



# When the new becomes necessary

10 platforms and perspectives changing  
how we think about advertising

**Anything is Possible.**

<https://aip.media>

## **Intro**

### **The world we want to see**

*Amid all the bold predictions about what the new decade might have in store, no-one guessed 2020 would be like this. But that's no excuse for crying and complaining.*

*The post-pandemic world is going to need a serious commitment from all of us to rebuild and regain what we have lost. We all need to step up and take responsibility for imagining the world we want to see next.*

*The new world we build together will need new stories. New ways of seeing and new ways of being. We have the reach and ambition to share those narratives with the people who need to hear them. It will take all our technical talents and creative imagination.*

*But we are not starting from nothing. A change has been building in the advertising industry, driven from the ground-up by bold new brands and agencies developing perspectives and platforms for delivering authentic, essential advertising media. Now there's a break in the old way of doing business, and farsighted innovators are ready to take their rightful place at the forefront.*

*For this new report, Anything is Possible surveyed the media landscape to discover how it's changing around us. It covers new platforms and technologies unlocking fresh efficiencies and shared value from the existing economy. And it also covers new perspectives and disruptive approaches from inside the advertising space, offering better ways of engaging audiences and sharing the messages needed to build the world to come.*

**Email me to find out how we can make these new ways of working - work for you.**

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## 1. Product placement at scale

**Mirriad** was founded in 2008 and after floating on the stock market in 2017, they have rapidly scaled up their offering. The platform creates completely new ad inventory unlocked by using artificial intelligence to retrospectively enable product placement within existing video.

For example, picture a scene in your favorite sitcom. Then picture the background of that scene. Perhaps the characters are outside, and there is an otherwise-unnoticed 48 sheet OOH banner in shot.

Using AI, this pristine, untouched 'ad space' can be manipulated to feature product placement for any number of brands. Other executions include an ad featuring on the back of a newspaper or magazine being read by the lead character. In some examples, placements and even actual products are being added to a scene where there was previously empty space.



Source: Mirriad Showreel, <https://www.mirriad.com/>

This something we have never seen before and marks a new era for product placement advertising. Used in conjunction with online and digital ad buying practice (see sections below), product placement becomes dynamic. The brands which feature in the placements could be tailored to the user's interests or otherwise relevant targeting methodology.

We could even see this inventory becoming readily available through Demand Side Platforms in the not so distant future.

Content creators may argue that with this evolved method of product placement, we risk distracting an audience from the original creative and damaging the art of content creation. And it remains to be seen how consumers would react to this at a mass scale if this was to become common practice. But relevant and willing brands who use these new capabilities wisely have an opportunity to be early adopters and reap the benefits.

### Thinking points:

- Dynamic display of on-screen real estate gives content creators new options and negotiating power.
- The entire history of on-screen culture potentially is back in play. What's old becomes new. But how will audiences react to advertisements for new services in old programming? How do we use creative design to avoid anachronism and future-shock?

## 2. Standing out on new mass-platforms - TikTok to Twitch

As we know, innovation within advertising doesn't always come from the functionality of the platform itself. It also comes from brands' use of said platform. A brand's timing, execution and creativity is what gives platforms like [TikTok](#) and [Twitch](#) such an exciting advertising offering that is worth considering.

Both platforms skew toward Gen-Z aka 'the Ad-block generation' and have seen a boom in downloads and usage in recent years. The boom is less pronounced for Twitch as it is geared toward a not-so-niche-anymore audience of gamers. However, TikTok has more immediate mass appeal and is quickly becoming a contender to platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat. While Instagram still has a much higher level of active users, using our partner market intelligence tool, [SimilarWeb](#), we can see TikTok has recently overtaken Instagram in the volume of Android downloads in the UK



Source: SimilarWeb, Last 24 Months, UK, Android Devices

It shows no sign of slowing down.

Both platforms are in the early stages of monetisation through advertisement. At the moment, the majority of the brand promotion is done through influencers, product placement and other soft-selling techniques.

Ads within the platforms are becoming common practice but still in a stage

of emergence. Where there are less advertisers, we can expect a cheaper cost to access inventory and this presents an opportunity that can be capitalised upon for campaigns with objectives at all stages of the purchase cycle.

