from the big guys but if you are plugging in programmatically you will need to stick to standard ad formats that plug into the exchanges. The IAB standard formats across video and display are universal and allow you to maximise demand from all buyers in market.

CONNECTING THE PIPES

This is where you need to understand what setup do I need for the formats and the ad server that I have? If its display heavy, you might go with header bidding or video stick to a tag-based solution. This can get quite technical and quick so its good to have a dedicated resource who can advise on best implementation for the resource you have. Understanding the implementation and what the fees are, what intermediaries are involved, and what specialties do different technology partners thrive in is important when deciding on the setup and partners you choose.

RESOURCE

This can be an overwhelming process and it definitely helps to have a dedicated resource driving this project. Also, you will need to consider when plugging in certain demand partners how they fit into your existing infrastructure? Will the additional dev work outweigh the return on investment? There is also

the ongoing management of making sure your programmatic demand compliments your direct bookings and optimizing the yield you are getting from each demand partner.

MAXIMISING YIELD

So now you have connected the pipes you can start pulling certain levers to maximise the sell-through on your inventory. This usually involves playing with floor rates, the position of certain formats within the waterfall, opening up to different or format-specific demand partners, and reducing duplication in the header just to name a few.

Erica Blakslee
Sales and Account Management
Xandr

START WITH STANDARD DISPLAY AD FORMATS

Most types of inventory can be made available programmatically including display (web, mobile web, app), video (short and long form), native, audio and digital out-of-home. When you’re just getting started, standard display formats would be the simplest to launch with first since there are fewer nuances and complexities, the market for these formats is very mature, and there is significant demand.

SCALE FOR INCLUSION IN AD EXCHANGES

Audience and inventory scale minimums vary for every platform, but in theory even small volumes can be made available programmatically. When speaking with tech providers (SSPs), be sure to highlight the growth forecasts and sales plans you have in place to demonstrate your business outlook and future growth potential.

CONTROL OVER SUITABLE ADS APPEARING FOR MY AUDIENCE

Regardless of the size of the business, publishers have control over the types of advertising that appear on their sites. This

AD MONETISATION PRODUCTS

includes the ability to manage which categories or brands can appear, which buyers are able to bid on inventory, the language the ads are in, technical attributes of the ads (do they have sound, can they expand), etc. It's important to work with a trustworthy and transparency technology partner that enables you to easily manage such qualities within the SSP's UI.

OPTIMISING REVENUE POTENTIAL, SELL THROUGH RATES AND NET YIELDS ACROSS BOTH PROGRAMMATIC AND DIRECT

There are a number of ways publishers can optimise revenue on their digital activity. Publishers should ensure their ad server allows programmatic demand to compete with their direct sold campaigns (often called a Unified Auction) so they are able to fulfill direct guarantees while also maximising the amount of revenue generated from programmatic buyers. Decisions around direct rate cards and programmatic floor rates should be reviewed frequently based on sell-thru rates and feedback from buyers.

How do I ensure I am optimising my revenue potential, sell through rates and net yields across both programmatic and direct?

Ben Murray

Director Technology and Operations
Interplay Media

Data-driven analysis is key. The use of granular reporting to identify and analyse fill rates, CTR & eCPM will ensure you give yourself the best chance to hit the so-called 'sweet spot' in regards to price floors programmatically. Generally speaking, the more granular you can target your inventory in regards to price floors providing you have conducted the proper analysis, the better chance you have of increasing yield.

This also applies to direct, identifying your best performing units to ensure they are correctly/fairly priced will go a long

way to increasing direct spends. The more proven data you can provide to the advertiser will only increase the advertiser's confidence to spend and see results (and rebookings!).

Colm Dolan

CEO

Publift

Optimising ad layout and user experience is probably the most important. There are a wide variety of ad layouts available and maximising revenue per page view is crucial. Two different strategies are necessary for both programmatic and direct. It's important not to cannibalise direct by accepting all advertisers in programmatic. This can easily be reviewed by placing specific floor rates on advertisers. Also, it's imperative to appeal to high impact brand advertising through funky new age formats.

Sites with a lot of content focused on a particular topic with a high volume of traffic generally perform well with Google AdSense. Having unique and valuable content, making your site sticky, promoting your content and optimising the site user experience all drive success with AdSense.

[Explore these useful links to make the most from your AdSense Account](#)

AD NETWORKS

Choosing a specialist partner to help effectively monetise your content, enabling you to focus exclusively on your content and audience strategies can be a viable option. Less prevalent than in the past due to the growth of programmatic solutions, consider carefully your choice of partner. Some recommended considerations are:

- Get an understanding of how you will be represented and how your sites will be presented into buyers. Will program-

matic solutions simply be the main driver of revenues, if so then you can probably manage this yourself without giving away any margins.

- Request a forecast of revenues based upon your analytics, demographics and traffic numbers.
- Seek testimonials and even open dialogue from key current clients.
- Get an understanding of the level of support and consultation that you can expect. Build related SLA's into any agreements and ensure you have a competent point of contact to liaise with.

NATIVE

Over the past two years, native and in-feed formats have become the hero product for display here in Australia, now making up 36% of overall display spend and is the fastest growing product on a quarterly basis.

Native advertising can refer to a range of formats and models but to be classed as native it should complement the natural design, location and behavior of the environment in which it exists, through content which provides a non-disruptive and relevant consumer experience to the context within which the ad resides.

In terms of the specific product definitions, there are three main types:

IN-FEED / IN-CONTENT NATIVE

These ad types are positioned within content, product or social feeds. In-Feed ads will closely mimic or replicate the look and feel of the editorial content - and In-Content ads will sit in-between or below the publisher content

CONTENT RECOMMENDATION

This ad type usually sits below (and sometimes adjacent to) editorial content and whilst it's highly relevant to the context

AD MONETISATION PRODUCTS

and environment is clearly external content and upon clicking users are taken to a different site. The format can be articles, products or video.

BRANDED / NATIVE CONTENT

This is brand-funded content which exactly matches the format, look and feel of the publisher’s editorial and whilst relevant to the context, must clearly labelled for consumers as being sponsored content.

Good native content shouldn’t involve tricking the audience into thinking the advertising is editorial content. It should deliver enough value that the reader engages voluntarily, even though they’re aware it is coming from a brand.

Resources:
[IAB Australia Native Handbook update \(2020\)](#)
[Native Advertising webinar \(May 2020\): Best Practices And Local Examples](#)

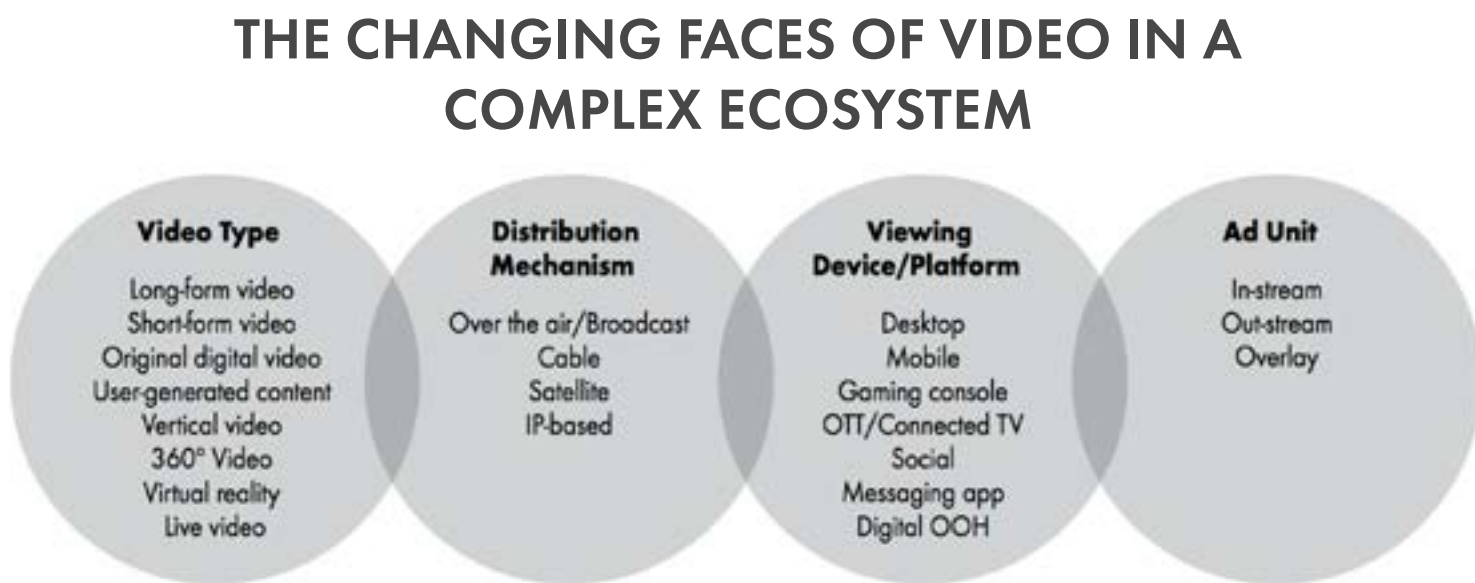
VIDEO

The video landscape has never been more complicated and exciting. We have seen an increased number of content creation sources, delivery and consumption channels, and platforms, and as a result, more video viewing time in total. Digital video advertising expenditure continues to grow strongly each year and is the fastest-growing digital advertising segment.

