

IDG Publishing Case Study

How a world leading technology publication monetized its eight media brands – including Macworld and PC Advisor – to bring content* to 22 million professionals across the UK and beyond.

Key achievements

115%

year-on-year growth in
affiliate revenue

More affiliate revenue

gained in December 2016 than entire
financial year in 2015

30%

of consumer division's total
revenue, accounted by E-commerce

About IDG Publishing

IDG publishing is a leading digital technology publisher, with eight independent media brands that reach 22 million professionals across the UK and beyond. Named Digital Publisher Of The Year 2015, IDG covers the enterprise, SMB and consumer sectors. A focus on innovation, editorial expertise and precision content has helped it become the biggest technology portfolio in the UK.

E-commerce is incredibly important. We refocused our strategy around it without losing sight of our principal mission to create quality, independent content for our audience. We don't write news stories anymore – instead we concentrate on long-form, long-term content based on what our audience analytics tells us people are searching for. In part our continued traffic growth shows that commercial content has reader value just like old-school content. All we ask of our content is that it answers a reader's need in as helpful and impartial manner as possible.

– Simon Jary, Publishing Director @ IDG

Keys to success

1 Dedicate resources to make it a success

Although IDG's affiliate team sits within the editorial team, they are singularly focused on producing content and the team is headed up by an editor who ensures any commerce-related content complies with standard editorial practice. The commerce team currently includes 3 dedicated commerce editors. This team is distinct from the studio that responds to sponsored content: commerce editors are focused on service journalism, researching and creating authentic content about the products and brands their community may be interested in buying.

2 A data-driven approach to content production

Editors don't decide what's best for readers independently. Instead, audience analytics lead the way, telling the IDG team what products and retailers their audience are interested in. This helps them to tailor content that will appeal to existing readers, but may also attract new readers searching for information about these products. They understand they are a niche publishing group and therefore focus on their core verticals and the products and brands that support their niches.

3 Commerce-related content is valuable content

IDG's strategy is to create editorial content that is independent of its commercial value. For IDG, metrics around products purchased is as useful a measure of engagement and quality as social shares or page views. If a reader puts their money where their mouth is and buys something as a result of content they have written, it is a more powerful measure of their influence and value to their readers' life than most other engagement metrics. By weaving commerce KPIs into their editorial dashboard, they build a richer picture of their audience and how to serve them more effectively. Their team lives and breathes that mentality in day-to-day content production.

*Content is a combination of commerce and content, referring to monetizable content.

Why they work with Skimlinks

While we were already working with Amazon when we started with Skimlinks, it was through our close working relationship with Skimlinks that we really started seeing affiliate revenues take off to become such an important part of our business. The granular level data their technology provides helps us drill down to see where we are making money and that has been crucial to our affiliate success.

– Simon Jary, Publishing Director @ IDG