



Rayman at Jupiter Ad Forum



ONLINE-ADS - Jupiter Conference by ClickZ

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Day one of the Jupiter forum was subtitled, "Making Sense of Ad Technologies." And while it seemed that many of the heaviest hitters tried to do just that, they did so with moderate success, at best.

The top guns of the industry's biggest ad management companies were well in attendance. We're talking DoubleClick, 24/7, NetGravity, i33 communications to name a few. But the group agreed on little more than the fact that online ad management technologies are, at most, uneven in performance and often unreliable; one-to-one marketing is still evolving; and promising rich media campaigns remain, well mostly just promising.

But as Solbright President Key Compton pointed out, "Online advertising is just a baby. And a baby cries a lot. So you have to put the pain in context."

Nevertheless, there were plenty of colorful moments at the conference most notably, when Starwave's Patrick "Doesn't Mince Words" Naughton charged in his morning keynote address that third-party ad serving is a raw deal for advertisers and site publishers alike. Naughton was followed on stage by a panel that included none other than DoubleClick's Kevin O'Connor.

Of course, O'Connor defended third party ad serving systems, as did several other speakers throughout the day. Naughton, for his part, side-stepped the crowds calling for blood and caught an immediate flight back the West Coast. Other highpoints included Jupiter analysts Evan Neufeld and David Card debating the vagaries of various new online ad technologies and products, and a la Siskel and Ebert rating them thumb's up or down. (Rich media: Two hesitant thumb's up. All-in-one packages: Thumb's down from Evan, thumb's up from Dave.)

Evan also coined a new phrase with this description of the percentage of users who offer phony demographics to free email service companies: Fib rate.

And before he jettisoned to the airport, Patrick Naughton shared a few things he's learned about web publishing:

- o Do things in as few ways as possible.
- o Design systems for 100 times your current load.
- o Move quickly but cautiously on new technology, and don't jump on the newest and coolest just because it's new and cool.

- o Put your best people closest to the money even if those aren't typically the highest-paying positions.

Later on in the day, i33's Drew Rayman was refreshingly honest in his No-More-PowerPoint-Please discussion on the shortcomings of ad serving technology that continually underdelivers on impressions.

Asked by ClickZ's Andy Bourland to name names and get specific, he pointed toward representatives from AdForce (formerly IMGIS) and NetGravity as the source of most of the problems he encounters, underdelivering at a consistent rate of anywhere from 10 to 50 percent. Not surprisingly, Rayman demonstrated his own ad management solution offered exclusively to advertisers.

And Scott Kaufman of AdKnowledge talked about the pack mentality of advertisers on the web, where the top 10 sites get 64 percent of all advertising revenue. Said he: "The media-centric food chain is not fully developed."

Finally, Macromedia's Norm Meyrowitz demoed some pretty cool rich media sponsorship and advertising vehicles, injecting a healthy dose of his good humor, to boot.

Some of the speakers at the Jupiter event unfortunately used their floor time to pitch their companies and products, which made for an uneven agenda. It would have been more useful for those in the audience to hear where these executives are at, what they are wrestling with currently, what solutions they've discovered. After all, most of those in the audience already knew why they were there. A little less pitch, a little more punch.

But that left plenty of time to comb the exhibit area for good tchotchkes, so I'm not complaining. In between all the t-shirts, keychains, magnets and mouse pads were some pretty novel things.

Most notable was the offering of boston.com, which gets the newly minted Most Innovative Use of Tchotchkes Award.

Not every attendee may necessarily make it to every booth. But it's a sure bet that each person there will

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visit the bathroom once or twice. Boston.com gets big points for sponsoring the bathrooms -- putting their branded toothbrushes, toothpaste and towelettes right

in front of everyone there far away from the maddening crowd.

By Ann Handley