Across video platforms, new opportunities to reach and engage consumers come in many shapes and forms. The term video is perceived through varying yet overlapping frameworks and lenses. Brands and marketers utilize these options to better connect and engage with consumers.

DIGITAL VIDEO AD FORMATS

Digital video ads can be broken down into two different



Source: IAB Video Landscape Report

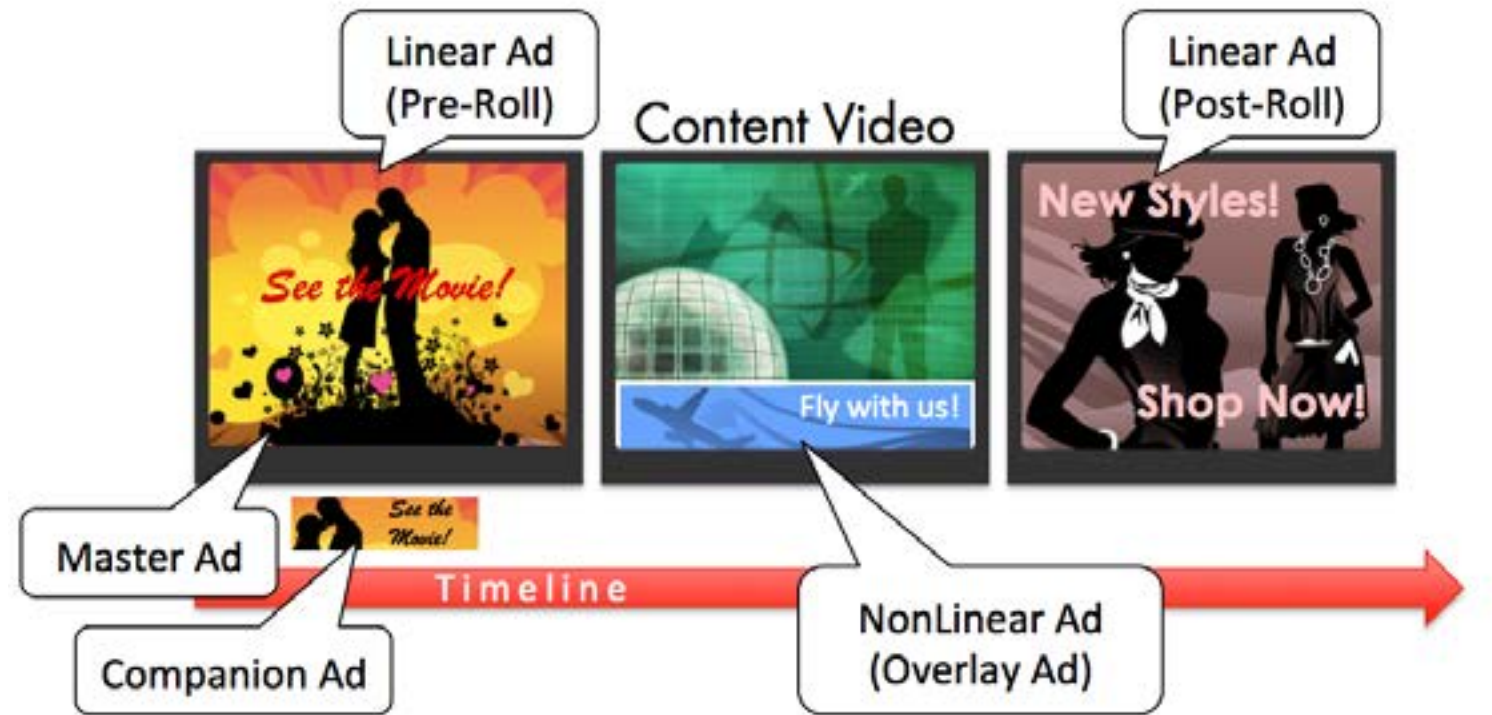
formats: linear and nonlinear. Either format may also include a “companion” ad that displays outside the player.

Linear video ads are sandwiched between segments of streaming video content much like a TV commercial. They can play before (pre-roll), during (mid-roll), or after (post-roll) the streaming content. Linear ad formats can be accompanied by a companion ad or they can include an interactive component such as branded components of the video player (i.e. logos within the control bar, progress bar, etc.)

Non-linear video ads are typically served as images that “overlay” the video content. The ad runs concurrently with the streaming content so the user sees the ad while also viewing the content without interruption. Ideally, the non-linear video ad is small enough to allow a relatively unobstructed view of the content. Non-linear video ads can be delivered as text, static images, interactive rich media, or as video overlays. Typically, a non-linear video ad developer can take advantage of the medium and use the small overlay as an invitation for consumers to further engage with a more robust set of interactions. As with linear ads, nonlinear ads can be served with companion ads.

Companion ads are served along with linear or nonlinear ads in the form of text, static image display ads, rich media, or skins that wrap around the video experience. These ads come in a number of sizes and shapes and typically run alongside

(or surrounding) the video player. The primary purpose of the companion ad is to offer sustained visibility of the sponsor throughout the streaming video experience. Digital video companion ads are always served with a master ad, which is either the linear or nonlinear ad.



Source: IAB Digital Video In-Stream Ad Format Guidelines

PROGRAMMATIC VIDEO

Automated buying is becoming the new normal in transacting digital video advertising as its efficiency, ease, and analytics have already garnered profits across all advertising verticals. Over the last 5 years, programmatic has gone from a fringe term used to describe the automated buying and selling of remnant inventory to a widely adopted marketplace enabler.

Digital Video Ad Units

There are two primary types of ad units: in-stream & out-stream.

In-stream video ads are played before (pre-roll), during (mid-roll), or after (post-roll) the streaming video content that the consumer has requested. In-stream video ads are displayed within the context of streaming video, frequently used to monetise the video content that the publisher is delivering, and can be played inside short-form or long-form video. Users typically cannot stop in-stream ads from being played, par-

ticularly with pre-roll. There are three different types of video content where in-stream may play: journalistic (i.e. news content); syndicated (i.e. distributed content); and user-generated content.

Out-stream video ads is video advertising that takes place outside of in-stream video content. The key difference between in-stream and out-stream video ads is that out-stream video ads leverage the existence of standard display ad units to deliver a video experience. For example, a site visitor may view an article on a news website and a muted, auto-play video ad may load in a standard display ad unit. Out-stream video ads are not the primary focus of the page and typically not rendered in a prominent video player. The visitor did not visit the page with the intent to view a video nor did they actively initiate the experience.

The out-stream definition includes:

- **In-banner video** is a video clip within a web banner that leverages the banner space to deliver a video experience as opposed to another static or rich media format. The format relies on the existence of display ad inventory on the page to be delivered.
- **In-article video ads** load dynamically between paragraphs of editorial content when a user scrolls through the page, playing video when the ad unit is in view.
- **Native videos** are promoted videos within one of the six IAB native core ads (i.e. in-feed unit, paid search unit, recommendation widget, promoted listing, in-ad with native elements, or custom). Native videos include a headline, description, and context for the ad.
- **In-feed videos** are native video ads found in content, social, or product feeds, often paired with a headline, description, and logo.
- **Interstitial videos** are ads that appear between two content pages. Also known as transition ads, inter-commercial ads, and splash pages. Other terms such as in-page, mobile pre-roll, and incentivized videos appear in the context of

mobile interstitials or ads that have 100% share of voice/screen.

