

Why Ad Buying Terminology Needs Standardization

Analysts waste too much time relabeling data sets

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An interview with:

David Smith

Founder and CEO
Mediasmith

Decoding ad tech lingo can be a headache since every vendor is free to adapt their own terminology. **Mediasmith** founder and CEO David Smith co-chairs an Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) Tech Lab **task force** that's pushing to standardize the language that everyone in the ad supply chain adheres to in their campaign reports. Smith spoke with eMarketer's Ross Benes about how the ad industry would benefit if the labeling of data sets became more consistent.

eMarketer:

Why do you think ad platforms need more linguistic standardization in their databases?

David Smith:

Because a lot of data is being transferred between companies. We're trying to reduce friction in the industry.

eMarketer:

How do you plan to do that?

David Smith:

When we do a campaign with a company, they send us data and it is in a bunch of fields. So for instance, let's talk about the term "publisher."

Maybe Google's DoubleClick calls that field "publisher," and maybe Strata calls it "site." And then for the next field, DoubleClick calls it "advertiser," but Strata might call it "client." Well, the automated system doesn't necessarily know that client equals advertiser or that site equals publisher.

“If we come up with a standard nomenclature, the flow of data will have less friction in it and there will be less need for people to spend time on it.”

eMarketer:

What are you hoping to accomplish with the IAB task force?

David Smith:

What we're trying to do when we evaluate campaigns is we're trying to take data from a whole bunch of different systems and roll them up into one database so that we can analyze and compare the performance of one publisher to another. So there is a lot of combining of data, there might be different tabs on a spreadsheet, there might be different entries in a database, but you're going to combine them all and if we've got a lot of different names, then somebody has to spend a lot of time relabeling.

If we come up with a standard nomenclature, the flow of data will have less friction in it and there will be less need for people to spend time on it.

eMarketer:

Why doesn't this type of standardization already exist?

David Smith:

For a long time, we didn't have a lot of different data sources. There was Nielsen for television, there was Mediamark Research and Intelligence for print. We didn't need to extract data from 14 different sources, there was just the one source. Now we've got so many different data sources with the web.

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