

JustPremium

Digital Publishing Roadmap for Navigating the Challenges of 2020

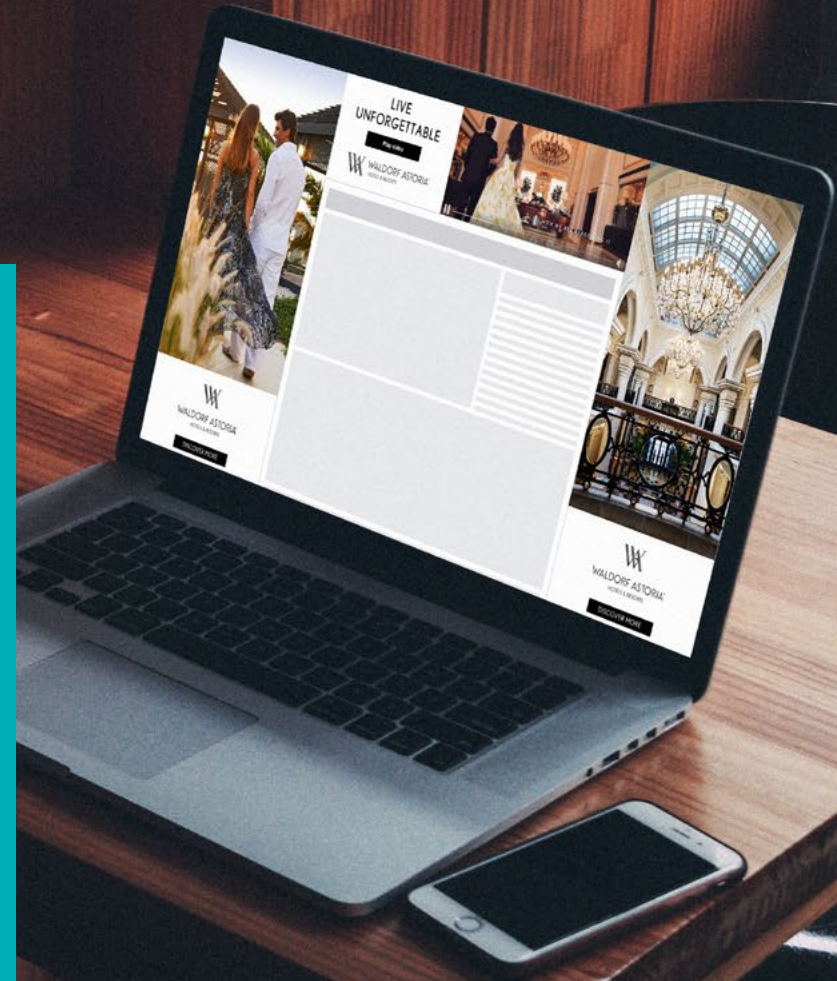


Table of Contents

The Current Predicament as it Concerns COVID-19	1	The Post-Corona Landscape	33
<i>The Digital Publishing Paradox</i>	2	<i>What Constitutes Success?</i>	34
<i>Ad Spend is Down</i>	3	<i>Maintaining Sustainable Growth</i>	35
<i>Removed Paywalls</i>	4	<i>An Audience-Centric Focus</i>	36
<i>Corona Content Block</i>	4	<i>Opportunities in Publishing on the Horizon</i>	37
How Publishers Have Handled Stormy Weather in the Past	5	<i>Better Data Mining and Targeting</i>	37
<i>2008 Recession</i>	6	<i>Stronger, More Transparent Partnerships</i>	38
<i>GDPR Implementation</i>	7	Conclusions & Key Takeaways	39
<i>Top 2 Publishing Winners</i>	8		
<i>Best Moves</i>	9		
<i>Lessons from the Past</i>	10		
What Coronavirus Has Done	11		
<i>Trends in the Pre-Coronavirus Publishing Industry</i>	12		
<i>Problems for Advertisers</i>	13		
<i>Changing Readership Habits</i>	14		
Problems and Solutions for Publishers	16		
<i>Problem 1: Loss of Revenue</i>	16		
<i>Problem 2: Cashflow Issues</i>	22		
<i>Problem 3: No Control Over the Situation</i>	25		
<i>Problem 4: Fewer Partnerships</i>	29		

Executive Summary

This whitepaper delves deep into the issues that most publishers are facing while the Coronavirus impacts their businesses. Through use of extensive interviews, custom surveys and thorough research, this whitepaper discusses the major trends in the digital publishing industry and how the past can redefine and illuminate the future for publishers. Section by section, different publishers and players offer their takes on the biggest problems publishers face, such as loss of revenues and rupturing partnerships.

This includes:

- JustPremium CTO Erik Hulsbosch discussing how publishers can leverage media partnerships to their benefit.
- Mark Alserda, the Programmatic Head for Future Publishing providing insights on how they are prioritizing revenue diversification during this time.
- A deep statistical dive into advertiser behavior before and after the effects of COVID-19.

Most importantly, all these sources and interviewees offer a complete 360-degree view on how they are coming up to solutions for these problems. Finally, we take a look at how this incident will redefine the publishing industry for good and what to look for in the future.

A Welcome Note

For most companies, the beginning of March seemed to be not too different from usual. Businesses were just beginning to turn their attention from a strong first quarter to a promising second quarter. There were murmurs and hints of disruption in different parts of the world. People were on edge, but most governments and institutions decided to stay the course.

In just over a fortnight, all of this would change. Businesses scrambled to plan for a drastically different future for themselves and their customers in 2020. Publishers are no exception. Unfortunately, there aren't many resources that publishers can use as a roadmap to help them navigate this unprecedented storm. All over the internet, you'll see loose pieces of information about what may have worked in a particular case or specific projections from a high-profile publisher like the New York Times. There has yet to be a definitive and conclusive guide for publishers concerning the Coronavirus, its impacts, and possible opportunities on the horizon.

This whitepaper will serve as a clear and extensive blueprint from voices all over the publishing industry. It can serve as a roadmap as to how different players are taking various perspectives and strategies on how to approach the same problems. A variety of solutions will be outlined through the consensus of professionals in the publishing industry.