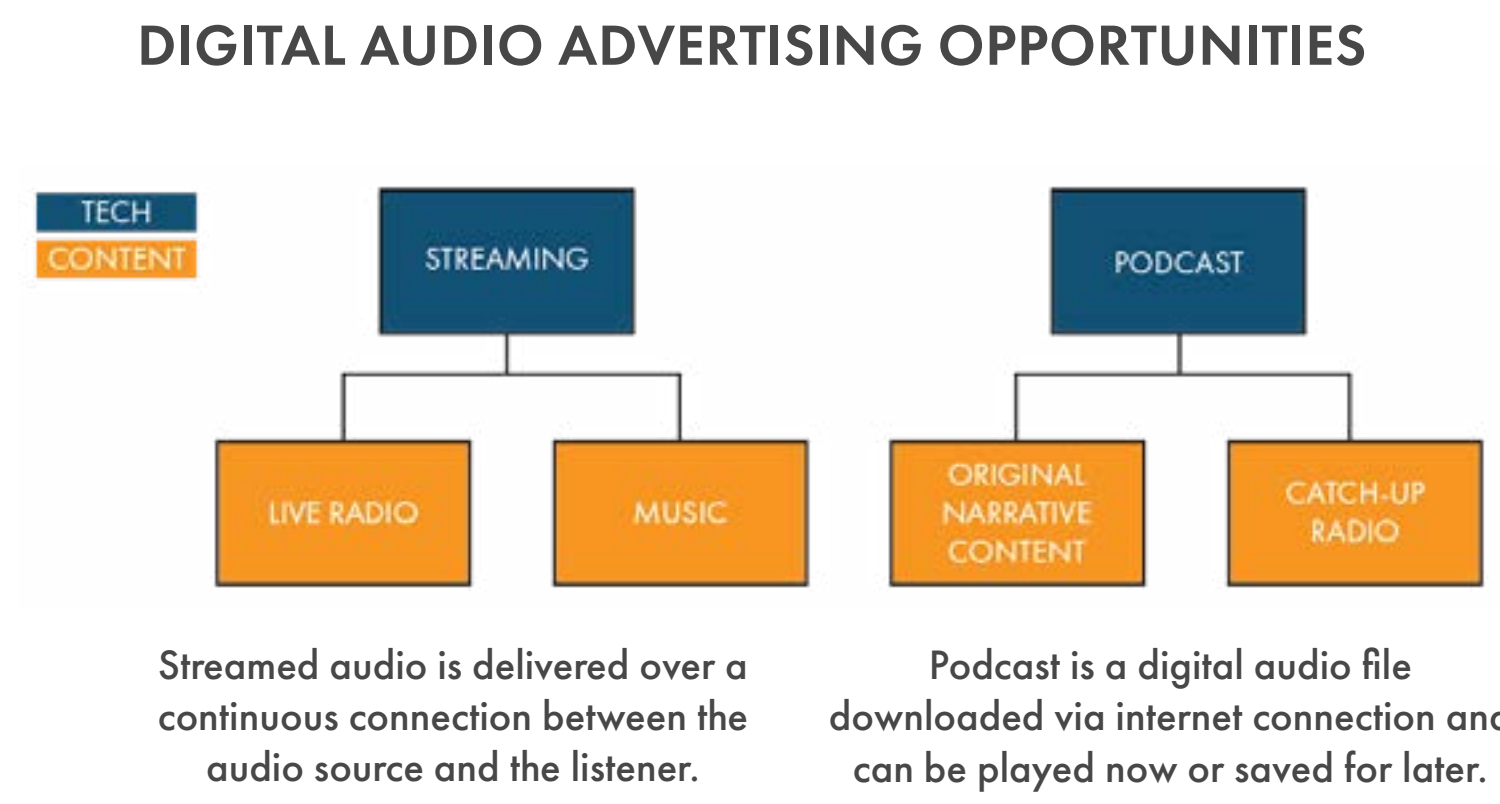
Resources:

- [IAB Australia Digital Video Landscape 2019](#)
- [IAB US Guide to Digital Video Advertising](#)
- [IAB Australia Member Q&A The evolution of Video Advertising through the current COVID-19 isolation period and beyond](#)

AUDIO

Consumer usage of Digital Audio is growing, driven by connected lives that rely more and more on mobile devices. This mainstreaming of digital audio follows a broader pattern of smartphone use and connected mobile lifestyles where audio plays a more and more central role. Not only is the range of content and platforms increasing for audiences, commercialisation of these audiences is also on the increase.

There are four types of digital audio content that can be delivered by publishers and provide opportunities for monetisation. All four have differing content environments, creative best practice guidelines and campaign measurement capabilities.



STREAMING

Streaming audio uses a playback technology that enables the passing of cookies & device IDs, particularly useful in programmatic buys to determine frequency capping.

- Music – music streaming services typically play audio ads between songs to non-paid subscription listeners.
- Live Radio – ads are typically delivered as pre roll before a stream and more recently inserted into the live streamed commercial break

PODCAST

Original Narrative Content – audio content written & produced to be heard via podcast. The content can vary in genre from mainstream entertainment to niche topics, education & documentary style. Typically, conversational or theatrical in tone, they usually maintain this tone through host-read advertisements instead of producing audio commercials.

Catch Up Radio – repurposed radio show content with music, news & advertising removed to serve as an On-Demand service for radio serving fans who are unable to listen live.

- The most widely used Ad Units for Digital Audio include:
- Recorded Spots
- Live reads/Host Read Ads
 - Branded channels/playlists
 - Branded podcasts
 - Rich media audio (such as Voice Activated Ads, Shake Me Adverts, Dynamic Creative)

What can help digital audio publishers commercialise their content:

- A deep understanding of how listeners engage with your audio format and content
- audio publishers need to be able to provide in-depth information and data about their audience characteristics and audio content consumption that can help plan a ad campaign

AD MONETISATION PRODUCTS

Suitable creative ad formats for ad campaign message and objectives

- there are a range of streaming and podcast ad formats available but its important advertisers can align with the most suitable to deliver their message

Audience ad targeting opportunities

- understand if the audience data is first, second, third-party or claimed and the implications for quality and privacy

Help measure campaign success with advertisers

- agree upfront what metrics will be used to determine the success of the campaign and how they will be measured

Advise on optimizing creative for the audio format

- audio publishers can provide advice and case studies on the best ways to adapt creative to optimize for audio, they are also experts in audio content creation

Resources:

[Digital Audio Buyers Guide Education and Training](#)

[Audio Advertising State of the Nation 2020](#)

[IAB Member Q&A: Programmatic Audio](#)

AFFILIATE MARKETING

More and more Australian brands are launching affiliate or partnership marketing programs as we continue to see strong return on investment, an ever-evolving landscape of opportunities, and a creative and diverse ecosystem that touches on many points in the customer’s journey. These programs are a marketing arrangement by which an online retailer pays commission to an external publisher for traffic or sales generated from its referrals.

Traditionally, affiliate marketing is defined as a performance-based channel in which an online advertiser pays a commission to an affiliate for any sales or actions that were generated from their referrals. Advertisers, also known as merchants, retailers or brands, are the online companies that have this product or service to sell. Affiliates, also known as publishers or partners, are people or companies that will promote a product or service to their audience. Essentially, affiliates/publishers are like an advertiser’s “online sales force” that use a variety of ways to encourage consumers to the advertisers website to make a sale.

At the heart of affiliate marketing, is the concept of paying on

performance (CPA, or Cost Per Action / Acquisition). Typically, an “Action” is an online sale or service. However, it can also include leads, downloads, registrations, calls, newsletter sign-ups and any other measurable action. The CPA can be a fixed amount or a percentage of the basket value. Advertisers pay the publisher when the advertising is successful in generating an action.

Resources:

[IAB Australia Affiliate Marketing Australian Industry Review 2020](#)

[IAB Australia Affiliate Marketing Handbook 2020](#)

MAKING THE MOST OF AD TECH INVESTMENTS & PARTNERSHIPS

Technology is essential to the proper functioning of digital advertising, but it is only a tool. These types of investments can't be expected to single-handedly ensure immediate returns or guaranteed effectiveness. To optimise your technology investments, your company must ask the right questions about the technology you are about to purchase.

As a first step in technology purchase, you need a clear picture of your business requirements:

- Have you ascertained what success looks like for your organisation in taking on this piece of technology?
- Has the resulting business plan been collaboratively amplified across your organisation to ensure the engagement of all associated stakeholders?
- Are you adequately resourced and structured to support the implementation, ongoing usage of and both internal and external communication related to this technology at a strategic/commercial, operational and technical level?
- Does the vendor offer best-in-class service and support during both implementation as well as on an ongoing basis? You're about to enter into a relationship with a vendor and you need to know they will support you through the good times and, more importantly, the bad...
- Have you done your diligence with testimonials and technical deep-diving with current customers?
- How much insight will you have into (or even influence over) the vendor's product roadmap moving forwards?
- What are the objectives, the associated costs and the resources you need with this technology purchase?

Asking these types of questions must be your starting point. This process of inquiry will save you money in the long-run – you won't need to rebuild your technology in three years if you make it agile and responsive now.

