

AFFILIATE MARKETING

TRENDS & PREDICTIONS



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REPORT

AFFILIATE MARKETING

TRENDS & PREDICTIONS 2020



Introduction

2019 was another spectacular year for affiliate marketing as the industry's growth shows no sign of slowing down.

While new verticals emerge and CPA offers pop up like mushrooms, affiliates have to be primed to be more responsive as they can pinpoint when a fad or new mode of advertising transforms into a tangible trend.

This report aims to make your market research even easier and turn your marketing into a math equation for precise decision making, not coin tossing.

EXPERTS FEATURED	3
PART I	4
Matt Lovett , Managing Director at WOW Media	4
Frank Ravanelli , Head of Affiliates, Asia & EMEA at Foreo	5
Emanuel Cinca , WHAT THE AFF	6
Nelson Nascimento , Head of Publishers at Lemonads	7
Alex Miller , Analyst at 3snet	7
Luke Kling , affLIFT	8
Vincent Jouvin , Business Developer at Big Bang Ads	9
Leonid , Co-Founder at AdCombo	9
KJ Rocker , Affiliate marketing expert	10
Amy Cheung , Moderator at STM forum	10
Erik Gyepes , Affiliate marketing expert	12
Federico Zwanck , CEO at GasMobi	13
Petar Joseph , VP marketing & communications at Advidi	13
Zac Tian , Senior Affiliate Manager at Wewe Media Group	14
Servando Silva , Affiliate marketing expert, servandosilva.com	15
Vyacheslav Chemodanov , Co-founder at Alfaleads & Alfamedia	16
Henry Whitfield , Global Head of Supply at ClickDealer	17
João Aguiar , Head of Marketing at Mobidea	17
Irina Razvodova , Head of Business Development at Zeydoo	20
PART II	21
Matt Lovett , Managing Director at WOW Media	21
Frank Ravanelli , Head of Affiliates, Asia & EMEA at Foreo	22
Emanuel Cinca , WHAT THE AFF	22
Nelson Nascimento , Head of Publishers at Lemonads	23
Alex Miller , Analyst at 3snet	24
Luke Kling , affLIFT	25
Vincent Jouvin , Business Developer at Big Bang Ads	25
Leonid , Co-Founder at AdCombo	26
KJ Rocker , Affiliate marketing expert	26
Amy Cheung , Moderator at STM forum	26
Erik Gyepes , Affiliate marketing expert	27
Federico Zwanck , CEO at GasMobi	27
Petar Joseph , VP marketing & communications at Advidi	28
Zac Tian , Senior Affiliate Manager at Wewe Media Group	29
Servando Silva , Affiliate marketing expert, servandosilva.com	29
Vyacheslav Chemodanov , Co-founder at Alfaleads & Alfamedia	30
Henry Whitfield , Global Head of Supply at ClickDealer	31
João Aguiar , Head of Marketing at Mobidea	31
Irina Razvodova , Head of Business Development at Zeydoo	33

EXPERTS FEATURED



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at WOW Media



PETAR JOSEPH,
VP marketing &
communications
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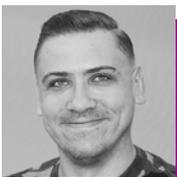
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KJ ROCKER
Affiliate
marketing expert

WHICH AFFILIATE MARKETING VERTICALS WOULD THRIVE IN 2020?

We've asked our experts to weigh in on which affiliate marketing verticals are getting more buzz than they might deserve and which ones aren't getting enough. And finally, we wanted to know what verticals to invest in next year.



MATT LOVETT,
Managing Director at WOW Media

In order to be a successful affiliate marketer, you need to be ahead of the game by choosing the best verticals in 2020. Two areas I believe that are going to thrive are coupon code affiliates and gambling affiliates.

The gambling sector is thriving at the moment, with the remote gaming sector generating billions each year. Make sure you adhere to rules and regulations when it comes to promoting the gambling industry, though. Whilst it is becoming more and more regulated, the gambling affiliate industry still seems to be growing strong.

Another vertical is coupon/voucher codes. Whilst some big retailers are moving away from permanent coupon codes, big retailers are still offering limited-time coupons, and I still think there is a huge amount of benefit from coupon codes for small retailers when promoted in the right way.

WOW MEDIA



FRANK RAVANELLI,

Head of Affiliates, Asia & EMEA; General Media Manager, Asia & Oceania at Foreo

The effects of overall economic and financial trends will become even more evident in the type of offers that affiliates will get more ROI from.

In most of the Asian GEOs, major moneymakers for affiliates will include beauty, skincare, and "aspirational" luxury that people buy to reward themselves for their career/business success.

Online trading will still be a winner, but wise affiliates will make sure that the offer promoted has a proper conversion funnel in place. Or they will create one.

In some Asian GEOs, registration rates are very high, but actual conversion rates quite low, unless the lead is educated in his/her native language about the benefits of a given service/product.

In Europe, alternative lending offers will grow. Also, Fintech options, which allow cutting costs, will keep gaining popularity. Affiliates who identify a way to target businesses, with Fintech offers, will benefit from both good demand and good volumes.

North America will be something in between, in terms of economic trend, so proper zip targeting will be required to serve the right offers to the right audience: high discretionary spending vs. value-driven.

For other macro GEOs, like LATAM and Africa, I suggest to check local networks and test how well top affiliate programs convert through scalable traffic.





