

Clouinary is Money for Mediavine, Simplifying Video Management



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Solution

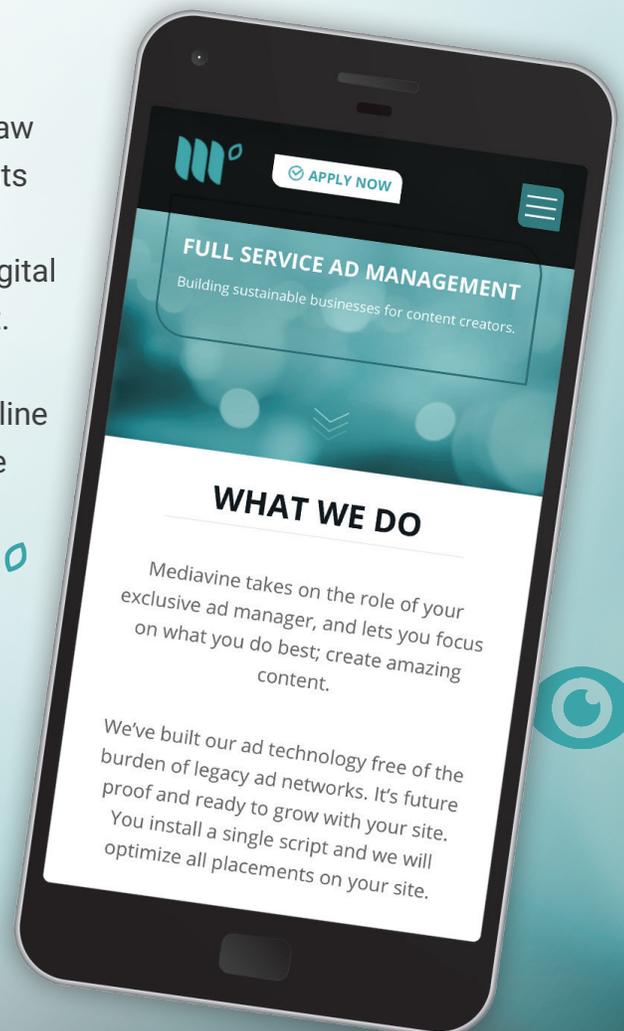
Unsatisfied with the way ad networks were run, Mediavine saw an opportunity to break free from the burdens and constraints of legacy ad networks by creating its own ad management service. As the exclusive ad manager for more than 3,900 digital publishers, Mediavine relies on video for monetizing content. Having used Clouinary for image management, Mediavine adopted Clouinary’s video management solution to streamline developer workflow, optimize video performance and reduce bandwidth usage.

Results

Over **1 Petabyte** of video served monthly

Bandwidth use cut by **50 percent**

Publishers using video **make 20 percent more** than display ads alone



Company

Mediavine has been an internet publisher since 2004, owning and operating sites like The Hollywood Gossip, TV Fanatic, Movie Fanatic and Food Fanatic. In 2013, when Food Fanatic was launched and the company's relationship with bloggers began, Mediavine began its evolution from publisher to full service ad management. The company works with digital publishers, offering services that range from display ad optimization to video monetization to influencer marketing campaigns.

The Challenge: Managing Performance While Delivering High Quality Video

As a full-service ad management provider, Mediavine supports more than 3,900 publishers in the lifestyle space who are at the forefront of developing video content for their followers to watch. To help them monetize content, Mediavine manages advertising that appears before publishers' content.

"Video is the fastest growing monetization channel for Mediavine. It's mission critical for both our company and our publishers," said Eric Hochberger, co-founder, CEO, and head of development at Mediavine. "We encourage our publishers to create unique content so we can offer exclusive ad experiences."

But making sure all video – both the content uploaded by publishers and the pre-roll ads Mediavine delivers – worked as expected was a complex, time-consuming process behind the scenes. Mediavine initially used third-party video players, which required the company – not publishers – to upload and log each video to the third-party's back-end system, then grab individual players for each video. This initial video player was integrated with a competing video ad server, which hindered Mediavine's ability to build the business as it had hoped.

"Getting off that player was critical because, as a new ad management company, the ability to monetize videos was the most important business goal," Hochberger noted.