But it's not just the cost benefits that represent an opportunity for brands to innovate. Last year Wendy's won awards and acclaim by setting themselves up by joining in with **Fortnite** and setting burger-themed missions for the players. The diversity of Twitch's mission and audiences, and the malleability of Fortnite's online world, make it a perfect venue for spectacular creative events that deliver enormous engagement.



The many (Fortnite) faces of Travis Scott

Rap megastar Travis Scott recently used Fortnite's virtual world to take live performance to a new level. Scott's fans and followers were alerted beforehand to log-in at 6.30pm to guarantee a place on Fortnite's busy servers before start time. Players gathered before a virtual festival stage custom built into the game world. At 7pm, Scott's avatar appeared and began a ten minute set including his biggest hits. Halfway through, the stage exploded and Scott transformed into a Godzilla-style giant, striding across the landscape while a psychedelic sci-fi firework extravaganza lit the Fortnite sky. Watched by an estimated 12m avid viewers, this kind of event has the critical impact of feeling like something new. It takes the audience to an elevated level of engagement, joining up the separate platforms on their personal

digital profile, and giving them a genuine, unforgettable I-was-there moment - all while under lockdown.

### Thinking points:

- How can you insert brands into these new, potentially hostile territories but still be true to their authentic values? (See **number 7** below to see how Bidstack are tackling the challenge.)
  - Carefully consider the platform and its users: What kind of stories can you tell, not just *for* the platform but *with* the platform?
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### 3. Connecting advertisers with established affinity audiences via newsletters

The enforcement of GDPR led to the creation of a number of new platforms within the advertising industry. These platforms provided solutions for advertisers that enable them to still reach a relevant audience without having to worry about the dangers of non-compliance.

One such platform is [LetterWell](#), a service that connects brands with publishers to allow them to advertise within publisher newsletters. This presents an opportunity for brands to piggyback on an already established, loyal and relevant audience through a highly engaging form of direct marketing comms. A brand is able to select from a marketplace of verified and vetted publishers that have also signed up to the platform, negotiate a price and ultimately deploy a campaign.



In and of itself, this may sound fairly straight-forward, but newsletters are known for having notably high levels of engagement (denoted by Open Rates and Click Through Rate). If a brand truly understands their audience and has access to the right market intelligence tools, they can target publishers with the highest levels of affinity.

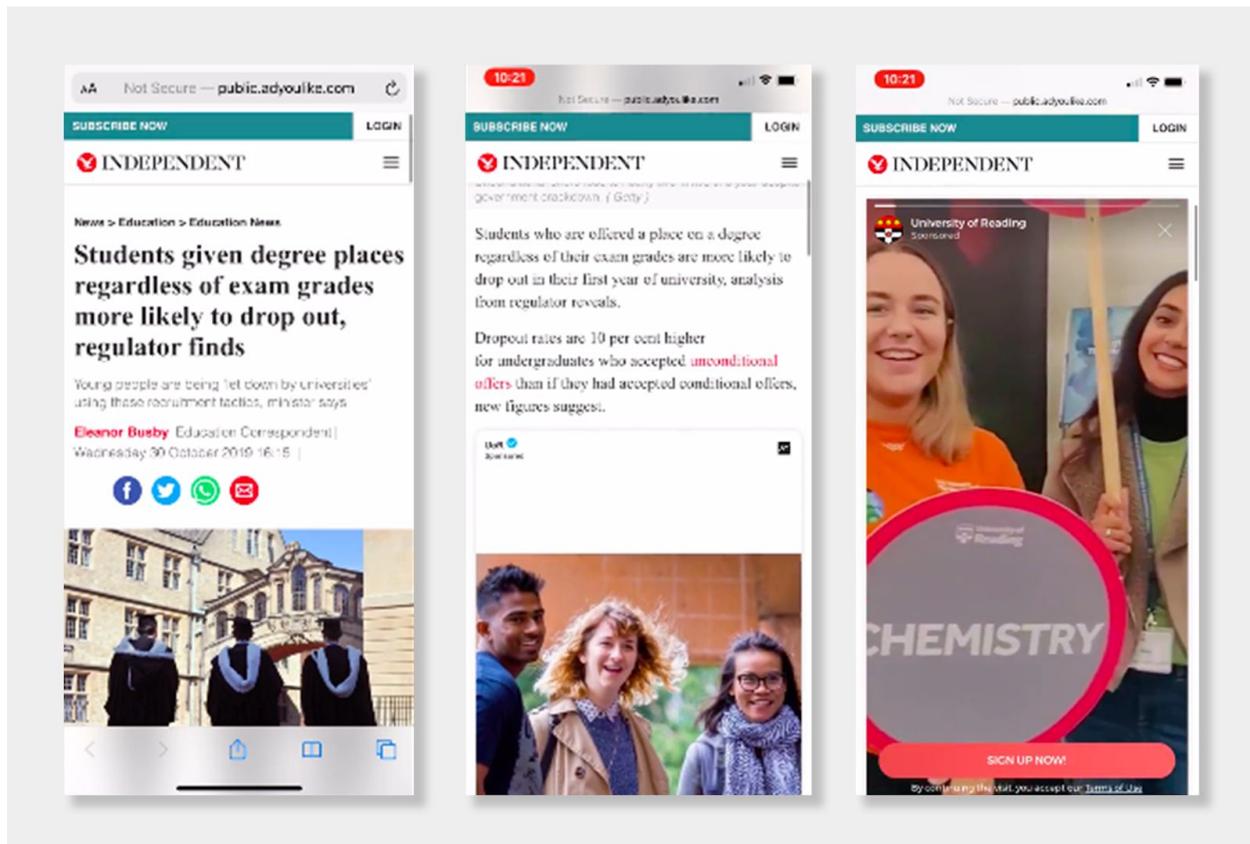
This analysis coupled with a creative execution that aligns well both with values of the publisher's audience and clearly illustrates the value the brand can provide to the select audience - will ultimately lead to success and great user experience.

