Evolve's Campaign To Get You To Watch More Than 7.5 Seconds Of An Ad

by P.J. Bednarski, 8 hours ago



No matter how much some things change in online video, one persistent problem continues: Getting people--real people, not bots--to see ads, fully.

In July, Evolve Media introduced INgage, a video ad that appears within copy on Web site, and goes away once you look at it or go past it. Advertisers pay only if you see it. Today, Evolve is formally announcing INGlide, which is a similar solution, except in this case, the ad window pops up to the side of the copy, in that right side of page slum, and stays there as you scroll through your copy. It keeps gliding along until you either watch it or close it.

Advertisers don't pay for the ad unless you've seen it for 7.5 seconds, which is, really, an eternity in this business. The IAB's Viewability standard is only two seconds, and that's if only 50% or more of the pixels are visible. As Troy Dreier at OnlineVideo.net wrote last week, "The approved standard for video ad viewability sets the bar so low that a limbo champion would have to step over it."

Brian Fitzgerald, Evolve's president and co-founder, tells me that 44% of those who come across the INgage ads get all the way past that 7.5 second mark, though he also says, "As we scale for higher distribution, in the future, we'll probably see that rate come down." At this point, INGage brings in 65 million streams a month, split among 160 different publishers.

INGlide, which is brand new, so far has been streamed only 7 million to 8 million times, Fitzgerald says, but it comes with the same 7.5 second window.

Other ad solutions firms offer similar products--notably Teads InSuite products--but they're priced on a cost-per-thousand basis.

"We're driven by views," Fitzgerald says, which comes with its own problems. Evolve provided a sample of an INglide ad insertion, which worked fine, except the ad, for an LG product, is horrible. You'd never watch it for 7.5 seconds. You'd never watch it at all.

"Ah, that's the age-old problem of advertisers using TV ads without paying attention the different environment of online," Fitzgerald says.

And he's at least half-right. He says Evolve asks some advertisers if its staff can look at TV ads the agency rejected to see if any of those might work better--because, of course, if the ads don't get seen, Evolve's not making money. Sometimes, Fitzgerald says, some advertisers say yes. But he says, that 44% rate INGage gets has "big fluctuations depending on the quality of the creative."

No doubt.

These new ad formats certainly beat auto-play--I absolutely hate auto-play, and so does everybody. But even that two second viewability standard IAB set kind of acknowledges that someone watching for two seconds is probably around for longer, so Evolve's longer 7.5 second play, while a substantial improvement doesn't perfectly get around the problem.

But it does seem to ensure a real person--a real human being--is rejecting the ad. And given the multimillion dollar problem viewability has become, real rejection is worth something, too.