



The Complete Content Discovery Guide

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If you're a content marketer entrenched in the battle for clicks, views, likes, downloads, leads and dollars, you already know it's tough out there. You're not just fighting off your competitors; you're fighting against short attention spans in a world filled with distractions.



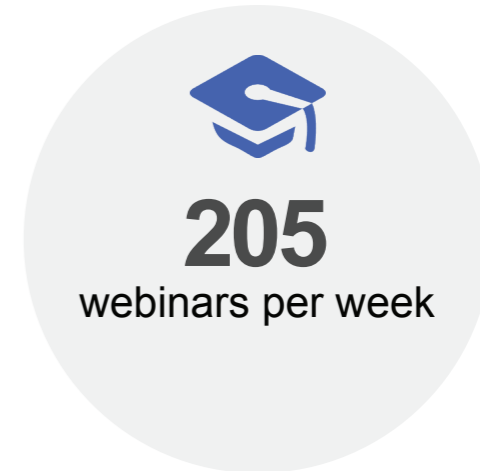
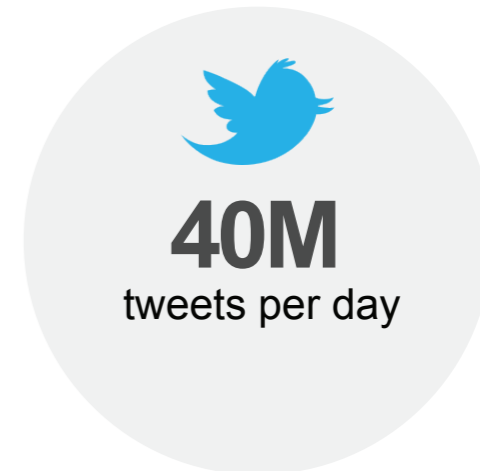
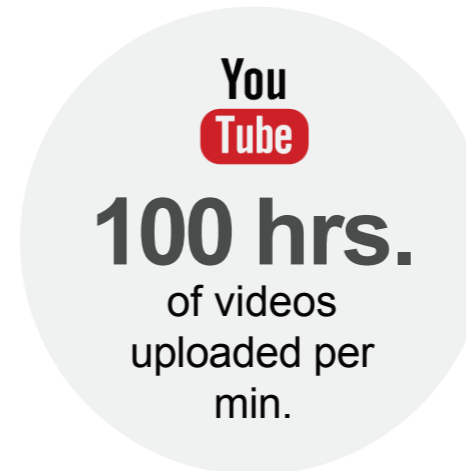
DOES DISTRIBUTION REALLY MATTER?

The distribution stage of a content marketing plan is a little bit like that old Buddhist riddle, “If a tree falls in the woods, and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?”

If you publish a blog, but can't reach your target audience, does your content make a difference? Reaching the right audience is key to seeing positive returns. Otherwise, the time, talent, and money invested in creating great content is wasted.

The Competition for Your Audience is Fierce

What makes reaching your audience so challenging? Your perfect piece of content might be getting lost at sea on the way towards its perfect audience. Every minute, there's a new distraction competing for attention. Your content, however apt, is statistically unlikely to naturally drift into notice of the correct person without a push.



HOW TO START CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE

So, how do you compete against the new Ice Bucket Challenge, “What Does the Fox Say” or the latest, most adorable kitty video? Using a mix of owned and paid distribution methods gives you the most reliable path to reaching your ideal audience.

Owned Platforms

1. Leveraging your own website: This one’s a gimme. It’s simple and low-cost to post your content on your own website. Once you get your audience to your website, you’re in full control of the experience and engagement.

2. Social networking: Give your current fans another way to find your content by posting it across all of your social networks.

3. Your email list: Another gimme! If you have a database of users who’ve opted in for messages, they want to hear from you.

4. Content sharing websites: If you’ve got content that’s appropriate for YouTube, Squidoo or Pinterest, all of these sites give you another opportunity to reach out to users where they’re already spending their time.



Paid Platforms

1. Content Discovery: Have your content recommended alongside the traditional editorial content on influential publisher websites. Much more about Content Discovery below.

2. Sponsored updates: The big social players all offer sponsored updates as a service. This can be another way to make a push towards your audience for a negotiated fee.

3. Online ads: You can promote important content items through paid search, display ads or social network ads.

4. Using the power of public relations: Pitch news sites and blogs about research, surveys, or new ideas you've launched – or you can reach out directly to bloggers with content that's relevant to their interests.