EMANUEL CINCA, WHAT THE AFF

E-commerce is going to certainly stay on top. Throughout 2019, we've seen how more e-commerce businesses can create affiliate offers that pure affiliate media buyers can run profitably. That's very likely to continue going into 2020.

This vertical is quickly growing outside of affiliate marketing too, so it's only a matter of building up the right type of offers for affiliates, figuring out what payouts work, how to judge quality, etc. The simple CPS model can work, maybe rev-share, and maybe hybrids will be more common too.

I do think there will also be more affiliates who will test out building their own products in this vertical, but I am not very optimistic that many will be able to handle all the non-marketing parts.

Aside from e-commerce, lead generation is my 2nd favorite for 2020, whether that's broad like sweepstakes or more specialized for insurance, finance, or similar.

The reason I think both of these verticals will thrive is because they can be profitably run by following compliance rules for everyone involved. The main trend of 2019 has been that any misleading campaigns are suffering more than ever for the majority.

That points towards verticals that can have strong value propositions, strong angles, while still following ad policies of different platforms, whether that's Facebook or PropellerAds.

Aside from that, I don't have a magic crystal ball that can tell me more, haha. It's purely based on seeing what happened throughout 2019. If there's something that went totally under the radar in 2019 and could just blow up in 2020, I have no idea.





NELSON NASCIMENTO, Head of Publishers at Lemonads

From what we see into Lemonads, some verticals are being more and more explored by publishers and affiliates such as Home Improvement and Astrology; these non-classic categories will keep being developed. We also notice more publishers specialized in Finance offers. It is not an easy vertical to work on, but if you make your way on it, it can be very profitable. Then, we always have the usual ones: Dating, Nutra, Sweepstakes, and E-commerce that will continue to be on the top verticals for next year.

For a couple of years, I heard that Mobile Content will die and will stop, but the truth is that it still works. Not like before but still works well, and some media buyers are still focused there.

The bottom line, I think the market is more diversified now, several new types of offers are appearing, affiliates are trying to explore new niches and master them. This is also a consequence of more competition in Affiliate Marketing.

LEMONADS



ALEX MILLER, Analyst at 3snet

Betting will remain in the spotlight. Along with the growing popularity of bookmakers, we expect tote or pari-mutuel betting services and other projects of this type to be on the rise. In pari-mutuel betting, gamblers place bets not against the bookie but against other gamblers. Big sporting events that will take place in 2020 around the world, like Euro 2020, Summer Olympics, Ice Hockey World Championship, will boost the popularity of betting activities in the coming year.

The demand for Casinos will also be high. The latest technological advancements and commercial initiatives (e.g., gambling with cryptocurrencies) turn online gambling into a very dynamic and constantly changing sphere. Today Asian and African casinos are on the rise as the gambling industry is growing at a significant pace in China, Singapore, and South Africa.

3SNET

Prospects for Poker are good. Most brands work directly with publishers and want to attract an international audience. Poker players are looking for opportunities to demonstrate their analytical skills, strategies, discipline, and self-control. Where there is demand over something, there will be supply to meet it, and we hope that the situation in the online poker sphere will change in 2020. It might happen that casinos will start offering additional poker services.

Crypto is on top, and the trend will continue throughout 2020. News about currency rate fluctuations, new electronic cryptocurrencies, changes in legislation stir up people's interest in the cryptocurrency market.

Esports is rapidly gaining momentum. An audience that grew up on esports is getting bigger and becoming more solvent. The vertical is already on the rise, and the trend is likely to continue in the coming year.



LUKE KLING, affLIFT

I think which verticals thrive in 2020 is going to be determined by what happens with push notification traffic.

Push has been really hot this year for both advertisers and publishers. If Google doesn't ruin push for us, then I can see that continuing to grow through 2020. That means, we're likely to see continued growth in the following popular verticals:

- Dating
- Gambling
- Sweeps
- Push Subscriptions

I am optimistic that push will continue to thrive for the foreseeable future :)



AFFLIFT



VINCENT JOUVIN, Business Developer at Big Bang Ads

Over the recent years, we've seen a few verticals rising very quickly and at times, dwindling even faster. However, the good old leadgen SOI offers (free sweeps) have proven to stay!

While certain regulations may change over the years, leadgen sweepstakes will still perform - affiliates remain profitable, and the better affiliates will grow to be super affiliates if they find the right GEOs, partners, trackers, ad format and angles.

BIG
BANG
ADS



LEONID, Co-Founder at AdCombo

There will be a stronger differentiation of white-hat and black-hat. After its expansive growth, Nutra vertical, where black-hat techniques are mostly used, is not expected to decrease. On the contrary, it is and will be rather profitable.

Even dropshipping has been affected by this differentiation. Cheap stores are blocked, while high-quality ones are the most profitable: they will undoubtedly draw in a large audience and bring you plenty of leads.

It seems like Mobile apps are likely to come back again and start gaining popularity. Though, now it's not about high-budget apps from a big Asian GEO, but about those apps that have various monetization systems (ads, subscription-based services, web-view wrapping of the affiliate business).





KJ ROCKER

Affiliate marketing expert

We are expecting to see positive changes in terms of compliance, and that will bring in new verticals with it, 2020 will weed out all the offers which don't provide any benefit to the end-user. 2020 is the year for lead generation.

Finance, insurance, home improvement are going to be top verticals for 2020. Due to new user authentication regulations are a big challenge for rebills and trail offers, which will cause many affiliates to shift to lead generation models.



