



GOOGLE ADSENSE REVENUE SECRETS REVEALED



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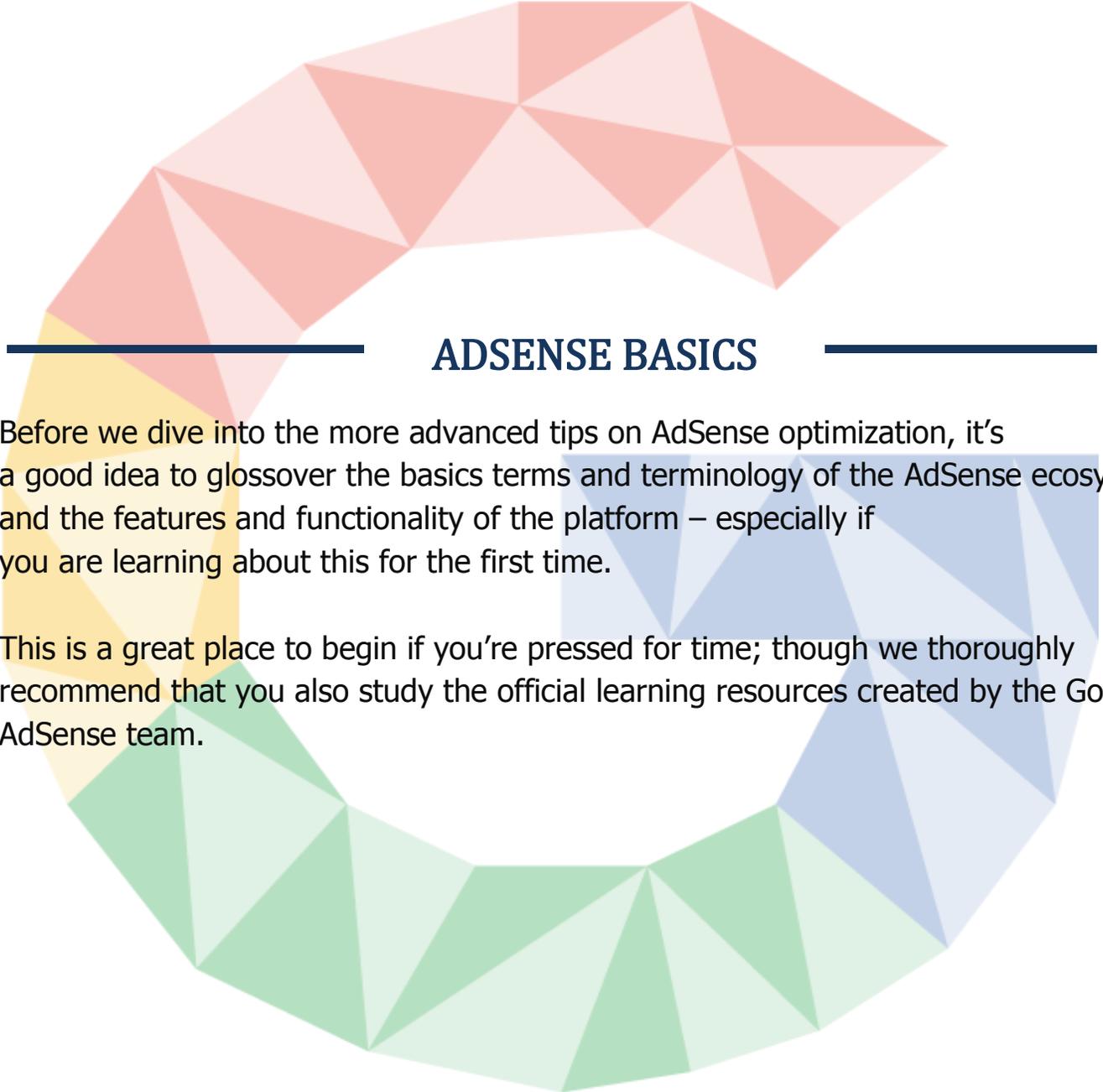
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ADSENSE BASICS

Before we dive into the more advanced tips on AdSense optimization, it's a good idea to gloss over the basic terms and terminology of the AdSense ecosystem and the features and functionality of the platform – especially if you are learning about this for the first time.

