

HEADER BIDDING PREBID & DEMAND MANAGER

ACROSS THE
NORDIC
ADVERTISING MARKETS



NETRIC

INTERVIEW #1

HENRIETTE HOFF

Head of Nordic Display Sales

ENIRO



At Eniro, Henriette is the person responsible for the overall display business. Eniro owns sites such as Krak.dk, Eniro.se and Gulesider.no. It is a commercial partner for publishers who don't have their own sales department and therefore has a large Nordic network. It also helps advertisers to create the best possible solutions for their digital campaigns, with the help of its salespeople across all three countries.

“There have been several alternatives to Prebid available, but none of them have had the same impact on the market.”

Where do you want your organization to be in terms of display and video in a year from now?

We are constantly expanding our display network with more publishers who produce original video content in particular. We see a huge demand for both in-feed video, as well as pre-roll.

Our work involves constantly monitoring and improving performance and quality, from within our display network, so that buyers get the best possible results at all times.

Google has announced the sunset of the 3rd party cookie within the next two years. Does it put publishers in a stronger or weaker position?

I believe that by and large, this will put publishers in a stronger position down the road. Yes, it may impact revenue for a while, but then again it will make our 1st party data much more valuable in terms of targeting and pricing for the foreseeable future.

It could unfortunately put smaller publishers in a weaker position, if they do not have enough data volume to compete with the large competition. Particularly for those publishers who have a specific target audience or vertical, it will surely be an advantage.

When we look at programmatic guaranteed vs PMPs vs open market – what would you say are the strongest areas right now, and what kind of missing features could really make a difference in each?

As we are present across all of the Nordics, we see different trends in different countries. They all have an important role. In Sweden we see a tendency that programmatic guaranteed and PMPs are stronger, whereas in Denmark it's the other way around.

What is your high level view on the state of header bidding and Prebid, both now and where it might get to in future?

Header bidding is here to stay. The Prebid technology has developed steadily, but rapidly. There have been several alternatives to Prebid available, but none of them have had the same impact on the market.

It was clear that the Prebid model, based on open source code, where many very skilled developers could contribute, was the way to go. This means that we have absolute confidence in the consistency of quality, and the product's continued development for the future.

What was the major decision factor that made you choose Demand Manager as your Prebid management tool?

There were several things that had an impact - we were in a process where we were switching ad server provider, and that meant that our current header bidding solution needed to be reviewed.

We wanted to deepen our analytics capabilities, and Demand Manager fulfilled both the need for more control over the technical part of the implementation as well as ongoing support. It also provides the necessary tools for us to keep track of the ongoing health of all of our header bidding implementations.

“We feel like we are not just one of many, but actually a valued partner.”

What is your main expectation from Demand Manager?

We expect continuous development of the platform, which will obviously bring more revenue, but also make life easier for us maintenance-wise. There's a strong support team, where we feel prioritized, which is really important to us, as we have an entire partner network to maintain and constantly wish to provide the best possible service level.

In the business case for Demand Manager, is it the cost or the revenue side that is most influential?

That is, of course, a mixture of both. We are very focused on quality, and of course, that will involve cost if we want the best solutions for our partners and ourselves.

Like all companies, we also need to have a focus on cost, so it will always be crucial that revenue gains exceed that.

What sets Netric and Rubicon Project apart from other, similar firms you have worked with?

We have a very strong and close relationship with Netric.

We work with many large international partners, but as many are US and UK-based we are only a small client of theirs. As Netric is Nordic and based in Stockholm, our physical distance is not that great, which I think is the key to why the relationship with Netric and Rubicon works much more smoothly.

They have a stronger presence in the Nordics no doubt because of their ability to network and therefore can be even more proactive. We feel like we are not just one of many, but actually a valued partner.



**E N I R O
ON DEMAND MANAGER
AND WORKING WITH
N E T R I C
& RUBICON**

INTERVIEW #2

LENA TEHRANI

Head of Programmatic

BONNIER NEWS



Lena is head of programmatic at Bonnier News and has been with the company for six years. Bonnier is one of the biggest media houses in the Nordics with a huge product portfolio, ranging from news sites to gardening magazines. It is also very big in online news video and instream.

“I think our market is reaching a saturation point. This means that all small features and points of differentiation become potential opportunities.”

Where do you want your organisation to be in terms of display and video in a year from now?

Honestly, pretty much exactly where we are now. If you had asked me that two years ago, I would have said “at the forefront of the programmatic advertising industry” and that is where I think we stand.