AMY CHEUNG,

Moderator at STM forum

To me, which VERTICALS to run is not as important as which PARTICULAR offers we choose, and HOW we run the offers.

One major trend that I (and a lot of other affiliates) have noticed is that it has become more and more difficult to promote scammy/spammy offers, and/or promoting using misleading tactics, or in ways that irritate the audience.

Traffic source compliance rules, mobile carrier rules, the law (for example, the FTC, and lawsuits by celebs), google chrome, etc. have made it more and more difficult to run blackhat.

Sure, there are still lots of black hatters that are doing 5+ figures daily in profits. But they have to constantly figure out new ways to survive under a tightening noose around their neck.

Meanwhile, there are affiliates that have turned to whitehat - by working WITH instead of AGAINST all the regulations to achieve win-win-wins for themselves, traffic sources, and end-users.

These affiliates avoid offers that are outright scammy (e.g., tech support, most crypto offers, most credit-card submit offers, most free trial / auto-rebilling offers). They seek out products and services that speak for their own quality and promote them using persuasive but honest angles.

Yes, doing it the "right" way can take more time and money to warm up the audience and optimize the campaign, because you can't use lies to make deals sound 100 times sweeter than they actually are just to jack up conversion rates.

But you'd stop losing accounts left right and center, or wake up to see all of your accounts banned in one fell-swoop to reduce profits to zero. You no longer have to focus on constantly upgrading your infrastructure to play the cat-and-mouse game. Traffic sources like Facebook and Google would love you and allow you to scale way more efficiently than by limiting spend on a ton of accounts just to lay low. Plus, you no longer have to worry about getting in trouble with the law.

And most of all, you'd sleep better at night, knowing you're not building bad karma by ruining people's lives - that stuff will follow you into the afterlife and beyond. What goes around, comes around.

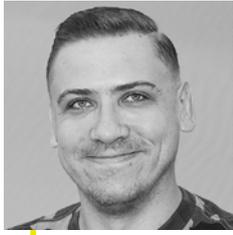
And some of the affiliates that have made the switch from the dark side are winning. It's not easy to make that switch, but with some patience and testing, it can 100% be done.

In the upcoming year, I would encourage all fellow affiliates to start at least making the switch to avoid scammy offers or using misleading advertising. Anyone can convert users using farticles, showcasing their favorite celebs.

On the other hand, it takes a TRUE marketer to promote non-scammy offers in a fashion that abides by regulations.

Or, stay on the dark side and die a slow death - like a frog in a pot on a stove.





ERIK GYEPES, Affiliate marketing expert

Many of the evergreen verticals will continue to thrive as there is never-ending demand for them, especially:

Sweepstakes - People will always love to participate and engage with contests where they can win new phones, shopping vouchers, and other products from their favorite brands.

As soon as affiliates continue to come up with fun and engaging ways to catch people's attention, this vertical will be around for a long time.

This vertical is also very newbie-friendly and popular with affiliates who are just starting out.

Dating - People break up and look for options to meet the opposite gender all the time. In this modern internet world, online dating continues to be very hot, and therefore this vertical will continue to thrive and attract many people as always.

It also has its own "sub-niches," so you can target and attract all kinds of audiences from different groups.

Crypto - In May 2020, there will be another halving for Bitcoin (block rewards for miners are cut in half). This event historically caused huge price spikes, i.e., bull runs. If that scenario happens again, then I believe crypto-related offers will become hot again as people will start FOMO'ing (Fear Of Missing Out) and looking for ways to invest and get rich.

E-commerce - E-commerce keeps growing, and if you have anything to sell online, there wasn't a better time than in 2020. There are so many solutions to start in e-com, that couple of years ago we just could dream about it. Though competition is also fierce and copycats are everywhere, so you have to be smart about your strategies.





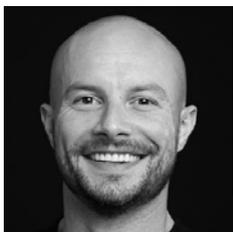
FEDERICO ZWANCK, CEO at GasMobi

Through the whole of 2019, we have seen strong growth in CC submit sweepstakes and VOD offers, and we consider that this trend will continue in 2020. The reason behind this growth is because a lot of mobile content advertisers have switched to this vertical due to the recent changes in the regulations coming from the carriers. Affiliates have been able to promote these offers successfully on multiple traffic sources like push, pop, Facebook, and on SMS traffic in a fairly stable and scalable way due to the wide range of GEOs available and high payouts.

Sweepstakes lead-gen offers have always been a strong and stable vertical for us, and we expect it to continue to endure. Users' data every year is more and more valued, yet not every data will work; correct age targeting is certainly key when setting up the right angle and campaign targeting, as young audiences are hard to monetize, and advertisers cannot sell those leads.

Undeniably in recent months, we see a peak in browser extensions. As a vertical, it has always been there, but recently more affiliates are requesting extension offers as alternatives to app CPIs.

They also work remarkably well with SmartLink traffic when a good pre-lander is used, as the flow is rather easy.



PETAR JOSEPH, VP Marketing & Communications at Advidi

It's not news that performance marketing gathers some of the smartest marketers in the world. That being said, although some markets are becoming more regulated, which we wholeheartedly support, the publishers, supported by smart networks, will always find new ways to sell products within these new regulations.

