

VIDEO INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Video Best Practices for the 2021 Q4 Holiday Shopping Season

Actionable Video Strategy Insights for Publishers, Advertisers, and other Digital Media

Executive Summary

With the annual Q4 increases in video consumption and consumer spending for the holiday season, there has never been a better time for companies to explore new ways of using digital video. Online video companies have the unique opportunity to maximize reach and revenue with holiday-specific video strategies and best practices.

Using data from across 12,000+ unique publishing sites and 10 billion monthly impressions, JW Player has compiled actionable insights for publishers, advertisers, and other digital media brands to succeed with online video during this lucrative quarter. Included in this playbook of video marketing best practices are tips on how to increase CPMs for publishers, trends in contextual advertising holiday keywords, and Q4 success stories from top digital media companies.

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FOCUS ON PUBLISHING

Publishers, especially those monetizing via ads, have been steadily increasing video production related to valuable holiday themes.

Digital video usage increases each year during Q4, and publishers monetizing their content through advertising-based video on demand (AVOD) are at a unique advantage in 2021. Nearly 50% of all digital video viewers in 2021 are using AVOD services, up from 44.2% in 2020.¹ With more viewers watching AVOD content than ever before, and publishers creating more holiday-themed content, this is one of the most lucrative times of year for publishers. As publishers expand their content libraries to maximize revenue, advertisers have a unique opportunity to increase their reach through contextual ad strategies targeted to the holiday season.

WHAT'S IN THIS SECTION:

HOLIDAY SHOPPING VIDEO TRENDS

SEASONAL EVENT VIDEO TRENDS

SUCCESS STORY: GONOODLE

SUCCESS STORY: CAFEMEDIA

HOLIDAY BEST PRACTICES FOR PUBLISHERS

“I’m glad we made the shift. It’s been nothing but positive. JW Player has exceeded expectations.”

Chief Product Officer | Insider, Inc.

Insider Inc.

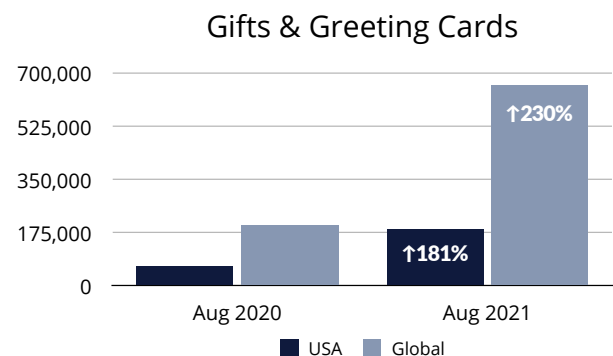
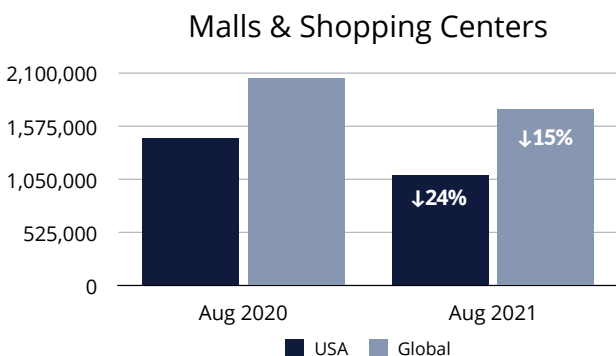
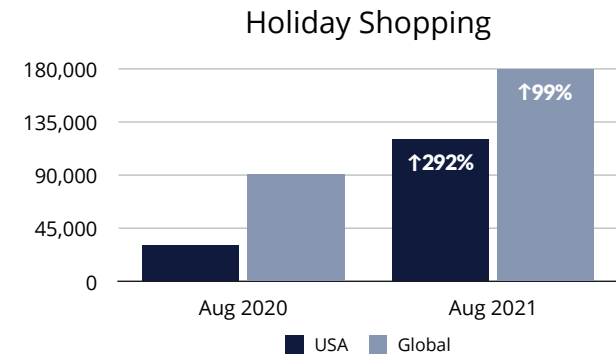
Holiday Shopping Video Trends



According to JW Player’s network of 12,000+ independent publishers, broadcasters, and media companies, in the lead up to the holiday season, there has been a **291.77% increase** in US holiday shopping themed video content year-over-year from 2020 to 2021 and a **98.99% increase** globally. This far outpaces the YoY growth for the less specific shopping category which has seen 19.80% and 40.86% increases in US and global markets, respectively.