CONTENT DISCOVERY: YOUR CONTENT 'FINDS' THE RIGHT AUDIENCE

One of the innovations addressing our overly taxed attention spans and overwhelming choice of content items is in the realm of discovery technology. Discovery platforms use intelligent, predictive algorithms to match people with anything they might be interested in, including articles, movies, music, apps, products, food, services, places around them and even other people.

The concept is simple: when you know what you're looking for, you use a search engine to find a specific piece of information. When you don't, Content Discovery will match you up with content you are likely to take interest in and may not have known existed. Think of Content Discovery as a search engine in reverse...



RECOMMENDING YOUR CONTENT ALONGSIDE EDITORIAL

Content Discovery platforms recommend sponsored content through a widget placed below or next to editorial content on publisher websites and blogs. Advanced mathematical algorithms predict what content users may like. Taboola, for example, uses factors including content other similar users viewed, personal content preferences, geographic location, context and topics trending on social media.

To get content recommended, marketers add content items – such as articles, videos and photo galleries – into a marketplace that operates based on a CPC model. In other words: you pay only when someone clicks on a recommended link and views your content.

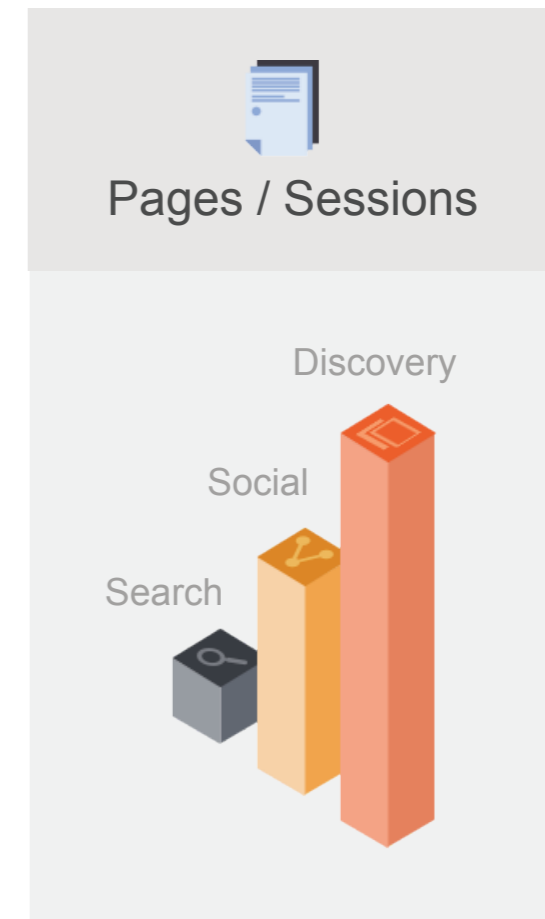
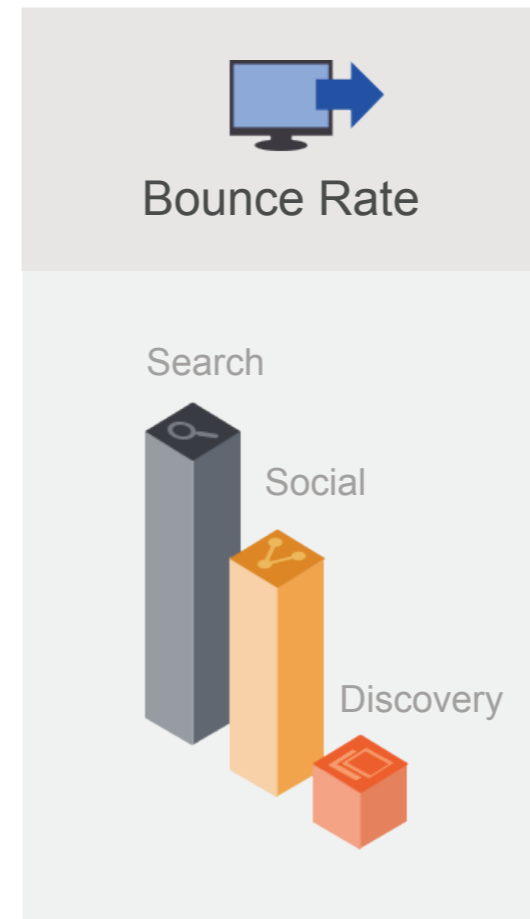


HOW DISCOVERY IS DIFFERENT FROM SEARCH AND SOCIAL ADS

Content Discovery typically yields higher engagement and lower bounce rates than ads, but why?

