

## Content.ad scales ad network to expand global publisher reach

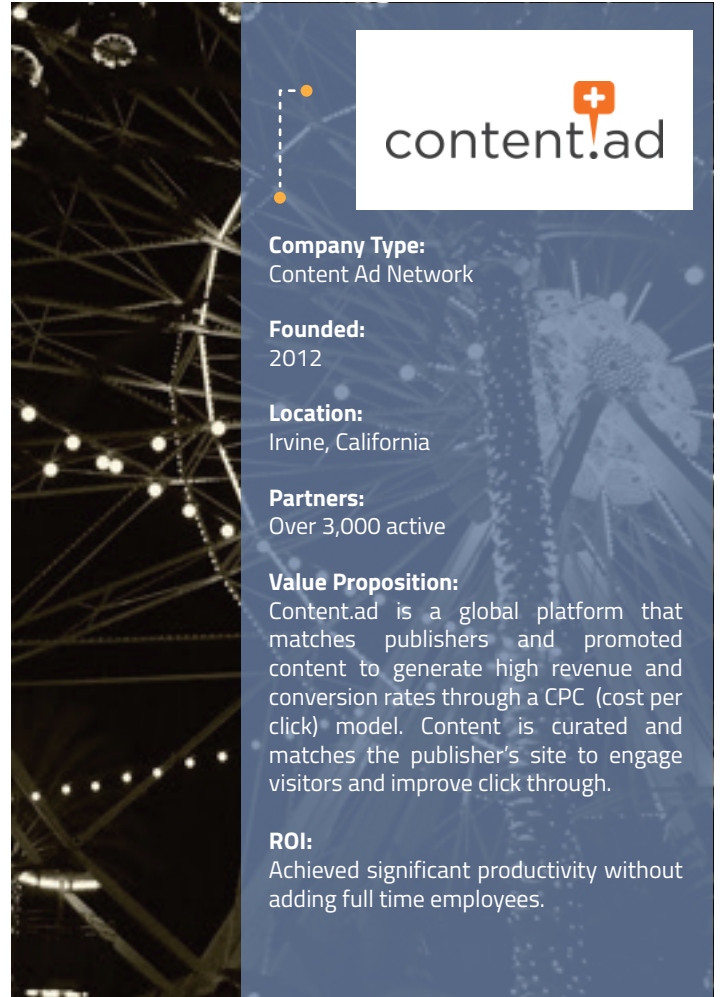
### Streamlining payment processes improves publisher relationships and enables unprecedented growth

In any “network economy” business model, scalability is one of the key drivers to building a successful, sustainable ecosystem. With Content.ad, publishers earn revenue by featuring high quality sponsored content relevant to their audience. As a direct response network serving more than 25 billion content recommendations a month, the more people clicking on content, the more publishers make. And the more high quality publishers the network has happily working with them, the more likely that advertisers will choose Content.ad over other content ad platforms.

While an ad network is a common ad tech business model, partner execution and network quality are vital. That said, not all networks are created equal.

“We strive to have a deeper connection with our publisher partners,” says Jeffrey Magliola, VP of Operations at Content.ad. “Because of that, publisher service and goodwill are constantly top of mind. We’re not the largest network, and that’s a good thing in the minds of our publishers. We can work more closely and directly with them to maximize the potential for both sides.”

Working directly with more than 3,000 active publishers seems ambitious, especially for a company of their size. Add to the fact that even though much of their content is English-only, many of their publishers are overseas making the complexity and efficiency of such relationships staggering. One of the primary issues as the company scaled was determining how to pay all these publishers every month.



**content.ad**

**Company Type:**  
Content Ad Network

**Founded:**  
2012

**Location:**  
Irvine, California

**Partners:**  
Over 3,000 active

**Value Proposition:**  
Content.ad is a global platform that matches publishers and promoted content to generate high revenue and conversion rates through a CPC (cost per click) model. Content is curated and matches the publisher’s site to engage visitors and improve click through.

**ROI:**  
Achieved significant productivity without adding full time employees.



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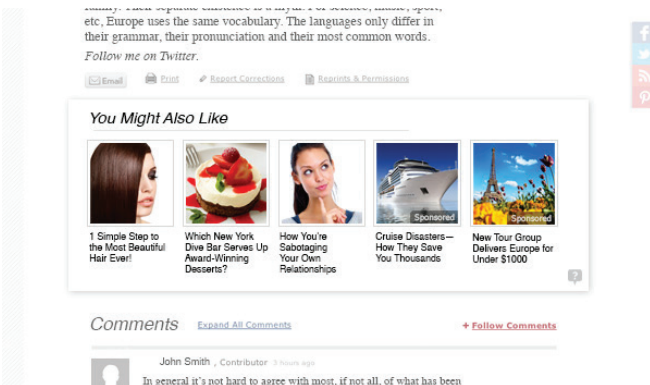
*Jeffrey Magliola, VP of Operations*

## Burdened by Network Payment Processes

**“Cutting checks, hunting down banking information, and reconciling payments is a full time job that no one really wants to do,”** remarks Magliola. Payments were in the form of manual checks or PayPal and took three people to process. That was before they turned their focus on scaling the business. At the same time, publishers were asking for greater payments choice and even more attention.

Says Magliola: “We were either going to hire several more people to manage publisher payments or we would have to find a better way.”