– Eric Visser, CEO, JustPremium



A man wearing a fedora and a light-colored shirt is sitting in an office chair at a desk. He is looking at a computer monitor that displays two clock faces. A dog is sitting on the floor next to him, looking up at his hand. The background features a large window and a brick wall. The entire image has a red overlay.

Part 1

The Current Predicament as it Concerns COVID-19

The Digital Publishing Paradox

The main word that most publishers can apply to their situation at this point is “paradox.” Most publishers would rank raising readership as one of their major goals at any point each year. Due to the Coronavirus phenomenon, most publishers experience a level of readership that would be the marvel of any managing editor in normal circumstances. And yet, more and more publishers are finding themselves strapped for cash. How can this be? Readership is up, but revenues don’t reflect that. A variety of factors are contributing to this problem that continues to be unstable for publisher networks.

Need table that clearly shows increase in readership vs. Decrease in ad spend – might be good representation of the paradox.

Ad Spend is Down

In turn, publishers are relying on an advertising-centric revenue model. It gets even more complicated when it comes to light that the keyword blocking is only happening by brands that are still advertising. Many more brands are cutting their marketing budgets and reigning in their ad spend. Major brands like Coca-Cola and Pepsi have announced drastic cuts to their brand marketing efforts. The biggest drops have been in the travel and automotive industries. Sports has also taken a major hit due to major sporting event cancellations such as the Euro championships and the Tokyo Olympics.



69%

of advertisers say they plan on
decreasing ad spend in 2020

Removed Paywalls

Secondly, for the general public interest, many publishers have decided to make all Coronavirus coverage free without restriction of the paywall. While this may win the hearts and minds of readers, it contributes to a revenue problem that leaves publishers looking for new ways to fund their operation.

Corona Content Block

Programmatic capabilities make it possible for advertisers to block their ads from being shown next to any content that features meta-tags related to Coronavirus. This is in spite of a recent study by Verity that found over 60% of Coronavirus content is brand safe. On top of that, a UK Newspaper group found that actually ads perform better on Coronavirus content.

With odds like these, it seems like publishers are stuck in an uncomfortable scenario. A scenario that has no clear end date and ongoing repercussions for all of their partners and stakeholders. However, digital publishing has been around for more than 25 years and has seen trials and tribulations before.

60%

Coronavirus content is
Brand Safe

63%

of people say their opinion of
a brand would be unchanged if
adjacent to Corona content



Part 2

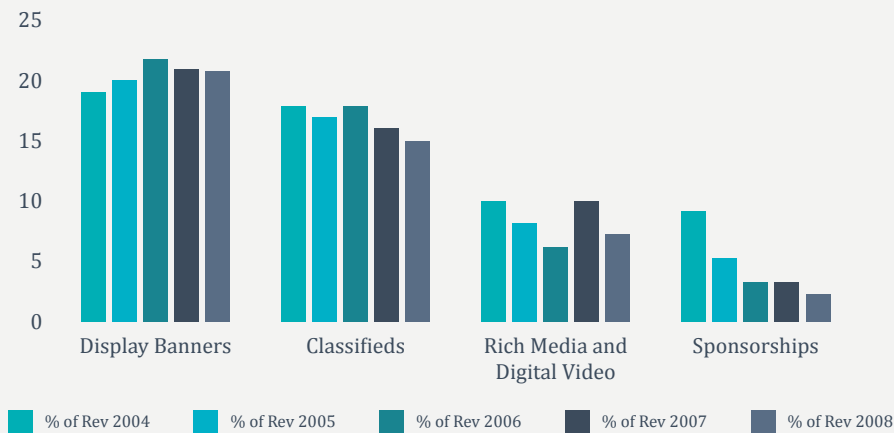
How Publishers Have Handled Stormy Weather in the Past

2008 Recession

In the case of the recession, readership was changing. It was moving away from traditional journalism at a time when there were abundant internet resources where they could find what they wanted to be informed or entertained. They had yet to find a way to effectively monetize internet traffic without the generous support of advertising, which had dropped due to brands cutting their marketing budgets. At the time, publishers felt they had to fend for themselves.

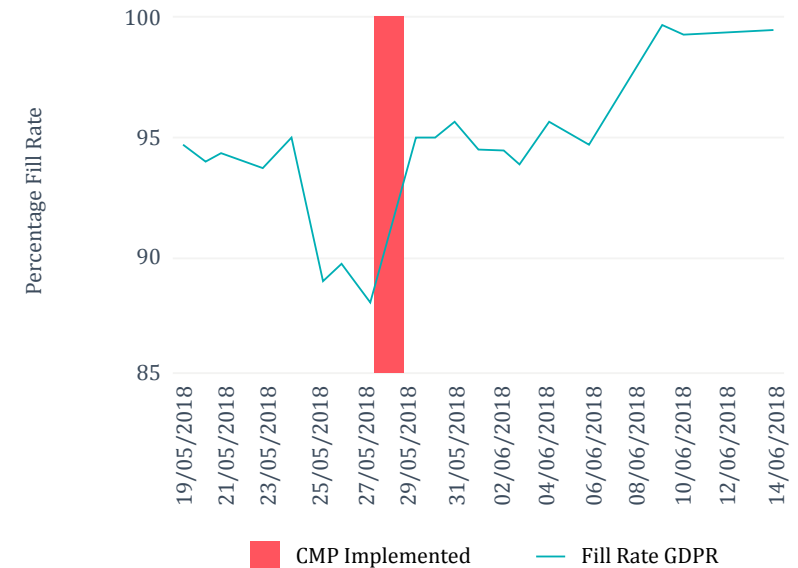
Key Trends

- Major dip in sponsorship and classifieds and directories revenues
- Display and Rich Media Spend remained relatively stable during the recession



Source: iab

Fill Rate GDPR and CMP Implemented



GDPR Implementation

In the case of the GDPR implementation, many publishers were still caught flat-footed by the law and scrambled to make the adjustments necessary for compliance. If they didn't, they faced loss of revenue in the form of fines, finding proper vendors, and upgrading their tech to include consent options.

Once again, publishers were able to weather the storm by turning to new tech and building partnerships. This time, **the rise of the Consent Management Platform (CMPs)** were essential in the survival of many publishers. A CMP relieves publishers of a lot of work and stress by handling their data protocols for them.

