

Above The Fold Report - Sept 22, 2025

Please note that this information is confidential and intended for the internal use of our partners only.



Community Feed

- James Strang Prebid post-hack analysis: [Here is the Link](#)
- [USA Today Enters Its Gen AI Era With a Chatbot](#)
- IAB Tech Lab is launching the AI and LL Content Monetization Protocols (CoMP) working group. [Sign up](#). [More info](#).
- [Catherine Beattie on forecasting for success as Director of Programmatic at WeatherBug](#): "Women belong in every space and elevate the value in every space. I see women excel in operational roles time and again. If there is a barrier to entry, those of us in our roles now (men and women) should address it by actively seeking out and lifting women of potential into these digital roles."
- Alan Chapell's article that relates to another proposed settlement related to Google called RTB Control: [WTH, there's ANOTHER iceberg for digital media?](#)
- "authenticity" <- that's the word getting called out in our industry as bullshit in this conversation with Aditude's Jared Siegel.. [LinkedIn post](#)



Events

- Users Expectations & Ad Experiences Webinar | September 23, 11:00 am ET | Virtual [Register here!](#)
- September 29th: Nativo and Assertive Yield are co-hosting a publisher [happy hour](#)
- Unplugged Collective [Advertising Week Plans](#)
- Prebid Summit: NYC 2025 | October 14 | Quorum by Convene at 1221 Avenue of the Americas, NYC [Register Here!](#)
- DanAds Summit 25 | October 15, 9:00-6:00 ET | Midtown Loft & Terrace, 267 5th Ave, New York, NY 10016 [Request Your Ticket!](#)
- Optable Connect '25 | October 16, 12:00 pm ET | People Inc, 225 Liberty St, 4th Fl. New York, New York 10281 [Request to Attend!](#)

Brand Safety Institute Happy Hour | October 8 | In person

Join the Brand Safety Institute, Compliant, and Scott Cunningham for a discussion of buy-side quality signals, followed by a happy hour with our partners at the Trustworthy Accountability Group (TAG). The BSI Publisher Quality Utility, launched a year ago, aims to provide publishers with access to the data that the buy side of the industry uses to evaluate their inventory. The first part of this session will cover the data already available in the Utility, how publishers are utilizing it as part of their continuous improvement processes, and provide a preview of the new data that will be available in the upcoming version 3.0. In the second part of the session, Compliant, which partners with BSI's Publisher Quality utility to provide publishers with free access to their Data Integrity Index (DII) scores, which advertisers use to better curate their programmatic media buying. Compliant will explain the what, why, and how publishers can utilize the DII to enhance transparency, mitigate risk, and increase yield. The session will be on Wednesday, October 8th, at the 4As headquarters. Those interested should RSVP to Neal Thurman (neal@brandsafetyinstitute.com). Space will be limited, so the sooner we hear from you, the better.



AI Just Wouldn't Understand: Human-Crafted Quick Summaries of this Week's Discussions

(In other words, we manually compiled this list.)

- Mike Racic made a new announcement this week reaffirming their commitment to the changes they have made to TIDs: "If this change is negatively impacting monetization, the real question is why, given its limited scope, its legal grounding, and the IAB's stated intent. Furthermore, how can we as an industry be satisfied with a framework that has serious data leakage issues as a standard for trust and transparency?"
- Paul Bannister made a proposal of his own. [Article](#). [LinkedIn](#). Beeler.Tech community questions:
 - If a DSP can decrypt all eTIDs, regardless of which bidder received the request, does that allow them to "bid shade" or gain unfair insights?
 - Could DSPs stitch together signals across auctions to build user graphs, even if decryption is key-controlled?
 - How does rotating keys impact security if the DSPs still get all the new keys?
 - Can most publishers realistically participate in this program? Do they have the resources?
- Google-related news is happening quickly, but the big question is: how much can we do until the ground beneath our feet settles? Some believe this will take years to resolve, making it difficult to change course. Google [posted this on their blog this week](#). The response: "Is this not better for us than divestiture?"
- Publishers are still frustrated in their efforts to get TAM restored.

