

With great data comes great probability

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Data visualisation - and the importance of its existence in programmatic

The term “big data” is used to describe a massive volume of a variety of different data sets – sorted and unsorted – so immense that it is nearly impossible to process using old-fashioned technology. According to the leading research firm, Gartner Inc., big data is defined by three distinct physiognomies that is – Volume, Velocity and Variety – also known as the three “Vs”. I, as a statistics enthusiast, am more interested in a fourth V, namely, Value. Ever owned a piece of gold? Miners remove gold-bearing rocks from the ground – and mining companies use a complex extraction process that involves machines such as crushers, steel balls, tanks and chemical solvents to really extract the value from the rocks.

To put that into context – what are the machines that you are using to extract the value from your first-party data? To retrieve information from data is to retrieve value from data. Information is simply **data** that has been **processed**, and **unprocessed data** is simply gold-bearing rocks that need work done on it. With that said, what you call “data” is determined by the “wants” of your company and what you call “information” is determined by its “needs”.

In the digital advertising industry, programmatic advertising is on the fast lane when it comes to progression and efficiency. Programmatic advertising is the utilisation of technology to automate the process of buying and selling media online – backed with processed data – conveying the **right product or service to the right people when they want it**. The point is to **add value** to internet users’ searches whilst browsing online and not to distract individuals from their desired actions. Data scientists collect important first-party data such as intent behaviour and demographics which is then married with third-party data obtained from data providers; this is used to determine the most relevant content for the most appropriate people who are online. This process results in a more efficient marketing spend, more relevant, compelling content, which drives a higher return on investment (ROI) for investors.

Going back to the three “Vs”, how can the immense amount of data - that comes in with volume, velocity and variety - be managed? The answer: Visualisation. Most people underestimate the significant amount of leverage visualisation of data can actually offer; being able to convert raw data to useful information is possible through visualisation. The fourth “V” is breathed to life when your data is refined and brought into visualisation, bringing out its true value.

Data visualisation is the art of presenting, often complex datasets, in a visually engaging way. Our brains are configured to think in pictures not number or words – influencing it with the right charts, images and infographics will result in a more effective analysis of the data.

Advantages

- Removes the hassle of manually sifting through thousands of rows of data in Excel, hoping to find arrays of statistics that may prove helpful to you
- Saves you time - and time is money
- Having all your data in front of you in one holistic view will make it easier to spot trends, outliers and inconsistencies
- Use the information found to get a better understanding of the audience you are dealing with and hence deliver a strategy with healthier optimisation
- Makes it possible to tell a story about your work to your clients in a visually appealing fashion
- Data visualisation makes it easier to explain your strategy to internal stakeholders

Disadvantages

- It is possible to easily make mistakes in the formation of charts, graphs and infographics
- Scaling mistakes in charts can lead to misinterpretation
- Misinterpretation of the visualisations will lead to wrong decisions being made and may negatively affect your business

There are a number of advantages and very few disadvantages, however these disadvantages can easily be eradicated if circumspection and rigorous investigation of the visualisations are done; some useful techniques are set out in the following article: "[Data: Avoiding the blind spot](#)".

Having a holistic view of your entire business on a single dashboard of some sort is the most efficient and the smartest way for non-techies and techies to keep their fingers on the pulse of their businesses ensuring a high probability of healthy campaigns and projects being executed.

According to Facebook, LiveInternet and GSMA intelligence, South African data continues to grow in 2016. In 2015, South Africa had a total population of 54 million, 24.9 active internet users and 11.8 million active social media accounts of which 10.6 million are on mobile. A shocking statistic shows that there are 79.1 million mobile connections in South Africa – a penetration rate of 146.48% - that's more than the number of South Africans in the country! The immense amount of data coming from our country's people is too great to manage using offline tools and methods.

At [Mark 1](#), we employ a number of unique methods to manage our first-party and third-party data allowing us to seamlessly extract the information we need in order to integrate various strategies to deliver superior results. As programmatic specialists we thrive on useful data and strive to meet our clients' every need by conveying the most compelling message to the most relevant consumers at micro-moments that matter to them.

ABOUT RIAAN SUNNY

Riaan graduated from UCT with a Bachelor of Commerce, specializing in Statistics and Economics. He is passionate about Programmatic Media and Yield management and has managed teams and drastically improved overall Revenue in some of the Largest Publishing websites in South Africa. Programmatic is his middle name and Yield management is the Game.

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