This is a great place to begin if you're pressed for time; though we thoroughly recommend that you also study the official learning resources created by the Google AdSense team.

PAYMENT MODELS

- CPC (cost-per-click): A fixed amount that an advertiser pays for each ad unit on which a user clicks.
- CPM (cost-per-mille): The amount an advertiser is willing to pay for 1,000 served ad impressions.

Although there are no hard and fast rules, generally speaking, CPC option is chosen more frequently when an advertiser is trying to drive traffic or generate leads, while the CPM option is used to generate awareness about a brand, product or service.

AD TYPES AND SIZES

Currently, AdSense provides two types of ads: *Text* and *Display*. They recommend using a combination of both types so that text and display ads compete to outbid each other for space on your website – effectively maximizing your revenue potential. Our experience on this has been different though, which is shared later in this book.

AdSense offers a variety of ad sizes to advertisers and publishers –in fact, even defining custom ad sizes is possible. But there are a few types that have historically been known to outperform the others.

These are: **336x280** (large rectangle), **300x250** (medium rectangle), **728x90** (leaderboard), **160x600** (skyscraper), **320x50** (mobile leaderboard), **300x600**, and **970x90**.

That being said, here's an important thing to note about ad sizes: Don't just go by what's recommended or even what works for other publishers. *Always run your own tests* (more on how to do that later).

AD BLOCKING

AdSense gives publishers the power to block ads from certain advertisers or even entire categories.

There are many reasons a publisher may want to do this. For instance, a publisher may want to block out sensitive categories such a "sex and sexuality" on a website intended for children. Or a publisher may want to individually block the ads of a competitor.

Whatever your reason, you can choose to selectively block ads to customize the ad experience on your website.

One caveat: For each ad or category that you block, your revenue potential takes a hit because this means that fewer numbers of ads are left in the auction pool to bid for a spot on your website.

So it's recommended to exercise restraint while using ad blocking.

However, at the same time, you should block ads, which are completely irrelevant to your audience as this can help improve the click-through rate of the ad units.

ADSENSE AUCTION

The AdSense auction allows advertisers to state the maximum price they're willing to pay to have their advertisement displayed. AdSense employs something called "second price auction." This means that the highest bidder wins the ad position, but pays a penny more than the price of the second highest bidder.

The second price auction is designed this way to encourage advertisers to bid their true maximum value and discourage them from bidding lower than their true value.

AD TARGETING

In order to increase ad relevance and consequently ad performance, Google employs three methods to ensure that ads are not served arbitrarily but are matched in some way to either the user or the content; these are contextual targeting, placement targeting, and interest-based advertising.