Overview of Core Ad Technology Value Layers

Service	Value	Cost Model
Data Management Platform (DMP)	Technology service that allows operators to aggregate and normalise disparate data sets for advanced campaign analytics / reporting.	CPM, Flat Fee
Publisher Ad Serving	Software to manage advertiser creative tags and delivery priority amongst many advertisers.	CPM
Sell-Side Platform (SSP)	Software used by publishers to aggregate, consolidate, and manage available demand sources and exchange inventory. Sometimes includes ad serving functionality.	% Media
Verification	3rd party technology intended to measure on target delivery, viewability, brand safety, or fraud. Often but not necessarily the same provider of pre-bid and post-bid tools.	CPM

Post-implementation, ensure that your measurable outcomes and plans remain flexible and adaptive in these ever-changing times

CHOOSING A TECH VENDOR AND RESOURCING IMPLEMENTATION AND ONGOING USAGE

Here is some advice from IAB Members for new and niche publishers for making the most of ad tech investments and partnerships.

Ben Murray
Director Technology and Operations
Interplay Media

Choosing your tech partner

When vetting tech partners is to carefully consider these key questions:

- Is there strong demand in-market for this product/service?
- Will the technology supply an adequate ROI?
- Can my sales teams' output benefit from the solution?

Also it's important the tech is right for your publication. Skins, high impact ads etc are great, but if you provide content of a sensitive nature then the likelihood is these are perhaps not the best solutions to invest in. For example if I'm working with obituaries, I don't necessarily want to see a whopping great skin on the site promoting vacations!

In my experience, the best tech vendors engage with publishers regularly, be it monthly or bi-weekly WIPs.

Technical integrations require a strong support infrastructure on behalf of the vendor. Ensure the partners you work with are able to offer this.

Another important point we have learned from experience is to check the partner/vendor has people on ground here in Australia. More often than not we have found that as soon as support in the market is relocated from the Australian market demand starts to dwindle, this has happened with 3-4 tech platforms we have used in the past. Make sure they have strong roots of operation in this or geo markets you're targeting too.

RESOURCING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND ONGOING USAGE OF THE TECH

First you require technical knowledge for set-up, then operational support for testing requirements, and finally sales/commercial support ongoing.

Technical: This requires not only operational support, but in most instances, developer support. Almost all technical inte-

grations at some point require dev testing. Make sure when appointing a technical vendor your dev team is up-to-speed on the technical requirements as more often than not you will be required to adjust code, and make adjustments on vendor requests.

Operational: your ops team will be required to test integrations, particularly when applying programmatic demand. This requires an operations team who are fully versed in the operational requirements for connecting the right SSPs with the right DSPs. Make sure your operations team is adequately geared to provide this.

Strategic/commercial: This requires input from your sales team/agency (if you have an agreement in place with an ad network or partner). It’s important with certain adtech solutions you are aware of what is coming up in-market so you can communicate this to stakeholders (and also to ensure you are getting the most out of the tech). If there are no sales on ground - demand can quickly dry up. It’s also important for sales to know what these solutions have to offer for marketers and how this technology can best serve their clients.

Adele Weiser
Regional Managing Director, APAC
Index Exchange

HOW TO ASCERTAIN WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE WHEN TAKING ON ANY NEW AD TECHNOLOGIES

The first step to success is understanding how to achieve desired business outcomes by working with the right partners and the right pipes and aligning those with the overall strategic vision for a particular publisher, whilst satisfying consumer needs.

Ad technologies work to streamline and automate manual processes whilst working to optimise performance and drive up yield for a publisher website. Though the right pipes are essential, the focus of the publisher and the provider should be on the end user - the customer who at the end of the day is wanting more and more control.

Ultimately Publishers across the ecosystem need to ask their partners tough questions; to ensure they know where every working dollar of media is going and to conduct audits with the ultimate goal of cutting off partners who do not stand up to their values.

ENSURING YOUR AD TECH PROVIDER ADOPTS ETHICAL PRACTICES, OPERATES TRANSPARENTLY AND SHOWCASES TRUE VALUE

There are a number of standards that have been made available by The IAB Tech Lab which ad tech providers can adopt. Standards such as ads.txt, sellers.json and supply chain objects help to bring transparency into the ecosystem and lift the veil on the industry’s inner workings. By adopting these transparency standards, publishers are able to gain insights on who is authorised to sell their inventory as well as uncover who participates in the bid or a sale of the impression.

Publishers can also ensure potential ad tech providers are operating ethically and transparently, by the potential partners’ willingness to disclose their fee structure to provide full fee transparency. A providers’ ability to share log data is also of paramount importance, these files provide a receipt for every transaction, empowering both buy and sell-side partners to gather granular data and insight about each impression served and bid placed through the exchange.

Overall, all players should be well equipped to understand the ecosystem they participate in, ensuring they have clean supply,

establishing a trusted relationship with both potential and current advertisers and help to achieve even greater results.

BUILDING STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH AD TECH PROVIDERS TO OPTIMISE AND INCREASE YIELD

Ad tech providers should act as consultants, working to continuously re-evaluate existing strategies and technical setups in order to increase efficiency and optimise yield for publishers. Ideally, this is done by consolidating exchange partners through Supply Path Optimisation, thus improving outcomes by minimising the number of exchange partners and building cleaner paths of supply.

Successful SPO begins and ends with optionality - understanding how to achieve desired business outcomes by working with the right partners, the right pipes for the current environment. SPOs should focus on choosing partners that are willing participants and early adopters of initiatives focused on trust such as the above mentioned IAB Tech Lab standards but also bring efficiency to negotiations, provide fee transparency and reduce technical costs.

It’s important to remember that more is not always more (particularly when it comes to tech partners), and consolidation often leads to accelerated innovation. It’s this type of thinking - this type of innovation - that is going to optimise the bottom line.

Resources:
[IAB Australia’s Advertising Technology Purchase Guidelines](#)

INVENTORY QUALITY AND BEST PRACTICES FOR VIEWABILITY, AD FRAUD & AD BLOCKING

AANA, MFA AND IAB AUSTRALIAN DIGITAL ADVERTISING PRACTICES 2020

The Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA), Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) and Media Federation of Australia (MFA) recently released the 2020 Australian Digital Advertising Practices, outlining an agreed set of digital working practices to support advertisers to make informed decisions and build confidence and trust in the digital advertising supply chain.

There are six key areas addressed in the Australian Digital Advertising Practices: digital value chain; viewability; ad fraud and brand safety; data governance; and consumer privacy. The practices offer practical everyday guidance, checklists and links to specialist sources. The three industry bodies actively encourage all advertisers to put them into practice and have conversations with their agencies, digital publishers and ad tech partners.

Resources:
[Australian Digital Advertising Practices 2020](#) - download the practices and watch the 40 minute webinar.

IAB members outline below the importance of these practices to the industry.

WHY ARE THESE PRACTICES IMPORTANT?

Jessica Miles
Country Manager
Integral Ad Science

Digital is difficult. Even more so than other channels which is why it's even more important that initiatives like Australian Digital Advertising Practices are available to the industry to

educate, communicate, and inspire.

Given that digital is difficult it becomes even more important for advertisers to have a thorough understanding of its key practices, which includes media quality metrics such as viewability, ad fraud, and brand safety. Additionally, it's important to grasp the impact that these practices have on media buying and trading practices. Poor media quality is a complete waste of advertiser money and can generate significant negative value. In some cases, investing in poor media quality does not only drive significant inefficiencies but can also negatively impact brand value and fund criminal activities, breeding bad behaviour. This need to invest in high-quality impressions, those that are viewable, fraud-free, and brand-safe is unique to digital and requires a high level of transparency from all media players to be successful.

Digital essentially introduces an axis of negative value (non-viewable, unsafe, fraudulent impressions) and therefore potential inefficiencies, which isn't a challenge in the more traditional channels. By understanding media quality and harnessing high-quality media, it creates a more efficient and effective market, with publishers providing quality impressions and advertisers integrating media quality strategies and goals into their media trading practices. The first step to achieving this is having an understanding of the baseline concepts in the context of the wider digital ecosystem. This is where the Australian Digital Advertising Practices plays an important role.

Digital is increasingly complex, and initiatives like the Australian Digital Advertising Practices can educate and move the market towards more efficient buying practices. It increases education and understanding into digital transparency, viewability, ad fraud, brand safety, and data transparency which would otherwise be difficult to understand, and additionally, it

presents it in the context of the wider digital environment.

HOW DO INDUSTRY STANDARDS CONTRIBUTE TO A TRANSPARENT, EFFICIENT DIGITAL SUPPLY CHAIN?

