Digiday Programmatic Summit 2017

Didn’t make it to the 2017 Digiday Programmatic Summit? Instead of a boring play by play of the hot topics you already know exist, I want to focus on two topics that most empathized or agreed with that I did not.

Okay, let’s get the stuff you know out of the way. Transparency is very important. On many fronts. There’s a talent dearth in programmatic, ground up talent development may be required. Brand safety and fraud prevention is critical. Some marketers are bringing programmatic in-house, but it doesn’t make sense for everyone. Nor does it always work out. Use the best in class verification partners, monitor, block, rinse, repeat.

Now let’s discuss a couple things I found surprising.

**KPI overload**.

There was a lot of conversation, complaints, discord, hullabaloo (yeah I threw down hullabaloo, get at me) around KPI overload. This likely stemmed from agencies and marketers crying out for more metrics. Vendors heeded that call and threw the kitchen sink at it. Meanwhile agencies and marketers combine media performance metrics with owned and earned channel data to provide themselves and their clients with a comprehensive view of everything. That’s exactly what should be happening, but that’s not where the breakdown lies. The breakdown lies in synthesizing that data or the lack thereof.

Marketers, if your agency is bringing you a dashboard with so much data your eyes go cross, they’re not adding the value you’re paying them for. Your agency should be providing you with insight and a way forward so you can make decisive and effective decisions. Data dumping does the opposite, clouding and confusing the best path forward. At CK, we believe in grounding everything we do in the client’s business goals. Those goals may or may not be directly measurable, but if you have a concise measurement plan that ladders up to those goals, all the noise will melt away.

**The cookie is dead**.

No it’s not. Not even close. There’s too much B.S. in this industry and I won’t be adding to it. Do you buy media outside of walled gardens? Do you buy media on desktop devices? Do those buys use data to target? Chances are you’ve answered yes to all of those, in which case you’re using cookies.

The use of the cookie remains, but the role of them has evolved. Machine learning and people based advertising have driven that evolution. Instead of solely being used as a proxy to reach a person, they’re being used as a link to connect proxies to a digital profile of a person. These profiles contain cookies from different browsers as well as persistent identifiers from other devices, creating a composite view of an individual’s digital fingerprint. That enables marketers to start with a person instead of a proxy and the cookie enables buyers like us to reach those people on their browsers.

People based advertising is complex, technical and the current state of validity and reliability is debated, but there’s no doubt that this is the way the industry is moving. Until the next Steve Jobs or Bill Gates comes along and reinvents desktop operating systems, we’ll still be using cookies.

Overall the conference was great, important issues were discussed, perspectives given and drinks were drunk. Digiday did a good job putting it together and I hope to go again next year.

* Michael Santee