Half of our digital ad revenue comes from programmatic today, which is a huge accomplishment for us. We are able to automate, create efficiency and give advertisers what they want without compromising what we stand for, which is quality content. It doesn't get better than that.

Google has announced the sunset of the 3rd party cookie within the next two years. Does it put publishers in a stronger or weaker position?

Publishers have one job when it comes to digital advertising - and that is making sure our clients get the best bang for every buck they put our way. We have a responsibility to give them the highest ROI we possibly can, and to make sure they are branded in a contextually safe environment. Not being able to work with cookies in the same way will not change our job, we just have to learn how to do it differently.

In one aspect, we will be in a stronger position, since our 1st party data will be more valuable to advertisers who want to reach specific segments. However, let's remember that this is something that we have been able to do for a long time and do almost every day already.

In another respect, it puts us in a weaker position - since programmatic has always been about data and data is, historically and usually, based on cookies. I think it might take some time for us as an industry to learn and understand how we are going to replace the cookie. Will it be a common identity? Other types of device IDs? During this time there is a risk we might lose momentum. But I hope that won't be the case.

When we look at programmatic guaranteed vs PMPs vs open market - what would you say are the strongest areas right now, and what kind of missing features could really make a difference in each?

We are definitely seeing a huge demand increase for programmatic guaranteed. I think it's simply because this is an easier way for advertisers to buy media compared with the traditional way. Also, advertisers get better control of what they are buying, are able to consolidate their buying and ultimately, they can get a higher ROI via guaranteed. I think it hasn't even reached close to its potential yet.

Where do you see most opportunity, and where are you most optimistic about publishing and advertising right now?

I think our market is reaching a saturation point. This means that all small features and points of differentiation become potential opportunities. As a publisher, I am very optimistic about programmatic native where I think we still have a lot to do. For advertisers, I think there is a huge opportunity in understanding PG and integrating it into their media plans.

“The level of service that the Netric and Rubicon-team provide is unlike any other.”

What is your high-level view on the state of header bidding and Prebid, both now and where it might get to in future?

Prebid changed the whole media landscape for us. All of a sudden, we went from tags on site to competing on every single impression served. That was huge! Our advertisers were suddenly able to see more impressions and compete in a fair way.

Looking back at Bonnier’s journey over the last four years, I honestly don’t think the programmatic results would be as great as they are now if it hadn’t been for header bidding.

With those results came more possibilities. We went from a group of three to a group of ten people, working solely with programmatic. We support our sales teams, we educate, we automate, it’s a wonderful place to be.

I don’t think the future will look different. We will continue doing what we are doing and that’s not too shabby.

What was the major decision factor that made you choose Demand Manager as your Prebid management tool?

The main factor was that we could finally have access to a tool that can give us an overview of how our platforms are performing. With header bidding came a huge increase in transactions

across, the different exchanges, and we have had challenges with understanding exactly what is happening, where it is happening and when it is happening.

Now we have a tool that lets us follow every single exchange in a simple UI. That makes our lives much easier.

Also, we are not dependent on internal tech resources in order to try out new partners. We can simply manage things ourselves on site.

What is your main expectation from Demand Manager?

More revenue! Just kidding (not really).

We are excited about the in app and server-side solutions.

What sets Netric and Rubicon Project apart from other, similar firms you have worked with?

The level of service that the Netric and Rubicon-team provide is unlike any other.

We can always count on them to help us when we need it, to keep us updated on market trends and always do it with a smile.

They are also in the frontline when it comes to creativity and innovation. For example, with guaranteed solutions across several DSPs and vertical video.



**B O N N I E R
ON DEMAND MANAGER
AND WORKING WITH
N E T R I C
& RUBICON**

INTERVIEW

**DANIEL
CEO,**

#3

**AHLBERT
NETRIC**

Header bidding still seems complex and difficult in some ways for publishers, how do we make it easier?

As the open source, industry standard for header bidding, Prebid is a big part of the way forward.

Crucially, it's not just the preferred choice for transparency – but also for performance. I believe it to be the most advanced header bidding wrapper in the market – both in terms of what it can do right now, and how quickly new features can be added in future.

Not least because, as an industry-wide initiative, it can lean on the knowledge and skills of hundreds of the best developers in the industry.

Also crucial is the fact that it puts the publisher firmly in control of all commercial decisions – which is a lot harder to realize with a proprietary alternative. Last year, we first thought the switch to server-side header bidding and understanding match rates would be the next great challenge. While that is still a focus for all parties, other topics, like cookies and identity, have also come to the fore.



“There are good reasons why both buyers and sellers are deploying a firmer supply path optimisation (SPO) strategy in 2020.”