Erica Blakslee
[Senior Account Director](#)
Xandr

Programmatic advertising heralded meaningful improvements in efficiency, effectiveness and scale. However, it also introduced a somewhat complicated supply chain that at times, can lack transparency. As a result, marketers can struggle to answer basic questions about where their working media dollars are going and what portion of their spend ends up with publishers. In order to combat these challenges, standards must be proposed and implemented by industry and governing bodies as well as technology platforms to improve transparency across the supply chain.

While efforts to create a more transparent and efficient supply chain are always a priority, they are especially important during times of uncertainty. Brands need reassurance that their media spend is being maximised and reaching publishers and that their messages are reaching the right audiences via premium content. Publishers and media companies need reassurance that their demand can be met and that they can monetise their inventory. All the while, consumers need reassurance that their personal data is being protected and that they are enjoying an optimal viewing experience.

Upon complying with standards, buyers and sellers will offer a higher degree of transparency to all sides of the equation. Further, policies that provide media transparency, insight into the type of auction that occurred, and technology fee transparency, which enables buyers to see fees deducted by the SSP, can make a true impact for the entire ecosystem.

ANALYTICS AND AUDIENCE REPORTING

Having data about your audience/s is essential for understanding how your business is performing and vital to drive advertising sales. The more that is known about your audience and the more it can be made addressable based on advertiser target requirements the greater the chances are for higher ad inventory yield. Different types of information on your audiences may be gleaned from the following sources:

- Site analytics (see below for more details)
- Site surveys - information directly from your audience via site or email surveys
- Registered data - valuable data based on the profile and habited of signed in users
- Enhanced data via programmatic partners - one of the key advantages to programmatic media buying from an advertiser point of view is access to data not only about individual properties but across all sites within their campaign
- Endorsed industry ratings data - high quality independent audience data used by media buyers to compare different opportunities (see below for more details)

The Digital Measurement Landscape has 5 key areas:

DIGITAL ANALYTICS	CONTENT AUDIENCE RATINGS	ADVERTISING AUDIENCE RATINGS	AD DELIVERY VERIFICATION	AD IMPACT/ EFFECTIVENESS
Measures traffic or volume data for the purposes of understanding and optimizing audience usage, interaction or engagement.	Measures the audience size, volume and usage patterns of Australian audiences across digital channels for the purposes of providing a competitive digital ratings landscape.	Measures the overall and target audience reach of advertising campaigns. Provides campaign reach and frequency and on target % metrics.	Measures if attributes of a served online ad have been executed consistent with the terms specified by the advertiser. Provides viewability, fraud and brand safety metrics.	Measures advertising effectiveness and impact on advertisers KPI's and business outcomes.
Internal >Improve content performance	External >Benchmark >Independence for advertisers	Media effectiveness > Improve ad delivery		Brand or sales ad effectiveness >Impact brand >Increase sales
Measurement of content		Measurement of advertising		

DIGITAL ANALYTICS

Analytics is the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of site/app traffic or volume data for the purposes of understanding and optimizing audience usage, interaction or engagement. Analytics tools (such as Google Analytics, Adobe Analytics) are used to assess and improve the effectiveness of digital properties.

Lead metrics from analytics are:

- Unique browser
- Page impressions
- Sessions
- Session duration /page duration
- Page depth
- Bounce rate
- Click path
- Exit rate
- New visitor/ repeat visitor

CONTENT AUDIENCE RATINGS

Digital Content Ratings measure the volume and usage patterns of Australian audiences across digital content channels for the purposes of providing a competitive digital ratings landscape. Many large and mid sized publishers use the current provider of the industry endorsed digital ratings, Nielsen, for competitive intelligence, profile within media agencies and as 3rd party audience data for clients.

Lead audience metrics for content ratings are:

- Unique audience – people based audience figure (official ranking metric)
- Sessions – number of times a site or app has been visited
- Time – such as total time spent and time per person

Content Ratings focus on the delivery of people-based audience metrics utilising a media-quality, privacy compliant measurement panel. This is a key difference to browser based data provided by web analytics systems. The proliferation of devices and browsers in use by consumers causes great disparity between browsers and actual people.

Where possible advertisers and agencies will prefer to evaluate digital content opportunities using people-based audience metrics like unique audience and audience profiling data such as demographics and other characteristics. Advertisers and agencies also prefer to compare content opportunities using an independent source of truth.

For nearly 10 years the IAB has endorsed a sole and exclusive provider for the measurement of digital audience content consumption. This sole and exclusive provider status was first appointed by the IAB in 2011 at a time when the online space had been using a variety of measurement tools, making it extremely difficult for advertisers to compare and understand

the value of digital audiences across media properties.

The move to an industry supported standardised currency, provided by independent measurement provider Nielsen, gave a level playing field for comparison of audience qualities and characteristics and hence greater confidence to advertisers for planning decisions on where to invest their media budgets. It also helped publishers to demonstrate the unique attributes of their properties and help commercialisation of their content.

An industry currency is as important in today’s intensely competitive advertising market as it was back in 2011. Advertisers need accountability for their investments and ways to evaluate opportunities and measure success consistently across all media. The products and solutions have been constantly evolving. Today content ratings delivers a deduplicated cross-platform view of digital content audiences across desktop, laptop, smartphone, tablet (app & browser) and across all content types (text and video).

Resources:
A summary of monthly audience trends and larger publishers is released by Nielsen and IAB Australia each month within the resources section of the IAB website titled Digital Landscape report - the April 2020 report can be downloaded [here](#).

AD AUDIENCE RATINGS

Ad audience ratings tools provide measurement of campaign audiences, including delivered reach and frequency as well as demographics reached by the ad campaign such as age and gender to evaluate the performance of digital advertising campaigns.

Advertisers and agencies can opt-in to this measurement by subscribing to ad ratings vendor tools and tagging advertising campaigns with vendor provided code.

Lead metrics:

- Campaign reach & frequency
- Viewable on-target %

For example, Nielsen Digital Ad Ratings provides overnight reporting of a campaigns reach, frequency, GRPs, impressions and on target % across digital devices. Nielsen’s Qualified Ad Audience solution in Digital Ad Ratings allows for more advanced evaluation of audience interaction with ads including time spent in-view by demographic. It provides the ability to apply different audience qualifiers or thresholds to observe campaign performance based on the amount of time the ad played and the % of pixels in the viewable portion of the screen. The systems single source methodology that takes viewability into account on a person-level, by demographic also allows for more accurate results for viewable on target %.

AD DELIVERY VERIFICATION

Ad delivery verification tools measure if attributes of a served online ad have been executed consistent with the terms specified by the advertiser.

Lead metrics:

- Viewability
- Ad fraud
- Brand safety

These areas are outlined in detail in the previous section of this paper.

Resources:
[Australian Digital Advertising Practices 2020](#) - download the practices and watch the 40 minute webinar.

AD IMPACT/EFFECTIVENESS

There are various options available in the marketers measurement tool kit to help understand the impact of marketing and advertising on brands objectives in the short and long term. Some of these measurement options, such as brand lift studies are often provided by media owners to prove the effectiveness of their properties for advertisers.

BRAND EFFECTIVENESS >Impact brand	SALES EFFECTIVENESS >Increase sales
Ad recall tracking Brand-lift Brand equity measurement	Market Mix Modelling Path to conversion Multi-touch attribution Sales-lift Customer lifetime value
The measurement of how marketing communications create mental structures (associations, consumer perceptions of brand meaningfulness and uniqueness, etc.) that will pre-dispose potential customers to choose one brand over another (brand building) and how they impact brand recall that may influence choice of products for consumers already in the market (share of mind).	The measurement of how marketing communications affect or influence consumer behaviour in relation to purchasing. There are two types of sales effects of marketing communications: 1. Long-term effects on brand business growth: impact on sales, profit, market share, penetration, loyalty and price sensitivity 2. Short-term activation effects on shoppers: transactional or intermediate direct responses and conversions (like sign-ups, leads, immediate sales online and offline)
Metrics -	Long-term metrics -
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unaided & aided brand awareness<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ad awareness• Brand favourability• Message association• Purchase intent (brand consideration)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Image attributes• Brand equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sales penetration• Customer-lifetime value• Return on profit• Short-term metrics -• Uplift in sales conversions and leads attributable to communications activity (MTA)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incrementality / sales/penetration lift• Return on advertising spend (ROAS)

These IAB resources can explain in more detail these methodologies, what they measure and best practices.