Take Dating, for example. Although some believe a long time ago that the vertical is dying, Dating continues to be Advidi's strongest vertical, and I would say it will be even more popular in 2020. In the upcoming year, we're expanding to even more GEOs that have not been heavily promoted in the past. In 2019 our biggest expansion was to the US market. Just imagine the market opportunities we've created for our affiliates this way. This reflects an expansion of the vertical to even deeper levels. We're confident that this will continue throughout 2020 and beyond.

Nutra is still one of the largest niches in the industry. Since the banking and regulatory changes, 2019 was a year for us to discover and prepare for other branches within Nutra, especially Straight Sales. Here we see even better and more stable opportunities with higher EPCs. We see the vertical maturing and predict it will dominate again in 2020.

On another note, it seems that everyone wants to know if eCommerce will hold the top position in 2020, and more importantly - how.

Especially after 'the death' of dropshipping, and with Facebook enforcing more regulations to address fraud, 2020 opens the opportunity to think better and connect primarily with product owners directly, and create online experiences that go beyond the product itself and are mostly focused on creating a long-lasting brand.



ZAC TIAN,
Senior Affiliate Manager at Wewe Media Group

Nutra will continue into 2020 despite Visa and Mastercard policy changes earlier this year, as we have seen a lot of affiliates transitioning successfully from trials to straight sales.

The US has been the main market all these while, but growth in other countries will increase as advertisers open up more markets, especially in Europe and Asia. The same can be said for CODs.

CC Trials (sweepstakes) has matured a bit. Advertisers are increasingly shifting their focus to profitable markets and shutting down undesirable ones. The onus is now on affiliates' ability to move to these markets while keeping a green ROI for themselves. Because of the high payouts that come with CC Trials, it will remain popular as one can work it using less expensive sources such as push.

Year in year out, we hear dating getting harder or dying, yet the vertical has never gone away, so it's here to stay.

Other verticals that would continue to trend include lead generation (sweepstakes, loans, finance, insurance, etc.) and e-commerce offers, as you can run more white hat with them.



SERVANDO SILVA, Affiliate marketing expert, servandosilva.com

It's hard to say which verticals are going to completely thrive, but in my opinion, we'll see a few white hat verticals increasing demand as other verticals suffer from restrictions.

A few ones that come to my mind are eCommerce and lead generation in verticals like insurance, finance, credit, and solar. As some of the biggest ad networks become harder and more restrictive, the move to white hat verticals is imminent, and it's happening slowly every year. Many media buyers have been adapting to those verticals since 2016, but every time FB or Google gets slapped in the US congress, we end up receiving some changes on our end.

Another vertical that could come back harder is crypto, but that would depend a lot on the market sentiment, and nobody knows how it's going to respond next year.

We'll have to wait and see.

On the other hand, a vertical which is having more difficulties is mobile content, and some of the rebills in different areas as well (Nutra, sweeps, binary, etc.). I don't expect them to recover much in 2020.



VYACHESLAV CHEMODANOV, Co-founder at Alfaleads & Alfamedia

If we would talk about grey verticals, it should be noted that global gambling and betting will grow aggressively. We observe market growth by 10-15%. Besides, the new promising market is opening, which will occupy a significant share of online gambling, which is the United States of America. At the moment, the process of bookmaker activity legitimization is in progress.

Besides, dating is developing actively. New players constantly enter the vertical: a lot of companies make their own products; for example, Facebook will create its own dating service.

It should be emphasized that TIER 3 is becoming very promising. In many countries, a possibility to use the internet emerges, it means that dating and gambling applications also appear. Those who will enter TIER 3 in 2020 will never regret this decision.

If we turn to the white sphere, Shopify, home drop shipping, and e-commerce, on the whole, are developing at a pace to be envied. It is obvious because, on Facebook, it is impossible to launch the campaign at the standard wow-products, even with unique landing pages.

The same situation exists with Google, even though a little bit easier. It means that large-scale nets are sick and tired of one-off cheap wow-products. They want the products to be connected with the brand, servicing, possibility of charge-back with proper support. And of course, according to the trends of Shopify itself, as a platform, and its growing turnover, we observe the growth.

White applications will also be developing: mobile games, including hyper-casual games and mid-core games. At the moment the market is still at an early stage, but I am sure that in 2020 this direction will be very interesting to our company and many other ones.





HENRY WHITFIELD, Global Head of Supply at ClickDealer

At ClickDealer, we continue to see great opportunity in two evergreen verticals: Dating and White Hat Lead Generation.

Dating has been at the core of our business since we launched and through 2019 and into 2020 we see that trend continuing, and while the dating vertical has changed dramatically over the last few years, there is always opportunity available for publishers who want to grow and scale real campaigns, instead of looking for a quick profit.

We even launched our own Dating smart link at the start of last year, and we saw this as a huge highlight for our partners - able to scale much quicker in dating while maximizing profits.

On the other hand, White Hat Lead Generation continues that same pattern, but we've also seen things grow exponentially in the second half of this year, with more and more publishers using Facebook, email and search traffic to scale campaigns in everything from Insurance to Solar Panels. The key here is to focus on the customer experience, creating a congruent message from initial impression all the way through to the close - whether its an appointment for installation or finalizing a deal for a remortgage on your home - quality is king.



JOÃO AGUIAR, Head of Marketing at Mobidea

Over the past few years, the growth of the affiliate industry has been explosive. This has created new opportunities and revenue streams in just about any vertical you can think of.

And thanks to new ad tech and constantly evolving promotional methods, It's no longer just the super affiliates who can use affiliate marketing to bring home the bacon.