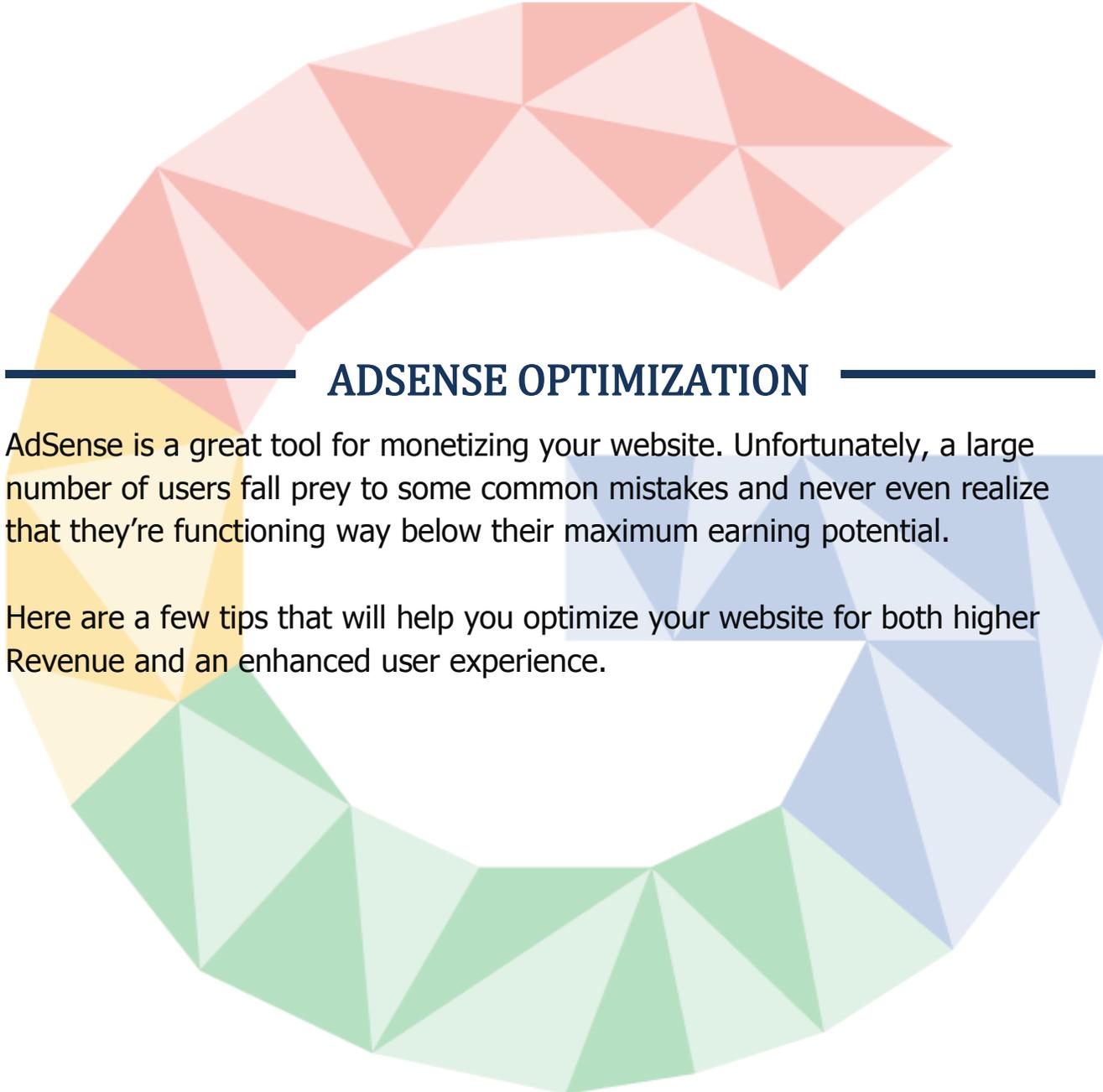
With **contextual targeting** our web crawler analyzes keywords, word frequency, and other formatting characteristics to match Google ads to each page.

With **placement targeting** however, advertisers choose specific ad placements where they want their ads to show. An ad placement can be an entire URL or specific sections of a website.

Finally, **interest-based advertising** enables advertisers to reach users based on their inferred interests and demographics. It also allows advertisers to show ads based on a user's previous interactions with them, such as visits to advertiser websites.

That essentially covers the absolute basics of the AdSense platform. There are a lot of other secondary concepts you could do well by learning such as page speed, ad coverage, custom channels and more.

For this, we recommend that you take the free [Optimizing AdSense](#) course offered by Google.



ADSENSE OPTIMIZATION

AdSense is a great tool for monetizing your website. Unfortunately, a large number of users fall prey to some common mistakes and never even realize that they're functioning way below their maximum earning potential.

Here are a few tips that will help you optimize your website for both higher Revenue and an enhanced user experience.

A/B TEST YOUR ADS UNITS

Experiments

▼ Allow & block experiments

You may only have one property-level experiment running at a time.

| Name | Status | Summary | Confidence | Start date | |
|--------|-----------|-----------------|------------|--------------|--|
| Test 1 | ▶ Running | Collecting data | | Aug 12, 2015 | |

▼ Ad unit experiments

| Name | Status | Summary | Confidence | Start date | |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------------|------------|--------------|--|
| Ad Unit Style test 1 | ▶ Running | Collecting data | | Aug 12, 2015 | |

Experimenting allows you to pit one variation of ad settings against another variation and select the one that performs the best.

