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THREE AD BLOCKING PARTNERSHIP WITH SHINE

Three UK and Three Italy have collaborated with Shine to use its ad blocking technology on their networks, with plans for a quick roll-out across all other Three Group operators, on an opt-in basis, for its 30m customers worldwide. Three say that the objective is to give customers “more control, choice and greater transparency”. The ad blocking will only work when the user is using mobile data, it won’t work with Wi-Fi, which accounts for more than half of smartphone use. Nor will it work with in-app advertising such as Facebook’s timeline ads.



IMPLICATIONS:

The announcement has caused concern about the impact on mobile advertising as 3 are the first provider to block ads across an entire cellular network. The move opens up new possibilities to monetize 3’s mobile domain outside of its rapidly declining voice and data business.

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FACEBOOK'S CANVAS CREATES IMMERSIVE ADS

Facebook's new Canvas platform helps brands create immersive, interactive ad experiences. The quick loading ads will appear within a user's newsfeed and take up the entire screen when clicked on. The platform allows users to interact and scroll through animations, carousels, product catalogues, tilt-to-view images, and videos.



IMPLICATIONS:

Facebook says that in early tests people stuck around and experienced the ads. 53% of users who opened a Canvas ad, viewed at least half of it, and the average view time was 31 seconds. Importantly for Facebook, users will stay within the platform, with their news feed only one click away.

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GOOGLE CHANGES SEARCH ADS LAYOUT

Google have removed the search ads from the right hand side of desktop search results and added in a 4th result at the top of the page, positions 6-9 will be placed right at the bottom of the search results. The side bar will be reserved exclusively for Product Listing Ads (PLAs) and knowledge graph panels where relevant. With desktop searches declining year on year and mobile searches in many industries surpassing 50% of total traffic, Google has been working on making the user experience more consistent between desktop and mobile results.



IMPLICATIONS:

The move to four, top-only ads adds an extra opportunity for a higher yielding ad position (to date, positions 1-3 have a stronger CTR over the ads served on the right). Consequently, for search results with 4 top ads, clicks on the top organic search listings are likely to fall. While a fourth ad in top position will benefit advertisers, the performance of new positions 5-7 at the bottom of the page is likely to pale in comparison to even those on the now defunct right side, thus making it difficult for smaller players to compete with the bigger brands.

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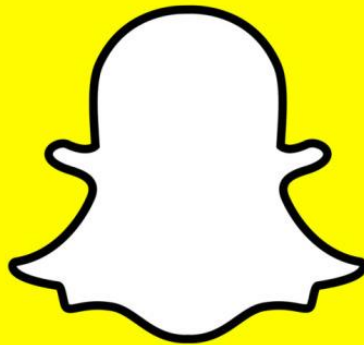
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SNAPCHAT'S DEEP LINKING AND LIVE STORIES ON DESKTOP

Snapchat recently aired their annual 'Oscars' story but this time it was also shown on their desktop website for longer than you could usually see it on the app.



IMPLICATIONS:

Enhancing the desktop offering is a big deal for brands as it opens the app up to a wider audience. They also added an update that allows users to 'deep-link' to their Snapchat content – meaning people (and brands) can now link direct to their Snaps from another app like Facebook or Twitter, making content more discoverable which, to date, has been a big challenge for the platform.

SOURCE: socialmediatoday.com/social-business/snapchat-continues-branch-out-oscars-live-story-viewable-web

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ZUCKERBERG TAKES SAMSUNG INTO A VR FUTURE

Samsung revealed their new Galaxy S7 models at last month's MWC. The reviews have generally been positive, with praise for the build quality, design, and camera, but some criticism of the bloated software, for example coming pre-loaded with Samsung, network provider and Google apps. However, what caused the biggest stir of the conference, was the demonstration of Samsung's Gear VR headset alongside a surprise visit from Mark Zuckerberg who evangelized about VR's potential.



IMPLICATIONS:

It has the largest share of global smartphone sales, but Samsung is being squeezed by Apple at the high end and Chinese manufacturers at the budget end of the market. Competition and shrinking margins means looking beyond phones for growth. Making money from its investment in VR will take time – Samsung is offering a free Gear VR headset to anyone ordering the Galaxy S7 in advance. However, with the help of Facebook's founder, Samsung has ignited a conversation about the company that makes it look more far-sighted than many of its rivals.

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NEW DAY LAUNCHES WHILST INDEPENDENT CLOSES DOWN PRINT

February saw big announcements in the UK's press industry. The Independent announced it would close its daily and Sunday newspapers, as well as the sale of the i newspaper to Johnston Press for £24m.



IMPLICATIONS:

Revenues in print advertising fell by 10% in 2015 and competition has increased from online only outlets such as BuzzFeed and The Huffington Post. The Guardian has pledged to cut costs by 20 per cent and is expected to record operating losses of £50 - £52m this tax year, while The Telegraph has announced a strategic review. However, this has not stopped the Trinity Mirror from launching a new cut-price daily New Day on the 29th February.

SOURCE: theguardian.com/media/2016/feb/17/daily-mirror-newspaper-new-day

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AMAZON DEBUTS ITS FIRST ORIGINAL SHOW WITH ADS

Amazon has unveiled an original video series supported by advertising. 'The Fashion Fund', a 10-episode reality show series produced by Conde Nast Entertainment, follows top fashion design contestants competing for a \$400,000 prize. The show is available for free to anyone in the US, who visits Amazon.com, so long as they are willing to sit through a few minutes of commercials. The site is also selling the fashion associated with the show.



IMPLICATIONS:

There are three potential benefits of giving the series away for free; Amazon can grow their share of the advertising dollars that are increasingly moving online; they can attract as many non-Amazon Prime members to their content as possible; and they can reach a large audience to whom they can sell the shows fashion items. These higher priced, fashion-centric brands complement Amazon's fashion offering, which includes seven recently released, Amazon owned, mid-range private label brands. If current trends continue, Amazon are on track to overtake Macy's as the number 1 US clothing retailer by 2017.