Just as a quick recap, what are the origins of header bidding, why did it come about and what does it aim to do?

As a technology, the ad server was built long before RTB came on the scene. And it never really caught up. Even as we moved from open to private marketplaces, to guaranteed and ultimately managing all yield holistically, in real-time, regardless of where it was coming from.

Arguably, the ad server wasn't even optimised to fit a waterfall structure – never mind a live, holistic auction model. In some ways, all header bidding did was to bring competition to the ad server market. To allow publishers to make money out of deals made in the programmatic world on an equal footing with what used to be called 'direct' – insertion orders.

Incidentally, header bidding was also a major part of changing the prevailing auction model from 2nd to 1st price – ultimately meaning more transparency for buyers and sellers alike across the market.

So how did Prebid emerge? How is it different to its competition - and how does it work exactly?

The industry came together and developed Prebid, in an effort to create a transparent and efficient standard all parties could use.

The advantages are clear - the industry, as a whole owns this transparent standard, no proprietary mechanism is involved. Where this is not the case, we've often seen inequalities in knowledge resulting in one side of the auction benefiting at the expense of the other. That is not how you build trust across a high value market.

Second, there is no other technology for header bidding that has as broad functionality as Prebid. Some 500 developers are constantly adding code, plus making checks and balances to ensure new functionality works as intended and supports the Prebid code of conduct. This level of commitment has led to a very well-functioning client-side (i.e. header or page-based), as well as a server-side header offering across desktop, mobile web, apps and video.

Some of the challenges that accompanied header bidding relate to complexity - in terms of extracting actionable data, setup processes and troubleshooting. This has created reliance on internal and, in some cases need for external tech resources.

All of the above has not gone unnoticed - and in fact is one of the main reasons Rubicon Project launched Demand Manager, which acts to simplify many of these areas.

Where should publishers be focussing their attention in 2020?

As buyer of ad exchange services, you don't just need to understand their performance KPIs - now you really also need to understand exactly how the exchanges work through brand safety issues, quality standards and regulation compliance.

Ultimately, you want a partner that puts your P&L, short- and long-term at the forefront. There are good reasons why both buyers and sellers are deploying a firmer supply path optimisation (SPO) strategy in 2020.

Some have said Prebid could ultimately replace the ad server - what is still lacking for that to take place? And if it were to, what do you think would be the ultimate impact for publishers?

Prebid is soon to have the capability to monetize all ad formats. The community just needs to work through some of last remaining native and video formats for that to be a reality. There's also lots of good work being done to make programmatic guaranteed fully supported within Prebid.

When it comes to operational procedures, making it easy to adjust your Prebid containers for various scenarios, as well as pulling all the relevant data you might want, we are getting closer to a scenario where the ad server might not be needed.

And what about for buyers?

The industry as a whole - but even more so on the buy side, has started taking a closer look at the programmatic food chain - all the way from activating a budget on one end, to a rendered ad on the page at the other.

Advertisers are asking their agencies to lay out a complete cost schedule of the technologies

being used. And it is obviously important to understand the origin of the inventory, what's the overlap and where exactly buyers find the outcomes they trust and overall provide value.


Overall, it's likely that the entire process will reduce the number of partners buyers use.

What changes do you expect to see in this area in 2020? What should publishers be aiming to achieve in the immediate future to secure their futures?

Firstly, Prebid is and will be in future a major part of your monetization strategy - make sure you have all the data at hand to understand how healthy your setup is.

Additionally, make all of the appropriate wrapper configurations needed to test various scenarios. Conditions change over weeks, months, markets, devices and formats. Each and every publisher's revenues will benefit from a better understanding of what the best solution is under different timings and conditions.

We expect to see further enhancements around video header bidding this year, which is still a growing part of publisher revenues, alongside native and other Demand Manager partner tools.



“There is no other technology for header bidding that has as broad functionality as Prebid. Some 500 developers are constantly adding code”

INTERVIEW

#4

ASHLEE

VP, Revenue

RUBICON

ROENIGK

Solutions

PROJECT

What is the status of programmatic for publishers right now, would you say - has it become more complex lately, and if so where are the opportunities?

The majority of our publishers went through many tactical changes over the last few years implementing header bidding and all that came with it. Header bidding started as an extremely hands-on solution which was very complex, but in the last two years has now seen productization and community standardization, which continues to lessen that complexity.

Last year, we first thought the switch to server-side header bidding and understanding match rates would be the next great challenge. While that is still a focus for all parties, other topics, like cookies and identity, have also come to the fore.



