



aop

**DIGITAL
PUBLISHING
AWARDS
2021**

In partnership with

 **PubMatic**

**ENTRY
GUIDELINES**

RECOGNISE

and motivate the individuals and teams who have contributed to your own organisation's successes over 2020.

BENCHMARK

your achievements in the UK's leading specialist digital publishing awards – these are the ones to win!

IMPRESS

our independent jury of advertisers, agency leaders, and your digital publishing peers.

DEMONSTRATE

the resilience and strengths of the digital publishing sector – all of our winners will be celebrated across the media and marketing community.

19th March
Earlybird entry deadline

6th May
Entry deadline

10th June
Shortlist announcement

16th September
Awards Ceremony



INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

CATEGORIES 2021

Journalist of the Year

This Award will celebrate the contributions of individual journalists to the quality output of online publishers. Our judges will be looking for a winner, working in either B2B or B2C publishing, who has demonstrated that they embrace the opportunities of digital journalism and are building a relationship with their audience. The Jury will be looking to reward engaging writing, investigative journalism and/or a real understanding of the interests and information needs of the audience.

Editor of the Year

Judges will be looking for an individual who has a strong editorial vision and has built a team to deliver compelling content that resonates with their target audience – whether working in B2B or B2C publishing. They should demonstrate a strong understanding of what drives the relationship with their end users; strategic thinking; good use of data and tools; and an audience development plan which encompasses all relevant platforms. Evidence of how they have contributed to commercial success is also desirable.

Local Hero Award

sponsored by Google News Initiative

This award recognises the value of local journalism and its contribution to society. The AOP invites entries from regional publishers for journalists who are proving that investigative and campaigning journalism is alive and well in the communities of the UK. Our jury will also be looking for journalists who recognise the added power that digital publishing provides for the amplification of local stories and the building of local communities around great journalistic content. This category is free to enter.

Sales Person of the Year

This category will celebrate the skills and dynamism of an individual selling digital advertising and commercial opportunities within a publishing operation. Our jury will be looking for evidence of the individual's development, demonstrating an innovative, creative and effective approach to increasing and diversifying digital revenues across digital platforms. Entrants are advised to include testimonials from clients demonstrating skills in relationship building. There is no requirement for the individual to be solely working on digital sales.

Rising Star

sponsored by Lewis Silkin

This award recognises that the profitable future of digital publishing depends on the development of young talent and aims to celebrate those individuals who are in their first three years of working within digital publishing and are already making a noticeable contribution to the growth of their business. Publishers are invited to nominate individuals from across all teams within their organisations – marketing, product, operations, data, research, sales, editorial, etc - who have demonstrated the hard work, creative thinking, commercial instincts and stand-out qualities which make them a Rising Star.



TEAM EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Editorial Team of the Year: B2B

Our jury will be looking for the editorial team which can demonstrate a real understanding of the industry sector the team is serving, creating a distinctive voice and providing industry leadership on key issues. Your entry should demonstrate a great understanding of the opportunity to create engagement and grow audiences both through your own brands and off platform. There is no requirement that the editorial team should be solely working online.

Editorial Team of the Year: Consumer

Our jury will be looking for the editorial team which can demonstrate the creativity and enterprise that drives digital consumer publishing. The winning team should have a strong understanding of their end users and have created their own distinctive voice, creating new conversations to deepen the audience relationship. Your entry should demonstrate the ability to create engagement and grow audiences both through your own brands and off platform. There is no requirement that the editorial team should be solely working online.

Sales Team of the Year

This award is open to entry by any sales or commercial team working to increase digital revenues within a publishing operation (although there is no requirement that the team is working solely on digital revenues). Judges will be looking for evidence of creative and innovative thinking to grow and diversify revenue opportunities across digital platforms; for evidence that the team has effectively grown the business and delivered an impact for the publisher. The winning team should also have a culture of nurturing and developing new talent. Testimonials from clients affirming the success of the team at developing profitable relationships should also be included.

Advertising Operations Team of the Year

This category seeks to recognise the contribution of the often-unsung heroes of online publishing – the advertising operations teams who ensure that all the creative innovations and incremental commercial opportunities are effectively implemented. Our jury will be looking for a winning team who have helped to drive the business forward without impacting on the quality of service provided. Entries should include testimonials from the team's internal customers – the editorial and sales teams – and from the publisher's clients.

Product Development Team of the Year

This category is designed to reflect the importance of the product development team's role in assisting digital publishers to grow revenues and build deeper audience engagement. Our Jury will be looking for brand innovations, extensions and rewrites that drive and diversify revenues - all underpinned by elegant technology solutions with a strong focus on great UX. The winning entry will be able to demonstrate that they have created a user experience that is nurturing deeper relationships between readers and content. Entries should include testimonials from the team's internal customers [the editorial and sales teams], from the publisher's clients, and the jury would welcome additional testimonials from readers.