Generally speaking, all verticals bring in good results provided the offers themselves are exclusive, i.e., not overused by other affiliates. This is a trend that you can expect to see continuing into the New Year and gives you plenty of room to try your hand promoting new and tempting offers.

So which are the top performing verticals you should try that are set to convert like crazy in the coming year?

- **Mobile Content (games, antivirus, video)** - Mobile content is becoming increasingly popular, and we're starting to see more and more ad networks offering mobile targeting in different formats on their platforms. Places to advertise include social ads, in-app advertising, and push, but make sure to keep your content fresh and keep an eye on your engagement stats. Tip: stay original and use eye-catching creatives together with powerful titles if you wanna get those clicks.
- **Adult Mobile Content (mainly video)** - Just a few years ago, adult occupied a fairly small niche, but in recent years it's grown in both the number of offers and the ad networks you can run them on. Adult offers convert exceptionally well, provided you have the right traffic and targeting for your offers, so make sure to test your campaigns and hold onto the winners. Trying out different offers and formats across various networks can bring about the best results, which can be extremely lucrative once you fine-tune your strategy.
- **Dating (adult or mainstream)**. - Dating has been a consistently high performing vertical for affiliates for some time. The reason? It's easy to find high converting traffic at costs that will push your ROI well in the green. It's also a market that covers a broad audience, and you'll find offers for just about every demographic and interest group you can imagine. Facebook is a good traffic source for dating for affiliates that know how to do cloaking. The traffic is expensive, but advertisers are willing to give a higher payout to Facebook marketers because they know the quality is good.

- **Sweepstakes & Coupons (gift cards, CCsubmit and CPL offers, smartphone offers)** - These offers are so easy to promote; it should be illegal! You also don't need a complicated landing page or years of coding experience to get your campaigns running.

MOBIDEA

Social media offers a steady stream of traffic for these types of offers, and provided you keep things interesting; it's not hard to find clicks. If you're feeling more adventurous, you can try variations of the spinning wheel lander or use tie-ins to seasonal events to pique your audience's interest. Think outside the box and focus on your targeting to maximize profits with these offers.

- COD - These offers are super appealing to affiliates as they have insane conversion rates. They tend to be used more in Asian countries and help to give the customer a guarantee about the quality of a product before paying for it. Places like Facebook and MGID can be extremely profitable for COD, but this is one vertical that tends to be used by more experienced affiliates, as cloaking and hidden referral paths are often used. Targeting is crucial for success with COD offers, so get yourself a decent spy tool like Mobidea Spy if you wanna check out what the competition is up to first. There's plenty of offers to choose from, and they work well across different formats, such as social ads, native and pop traffic.
- Leadgen in general (dating, finance, crypto, services in general, sweepstakes, coupons, etc.) - Leadgen continues to be a top-performing vertical across a variety of niches. It's a vertical that lends itself to a number of promotional strategies, making it one of the most versatile and accessible options on the list. Catchy headlines and eye-catching images are essential to grab the users' attention, and you can use the majority of mainstream traffic sources to promote your campaigns. Targeting the right audience is the key to generating quality leads for the advertising, and once you've found a high converting traffic source, make sure to continue to optimize your campaigns to get the highest return on your ad spend.





IRINA RAZVODOVA, Head of Business Development at Zeydoo

Affiliate marketing now revolves around push subshunters, and this trend is likely to continue as long as Push Notifications as ad format exists. Why? Affiliates are going crazy about super easy conversions and fast payouts.

Next (and traditionally) I'd say, are Leadgen offers like home improvement, loans, bank cards, etc. Here, the flow is much more complex compared to subscription hunters, yet if you know the ropes - this vertical can be a goldmine.

CBD or cannabis. As legislation loosens and more countries are permitting the open trade of cannabis, we are about to see a CBD boom in the market. Imagine, it was all strictly forbidden for years, and now you can order cannabis products online.

Shall we talk about Nutra? Nutra is getting hotter, even compared to a year ago. We see significant growth, also new offers pop up with increased speed, meaning that the demand is obviously high. Of course, it depends on the type of offer, but traditionally nutra offers are harder to convert, unlike subshunters.

CPI mobile (installs) are not performing as good as years ago due to restrictions from advertisers and hard KPIs. Everyone is after quality leads. Yet, again, if you are experienced enough, you can make good money here.

WHAT WOULD BE THE TOP AD FORMATS IN THE COMING YEAR?

Experts discuss what's next for the advertising ad formats. Which ones are about to fade away, and what tools and features will be added to the affiliate toolkit.



MATT LOVETT,
Managing Director at WOW Media

Not only do you need to make sure that you choose the best affiliate marketing vertical for you, but you need to make certain that you advertise your products and services in the correct way too. Video marketing is going to be especially popular throughout the coming year.

Catering your content and strategy for voice search is something else that you should consider. After all, it is predicted that 50 percent of all searches online are going to be voice-based by next year.

We're also going to see private messaging apps being used more commonly for advertising purposes throughout 2020.

WOW MEDIA



FRANK RAVANELLI, Head of Affiliates, Asia & EMEA at Foreo

Videos and Native ads. The first because they are powerhouses for storytelling. The second, because they make storytelling scalable.



EMANUEL CINCA, WHAT THE AFF

This is a very difficult question that has many “ifs” for me. We probably have more ad formats than ever in the industry, and many of them can serve a purpose so instead of saying “oh, this ad format will be best, clearly” without explaining why I will break down where I think each ad type has its strength in terms of what business models and what verticals work best.

