

The Albany Times Union, a major daily newspaper with a circulation of over 90,000, serving New York state's Capital Region, has been around for more than 150 years. Founded in 1857 as the *Morning Times*, the newspaper has truly stood the test of time. Moving into the online sphere in 1996, the newspaper now publishes both an electronic edition and a mobile device-optimized version of its main website for readers.

While the Times Union has developed a web presence in an effort to remain competitive in a changing media landscape, its print offering continued to face declining advertising revenues until several years ago. Advertising sales had dropped off, as advertisers moved away from cost-prohibitive print products and into online spaces.

In AdPerfect, Times Union executives saw the ideal partner to turn their newspaper's advertising sales around. With a full suite of web-based advertising solutions for print and online, AdPerfect has helped the Times Union leverage online technology to reduce administrative and production expenses. At the same time, they have been able to increase and diversify revenue streams from new and existing advertisers.

While newspaper advertising sales across the US have fallen an average 23.2 percent over each of the last two years<sup>1</sup>, the Times Union, in contrast, has seen significant growth with its AdPerfect offerings.

Beginning in 2007 with AdPerfect's Marketplace Directories product, building on its success with an AdPerfect Niche Magazine in 2009, and adding AdPerfect's Dynamic Web Ads in 2010, the Times Union has found a sweet spot with its advertiser base among its multiple AdPerfect products.

## Marketplace Directories

The Times Union has been using AdPerfect's Marketplace Directories product in its *Autos Weekly* section for close to four years now. Before deploying Marketplace Directories in early 2007, the Times Union's sales were in serious decline.

"Used car ad volume and revenues were falling... We were losing market share to other publishers, to niche book publishers, and we were losing a lot," says Randy Lewis, Automotive Sales Manager. The newspaper was being

<sup>1</sup> Research Department, Newspaper Association of America, 2010.

competitively priced out on the one hand, and struggling to secure new advertisers on the other. On top of that, Times Union staff were having to spend excessive time typing in agate lines for ads as they came in. “We don’t have to do that anymore,” he stated.

"It [Marketplace Directories] is easy to use... dealers really don't have to get involved at all. That right there is worth its weight in gold. No more getting copy minutes before or after deadlines," says Lewis.

Since deploying Marketplace Directories, the Times Union has seen sustainable growth of ad sales with the product. “The newspaper now has more used car ads than ever before, averaging between 800 and 900 a week... more than we’ve ever had,” Lewis asserts. That used car liner advertising volume is now more than three times what it was just two years ago.

[illegible]

*"With Marketplace Directories we pretty much changed the way our readers look for a used car in print. We own the used car marketplace with Marketplace Directories."*

*—Randy Lewis, Automotive Sales Manager*

Revenues have also risen. "We've seen an 8 to 10 percent increase across the board for the last two years! Not many newspapers can boast about that in these times," says Lewis.

With Marketplace Directories, the Times Union got turnkey technology that extends the value of their print value proposition with multiple enhancements, as well as online and mobile integration. This integration enables Times Union staffers to track consumer interest and interaction with the print ad, making it easy to return performance metrics to advertisers. Consumers reading the print directory are encouraged, through the call-to-action on the print page, to view more vehicle details either online or via their mobile device. AdPerfect then tracks all online & mobile consumer activity.

AdPerfect's Marketplace Directories also helped the Times Union reduce costs because print production is automated, easy, and takes only a few minutes. The online and mobile components update automatically. They are now saving six hours of staff time, week over week, that used to be devoted to data entry. These liberated hours can now be put back into direct sales efforts.

The Times Union has even taken the initiative in taking their Marketplace Directories product in innovative directions, embedding QR codes in their header and footer artwork to drive traffic to the mobile companion microsite included as a part of the overall solution.

After the resounding success that was realized with AdPerfect's Marketplace Directories product, the Times Union launched iNMotion, a custom automotive Niche Magazine in 2009.

## Niche Magazine

AdPerfect's Niche Magazine solution provides the tools that allow publishers to manage the production of an entire advertising magazine, with or without production staff, using a web-based application.

AdPerfect's Niche Magazine offering has a robust feature set that includes flexible page layouts and previews, automatic flowed ad placement, auto-generated index pages, a folio application, online companion magazine, and more. By leveraging AdPerfect technology, the Times Union has been able to economically produce its own niche product, making them competitive with other niche book publishers, and opening doors to new revenue-generating opportunities.

