

COLUMNS

## Make it official: 2017 will be the year of native advertising

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By [Jane Loring](#)

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Last year saw brands and publishers alter the way they distribute content through a significant increase in native advertising adoption. As a result, 2017 looks set to see important changes within native advertising as the focus will shift to a mobile-first perspective.

The 2016 year also witnessed a groundswell in ad-blocking behavior from consumers, driven by poorly executed and overtly intrusive display adverts that acted as the catalyst for an increase in mobile-led browsing. And with the increase in mobile ads came consumers' drive to download mobile ad blockers in to save their data allowance for the content that they actually wished to see.

These factors suggest that 2017 will be a promising year for the industry as more brands and publishers shift from display to native advertising, creating content that consumers want to see and which adds to, rather than takes away from, their experience.

### Open and shut

Publishers will drive change, alongside technology providers, as they marry adoption of premium bespoke content with scalable options. This will be aided by the growing industry demand of brands to reach their target audience, and not just an audience in general.

Great native ads and content, for that matter, are null and void if they do not reach the group for which they are intended.

This has come to fruition in a few ways already.

First, the adoption of Native OpenRTB, which will mean that demand-side platforms (DSPs) support OpenRTB 2.3, providing agencies with the tools to make the buying of native far more seamless. This will be supported by increased adoption of dynamic formats for native which, with a programmatic approach, will allow for data-driven content optimization in near real time.

Additionally, digital disruptors that are offering their own custom native ad solutions with tailored distribution will continue to become more popular, especially those that understand the need to be optimized for third-party social platforms from Facebook to Instagram.

Innovations of previous years, such as the introduction of in-feed formats which have now been widely adopted, will be followed by the creation of additional native formats for new mobile-led media formats.

Bots up

I also predict that this upcoming year will see continued adoption of AR and chatbots by brands as they reach users where they are already: their phones.

Publishers will need to work with native content providers to develop native ads that grip consumers' attention and make use of the unique attributes of these new media channels.

This year will also see native come of age when it comes to metrics and campaign key performance indicators (KPIs).

There will be more emphasis on metrics that measure engagement versus clicks and views, therefore redefining what content is and is not truly successful. These could include eye-tracking studies that focus on gaze and time spent with the content, or the use of content formats such as polls and quizzes that provide data on the back end to showcase how users interacted with these content items.

Improved measurement practices will allow publishers and brands to optimize their ads for best results.

THIS WILL undoubtedly be a breakthrough year for the mainstream adoption of native advertising led by technological improvements, scale, data and new industry standards when it comes to content consumption.

With improved metrics that can prove the effectiveness of native campaigns, brands that were previously wary will come on board.

There is a real opportunity for native to prove its mettle when it comes to new mobile-led media channels and I look forward to seeing some great executions when looking back on 2017 next year.

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1. [walker@lxedition.com](mailto:walker@lxedition.com) says:

January 5, 2017 at 4:00 pm

I couldn't agree more with this article – Having worked as a Brand Manager – we shifted our focus from paid display advertising to native content and saw an increase in readership and hours spent with our brand at a much lower cost.