



Exploring the Benefits of Programmatic Direct

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Google Australia's marketing team needed an efficient way to secure premium video inventory for the all-new Pixel phone campaign. Here, Google Media Lab's Rob Maddison explains how the team used Programmatic Direct to streamline the process.

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For the [launch of Google's new smartphone, Pixel](#), in Australia last spring, we knew that online video would be key to our media mix. While our team [purchases video programmatically as much as possible](#), the Australian market presents unique challenges.

First off, we were primarily interested in premium inventory, which is often in short supply in Australia. Premium inventory is typically set aside for traditional reservation buys, which can be much more time-consuming than programmatic buys and relatively complex.

Activating [Programmatic Direct](#) via [DoubleClick Bid Manager](#) (DBM) was just what we needed. We were able to efficiently secure premium video inventory across multiple local publishers as well as get a comprehensive view of the campaign's performance.

Streamlined media buying for Pixel with Programmatic Direct

Buying and executing via traditional reservation involves a lot of moving parts; some media orders can require more than 62 steps. Since we wanted our digital media agency, [Essence](#), to focus on developing and optimising our campaign strategy, we looked for solutions that would streamline this process.

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Right from the beginning, Programmatic Direct helped us create a more efficient workflow. By reducing the number of required steps to fewer than ten, Programmatic Direct saved us about three hours per publisher, which translated to 50 agency hours.

Activating Programmatic Direct also gave us access to a limited supply of premium inventory from YouTube through [Google Preferred](#) and from other key third-party publishers. These impressions were guaranteed, just like traditional reservation buys, with the added benefits of layering on precise audience targeting and applying advanced campaign optimisation and measurement.

Isamar Pena, senior programmatic manager at Essence, explained, “In a market where premium video inventory is notoriously difficult to secure, Programmatic Direct allowed us to guarantee high-quality video placements with the flexibility to choose the types of deals we needed to drive our campaigns.”

Getting a single view of the consumer across all publishers

Once we bought our video inventory via Programmatic Direct and pushed the Pixel campaigns live, our DBM dashboard gave us a holistic view of how our efforts were performing across publishers. With real-time data, we could optimise our ad spend and easily compare performance across publishers.

DBM successfully broke down the measurement silos between different publishers and deal types. By tracking how many times people saw our ads across all digital publishers, we could set overall frequency caps and avoid hitting the same people with the same message again and again. The [ability to measure this activity across our full video buy](#) was key to understanding the messages that resonated with potential Pixel customers.

Benefits of Programmatic Direct



Layer on
targeting and
remarketing lists



Frequency cap
Real-Time Bidding with
a single view of the user

Advanced optimisation and performance with DoubleClick Bid Manager

Using DBM also gave us the ability to optimise our campaign's performance towards advanced metrics like Audible and Visible on Complete (AVOC), which measures the number of users who watch our video ads all the way to the end with full audio. This view allowed us to prioritise the types of sites and publishers where people fully viewed and engaged with our ads and avoid waste by passing on impressions in places that weren't performing.

Not only was our team able to run more efficient campaigns; Programmatic Direct and DoubleClick tools helped drive a 6.7X higher AVOC rate than Australia's industry benchmark (79% vs. 11.7%). Our [Brand Lift](#) surveys revealed a 10.7% uplift in brand awareness and an 8.9% uplift in brand consideration.



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“Our campaign for Pixel was intended to grow brand awareness and consideration, so the fact that Programmatic Direct was 100% measurable was crucial. This enabled us to assess our full video buy against brand goals and compare exposed audience versus control,” explained Aisling Finch, head of Google Marketing in Australia and New Zealand.

In the past, holistically understanding the performance of a brand campaign would have been difficult. Having transparent data on all publishers in one place means we can make more informed choices on future campaigns and continue to get closer to delivering the [right messages to the right people at the right times](#).