### Thinking points:

- Newsletter advertising needs pinpoint precision. Audiences in these spaces are demanding and discerning, and poor decisions or simple mis-steps can create lasting brand damage and sink the newsletter channel.
- With this high risk comes high reward. If you can provide content that is genuinely enlightening and useful to the audience, you can onboard new users, leverage powerful word of mouth, and drive positive, lasting brand sentiment all at once

## 4. Repurposing social assets to extend reach

We are seeing how new thinking (mixed with some API expertise) is unlocking the investment and lessons learned from a decade of social media advertising into wider digital environments. In 2020, an increasing number of ad tech suppliers have introduced new ad formats that allow brands to repurpose existing social assets and showcase them across Native and Display environments.



This represents a serious opportunity for advertisers to extend the reach and maximise the return on increasingly costly social campaigns without having to create bespoke display assets. Popular social formats such as Instagram Stories can be served across the web similar to how Facebook's audience network might function but with greater reach, smoother execution and arguably in more superior environments.

The numbers here look strong - with viewers more inclined to spend time engaging with content rather than more standard and familiar formats. Equally, when comparing the performance of the creative to the original platform it was designed for, some ad tech suppliers are reporting +45% higher Click Through Rates and an astonishing +400% in Completion Rate (number of people that watch the complete ad).

There is a three way win in this new development. For brands, it reduces the need to produce multiple creative variations for different platforms. It's a one-size-fits-all approach to digital content placement.

For advertisers it means new revenue options suddenly come on-stream, and allows them to experiment to see which combinations of platforms, content and channels work without having to try costly new bespoke material.

But potentially the biggest benefit here is for the end-users: standardisation of advertising across channels and platforms means optimising for better experiences

