

Agile, mobile, and accessible: Programmatic is the new startup

 By [Keabetswe Kgomongwe](#)

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Programmatic or premium? It's an age-old debate in the digital arena and, depending on who you ask, you'll get very different opinions.



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Publishers will instinctively tell you that premium-buys are much better for your brand. In fact, a lot of articles on the web would agree. They'll toss around terms like "brand safety", "viewability", and "fake news" in an attempt to persuade clients to choose premium as the safer option. The truth is, it's nowhere near that simple.

New and unprecedented opportunities

In an [article published by AdAge](#), David Jacobs defines programmatic as "an automated way for buyers to bid for ad inventory"; whereas premium is "a term used to describe the quality of inventory or website content".

Programmatic technologies offer new and unprecedented opportunities to capture demand well beyond the reach of an in-house sales team. They allow advertisers to strategically place banner ads in front of the right audience, based on real-time data. A more practical comparison of the two would be to compare programmatic to a startup, and premium to a standard business.

Much like a startup, programmatic has three distinct characteristics that make it disruptive to the media buying industry:

Agile

In today's digital world, it is vital for brands to be dynamic in their ability to be adaptable.

In a startup environment, concepts such as hot-desking, working from clients' offices or working from home are not uncommon. As they look to compete against larger incumbents, they constantly have to prove themselves and be very strategic about their movements.

Programmatic requires similar agility. It pivots quickly and constantly evolves. Agencies who run their own programmatic tech are able to be more proactive, especially when it comes to checking campaign performance and optimisations. That gives it a distinct advantage over premium, which is static by comparison.

Mobile

Mobility is about getting to where you need to when you want to. Your audience is not waiting for you to jump on the bandwagon. If you spend your money on something that is not going to change, enhance or streamline audience interaction, you're going to be left behind. This can be seen in startups such as Uber and Airbnb, which disrupted the taxi and hotel industries.

Similarly, programmatic has come in as a huge disruptor to the media buying space, serving ads to individuals at the optimal time and place. Any brands still adopting a "wait and see approach" are setting themselves up for failure.

Accessible

The past decade or so has proven that audiences have quickly moved on from media in a traditional sense. The old adage of "build it and they will come" is no longer relevant. Today's audiences have a much shorter attention span and want to only access your offering at their time and convenience. Wherever they are.

Because of this, brands need to be accessible enough for people to reach them. "Significant momentum behind programmatic ad buying now focuses on its rich audience targeting capabilities," according to eMarketer. This allows for programmatic to operate as a bridge that connects relevant audiences to content that they would like to engage in.

Done correctly, programmatic is not something to be feared, but an essential component of any advertising strategy.



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I foresee that the new wave of disruptive startups in South Africa challenging traditional players in banking, mobile networks, and other industries will rely heavily on programmatic technology purely because of the current paradigm shift in the country. Being at the forefront of technologies such as programmatic radio, video and TV ads will prove to be beneficial to clients that have previously been afraid to take the leap.

It has become clear that you cannot definitively say that premium is better than programmatic or vice versa. What can be said, however, is that premium is an established yet dated way of media buying and programmatic is the innovative startup disrupting the space. As a brand, you should be able to take the lead by making sure you are agile, mobile, and accessible

to your audience.

ABOUT KEABETSWE KGOMONGWE

Kea is a Programmatic Specialist Hoorah Digital. She has a demonstrated history of working in the media and advertising industry. Skilled in Programmatic, Digital Strategy, Paid Digital Advertising, Media Buying and Consumer Branding. Kea achieved her BA in Advertising and Brand Management with Honours from Manchester Metropolitan University in 2014. Kea is an innovator whose main goal is to enrich lives, one campaign at a time.

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