Resources:
[IAB Australia Guide To Designing Digital Ad Impact Studies](#)
[IAB UK Measurement Guide and Toolkit](#)

DATA GOVERNANCE AND CONSUMER PRIVACY

Consumer trust is the lifeblood of digital media. This means that it is imperative to safeguard the personal and confidential data of customers, employees and business partners. Maintaining best practices of privacy and security controls to comply with the law reduces the chance of reputational damage from a data or cyber breach, strengthens the business by increasing consumer confidence and better manages post-breach incidents.

If you are collecting or processing data on consumers in other geographic markets it is essential that you are across the law in each country including the well-publicised roll out of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the roll out of the Californian Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in early 2020. There are many other countries currently reviewing their privacy regulation particularly in relation to the marketing industry, including Australia.

FIRST-PARTY DATA AND KEY LEGAL PRINCIPLES THAT NEED TO BE APPLIED WHEN COLLECTING DATA

Andrew Rudd
Director Analytics A/NZ, Data Quality & Targeting
Experian Marketing Services

With first party data, or data that you collect and own, you'll have several applications where this data can benefit your business.

The first application is that first party data enables you to create a segmentation of your users, breaking a mostly unfamiliar collective of users into defined buckets with similar demographics or behaviours. By segmenting users, you gain the ability to better understand your audience and therefore serve content which is more meaningful to them. Whether based on

demographics or behaviours, your segmentation will tell you what your audience is like outside of just your service. Additionally, with the insights you gain by holding first party data you'll be able to use this to entice other advertisers or vendors to your service. Imagine if you could describe the typical users, allowing other advertisers to tailor their message to these people on your service.

When collecting data about the users of your content, it's critical that you abide by the legislation set out in the Australian Privacy Act of 1988. There will be two categories of data that you as a publisher will be able to collect: "personally identifiable information" (PII), such as an email address or a name; and "non-personally identifiable information", such as a postcode or latitude & longitude.

When collecting personally identifiable information (PII), you must provide your users with the opportunity to give consent to having their data collected. Only once they've given their consent will you be allowed to store and reuse that data. This is called express (or explicit) consent. But it's not enough to just collect it once and store forever. For your business to continue using this data you'll also need to maintain good, clear records of when and how you collected this consent. This is important for two reasons, firstly to remain compliant during an audit and secondly to make sure that it's easier for you to manage opt-outs and retractions of consent.

You'll also find that when collecting people's data, you'll need to provide the justification for why you're collecting it and what applications their data will be used for. For example, whether personally identifiable contact details will be used for direct marketing or aggregations of postcodes will be used for analytical projects. The onus therefore is on your business to provide a clear justification to the users, or incentives that benefit these people in exchange for providing their data.

DATA GOVERNANCE: BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MANAGE CONSUMER CONSENT AND CONTROL: CHAMPION THE USER EXPERIENCE

Determine the controls to give to customers when it comes to consent. Under Australian Law, personal information collected by an entity may only be used or disclosed for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exception applies.

This means the way personal information is collected, and what the individual is told about the collection is important for data activities. Businesses should implement the Office of the Australian Privacy Commissioner's (OAIC) Privacy Management Framework which encourages the use of a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA), to inform big-data activities. This includes mapping the information life cycle, identifying what information is collected, whether it might be utilised for big data and for what purpose. Undertaking these steps will inform what personal information should be collected, how it should be collected and what notice should be given.

Proactively managing privacy protections: Be forward thinking
The Australian Privacy Act requires Australian companies to implement data practices, procedures and systems to ensure ongoing compliance with Australian privacy law. This means compliance is a dynamic and ongoing process. When collecting data on a consumer, the collector becomes a custodian of that data. The Office of the Australian Privacy Commissioner requires the consideration of privacy and data protections throughout the data life cycle including when:

- Existing owned data is used for new purposes.
- Collaborating with vendors (such as CRM, marketers, or cloud IT providers) that involve data sharing.

- Staying up to date with newly introduced legal requirements (like those introduced in early 2018).
- Developing internal policies or strategies with privacy implications.

PRACTICE DATA MINIMISATION

Under Australian Privacy Law, companies are required to actively consider whether they are permitted to retain personal information. When a business no longer needs personal information for any purpose for which it may be used or disclosed, the company should destroy or de-identify that information. A business must take reasonable steps to destroy or de-identify personal information. Best practice guidance on de-identification has been compiled by the OAIC and can be found on the IAB Australia website.

BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH DATA BREACH LAWS

New data breach laws introduced to Australia in February 2018 are very similar in substance to new data breach requirements in place in Europe under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). These data breach laws force any company in the digital advertising ecosystem (advertiser, agency or publisher) to notify all affected individuals and the Office of the Australian Privacy Commissioner if they experience a data breach which poses a risk of harm.

- Minimise the risk of a data breach through the following techniques:
- Educate employees: The oft-used example of a misplaced company laptop can lead to a data breach of hundreds of clients’ data. Teach staff the most secure ways of data sharing and storing and how to identify and deal with data breaches.
 - Evaluate technology: Check if existing software and hardware can adequately identify and deal with data breaches in real time.

- Minimise the amount of personal information held: This can be a tough one, especially when it comes to advertising databases, but where possible, try and decrease the personal data stored.
- Encrypt and anonymise personal data: Encrypt or anonymise personal information where possible.

MANAGE DATA PROTECTIONS IN YOUR ADVERTISING TECH STACK

Any vendor in the digital ecosystem that is processing customer data is liable for the protection of data used. Many marketing professionals rely on third-party vendors (such as CRMs, email service providers, cloud IT services) to interact with customers. The owner of the first-party data is responsible to speak with third-party partners processing customer data to ensure they are taking the proper steps to remain compliant with privacy law. This includes having the tools in place that will allow vendors to both retrieve and destroy data at the end of its life cycle.

ETHICALLY AND TRANSPARENTLY SOURCED DATA

A whole-of-cycle view of data with deep insight into how and why data is being used is essential for ensuring the right balance between compliance, privacy and innovation. The revelations around U.K. firm Cambridge Analytica in 2018 demonstrate that it is not good enough to think about data sharing in a linear way. Anticipate any risks that might be involved in the processes employed. Ethical decisions around the use of data will be expected of the company when handling customer data – but don’t expect these requirements to be spelled out in every case.

DATA PRIVACY

For businesses handling consumer data, demonstrating the ability to secure and protect said data, both your own and

that of your customers, is a business imperative that yields a competitive advantage. Every phase of the data life cycle (like collection, use, retention, storage, disposal or deletion) must be managed to guarantee compliance with the law, protect the brand and preserve customer confidence.

- Organisations understand the need to innovate and safeguard the personal and confidential data of customers, employees and business partners. Maintaining best practices of privacy and security controls to comply with the law will help better manage post-breach incidents. Effective data protection will:
- Reduce the chance of reputational damage from a data or cyber breach.
 - Strengthen the business by increasing consumer confidence.

The Privacy Act regulates how the digital advertising ecosystem handles personal information, including sensitive information. The Act includes the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) which set out standards, rights and obligations in relation to handling, holding, accessing and correcting personal information. Parts of the digital advertising ecosystem rely on data analytics which may include personal information.

Under Australian law, personal information is information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FROM THE IAB

Corinne Podger
Media Development Consultant
The Digital Skills Agency

USEFUL READINGS

[Going Digital: A Roadmap for Organisational Transformation](#), Professor Lucy Kueng, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 23 November 2017.

[Journalism, Media and Technology Trends and Predictions 2020](#), Nic Newman, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, January 2020.

[Reuters Digital News Report 2020](#) (link to [Australia section](#))

[Journalism after Covid-19](#): “It’s not an extinction-level event”, Freddy Mayhew, Press Gazette, 2 12 June 2020.

[231 ways publishers can make media pay](#), Damian Radcliffe, What’s New in Publishing, 4 August 2020.

[Coronavirus closed a Broken Hill Newspaper, but the community fought to save it](#), Gay Alcorn, Guardian Australia, 16 April 2020.

[Guide to audience revenue and engagement](#), Elizabeth Hansen and Emily Goligoski, Tow Center for Digital Journalism, 8 February 2018.

[T-Squared: We’re creating our first-ever local news revenue and training lab](#), Evan Smith, Texas Daily Tribune, 2 December 2019.

[The Publishers Guide to ecommerce](#), What’s New in Publishing, Sovrn and University of Oregon Journalism Professor, Damian Radcliffe.

