



Times Online uses Google AdSense to quickly monetise changing content

“The Google AdSense programme has consistently delivered results and I’m confident that the incremental revenue generated by the ads will grow as a powerful complement to our own digital classified advertising.”

Zach Leonard
Digital Media Publisher
Times Media

TIMESONLINE

Times Online is the website of The Times and The Sunday Times newspapers in the United Kingdom (UK). The site was launched in 1996 and underwent a significant relaunch in February 2007. As of October there were 12.4m worldwide unique visitors to Times Online. The site is the second most visited online newspaper in the UK. Zach Leonard, Digital Media Publisher, Times Media, attributes the brand’s ongoing success and increasing visitor base to its mix of general news, comment, sports and business coverage, along with contemporary lifestyle and entertainment.

With more than 70 per cent of visitors comprising the high-spend ABC1 demographic, Times Online is an attractive media property for businesses wanting to deliver successful display and classified campaigns. Leonard says: “Our display and classified categories perform very well, but we wanted to monetise more of the site’s content and enhance our visitor experience with well-placed, relevant advertising.”

In 2004, the company began a contextual advertising strategy using Google AdSense. Since then, the programme has become an important element in the Times Online media mix. Leonard explains: “The Google AdSense programme has consistently delivered results and I’m confident that the incremental revenue generated by the ads will grow to complement our own digital classified advertising.”

Enhance visitor experience with relevant, high quality ads

“As a general news resource we draw a lot of different audiences – from football enthusiasts, to financiers,” says Leonard. With this in mind, it is important that the site’s contextual advertisements always reflect and reinforce the Times Online brand. “Using Google AdSense, we can easily monitor the quality of the ads so that wherever they appear they are always a good accompaniment to the page content,” he says.

“Users planning a holiday who research Times Online’s popular Travel section, are only shown links that offer further information or products related directly to the page article or commentary.” The company can also choose to exclude ads that contain words not suited to the editorial style of Times Online.

Monetise new and existing content easily

“Using Google AdSense means we don’t need to build individual solutions every time we develop new content streams,” says Leonard. A recent example of this is Times Online’s new blog called ‘Alpha Mummy’, which targets women in business juggling parenthood with the challenging demands of work. Times Online in general has developed a large professional female audience, and many of its sections are therefore attractive to AdSense advertisers targeting working women.

“Google AdSense algorithms can keep up with our changing content and enable us to harness the advertising potential of emerging markets easily.”

Zach Leonard
Digital Media Publisher
Times Media

Leonard explains: “Google AdSense algorithms can keep up with our changing content and enable us to harness the advertising potential of emerging markets easily. We can quickly monetise new audiences – such as professional women – very successfully.”

Use Google experience and expertise to optimise advertising traffic

According to Nielsen/Net Ratings, the number of visitors to the UK online newspapers has grown by more than 30 per cent since December 2006. Google is helping Times Online to utilise the growing popularity of online newspapers and attract more visitors to click on its Google AdSense ads. Using Google’s knowledge of the user experience, the company has decided to give the ads more prominence and is repositioning them to appear closer to page content.

“With the revenue-share model we already receive most of the revenue generated by the Google AdSense ads, but we’re confident that incorporating the end-user experience into the new positioning will increase click-through rates and bolster ad performance even further,” says Leonard. “This information will also help us to sell currently unsold inventory across the site.”

Times Online also uses a section-tracking tool to monitor the performance of ads in different pages. This data, combined with knowledge of how people use the site, helps the company to plan the best way to make use of different content locations.

Partner relationship supports ongoing success

Times Online has a dedicated partner account manager, who is the first port of call for support and advice. It also has continuous access to technical account teams who can help with administering and managing the programme. These factors complement the strong strategic partnership between Times Online and Google, explains Leonard. “In a market saturated with similar services, we choose Google for a number of reasons. These include its focus on considering the end user in its product design, its brand recognition, and its huge pool of global advertisers. It also listens carefully to what we say, and is dedicated to helping us achieve our business goals.”

