



What's Hot?!

November 2024



The London Standard Is Launched as A Weekly

Following its launch in 1827, the *London Evening Standard* has relaunched as the *Standard*, moving to a freely distributed weekly title in the capital. The new title will continue to report on the latest news, politics, business and entertainment every Thursday.

The move from daily to weekly

The announcement back in May, that the *London Evening Standard* would be repositioning as a weekly edition, prompted considerable speculation about the title's future. This shift to weekly publication would be a first in the nearly 200 years of consistent daily distribution. Indeed, not since October 2009, when new ownership terminated multiple daily editions and made the paper free, has it seen such radical change.

The *Standard* has long been an iconic part of London life and this new distribution plan helps protect the title for the future. The key part of adaptation will be how they report on news. We anticipate a slight editorial shift to reviewing and long-form journalism rather than breaking news, offering readers a new way to engage with the content.

Change for the capital

With the move to weekly, we expect to see a more robust paper better serving the needs of the London audience. With the increased presence of entertainment and nightlife ahead of the weekend it will become a real guide to Londoners on what's going on in the city. Albert Read was appointed last month to the role of executive chairman of the *London Evening Standard*, bringing 25 years of experience in magazine publishing from Condé Nast. He said: 'As the *Standard* embarks on the next phase of its journey, its new weekly print publication will set the bar high, reaching new readers, and reflecting the dynamism and excitement of London.'

Quality journalism remains

Following the shift, we can anticipate that clients are going to welcome this new bumper weekly edition, as it will become a real moment in the week for London. The environment will remain high quality, preserving the excellent standards we have come to expect from the journalists and commercial teams at the *Standard*. The new approach is fresh and will no doubt reinvigorate this iconic London institution.

With the *Standard* transitioning from a daily to a weekly publication, its aim is to maintain its relevance in a changing media landscape by focusing on long-form journalism and becoming a go-to guide for London's weekend activities. This refreshed version of the historic title has been welcomed in the city already since its official launch on 26th September.



How Paywalls Are Changing the Podcast Landscape for Creators and Listeners

Increasingly, podcasts are adopting a paywall model as the industry seeks new revenue streams. By offering exclusive content, ad-free episodes, and early releases behind paywalls, podcast creators—from major media outlets to independent producers—are capitalising on loyal audiences willing to pay for premium experiences.

Acast recently launched [Acast+ Access](#), a subscription model that allows news publishers to integrate their existing paywalls into platforms like Apple Podcasts. This means publishers can now bundle podcasts into their inclusive packages without relying on proprietary apps or external hosting. A recent Acast survey found that 27% of consumers are more likely to subscribe if podcast benefits are included, highlighting the potential of podcasting as a revenue generator. Alexandra Fuller, senior partnerships manager at Acast, explained that Acast+ Access allows publishers to retain ownership of their customer relationships. For example, subscribers to bonus content from *The Economist* remain within *The Economist*'s ecosystem rather than Apple's or Acast's, giving publishers greater freedom to maintain their relationship with their audience.

The New York Times is also [joining the paywall trend](#) with a new podcast subscription service priced at \$6 per month on platforms like Apple Podcasts. Archived episodes are placed behind a paywall, while the most recent episode remains free. According to Paula Szuchman, the Times' director of audio, the revenue will be reinvested into expanding their journalism and producing more shows, helping them grow their audio offerings.

These premium services offer more than just paywalled content. Subscribers gain access to ad-free listening, exclusive episodes, early content releases, and personalised experiences. Independent podcasters are also leveraging this model to monetise their content and build deeper connections with their listeners.

However, the success of these paid models depends on balancing exclusivity with accessibility. Too much content behind paywalls could alienate potential listeners, and podcast creators must carefully consider how much they charge for access without shrinking their audience. This is particularly important for media companies using podcasts as an advertising platform, where maintaining broad reach is crucial. Interestingly, Spotify UK, a top platform for paid audio ads, reported that none of their brands are currently implementing paywalls, suggesting the trend is evolving differently in the UK media landscape.



The Future of Streaming Ads: How Netflix's Ad Tier Is Shaping Viewer Experiences

With the introduction of ad-tier memberships, Netflix has recently made waves, a strategic move designed to attract a wider audience through more affordable viewing options. This initiative allows the streaming giant to tap into the advertising market, enhancing its monetisation strategy amid fierce competition in the streaming landscape. By offering a lower-cost entry point, Netflix aims to engage viewers who may have previously found its subscription fees a barrier to access.