When people Google “Who won the 1960 World Series” they want the answer (Pittsburgh Pirates), and when they’re on Facebook, they want to see new pictures of their baby niece or share their love of a perfect brownie sundae. They aren’t looking to read an article about a new line of running shoes. That’s not their state of mind.

But, if people are reading their favorite online magazine, then they’re open to checking out one more article. If they’re watching videos, they might go ahead and click to watch another. They’re in a “content consumption” mode, and are likely to be interested in consuming more, as long as it matches their interests.



WHY CONTENT DISCOVERY IS TAKING THE ONLINE WORLD BY STORM

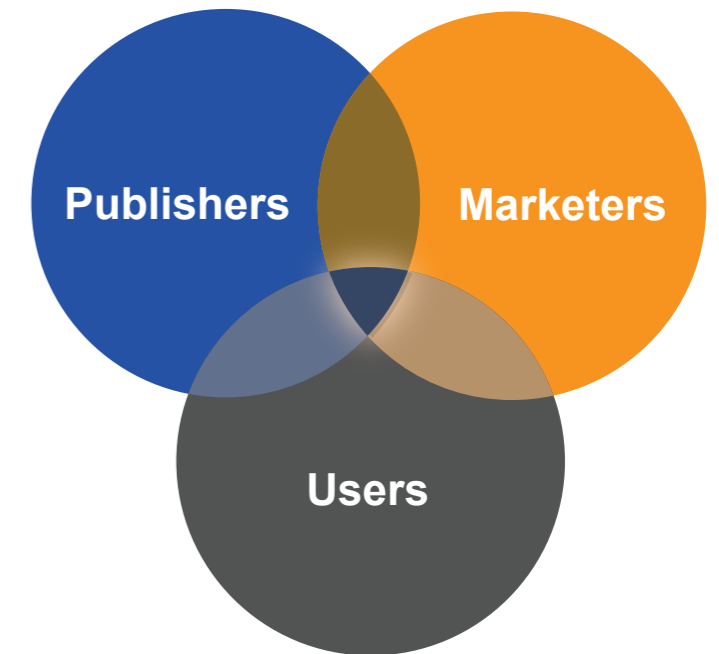
Content Discovery is growing quickly because it directly solves problems that publishers and brand marketers face:

Publishers are in a constant battle to attract loyal readers and monetize their content. With declining display ad revenue and a shift to mobile devices, most publishers see Content Discovery as a viable solution to generate revenue while increasing engagement.

Marketers are searching for ways to get their content in front of their target audience at scale while realizing a strong ROI, and Content Discovery platforms let them do exactly that! Taboola, as an example, reaches 400M unique users every month and enables marketers to optimize campaigns based on their specific goals, such as conversion rates, subscriptions or content views.

