The mobiThinking guide to mobile advertising networks

This guide profiles eleven of the most important mobile ad networks giving publishers and advertisers an exclusive insight into who they are, what they do and what geographies they cover.

Considering the rate at which mobile advertising is growing around the globe, mobiThinking was surprised to find how little information there is about mobile advertising networks and the vital role they play in connecting marketers to mobile Websites. So we decided to do something about it. This guide profiles ten of the most important mobile ad networks across the globe – we will add more, as they are recommended to us – giving publishers and advertisers an exclusive insight into who they are, what they do and what geographies they cover.

We have divided networks into three loose categories (with considerable overlap), based on the business model.

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What are blind, premium blind or premium networks? For the uninitiated, the following will also be an introduction to the commonly used jargon and acronyms…

Blind networks are usually the largest in terms of publishers, advertisers and impressions. They serve a high volume of advertising to an extensive base of mostly independent mobile publishers (mobile sites and applications), supplemented by premium publishers' unfilled inventory.
They offer plenty of options for targeting such as by country and content channels (news, sports etc), but do not (usually) allow advertisers to choose specific Websites.
Performance advertising is the norm, paid for by cost per click (CPC) – this is for marketers who want an active response to their ads such as clicking through a banner to the advertiser's site, click to download/call etc. The CPC varies with supply and demand, determined through a self-service auction system. The cheapest option is run of network (RON) adverts (i.e. no targeting), which in some countries may start at US$0.01 CPC.
Some blind networks also offer brand advertising, on a cost per thousand impressions (CPM) model – i.e. you pay X for every 1,000 devices that visit/download the page – this is for marketers that want exposure, perhaps to create awareness of a new product.
Advertisers should expect a wealth of self-service tools that help you track and optimize your campaign in real time.
Publishers receive a revenue share, perhaps 55-65 percent of what the advertiser pays.
Read the profiles of: Admoda/Adultmoda, AdMob, BuzzCity, InMobi

Premium blind networks tend to be medium-sized, with a higher proportion of premium publishers (i.e. big-traffic mobile sites of well-known brands, perhaps newspapers, broadcasters or operator portals), some on exclusive relationships. These networks attract a higher proportion of brand advertising, paid for on CPM basis. A lot of advertising will still be blind or semi-blind (i.e. targeted at a channel), but for a premium price you may be able to buy a specific spot on a site of your choice. Costs vary considerably – quotes can be as high as US$20 CPM.
Performance advertising is also available – and in some cases, search advertising (based on key words) – paid for by CPC. Some networks offer cost per action/acquisition (CPA) – where the advertiser only pays if the customer clicks through and then buys, signs up etc.
Advertisers should expect a mix of self-service and direct sales and support and lots of targeting options.
Read the profiles of: **Millennial Media, Jumptap, Madhouse, Quattro Wireless**

Premium networks focus on a limited number of prestige publishers – mobile operators and big-name destinations – for which they are akin to an extension of their direct-sales team. In the case of Nokia and AOL, much of the mobile inventory they sell is on Nokia or AOL sites.
The predominant (maybe only) pricing model is CPM, as the majority of campaigns are brand advertising. Premium networks attract big brand advertisers who are prepared to pay premium prices to secure the prime locations on top-tier mobile destinations. This means CPM will vary wildly from US$5-US$75.
Advertisers should expect more direct sales and support, than self-service and a wealth of targeting options. Publishers should expect to receive a majority share of advertising revenue, perhaps 50–70 percent. Deals are usually negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
Read the profiles of: **Advertising.com/AOL, Nokia Interactive Advertising, Pudding Media**

- **Thanks to all the ad networks that helped with this guide. Thanks also Harry Dewhirst (COO, mobile media agency RingRing Media), Laura Marriott (mobile marketing consultant) and Paul Berney (Mobile Marketing Association).**
- **This guide will be frequently reviewed. Please let us know if you think it can be improved or wish to recommend a mobile ad network not covered here.**
  Comment below or email editor (at) mobiThinking.com.
