

The Art of Cross-Device Attribution in an Evolving Digital Space



By **Keith Petri**

Vice President of Strategic Partnerships

The phrase “cross-device attribution” has been tossed around with increasing frequency in the digital marketing space. The problem? Not everyone understands what it means in a marketing context— nor is it always clear how to best use attribution to connect the dots. A buzzword-filled phrase is well and good, but it isn’t of much help to marketers without concrete meaning and strategy behind it.

Cross-device attribution is a result of identifying a user’s device ID, cookies, IP address, etc. across multiple devices, combined with a clear understanding of that user’s interests (search history, time on a site, product page views and other unique data that qualify him as a potential customer). Those insights combined allow marketers to serve up the most appropriate piece of messaging to an individual consumer.

There are all sorts of ways attribution and connecting the dots can bring search marketers better results, allowing them to engage more strongly with audiences in a way that speeds conversions.

In terms of mobile device spend, phones still outweigh tablets as a major device of influence in the buyer’s journey. Cross-device attribution has greatly improved overtime, but there are still some challenges when dealing with mobile attribution. It can be difficult to connect devices, gain clarity on what metrics need to be measured and get around cookie-blocking or erasure as different cookies are used between the mobile web and browser sessions invoked from an app.

But with these challenges come opportunities. Successful cross-device attribution allows marketers to know the influence of mobile spend when it comes to driving conversions, while also identifying unaccredited conversions that are reported by tracking solutions.

There are two main methods used when trying to attribute behavior to identify a cross-device user. The first is deterministic, in which the system performs comparisons based on given factors to determine a precise user match with 100% accuracy. However, precision comes at a price, and the deterministic method is extremely restricted to specific use cases.

The second method is probabilistic matching, which identifies the likelihood of a match by taking into account the relative closeness of the data and the context of the data records. While less exact, it allows marketers to tie a lot more exposures together. If done right, it can still be very precise.

Utilizing both of those methods through IgnitionOne Score-Powered Audiences, we support the feedback loop of data intake and then deliver relevance to future interactions – all within the context of understanding where consumers are in their journey so as to better engage with them. By knowing more about customers and being able to attribute actions to outcomes, we can use integrated audience profile data to orchestrate marketing campaigns across multiple channels and devices, and segment and activate audiences.

Ultimately, if marketers are utilizing an audience-management system that pulls together first, second and third-party data and links anonymous consumers with a known customer profile, they can implement a true cross-device strategy.

About IgnitionOne

IgnitionOne simplifies life for marketers, providing deeper insights and robust targeting of individuals through the use of proprietary engagement scoring and integrated marketing and advertising solutions. The IgnitionOne DMS is full-featured digital marketing hub which significantly improves performance across all devices and channels. IgnitionOne allows marketers to better understand their customers and activate personalized 1:1 messaging across search, display, social, mobile, email, and website personalization. With a global footprint of over 450 employees in 17 offices across 10 countries, IgnitionOne is one of the largest independent marketing technology companies in the world. IgnitionOne currently scores over 300 million users monthly in 75 countries and powers more than \$60 billion in revenue each year for leading brands, including General Motors, CenturyLink, Bridgestone, La Quinta and Fiat, as well as advertising agencies such as 360i, GroupM and iProspect.

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