The early success of the ad tier is evident, with a growing number of new subscribers joining from various regions, including those that had begun to show signs of market saturation. To build on this momentum, Netflix is focused on enhancing its advertising capabilities, aiming to expand its membership base and achieve critical scale. This growth is about more than just increasing numbers; it's also about elevating the quality of the advertising experience.

Central to this initiative is the rollout of a new proprietary ad technology platform, designed to optimise inventory management and improve audience targeting. This technology will allow advertisers to reach their desired demographics more effectively, thereby increasing the overall value of ad placements. Moreover, Netflix is committed to diversifying its advertising formats and features, encouraging creative engagement from advertisers to produce campaigns that resonate with viewers.

To further bolster campaign effectiveness, Netflix plans to implement advanced measurement tools that provide actionable insights into performance. This will help brands refine their real-time marketing strategies, enhancing their return on investment. Additionally, the streaming service is exploring potential brand partnerships and sponsorships, aiming to foster deeper audience interaction and create new revenue streams.

Netflix's ad tier represents a significant opportunity to enhance campaigns by reaching a broader and more diverse audience. With access to new consumer segments that were previously more difficult to engage, brands can refine their targeting strategies and ensure their messages resonate with the right viewers. The introduction of detailed audience insights and real-time performance analytics allows brands to optimise their campaigns for maximum impact. As Netflix continues to refine its ad technology, brands will be able to craft more personalised, engaging ads that not only increase brand visibility but also drive higher engagement and conversions.

This shift offers brands a unique opportunity to leverage Netflix's premium content while benefiting from data-driven precision and creative flexibility in their advertising strategies.

Looking ahead, Netflix envisions a seamless integration of digital and traditional advertising, crafting a unique environment that appeals to viewers while delivering measurable results for brands. These initiatives highlight Netflix's commitment to evolving its advertising offerings, ensuring it remains a competitive force in the ever-changing digital entertainment landscape.



How the DOJ's Investigation of Google Could Change the Future of Adtech

Google's dominance in adtech could face a reshaping as regulatory pressure mounts on its tightly integrated ad ecosystem. With the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) exploring whether a break-up of Google's adtech business is feasible, this situation raises the possibility of new entrants challenging Google's long-held control. If Google is compelled to restructure its ad services, the adtech market might see a surge in opportunities for emerging players to gain ground.

The DOJ's main issue with Google centres on its control and potentially "anti-competitive conduct" across various functions in the digital ad supply chain—from the demand side to the supply side. This limits competition, but if Google's ad business fragments, the ecosystem could benefit competitors and new entrants. Industry expert Rocco Strauss has proposed that spinning off Google Network as an independent entity could ease regulatory concerns and level the playing field for publishers and advertisers.

A fragmented Google ad ecosystem could drive competition in a way that allows smaller adtech companies to grow and capture market share. With Google's systems no longer seamlessly integrated, new companies could offer specialised tools to advertisers and publishers seeking alternatives to Google's one-stop-shop approach. This, in turn, could encourage innovation, as smaller, specialised firms bring new features and flexibility to advertisers looking for custom solutions.

International tech firms may leverage the opportunity, viewing Google's break-up as an entry point into markets where the search giant was once unshakeable. Competitors focused on data privacy, AI-driven targeting, or innovative ad delivery could capitalise on shifting advertiser preferences.

If the split goes ahead, it may well pave the way for a broader ecosystem with diverse competitors offering tailored, competitive options. A public-benefit spin-off of Google Network might satisfy regulators while ensuring a continued U.S. presence in the digital advertising market, especially against global competitors. A potential breakup of Google's adtech business could reshape the competitive landscape and lead to a more diverse and innovative industry.



RAJAR Q3 2024: Digital Listening Gains and Key Station Performances

The RAJAR Q3 2024 results are in, and they continue to underline the strength and resilience of audio as a channel in the UK. With radio listenership reaching a record 50.9 million adults, audio remains a critical medium for advertisers. This new milestone, an increase from the 50.8 million record in Q2, demonstrates the steady audience growth that brands can leverage to drive engagement and build connections.

Commercial radio's share of listening fell slightly this quarter to 53.3%, down from 55%, while the BBC regained some ground with a 44.5% share. Yet, commercial radio's weekly audience has grown to over 40 million, up from 39.2 million in the same period last year. This consistency proves that commercial radio remains a robust platform for brands looking to reach engaged audiences across the UK.

