

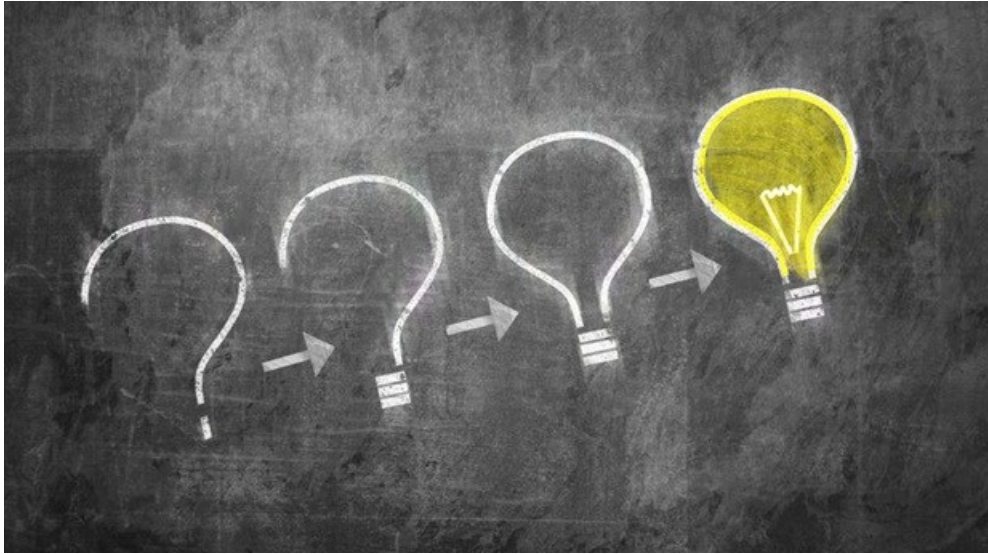
Where to for display?

 By [Graham Du Plessis](#)

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It's a question I have begun to see more often, certainly from a South African context, and it got me thinking, has the banner ad had its days in the sun?

Popular opinion may suggest this with every new channel being branded as the 'next' massive thing in digital leaving the humble display banner to soon gather dust and lose its place on the media plan it has occupied for so long.



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However, I think it's slightly premature on those that have begun writing off this granddaddy of digital advertising just yet. Clearly the growth from 2013/2014 online advertising revenues rose from R452m to R566m according to the IABSA and paints a different picture from one of decline.

It's prudent to give thought to the arguments that lead to this sentiment, as they are admittedly pretty compelling from an advertiser's perspective:

1. Is the message you pushing relevant? A common approach for big digital buys take place across as many properties as possible with the aim that by sheer overwhelming quantity the advertiser will garner some form of performance. Even placing your ad's by vertical does not suffice these days, is not enough and leads to wastage.
2. Persistent retargeting. The stalking of a user across the internet after they have landed on your page without them showing any viable interest of performing a qualified event is leading to some grumblings.

3. Poor creative. Self-explanatory really, as why would a user even consider thinking twice of paying attention to shoddy artwork.
4. Time lags between booking the campaign and having it up and running, being left to the mercy of the publishers workflow
5. Less than robust reporting
6. Low viewability of the banners
7. Complicated invoicing.

Naturally the above is a result of a broad generalisation of display's challenges and does not give credence to those doing great work.

But for the purpose of this article we are faced with some challenges for the display channel, and not to sound to clichéd, but also plenty of opportunities. Like everything in digital nothing stays the same that's the nature of the beast. Display is certainly not ready to be seen as an afterthought and has come out swinging against those ready to dismiss it. In my [last article](#) I touched on programmatic and this is without doubt the second wind display has needed, looking at the US and European markets success I think they onto a winner.

Programmatic for the win

In 2014 direct trading took up 92% of the R566m digital ad spend according to the IABSA , with search receiving a whopping R865m up from R680m.

Now why is search relevant here? Advertisers, and I will count myself as one of them, are now taking a more analytical and data centric approach to how we spend our money within the digital eco-system across all the channels. With search, opportunities to measure the performance are vast allowing for large amounts of information to be collated, analysis and acted on. Actioning a new campaign is virtually instant (not factoring in creative approval by Google) but the point is obvious. Immediacy aside the measurability and of performance is a strong pull factor towards this channel.

Programmatic has allowed display to follow suit by offering us more. Advertisers are looking less and less for quantity, and are becoming hyper sensitive to 'wasted' spend on the users that simply won't make a purchase or look at the brand twice.

Enter the rise of the 'audience'. Advertisers know their audiences (as they built it). They have done their homework (or should have). They know exactly who they want to market to, and be relevant.

Display is at the cross roads where it is moving away from bulk buys on one property or networks and publishers should have started to re-evaluate how they can assist in ensuring the CORRECT audience is found which can be a huge asset and opportunity for a publisher.

Addressing the pain points in display

Embracing programmatic immediately resolves the issues mentioned earlier in the article. Efficiency is exponentially increased due to the advertiser being in control of the process from a- z. Pricing is fair due to the bidding model; should you want a more valuable audience you will naturally pay more for it.

Reach is increased due to not being confined to a platform, while all creative types are supported and can be loaded on the advertiser side ready for flighting. Great creative will always trump shoddy work, and by performance alone should dictate the quality of work put out there.

Reporting is in real time and at your fingertips, allowing for fast reaction times to low performance or optimising towards those flights doing well. Not to mention allowing for easier attribution modelling due to greater integration of the demand side platforms available to the buyers.

Viewability, we can now measure this and bid on impressions by their viewability percentage, placing the ball back in the publishers court to ensure the ad placements are up to scratch and not hiding deep below the fold.

Last but not least, invoicing is simple removing that administrative headache and you pay for what you won without discrepancies between ad servers.

Display has indeed found its second wind in the form of programmatic, the goals remain the same but the mechanics have changed. It's inevitable the South African market will embrace this channel in the near future as efficiency and performance will dictate as such and should it take longer I see spend not being taken away from display as such, but rather moved to other more measurable and high yielding options.

Resource: [IABSA](#)

ABOUT GRAHAM DU PLESSIS

Experienced digital and marketing professional, with an interest in ecommerce, product development and customer experience. Started in the martch environment before moving into the retail environment at Zando, rising quickly into the management space first as the head of mobile and then heading up the groups marketing initiatives. Currently at one of South Africa's leading performance agencies, Incubeta, managing a client portfolio within the financial and retail space.

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