You can compare the performance of text-only ad units to ad units that have both text and display enabled, or analyze the effect of changing the color of ad text on ad performance, or the size of the ad unit.

One way to go about A/B testing is to do it manually.

Pick a few different ad locations for each unit (also called *variations*), split your traffic between the different variations and compare the CTR from each of these variations. Similarly, pick different sizes for ad units and different ad colors for your text ad units. Although, as you can imagine, this gets tedious real quick.

The second way is to automate it.

If you have knowledge of programming, this can be automated somewhat — you could create scripts in the language of your framework (e.g., PHP if you are using WordPress) that will call a different banner on each request, and at the end of a certain period (e.g., a couple of weeks or a month), you get the numbers to see which banner performed better.

But of course, even with this method, the complexity of the script increases significantly with each additional factor that you want to test the ads for such as ad size, ad location, ad colors, and more.

Not to mention the time that will go into writing a custom script such as this, even though you may have the requisite skills.

The last, and perhaps the most effective method for A/B testing ads, especially for people who are pressed for time and would rather have someone else test and optimize their ads for them, is to use the services of a SaaS based A/B testing platform like ours.

Although you need a little tech-savvy to navigate your way through the entire process of preparing your experiment, creating your experiment, monitoring your experiment, and finally choosing your winner — it's all well worth the effort.

USE MULTIPLE AD UNITS TO MAXIMIZE

A simple way to bump up your AdSense click rate and revenue is to **place ad units of more than one type** (AdSense for content, link, and search) and in different sizes on your pages.

This way, your users are served more ads from Google's large ad inventory, increasing the probability that they will click on at least one of them.

And **remember to adhere to the AdSense maximum ad policy**, which is up to 3 AdSense for content units, up to 3 link units, and up to two search units on each page, to avoid having your account banned.

LIMIT THE NUMBER OF ADS ABOVE THE FOLD

In web design terminology, "**above the fold**" refers to the portions of a web page that **are visible without scrolling**. When too many ad units are placed above the fold, users get turned off because finding the content that they came in for, gets difficult, and the

tendency to exit the page increases. As a result of this, Google now penalizes such pages. Here's an excerpt from the Google Webmaster Central blog:

"As we've mentioned previously, we've heard complaints from users that if they click on a result and it's difficult to find the actual content, they aren't happy with the experience. Rather than scrolling down the page past a slew of ads, users want to see content right away. So sites that don't have much content "above-the-fold" can be affected by this change. If you click on a website and the part of the website you see first either doesn't have a lot of visible content above-the-fold or dedicates a large fraction of the site's initial screen real estate to ads, that's not a very good user experience. Such sites may not rank as highly."

