

CASE STUDY

The New York Times

Growing engagement with better reader experiences: The New York Times' approach to Native Ads

The New York Times

 DoubleClick
by Google

The Goals

- Deliver a valuable and engaging reader experience, of both content and ads
- Scale high-impact “Flex Frames” native ads across all platforms and properties

The Approach

- Used the component-based ads approach in Native Ads on DoubleClick to compile and build responsive ads that scale across mobile web, desktop, and app
- Layered first party data to adapt not just to the content, but also to the specific Flex Frames ad format users are most likely to respond to

The Results

- Greater user engagement, with a 6X increase in CTRs
- Higher viewability, with 4X more viewable impressions
- Greater efficiency from a scalable approach to native ads

“The seamlessness of the user experience has improved our performance all around.”

—Nicholas Van Amburg, Managing Director of Ad Innovation at The New York Times.

Growing engagement with better reader experiences: *The New York Times'* approach to Native Ads

The New York Times aims to deliver valuable news and information to readers, wherever they may be consuming content. With the growing consumer shift to digital, the company developed a variety of properties and platforms to provide readers with quality experiences across all screens, including a virtual reality *app* for Android with Google Cardboard. With more than one million digital-only subscribers in 2016 consuming content across all of these expanding platforms, however, *The New York Times* faced a new business challenge: creating a sustainable advertising model that efficiently and effectively scaled across all of its properties.

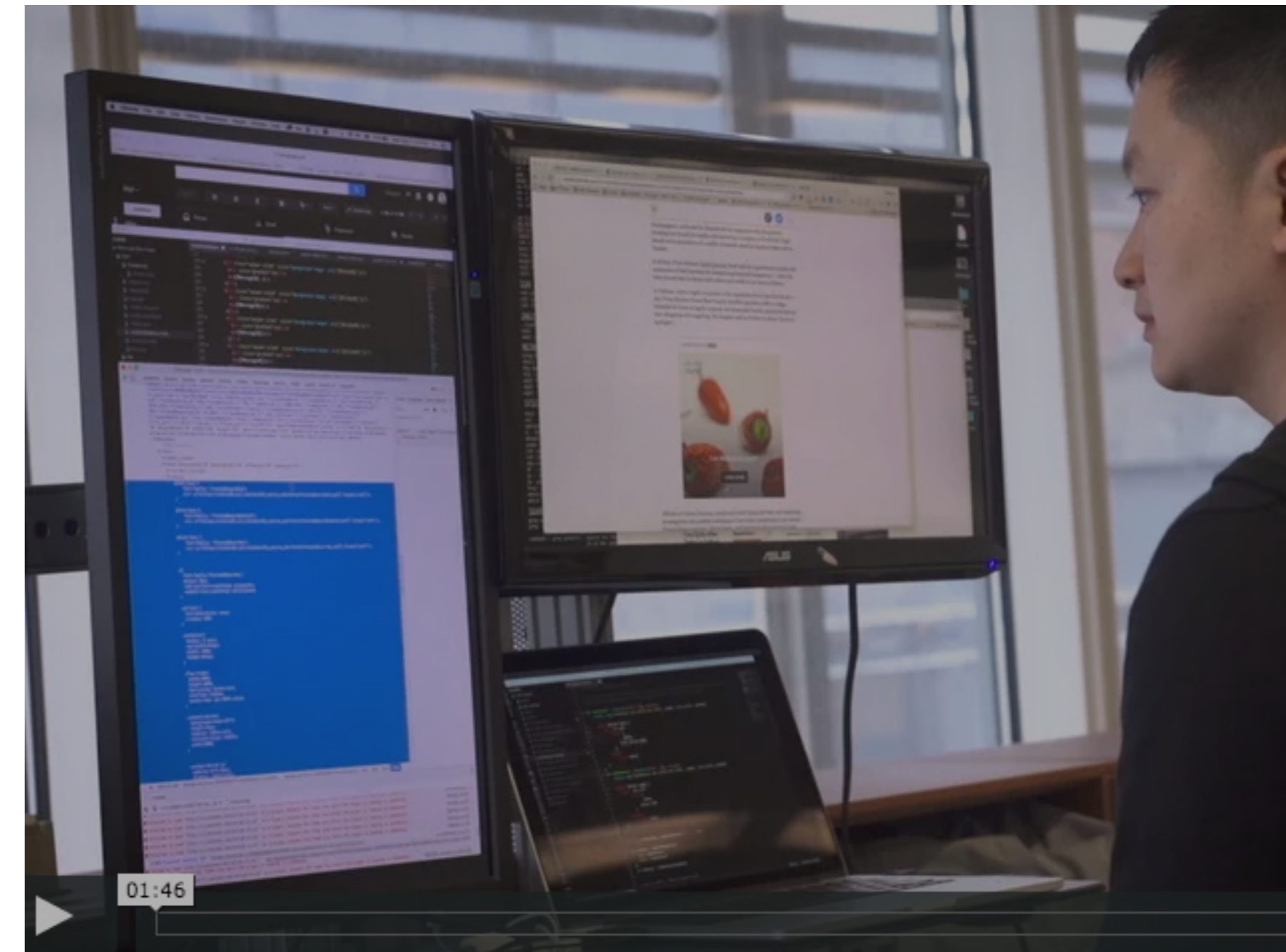
“In the past, Flex Frames took an enormous amount of time because each layout required handholding, but with Native Ads on DoubleClick, the advertiser can supply one set of assets and it can automatically distribute it to different layouts and formats.”