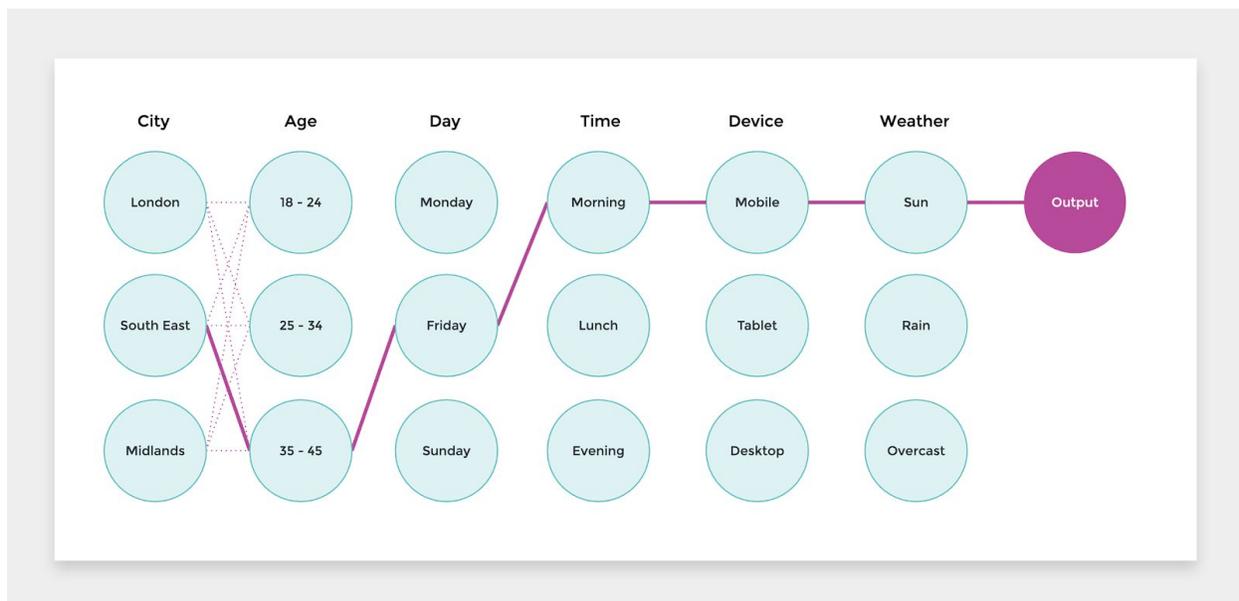
### Thinking points:

- Will we start to see Facebook catch up and work to improve their creative execution across their Audience Network? It's likely. But it begs the question, which option will be cheapest and most effective for advertisers?
- Could we see the environments for this expand beyond within a user's browsing journey online? Digital OOH could be a potential use case here. (See **section 9** below.)

## 5. Dynamic creative and personalisation for digital audio

Personalised advertising almost always leads to higher ad recall and greater impact. Lesson 101 in advertising: creative built with a particular type of consumer in mind is more likely to generate an emotional connection and consequently, a higher propensity for them to engage. This is taken a step further through new digital media where we can now personalise an ad to a specific user and leverage data signals such as time of day, device, location, weather and even names to build a creative execution. Not many platforms allow you to do this dynamically, however, [A Million Ads](#) does and is geared specifically toward digital audio.

A Million Ads combines data-driven personalization with the strength of audio to allow advertisers to easily enhance emotive connection between creative and consumer. The platform will combine all known data points about a user to create a huge number of combinations of potential experiences for said user. For example, knowing a user's location, age, the day, time, their device and current weather conditions presents a number of different levers to pull in a creative execution.



With more consumers moving away from broadcast channels such as television, advertisers need to be smarter with their spend. Without creative personalisation, ad fatigue becomes a real problem. This is an opportunity for brands to greatly improve the relevancy of their advertising at a mass scale and adopt true personalisation through digital audio.

As of mid-last year, A Million Ads announced partnerships with [Triton Digital](#) and [AdForm](#), two key platforms in the Podcast tech and Programmatic buying space. This both improves an advertisers ability to buy efficiently and also greatly increases the size of the inventory available.

With A Millions Ads' platform capability and the ever continuing advancement in AI in building synthetic voices we can expect to see the platform evolve even further, perhaps one day allowing advertisers to simply input a script and receive any number of automatically generated voice over variations as an output.