Audience Development Team of the Year

sponsored by UKOM

The winners in this category should be able to demonstrate innovation and sophistication in understanding content strategy as part of audience development. Our judges will be looking for deep insight into on- and off-platform audience behaviour and intelligent use of social and search analytics, and the winning team should demonstrate an effective relationship with editorial and a real impact on business performance.



PUBLISHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Best Use of Video

sponsored by Unruly

This category will celebrate content features or editorial series which demonstrate an innovative and creative approach to the use of video to increase audience engagement. Judges will be looking for examples of compelling and inspiring storytelling, great engagement metrics, shareability and viral impact.

Best Use of Audio

This category recognises the phenomenal growth of podcasts and the innovative use of audio by consumer and B2B publishers to build audiences and create commercial opportunities. The jury will be looking for publishers who have grasped the podcast and audio opportunity, developing a great editorial product to engage readers and grow their brand. The winning entry should demonstrate how the audio strategy has delivered impressive engagement metrics and/or developed new audiences and/or grown audiences.

Best Diversification of Commercial Strategy

sponsored by Deloitte

This category reflects the growth of non-advertising revenues for digital publishers and the innovative approaches that publishers are taking to create new commercial opportunities. The jury will be looking for effective strategies for driving subscription growth, and/or membership models, and/or events, and/or ecommerce revenues.

Best Creative Solutions Led / Content Marketing Campaign

sponsored by Unruly

This category is for the best campaign which engages a publication's readers while delivering great results for an advertising brand. Our jury will be looking for the most creative and effective content-led campaign, delivering impact through the power of the publishing brand's engagement with its audience through its own site and/or through social media channels. Entries are invited from publishers but also from advertisers and agencies – our jury will be looking for evidence of collaboration and innovative partnerships.

Best Publisher-led Social Good Initiative or Campaign

New for 2021, this category celebrates the potential for strong digital publishing brands to take the lead on the challenges that the world is facing around the environment, sustainability, poverty, and diversity and inclusion. Our jury will be looking for initiatives that have engaged audiences and made a difference – whether in B2B, specialist consumer, or broader consumer markets. Entries that can also demonstrate how strong partnerships with not-for-profit organisations and/or commercial partners have added to the value of the initiative will do well in this category.

Best Use of Data

sponsored by LiveRamp

Effective use of data underpins all key business decisions within online publishing - from product development, audience growth, monetisation of audiences, development of new commercial trading methods and communication to key stakeholders. For this category, the jury will be looking for an effective use of data sources to deliver quality information; for evidence that the data has been presented effectively to impact on strategy and for a robust measurement process that has demonstrated effective results.

Best Research / Insight Project

The winner in this category will be a project that has demonstrated the application of innovative and/or effective research methodology to deliver real insight and business impact, whether – for example - in providing a deeper understanding of audiences, or of how digital media is consumed, or of how advertising on digital media can be made more effective.

Best Digital Publishing Innovation

sponsored by Xandr

This category celebrates the entrepreneurial endeavour on the part of online publishers. We invite entries for innovation projects, which could include the successful launch of a new digital property or properties, or the effective use of new publishing technology, or the successful leveraging of new partnerships. Our jury will be looking for publishers who are clearly aiming to foster a spirit of innovation, who can demonstrate a clear understanding of how new ideas will work with their target audience, and evidence of the commercial viability of new innovation.

Best Media Technology Partner

Digital publishers can only achieve real progress when they have effective partnerships with media tech solutions providers. This award invites entries from media technology providers who are working closely with their publisher clients to evolve improved or new solutions to the challenges that the sector faces – whether around content distribution, dynamic design, the effective use of data, or the development of new monetisation opportunities. The winning entry will be able to demonstrate an effective contribution to the business of their online publisher clients. Judges will be looking for evidence of a real impact on business efficiency and bottom line; testimonials from publisher clients should be included with your entry.

The AOP Employer Excellence Award

This award category reflects the growing importance for the digital publishing industry to attract and nurture the best talent, provide professional growth, support wellbeing, and foster a strong culture of diversity and inclusion. Our jury will be looking for examples of strategic initiatives that can inspire best practice in our industry, and for evidence of a commitment to developing a culture of employer excellence.



GRAND PRIX

Best Online Brand: B2B

Our jury will be looking for an online brand, or unique domain, that has demonstrated the innovative thinking so important to the future of digital publishing. Our jury will be looking for a digital publishing brand, or unique domain, that has maintained a consistently high standard of content and commercial success across all digital platforms – we will be looking for great design and usability, editorial excellence, innovations in approach to advertising and commercial partnerships, and a strong profit performance.

Best Online Brand: Consumer

Our jury will be looking for an online brand, or unique domain, that has demonstrated the innovative thinking so important to the future of digital publishing. Our jury will be looking for a digital publishing brand that has maintained a consistently high standard of content and commercial success across all digital platforms – we will be looking for great design and usability, editorial excellence, innovations in approach to advertising and commercial partnerships, and a strong profit performance.