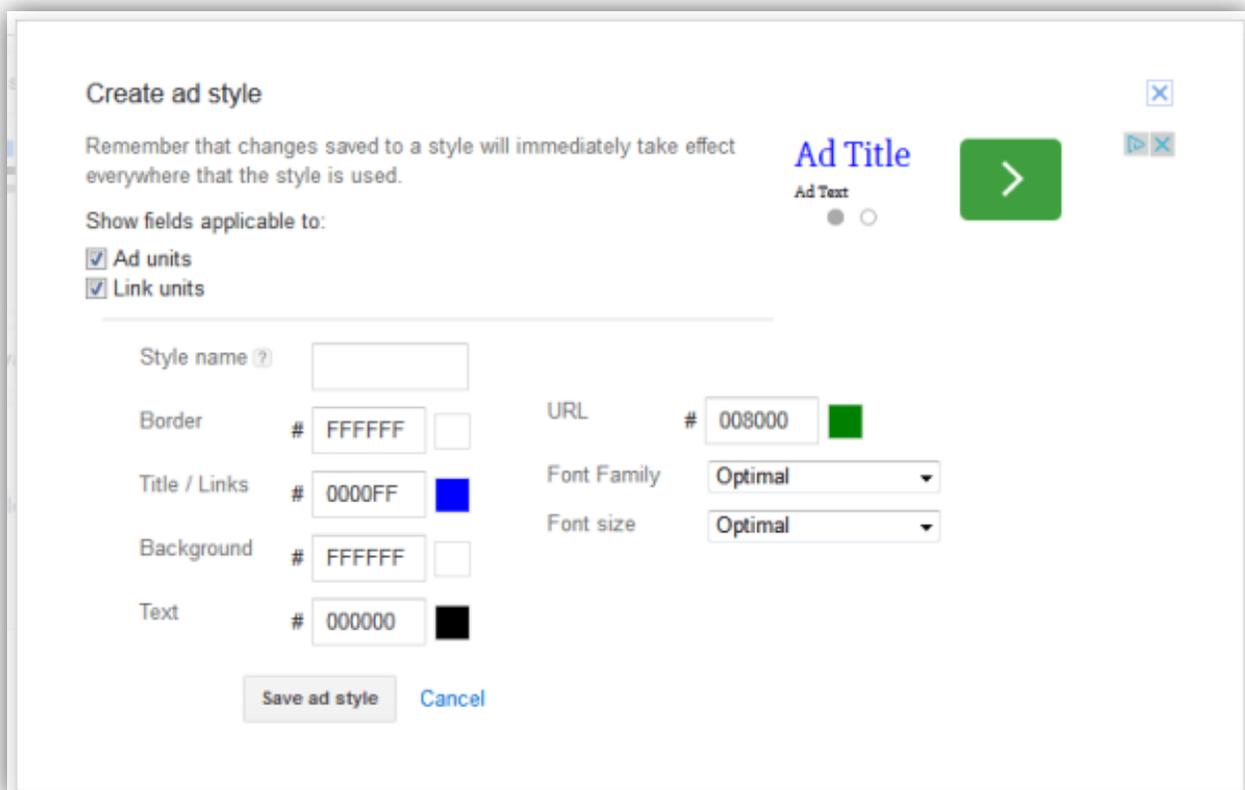
Apart from this, we've seen in our numerous tests that above the fold ads don't guarantee success. For example, the top-right header ad is an above the fold ad placement, very popular among websites.



However, this ad placement witnesses the highest amount of banner blindness and in many experiments we've noticed that even ad units at the bottom of the content perform better than this top-right header placement.

Hence, irrespective of the ad units being above the fold or below the fold, we should test multiple ad placements on the website.

— OPTIMIZE THE COLOR IMPACT OF TEXT AD UNITS —



Create ad style

Remember that changes saved to a style will immediately take effect everywhere that the style is used.

Show fields applicable to:

- Ad units
- Link units

Style name

Border # FFFFFFFF

Title / Links # 0000FF

Background # FFFFFFFF

Text # 000000

URL # 008000

Font Family

Font size

Save ad style Cancel

Ad Title
Ad Text

Experimenting with the color of text ads is essential to increasing visibility.

For the most unobtrusive user experience, match the background and border color of the ad unit to the background of the page where the ad will be placed.

For a more distinct ad, match background and border colors to your website, but don't match them exactly to where the ads are placed. Try out different styles and measure ad performance over time.

In some cases, blending the ad background with the background color of the website can improve the ad RPM drastically. However, in some niches, we've seen the opposite. This is definitely a factor to test. You should test at least 4-5 ad themes for each ad placement.

———— CREATE AND IMPLEMENT RESPONSIVE ————

Last year, [comScore reported](#) that mobile platforms — smartphones and tablets — combined account for 60% of total digital media time spent.

If your website is not optimized for these devices, you're missing out on a big opportunity to capture this audience.

So what does this have to do with AdSense, you ask? Well, AdSense plays well with responsive design, and allows you to generate codes for responsive ad units, which automatically resize themselves to offer the best viewing experience to the mobile audience.

Do this now because that 60% is a number that's only going to go north.

— LINK YOUR ADSENSE AND ANALYTICS ACCOUNTS —

Linking your AdSense and Google Analytics accounts gives you access to AdSense metrics such as revenue, clicks, and impressions which you can add to your favorite analytics reports to get a better understanding of how well your content is monetizing.

This data can assist in optimizing your site such as the optimal ad load or what type of content to focus on.

Once you've linked your properties, you can use insights from Analytics to refine and optimize your AdSense ad units, improving the overall performance of your website.

