# Comcast introduces Universal Ads to attract small advertisers



At this year’s CES, Comcast unveiled a new initiative aimed at small and regional advertisers, called Universal Ads. This new platform, developed through Comcast's ad tech subsidiary FreeWheel, aims to provide a free-of-charge advertising solution, though it is anticipated that advertisers will need to commit to a minimum campaign spend, a detail not confirmed by CNBC or the official announcement.

Universal Ads is poised to integrate with major broadcast entities, including Paramount, Roku, Warner Bros. Discovery, alongside NBCUniversal. The platform seeks to attract a broader array of advertisers, particularly smaller businesses, who are accustomed to purchasing video and streaming ads through simplified interfaces such as those provided by Google and Meta. While Google and Meta have millions of advertisers engaging with their platforms, NBCUniversal maintains a significantly smaller base, demonstrating the potential for growth in targeting smaller advertisers.

James Rooke, Comcast Advertising President, noted the strategic pivot, stating, “You can continue to compete in a diminishing market, or you can go on offense and you can go after where the growth is. We have to be fishing in the ponds where the growth is.”

In other developments in the ad technology landscape, testimony from Jed Dederick, Chief Revenue Officer of The Trade Desk, during a Department of Justice (DOJ) trial against Google emphasised the unique competitive dynamics in the streaming TV advertising sector. Dederick argued that Google's dominance in various ad markets has stemmed from its ad server monopoly, which hampers the capabilities of direct competitors. However, the lack of control that Google exerts over TV advertising has allowed The Trade Desk to gain a foothold in this market. Notably, despite the enormous scale of YouTube, Google struggles with streaming ad tech and connected TV (CTV) due to its Digital Video 360 (DV360) service's weaknesses among CTV advertisers.

Catherine Perloff from The Information notes that Google’s advantages in online search and display advertising are not as pronounced in CTV, where TTD has been able to effectively challenge Google. This evolving landscape raises questions about Google’s monopolistic position, especially if the judge in the ongoing case decides to disrupt the integration between DV360 and YouTube.

Meanwhile, the proposed joint venture in sports broadcasting, known as Venu Sports, which involved Disney, Fox, and Warner Bros. Discovery, appears to have found new momentum. Business Insider reported that this venture has reached an agreement to pay Fubo $220 million to settle an antitrust lawsuit complicated by previous plans for the joint venture. As a condition of this settlement, Disney and Fubo are set to establish a new venture that will merge Hulu + Live TV with Fubo's streaming platform. Disney will hold a 70% stake in this new entity, although specifics regarding its name and launch timeline remain absent. This shift underscores Disney’s commitment to live sports distribution, a critical element of its advertising strategy moving forward.

As the advertising industry adapts to rapid technological changes and competition, the convergence of new platforms, regulatory challenges, and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, continues to shape the landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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