Even more telling is the fact that after the GDPR was implemented, CPMs did fall around the middle of Q2. However, they soon caught up with the average CPMs of non-GDPR countries after CMPs were used to their full potential.

Source: <https://sortable.com/blog/the-impact-of-gdpr-on-publishers/>

Top 2 Publishing Winners from the 2008 Recession

1

The New York Times

The Times was as hard hit by the recession as any publisher. Their subscriptions dropped at first and their advertisers were less reliable than ever. They rewrote their response to the financial crisis through a joint strategy of upgrading technology and diversifying revenue. They built and launched a metered paywall, which gave users enough to try out their content before subscribing. The Times also purchased an ecommerce site called Wirecutter that soon became a large source of revenue. Finally, they found other ways to provide value to their readers who expect excellent journalism by delivering their product in innovative ways, such as a daily podcast.

The New York Times

2

Dennis Publishing

Dennis Publishing, which publishes more than 35 magazines and websites, also recognized that diversifying their revenue was key. They integrated their e-commerce car business into their already large portfolio of car and automotive publications. By getting into the business of car sales and dealing, they were able to create a strong enough buffer that helped them grow revenue from £59m in 2009 to £93m in 2016.

Dennis



Best Moves

It was diversification of revenue streams that led publishers out of the storm. Tech improvements such as more data and effective paywalls that included IP checks, also provided a boost for publishers. They were also able to offer more data to advertisers that made their ads more effective, meaning more revenue for everyone.



Lessons from the Past

Key Advice

1. Upgrade tech. Downtime and upheaval is a great time to reevaluate your tools and arm yourself with the best advancements.
2. Diversify your revenue stream and optimize on the best-performing areas. The more interests and investments you have in different areas, the more insulated you will be from economic downturns.

How is This Applicable Now?

1. No matter the type of downturn, having multiple income streams keeps your publication stronger for longer, as it gives you the buffer of liquidity necessary to survive and even thrive.
2. The loss of cookies and the update of TCF 2.0 means that CMP will once again be top of mind. The publishers that implement it will perform better, just like what happened with the GDPR.
3. For more on how to leverage these lessons to overcome the Corona crisis, see page 25.



Part 3

What Coronavirus Has Done

Trends in the Pre-Coronavirus Publishing Industry

Moving Away from CCPA

As the new decade began, publishers increasingly had to focus their attention on upgrading their tech as the CCPA came into effect in California.

Since Coronavirus has dominated news cycles, very little news has been heard about the CCPA. The law, which borrows many of its main privacy regulations from the European GDPR, presented new logistical dilemmas for publishers. Luckily, there are many tech upgrades from the GDPR that publishers can use to tackle this issue such as CMP implementation.

Cookie Phase-out Contingencies

Google's announced that they were planning to remove third-party cookie tracking from their Chrome browser by 2022.

Google Chrome has a 67 percent market share on desktop and 60 percent on mobile, according to StatCounter data.

Even with strong mobile competitors such as Apple's Safari, this would still mean changes for most publishers and advertisers who rely on those tracking technologies to deliver more relevant ads to audiences. Despite having two years of advance notice, publishers have already begun to prepare for a new era of privacy on the internet by looking into contextual targeting and first-party data solutions.

Preparation is Powerful

All of these trends have created a sense of urgency within publishing circles to find new and better ways to monetize their inventories. Whether it be by turning to the opportunities offered by first-party data and contextual targeting or building more transparent relationships with advertisers, agencies, and users, publishers are putting new value on preparation.

Problems for Advertisers

Brand Safety Concerns

Brand safety concerns are clear to see when you look at how wary advertisers are of anything that could damage their brand.

Mark Alserda of Future Publishing

For instance, Mark Alserda of Future Publishing knows that advertisers are trying to steer away from the content out there because they are increasingly worried about brand image: "Brand safety has always been a concern of advertisers. And I think especially now that has definitely been amplified so they've been targeting away from COVID-19 content, which puts pressure on the publisher."

The Head of Trading at JustPremium, Bram Theunissen points to the fact that brands are averse to economic uncertainty. He said,

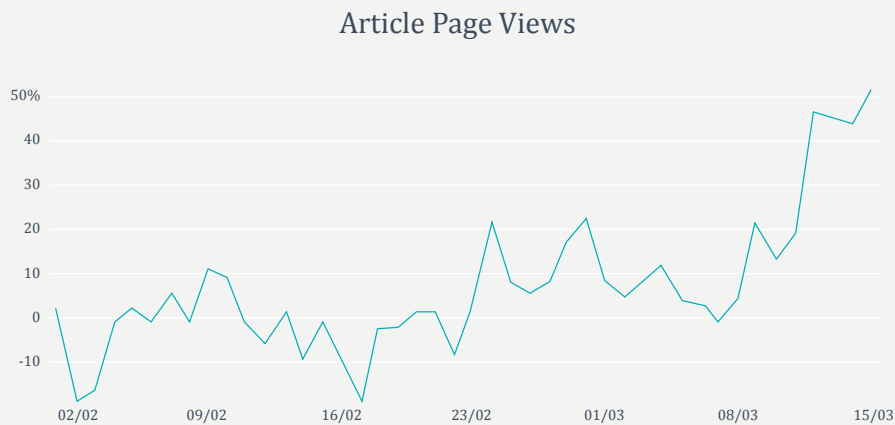
It makes sense because it's very unclear where this is going. They're saying it will continue in the sense that like it's a recession, like 7.5% contraction, which is a lot."

- According to a new report by IAB, 74% of media buyers, planners and brands said Coronavirus will have a bigger impact on advertising than the 2008 financial crisis.
- 70% of buyers have already adjusted or paused their planned ad spend, while 16% are still determining what actions to take.
- Nearly a quarter (24%) of respondents have paused all advertising spend for the remainder of Q1 and Q2 while 46% indicated they have adjusted their ad spend for the same time period.

Changing Readership Habits

Coronavirus Readership Spikes

Publishers saw a huge spike in traffic at the beginning of the Coronavirus period due to people being more engaged than ever in what was happening. As can be seen from this graph from Vox Media at the very beginning of the crisis.