— KEEP YOUR DESIGN AND CONTENT USER-FOCUSED —

In the mad race to increase ad revenues, it's easy to lose sight of the real goal of why your website or business exists in the first place—**to provide value to users.**

Use a judicial mix of ads and content so that users are not overwhelmed by the former.

Sometimes ads are placed haphazardly on the web page and in between content without any thought to usability or aesthetics. Have a look at the homepage of WIRED to know what great design looks like.

Even Google says that to get the most of your account, you should first consider the user first and anything else second.

Doing it the other way around is like putting the horse before the cart, it's never going to work.

— PUBLISH HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT REGULARLY —

This really is the big one, the other points are all just tweaks in one way or another—but when it comes to AdSense earnings, content really is the king.

Simply put: No traffic, no money; more traffic, more money.

But this is always easier said than done. It helps to publish content about a topic that you're both interested in and have some level of expertise in, as people will then be more likely to view you as an influencer on your topic. Google's algorithm rewards websites that publish content regularly with a higher ranking, and consequently, higher traffic—so make sure your publishing is more predictable than erratic. Finally, going the extra mile to optimize your content for search engines can yield great results in terms of organic traffic, especially, in the long run.

— BUILD AN AUDIENCE BEFORE SETTING UP —

Though it may be tempting to set up AdSense on your website right after you've published the first piece of content—the temptation is best avoided.

Cluttering your website with ads before anybody really knows about it will likely put visitors off, and consequently, they'll be less likely to share or link to it.

This limits your ability to emerge as an authority in your niche.

Focus instead, on winning a sizable audience in terms of email subscribers, RSS readers, and monthly visitors before you start displaying ads.

— A WORD ABOUT BLOCKING ADS —

Your CTR will increase if your ads are relevant to the audience along with being targeted. Therefore, the next time you see an irrelevant ad unit on your webpage, use your AdSense control panel to remove the advertisers or domains serving such ads.

But here's a caveat: **Each ad that you block by URL will be one more ad that won't be bidding for space on your website in the auction**—effectively reducing the earning potential of that ad space.

Furthermore, advertisers whose ads you block may decide that they don't want to advertise with you in the future.

The same thing happens when you filter out entire categories, but on a larger scale. So you want to use the ad blocking feature intelligently without overdoing it to maximize your gains.

— SET HIGH-PERFORMING AD UNITS TO LOAD FIRST —

You should ideally structure your html such that the ads with the highest CTR, on an average scale, should load first. This can be accomplished with the use of the '<div>' tags and some CSS.

This small change makes sense when you have 2 to 3 ads on your website (AdSense allows a maximum of only 3 ads on a single page).

The rationale for this is that AdSense should serve the high performing ads first. So basically, you're optimizing the system to increase your odds of generating additional revenue.

SET UP GOOGLE CUSTOM SEARCH

Publishers are correct in assuming that more clicks means more revenue but wrong if they think that more traffic means more clicks.

To help publishers serve relevant ads to their visitors, Google lets websites add up to two *Custom Search Bars* per page in addition to the 3 standard ad units that are allowed.

This is an interesting tactic towards increasing revenue that works when visitors use the search bars to find information on the site and are displayed relevant ads.

Adding the *Custom Search Bars* is an effective way to increase revenue because this makes the visitor doesn't feel spammed as the ads are based on their search results.

TRY OTHER AD NETWORKS

While AdSense is the most popular and widely used ad network, it's not necessarily the best for every website's audience.

In other words, webmasters need to keep an eye out for specialty ad networks and try the ones that are directly relevant to their niche.

This could mean looking outside the box and testing one of your vertical with a specific ad network. This could even mean looking towards affiliate or CPA networks.

While going through some forums, we've seen publishers share stories where they made more money in commissions from ClickBank and Amazon than AdSense.

By putting in the effort to really nail down which ad network will deliver targeted ads to your visitors, you can maximize your revenue quite quickly and consistently.

MIND THE POLICIES

Google is notorious for banning publishers from AdSense without giving much detail or a chance to rectify the fault.

