COLUMNS

7 critical things publishers should know about ad mediation

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There has been discussion recently around the role of ad mediation in achieving the best possible yield for publishers' inventory.

While ad mediation can be instrumental in earning higher eCPM (cost per thousand impressions) and lifetime value (LTV), there are seven important things publishers need to consider when choosing a mediation partner.

1. Neutrality is key
Ad network neutrality in mobile advertising makes it significantly more efficient to mediate hundreds of ad networks into a single ad placement, ensuring that the publisher is getting the best deal from each ad serving event.

In the digital advertising ecosystem, each network has its own line of specific verticals, budgets, geo, ad formats and campaign goals. But for publishers, trying to compare all of these elements and make decisions in real time would be a major stretch.

The good news is that a suitable mediation solution can dynamically address every ad opportunity and optimize, in real time, the best ad network available for that opportunity.

Sometimes, publishers will find that the best yield for their inventory comes from networks that they may not have expected. Only neutral ad-network mediation platforms can offer this type of advantage.

2. Native ads rock

Oftentimes, native ads provide a better yield and higher returns on each ad placement. They can also increase the advertisers' campaign performance metrics tenfold.

However, all inventory should be carefully mapped and spec'd so that the relevant native ad units are served at the right moment, allowing native ads units to perform well and avoiding ad-response fatigue.

Native ads can take many forms in a given inventory: promoted articles and content, story cards, native buttons, app-wall promotions and native video. Each type has the potential to be relevant and effective, but only if placed in the right context, with the right design to the right audience.

3. SDK or SDK-less it does not really matter
SDK-based mediation has its merits, including a high-quality user experience and the ability to effectively serve advanced ad units and cache heavier weight ads.

However, in some cases, publishers are better off keeping the direct link to their apps or Web sites, while connecting to the monetization platform from their servers instead. This particular strategy works better for publishers who want to maintain more control over their data.

4. Transparency is vital
When publishers are deciding on a mediation solution, they should choose one that gives them a fully transparent dashboard so they have a real-time view of their inventory performance and campaign metrics.

5. Full flexibility is a must
In some instances, the publisher may want to apply manual override rules for specific campaigns (direct or mediated), strike a direct deal with the advertiser, or simply divert their traffic to a specific network.

A suitable mediation solution should grant the publisher that full flexibility to ensure that whatever decisions the publisher makes it is fully supported.

6. User data boosts campaign performance
Adding user data to the ad serving flow substantially increases a demand side partner's ability to address all ad opportunities coming out of a publisher's inventory.

User data includes any type of device, OS, geo or other user-related information and it is fine to use it as long as it respects the end user's privacy.

A reliable mediation partner empowers its publishers to increase their yield based on advanced user-focused targeting, based on big-data capabilities (DMP) for profiling, audience segmentation and activation.

7. Programmatic on mobile: next big thing
Programmatic buying is rapidly gaining traction in mobile advertising.

A mediation partner should be able to support an OpenRTB programmatic exchange to help publishers open their inventory to specific budgets through private exchanges and trading desks with deal IDs and many other flexible functionalities that programmatic offers.

ULTIMATELY, PUBLISHERS should aim for monetization technology that ensures a fully transparent, ad-network neutral solution, with the ability to integrate it into their inventory via SDK or API.

Plus, they should have the ability to manually override auto-optimization operations with their own preferred partners.

The right mediation solution gives publishers a much higher chance of meeting, or even surpassing, their ad-based revenue goals.

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