However, this data is in reference to a news publisher. Other publishers in verticals such as sports saw different trends.

Here's a look at how vertical interest has shifted across six-week periods before and after March 15th

Before		After	
Home & Garden	32.76%	Arts & Entertainment	28.81%
Uncategorized	29.12%	Food & Drink	18.65%
Personal Finance	18.78%	Automotive	16.48%
Automotive	11.65%	Technology & Computing	9.65%
Arts & Entertainment	5.06%	Home & Garden	9.05%
Law, Government & Politics	1.7%	Health & Fitness	6.72%
Health & Fitness	0.91%	Utilities	2.80%
Food & Drink	0.91%	Shopping	2.65%
		Law, Government & Politics	2.49%
		Uncategorized	1.77%
		Personal Finance	0.93%

FUTURE

We saw a significant increase in traffic across our portfolio, with verticals as Gaming and Science in particular. Furthermore we benefited from users reading about Corona content on our science titles and also an increase in the sharing of articles. So overall we saw increased audience figures but this was most noticeable in these verticals."

Mark Alserda

Programmatic Head, Future Publishing



Particularly when the sports events were cancelled for the foreseeable future, I think a lot of people tuned out of sports news altogether. I think that kind of plateaued out that we have seen a small growth 5-7% recently. I think people miss other news. They are Coronavirus newsed-out (fatigue). You can only hear about it so much before people are looking forward and thinking, "Okay, sport might return at this date." So they are getting more engaged rather than just saying, "Okay there's no sport for two months."

Tom Jones

Head of Digital Operations, Snack Media



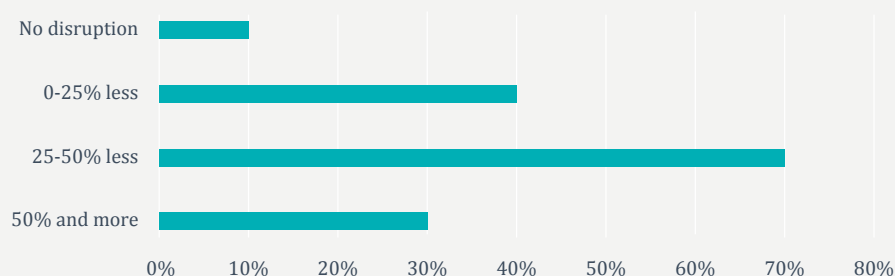
Problem 1

Loss of Revenue

Demand Drop Leading to Lower CPMs

Losing revenue is one of the biggest concerns for publishers during this time.

How Much Has Your Average Ad Spend or CPM Been Disrupted?



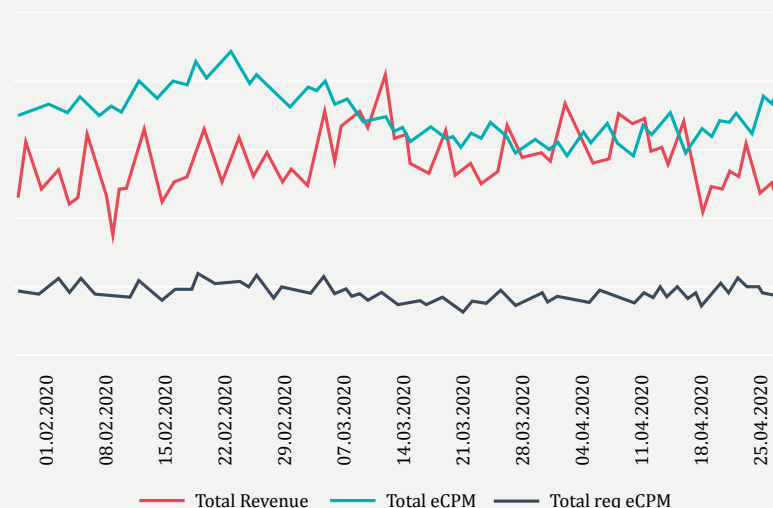
Daniel Young, the Yield and Programmatic Director for DMS Publishing said, "There has actually been a take away of a big chunk of the demand that comes from just huge drops and the CPMs that have been lowered. I think that was to be expected, but what I didn't expect is then people just to throw out all their quality buying mentalities that they spent so long to plan."

Most of this loss of revenue comes from advertiser uncertainty, as Anastasiia Bohinska, the Supply manager for JustPremium explained, "Basically, the most is the drop of revenue which comes from the demand drop. So, a lot of advertisers are cancelling the campaigns or putting them on hold, which means less advertisements, which means less revenue. So, I believe this is the biggest fear of the publishers and agencies."

Eric Hulsbosch, the CTO of JustPremium elaborated: "I think this is the biggest fear because from their perspective they have more traffic now even though for a lower CPM and for a while they were actually earning less revenue but now it started to climb again."

Here are the latest figures in how publishers are faring based on revenue and CPM changes over the last three months:

Revenue, eCPM, rCPM



Certain Verticals Fare Better Than Others

Here you will find extensive information on how different verticals have fared during the crisis, with Autos and Vehicles taking a big hit, while Apparel and Food & Groceries spiked.

	Best Positioned	Worst Positioned
Immediate Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plastic and protective gear manufacturers• Home delivery businesses• Home improvement stores• Loungewear and home fashion• Drug companies• Indoor exercise machines and equipment• Streaming services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restaurants and bars• Gathering places such as stadiums and concerts• Real Estate businesses and mortgage companies• Museums, galleries, and outdoor festivals• School campuses• Movie theaters• Hair salons• Contact professions
Long-Term Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ecommerce• Grocery delivery• Telecommunications and video conferencing software• Hygiene products• eLearning• Wifi and broadband providers• In-home entertainment• Non-contact sporting goods, such as tennis or golf	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel and tourism• Oil and fossil fuel producers• Automobiles• Public transportation• Physical stores and shops• Gyms• Commercial real estate and office sharing, such as WeWork

Source: WARC

Digital Media Forecasts Still Project Growth

Digital media owners expect that growth will be reduced from 11.4% forecasted to 3.9% in 2020.

Even brighter news comes in the form of stats that show overall digital media will be quicker to bounce back in 2020 over linear media by a margin of 16%.