Within the malls & shopping center video segment, there’s been a decrease in content—signalling the continuing rise of ecommerce shopping over in-person shopping. This can largely be attributed to the change in consumer shopping habits accelerated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and recent supply chain shortages.

AD REQUESTS BY VIDEO SEGMENT

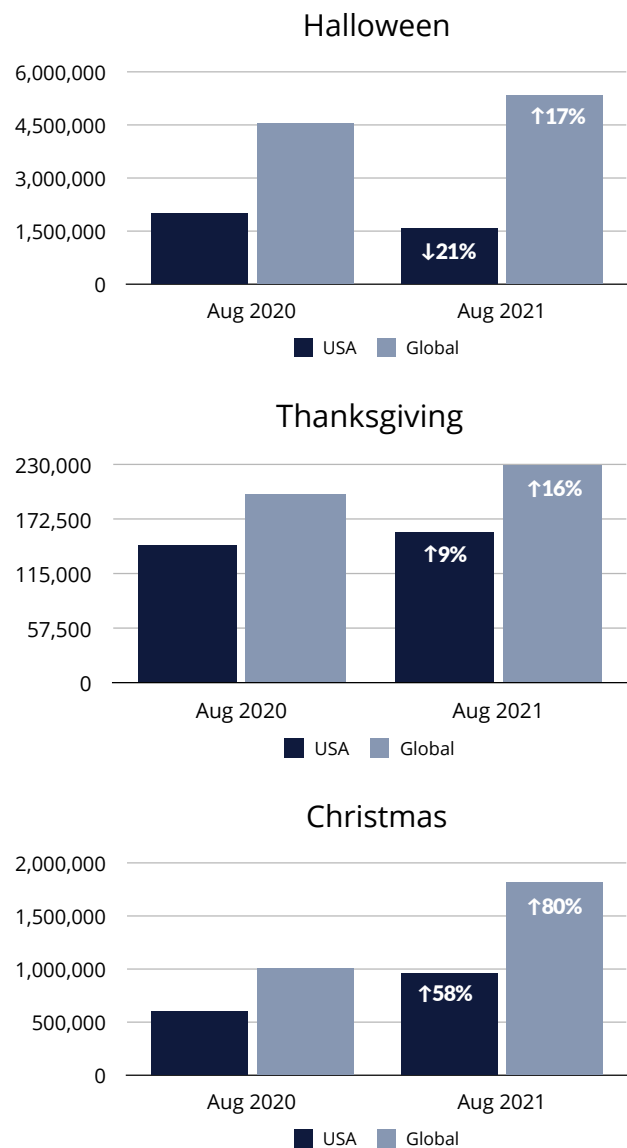


Seasonal Event Video Trends

Among video segments related to seasonal holidays, Christmas and Halloween are the top holidays by volume. There has been a 58% increase in Christmas-themed content since 2020 in the USA, and an 80% increase globally.

With the increase in news reports on product shortages and delivery delays, the Christmas holiday shopping season has started sooner than in earlier years—hence the increase in Christmas-themed content. According to one report,² 31% of U.S. consumers have already started shopping for the holidays before October.

AD REQUESTS BY VIDEO SEGMENT





SUCCESS STORY

How GoNoodle uses themed playlists & landing pages to increase engagement during popular children's holidays

“As we continue to be a force of joy, health, and self-discovery for kids and the adults they love, we hope to bolster video viewership by providing these seasonal destinations for the GoNoodle community.”

—Sarah Halloran, Director of Global Marketing & PR at GoNoodle

GoNoodle is a media and technology company making active content and products for kids and the adults who love them. Created by social-emotional learning experts, GoNoodle is dedicated to empowering next-generation humans and helping the grown-ups who love them positively charge every day with good energy. Used in millions of homes and four-out-of-five U.S. public elementary schools, GoNoodle's interactive content is made to energize, focus, calm, or delight.

