



# How Aussie advertisers are making the most of programmatic

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In the last year, we've seen more Aussie advertisers tap into the power of programmatic to drive their campaigns in a fast-moving landscape. Rhys Williams, Google AUNZ's director of media platforms, lays out three recent trends driving programmatic adoption in Australia.

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Programmatic advertising was a game-changer when it first emerged in Australia. As tools like [Programmatic Direct have given advertisers an edge](#) by helping them efficiently secure premium ad inventory, more brands have started to bring programmatic into play to streamline their media buys and reach more relevant audiences.

Until recently, programmatic was primarily used in this type of siloed, specialist role. That's already changing in a big way. Due to advancements in machine learning, more marketers are starting to understand and embrace ways in which programmatic can make an impact far beyond their media buys.

Programmatic creates both exciting opportunities and unique challenges for Aussie advertisers. As ad tech adoption rates continue to accelerate, 2018 will be an inflection point for the programmatic industry. Below are three reasons we've seen programmatic take hold in the Aussie digital landscape with a few examples from leading brands that have tapped into the technology.

## 1. Innovation is more important than ever

Both consumers and marketers are being empowered by technology. As a result, consumer expectations for fast, relevant online experiences are higher than ever, and marketers' expectations for technology are also on the rise—specifically how it can help them work more efficiently and drive better results for their clients.

To keep up in this environment, advertisers need to take a fresh approach to their campaign strategy and setup. We're already seeing that take shape in a few ways:

### **Programmatic Guaranteed**

The recent launch of [BCG/Nielsen research](#) is a great example of how advertisers and agencies are reimagining the media buying process. Merging traditional reservations (typically used to secure premium inventory) with programmatic buying in a single platform gives advertisers the ability to efficiently reach more unique users and deliver relevant ads across channels.

"The automation of guaranteed media buys is an exciting development for Domain," said Shannon Fitzpatrick, Domain's operations and performance director. "Our clients can now sync their own data segments with Domain's premium property seeker audience, and then deliver relevant creative messages to our network of sites in real time."

The real bonus for Aussie advertisers is the lowered risk of wasting impressions and premium inventory. That's not just a boon on the business side; it also translates to better ad experiences because consumers are much less likely to see the same ad, even when they switch devices.

### **Intent-focused creative**

We've also seen more Aussie advertisers use intent signals to revamp their creative development. By processing real-time signals with a platform like [DoubleClick](#), advertisers can streamline development of a huge number of [tailored creative variations](#), including rich media formats. Advertisers can even use signals such as local weather or sports results to trigger the launch of a digital campaign in line with real-world events or, in the near future, airings of their TV ads.

**Programmatic is making it easier for advertisers to tell their stories with relevant messages to the right audiences at the right time.**

Brands like [Toyota](#), [Qantas](#), and [HP](#) have already seen more engagement on their ads by using personalised creative. New Zealand's [Fly Buys](#) took a similar approach to streamline its remarketing strategy. After serving tailored, dynamic display ads to its reward programme members, the brand eventually achieved its biggest-ever points redemption week.

Of course, this doesn't change the entire creative process; the most effective campaigns are still centred on [genuine insights and stories](#). Programmatic is making it easier for advertisers to tell their stories with relevant messages to the right audiences at the right time.

## 2. Greater focus on sustainability

Brands want to ensure their ads appear next to content that matches their brand values, and consumers don't want to be annoyed by offensive, deceptive, or non-relevant ads.

The good news is technology can help. Using a combination of [human experts and machines](#), advertisers can gain more control over their ad placements. People are always going to be more reliable at making judgement calls based on tone and context, but machines can work faster and scale much more easily—and those capabilities are only increasing.



The [ads.txt project](#) is [IAB Tech Lab's](#) effort to increase transparency in programmatic advertising by creating a public record of Authorised Digital Sellers. [Adopted by all major publishers in Australia](#) (and about 70% of Australia's larger websites across different categories), ads.txt gives marketers more confidence and control by helping them easily identify trustworthy publishers and makes it more difficult for bad actors to profit from selling unauthorised inventory.

### 3. Higher demand for personalised assistance

Just as mobile unlocked new ways to find and reach relevant users, machine learning is leading the charge into the [age of assistance](#)—a new era defined by skyrocketing expectations for relevant, personalised, and assistive online experiences.



The Walt Disney Co. is [using language processing to trigger an audio soundtrack](#) when parents are reading a story aloud to their kids, and Japan's leading buyer and retailer of used cars, IDOM, [turned to machine learning to consolidate its data](#) and find users who were more likely to visit its stores. By serving customised ads to high-value potential car buyers, the brand saw 25% more in-store visits and a 300% increase in sales compared with the previous year.



Because the ability to optimise with machine learning extends far beyond creating and delivering relevant ads, there's going to be a lot more talk about machine learning and automation in ad tech pitches, headlines, and conference agendas. To move beyond the "hype" and turn an exciting opportunity into action, marketers, publishers, and agencies should look for tech partners that have a proven track record in driving end-to-end solutions—from media planning to optimisation and [cloud-based consumer insight strategies](#).

## Embracing a programmatic-filled future

Adopting new ad tech might sound like a daunting transformation, but we're finding smarter and better ways to work by [putting new understanding into action](#). The difference for today's advertisers is that we finally have the tools to harness those insights, create more relevant campaigns, and achieve new levels of ad efficiency and effectiveness that weren't previously possible.



Rhys Williams

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