First on my list would be Stories format on Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, maybe WhatsApp soon, etc. Especially in our industry, advertisers are not tailoring ads for this format yet from what I’ve seen. They generally rely on Facebook adapting their desktop feed ad in Stories.

Building more specialized ads for Stories has a lot of potential. 15 seconds or less, powerful and eye-catching animations, then one strong headline/call to action combined with Facebook’s machine-learning to drive campaign objectives is underused by affiliates right now, I believe. It can certainly work well for leadgen, for e-commerce, for software, etc.

Next on my list would be native ads. Hear me out on this one... Native ads have been around for some time sure, but platforms have now added a significant layer of machine-learning and targeting capabilities.

I think the platforms with native ads that implement a “FB/Google-like machine-learning” algorithm have the most to gain.

WHAT THE AFF

And the affiliates buying traffic from these platforms have the most to gain as well. Again, this can all work with the verticals I mentioned before as being the most likely to thrive in 2020.

Third on my list would be push ads. The format is becoming more mature; there's more care for how often you can send messages, etc. In other words, it's getting "harder," but the quality of the traffic is likely to increase too.

The extra advantage of this format is that any advertiser can try and build their own list as well, then either monetize it themselves or work with partners like PropellerAds. Either way, it's a format that should maintain a solid position in 2020, even if certain techniques won't work anymore because of browser changes.

So Stories combined with machine learning and great targeting capabilities, native ads where platforms try to leverage their data and push ads where costs are lower, ads policies are less strict, and there's the option of building your own list too.



NELSON NASCIMENTO, Head of Publishers at Lemonads

I believe Native will be even hotter next year!





ALEX MILLER, Analyst at 3snet

In 2020, online advertising will focus on social networks and applications. Despite the fact that social networks are tightening up rules for advertisers, Facebook and Instagram will maintain their leadership position. New social networks and applications appear and gain momentum in terms of advertising.

Video content is the most in-demand type of content: over 50% of users (according to different statistical sources) prefer video to other sources of information. As a result, interest in TikTok, Youtube, and other video platforms has grown sharply. Applications with useful video content—various tips and tricks, manuals, guides—are also on the rise.

Active advertising on messenger channels and in-built services will be one of the trends in 2020.

Chinese users are actively entering betting and gambling markets through thematic channels on Wechat. However, WhatsApp, Viber, and Telegram are still No.1 in terms of the number of users and the effectiveness of advertising campaigns.

Users have been using mobile devices to surf the Internet increasingly often, so mobile advertising is holding a clear lead over desktop.

One-size-fits-all mailers don't work anymore. Email marketing is moving towards a greater level of detail and uniqueness; no effective email marketing campaign is now possible without an analytical approach. Target audience needs, interests, and emotional triggers should be considered in the first place. Mailers should be interesting to read to attract users' attention, and, what is very important, they should be delivered at the right time, when users need this information. Only such advertising will be effective.

When summarizing, one thing is worth pointing out. Advertising formats do play a role, but what comes first is the need to use analytical services. Any advertising campaign launched with due regard to information about users' behavior, their search queries, and purchase history will have a higher conversion rate and ROI no matter what traffic sources are used. To cut a long story short, focus more on analytics, consider all statistical data when running advertising campaigns in 2020.



LUKE KLING, affLIFT

Similar to my thoughts on verticals, I think this will depend on what happens with push notifications. As long as push notifications are still a viable option for driving traffic, it's going to continue to grow as a very popular ad format.

I am optimistic that we're also going to see a surge in native traffic. Facebook is causing havoc with e-commerce, which I think is going to drive more ecomm brands to move their budgets to native.

Facebook is far from dead, but ROAS will determine where people go, and I believe native is currently underutilized, and many affiliates and advertisers will start to take advantage of that.

AFFLIFT



VINCENT JOUVIN, Business Developer at Big Bang Ads

Is ad format the key to a successful campaign? What about trying to be a little more creative by thinking about the user's perspective. What would someone like to win, what are some of the better funnels to improve user engagement or what would be the right images and words to boost user sign-ups and increase conversions?

Affiliates should explore running more exclusive landing pages where possible, especially with leadgen offers.

Also, if you didn't run a landing page which has been converting for a while, you might want to skip it altogether! We've had countless affiliates asking for the same landing page in the same geo, and even using the same type of ads to promote – which might not be the best solution as you're likely to hit audience fatigue pretty quickly, especially on Facebook or Instagram.

Whether it's Facebook, native, email, or push traffic – we believe in the approach rather than the ad format itself. Let those creative juices flow!

BIG BANG ADS



LEONID, Co-Founder at AdCombo

Social Media traffic was, is, and will be the top ad format. Consequently, this year, we expect huge traffic growth from such social networks as TikTok, Snapchat, and WhatsApp.

Moderation is becoming increasingly tough; thus, many affiliates are going rogue to use only black-hat methods.

Especially when it comes to push traffic, we are awaiting that the rules and requirements for advertisers will be tightened in 2020 since it did not happen this year.

ADCOMBO



KJ ROCKER Affiliate marketing expert

Video ads going to be top ones considering the growth of stories format with that said native advertising is definitely going to be in the top spots due to its availability on multiple platforms and high volumes. We should also consider voice search, and 2020 can be a year when voice search ads take over the market.



