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Curious Thoughts from Curious Minds: This Could Change Everything - David Cohen - MediaBizBloggers



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UM: Curious Thoughts for Curious Minds

Duration Media v. Rich Media Club
IPR 2023-00953 (Patent 11,443,329)

Rich Media Club Exhibit 2024

Have you ever had a meeting with a potential business partner that rocked your world?

Something that called into question everything that you believed to be true?

I recently had one of those meetings and wanted to share it.

I have spent a good bit of time over the last few years working in an industry capacity, trying to make the "business of doing business" in the digital space more efficient. As Chair of the AAAA Interactive Marketing Committee and co-chair of "[Project Reinvention](#)" we have been working to identify the greatest areas of friction in the business and tackling the greatest areas of contention (revising the industry Terms & Conditions as an example).

After 15 years in the digital media business I can safely say that our industry is overly complicated. In order for us to truly scale our business it is critical that *we make it easier* to plan, buy and steward digital campaigns.

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We certainly don't need any more [Wall Street Journal](#) articles on "Invisible Ads" or trade publications



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exposing the dangers of ad networks, click fraud, below the fold placements, etc. So, you can understand my dilemma after I met with [RealVu](#) last week. Part of me wanted to forget that the meeting ever happened. The other part of me thought that this little known Salt Lake City startup could change everything.

It would appear that (among other things) RealVu has developed a technology that allows them to identify when an online ad is "[within the viewable area](#)" of a user's screen, and for what duration. So, for ads that are run on a particular Web site that require a user to scroll "below the fold," their ad never gets requested until the user has scrolled to that part of the page. Makes sense, right? Pretty innocuous you say?

On average, across all placements that they have tracked – fully 50% of online ads are never viewed because they are outside of the user's viewable area. *Say what?*



Now, keep in mind this is a combination of all properties. Some long tail sites are poorly constructed and they may indeed have questionable motives, but this does include Top 100 properties as well. The number of ads that we are paying for that go unseen floored me.

In addition to making sure that an advertiser is only charged for an ad that is viewed by a user, hey are able to see how long the ad is viewed before it leaves the viewable area (another tab is opened in the browser, user scrolls down the page, etc.).

It is not inconceivable that this kind of data will drive the industry towards an entirely new buying mechanic. Only paying for the amount of time that an ad is viewed, and obviously not paying for ads that are not viewed at all. This may very well translate into a decrease in efficiency (or an increase in CPM), but it will be a far more accurate representation of true ad delivery. We *are* supposed to be the most measurable and accountable medium, right?



RealVu has reportedly signed a deal with MSNBC.com to start working with them to provide their service to advertisers. They also have been working with some of the leading industry bodies like the IAB and the Media Rating Council (MRC) to revisit some of the very foundations of our industry, like [what qualifies as an ad impression](#).

I have no doubt that this will not be the last time we hear about this company nor the last time we discuss the potential to revise the currency of Internet display advertising. Might this be the catalyst the industry needs to galvanize around a new standard metric? Engagement, iGRPs, Brand minutes, involvement score – take your pick. The possibilities are as varied as they are exciting.

At the end of the day, if this new potential standard makes the business of doing business easier and more transparent, I believe it will be a giant step forward for the industry. It will set a new bar for accountability – one that will influence all communications channels, including the 800 lb. gorilla in your living room.

Remember folks, you heard it here first.



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This could change everything.

David is EVP, US Director of Digital Communications, David's central goal is to spearhead UM's digital and alternative media offering across the US and to accelerate, integrate and intensify a digital best practice throughout the UM universe. David can be reached at david_cohen@universalmccann.com.

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