[ABC Podcast Survey 2019](#), Australian Broadcasting Corporation

[Digital transformation through data: a guide for news and media companies to drive value with data](#), Deloitte in Collaboration with the Google News Initiative

[Search Engine Optimisation Starter Guide](#), Google

[Public Interest Journalism Initiative](#)

[Regional News Media State of Play](#), UTS Centre for Media Transition

[News Media Innovation 2020](#), UTS Centre for Media Transition

[Reinventing Digital Editions](#), Twipe Digital Publishing

[Entertainment and Media Outlook 2019 - 2023](#), PWC

WEBSITES (MOST OFFER NEWSLETTERS)

- 1. Adweek
- 2. Buffer Blog
- 3. Centre for Media Transition, University Technology Sydney
- 4. Chartbeat
- 5. CityDog Belarus - Advertising options
- 6. Digiday
- 7. Digiday’s WTF Guide to Advertising Formats (2015)
- 8. Digital Content Next
- 9. European Journalism Centre
- 10. European Journalism Observatory
- 11. Facebook Journalism Project
- 12. FIPP World
- 13. Inside Philanthropy - Journalism Funders
- 14. Global Investigative Journalism Network Grants & Fellowships
- 15. Google News Initiative and GNI Digital Growth program
- 16. IAB Australia and IAB International
- 17. INMA
- 18. International Journalists’ Network
- 19. Journalism.Co.Uk
- 20. Judith Nielsen Institute

- 21. Lenfest Institute
- 22. Media Voices Podcast
- 23. Membership Puzzle Project
- 24. Newsonomics
- 25. Niche Publishing Network Australia
- 26. NiemanLab Business Models Vertical
- 27. Online News Association
- 28. Poynter
- 29. Press Gazette
- 30. Publishers Global 3
- 31. Regional Media Connect
- 32. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism Research Portal
- 33. Splice Newsroom
- 34. Table Stakes Europe
- 35. TechCrunch
- 36. Tortoise Media Thinkin Bookings
- 37. Tow Center
- 38. Twipe
- 39. WAN-IFRA
- 40. Web Publisher Pro
- 41. What’s New in Publishing
- 42. WIRED

MORE ADVICE FROM IAB MEMBERS

PROGRAMMATIC ADVERTISING

Ben Murray
Interplay Media

For emerging publishers looking at offering their inventory via programmatic, what type of inventory would you suggest focussing on?

Focus on what returns the highest yield and work back from that. From market experience agency requirements tend to be around high viewability (in some cases 90% guarantee) rates and video completion rates. Therefore it's important to ensure you have solutions in place that can offer one or both options.

High Impact units such as scrollers (mobile) skins (desktop) can help with viewability concerns, Instream pre-roll advertising is preferred as it gives buyers higher completion rates on average than their Outstream counterparts. If however you don't have video content (which is expensive to produce) ensure your Outstream solutions have strong cut-through (like in content expandable players, or overlay w/6" close functionality). Both work well from a completion rate perspective. It's important though to strike a balance so the user experience isn't compromised - for some clearer perspective it's worth reviewing the coalition for better ads standards.

App users (particularly games) reward video is another option that can be implemented through GAM. Again serving high completion rates.

What audience or traffic scale do media owners need for inclusion in ad exchanges?

AdX requires publishers to have a Google 360 account. This in turn requires the business to be running over 90 million ads per month (give or take). If you fall below this number (which the

majority of tier 2 publishers and other niche publishing clients would) your options would be to partner with an ad network or tech partner who can supply support in this area.

Also when working with SSPs, whilst in my experience they don't tend to have an impression threshold on the scale of Google 360, you will more likely than not, when onboarding asked to submit traffic volumes. If you fall under these requirements, fear not, there are plenty of third party ad networks you can utilise for fill.

What sort of control does a small publisher have in assuring that only ads that are suitable for my audience appear?

There are a number of options open to small publishers in enabling controls for buyers. The main one that springs to mind is deploying a DMP solution that enables them to build key audience control segments such as age which is a requirement for alcohol or wagering brands.

DMPs traditionally are expensive, and, if you are not an ecommerce business may not be a viable option, however, there are alternate solutions available for smaller publishers that do not carry hefty platform fees. SSPs also have strong whitelist and blacklist options to ensure quality control.

Further to that the advertisers DSP has additional controls around ad verification (brand safety, ad viewability and fraud). Therefore you need to ensure your inventory has been whitelisted by your SSP during the initial set-up.

Jessica Miles
IAS

How do I ensure I am optimising my revenue potential, sell-through rates and net yields across both programmatic and direct?

Specific to media quality, an issue that niche publishers can face in programmatic is not taking into consideration how DSPs are aggregating viewability bid-stream data and consequently missing out on advertiser revenue. It is common for advertisers to apply DSP viewability segment targeting ("pre-bid") that directs the DSP to only bid on opportunities that satisfy their viewability criteria (e.g. target 70% or greater viewability). Some DSPs aggregate viewability data in the bid-stream based on ad size or page level. This means aggregating the viewability results for either all the ads of a particular size (all the MRECs for example) or aggregating based on all the ads on the page.

This can impact publishers as it reduces their ability to monetise great ad slots due to low-quality ad slots, inadvertently bringing down their viewability averages. It's important that when a publisher is assessing their viewability results, they look at the aggregate results as well as each individual ad slot. This ensures that they aren't excluded from the auction and can effectively and efficiently monetise their ad slots.

A&A Digital

What sort of control does a small publisher have in assuring that only ads that are suitable for my audience appear?

If you want more control - suggest to update your blocklist regularly, but don't cut off potential buyers because they may

not fit your ‘audience’ exactly. Careful monitoring of buyer/advertiser activity can allow you to ‘keep your options open’ and attract \$ for audiences already on your site. As an example, a mother of 3 visits your Parenting website, looking for advice for a teething child - it doesn’t mean they are not interested in buying a Harley Davidson.

Harley Ramien
Bonzai

What type of inventory would you suggest focussing on?

The quality of programmatic open exchange advertising can easily kill the user experience if not handled well and can work against your niche positioning.

Setting up private marketplaces for qualified advertisers is a good solution with many SSPs helping to build bridges to relevant advertisers and simplify campaign setup. This means there’s less resistance to adding a niche publisher to a plan.

Within programmatic, you can now run higher impact solutions across mobile and desktop which avoid the issue of poor ad quality and can help deliver more varied campaign outcomes than simply driving clicks. The value to you is also much higher.

Many niche publishers worry their margins will be impacted by programmatic. You can still facilitate programmatic campaigns via PG deals for fixed prices

AD TECH INVESTMENTS & PARTNERSHIPS

Erica Blakslee
Xandr

How can publishers ensure that vendors offer best-in-class service and support during both implementation as well as on an ongoing basis?

Expectations around service and ongoing support should be well established as part of discussions with tech providers before any commercial agreement is made. The requirements and process for integration should be outlined in the form of an integration plan with owners assigned to each step and expected timelines clearly stated. Following launch, the tech provider should provide you with details around how to get help or have your questions answered by members of their support team.

How can publishers assess that they are adequately resourced and structured to support the implementation, ongoing usage of and both internal and external communication related to this technology at a strategic/commercial, operational and technical level?

There are several areas of expertise that are important for successful management of digital media within a publisher. At a minimum this includes:

- An Ad Operations manager who has an understanding of programmatic and will be able to manage direct campaign delivery as well as setup deals and maintain control settings within your SSPs
- A Technical Operations manager who can manage integrations with SSPs and who intimately understands the functionality of your ad server.
- A sales function for both direct and programmatic offerings who can position the value of your audience and websites to agencies, media traders and marketers.

- Other expertise that is beneficial to your team includes:
- Data analyst who can help fine-tune your offering and help to maximize yield.
 - Marketing and PR who can refine your messaging and amplify its delivery across the wider industry

A&A Digital

How can publishers ascertain what success looks like for their organisation in taking on any new Ad Technologies?

They need to start at the very base, and forecast and model out key KPIs and sales channel strategy to begin with (it sounds basic but a LOT of people don’t do this!). They need to get the foundations right with a good adserving platform and work up. So many people don’t have this base, and think they need a DMP (!). Get the base right, and look at what you’ve got to play with, and then work out a staged strategy to capitalise on audiences and opportunities. They need to model out potential revenue uplift in relation to tech costs or partner revenue shares. In a lot of cases the costs of complementary ad tech are significant, and the publishers won’t receive enough revenue uplift to cover these costs.

Harley Ramien
Bonzai

What tips can you give to ensure technology investments are collaboratively amplified across the organisation to ensure the engagement of all associated stakeholders?

Having a realistic understanding of your organisation’s strengths and weaknesses and is key to coming up with an ideal a roll-out plan.

Ask your technology partner about the most successful implementations they’ve seen, conversely ask about the worst and

draw your learnings from both. Make sure all the internal stakeholders agree on why you’re undertaking the change and keep them updated on news.

Develop an internal product expert who is responsible for knowledge sharing each of your key tech investments.