The Cloudinary Solution: Removing Complexity from Upload to Delivery

Mediavine had been a long-time user of Cloudinary's image management solutions, which enabled it to serve images at one-quarter of the size of the originals and easily support responsive design.

Mediavine's The Hollywood Gossip site ranks #1 with Google based on page-load time. "Images are the bulk of the weight on the pages, and Cloudinary was instrumental in helping us reduce that load and achieve the #1 Google ranking," Hochberger said.

As Mediavine was seeking solutions for its video challenges, it discovered that Cloudinary could help with that as well. "Cloudinary had already made it so much easier for us to manage images, so the second the company said they could do the same for video, I knew it was the obvious choice," Hochberger noted.



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Moving to Cloudinary's video solution was a breeze, he noted. "The way we were uploading images was the same way they did video, so integrating Cloudinary into our website was a matter of changing one variable name," he said. The entire process took less than a day of development, something Hochberger said he could have never imagined with any other solution.

Generating thumbnails was one of the frustrations Mediavine was having before the transition to Cloudinary. “Back then, that was one of the more challenging aspects, and with earlier partners, we’d end up having to take screenshots of the page to create a thumbnail,” he noted. “With Cloudinary, all we needed to do was present a thumbnail tag.”

Mediavine automated video uploads through the Cloudinary API, which has been integrated with the WordPress Mediavine plug-in used by their publishers. Publishers can simply click a button to add video to their posts, or grab an embed code from their Mediavine dashboard. Mediavine has created different streaming profiles and can automatically apply those to each video.

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The Results: Speed, Savings and Improved Search Rankings

With Cloudinary, Hochberger estimates that Mediavine has saved hundreds of developer hours, particularly when considering the rollout of new codecs and the systems it has built. One example of this impact is the recent move to H.265 and VP9, Google’s video coding format. Using Cloudinary, Mediavine was able to introduce these two new codecs to regenerate more than 30,000 videos in only one day. “I’m not sure how we would have done that if we were transcoding videos on our own, much less in a single day. The power of Cloudinary and the amount of time it saved us was impressive,” he noted.

Mediavine developers aren’t the only ones benefiting from Cloudinary. Mediavine reports that publishers who run video in addition to display ads typically see earnings increase by 20 percent to 30 percent. In addition, optimized video content helps increase traffic to the publishers’ sites and their Google rankings.

“Adding video to my site has completely changed my website’s revenue potential and my page views,” said Courtney O’Dell, a Mediavine publisher of the website Sweet C’s. “In a crowded web niche, it can be hard to stand out in search results or make a splash in social media. But videos in posts have helped me rank higher in search terms and kept readers engaged and interested in my content. After adding videos with pre-roll ads to my site, I started making more money each month than the entire previous year. There is simply nothing better to attract and engage new readers and increase ad revenue than the addition of dynamic video content!”

Sweet C’s first incorporated video content in July 2016. Comparing July 2016-June 2017 to the same timespan in 2018, the site saw its video advertising revenue increase almost 1,200 percent. In the last months of 2018, video revenue continues to rise by an average of 20 percent per month. The site also saw traffic growth in these same time periods. From 2016 to 2018, the site has experienced a 95 percent increase in traffic overall, jumping from 4.5 million sessions in 2016 to 8.7 million in 2018.

Mediavine’s move to H.265 and VP9 also dropped the bandwidth usage of the videos by half. “Our publishers are always looking for higher quality video,” Hochberger added. “Cutting the bandwidth in half is great not only for our money savings, but for our users, since our videos are now half the size at the same quality.”

About Cloudinary

Cloudinary provides a cloud-based media full-stack platform for the world’s top brands. With offices in the US, UK, and Israel, Cloudinary has quickly become the de facto solution for web developers and marketers to manage images, videos and other rich media assets and deliver an optimal end-user experience. Cloudinary has more than 5,000 customers worldwide, including AMC, Bleacher Report, Cars.com, Conde Nast, DoorDash, Fairfax Media, Forbes, Gizmodo, GrubHub, Hinge, Indiegogo, Lululemon Athletica, Outbrain, Stitch Fix, StubHub, Under Armour and Whole Foods Market. For more information, visit www.cloudinary.com.