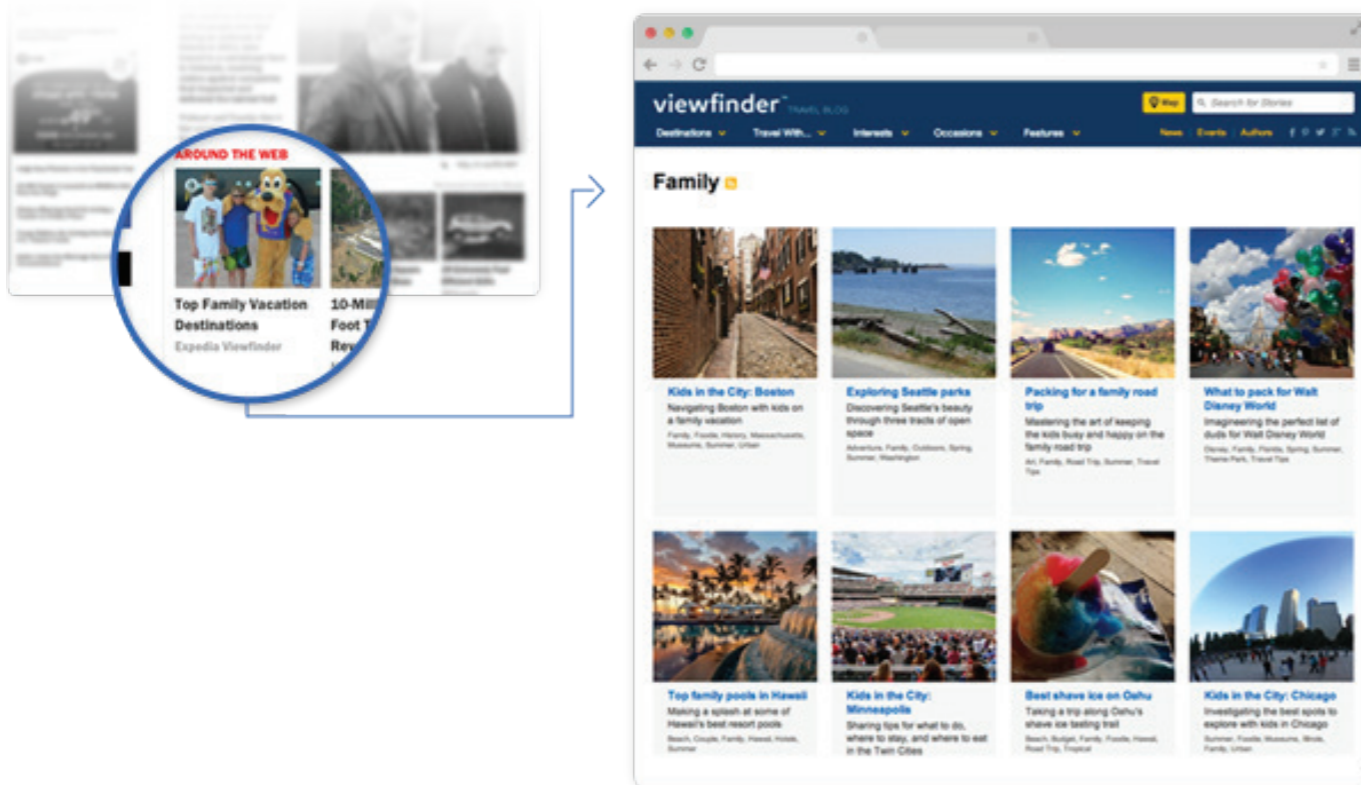
Users are overwhelmed by the mountains of content now available online. Too much choice often leads to what psychologist Barry Schwartz calls “choice paralysis”. More choices make us less likely to take action, and to be less satisfied with our eventual decision. Content Discovery helps users find content they may like.

The combination of these needs is fueling the success of Content Discovery.



DISCOVERY IN THE SERVICE OF MARKETERS

Content Discovery platforms, and content marketing in general, provide value across the funnel –helping to build awareness, change perception and drive action. Plus, Content Discovery can work in virtually any industry. Here are some examples of successful content campaigns.



Viewfinder, Expedia’s travel blog, contains high quality content about travel destinations around the world. Viewfinder visitors, who go to the site for travel information, are likely to then book their travel at Expedia.

As part of its efforts to increase traffic to Viewfinder, Expedia used Taboola’s Content Discovery platform to get Viewfinder posts recommended to relevant audiences. Results were extremely positive – Expedia found that visitors it brought in from Taboola viewed 28 percent more pages than organic traffic and stayed on-site twice as long.

The Complete Content Discovery Guide

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Obama Orders About 200 More U.S. Troops to Baghdad

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previously getting tired, it was boring.

"I look forward to bringing our beloved NBC sitcom to a larger audience by moving it online," Harmon said in a statement. "I vow to dominate our new competition. Rest easy, *Big Bang Theory*. Look out, *Bong Bus!*"

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Filed in **CLOUD INDUSTRY INSIGHTS** on September 19th, 2013 by **Ben McInnes**

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I often get questions about writing software in .NET. Is it expensive? Do I have to have a Windows machine? Can I build a website? Can I build "serious" software?

While I've written a couple of articles on how I learned **Ruby on Rails** and **installing Rails on your Mac**, my formal background is programming using Microsoft's .NET framework. As a developer at Rackspace on the **RackConnect** product, I use .NET every day to make sure that we can link together our customers' dedicated servers to their cloud servers. If you want to get started learning .NET, here are a few suggestions I have for you.

1. Choose Your Language

First, there's no ".NET" language. Instead, .NET is a framework that provides an environment that programs in several languages can execute, including C#, Visual Basic, NET, Python, Ruby and Lisp (**.NET developers can work in open source too!**).