Put times and deadlines and owners on all roll-out tasks.

How can one gain insight into, or even some influence over, the vendor’s product roadmap moving forwards?

Ask! It’s probably all you need to do to get involved. Pick up the phone and call. If there’s no phone number then that’s probably a sign.

Larger companies are naturally less inclined to be swayed by any individual’s feedback but If your vendor isn’t interested in your input then shop around because there are plenty that are open to being on the journey with you.

Come with numbers. Your partner will probably have to put in a business case or strategic plan for a product change so the more specific you can be around a particular opportunity or feature, the faster this will be to action.

Often we go straight a particular feature or widget as being ideal to solve for a particular problem. Sometimes it’s better to talk about the actual problem or ideal outcome as there could be a better or more scalable solution that your partner could work out.

AUDIENCE AND PERFORMANCE METRICS THAT RESONATE WITH AGENCIES AND ADVERTISERS

Jessica Miles
IAS

Advertisers are overlaying media quality metrics when assessing a publisher’s performance. What can niche publishers do to ensure that they are meeting advertiser requirements?

Advertisers want to invest in advertising that is seen on the screen, by a human (not a bot) for a significant amount of time in what they deem to be a safe and suitable environment. The longer an advertisement is in front of the consumer the more it can influence key marketing metrics such as brand awareness and brand recall. Time is a key metric for advertisers as it means that their ad is viewable (and fraud-free, as fraud is removed from any viewability calculation) as well as being a metric that can be used in value-based calculations like ROI. One way that time is being used to demonstrate value is with the eCPH (effective cost per hour) calculation.

For a niche publisher to be an attractive option for advertisers, the publisher needs to provide investment opportunities that are highly viewable, fraud-free, and maximise these opportunities by ensuring they are delivering high exposure times. The ability for a niche publisher to deliver high average exposure times can also be used as a key differentiator when competing with cheaper, proprietary platforms which tend to generate lower viewability results or lower average exposure times. Should the publisher’s content also resonate with a particular audience then this contextual alignment coupled with high average exposures times is a compelling offer for advertisers, especially with the deprecation of the cookie and the increasing Intelligent Tracking Protocol regulations.

What responsibility does the publisher have to deliver on brand safety and suitability for advertisers?

Brand safety and suitability are a little more challenging for publishers to deliver on and I would argue that it is not their responsibility. A publisher’s responsibility is to deliver great content for their audience, not to deliver content for their advertisers. It is the advertiser’s responsibility to decide what is safe and suitable for their brand. This can impact niche publishers significantly if blunt strategies are used like the URL exclusion lists or keyword exclusion lists and because of which there is ongoing education for advertisers around safety and suitability targeting. One particular trend is the move to contextual targeting.

We’ve seen off the back of COVID that a contextual targeting strategy that takes into consideration sentiment and emotion can ensure that publishers are still able to monetise content that is appropriate for their advertiser partners (e.g. positive content around COVID vs negative content) and there are also strategies and tools that publishers can adopt to reduce the impact of safety and suitability measures that are applied by advertisers. Some of these can include manual targeting strategies such as PMPs or the implementation of verification tools that can assist publishers in matching advertiser requirements, reducing the operational costs associated with manual optimisation.

Above all, communication is key, especially with direct bookings. If the publisher can ascertain the media quality criteria from the buyer, then it can go a long way to ensuring that the publisher only offers the right kind of content whether that is via manual or automated optimisation.

A&A Digital

How can a small publisher stand out from the crowd to attract advertising investment?

Some will utilise a 3rd part solution so they can take advantage of that access, but it usually comes with a hefty revenue share. Wherever possible, they need to try to utilise sales contacts and drive awareness that way.

In the absence of direct contacts, they need to think carefully about how to present themselves in any buyers market-place type environments - utilising as much detail about their audience and relevant keywords as they can, so that if buyers are searching for particular content or audience segments, that they show up where relevant.

Monika Calamos
Paykel Media

How can a small publisher stand out from the crowd to attract advertising investment?

In 2020, small and large publishers have more or less reached a state of parity in terms of their products and services. While larger publishers benefit from established relationships with agency groups, small publishers play an integral role in fulfilling tasks which can't always be done at speed, accuracy and scale.

Smaller publishers and suppliers have the inherent advantage of being able to forge closer relationships and offer exceptional customer service. Being more readily available to answer questions and make your rep's life as easy as possible will put you in a favourable position for when briefs begin flowing. This can come in the form of sharing updates, collateral, offering advice, being available and the first to solve problems. Even

developing a real friendship with your agency rep puts you at the front and centre when it matters the most.

Even if you don't have the right solution at the right price at the time, the hard work you put into strengthening your position and market and your relationships will pay off, and is your key to success.

Andrew Rudd
Experian Marketing Services

How can a small publisher stand out from the crowd to attract advertising investment?

User engagement and regular interaction amongst the community is highly valuable and although it's difficult to build up, the growth of that community will help you to stand out. Leverage non-intrusive advertisement practices and promote engagement between users. For example, by highlighting interesting users to the rest of the community, others are incentivised to comment such that they might have a chance to be in the spotlight.

Quality engagement can be measured through the depth of the conversations that your users have in response to your content. Comments that lead to discussion instead of arguments, re-sharing of the media amongst social circles, and user's language which aligns to the themes of your content will all be indicators that the message has landed successfully amongst your audience.

AD FORMATS

Simon Larcey
Viztrade

Do you have any advice for new & niche publishers in relation to ad formats?

Being a digital publisher you are open to a range of commercial opportunities. Display (banner) advertising is only one type of advertising. Be sure to create a newsletter and include one paid story in that newsletter each time you send it out. As you build your e-newsletter database you can offer solus emails for your key advertising clients. Podcasts are proving hugely popular and if you are in a specific niche or area, special interest podcasts are very popular. At the most basic level top and tail a podcast with a sponsors message. Native advertising or sponsored links can be added at the bottom of stories. These can potentially be charged on a weekly or monthly rate. Run sponsored competitions for clients and share the data collected with your sponsor. Being a digital publisher provides you endless opportunities to commercialise your traffic. Think outside the box and don't be limited to traditional formats.

Andrew Rudd
Experian Marketing Services

Do you have any advice for new & niche publishers in relation to ad formats?

Newsletters are an ideal medium to provide tailored content for a user. To really help make a newsletter stand out, try to understand the profile of your users first before building the content. When you know the demographics or behaviours of your users, you'll better understand what content is going to be most important to them.

MORE ADVICE FROM IAB MEMBERS

Short form videos are a great way to pitch a brand or product in a very short time frame as consumers’ attention spans tend to drop off quite fast. Thus, the message delivered needs to be punchy and the purpose of the ad should be conveyed within the first few seconds of the clip if possible, while the consumer is still highly engaged.

With games, users will be highly immersed and emotionally invested into their own success. Advertisement can serve as a great tool to build on that investment with rewards for viewing an ad. Successful games include benefits such as person-alised graphics, in-game currency, or other forms of rewards which are handed out after a user has viewed an ad in its full length. For example, a user might be awarded with an extra life or a powerup after watching a 30 second video ad.

USER EXPERIENCE

Colm Dolan
Publift

How do you balance the user experience with making the most revenues possible per page and/or per user?

This is always difficult. It’s really important to analyse what type of business you are. Do you have a loyal user base? If so, what is the most important to them? They need to be educated that producing content is not free. But essentially I feel creating a good ad experience can be a really good user experience. If I go to a website and get a good well targeted ad it creates a good experience. It’s also about tracking specific pages, what type of page has a high bounce rate? If it’s notoriously high, then a more aggressive ad approach may work. Ultimately it’s about understanding and educating users. If they would like a more ad free version than sub model may work, extra features in an app for instance.

A&A Digital

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We heavily advocate following guidelines from the Coalition for Better Ads for all publishers, regardless of the site size and working with fewer better ad slots that complement the content rather than overtake it. They should also utilise lazy loading for ad delivery, as this ensures that their viewability remains high, and if users are reading longer or scrolling content pages that ads will show up at appropriate times throughout their journey.

DATA PRIVACY

Stas Vainshtein
Innovid

What are the key legal principles a niche publisher needs to apply when collecting data from their audience?

A publisher must not collect and share PII data. It is highly recommended to align to the GDPR compliance for data privacy, end user data collection and sharing as it becomes the global norm with differences that are applicable per region (although full compliance isn’t necessary in the AU market, adopting the side of the user privacy policy will enable further trust and transparency in market, which will also assist with bringing in new business from global brands who are buying inventory in AU). In addition, it is highly recommended to check the ACCC guidelines and best practices they would like to see in the AU market.



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