



THE PATH TO A BETTER FUTURE

“Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds, cannot change anything.”

George Bernard Shaw, playwright and political activist



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Change is everywhere. Today, every facet of our life is continually evolving, and thanks to technological innovation the pace of change is faster than ever before. The positive impact of new digital technologies is far reaching, both geographically and societally, with the UN claiming they reached around 50% of the developing world's population in only two decades. Used correctly they can transform communities by enhancing connectivity, financial inclusion, access to trade and public services – technology can and should be a great equaliser.

For those of us working in the highly-developed advertising sector, the advent of digital technologies and the subsequent arrival of automated trading has reshaped the way our industry worked, heralding new opportunities for increased efficiency and effectiveness. We've seen new channels and platforms created, we've witnessed huge growth in digital audiences, and with that rapid shifts in marketing investment.

Yet not all growth is good growth. This upswing in digital advertising investment has disintermediated the primary parties in the advertising chain, the brands and publishers who are directly affected by the value and quality of engagement with consumers. Public trust in advertising has plunged to all-time lows, largely fuelled by fear of data misuse, message bombardment and intrusive, stalker-like ads following them around the internet.

Today we stand at a crossroads. Change in digital advertising is now inevitable, much of it enforced or driven by regulators, browsers and public demand. This time for change presents a once in a generation opportunity to equalise and reset our collective view of what is valued in digital advertising and reward where that value is created.

Progress is impossible without change.

Introducing the Better Future Series

The Ozone Project was created to change the world of digital advertising for advertisers, publishers and consumers – we are creating an ecosystem where all three can thrive. This means a more effective future where a brand's advertising results are inextricably linked to overall business performance, a more sustainable future where publishers are recognised and rewarded for the high attention environments they create for their loyal readers, and a fairer future where consumers clearly understand and value their role in the advertising exchange.

The **Better Future Series** is our way of introducing, investigating and interpreting the changes that are happening within the world of digital advertising. Throughout 2021 we will be deep-diving into the topics and thinking that are shaping our sector and dissecting what they really mean for advertisers, agencies and publishers. We will challenge the status quo by highlighting the products and initiatives Ozone is developing to create a better ecosystem that works harder for everyone. We are inviting you to join us on this journey into a new way of operating because we passionately believe a better future exists for the next generation of digital advertising.

Remember, those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.

Framed in a cookie-free future

One of the most talked about topics in digital advertising in the past year has been 'the death of the third-party cookie'. Its decommissioning from the world of digital advertising has ramifications across almost every aspect of campaign planning and delivery; from audience segmentation to targeting, frequency management to campaign measurement.

It was when Google announced they would no longer support third-party cookies in Chrome – the browser of choice for the majority of the UK population – that the industry began to acknowledge that the way things were done previously will not be the same as any future state. With Safari and Firefox having made the same user-friendly changes years ago, the impending changes from Google will end any safe-haven for the type of digital advertising that consumers dislike.

Our **Better Future Series** will be focused on a world where third-party cookies don't exist. While our industry's headlines have been dominated - often very negatively – with the challenges this will create for our sector, few allude to the opportunity this will create to sustainably reshape the online advertising ecosystem in a way that delivers even greater value for brands, publishers and consumers.

Our choices have consequences

Our thinking clearly points to a more progressive, alternative path for digital advertising. While a learn-as-you-go approach can account for decisions made in the early and growth years of our industry, any future direction will undoubtedly be the result of deliberate choice. That's a choice we all have to make.

Do you want to be part of a future where your consumers' data is shared among often anonymous middlemen, where easily gamified ad tech metrics are your measures of success, and where any engagement with consumers is deemed as good engagement?

Or do you want to be part of a future where your customers' data is treated properly and respectfully, where you do things because it's right to, not just because you can, and where your advertising succeeds because your target audience is genuinely interested in what you have to offer?

Ozone's view of a Better Future

Everyone at Ozone is incredibly passionate about what we do and our commitment to changing the landscape of the world we work in – so much so it's built into our values. Stopping short of being a manifesto for industry change, we have a number of principles that guide our approach to building a **Better Future**.

We want to create a future where:

- **Exceptional advertising and advertiser experiences are the norm for both readers and brands.** This creates engaged and long-term relationships - our starting point is if it's good for readers, then it's good for business
- **Customer data is sourced and used in ethical ways**, where its provenance is known and compliance ensured
- **There is complete transparency and trust between all parties**
- **Brands are safe by default**
- **Consumer attention – the whole point of advertising – is valued**, rather than adtech metrics that focus on the unit cost of inventory and are easy to game
- **How you do something is as important as what you do**, where we are guided by values and ethics not legal frameworks
- **Quality publishing can thrive because the loyal and attentive audiences they curate are valued**

We don't believe we're alone in this thinking. The many conversations we have with the vast majority of our customers – both advertisers and agencies – as well as our publisher members, point to an overwhelming desire to do things differently. While change is inevitable in our complex world of digital advertising, it will be our collective and conscious choices that can create a better future for all.