So if .NET is the framework, what language should you use? I strongly recommend **C#** (pronounced "C Sharp"), it is far and away the most popular language used in the .NET ecosystem. Almost all open sourced software in the .NET environment is in C#. Most serious .NET software engineering projects use C# as it is a derivative of C++ and is a powerful object-oriented language. People with a background in Java should find it a relatively easy transition to learning C#.

The other popular option is using **Visual Basic .NET**, but I would only advise learning this language if your primary programming experience is writing macros and scripts for Microsoft Office.

Search

Rackspace Cloud Products

COMMUNITY

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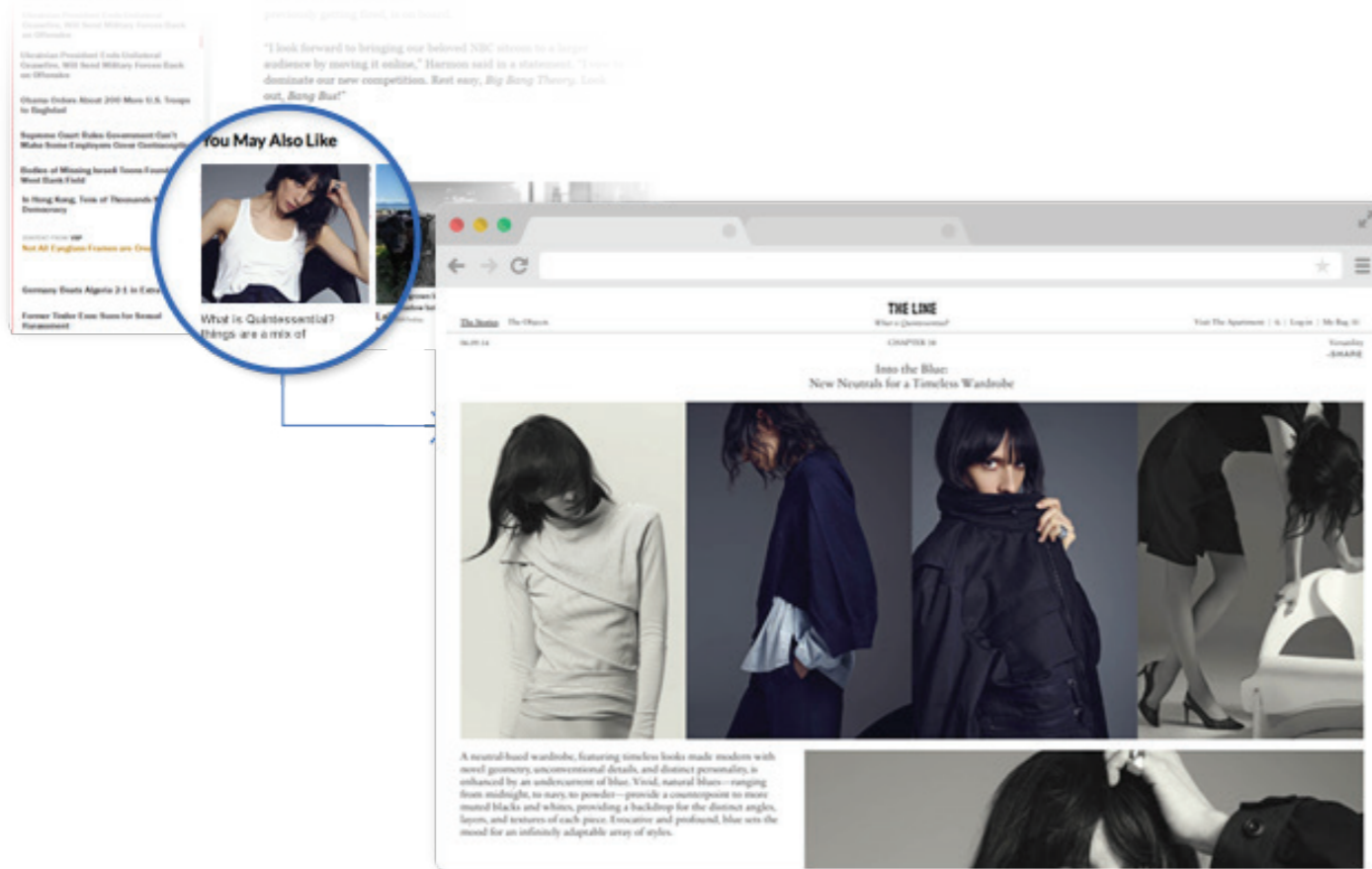
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Rackspace, a hosting company serving 60 percent of the Fortune 100, generates leads through white paper and software downloads – many of which start from its popular blog.