Digital media

16%

Quicker bounce back
in 2020



Opportunity to Upgrade Tech

Implementation of a Consent Management Platform (CMP)

An easy fix is the **implementation of a Consent Management Platform (CMP) in order to be able to send explicit user consent down the chain**. This should be in compliance with the latest version of the Transparency and Consent Framework as outlined by the IAB.

Anastasiia Bohinska of JustPremium states that this is a good move as it ties directly in to increased revenue for publisher because of the increased revenue opportunities.

Clean ads.txt

Another small fix is making sure the ads.txt files are correctly implemented on sites. Bohinska reports those publishers who added missing ads.txt codes increased their revenue by 25% (on average) from JustPremium.

DSPs are Key Partners for Advancement

Her colleague Erik Hulsbosch believes that there will be some onus placed on publisher partners as well to take up this challenge.

Hulsbosch said: "I do believe that there is a place for 1st party data but then again, if all the publishers are doing that it is very hard for the DSPs to use because they need to change their algorithm for each single publisher. So, in the end there should be an initiative, a drive from the DSP's to solve this."

Tom Jones takes a more agnostic approach to troubleshooting the problem of updating the tech used on Snack Media's publications.

"I think you're being forced to look at every possible solution that exists, even if you didn't consider it before, leaving no stone unturned. Then you're looking at things like page speed and load time. You're looking at every single thing. We're doing this this way now, but within X amount of months things can change. How can we offer the best experience for our partners and users?"

Diversify Revenue Streams

Multiple Sources of Revenue Creates a Much-needed Buffer

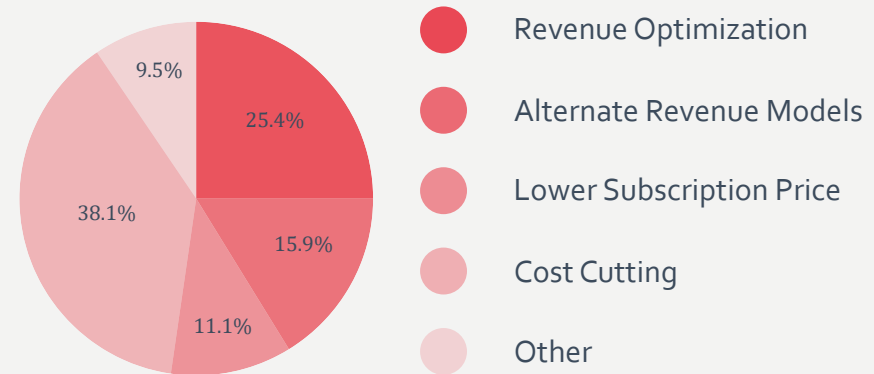
It is best during a time when revenues are in jeopardy to insulate your business from a potential hit to one of your sources of income. This means not focusing too exclusively on any one revenue source.

As it turns out, Mark Alserda's Future Publishing already had prepped for this contingency: "We are luckily in a place that advertising is not our main source of income, we are quite diversified. We have our e-commerce income, lead generation, we have our print magazines, although this has been impacted now as well, we have our events. So while advertising income is still important, we're not solely reliant on advertising"

- Other publishers are similarly proud of their work when it comes to how they've grown their revenue base through other means. Take WIRED, for instance.
- The Atlantic grew its readership by 125% during March of 2020, due to discretionary use of their paywall and Coronavirus content
- Hearst's portfolio has seen an increase in eCommerce-driven product sales. They helped generate approximately 1M product sales through commerce content in March, which is a 143% increase over March 2019.

Recently, they reported that they expected to see a 10% revenue growth despite Corona crisis. This is because they doubled down on diversification including magazine sales, affiliate marketing, and book publishing.

Plans to Counter the Business Impact from COVID-19?



Adding More Formats and Lowering Floor CPMs

For those publishers that want to take a more proactive solution stance to their current troubles, there are options for them as well.

Anastasiia Bohinska of JustPremium suggests that publishers consider adding more formats onto their pages to maximize their revenue streams.

Another solution is to considering lowering the floor CPMs on sites. This may seem counterintuitive, but there is data that supports this conclusion.

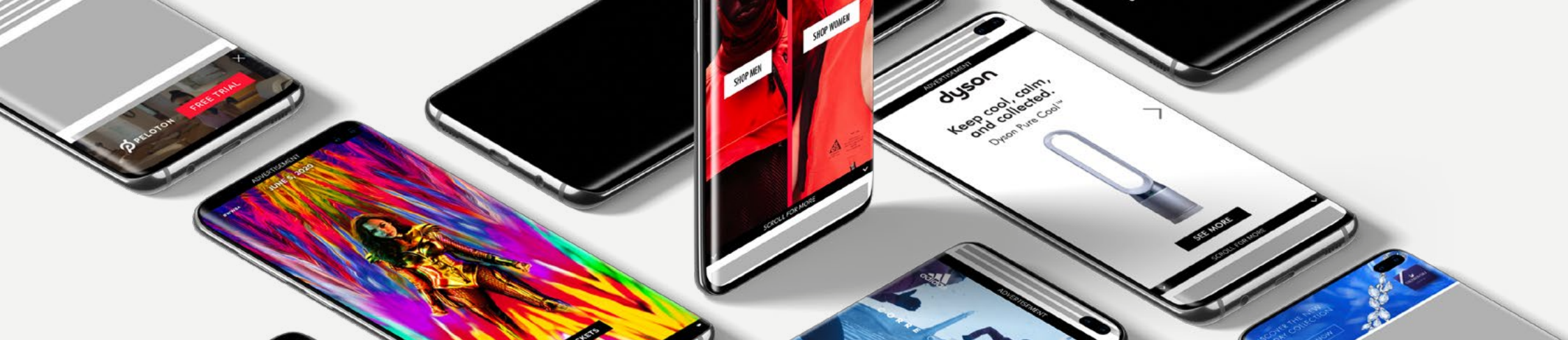
- Publishers that didn't lower their floor pricing saw 20% more losses than those who did.

A quarter of publishers are focusing on revenue optimization options in order to counteract the effects of the Coronavirus impact.