“We want publishers to be able to focus on their business and what they’re best at. We’ve done over two thousand header implementations, at least, since I’ve been at Rubicon Project”

Thinking specifically around Prebid.org, what are the specific challenges and opportunities there? and why is Prebid.org an important forum for publishers to join in?

Prebid.org is fighting the good fight on behalf of publishers. Rubicon Project takes part in the vast majority of the committees and projects that exist which allow a great back and forth flow of information, including chairing many of the committees

It is an exciting time, as publisher involvement is at its highest point – and this is critical to driving solutions around all the industry challenges we face. Not only in the work being done around cookies and alternative identity solutions, but also around a universal floors solution which we believe will finally provide transparency and standardization across all Prebid.org (and hopefully Google) auction participants.

If they use Prebid, publishers should absolutely join the organization, for many reasons. In case you don’t know, there are free tiers of membership in which you can participate however you want - giving feedback, presenting at an event, joining a committee or project. There are also paid membership tiers. One such tier, the publisher tier, gives you board representation – meaning you can fully participate in product roadmaps and industry-wide discussions.

Prebid.org offered publishers a greater revenue potential but also brought complexity - What is the problem Demand Manager is seeking to solve, and what kind of publishers is it aimed at?

We want publishers to be able to focus on their business and what they’re best at. We’ve done over two thousand header implementations, at least, since I’ve been at Rubicon Project; out of that process, we built a toolset that both our clients and internal teams use to implement, troubleshoot, and optimize for our clients. We know header bidding can be as complex to set up as it is to maintain and optimize. We want to provide publishers with the data to make business and technical decisions without resource implications being a factor.

Demand Manager allows anyone to make use of the time saving tools, whether that be business teams, engineering teams, or the Rubicon Project team upon request. To date, the service has been utilized by publishers with a variety of different needs -- the main being lack of internal dedicated resources to maintain header solutions. In addition, there are many publishers that do have resources but want better tools to really test and measure the value of their demand partners.

How is it different to similar solutions on the market? And if possible, can you give more specific detail around what it does right now, and what we can expect it to do in the near future?

There are many solutions built around Prebid.org. It's important that the solutions use the standard Prebid code, like Demand Manager, without any modifications.

In addition, it's key to have tools like Demand Manager's configuration UIs that connect not only to the page, but to the ad server, and robust analytics that give details on all demand sources, not just the one that manages the wrapper, in order for publishers to maximize their header implementations.

It's advantageous to understand how solution providers interact with Prebid.org - they can have many roles in the organization including: holding leadership positions, being extremely active by releasing features and driving industry collaboration services to serve publishers' needs directly.

This year we'll be taking Demand Manager a step further by continuing to automate a lot of what our tools do today, which will give publishers more ways to test and optimize their setups.

What is the longer term view on header bidding and Prebid.org? Will it be server, rather than client-based - and will it function with third party cookies, or rather, other identifiers?

We do still feel strongly that Prebid Server is the future of header bidding and we're already seeing traction with mobile app and video. Solving the cookie issue is our mandate for 2020, and the move to servers at this time (for standard desktop en masse) is secondary to solving these core issues. All the tools being built today, both at Rubicon Project and within Prebid.org, are built to solve today's client-side issues as well as easily translate to server when we're ready.

There are many publishers today that are using server for environments such as mobile app and desktop formats like video. Other publishers, on the other hand, are using tools like Demand Manager's A/B testing module to try server in an easy and risk-free way: for example, to understand what their current match rates look like and if latency can be improved in cases where current header implementation or size can be causing page performance and/or revenue issues.

Prebid Server, and Demand Manager, support many of the current identity solutions on market as well as the newly created Prebid ID solution, which allows publishers to create and transmit their own IDs or identity vendor IDs in a standardized way to everyone in the auction.

We expect the near future to remain heavily focused on client-side for desktop display but mid-term future will have many hybrid set-ups with one to two client bidders (while 3rd party cookies still apply) and many server-side bidders.

We still believe our collective five-year future will see Prebid Server being able to fully function as ad serving technology and giving publishers real options and control over their tech setups.

Rubicon Project CTO Tom Kershaw:

"As Prebid scaled globally, it became clear that publishers had to expend significant time and resources adapting it to their needs, which is unsustainable and unnecessary."



"With Demand Manager, we see the opportunity to combine the transparency and flexibility of open source with a turnkey service that puts control back in the publishers' hands so they don't have to rely on us or anyone else to run their businesses.""

For more information on Prebid & Demand Manager, please get in touch
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