

11. Ad serving, App store optimization, Article marketing and Classified advertising

11.1 Ad serving

Ad serving describes the technology and service that places advertisements on web sites. Ad serving technology companies provide software to web sites and advertisers to serve ads, count them, choose the ads that will make the website or advertiser most money, and monitor progress of different advertising campaigns.

11.1.1 Overview

An ad server is a computer server, specifically a web server backed by a database server, that stores advertisements used in online marketing and delivers them to website visitors. The content of the webserver is constantly updated so that the website or webpage on which the ads are displayed contains new advertisements—e.g., banners (static images/animations) or text—when the site or page is visited or refreshed by a user. The purpose of ad serving is to deliver targeted ads that match the website visitor's interest.

Ad serving also performs various other tasks like counting the number of impressions/clicks for an ad campaign and report generation, which helps in determining the ROI for an advertiser on a particular website.

Ad servers can be run locally or by third-party or remote ad servers. Local ad servers are typically run by a single publisher and serve ads to that publisher's domains, allowing fine-grained creative, formatting, and content control by that publisher. Remote ad servers can serve ads across domains owned by multiple publishers. They deliver the ads from one central source so that advertisers and publishers can track the distribution of their online advertisements, and have one location for controlling the rotation and distribution of their advertisements across the web.

11.1.2 The history of ad serving

The first central ad server was released by FocaLink Media Services and introduced on July 17, 1995, for controlling the delivery of online advertising or banner ads. Although most contemporary accounts are no longer available online, the Weizmann Institute of Science published an academic research paper documenting the launch of the first ad server. The original motherboard for the first ad server, assembled in June 1995, is also preserved. Focalink re-launched the ad server under the name SmartBanner in February 1996. The company was founded by Dave Zinman, Andrew Conru and Jason Strober, and based in Palo Alto, California. In 1998, the company changed its name to AdKnowledge, and was purchased by CMGI in 1999. The AdKnowledge name was subsequently purchased by a company in Kansas City in 2004, which now operates under the brand name AdKnowledge.

The first local ad server was released by NetGravity in January 1996 for delivering online advertising at major publishing sites such as Yahoo and Pathfinder. The company was founded by Tom Shields and John Danner, and based in San Mateo, California. In 1998, the company went public on NASDAQ (NETG), and was purchased by DoubleClick in 1999. NetGravity AdServer was then renamed to DART Enterprise. In March 2008 Google acquired DoubleClick. Google has continued to improve and invest in DART Enterprise. The latest version of the product was renamed and shipped as DoubleClick Enterprise 8.0 on September 28, 2011.

Another central or remote ad server was introduced by David Stein at Burst! Media in January 1996 for controlling online advertising or banner ads. The company was founded by Jarvis Coffin, David Stein and Bob Hanna, and based in Katonah, New York. In 2006, the company went public on the London Stock Exchange's Alternative Investment Market (BRST).

11.1.3 Ad server functionality

Common functions

Uploading advertisements and rich media.

Trafficking ads according to differing business rules.

Targeting ads to different users, or content.

Tuning and optimization based on results.

Reporting impressions, clicks, post-click & post-impression activities, and interaction metrics.

Advanced functions

Frequency capping so users only see messages a limited amount of time. (Advertisers can also limit ads by setting a frequency cap on money-spending)

Sequencing ads so users see messages in a specific order (sometimes known as surround sessions).

Excluding competition so users do not see competitors' ads directly next to one another. (Usually done by bidding on keywords)

Displaying ads so an advertiser can own 100%

11.1.4 Ad targeting and optimization

One aspect of ad-serving technology is automated and semi-automated means of optimizing bid prices, placement, targeting, or other characteristics. Significant methods include:

Behavioral Targeting - Using a profile of prior behavior on the part of the viewer to determine which ad to show during a given visit. For example, targeting car ads on a portal to a viewer that was known to have visited the automotive section of a general media site.

Contextual Targeting - (also known as Semantic targeting) Inferring the optimum ad placement from information contained on the page where the ad is being served. For example, placing mountain-bicycle ads automatically on a page with a mountain biking article.