The background of the slide is a close-up of a 100 Euro banknote. The large number '100' is visible in the upper left, and the intricate architectural details of the banknote are on the right. A semi-transparent red rectangle covers the left and bottom portions of the image, serving as a background for the text.

Problem 2

Cashflow Issues



Publishers Maintain High Overhead Operations

The other problem that presenting itself for publishers now that revenue streams are drying up is the issue of solvency.

Daniel Young already sees issues on the horizon: "There's always going to be the risk of clients not paying the agencies or delaying or extending their payment terms. This will then have an effect on cashflow. Then if the agencies aren't getting paid they might not pay the suppliers. I already know of some agencies that have put the brakes on payments."

DSPs and SSPs May Have Solvency Issues

But it goes even deeper than that as they are dealing with missing incomes from other partners such as SSPs.

Mark Alserda of Future Publishing puts it this way: "We definitely have seen some partners trying to adjust their payment term, which puts pressure on us. We've seen some impact and some risk there, which I think for partners, which don't have multiple income streams or revenue streams, that could definitely be a risk."

If publishers cannot meet their basic financial obligations, they cannot be expected to produce the same quality content or even to continue regular operations.

Pre-payment Programs Like JustPremium Invest

Pre-payment Reserves Premium Inventory for High Returns

In order to effectively combat cash flow problems that publishers are facing, they must have enough of a liquidity buffer to effectively survive the downturn. JustPremium launched a new program centered on paying publishers upfront for their best inventory. The JP Invest Partner Financing Program is intended to offer a hand to new publishing partners.

JustPremium



It is very insecure times so whenever you just bring money that you want to recoup later every publisher will want that. Especially at this time they are already seeing lower CPMs everywhere, slightly lower revenue, and they are not certain which companies will survive. You bring them money now and recoup it later. Then they are 100% sure they can get the funds they need, so they are willing to make moves for you as well.

Anastasiia Bohinska

Supply Manager, JustPremium

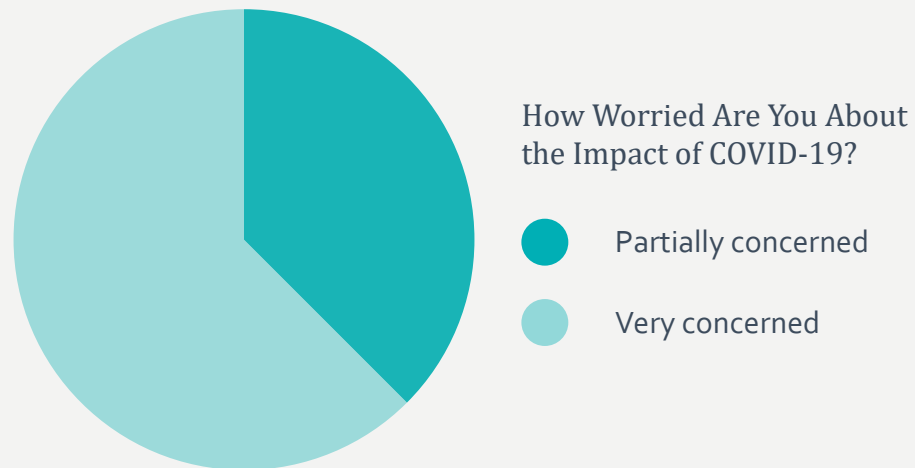


Problem 3

No Control Over the Situation

First Disruption of its Kind

Even in the short time that Coronavirus has been on the radar, projections have wildly differed.



This level of disruption in the economy is a dangerous mixture of unprecedented and unpredictable. Publishers are feeling that pressure.



We had to take our yearly plan and throw it out of the window. So in the last couple of weeks, for example, we've been scrambling around trying to actually adjust and get used to this situation because I think there was just an industry shock with the lockdown a lot of companies did not know what to do in the first week. Most people and companies just panicked and pulled all advertising budgets. It was after days if not weeks that we started connecting with partners. The first week we had to concentrate on ourselves. We were in defense mode so we did all we could do to keep revenue flow.

Remo Chipatiso

AdOps Manager, Weeronline

High Costs Make Preparing for Downturns Difficult

Erik Hulsbosch highlighted an example of forward thinking: “I have just read that Wimbledon got insured for a pandemic, but they are basically the only company in the world that did it. Due to the high costs’ publishers have with maintaining the websites, paying their journalists, content wise it is difficult to them to actually allocate budget for worse times.”

This news is particularly punishing because many major publishers such as Axios and Vox turned profits for the first time in 2019. This has been accredited to more stringent copyright and privacy laws that have pushed publishers toward first party data investments. A so-called “rainy day fund” is a privilege to have in times such as these.

Hulsbosch continued, “The difficulty is that nobody knows what is going to happen and the best bet is building relationships with all the partners you have, direct clients, etc.”



JustPremium



For the publishers that actually follow all the regulations, we are building a platform where they can use to actually leverage our technology tool for their sales team. For the others, we are working on network integration so that we can connect to other publishers.

Anastasiia Bohinska
Supply Manager, JustPremium

Necessity is the Mother of Invention

Ad Tech Has the Necessary Agility

- Ad tech companies can facilitate faster and more efficient innovation
- Short-term solutions will transfer into long-term measures

The longer this interruption lasts, the more publishers will start making short term adjustments more viable in the long-term. It may be all well and good to try to make money-producing adjustments like allowing all ad formats to your website, but how can that be made sustainable once things are normal again? This means switching models that give the reader more privacy while still maintaining the value targeted advertising can bring to their readership.

As always, there will be players who are able to facilitate faster, more sustained changes on behalf of publishers. Combining the above principles of strengthening relationships with upgrading tech, adtech companies in particular are seeing a true time to shine. This is when their USPs for publishers are being put to the test. In times such as these, platforms and technological agnostic solutions built for publishers by adtech companies can make a true difference.



Problem 4

Fewer Partnerships

Advertisers Reluctant to Relinquish Control

It is found that many advertisers are making a switch from Direct IO deals to PMP so that they can have more control over their campaigns. This could leave publishers with fewer ways to communicate with their partners.

Bram Theunissen of JustPremium looks at it from the perspective that advertisers (and other players) are wary about attaching strings at a time like this. Theunissen says that advertisers spending less and being less committed to their spend could cause trickle down effects that leave publishers hanging out to dry, causing lower fill rates and stretched budgets.