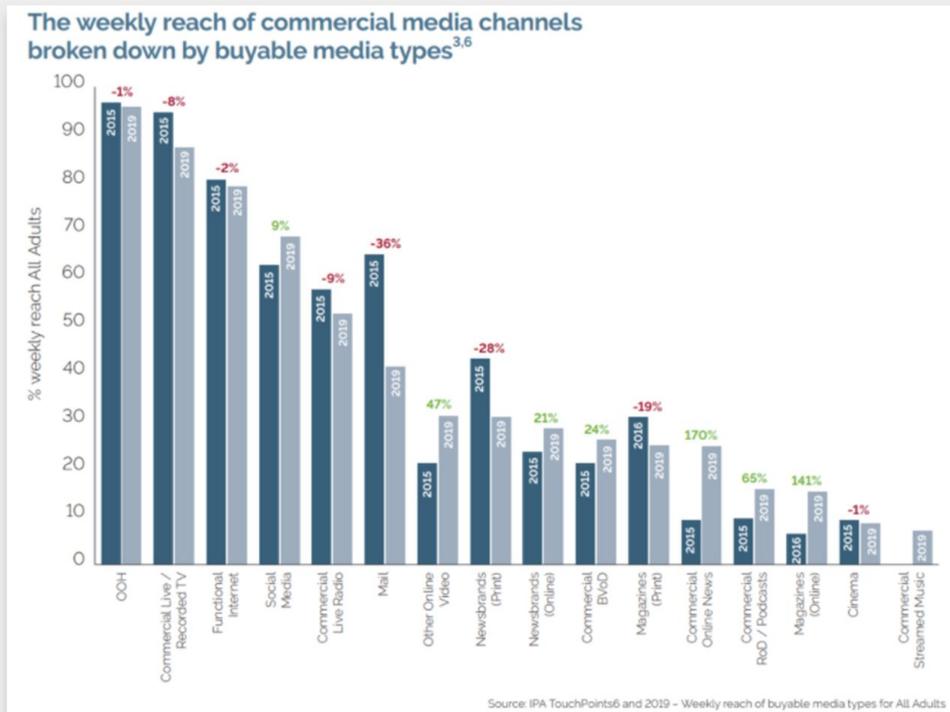
### Thinking points:

- Anyone currently running or planning to run digital audio campaigns should consider A Million Ads as a way or elevating their creative execution. However, a user's privacy should be kept in mind. Do we risk being *too personalised* and having the opposite effect?
- AI's ability to seamlessly generate voice over options that attain the same level of emotion as the real thing is not quite there yet but we suspect it won't take long.

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## 6. Transit media - getting the show on the road

Until the current crisis, Out-Of-Home (OOH) advertising was still the undisputed king of media channel reach. For that to stay true in the post-crisis world, OOH is going to need its disruptors and innovators. (See [section 9](#) below.)



And within OOH, a 2019 Nielsen report showed that wrapped vehicles are the leading format for impact. Because of that combination of impact and reach, placing ad content onto the road network's most frequent features - our cars - is not exactly unknown territory.

But big gains are there to be made from sharpening up the targeting and coordination with a satellite view of placement and presence, matching audience data with key places and key times.

Driving added value in transit advertising is all about connecting individual driver behaviour patterns and specific vehicles with target audience movements and locations. Joining these dots is where platforms like [adverttu](https://www.adverttu.com) come in, with an all-in-one platform that brings brands, wrap-suppliers and car driver-owners together - along with the data they need to manage campaigns for optimal impact.

### Thinking point:

- Wrapped-car advertising is all about *movement*. Think about your brand values and your product - if fast and dynamic are what you're going for, this could be the perfect platform to maximise exposure and return.

But if ecological awareness is your thing, not so much - unless adverttu are collecting and connecting data on electric cars...

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## 7. Cracking in-game advertising to reach the unreachable

How do you turn the players into payers without sucking the fun out of the game? **Bidstack** are turning the ambient and background spaces of popular video games into programmatic real-estate where brands can place their logos, creative and messaging in ways that - critically - don't interrupt gameplay.

Wisely for this volatile audience, Bidstack position themselves on the side of gamers and developers alike, prizing the immersive gaming experience and the realistic playable environment over intrusive brand exposure in-game. When it comes to real world gaming it's hard to see where either side could object. What is less realistic than an urban game world somehow mysteriously free of recognisable advertisements? As Bidstack mediates the sometimes frosty relationship between gamers and advertisers, it's not hard to foresee gaming's restless innovators incorporating real-world advertisements (and their attached brands and services) into the fabric of their interactive storytelling modes in ways that enhance the immersive experience - as Fortnite already showed with Travis Scott and Wendys.

For advertisers and agencies, another part of Bidstack's appeal has to be their crisp, non-nonsense console interface which enables clear visibility on spend

and placements, offering data that can be used to adapt their tool to your own ends and mission.

As Bidstack works to warm-up the sometimes frosty relationship between gamers and advertisers, it's not hard to foresee the opportunities for creative brands to tell their own stories in these scenarios are enormous.