Small Digital Publisher of the Year

sponsored by Google

This category celebrates the best of those smaller digital publishers [with a turnover of less than £5M] who are succeeding in building a portfolio of online brands, growing their audiences and their profitability, with smaller budgets, but with ingenuity, innovation, an unbeatable understanding of their audiences and great commercial vision.

Publishing companies who have demonstrated success across several categories in the AOP Awards will be invited to enter the final two categories, following the announcement of our finalists. There will be no entry fee, but a written submission will be required.

Best Digital B2B Publishing Company 2021

sponsored by PubMatic

This award is for the digital publishing business [with a turnover of more than £5M] which has demonstrated outstanding achievements across all of its brands and publishing activity in the B2B sector. Publishers entering this category should provide evidence of a strong strategic vision, innovation in approach to your digital publishing business across a portfolio of unique domains and audiences, and a clear achievement against objectives. The written submission will be reviewed by the full Jury in both judging rounds.

Best Digital Consumer Publishing Company 2021

sponsored by PubMatic

This award is for the digital publishing business [with a turnover of more than £5M] which has demonstrated outstanding achievements across all of its brands and publishing activity in the consumer sector. Publishers entering this category should provide evidence of a strong strategic vision, innovation in approach to your digital publishing business across a portfolio of unique domains and audiences, and a clear achievement against objectives. The written submission will be reviewed by the full Jury in both judging rounds.

HOW TO ENTER

All the entries to the AOP Digital Publishing Awards 2021 should be based on work implemented and results delivered between 1st January 2020 and 31st January 2021



1. DOWNLOAD ENTRY TEMPLATES

Use the entry template form for each category to draft your entry copy - the templates provide useful guidelines and make it easier to secure colleague or client approval before submitting your entry. Each entry template also provides reminders of the criteria that our judges will be looking for as helpful tips when you are writing your entry.



2. WRITE YOUR ENTRY

We are inviting written entries, supported by your chosen images or videos. With the exception of The Local Hero Award for Regional Digital Journalism, Media Tech Partner, The Rising Star, and Employer Excellence categories, your written entry should be in four parts:

- The elevator pitch: sum up why you are making this entry and why you think you should win;
- Set the scene: explain the issues you were facing or the challenges you had been set;
- Tell us your story: tell us what the entered individual or team did that makes them stand out, or explain how a project was implemented;
- Results: outline what was achieved with as much data as you can provide to back up your argument.
- For The Media Tech Partner and Employer Excellence category, you will be asked to provide the elevator pitch, tell us your story and provide some results. For The Local Hero Award and The Rising Star category, you will be asked to provide a 30-word elevator pitch and a 500-word nomination, with no additional sections.



3. CHECK YOUR WORD COUNT AND SUPPORTING FILE FORMATS

Please ensure that your entry adheres to the maximum word counts advised on the Entry Template forms. When you upload your entry to the online entry platform, you will not be able to submit more than the maximum word count. If you are entering for the individual or team categories, you will be asked to provide a photo. For all categories, you will be asked to provide a company logo, and invited to submit no more than three supporting documents, which might include, for example:

- written or video testimonials;
- screenshots of features or social activity;
- video files or links to videos;
- photos of nominated individuals or teams.
- Supporting materials can be in the following formats: csv, doc, docx, pdf, ppt, pptx, xls, xlsx, gif, jpeg, jpg, png, ai, eps, mov, mp4, mpeg.



4. SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY

When you have your written entry and supporting materials ready, please click on the awards entry site link [ENTER NOW](#) where you will be asked to register your details, copy and paste your written entry and upload your supporting materials. Please note that you are encouraged to list names of any other companies involved in any projects, campaigns, or initiatives that may have contributed to your entry. Be sure to spell all individual and company names correctly and in the correct form, as we will use your spelling on all published materials.



5. PAY FOR YOUR ENTRY

AOP Digital Publishing Awards application rates are as follows:

MEMBERS:

£125 Earlybird Rate (expires 19th March)
£150 Standard Rate

NON MEMBER PUBLISHERS:

£170 Earlybird Rate (expires 19th March)
£210 Standard Rate

NON MEMBER TECH COMPANIES:

£200 Earlybird Rate (expires 19th March)
£250 Standard Rate

Please note that no fees are charged for the The Local Hero Award, or for those invited entries for the Best Digital B2B Publishing Company 2021 and Best Digital Consumer Publishing Company 2021 categories.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. ALL ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED AND PAID FOR BY THE ENTRY DEADLINE: THURSDAY 6TH MAY 2021.

2. PLEASE NOTE:

By entering the Awards, you give your permission to the Association for Online Publishing to publish your entry in the event that you are shortlisted, inclusive of your entry in written copy. We understand that in some circumstances you may be happy to share sensitive commercial data with the Jury to ensure that your entry is more persuasive, but may not wish for this information to be publicised. Therefore, we will provide the opportunity to submit an edited version of your shortlisted or winning entry for publication. This must be provided by 31st July 2021.

3. WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT THE AOP AWARDS CEREMONY ON 16TH SEPTEMBER 2021.



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