



Zulu5 & SMARTSTREAM.TV – Bridging the Analytics Gap to Deliver Video Ads in Brand-Safe Environments

*The demand for greater transparency, brand-safe ad delivery and elimination of ad fraud are key drivers for a complete set of best practices that ensure the highest standards in online ad delivery. Implementing a media quality strategy with a strong focus on **brand safety** can be challenging. Multiple vendors, numerous players on both the demand and supply side, and massive amounts of data to analyze make it difficult to stay ahead of the game. **Zulu5** helps advertisers, agencies and publishers alike to identify gaps in their current toolset by auditing ad fraud and brand safety measures with a crawler based outside in approach, actively screening illicit websites and alerting clients every time their ad gets displayed in such an environment with full delivery chain visibility.*



has grown into one of the largest video advertising networks in Europe – focusing on generating measurable brand impact with multiscreen video: managed services & programmatic. The company runs its own independent cross-device audience targeting system, boasting a database of more than 40 million unique users. Smartstream.tv is keen to follow in the footsteps of its mother company, ProSiebenSat. 1 Media Group, by adopting the Group’s ethos hinging upon a conducive advertising environment. It does this through a strong commitment to foster a brand-safe platform, with a strict no-tolerance policy against fraudulent traffic.

250

advertisers and all big media agencies and medianetworks

350

million video views monthly in Germany and other European countries

750

sites & apps - constantly monitored

40

million user profiles within its own multiscreen targeting system

Current Situation

“Transparency within the complete multichannel video ad delivery”

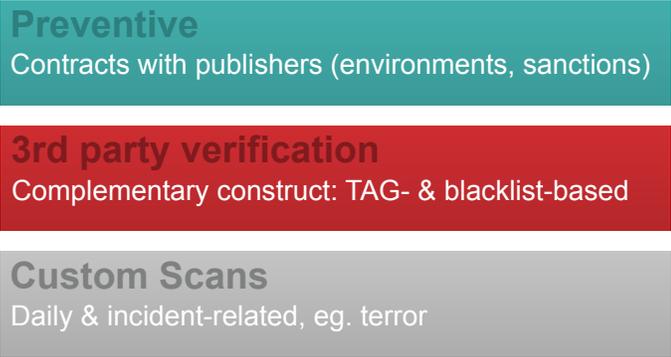
The challenge at hand for Smartstream.tv is to deliver video ads in a targeted, brand-safe, multichannel environment. Brand safety and ad fraud have always been a pain point in the ad industry, so it was only a matter of time until the team at Smartstream.tv established a correlation between video ads and increased fraud levels. This affinity for fraud with video ads has been traced to two things in particular: it is a very attractive target given the high CPM and there is less transparency along the video ad delivery chain. Transparency is one of the building

blocks of Smartstream.tv as a company, and one it remarkably excels at. Suffice to say the multiscreen ad network goes above and beyond to make sure it stays within the confines of this code.

Building Context

As a premium provider of services geared towards preventive action, Smartstream.tv was originally using multiple proprietary self-built tools for analytics, ad fraud detection and viewability.

At a later stage, it teamed up with two ad fraud tech companies in Integral Ad Science and Meetrics, which are both well-known for their third-party ad verification services. By and large, the data coming from these third-party verification vendors was good. But there was a caveat: bearing in mind



they are tag-based tools, it meant their systems were prone to gaps in analysis. No matter. The whole idea behind the conception of Smartstream.tv as an analytics-driven ad network was to bridge these gaps in the ad delivery chain.

However, it would be remiss to talk about the Smartstream.tv analytical process and fail to factor in the crucial role played by the team tasked with the manual aspect of it. The premium ad network has a dedicated team on hand that manually evaluates data coming

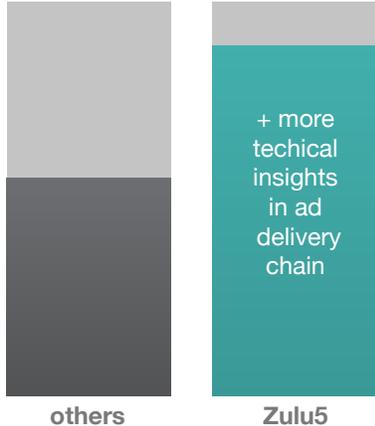
from fraud and analytics tools. Its overall goal is to weed out and subsequently curb abnormalities, following which relevant action is taken based on the findings.

It was not lost on the Smartstream.tv team that tag-based code falls short in accurately reading out ad referrals by as much as 5-20%. This, expectedly, had a negative bearing on quality control. To arrest this shortcoming, a solution was devised to add a data set that was not integrated in code, but rather, one that operated as a targeted scan of suspicious inventory, deceptive publishers and bad websites.

By using tag-based tools from current vendors and then beefing up the analytics process through targeted scanning Smartstream.tv would be able to gain a clearer and broader view of the path followed by video ads from start to finish. In the end, what this “outside-in” approach would do is to allow for a better transparency of the ad delivery process.

Current Integration

To put this vision into practice Smartstream.tv integrated **Zulu Black**, a data platform that rides on a crawler approach and provides detailed call chain information, in its fraud prevention system. This allowed for information such as daily checks designed to allow



for early detection of anomalies, spotting and interpreting existing flaws in ad delivery, as well as implementation of a chain of action to keep problematic deliveries at bay while also balancing the impression gap. The team developed a priority plan to capture all alerts coming from the different systems, including those from the zulu5 platform which comprise cases that tag-based fraud services would miss to capture.

Considering it provides detailed and actionable insights into specific transactions, not to mention an ability to analyze questionable behavior at the call chain level, zulu5 alerts were set as priority one. Its crawler-based approach means Smartstream.tv can now rely on the zulu5 platform to receive continuous real-time surveillance information, upon which the necessary subsequent action can be taken.

The outcome is that Smartstream.tv can provide clients with something that has previously been elusive in the video ad delivery process: the highest level of placement quality control for their video and programmatic campaigns.

The value addition that comes from zulu5 means Smartstream.tv can deliver one of the most robust brand-safe and anti-ad fraud video delivery systems available on the market today.

Next Steps

In addition to capturing ad call chain data, Smartstream.tv recognizes the need to screen publishers prior to bringing them on board. Zulu5 features a built-in URL screening tool that offers the ability to conduct publisher quality audits and assessments prior to inclusion in the network.

Smartstream.tv is also set to employ continuous custom scans that analyze, in real-time, if ads appear next to sensitive context, bridging the gap to tag-based tools that can take up to 24 hours to classify content. The platform will allow the specialist team to pull together the most sensitive sites and set up a custom scan to see who is placing ads there. This will allow for instant identification of any ads appearing next to degenerate content, be it explicit, extremist or terrorist and to take effective action.

Going the extra mile in brand safety is not only valued immensely by digital and TV clients, but also raises the bar for the market with regard to upholding video quality standards.