Some of Content.ad’s higher volume publishers could reach six-figures in terms of payments, making it critical to keep those elite publishers happy. Those elite publishers wanted more payment options beyond slow checks or the hassles of money transfers from PayPal and they wanted payment in their currency. They also preferred shorter terms thresholds.



For smaller publishers, making payments to them also added complexity. Small payments take just as much work as large ones, but the cost-benefit to Content.ad isn’t the same.

Content.ad wasn’t positioned to support for wire transfers (which are faster) or ACH direct deposit transfers (which require more publisher banking information and interfacing). The company also wasn’t geared to execute additional, staggered payout processes for high and low volume partners.

## Automation as the Key to Scalability

The Content.ad team understood that automating the payment process was the only way to successfully grow the business. Initially they started working on developing some of their own tools to try and solve the problem. “We looked around for solutions, but couldn’t find anything, and even started building parts of it ourselves and had the beginnings of a raw solution,” remarks Magliola. “But Tipalti was a natural fit, and we never had to go any further with a custom platform.”

And it came at the right time. There were many other finance and accounting initiatives Content.ad was working on and manually dealing with payment issues took up valuable resources. Says Magliola: “We had credit card pay-in processes that were pressing. We were integrating our systems with NetSuite. Plus our controller was going on maternity leave.”



**“To be more competitive, there are a hundred different enhancements we want to work on to scale our business,” he adds. “Tipalti has taken away the complexity of global payments, provided a self-service platform to publishers, and is streamlining our accounting process so we can focus on more pressing projects.”**

## Smooth, Painless Implementation

And how was the process for getting set up on Tipalti? “The whole Tipalti team is easy to work with,” says Magliola. “Everyone is knowledgeable and helpful.”

The most valuable benefit has been the ease of submitting payments and payment options for publishers. Through Tipalti, Content.ad currently allows their publishers to choose ACH, paper check, eCheck (international ACH), PayPal, and wire transfer. Publishers also have the option to choose to hold their payments until a certain threshold to minimize fees. To date, about one-third of Content.ad’s publishers are using the new payment options.

“Tipalti has significantly increased our productivity,” says Magliola. “Paying publishers would take a week just to initiate and track payments, as well as send checks or PayPal. And we’d spend two days a month investigating and resolving payment issues. Now we’re able to do all this in one-fifth the time.”

At first, Magliola was hesitant to use Tipalti’s optional brandable IFRAME as the publisher payee portal. But after a few discussions on how customizable Tipalti was to Content.ad’s own brand look & feel and the level of development they would have to take on if they developed a custom portal themselves, it became clear the IFRAME portal was the best, most cost-efficient choice. Their publishers now register and get payment status by visiting the payment portal embedded within Content.ad’s site and the feedback has been very positive.

One interesting point during implementation: the finance team had initially considered continuing to manually process PayPal payments because they wanted to draft from a credit card. But once it was clear how simple the platform was to use (particularly when it came to 1099 tax reporting), they deployed all payments from Tipalti and have never looked back.

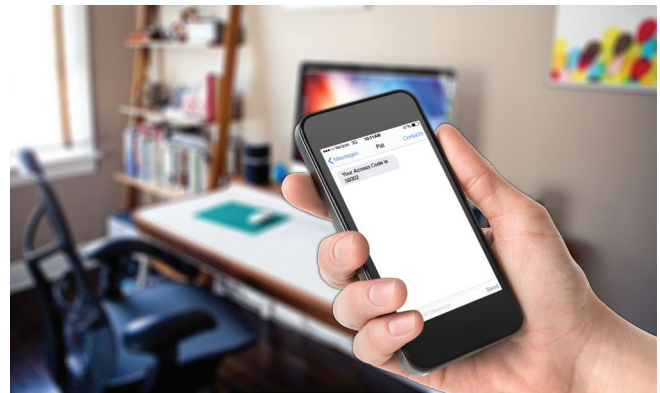
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## Solutions to Improve Fraud Control

To maintain a high quality publisher network, Content.ad is proactive in identifying fraudulent publishers. Along with existing systems and processes it has in place, the company also added Tipalti’s multi-factor authentication (MFA). With MFA, the onboarding process for publishers requires them to provide a mobile phone number so they can receive an authentication code via SMS to enter during registration. MFA was something Magliola had considered developing themselves, but after a meeting with Tipalti CEO Chen Amit and Tipalti COO Eran Karoly, they appreciated that MFA was already integrated the system.

He also adds that identifying fraudsters is an ongoing issue because once a bad actor believes they have a process to scam the network, they continue to try it under new and different identities. For that, Magliola is grateful for Tipalti’s approach to MFA as well as in their risk management module (RMM), which can also help eliminate fraud.



## Continuous Growth

Content.ad continues to pursue its growth strategy. The ad network is on track for 250% growth in 2015 in terms of click volume. To become more competitive, they’re working to create shorter payment terms beyond the standard Net 30. The company hopes this will give publishers even more reason to work with them and ramp up traffic.

“Tipalti is always on top of what their customers need in both service and technology,” remarks Magliola. “They’re a high touch service and always consider the issues we’re having around our processes and strategy beyond what’s currently in their product. And our publishers get what they want, which is more flexible payment options and a strengthened relationship with Content.ad.”

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