MEDIA IMPACT REPORT

Defining Video in 2023

Also in this issue:

Winning the Fight Against Made for Advertising Sites

Video in 2023: Impact of Strikes, Consumption Trends and More

By *Robin Cohen,* **EVP, Integrated Media Investment and Planning**

I'm writing this as I stare at the focal point of my living room – our family television. Many hours have been spent in front of this device by our family of four, watching everything from World Cup Women's Soccer (live on Fox), to *Big Brother* (on-demand on Paramount+), to *Only Murders in the Building* (binged on Hulu) and everything in between. We are a YouTubeTV, Roku and proud subscription stacking household. When someone asks me how and what I watch on TV—the answer is complicated. Isn't it for us all?

So while "it's complicated" is how most of us would describe our experience with TV today, when I pivot to wearing my marketing hat, I think about: What is the definition, then, of TV? Is it any surprise that when I ask Merriam-Webster, I get a 3-part answer?

The Future of Video

As we embark on our third annual client road show, where we share with our clients our outlook for the media landscape, I've spent a lot of time thinking about the future of video. As I watched NFL pre-season football via a streaming platform,

I saw a mix of ads that I knew were being served to me through both linear and streaming media buy types. The acceleration of cord cutting has made digital video a critical component of all video strategies across all demographics, but even as a cord cutter, I'm exposed to both linear and streaming-originated media buy types.

The recent strikes have also impacted the development of new content and it has become even more critical to be able to reach audiences as they seek out programming that is most interesting to them. For many, that could end up being binge watching that great series that you never got around to watching that lives on a streaming platform. It's our job to follow the audience wherever they are consuming content, and in a converged world of video viewing, that means being able to shift budgets and tactics across all forms of video.

As the SAG-AFTRA strike continues, we'll be making continued efforts to monitor impacts to the video ecosystem. When looking at linear TV, we have actually seen a plateau in overall cable and broadcast viewership in the past four weeks, with sports being a key factor. Our teams are continuing to monitor consumption and performance within a converged lens, and make regular optimizations to maximize trends across platforms and audiences. We'll continue to report our learnings and findings through the Media Impact Report as marketplace updates arise.

TV Viewership For Cable News Networks - Weekly Overall
12/30/19-9/10/23

TV Viewership For Broadcast Stations - Weekly Overall
12/30/19 - 9/10/23

TV Viewership For Ad-Supported Cable Sports Stations - Overall
12/30/19 - 9/10/23

Fighting & Winning the Battle Against Made for Advertising Sites

By **David Nyurenberg,** *Associate Media Director, Digital Video*

In today's digital advertising landscape, the importance of making every advertising dollar count cannot be overstated. As a result, the topic of made for advertising (MFA) sites has dominated the conversation at industry conferences and in trade publications ever since the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) dropped its landmark transparency report at Cannes earlier this year. Although the news that advertisers are losing a significant portion of their budget to MFA websites came as a shock to many, it really shouldn't have. These fraudulent sites have been prevalent since the early days of programmatic advertising but are now seeing even more prevalence with the advent of AI and content generation tools. In this article, we will explore the significance of MFA sites, how they evade detection, and most importantly, what Rain the Growth Agency is doing to remove them from our media buys.

The MFA Problem

MFA websites are deceptive websites that thrive on revenue from overloading users with programmatic ads. Often, users are directed to the site through click-bait posts and advertisements, where the user is then served a plethora of ad impressions, allowing the site to monetize attention at a high rate but sacrificing customer experience and brand equity. Detecting these sites can be challenging because they've found ways to bypass checks by Supply Side Platforms (SSPs). This evasion can persist for extended periods, resulting in millions of wasted advertising dollars.

MFA sites exhibit varying behavior patterns depending on their incoming traffic. When receiving direct traffic, users may experience a relatively normal ad-viewing experience. However, when the site detects paid traffic, it bombards users with excessive monetized ads, creating a chaotic and unpleasant user experience. These fraudulent sites often host low-quality or stolen content to appear legitimate. Coupled with an overload of advertisements, they boast high view counts and completion rates even though their organic traffic is negligible.

Brand Suitability at Risk

Brand suitability in advertising involves aligning your brand with content that enhances its image. Placing ads on MFA websites undermines brand suitability by associating your brand with an environment that discourages organic traffic. Studies have shown that ads in high-quality web environments are viewed more favorably than those in low-quality contexts.

Therefore, keeping programmatic ads on MFA sites diminishes your brand's suitability and essentially wastes your advertising budget.

Prioritizing Quality Over Quantity

The open web programmatic media ecosystem, valued at $88 billion, faces significant inefficiencies and waste. ANA's report highlights the potential for advertisers to gain as much as $20 billion in efficiency by addressing exposure to MFA sites.

The report reveals the trap media buyers fall into when prioritizing cost over value. They chase cheap CPMs without considering the quality of inventory and optimal performance outcomes. This shortsighted approach contributes to significant waste in the programmatic media supply chain.

Winning the Fight Against MFA

To address these challenges, Rain the Growth Agency has combined programmatic best practices with the latest technologies to ensure our clients' budgets are used optimally. Tactically, we're winning the battle by:

- **Gaining direct data access:** Rain the Growth Agency has direct data access contracts with primary supply chain partners, including demand-side platforms (DSPs), SSPs, and Ad Verification vendors, to maximize transparency.
- **Measurement and verification partnerships:** We work with leading media verification and quality intelligence partners such as DeepSee and DoubleVerify to detect and optimize our programmatic campaigns in real time away from MFA sites.
- **Prioritizing quality media:** We prioritize premium media environments, high ad quality, a focus on high attention placements, fraud prevention, and brand safety.
- **Excluding MFA sites:** Our agency excludes MFA sites from media buys upon immediate identification.

Programmatic buying will continue to evolve, whether it's staying proactive in the battle against MFA sites, testing new post-cookie targeting approaches or building custom buying algorithms. Rain the Growth Agency remains committed to staying ahead of the curve and up-to-date on customer behavior in order to deliver results and innovation for our clients.
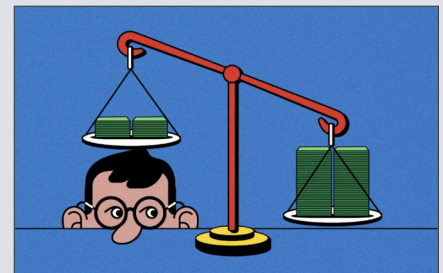
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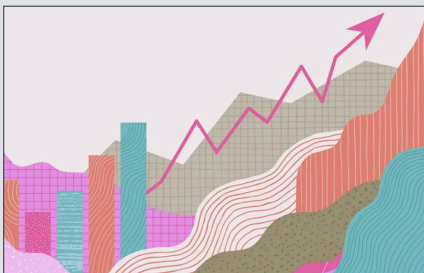
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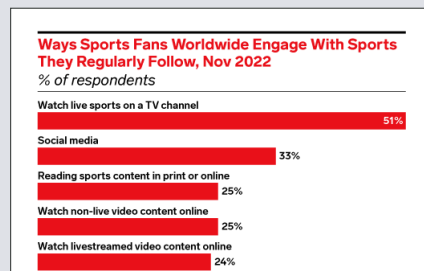
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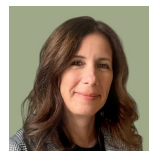
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Need More Guidance?

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