Publishers are Preparing for Ruptured Partnerships

Tom Jones from Snack Media posited, “We expect it to come down the line and we’ve had SSP’s reach out to us, and say they are taking out additional insurance. But we expect some reasonably big players to struggle as such leave the financial hole. We are trying to work with trusted partners where we can, but you can’t always cover all of your bases. We are trying to forecast what’s almost impossible to forecast and minimize risk where possible.”

Building Better Relationships

Ad Tech as a Mediator

Erik Hulsbosch of JustPremium thinks publishers should realign goals together with partners and seek mutually agreeable solutions through mediators: "I do not believe that every single publisher is able to go to the advertiser or agency and build a relationship with them. Why? Because there are hundreds of thousands of publishers and there is only a few people on the agency. It is always good to keep close contact with the people in between, with the aggregator, with the network with the SSPs, with the whole ecosystem. Why? Because there are more publishers connected, and by that have immediate power to work with the advertisers."

Open Communication and Trust are Essential

These relationships consist of open communication between parties where being forthright is valued above all else, even if that means telling a partner that they will be late to their obligation.

As Mark Alserda of Future puts it: "We are all on the same boat right and we all understand the situation we are in so if you can be transparent then of course we can work together and come up with a solution, and we've always done that in the past years with our partners."

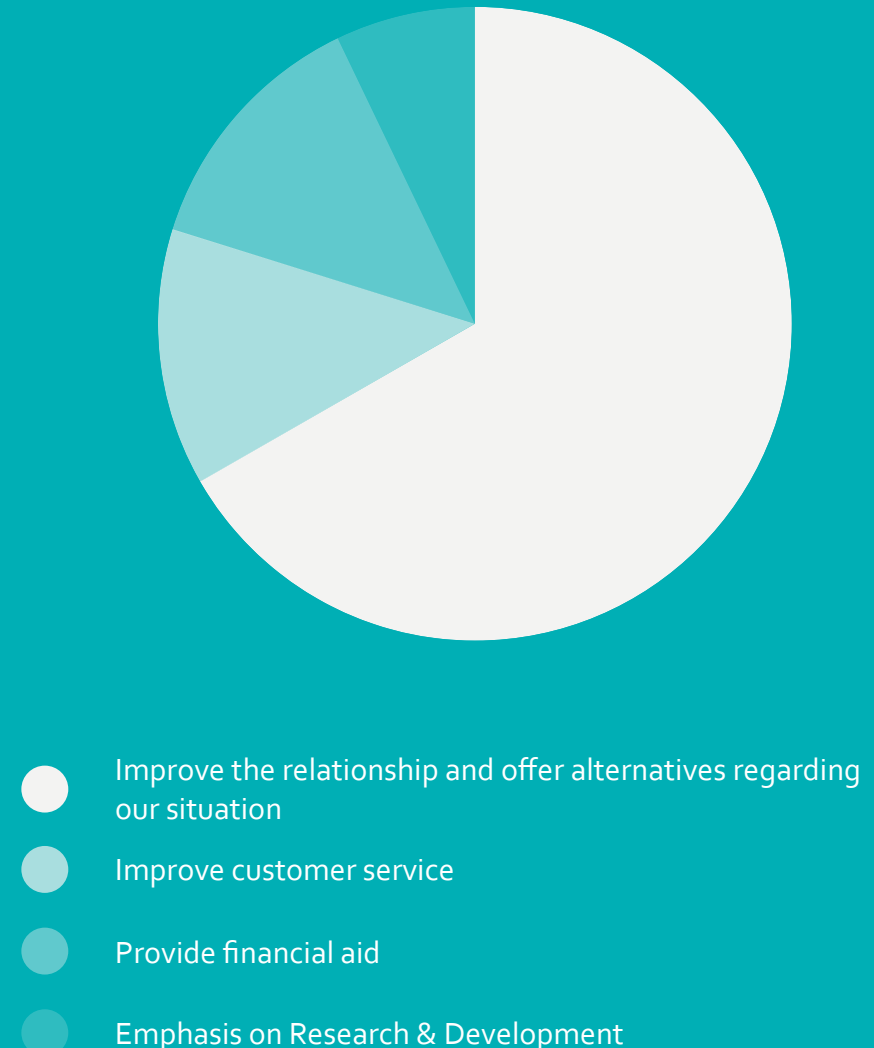
Tom Jones extrapolated further by saying that a little understanding with partners reaching out more than they usually would: "From a publisher side, we are proud of the relationships we have with clients and you're maybe checking on those relationships more than you would usually. You just become more excited when a particular campaign comes in as it can make a big difference right now."

Agency State Overview

There's also something to be said for understanding what your partners pain points are. Take a look at this recently updated table with the latest moves from major advertising agencies:

Dentsu	<p>Dentsu Aegis Network has implemented a series of cost-cutting measures across the business, including salary cuts and furloughs for employees</p> <p>Dentsu postpones first quarter results reveal for several months, reassesses forecast</p>
WPP	<p>WPP approved for more than \$700M in U.K. government loans</p> <p>WPP's public sector business is working with governments to scenario plan for the "recovery" and "new normal" phases in a post COVID-19 world.</p>
Hogarth Worldwide	<p>Hogarth reduces hours and salaries, looks to avoid layoffs</p> <p>Hogarth is ramping up technological investment in areas that may make content creation more seamless while still maintaining quality</p>
Omnicom	<p>Furloughs and layoffs loom at Omnicom</p> <p>Omnicom closes third office over coronavirus concerns</p> <p>Omnicom confirms staff and salary cuts, as well as eliminating discretionary costs such as travel</p>
Publicis Groups	<p>Publicis announced a 500 million euro cost-reduction plan to assist it be recovery ready.</p> <p>The management has opted for reduction of the fixed remuneration with dividends having been slashed by 50 per cent</p> <p>They saw a 17 per cent growth in the first quarter</p>
IPG	<p>Interpublic Group Strengthens Balance Sheet in Response to COVID-19</p> <p>IPG obtained a \$500 million credit boost in addition to its current \$1.5 billion credit endowment</p> <p>IPG completed its registered public offering that resulted in \$640 million in profits after fees, discounts, and expenses</p>

What Do You Expect from Vendors in Terms of Assistance?



A woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a light-colored jacket, dark pants, and a face mask, is sitting on a white rolling suitcase. She is looking towards the left. The background is an airport terminal with check-in counters, some labeled 'Check-in 3' and 'SWISS'. Overhead signs indicate directions for 'Check-in 1/2', 'Toiletten Toilets', 'Abflug alle Gates Departure all gates', and 'Bus/Coaches Tram/Tramway'. The scene is dimly lit, with a red overlay on the left side.

Part 5

The Post-Corona Landscape



What Constitutes Success?

Success is a malleable construct when it comes to business. Particularly in the digital publishing industry, readers often determine success metrics. The volume of readership determines the quality of your content and how you can value your inventory, and therefore how much can be charged for subscriptions. From an advertising perspective, you must also consider that a good user experience is defined by including ads that are non-obtrusive, attractive, and delightful to the audience. It makes sense that publishers will therefore seek solutions that are user-focused, as most industry sources confirmed.

Sustainable Growth

Maintaining Sustainable Growth

According to Daniel Young of DMS Publishing based in Dubai, he says the goal is to get to a place where everyone in the supply chain realizes the value publishers bring to the table and are willing to support the growth of publishers monetarily.

Young said, “You don’t have to keep fighting for that initial dollar, you know that you’ve got however much coming because they know it works. The only question of spending with publishers is If they have to justify it if it’s already justified for whatever reason, that is it doesn’t have to be a price or a CPM. It it could be justified by a multitude of other things that support the relationship.”



An Audience-Centric Focus

Tom Jones of Snack Media said, "We can change our content model perhaps, but not our business model. All those little kind of engagement pieces: more polls more quizzes, that sort of content. People are looking for different ways to engage. I think that is one of our key strategies going forward is, how can we engage them in different ways?"


Even if revenue structures change slightly, for instance, implementing a stricter paywall, this will not be the key to success for publishers. All possible solutions and outcomes must better serve the users whose readership supports the publishers.

Opportunities in Publishing on the Horizon

Better Data Mining and Targeting

First Party Data and Contextual Targeting are the Future


This is a huge time for contextual advertising as it proves to be a very strong solution when it comes to the loss of third-party data. According to Bohinska:



You also need to look into what other solutions there are, I believe contextual will be rising again. Try build your own contextual segments making sure that all the partners you work with actually support those and supply them to the DSP. Make sure that the industry is standard so all the DSP's can actually work with it. I think that it is the main thing they can do."

Third-Party Vendors are Valuable Resources

But there are even more opportunities when publishers consider reaching out to those partners who provide value and have the data that both advertisers and publishers crave. Bohinska sees it this way:



I see that partnering with 3rd party vendors who own data is very valuable for publishers. There are a lot of vendors so definitely they have where to choose from so it will be my advice. And let's not forget about the stuff I mentioned earlier: making sure they have DSP and SSP. Accept formats in unused space and not spoiling user experience and that they ask for reasonable price for the inventory which is compatible."

Stronger, More Transparent Partnerships

In this time, when everybody is searching for solid ground, it can be a good opportunity to remind the industry of the worth publishers bring through their platforms.

JustPremium

You should work with your partners on solutions that can help you and your sales team or your whole business. Obviously, it is important to work with partners that generate a lot of revenue for you, but in the end I think the most value for both partners: advertiser, user is when you can bring something unique."

Erik Hulsbosch
CTO, JustPremium



Weeronline

I remember when we started working from home for a couple of weeks. We had to spend quite a lot of time analyzing our inventory trying to understand what advertisers were doing, trying to understand how deep this situation is going. This was more analytical work than we've never done before because it was not that important so, there's always positive things that can come out of it. We all have something we can contribute after all in small or big ways. I think if it wasn't for coronavirus, we would have had the amount of free campaigns at the same rate as we did."

Remo Chipatiso
AdOps Manager, Weeronline

A photograph of a person's hand using a laptop. The laptop screen displays the Nikon website, which features a dark background with a forest scene and the text "A WORLD WITH NO CEILING." The website layout includes a header with the Nikon logo, a main content area with a large image of a camera, and a sidebar with a circular logo and the text "DS500 Outline the ordinary." Below the sidebar is a button that says "Learn more". The laptop is on a wooden desk, and there is a stack of papers and a cup of coffee in the background.

Part 6

Conclusions & Key Takeaways

Conclusions & Key Takeaways

1

Divide and Conquer with Multiple Revenue Streams

All of the supported theories here suggest that leaning too much on only one source of revenue will find you in a tough position if that source dries up. Look into various sources of income to insulate your publication from negative impact.

3

Weave Yourself Within the Fabric of the Advertising Landscape

Times of disruption cause advertisers, DSPs, SSPs, ad-tech agencies to reevaluate. Make sure that you are top-of-mind as they realign relationships and take inventory of the value that publishers provide to the advertising ecosystem.

2

Push the Frontiers of Tech Advancements Before Anyone Else

Downtime doesn't have to be idle time. The world doesn't stop turning and the loss of third-party cookies is still on the horizon. Use this time to update both your back- and front-end interfaces with the tools you need to make your content more successful.

Conclusions & Key Takeaways

5

Keep a Tab on Your Tags and Make Them Work For You

One of the most regrettable ways to lose revenue is when your back-end tags are not directing users successfully to advertisers. Make sure you get the credit for every lead you generate by checking your ads.txt and ensuring they are viable.



4

Clear the Regulatory Checks with Ease Using a CMP

No publisher should be expected to do all the work necessary to make them regulation compliant by themselves. Employ a CMP to make sure you aren't missing any traffic due to non-compliance. It's a simple fix for a complex issue.

6

Give Your Readers the Best Ad Experiences Available

Your content is valuable and should be displayed next to the most high-value advertisements available. Opening up your inventory to more high-impact formats will give your readers cohesive, non-obtrusive experiences that make them happy and earn you high returns.



JustPremium

Thank You

Our team of supply experts is committed to helping guide you during this time.
Please reach out to your local supply managers or info@justpremium.com
for more information.