### Thinking points:

- One of the more interesting potential effects of Bidstack's model is the way that it opens up a new stream of revenue for games developers which can support niche or indie gaming. It means devs struggling to fund their pet projects and create the next surprise cult hit can potentially access funds without risking their creative integrity.
- Bidstack is knocking on the door of a very special advertising sweet-spot; the targeted intersection where the supermassive yet traditionally hard-to-find gaming audience meets the highly engaged and vocal indie gaming community.



Bidstack's non-invasive in-game ads speak to their gaming-first priority.

## 8. Effective, ethical advertising and the true value of attention economics

**Good Loop** is a custom video-player that appears mid-stream as readers scroll through articles, or as a pre-roll for other video. What's new about that?

Sometimes innovation can be as simple as a small shift in perspective leading to a bigger change in purpose. Wherever and whenever you see Good Loop's 'Ads for Good' seal on an advertisement, they ensure that if the viewer engages 50% of the revenue from their watch, swipe or click on the ad will go to charity.

The real-world benefits of their model to date are clear. Good Loop are on-target for £2,000,000 raised for global good cause by 2021. But beyond these good causes, Good Loop presents a systemic challenge to an industry which has got used to taking its ubiquity for granted.

Good Loop's perspective uses advertising to empower audiences to make a positive contribution. It complicates the simple arguments of the adblocker generation and makes a serious demand of them: are you spending your attention consciously? Or by refusing to engage, are you just a slightly different version of the mindless consumer you always say you're not?

Good Loop have good figures to go with their good intentions. Ads bearing the Good Loop stamp show higher recall and engagement - and that is where the power comes in. If brands want to make lasting, meaningful connections with trusted audiences, they need to invest a bit of trust in them first.

### Thinking points:

- Good Loop understands that the value in programmatic advertising, and the attention economy as a whole, comes entirely from the audience and where they choose to place their thoughts and feelings. Producing authentic user interactions means engaging their whole

being and treating them like conscious, conscientious participants in a positive, rewarding process.

There's an implicit, and welcome, creative challenge: can we tell stories strong enough to deserve that attention, without falling back on questionable tricks of the trade?

- Good Loop is part of a developing narrative about the changing role of advertising in society. Different strands in this complex story are being told by a number of different participants, including the Conscious Advertising Network. It's the opposite of a passive consumer model, and it holds the key to improving the way advertising as an industry works.

This is a model and a message **aip** are 100% behind.