Creative Optimization - Using experimental or predictive methods to explore the optimum creative for a given ad placement and exploiting that determination in further impressions.

11.2 App store optimization

App store optimization (ASO) is the process of improving the visibility of a mobile app (such as an iPhone, iPad, Android, or Windows Phone app) in an app store (such as iTunes or Google Play for Android). App store optimization is closely related to search engine optimization. Specifically, app store optimization includes the process of ranking highly in an app store's search results and top charts rankings. ASO marketers agree that ranking higher in search results and top charts rankings will drive more downloads for an app.

11.2.1 Goals

Being found better by users in the app stores, due to the fact that App Store Search is the No. 1 source for people to discover new applications

Rank higher compared to competitors

Rank higher for specific keywords (mainly due to keyword density)

Rank higher in Google's semantic search for applications.

11.2.2 History

Apple's iTunes App Store was launched July 10, 2008, along with the release of the iPhone 3G. It currently supports iOS, including iPhone and iPad. There is also a non-mobile app store for Macs. Google's app store, Google Play, was launched September 23, 2008. It was originally named Android Market and supports the Android operating system. Since the launch of iTunes App Store and Google Play, there has been an explosion in both the number of app stores and the size of the stores (amount of apps and number of downloads). In 2010, Apple's App Store grew to process USD\$1.78 billion worth of apps. iTunes App Store had 435,000 apps as of July 11, 2011, while Google Play had 438,000 as of May 1, 2012.

As the number of apps in app stores has grown, the possibility of any one app being found has dropped. This has led app marketers to realize how important it is to be noticed within an app store. As marketers started working on ranking highly in top charts and search results, a new discipline was formed.

The first use of the term "app store optimization" to describe this new discipline appears to have been in a presentation by Johannes Borchardt on November 4, 2009. It began to take hold as a standardized term not long after, with outlets such as Search Engine Watch and TechCrunch using the term by February, 2012.

As app publishers became more interested and engaged around App Store Optimization, tools began to emerge to help them understand and optimize their success with app store optimization. For example, TechCrunch wrote about MobileDevHQ's App Store Optimization keyword volume tool on February 29, 2012 and AppCod.es' keyword tool on March 12, 2012.

11.2.3 Methods

App store optimization is a young and evolving field. Methods of how to efficiently optimize an app's visibility within an app store are still relatively unknown.

However, as the field is quickly becoming an important driver of app downloads for marketers, methods for App Store Optimization are beginning to be more widespread. App Store Optimization tools provider MobileDevHQ broke App Store Optimization into three distinct parts: finding the right keywords, ranking highly for those keywords, and converting visitors into users. Nevertheless, ASO is not limited to keyword related tactics only, it actually involves all meta data available and accessible in the app stores, like icons, screenshots, description and update texts and others.

11.2.4 White hat versus black hat

Many app marketers attempt to perform ASO in a way that most app stores would approve of and accept. This is called "white hat" ASO. Some app marketers, however, engage in what many call "black hat" ASO and are practices which the app stores do not condone.

Black hat ASO includes falsifying downloads or ratings, perhaps by using bots or other techniques to make app stores (and their users) believe an app is more important and influential than it actually is.

Apple has been proactively fighting against black hat ASO. In February, 2012, Apple released a statement as reported by The New York Times "warning app makers that using third-party services to gain top placement in App Store charts could get them banned from the store."

11.3 Article marketing

Article marketing is a type of advertising in which businesses write short articles about themselves, their company or their field of expertise as a marketing strategy. A primary style for the articles includes a bio box and byline (collectively known as the resource box) about the business.

11.3.1 Traditional Article Marketing

Article marketing has been used by professionals for nearly as long as mass print has been available. A business provides content to a newspaper, possibly on a timely topic such as an article on tax audits during tax season, and the newspaper may use the article and include the business's name and contact information. Newspapers and other traditional media have limited budgets for gathering content and these articles may be used in the business section of the newspaper.

11.3.2 Internet Article Marketing

Internet article marketing is used to promote the authors expertise of their market, products or services online via article directories. Article directories with good web page ranks receive a lot of site visitors and may be considered authority sites by search engines, leading to high traffic. These directories then give PageRank to the author's website and in addition send traffic from readers. Articles and article directories attract search engines because of their rich content.