Digital listening continues its upward trend, now accounting for 32.8% of all commercial radio listening—a noticeable increase from 28.2% year-on-year. This surge reflects the importance of digital platforms as essential touchpoints for advertisers aiming to capture audience attention, particularly among younger and digitally savvy demographics.

The UK's leading commercial stations continue to deliver significant reach. Heart, Capital, and Smooth have set new audience records, with Heart leading at 12.99 million, followed by Capital at 9.7 million, and Smooth at 7.7 million. These stations remain powerful tools for media planners seeking high-reach options to enhance brand exposure and connect with listeners nationwide.

Meanwhile, Bauer's recent rebranding efforts for some of its stations under the "Hits" branding led to the network reaching its highest audience to date with 7.2 million weekly listeners. Hits Radio itself achieved a weekly reach of 4.6 million, highlighting its growing popularity among UK audiences.

Adding to Bauer's success, Greatest Hits Radio continues its upward trajectory, with a year-on-year growth of 12.9%, bringing its weekly audience to 7.4 million. This expansion underscores the station's appeal, particularly among listeners seeking familiar tunes and trusted personalities. Additionally, the Hits Radio Network boasts some of commercial radio's most popular talent, with Simon Mayo leading the largest commercial drivetime show and Ken Bruce commanding over four million weekly listeners, making his show the most listened-to on commercial radio. These well-known figures provide brands with valuable opportunities to partner with personalities who already have strong audience trust.

The RAJAR Q3 2024 results reflect the resilience of radio and its adaptability within the evolving digital landscape. With radio attracting record audiences and digital listening on the rise, brands have a unique opportunity to connect with audiences across a broad mix of platforms and stations. From leading networks like Heart and Capital to Bauer's expanding Greatest Hits Radio, the UK audio landscape offers diverse options for advertisers to create impactful campaigns and reach highly engaged listeners.



TikTok Launches Smart+

TikTok has launched Smart+, a new AI-powered performance marketing suite designed to automate campaign creation and optimisation. Available globally, Smart+ allows advertisers to input assets, budgets, and targeting goals, while TikTok's AI handles the rest. The tool incorporates TikTok's creative AI suite, Symphony, to streamline campaign setup, significantly reducing the time spent on testing and planning.

Marketers retain control and can choose which aspects to automate or manage manually. This move is part of a broader trend, with platforms like Pinterest and Meta also rolling out AI tools to enhance marketing performance.

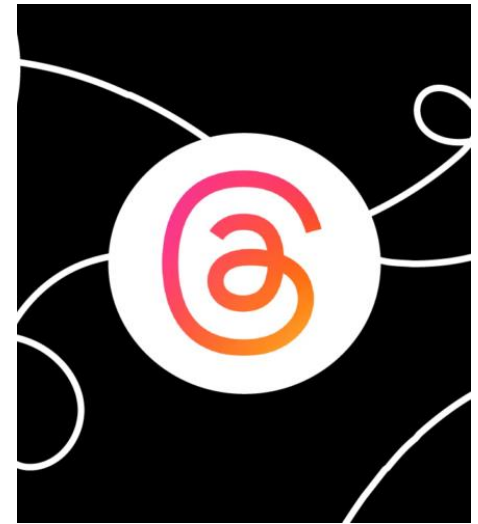


Amazon Prime Video Reaches 19m in the UK

Amazon Prime Video now reaches over 19 million UK users each month through its ad-supported service, as revealed during the company's UK upfronts. This marks the first time Amazon has disclosed its UK commercial audience reach.

Since introducing an ad tier earlier this year and joining TV measurement body Barb, Amazon has seen a shift in viewing habits, with over half of Prime Video users opting out of traditional paid TV services.

Interestingly, Prime Video viewers spend 36% more on Amazon.co.uk than the average customer, highlighting its role as a tool to drive retail sales rather than profit from streaming alone.



Threads Developing 'Loops'

Threads is developing a new community feature called 'Loops', which will allow users to form groups around specific topics and interests, according to TechCrunch. The feature, discovered in the app's code by developer Chris Messina, resembles the 'Communities' feature on X or subreddits.

Users will reportedly be able to join and leave Loops, as well as assign names and bios to these groups. Developer Alessandro Paluzzi also uncovered potential UI elements of Loops, including a speech bubble icon for accessing the feature.