To increase lead flow and reduce cost per lead, Rackspace turned to Taboola and promoted several blog posts through the Taboola platform. Visitors who read the great content on Rackspace's blog were also offered a free download. Rackspace realized that visitors who found Rackspace via Content Discovery were more likely to sign up for software trials, download whitepapers, and learn more about their product features.



THE LINE

The Line is an online boutique that showcases products that can be found at their brick and mortar store, The Apartment by The Line, located in New York City's upscale SoHo shopping district. The Line chose to weave traditional storytelling techniques into their content and even went so far as to create "chapters" as a way to reach their audience and offer products for consideration.

After getting their blog posts recommended through a Content Discovery platform, The Line's content earned over 72 million impressions and an almost 100 percent traffic increase in one month alone. Their e-commerce team was also pleasantly surprised by email subscriber growth, which spiked by 12 percent.

Why get excited? Content Discovery can help marketers make Content Marketing more measurable, more predictable, and more scalable. That's exciting. Trying to create the next viral video a la "Harlem Shake" - that's just luck.

SO, HOW DO YOU GET STARTED WITH CONTENT DISCOVERY?

These are the steps you need to achieve success your first time out with Content Discovery.
Game, Set, Match

1. Define Goals

Before you start, know what you want to accomplish with your new campaign. Are you trying to drive action (e.g. sign up for a newsletter, request a trial, download an app), build a loyal reader base, lift brand awareness, etc.? You need these answers to set your KPIs.

The more you know about what you want to achieve, the better your chance at getting that delicious ROI. Content Discovery platforms like Taboola can even optimize your campaign based on the KPIs you set for the campaign.

2. Set Up the Campaign

A successful campaign always consists of the following:

a) Content that is informative, professionally produced, and relevant to your target audience – this can be a post on your blog, a video on YouTube, a slide show, a third-party review of your product, etc.

b) Thumbnail and Title for use within the recommendation widget – these should attract your target audience and reflect the content users see after they click

c) CPC that will ensure you achieve your goals; the optimal CPC is determined based on flight length, volume, estimated CTR, targeting and budget.



d) Targeting and Re-targeting can often increase the effectiveness of your campaigns. For example, some Content Discovery platforms support geographic targeting, device targeting, specific time-of-day, and more.

e) Tracking Results is key to optimizing the campaign, so make sure you implement the tracking code you receive from your Content Discovery platform, when possible, or use third-party tools and services to gain insights into campaign performance.

Some Content Discovery platforms offer a self-service option, and with others you will be assigned an account manager who will help you with creative, CPC and ongoing optimization.



3. Always Be Optimizing

A marketer's work is never done. A piece of content can be a powerhouse, and then suddenly stop working for no apparent reason. It is completely normal for headlines or images to get "tired." The best way to keep performance consistent over time is to prevent these performance lags. You can create a corral of headlines and images to test over time. Content Discovery algorithms help you identify the top performers from your full line-up. Content Discovery is the ideal platform for experimentation and searching out unexpected successes. You never know what might gain traction.

HOW TO CHOOSE A CONTENT DISCOVERY PLATFORM

The rising popularity of Content Discovery has spurred the creation of a good number of platforms. These are the key aspects to consider when choosing a solution:

- ✓ **Quality of Publisher Network:** on what websites is the recommendation widget deployed?
- ✓ **Scale:** how many users does the platform reach in your target regions?
- ✓ **Platform Support:** how well are mobile devices supported by the platform?
- ✓ **Targeting:** what targeting and retargeting capabilities does the platform offer?
- ✓ **Tracking:** does the platform provide capabilities to track metrics such as CPA and PPV?
- ✓ **Reporting:** what reports are available through the platform? Can you export data for custom analytics?
- ✓ **Ease-of-Use:** what's it like using the platform's campaign management interface? Is the platform accessible through a mobile app?
- ✓ **Service:** can you get help with planning, creating and optimizing your campaigns from an account manager if needed, or does the platform only offer self-service?

A good general recommendation is to create a shortlist of platforms and test all of them to see how they perform and how easy it is to work with the platform provider.

Taboola is the leading content discovery platform, serving over **150 billion** content recommendations to over **400 million** unique visitors every month on the Web's most trafficked publisher sites, including **USA Today, The Huffington Post, Time,** and **The Weather Channel.**



www.taboola.com