

Press Release

ThunderDay 2018: Global pioneers of the IT and publishing world promote collaboration models

BURDA congress forms the foundation stone for the future of Online Publishing

Munich, 28th November 2018 - On 26th and 27th November Media, IT and Open Source experts discussed the future of professional Online Publishing in Berlin's Festsaal Kreuzberg. Munich publisher Hubert Burda Media provided more than 150 participants with a diverse mix of keynote speakers and presentations from international companies as well as the basis for further conversations and networking. The media and publishing world is facing the critical question of how income can be generated in the future through sources other than classic advertising. In the opening panel, Hans Fink named Amazon, Google and other global giants as a threat to be taken seriously.

GAFA Data Collectors: American internet giants are threatening the sector

In the panel entitled *Revenue streams beyond advertising*, Stefan Betzold, Managing Director Digital BILD GmbH, Jan Wachtel, Managing Director of RTL Interactive GmbH und Hans Fink, CEO of Burda Studios discussed experience gained so far, future trends and expectations as well as challenges made by the media to Online Publishing.

"Most income lost by the publishing industry goes to companies such as Google or Amazon", said Betzold. According to this assertion, the sector is not only losing income from advertising business to American internet giants but also has no access to important customer data. "Amazon, Google et al. horde the data as if it were rare treasure and ultimately influence customers' searching behaviour, which in turn makes fair competition impossible", said Fink. Possible solution approaches and measures already shown to be efficient include paywalls such as those from WELT+ or BILD+ and original content such as video productions with a local flavour, as successfully practised by RTL.

Fink saw the success in the overall package: "In addition to the largest income source from display advertising, individual content, a customer loyalty system and being a competent service provider are becoming ever more important". As before, challenges include the GDPR, lack of transparency, trust within the industry and the wish to share knowledge with each other. "Publishers have been exchanging more and more knowledge with each other, however, players fear divulging too much knowledge and endangering their own business model", complained Betzold. Wachtel is adamant that a solution for fair cooperation be found.

Call for more collaboration, relevant content and customer focus

Hubert Burda Media Holding Kommanditgesellschaft

Sitz: Offenburg · HRA 471250 AG Freiburg · Geschäftsführende, persönlich haftende Gesellschafter: Prof. Dr. Hubert Burda, Hubert Burda Media Holding Geschäftsführung SE · Sitz: Offenburg · HRB 470692 AG Freiburg · Vorstand: Holger Eckstein, Dr. Paul-Bernhard Kalten (Vorsitzender), Dr. Andreas Rittstieg, Martin Weiss, Philipp Welte, Stefan Winners

Numerous speakers from companies such as Microsoft, Gruner + Jahr, BOTlabs or Makerist provided insights into their business models and work with open source systems such as Drupal or Thunder. "If we wish to exist as IT companies in the future, we will have to go the way of the developers", said Campbell Vertesi, Principal Software Engineering Manager Microsoft. "We should promote Open Source because a collaborative and open culture is very culture for our company."

Matthias Kretschmer, CEO at Desk-Net, also appealed to all publishers to rethink the relevance of content. It is not only the planning of content which matters but also content which is correct and relevant for the user. Ricardo Schneider, Digital Intigration Director at Somos Educação added: "Digital publishers must therefore think differently to the extent that content has to be interactive." The most successful Brazilian digital publisher for educational books has been pursuing this strategy and is continually expanding it.

In his provocative presentation, Brian Osborn, publisher and CEO of Linux New Media cast doubt on the digital trend. "The digital transformation is not relevant for every company at the same time." By ignoring the trend, an IT publisher such as Linux New Media is still able to enjoy success. "The essence of sustainable business models does not lie in running with every trend, simply because others are doing it", said Osborn. "What matters is what the readers want and expect. Are they digital natives? Do they require digital content? Focus on the customer determines the success of the company."

Extra: Tech4 Good - Projects in the fight against corruption

An example of how transparency can function due to IT was provided by Veronica Celis, founder and CEO of EnlightAID. "Together with our fintech company, we advocate fully comprehensive information regarding donation transactions", explained Celis. According to the native Chilean, in most cases around 30% of donations are lost due to corruption. "Trust in charity organisations hardly exists anymore due to repeated headlines about the misuse of donated money", said Celis. "Thanks to Blockchain and artificial intelligence we are able to guarantee decentralised money flow, accelerate processes and positively influence the trust in social projects." Celis calls for more acceptance for Tech4Good projects, those wishing to improve the lives of people in need through the use of IT.

"The cross-industry community event has shown that a meet-up of this type is unbelievably important for publishers, IT experts, decision-makers, managers and all actors who actively shape the media landscape in order to shape the future together and guarantee efficient business models", comments Kai Riecke, CTO of Hubert Burda Magazine Holding and Thunder's patron. "The keen interest in the presentations and the discussion rounds together the emerging demands of economic realities, political regulations and technological possibilities show that Thunder Day is on the right track. We are looking forward to Thunder Day 2019 are very interested in how the market will have developed in the meantime."

About Thunder:

Thunder is an Open Source Content Management System based on Drupal8. It has been offered by German publisher Hubert Burda Media since March 2016.

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The Thunder Core Team initiated the inaugural ThunderDay 2017 in Hamburg. The community event took place over two days in Berlin in 2018, in a larger and interactive context. Participants included a multitude of international speakers from the digital and publishing world who discussed the future of digital publishing.