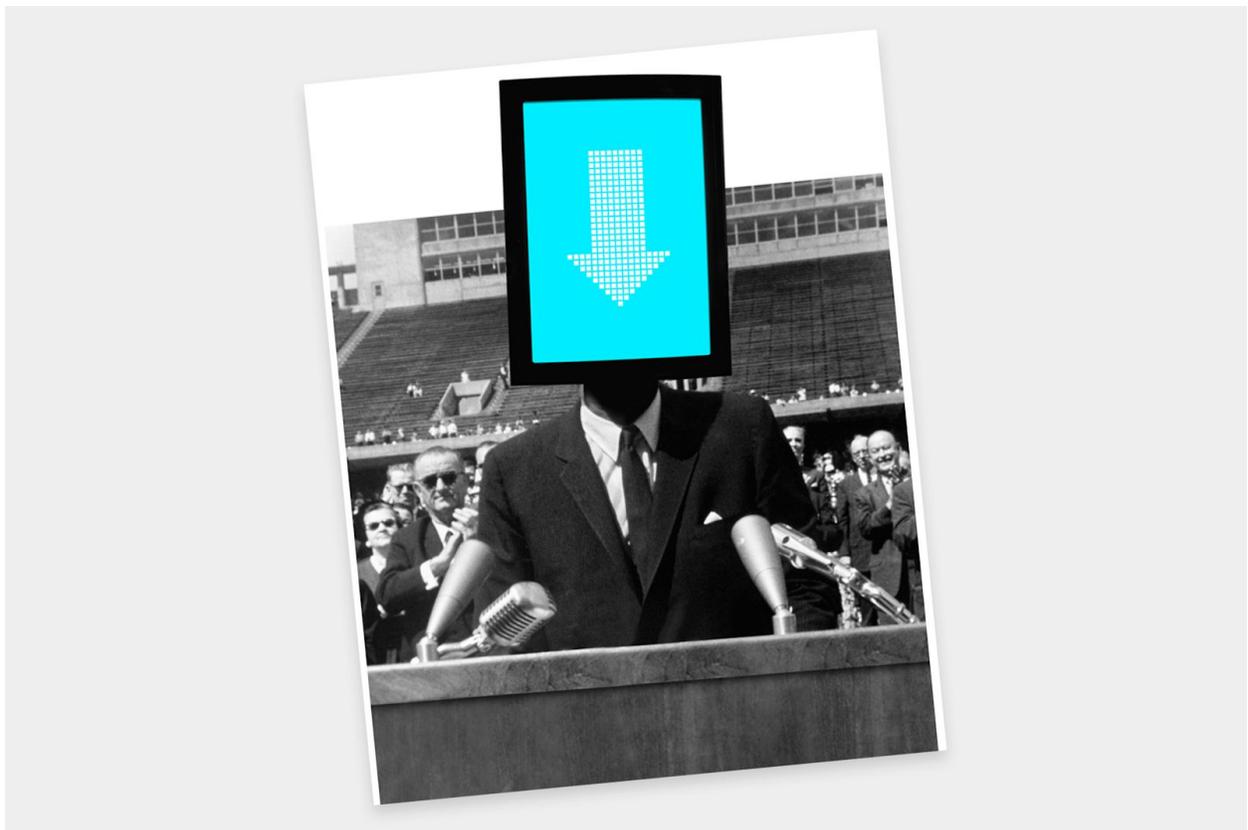


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## 9. Bringing transparency to digital OOH

It doesn't really matter whose numbers you are looking at - the sheer, unimpeded reach of OOH ad placement, plus the freedom and flexibility of a digital content display platform, is one of the most impactful and cost effective of sharing your message with the whole wide world.

But the way the business of digital ad placement is often conducted recalls all too well the image of the pre-digital advertising industry from decades ago: backroom deals, nods and winks, backhanders and old-boy networks. That's why **VIOOH**'s simple commitment to transparency is so welcome: bringing the practical ethics of the digital age to OOH.



VIOOH's online media buying marketplace removes the barriers to automated and programmatic digital OOH transactions. By doing so, they are

increasing placement accessibility for new or smaller players and cutting wasted time and effort through an open, frictionless buy-sell experience. VIOOH gives media buyers a platform that 'ensures advertising messages are 100% viewable, brand safe and seen by bot free, targeted audiences'. A fair and open bidding process for OOH that gives a clear line of sight on ROI and pricing could herald a new way of thinking for the OOH industry, driving out unscrupulous players and, crucially, providing over time audience engagement data that makes a difference to how, when and where messages are displayed for maximum impact.

### Thinking point:

- VIOOH's integration of platform, marketplace and content is generating a huge amount of new data, and could be a critical step on the journey to unlocking new metrics for digital OOH to improve personal message relevance on the streets.
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## 10. Taking personal privacy seriously: the great search differentiator?

You've probably heard of [DuckDuckGo](#), they have been around for over 10 years. For those that haven't, they are a privacy first search engine that focuses on trust. DuckDuckGo enables its users to take control when it comes to how their data is handled. To put it simply and from the horse's mouth, "we don't collect or share any of your personal information.". DuckDuckGo will not store or track specific user behaviour that can later be used for targeting through advertising - a vital lifeline for platforms such as Google.

Since the announcement of GDPR, the general public's awareness of how their personal information is handled online has greatly increased. YouGov's recent data suggests that 80% of consumers are more concerned about their personal privacy than just a year ago. When comparing visits to that of