Business Owners, Marketers and Entrepreneurs attempt to maximize the results of an article advertising campaign by submitting their articles to a number of article directories. However, most of the major search engines filter duplicate content to stop the identical content material from being returned multiple times in a search engine results page. Some marketers attempt to circumvent this filter by creating a number of variations of an article, known as article spinning. By doing this, one article can theoretically acquire site visitors from a number of article directories.

Most forms of search engine optimization and internet marketing require a domain, internet hosting plan, and promoting budget. However, article marketing makes use of article directories as a free host and receives traffic by way of organic searches due to the listing's search engine authority.

The primary goal behind article marketing is to get search engine traffic to the article so that the author can strengthen their authority and influence within their field, while also leveraging that traffic for their own site(s). The key to article marketing is that the author should be providing value with their articles, not just promoting their site, products or services.

11.4 Classified advertising

Classified advertising is a form of advertising which is particularly common in newspapers, online and other periodicals which may be sold or distributed free of charge. Advertisements in a newspaper are typically short, as they are charged for by the line, and one newspaper column wide.

Publications printing news or other information often have sections of classified advertisements; there are also publications which contain only advertisements. The advertisements are grouped into categories or classes such as "for sale—telephones", "wanted—kitchen appliances", and "services—plumbing", hence the term "classified".

Classified advertisements are much cheaper than larger display advertisements used by businesses, and are mostly placed by private individuals with single items they wish to sell or buy.

11.4.1 Developments

In recent years the term "classified advertising" or "classified ads" has expanded from merely the sense of print advertisements in periodicals to include similar types of advertising on computer services, radio, and even television, particularly cable television but occasionally broadcast television as well, with the latter occurring typically very early in the morning hours.

Like most forms of printed media, the classified ad has found its way to the Internet.

Internet classified ads do not typically use per-line pricing models, so tend to be longer. They are also searchable, unlike printed material, tend to be local, and may foster a greater sense of urgency as a result of their daily structure and wider scope for audiences. Because of their self-policing nature and low cost structures, some companies offer free classifieds internationally. Other companies focus mainly on their local hometown region, while others blanket urban areas by using postal codes. Craigslist.org was one of the first online classified sites, and has grown to become the largest classified source, bringing in over 14 million unique visitors a month according to comScore Media Metrix. A growing number of sites and companies have begun to provide specialized classified marketplaces online, catering to niche market products and services, such include boats, pianos, pets, and adult services, amongst others. In many cases, these specialized services provide better and more targeted search capabilities than general search engines or general classified services can provide.

A number of online services called aggregators crawl and aggregate classifieds from sources such as blogs and RSS feeds, as opposed to relying on manually submitted listings.

Additionally, other companies provide online advertising services and tools to assist members in designing online ads using professional ad templates and then automatically distributing the finished ads to the various online ad directories as part of their service. In this sense these companies act as both an application service provider and a content delivery platform. Social classifieds is a growing niche.

11.4.2 Statistics

In 2003 the market for classified ads in the United States was \$15.9 billion (newspapers), \$14.1 billion (online) according to market researcher Classified Intelligence. The worldwide market for classified ads in 2003 was estimated at over \$100 billion. Perhaps due to the lack of a standard for reporting, market statistics vary concerning the total market for internet classified ads. The Kelsey Research Group listed online classified ads as being worth \$13.3 billion, while Jupiter Research provided a conservative appraisal of \$2.6 billion as of 2005 and

the Interactive Advertising Bureau listed the net worth of online classified revenue at \$2.1 billion as of April 2006.

Newspaper's revenue from classifieds advertisements is decreasing continually as internet classifieds grow. Classified advertising at some of the larger newspaper chains dropped by 14% to 20% in 2007, while traffic to classified sites grew by 23%.

As the online classified advertising sector develops, there is an increasing emphasis toward specialization. Vertical markets for classifieds are developing quickly along with the general marketplace for classifieds websites. Like search engines, classified websites are often specialized, with sites providing advertising platforms for niche markets of buyers of sellers.