Open any SEO or internet marketing forum and you'll see hordes of webmasters sharing their experience of being abruptly banned by Google. Make sure you're not one of them.

Take the time to [read the policies](#).

KEEP YOURSELF UPDATED

Subscribe to the [Google Inside AdSense blog](#), so that you're always up-to-date with the latest news about the platform from the creators themselves.

Apart from this, the Google help center has this brilliant [AdSense optimization overview](#) that you could look at and take ideas from to get more mileage out of your AdSense account.

There's also a [free online course](#) that Google runs, which aims help publishers earn more money from their website.

TESTING IS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS

The defining element behind optimization and testing is that they are 'continuous'. It is a never ending process.

It's the one thing that differentiates successful AdSense users from the not so successful ones.

The reason is not difficult to decipher, which is that user experience changes with time and which is why same ad units might not perform what they did weeks or months back.

Such advanced testing is time consuming and a difficult nut to crack given the complicated mathematics of probability that goes into it.

And the sample size is constantly changing, so you have to do this continuously. But all this hard-work will eventually help you in uncovering the sweet spot for your AdSense ads.

ABOUT ADPUSHUP

The reason why we started AdPushup was simply because websites are still not able to optimize their ad revenues properly and we feel that there is a big opportunity for a product which can do this efficiently for websites without requiring the webmaster to learn about advanced algorithms or any other rocket science.

Let me give you an example: A website we worked on recently, we created 200+ Ad units, **that's right 200+ AdSense ad units** to test between different ad locations, sizes for each location, different ad themes (borders, colors, text size). For a website with enough traffic, testing so many variations pays off very well (as it did in this case too).

The biggest problem however was creating so many ad units – you still have to do it manually and while the interface which Google provides is decent, **it is not designed for creating ad units in bulk** – so we had to spend a great deal of time creating these ad units. No plugin that we mentioned above can help you here.

At AdPushup, you don't have to switch between your AdSense account and website/WordPress editor. **Creating ad units in bulk is a breeze** and it's all done from within our editor.

Next, another problem which no plugin had solved yet is **reporting**. You put your ad code in WordPress and **the plugin has no clue** about how each ad unit is performing or which ones are performing better.

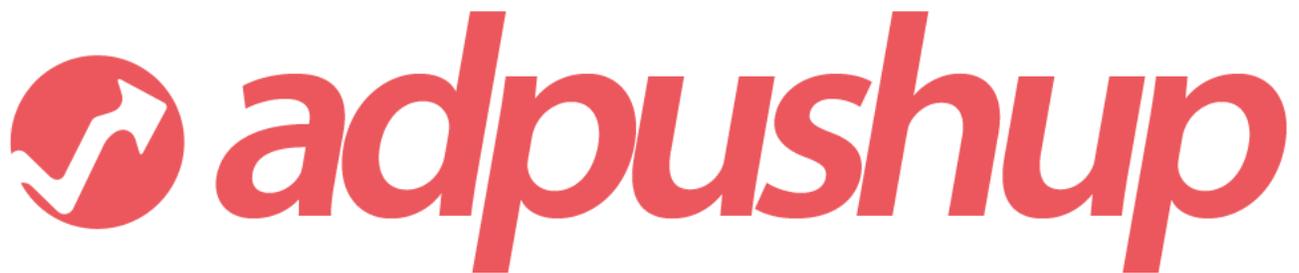
So you have to manually keep a track of this from your AdSense account to measure how ad units are doing in each spot and then come back to your plugin/editor to edit the code and make them show more often.

This is not scalable, you can't do this with 200 ad units nor can you keep doing this constantly – this is not your full time job.

So, at AdPushup, we created an **intelligent engine, which distributes your traffic automatically** between different ad variations to test ad units, which were created (in bulk) in our app itself.

We're calling this an intelligent engine because it knows how your ad units are performing (making more money) and based on that it decides which ad units to show more often than others.

Next, **the engine gets even more intelligent** as it knows what [banner blindness](#) is. It constantly keeps a track of this and as soon as it notices banner blindness around your ad units, it automatically starts finding the new best performing ad unit (or variation).



Learn more at - <http://adpu.sh/aboutadpushup>