—**Benjamin Cheung**, Ad Technology Engineer,
The New York Times

Building a sustainable advertising model with Flex Frames

Over the years, *The New York Times* has experimented with different advertising models to find a solution that prioritizes readers' experiences while keeping an eye on its bottom line. “If we don't create useful and engaging ad experiences,” says Nicholas Van Amburg, Managing Director of Ad Innovation at *The New York Times*, “our business is not going to be sustainable and successful long-term.” With that in mind, the team developed “Flex Frames” in September 2015. Flex Frames are an advertising model where the ads seamlessly integrate with a reader's experience of content.

While Flex Frames successfully adapted to the look and feel of its content across all screens, *The New York Times* quickly ran into roadblocks when attempting to scale this new ad format to all of its diverse properties across the web and in apps. The innovation team found themselves overwhelmed with long hours of coding and compiling individual ads for review by advertisers.





Scaling Flex Frames with DoubleClick

With [Native Ads on DoubleClick](#), the team found an efficient way to expand their Flex Frames offering. The team created a library of native styles adhering to the Flex Frames guidelines in DoubleClick for Publishers. Advertisers now provide a single set of components for their ‘flex’ ads—image, headline, copy, etc—and DoubleClick automatically compiles the right creative from these components, applying the right style to match readers’ contexts—meaning the device, the content, the amount of space available, and more.

Better viewability and greater engagement with Flex Frames

The New York Times pushed further, using its first party audience data to serve advertising that was most likely to be relevant for each individual reader, in both format and content. “If we know a reader is more likely to watch video content than view photos in a carousel,” Lauren Reddy, Associate Director of Audience Development at *The New York Times* explains, “we can serve him or her a piece of video advertising rather than a photo story.” With this scaled approach to deliver native ads relevant to a user’s interests and context powered by DoubleClick, the team saw a 6X increase in CTRs with 4X more viewable impressions. The response from advertisers has been positive as well, as they have jumped to take advantage of this new type of inventory

Setting the pace for the future

As content channels and screen types continue to increase, *The New York Times* will look to Flex Frames and native advertising as the key to creating a scalable and sustainable business with ads that drive engagement. The next frontier in their native ads strategy is making Flex Frames available to programmatic buyers in partnership with DoubleClick. Van Amburg says, “Our innovation and partnership with DoubleClick will bring more scale and opportunity to our platform. Working with DoubleClick on native ads is a really exciting step in the right direction.”

We recently released [Native Ads on DoubleClick](#) across all screens—on the web and in apps—to all our partners. Read [The New York Times’ op-ed](#) on best practices for winning with native advertising to learn more.

About The New York Times

The New York Times Company publishes two national and 16 regional newspapers and owns eight television stations, two radio stations, and more than 40 websites. The company's flagship brand is the daily newspaper, *The New York Times*.

About DoubleClick for Publishers

DoubleClick for Publishers is a complete ad revenue engine that helps publishers capture the full value of every impression across demand sources and channels. Seamless integration with DoubleClick Ad Exchange provides instant connection to millions of quality advertisers, while the natively integrated sales management platform streamlines operations for maximized sales at minimized costs.

