

FlightStats.com's ad revenue takes off with DoubleClick for Publishers Small Business.



About FlightStats.com

- www.flightstats.com
- Portland, OR
- Website with global flight status updates

Goals

- Monetize site with cost-effective ad serving solution

Approach

- Served 85% of ad impressions via DFP Small Business
- Used DFP Small Business to manage and optimize revenue from its directly sold ads
- Used integrated AdSense feature to optimize revenue from non-guaranteed inventory

Results

- 40% of total business revenue comes from online advertising
- 50% of online revenue comes from AdSense
- Ability to fund growth of other aspects of business
- Solution scaled along with growing traffic
- New sources of income from directly sold ad campaigns
- Increased CPMs from AdSense ads
- Reliable service with no significant downtime

At a time when air travel can often be unpredictable, FlightStats aims to help travelers “fly smarter.” Created in 2001 by a group of travel technology specialists, FlightStats initially began as a decision support tool for air freight logistics companies, explains David White, vice president of business development. “But when we realized there was no single source for global flight status information, we seized that opportunity and became that source,” he says. In 2005, FlightStats.com was launched, and the FlightStats brand made its landing in the world of travel.

Since its arrival, FlightStats.com is one of the top travel sites on the web, with 3 million unique visitors each month and a global Alexa traffic rank of about 5,000. Travelers from all over the world check for flight updates – more than 60 percent of FlightStats.com visitors are from countries other than the US.

“We define and dominate our category by collecting airline and airport data from the broadest array of sources, applying innovative solutions, putting that data in a useful context to create actionable information, and efficiently distributing the information to travelers through the broadest array of channels,” David says.

Test flight

As FlightStats.com got off the ground, David looked for a cost-effective ad serving solution in order to monetize the site. “Since we had no way of knowing that the site would become a big success and generate lots of ad revenue, we needed a reasonably capable ad server that cost little or nothing,” he explains. When David learned about Google’s new DoubleClick for Publishers (DFP) Small Business solution, which combines the best of Google and DoubleClick intelligence, design and usability, he decided to give it a test run.

DFP Small Business is a free, hosted ad serving and revenue optimization solution. With advanced features such as streamlined ad trafficking and granular reporting, DFP Small Business offers a complete toolkit to easily sell ads on your site directly to advertisers while also working dynamically to help you get the most money from inventory you sell through partners like AdSense and ad networks.

Getting started with DFP Small Business was simple for David and his team, but they also took time to make the most of the tool and all its capabilities. “It was relatively easy to learn the basics,” David explains, “but extracting the real value from the ad server requires more energy to learn how to efficiently use placements, inventory analysis, and custom targeting.”

Taking off

DFP Small Business currently serves 85 percent of FlightStats.com’s ad impressions, with the remaining 15 percent generated by its mobile site. “DFP Small Business has evolved along with us,” says David. “It has scaled nicely as our traffic grew. New features and capabilities were added at a pace that kept us from looking for other solutions,” he says. “It’s helped us build a publishing business large enough and profitable enough to help us fund the growth of other parts of our business – things like itinerary monitoring and messaging services, improving our data collection and aggregation platform, and giving developers access to our data

About DFP Small Business

DoubleClick for Publishers (DFP) Small Business is an easy-to-use yet powerful ad serving solution that helps website publishers manage and grow their online advertising business. Featuring streamlined ad trafficking, inventory management, revenue optimization, and granular reporting, DFP Small Business equips publishers with a complete toolkit for ad delivery and revenue optimization across their directly-sold ads, AdSense, and ad networks.

For more information visit:

www.google.com/dfp/sb

About Google AdSense

Google AdSense™ is a program enabling online businesses to earn revenue from serving ads precisely targeted to their site. Through AdSense, website publishers can also provide their visitors with site search and Google web search, earning revenue through Google ads on the search results pages. AdSense publishers are a part of the Google Network, which includes many of the Top 100 Media Metrix sites such as AOL, About.com, Amazon, Ask.com, and Lycos.

For more information visit:

www.google.com/adsense

*"DFP Small Business has been nearly perfectly reliable. We appreciate the degree to which it performs without any significant downtime."
— David White, VP of Business Development at FlightStats*

via our APIs and data feeds," he adds, noting that 40 percent of FlightStats' business revenue comes from its online advertising.

Revvig up revenue

The team at FlightStats uses DFP Small Business to manage and optimize revenue from its directly sold ads. The custom targeting features have allowed FlightStats to let its travel suppliers target users based on airline, destination or departure airport, and whether travel is domestic or international. "This feature has allowed us to bring some great campaigns to the site. Airline campaigns, for example, have become a great source of income for us," says David.

In addition, David and his team also use the integrated Google AdSense feature to compete on price against their non-guaranteed inventory. "We rely very heavily on AdSense revenue," he says, noting that about half of FlightStats.com's online advertising revenue comes from AdSense.

"The integration with AdSense really helped us begin to bring in complementary sources of inventory and to let the best-paying ads win."

"As we've built up our direct advertising business and attracted higher-paying spot buys from the premium ad networks, both the quality and the CPMs of our AdSense ads have increased, since they have to compete with our direct and network buys for the inventory," he adds.

Jetting forward

David's advice to other publishers? "You have to think like an advertiser and help them achieve their campaign objectives in unique and productive ways in order to earn higher CPMs," he says. As FlightStats.com continues to help travelers stay informed, David and his team will continue to use DFP Small Business to power their ad serving and management around the clock. "It's a no-brainer for small to medium-sized sites," says David.