AMY CHEUNG, Moderator at STM forum

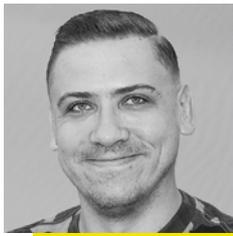
FB and Google are evergreen platforms.

Pop has gotten quite saturated, although it's still the easiest form of paid traffic for newbie affiliates to get their feet wet for cheap.

Push is still hot, but there are risks. One update from chrome, and it can be game-over.

New traffic sources such as Pinterest has shown great potential and are worth exploring.

STM FORUM



ERIK GYEPES, Affiliate marketing expert

Push - People thought that this format would be dead by the end of 2019, but it still continues to go strong.

It's still a very unregulated format and works very well with various verticals.

It was heavily run by many affiliates in 2019, and people on the lists got bored of the same old ads and angles, and as an affiliate, I noticed a drop in engagement (lower CTRs) than they used to be earlier.

So even though I still believe it's going to be one of the top formats in 2020, there might be some slow natural decline. Also, major browsers such as Chrome and Firefox are coming up with updates, where collecting new subscribers might become a bit harder than it was.

As for other formats and traffic sources, I would keep an eye on the new and still growing social network TikTok, which might become a big competition or rather a supplement to Facebook/Instagram and Google.

It's more popular though with younger audiences, so it may not work well with all products and services, but those who will figure it out will be rewarded big time.

AFFILIATE MARKETING EXPERT



FEDERICO ZWANCK, CEO at GasMobi

Push traffic is still in its early stages, so as the base of users will grow, the inventory is going to grow proportionally as well. This ad format is pretty friendly; for this reason, we see a lot of affiliates becoming more and more skillful with this new format, also because it works well across several verticals like Sweepstakes, Dating, CC submits among others.

GASMOBI

SMS traffic performance has also been really good with CC Submit offers. For instance, we see the highest CRs, especially on SMS traffic. The inventory is still small in certain GEOs and definitely the legislation of each GEO, in this case, is important to take into account using SMS traffic, to be able to work with this type of traffic in the right way.

Affiliates are also becoming increasingly interested in being able to monetize e-mail users and creating their own databases. Doing it with the right flow, this ad format can be highly profitable, especially in the long-term.



PETAR JOSEPH, VP Marketing & Communications at Advidi

We see the “stories” format gaining its momentum on Mobile - Instagram, SnapChat, and Facebook (and most probably Whatsapp in the near future). I would confidently add that any portrait video format with mobile users in mind will lead this section in the upcoming years, not only for 2020. Think Instream pre-roll, think rewarded video, think Interstitial video.

Native advertisements did remarkably well this year, and we predict it has no intention of slowing down. We'd encourage affiliates to dive into native advertisements. Native videos especially took over in 2019 with almost doubling its budget on a global scale.

We expect that voice search will gain more and more in 2020. We suggest affiliates start optimizing their content for voice search. Experts are predicting that voice search will make up to 50% of searches in 2020.

Next to this, an email will continue to be a strong source, especially for the Finance vertical, and with the rise of the 5G networks, AR, VR, and 3D ads will become more accessible.

However, though with certain limitations, the good old Standard banner is far from over. Probably because of its non-intrusive nature. One tip though, always think mobile or mobile responsive when you create banners. Having different versions that look neat on a mobile is a must.

ADVIDI

Before you jump into following the trends, always ask yourself about the type of audience you're reaching out to, as well as the level of engagement that it's necessary for a certain product. It comes without saying - test, test, test, test....



ZAC TIAN, Senior Affiliate Manager at Wewe Media Group

Many people have already mentioned push notification being popular in recent years. It will still be one of the top traffic sources moving forward. There is no sign of the momentum slowing down. In fact, more and more affiliates are getting into it.

We should see more diversity in push traffic; ways to acquire traffic, formats, methods, and monetization.

There are constant laments about how Facebook is making the lives of affiliate marketers difficult. However, Facebook will still be the go-to social media traffic source, given its targeting ability and quality. As with most other traffic types, it is all about how well and resourceful one gets circumventing the restrictions. Also, WhatsApp is getting ads in 2020. That is one to look out for.

WEWE MEDIA GROUP



SERVANDO SILVA, Affiliate marketing expert, servandosilva.com

Top Ad formats don't change as much every year. I think we will see an interesting shift in push notifications as companies like Google and Firefox start working on more regulations. It could hit volumes hard but we know this market tries to adapt fast, so we'll see what happens after that.

New types of push notifications might appear (PropellerAds already launched In-Page Push) to overcome the issues. Some other formats that could regain some popularity are Interstitial Ads, Native Banners, and Video Ads.

SERVANDOSILVA.COM



VYACHESLAV CHEMODANOV, Co-founder at Alfaleads & Alfamedia

In respect of sources, Google and Facebook continue developing. Since the moment when Google announced UAC, it began to earn far more funds and sell its traffic in greater volume, more expensive, and more efficiently.

It is obvious that the sources are moving towards mobile and App Installs. In 2014-2015 it was predicted that very soon there would be no applications, but they existed, and they do and will exist. It is confirmed by the development of ironSource type nets, for example, the TikTok advertising network.

Everybody makes its resources, tooled for the sale of advertisements (mobile - App Installs). Everybody wants to follow Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat model, even Google follows this trend with its UAC. At the moment, a lot of services, SNS, and software is being created to sell advertising for the other applications inside their own application.

