

COLUMNS

Mobile ad revenue share report requires native response

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By **Ariff Quli**

The continued fall in revenue share among all mobile advertising providers except Facebook and Twitter in the eMarketer's latest predictions on global mobile ad spend must serve as a wake-up call for the industry.

First off, we have to face up to the fact that in-application display advertising has not achieved its promises. In large part that is because many premium publishers' apps do not get widespread use, even if they have achieved large numbers of downloads.

Web bruiser

The most important content app on a consumer's mobile phone is the Web browser. Publishers that are still focusing their mobile monetization strategies solely on apps are ignoring the reality that mobile content consumption is casual.

The **eMarketer figures** are inarguable search engines and social media shares drive mobile content consumption and ad interaction. Consumers accessing content through such channels generally do not want to download an app for each source they want to read.

Even if a publisher's app is clear and helpful, consumers are more likely to still use a search engine to find the site again rather than download an app.

Secondly, the eMarketer stats show that the companies receiving most revenue are those that offer ad formats that fit the form and function of their mobile publishing platform, not those that are just bashing banners around Web sites.

The limited screen size and the ability for consumers to bypass banner ads by zooming into content with a double-tap of their mobile screen means that most banners simply do not get an opportunity to make an impression on consumers.

Non-PC talk

Ads on mobile need to be much nimbler, working with the smaller format display of mobile and tablet screens, responding to the consumer's device and enhancing rather than compromising the consumer's experience.

Yet to say that mobile ad formats need to natively respond to characteristics of the mobile environment is a gross over-simplification.

In fact, mobile ads need to be responsively designed to the functionality of an array of different mobile phones and tablets.

The desktop devices that online marketers have been dealing with has made online advertising simple: in the main, consumers generally either have a Windows PC or a Mac, and pretty much everyone has at least a 15-inch screen size. There is no need to prove that that is not the case in mobile by listing all the various hardware brands, operating systems and screen sizes consumers have adopted.

To deliver such campaigns, ad agencies are often asking brands for numerous sets of creative specs to reach audiences across smartphones, tablets and desktop devices.

By the way

The buying process for many mobile campaigns is just not simple enough.

Finally, what is clear from the 25.8 per cent "Other" category within the eMarketer predictions is that there are a lot of smaller players in the mobile ad space. (The one company appearing above the "Other" category has just 0.8 per cent of the market.)

That fact, coupled with the predicted fall in revenue share of this segment, lends credence to the ongoing doomsaying of imminent consolidation in the mobile ad sector perhaps even the closure of those companies peddling mobile banners. However, it also suggests something else: many mobile ad providers are just not offering enough scale for campaigns.

Inarguably, Google, Facebook and Twitter offer large audiences. However, there are some creative limits to the native formats that these platforms offer.

Brands want to be able to deliver creative consistently to audiences across a diversity of media. Ideally, they want more open advertising environments, so they can reach consumers a number of times with the same ad creative in a variety of places that each consumer frequents.

THE OPPORTUNITY for mobile ad companies is to offer brands a varied network of premium, brand-enhancing publishers to advertise across, and in a manner that does not require the repurposing of creative assets across multiple media titles.

The smaller format of mobile requires a native advertising mindset which is totally different to that of the exclusively desktop past of online advertising. The industry needs to react fast to prove eMarketer's predictions for 2014 wrong.

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