

3 Drivers of Creativity in a Cookieless World



Regardless of Google’s decision to extend the deadline, the death of third-party cookies has further vitalized the focus on great creatives. Tech providers should now accelerate the trend with solutions that facilitate creativity at scale as much as standardization.

In a recent webinar, OMG recommended that agencies need to “talk more to the right half of the brain” rather than focusing too much on measurement and analytics (which to a larger extent speaks to the left half). While it’s ironic that this recommendation comes now that third-party data is disappearing and ad buyers are struggling to get their hands on data, the advice isn’t bad. Ad Age explains:

“An axiom of advertising is that it must evoke an emotion, but with ad tech came an overreliance on targeting and data that never quite lived up to the hype. Ten years ago, a Google study proved that 80% of an advertisement’s impact came from content, and 20% from targeting—a finding largely ignored by digital advertisers.”

While there has been some technological innovation in creativity, programmatic advertising has largely sacrificed creativity to the benefit of standardization; such an ecosystem can only grow as quickly as it has if the players involved agree on a common language (OpenRTB) and a set of standards. Thus, programmatic advertising comes in little rectangular boxes.

What if we could break out of those boxes and clear a path for more creativity?

Here are three tips to help that become reality.

Prebid and Curated Marketplaces

OpenRTB became a common language for anyone who wanted to join the creation of the massive programmatic ecosystem. But common languages develop slowly, and changes in direction can't be made if you want everyone to stay onboard with the standards. While highly effective, it's not exactly inspirational for the graphic designer. And besides, if everyone relies on one common standard that enables everyone to do exactly the same thing at the same time, how differentiated are you really? To borrow a quote from the animated movie *The Incredibles*: "With everyone super, no one will be".

Prebid has matured as a connector between publishing inventory and programmatic tech providers and combined with increased focus on high costs and lack of transparency, private (also called "curated") marketplaces are now getting increased attention. Put simply, curated marketplaces are designed to allow ad buyers to connect directly with publishers instead of going through multiple intermediaries, thus creating a shorter, less costly, and more transparent value chain. The most popular way of connecting publishing inventory to curated marketplaces? Prebid!

Here is another benefit of prebid: it doesn't stop you from serving any type of creative you want to. If your buy-side tech offers the opportunity to design different formats based on, for example, html render templates, that can be sent through with the ad to create any look and feel. As such, curated marketplaces can be designed to better support creativity without having to rely on restrictive standards.

Closer Buyer-Seller Cooperation

This is of course easier said than done; publishers are naturally weary of allowing anything and everything, as they need to provide consumers with decent user experiences. This is also why many publishers put ads inside an iframe to limit what can be done on their pages. However, the emergence of curated marketplaces not only facilitates closer collaboration between publishers and buyers to agree on product development; it demands it.

Every week I am contacted by technology companies who think we offer either a DSP or SSP to our customers, asking to connect in order to either buy or sell ad inventory. It's one connection they say (using OpenRTB of course), and we can then sell or buy billions of impressions. And there's never talk about who is on the end of either the buying or selling value chain. With that many intermediaries it is no wonder that buyers and sellers have lost touch with each other, leaving them to trust the tech in the middle not to break with acceptable standards.

Curated marketplaces can change that. Buyers and sellers can cut out the middlemen, connect directly and agree on how inventory can be utilized for more creative presentation of advertising. Automation is still preserved through a one-time setup, and the reward for investing in this setup is for buyers to provide creativity at scale while letting publishers protect their properties.

New Measurement

Lastly, let's not throw measurement completely out of the window: There's still value in measuring, and a curated marketplace worth its salt should make it easy to introduce new ways of measuring success. Here is one example that could also be used as a measurement of creative success.

Let's assume that an expected behavior when consumers are faced with creativity is to stop and have a look. Capturing attention as well as evoking emotion are important goals, and one way of measuring without having to ask consumers is to register how long they dwell with the creative material. It's also a way to get more information beyond a viewability yes/no answer.

Creativity could be the big winner from the death of the third-party cookie and publishers, advertisers and consumers are set to benefit.