"It's helped bring in a lot of new business from non-franchise dealers that we normally wouldn't have had in print," says Lewis.

AdPerfect's Niche Magazine offers a modular layout for simplified control. Publishers can create pages conforming to any standard size (tabloid, broadsheet, magazine), or custom page format, and containing any number of modular ad sizes. The web-based booking manager facilitates quick and easy placement of AdPerfect's display ads, flowed ads, and third-party creatives. It also handles data-syncing from a publisher's order entry system to automatically populate listings and supports drag-and-drop into the layout grid. Creating a niche book product offering, like the Times Union's iNMotion auto feature, has never been easier.

"We have one person create it every other week. The art department doesn't get involved and that gives them more time to work on other ads. It's saved us more in labor costs than anything else," says Lewis.

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The Times Union recently launched an online only AdPerfect product, Dynamic Web Ads, to complement its print-based ones.

## Dynamic Web Ads

In August 2010, the Times Union launched its third AdPerfect offering — Dynamic Web Ads. Part of AdPerfect's Online Advertising Solutions, Dynamic Web Ads leverage live database inventory to create dynamic Flash advertisements with built-in intelligence. These ads actively engage viewers, turning passive users into active consumers. Inventory-driven Dynamic Web Ads ad units, with relevant content, attract qualified consumers far better than creative-only ads.

When deployed with AdPerfect's dynamic targeting technology, publishers have seen click-through rates soar to 20 times what they previously were. Dynamic Web Ads come in a wide variety of template styles and IAB-standard sizes, with completely customizable links and color schemes.

Moreover, publishers like the Times Union have fine-grained control over the inventory the ad units serve. For example, they can set parameters to show only certain types of inventory in a particular ad unit, or allow them to show different inventory depending on where the ad appears on their website. Dynamic Web Ads ad units remember user behavior, actually becoming "smarter" over time in the inventory they display to consumers. Self-optimized and sophisticated dynamic targeting improves advertiser ROI, which increases yield for publishers like the Times Union.

Advertisers can actively participate in inventory selection or allow AdPerfect's inventory selection engine to automate the process for them. In addition, Dynamic Web Ads units update automatically based on changes in the advertiser's inventory.

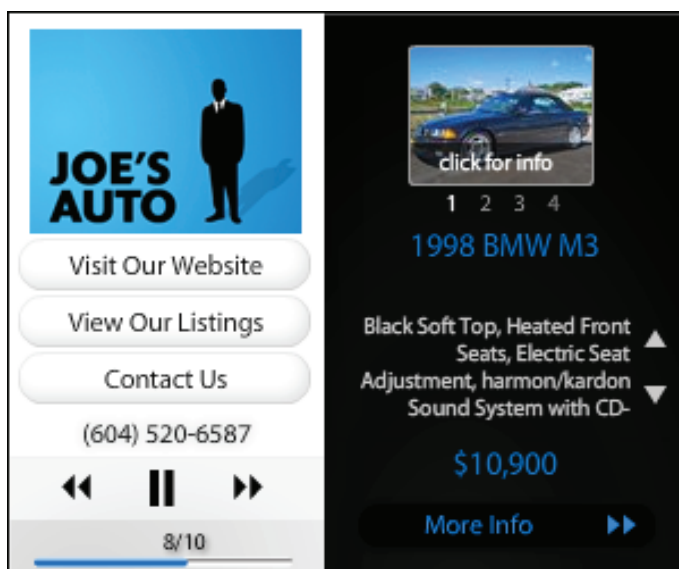
Part of their built-in intelligence is a function of this always current, relevant inventory.

## Conclusion

As the Times Union moves forward as a 21st century news publisher, they continue to look for innovative technologies and opportunities to sustain and grow business. Whether as a standalone offering or bundled solution, AdPerfect's Marketplace Directories, Niche Magazine, and Dynamic Web Ads have all helped them to expand their offerings to advertisers, and reduce costs while growing and diversifying revenue streams. Times Union executives remain confident that in AdPerfect they have access to a world-class solution suite for their advertisers.

*"Newspapers are not the same as they were 20 years ago. We need to be new and exciting to stay on the cutting edge. AdPerfect gives us that. They are constantly changing the landscape."*

*—Randy Lewis, Automotive Sales Manager*



Interested in finding out more about AdPerfect's suite of advertising solutions?

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