- Did you know that you can obtain Google DTF files for free in EU/EEA countries? [Link](#) & [Link](#)
- Index Exchange provides [log files](#), but the consensus is that log files from other SSPs are overpriced and don't pay for themselves. However, think what that data could tell a publisher...
- Publishers are feeling the impact of the TTD Kokai changes, seeing less spend coming through PMPs.
- Further conversation about [Header Bidding Trafficking](#) in GAM is that some have found it buggy, and it's too much of a black box.
- Trade Desk Deal Desk is getting positive feedback based on UI walkthroughs.
- Passing Schain: further test results show that it was actually detrimental. Possible configuration issues, but to date, we haven't heard any positive feedback on using it.



Poll: Ad Manager Update: New Opportunities Available Alerts. Do You?

- 64% Ignore them. They never win.
- 28% Evaluate each one. Mixed Results, though.
- 8% I can't wait for the next one to come through



Server-Side Ad Servers

This looks to be an area of exploration for the community. We've come up with an initial list: Kevel, Koddi, Topsort, AdButler, Equativ. These solutions make sense for commerce networks, but they may also be applicable to native ads. API-driven gives it speed – something publishers need to continue improving – and they conduct their own “auctions.” Someone suggested that this could be part of an ad block recovery solution. However, the cost of the platforms, the work involved to maintain them, and the lack of built-in demand are significant challenges.



NAI Announcement: What's the Full Story?

Is this an important change? "As of September 15, 2025, the Network Advertising Initiative (NAI) has ceased operations for its opt-out tool for cookie-based and probabilistic interest-based advertising (IBA). If your company offers links to NAI's tool in your privacy policy or other content, you can immediately transition those links to the Digital Advertising Alliance's (DAA)

choice tools, which will remain fully operational at the URLs**DAA has always used, further described below. This will allow you to continue to offer direct access to industry-wide choices that both consumers and policymakers have come to expect. If your company was integrated in the NAI choice tool, then **please contact DAA** to learn more about how or whether this change affects your organization." [Full article here](#).



Consent or Pay?

(Someone from the US asked about consent or pay, and this was posted this week.):

Very broadly, from a UK/ICO perspective, which is a pretty good proxy for most other markets, when considering Consent or Pay, there are 4 key factors you have to carefully consider and show clear evidence of having done so via a DPIA:

- **Power imbalance** → *Do users really have a free choice, or are they being pushed into consent because I hold too much leverage?*
- **Equivalence** → *Are both options (consent vs pay) fair, viable, and presented in a balanced way?*
- **Fee level** → *Am I charging what a customer would reasonably expect to pay for this specific service, without using price as a way to coerce consent?*
- **Privacy by design** → *Am I embedding privacy protections into both routes (consent and pay) from the start, not as an afterthought?*



Push Notifications

Regarding the question, “Is anyone using push notifications with any success?” a few have weighed in. Someone pointed out that they personally ignore them (unless it's app-based), saying they feel like spam. However, a few people pointed out that they can drive traffic. “LTV measurement that we’ve done for push users is off the charts. Some people certainly do sign up for them, and they’re typically absurdly valuable users.”



Questions In Search of Answers/More Discussion

- Has anybody had any success with explicit opt-in emails?
- Seeking feedback on Pubmatic's new AI gizmo "[Pubmatic for Publishers](#)"
- Anyone just getting beat up in PMP this month, with the TTD's Kokai flip?

- Does anyone work with tap native or something similar? Have you tested their contextual (outbrain type) ads or their responsive ones, or both?
- I'm wondering if there are any good tools for forecasting, ad health monitoring, insights, etc. that have solid experience working with Criteo.
- Does anyone have yoy display/digital spend by advertiser vertical for the UK? For context, I want to see if spending in the automotive industry has increased with the influx of Chinese car launches and/or the push towards electric vehicles.