So, it is safe to say that the formats, which allow advertising the applications, attribute the traffic, and forward it for App Installs, conversions, intra-game, and in-app purchases will be at the top.

As for gambling, so-called capper traffic is becoming a trend. Everything, connected with the aggregation of the users by "white" means and further work with them, using e-mail, chat-bots, etc., will gather the speed in 2020.

Hardly anybody deals with these aspects, and those who do live hella good. At the moment, sources and its neural nets are increasingly limiting the possibilities for "grey" advertising, and very soon, it will be impossible to work in the "grey" sphere explicitly. That is why it is necessary to develop "whiter ways" and work with traffic funnels. I suppose that those are the directions, which will rule in the future.





HENRY WHITFIELD, Global Head of Supply at ClickDealer

The start of 2019 saw Push traffic as the new 'hot' traffic type, with everyone piling on that train in a similar way to the end of 2018 with Native ads.

In 2020, we fully expect a voice search to be a driver in many verticals, so optimizing for that, and taking it into account is extremely important for many affiliates.

However, more so than a specific ad format, the focus on quality will become even more important as we move forward.

With technology advancing for advertisers on the back end, it means metrics and KPIs are becoming more and more advanced, meaning the more you focus on the quality of your lead, the more long-term success you are going to find scaling and maintaining campaigns, versus grinding accounts and grinding out new offers.

Focusing on the quality of your ad-copy or creatives will increase not only your conversion rates but also the back end metrics - something to keep in mind for the New Year.

CLICKDEALER



JOÃO AGUIAR, Head of Marketing at Mobidea

1. Push advertising is still one of the top trending formats and looks set to continue to be a leading format in 2020.

Bit of everything (mobile content, dating, sweepstakes, coupons, COD, lead gen) - The reason push is consistently performing so well for many verticals is due to the expansion of mobile eCommerce as well as its adaptability to be used in almost any market. Mobile content, dating, sweepstakes, coupons, and COD, as well as leadgen, can all use push to get their message across in a clear and direct way.

It's a powerful and engaging format that allows advertisers to communicate directly with their customers and gives affiliates a way to display their offers to users when they are likely to be most effective.

MOBIDEA

Ad networks have been quick to implement ad tech, which takes advantage of the format and introduces advanced targeting and delivery options, which make push a cost-effective and rich source of traffic. It also has the advantage of being bot-free traffic with a high volume of users, making it an ideal traffic source for affiliates who want to scale their campaigns.

2. Video is another format that we can expect to continue to see being widely used by affiliates. New innovations in ad technology and mobile network services have meant that video is more accessible for users and, with video placement becoming more and more popular with top tier networks like Google, Facebook, and Instagram, we're likely to see that trend continue for some time.

High CTR and engagement attract affiliates to video ads, where streaming and video-on-demand are examples of high paying offers in this format, but watch out as they can also have some of the highest traffic costs.

- Mobile content and video can be an extremely powerful combination for getting the attention of your audience, and getting results. In addition to mobile video ads, try n-stream ads as well as native video to test which placements give you the best results.
- Apps. This is another hot favorite among affiliates, and for a good reason. Try app offers with rich media video interstitials or playable ads to catch the user's attention at the point they are most receptive to your offer.
- Dating is another vertical which easily lends itself to video ads. You'll get fantastic CTRs combined with good conversion stats, provided your targeting is on point. Reveal ads used in the article content are one example of how these might be used, along with mobile video ads used when the user may be more receptive to the message. Test these with different traffic sources and networks to see which convert for your offers.

3. Native is a format that's been getting more and more traction recently and is being used in increasingly innovative ways.

There's no shortage of networks offering this format, and it performs well with both images and video across many verticals. While it may not be the cheapest format, it can be very successful when used with the right traffic sources and targeting.

- **Nutra - Consistently profitable with native ad campaigns, Nutra offers respond well to targeted ads and powerful images, and you'll get the best results by using a pre lander for these offers.**

- Finance - Similar in promotional style to Nutra, finance is another staple vertical for native affiliates, where advertorial style landing pages and blog style reviews link to the advertiser's page. Targeting is crucial with these ads, and the landing page should be tweaked to match the audience for the best results.
- Crypto - These offers frequently use provocative imagery and sensationalist advertorials using celebrity endorsements to give an element of social proof to their claims. There's no doubt crypto will continue to generate interest in 2020, and we can expect the number of these offers to rise. Finding a unique angle and having well-designed pre landers is essential for getting conversions with these types of offers, as well as trying to find trending offers ahead of the crowd.
- eCommerce - eCommerce is a vertical that works effortlessly with native advertising. We're starting to see more and more Shopify brands using native ads with popular platforms such as Pinterest for both brand awareness as well as conversion and sales. For affiliates, a product choice is key, so use an ad spy tool to check out what the competition is up to and cut your cost before planning your campaign.



IRINA RAZVODOVA, Head of Business Development at Zeydoo

If you are looking for serious traffic volumes, then Popunder is definitely your guy. Yet, in my opinion, it's more suitable for affiliates who know how to deal with pre-landers.

As for push - it's a big question here whether push is going to survive the next Google updates. Anyway, we can see that ad platforms are already coming up with solutions to keep this ad format alive; for example, in-page push.

FB and Google will maintain their positions. Leads brought from these channels are traditionally very quality ones. Still, the competition is fierce, so year after year, it's getting harder for affiliates to break through the crowded advertising landscape.

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