ECOZONE

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Sustainability has been at the heart of Ozone since our launch in 2018. As a business designed to create a more sustainable ad-funded future for journalism and a more sustainable advertising ecosystem to deliver the outcomes brands desire, this has always been – and remains – at the heart of what we do. Our journey towards making a greater contribution to environmental sustainability started in earnest in early 2021; a time that coincided with the world considering a return to normality post COVID lockdowns, and a period of significant growth for Ozone.

Our ECOzone programme

In summer 2023, we consolidated a number of different workstreams across our business under the ECOzone banner. Our programme is centred around two core pillars, Accountability and Transparency.

ACCOUNTABILITY focuses on the steps our business takes to reduce its carbon footprint. While this is largely a product and engineering workstream, it also touches on a number of other areas such as our office spaces and the impact of our travel and commuting.

TRANSPARENCY relates to the steps we have taken – and continue to improve on – that provide each of our customer groups with access a to free and actual measure of carbon emissions generated through the Ozone platform.

Accountability in detail

The majority of Ozone's carbon emissions are generated as a result of the cloud-based data storage used to power our platform. Through smart engineering fixes, we have continued to reduce emissions associated with campaign delivery across our platform. Since our programmes of reduction began in 2021, we have halved the amount of emissions our platform generates. We continue to focus on lowering this number and in 2022, we reduced emissions per billion bid requests by -52%, followed by a further -13% reduction in 2023.

Legend: Bid Requests (bns) — tCO2e per Bn Bid Requests

Chart data (Bid Requests, bns): 1/7/21: 109.6, 1/8/21: 116.7, 1/9/21: 106.4, 1/10/21: 119.2, 1/11/21: 181.3, 1/12/21: 246.1, 1/1/22: 213.6, 1/2/22: 198.0, 1/3/22: 233.5, 1/4/22: 247.5, 1/5/22: 285.7, 1/6/22: 301.6, 1/7/22: 375.0, 1/8/22: 399.3, 1/9/22: 407.8, 1/10/22: 488.0, 1/11/22: 575.5, 1/12/22: 634.2, 1/1/23: 620.9, 1/2/23: 594.5, 1/3/23: 623.4, 1/4/23: 660.8, 1/5/23: 707.4, 1/6/23: 734.2, 1/7/23: 689.5, 1/8/23: 697.7, 1/9/23: 656.8, 1/10/23: 765.7, 1/11/23: 877.8, 1/12/23: 950.6

Key tactics have included:

- **Reducing ad tech code** on our publishers' pages while simultaneously building direct connections for our publishers. Both of these actions have significantly improved latency and have generated savings on energy consumption and cleaned up the digital advertising flow between the publishers and the advertiser.

- **Employing machine learning** to predict what would be the best performing inventory and filtered out low performing ad requests. We also moved to edge computing - processing data closer to the point of generation – which reduced the number of hops between the user and our platform.

- We conducted a **full review of our data storage and archiving** capability. We restructured and optimised our data pipeline to determine what data we needed to store and for how long. We've been able to significantly reduce the amount of data we need to be readily available, with the remainder moved into cold storage – a process that creates a lot less carbon.

- We invested in **building direct connections with DSPs**, such as our partnership with The Trade Desk. What this has created is a more direct and transparent path – connecting agencies and publishers with our platform, eliminating the broadcast behaviour of the open web through SSPs.

In addition to the engineering workstream, we have taken steps to reduce emissions in other areas of our business. For example, we moved our Manchester-based hub to new office premises powered by 100% renewable energy, and took steps to ensure all new and replacement laptops and monitors are refurbished machines rather than bought new.

Transparency in detail

Since our launch, the principle of transparency has been firmly baked into everything we do. It has led to the creation of two sustainability measures for our brand, agency and publisher partners.

Launched in August 2023, **ECOzone for Brand**s is a free-to-access report, built into every managed service PCA. It measures the amount of carbon used to power campaigns through Ozone's platform, using actual data from our cloud providers. This dataset has been verified by independent environmental consultants, Green Element. Since launch, almost 700 campaigns and one billion impressions have been measured.

ECOzone for Publishers, launched in August 2024, provides every publisher partner with a bespoke view of the amounts of carbon generated through Ozone's platform, carbon generated by ad partner and a revenue:carbon efficiency metric. This is already available to 19 different publishing groups as part of Ozone's suite of publisher tools. ECOzone for Publishers provides actionable data points that allows partners to take more control over their digital advertising set-ups. For example, one publisher has been able to reduce the carbon generated per ad request by c.10%, by focusing on reducing the size of their bid requests.

As a member of the Ad Net Zero initiative, Ozone actively engaged in the development of the GARM Suitability Framework by submitting feedback and sharing documentation, while at the same time ensuring both of these ECOzone measures work within this. As the framework continues to evolve, Ozone will continue to iterate these measures to provide the transparency, consistency and accuracy that the industry is striving to achieve.

Residual emissions

At Ozone, we believe that one of the easiest ways to minimise carbon emissions in the digital landscape is to to work directly with premium publishers or through publisher-built platforms like our own. This way focus can be on not creating the emissions in the first place, rather than having to clean them up.

When it comes to our residual carbon emissions – i.e. those that we have as yet been unable to reduce – we follow Green Element's recommendation of investing in decarbonising our own operations rather than pushing resources towards third-party offsetting programmes.

Having set further science-based reduction targets, we remain committed to creating the best experiences online with minimise impact on the environment. As ever, we will keep a watching brief on this one, and align ourselves with best industry practice.