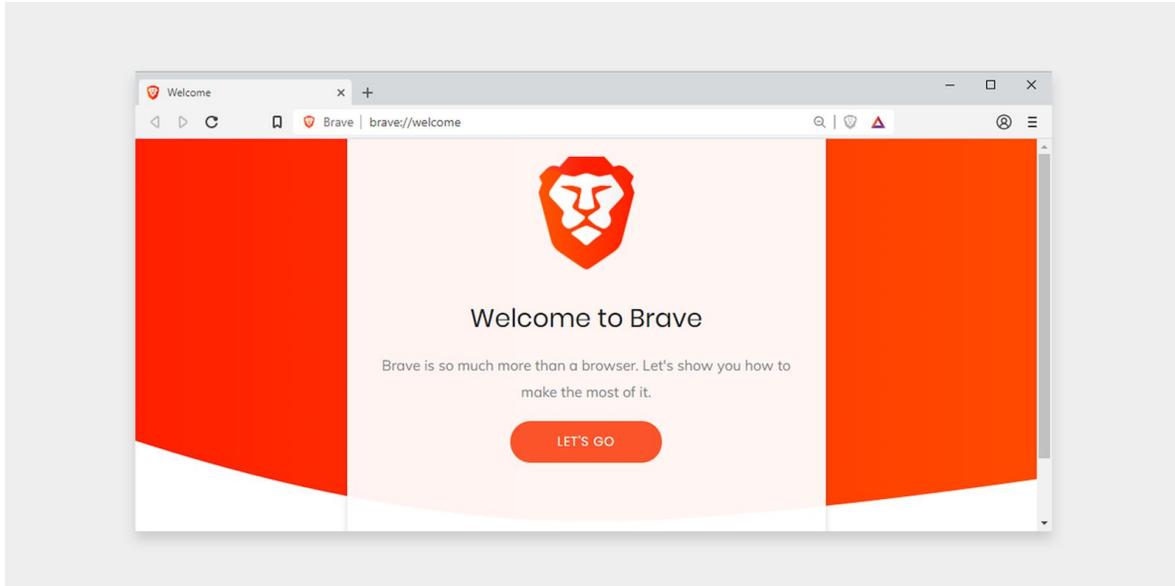
Microsoft's Bing over the last 24 months, we can now see DuckDuckGo has overtaken Bing in terms of visits in the UK. While the gap has slowly been closing, GDPR will likely have led to people actively searching for alternatives



Source: SimilarWeb, Market: UK, Date Range: Last 24 Months

It's important we also acknowledge browsers at this point. As we know, Google Chrome is one of the largest and comes with Google as the default search engine option. A user's choice of browser will likely influence which search engine they use and trying to persuading them to switch browser is understood to be difficult.

DuckDuckGo offers a Chrome Extension to bring the search engine's offering native within Chrome, but this seemingly simple fix is being challenged by new privacy-first browsers such as [Brave](#), an independant option for users that will enable tracker and ad blocking as default from within the browser experience.



So, what does all this mean for brands and advertisers? Well, it removes the ability to target user's at a granular level and has a knock on effect on personalization. This is obviously a negative when you put in the context of the capability of other platforms, however, we should strive to adopt a consumer first mindframe.

Ultimately, consumers lead change and they are the decision makers. We have already seen browser's such as Safari and Firefox remove 3rd party tracking capability and Chrome is due to follow suit within the next 2 years. The inability to personalise ads and target at granular level could become the norm. Advertiser's that can find ways to make this work both to their advantage and their campaigns to a similar level of efficiency will succeed.

### Thinking point:

- Search engines such as Google have already made it easier and clearer for user's to turn off tracking and ad personalisation at the click of a button. Will this slow into DuckDuckGo's rate of growth and adoption?

## Outro

### **5G meets AI: When sci-fi becomes sci-fact**

*It is important we acknowledge the rollout of 5G and understand the importance this will have on all the above trends.*

*Just as advertisers can be on the front foot with the platforms above, so can the platforms themselves with new technical possibilities. 5G will enable a more connected world with a stronger, faster infrastructure that both advertisers and platforms can leverage. Video advertising will grow significantly and we can expect platforms like Mirriad to evolve into offerings that encapsulate real-time video and buying processes.*

*Combined with the detail and context given by widespread AI, deep personalisation and remarketing have the potential to truly change the advertising landscape.*

*At times like these there is a lot to be said for keepings one's ear close to the ground. Much of the benefit of new technological affordances as they emerge goes to those early adopters who are able to leverage first-mover advantage before the crowd catches up and the tech normalises.*

*At times like this the old ways of doing things become weaker than ever, and **the new becomes necessary.***

**Possiblists** with a deep understanding of the conjunction of technology and audience with cultural creativity have an opportunity today to remake media from the ground up.

Contact **Anything is Possible** today to put these new platforms and perspectives to work for you.

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**hello@aip.media**