

Programmatic buying as a powerful tool

By [Paula Raubenheimer](#)

18 Jan 2017

Over the last three years, programmatic buying in South Africa has grown tremendously. Buyers and agencies alike are seeing the value of both buying media programmatically as well as buying programmatic guaranteed media, and as such have invested in technology as well as in upskilling staff.



Paula Raubenheimer

This is evident from a SouthernX and SpaceStation perspective where, over the last year, there has been a 50% increase in the number of buyers buying programmatically and there has also been more than 100% increase in the number of impressions bought since this time last year.

Going forward in 2017, we hope to see more buyers and agencies realising that buying programmatically doesn't just mean cheap inventory. It is a powerful tool that can be used to make more informed media buys, as well as a better way for buyers to purchase data. We are already seeing some buyers and agencies realising this power, and the more this perception shifts, the more publishers will be able to attribute meaningful data to the sale, which can then be analysed and used in future buys.

I believe that in 2017 we will see more heavy hitters investing seriously in making their inventory available programmatically, as Media24 and The SpaceStation have already done. This shift will mean that buyers will be able to have access to all buying channels through one media house. This will include the ability to buy video, mobile, app inventory or even part of a native buy either programmatically or through a direct deal. This integration will also mean that these media houses will be working hard to add value to their advertising inventory through a thorough understanding of their user base.

From a tech stack point of view, we will see header bidding coming to the fore. Header Bidding is the most technically advanced type of programmatic selling and is already making headway internationally and we will see this being adopted in the local market more aggressively going forward.

Header Bidding will better integrate revenue partners, ad tech companies and publishers, allowing for more yield for publishers and more automation and efficiency for buyers.

Programmatic TV is still on the horizon; for certain TV consumption across digital devices the ability to programmatically buy is already available. I do believe that programmatic TV will eventually become a standard offering in a programmatic media sell, but for now while linear TV consumption is still very high in emerging markets, the trick will be to work on how to best integrate programmatic efficiencies and data about these users into non-digital mediums.

I sincerely hope that 2017 will be the year where buyers and agencies fully embrace the true power of programmatic by buying transparently (meaning that the specific site and placement are visible to the buyer), so that they can collate the data from these buys and ensure that future campaigns are bought based on intelligent data.

We also need more push back from clients to ensure that their agencies are buying quality media, instead of buying the cheapest inventory and arbitraging the media buy.

Programmatic buying can, and should, enable brands to utilise audience insights and technology to tailor messages to the right person, at the right moment, in the right context.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paula Raubenheimer is Head of Programmatic at SouthernX@The SpaceStation.

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