

# Why Video Ads Still Load Slowly

Too many ad tags and poor page design create latency

**INTERVIEW** | **FEBRUARY 2018**

**Ross Benes**





An interview with:  
**Brian Rifkin**

Co-Founder  
JW Player



Although **digital video advertising is growing rapidly**, video ads are often still a **pain to load**. Brian Rifkin, co-founder of video software company JW Player, spoke with eMarketer's Ross Benes about the technical details that create latency with video ads.

**eMarketer:**

Header bidding has **become really popular** with display advertising. Why hasn't it taken off with video?

**Brian Rifkin:**

Video header bidding was a buzzword of 2017. But it's just not there and it didn't scale up. A lot of times it is because of technical issues and resource constraints from the publishers.

**eMarketer:**

Can you elaborate?

**Brian Rifkin:**

For some reason, publishers have difficulty getting header bidding live with video. It just isn't set up as well and we did a lot to really support it in 2017, but we just didn't see the takeoff of it. Video seems to be different.

**"Most publishers are not implementing video in the most optimal way. It's no fault to them, it's just the fast evolution of HTML5, mobile and building your page for speed."**

**eMarketer:**

What is so different about video header bidding compared to display header bidding?

**Brian Rifkin:**

There's a smaller pool of buyers with video that are looking for higher-quality inventory. So there isn't as much of an advantage of bringing all the demand sources together at the same time. Video is also moving quickly to private marketplaces, so you need to align yourself with ad platforms that can let you sell those private deals, or have [an internal sales] team that sells those deals.

**eMarketer:**

How have you approached video header bidding?

**Brian Rifkin:**

We've linked the ad tech and video tech together [through a [deal with SpotX](#)]. We make just one ad call to SpotX, which is faster than making multiple client calls.

**eMarketer:**

Why do video ads take so long to load?

**Brian Rifkin:**

There are a lot of issues. There's a big creative file. Advertisers wrap the ad with different tags whether it is video ad serving template [VAST] or video player ad-serving interface definition [VPAID] tags. You also have to have the right technology in place.

Another factor that I can't underestimate enough is that it's all about the page layout.

eMarketer:

Why does page layout matter?

**Brian Rifkin:**

Most publishers are not implementing video in the most optimal way. It's no fault to them, it's just the fast evolution of HTML5, mobile and building your page for speed.

eMarketer:

What does a good page layout look like for video?

**Brian Rifkin:**

I'm a deep believer that video should be at the top of the page. I want the experience to be around video. I don't want it to be about getting that user to make sure they see six ads on the page because video is not like display. With video, you just want them to immerse themselves directly into the video launcher.

With video you want them to watch the content behind the ad because that means they're watching the ad. That's something that's very different than getting someone to just read an article and getting someone to scroll through multiple images.

**"An auction might take too long, or someone said they wanted the inventory in the auction and then declined it, so the auction had to move on to the next buyer. It could also be that the creative screwed up and returned an error. "**

**eMarketer:**

What is the biggest obstacle for publishers to address these issues?

**Brian Rifkin:**

Publishers have resource constraints and have to choose where to allocate their time.

**eMarketer:**

Unless I'm watching YouTube or Netflix, most video I watch online is far from seamless. It is easy to blame the publisher for slow loads, but what else is happening that I may be unaware of?

**Brian Rifkin:**

A lot of times it is behind the scenes. An auction might take too long, or someone said they wanted the inventory in the auction and then declined it, so the auction had to move on to the next buyer. It could also be that the creative screwed up and returned an error.

**eMarketer:**

How do you feel about the state of video advertising?

**Brian Rifkin:**

We're moving fast and you and I are pulling every rock underneath it and saying, "Here's what is wrong."

It's growing at a very rapid rate. It's surely an amazing business. But there's a lot that could be done for video to look even better.

Interview conducted on February 26, 2018