During the holiday season, GoNoodle creates children's programming tied to the most popular holidays as a way to increase engagement. Using themed landing pages for each holiday, they're able to create a central place for featuring their themed content, making it more accessible for viewers to find and then stay actively engaged.



SUCCESS STORY

How CafeMedia uses holiday themed content to maximize CPMs

“The contextual targeting we pass to our demand partners enables us to target video deals to videos that appear within contextually relevant holiday content, boosting demand and CPMs during the holiday season.”

Regan Moran | Video Business Lead, CafeMedia

CafeMedia empowers the world’s best creators and independent publishers to grow thriving businesses for the long term. Under CafeMedia and AdThrive brands, the network manages digital advertising sales and technology and a growing number of services for more than 3,000 creators and independent publishers, making it the leader in advertising and creator services. CafeMedia ranks as the 10th largest

digital property in the U.S. and #1 in Food, Family, Home, and Lifestyle—with a reach of nearly 175M monthly unique visitors in the U.S. alone.

During the Christmas season, CafeMedia’s network of 3,000+ independent publishers see an increase in advertising CPMs around certain themes and segments, especially for holiday-themed food and recipe content.

Best Practices for Publishers

While many of these video strategy best practices are recommended year-round, due to the seasonality of CPMs being highest in Q4, publishers should use this time to make sure they're optimized for success.

01

CREATE SEASONAL CONTENT TARGETED TO HOLIDAY SEGMENTS

With the incoming cookie deprecation, advertisers are using contextual advertising strategies to reach audiences through better targeting. Because of the increased ad demand around certain holiday segments, publishers can maximize revenue by creating more content targeted to the particular holidays and shopping segments such as those listed earlier in this section.

02

ENABLE AUTOPLAY FOR ADS

Autoplay helps publishers maximize revenue per session by starting videos at page load, therefore generating a higher volume of ad impressions. CPM and fill rates are lower on autostart compared to Click-to-Play user-initiated players (sometimes 3x higher CPM), but with the increase in Q4 web traffic, publishers can often still generate the same level of revenue.

03

USE VIDEO THUMBNAILS

Video thumbnails can drive 15% more views over static thumbnails while also improving the site experience for users. These 5-second thumbnails automatically play in a loop silently when a player is viewable, offering an interactive preview of the video itself. Publishers can also use video preview assets outside of the video player to build interactive sites and applications to engage audiences.

04

MANAGE HOLIDAY-THEMED CONTENT THROUGH PLAYLISTS

Through maintaining a strong playlist strategy for your content, publishers can yield higher revenue per session. More importantly, playlists strengthen viewers' experience with relevant content as it guides the follow-on plays. With manual and dynamic playlists, publishers can create a viewing flow based on a specific series or type of content to keep users more engaged.

05

USE A RECOMMENDATIONS ENGINE TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT

With **JW Player Recommendations** activated, publishers can select the initial video and the JW Player algorithm will create a playlist of recommended videos based on viewing pagers and semantic similarity. This extends the time users spend with on a site while also giving viewers the ability to easily discover additional content that they're likely interested in already.

06

CREATE A DEDICATED HOLIDAY VIDEO SECTION

Publishers should consider building dedicated video sections exclusively for certain holiday segments to showcase the best video content. Making video content accessible to viewers via main navigation channels or specific call-outs makes it easier for viewers to find, watch, and continue watching content. While hiding video players below the fold or embedded within articles does generate plays, the most successful publishers make their video content easy to find.

07

ENABLE FLOAT ON SCROLL

Implement this out-of-the-box player feature to guarantee buyers and advertisers more than 75% viewability on ads. With increased web traffic during Q4, it's important for publishers to make their ads highly visible for maximum CPM rates.

08

EMBED VIDEOS HIGHER UP ON THE PAGE

The most common reason for low completion rates are video players that are embedded autostart on view below the article. Due to the increased traffic during the Q4 holiday season, publishers should make sure videos are visible above-the-fold when possible to capture this quick-moving traffic.

09

PRODUCE LONGER ARTICLES

Users spend more time on the page and inadvertently have a positive impact on completion rates if the content is thoughtful and engaging. While many publishers create holiday gift guides in both video and text formats, it can be beneficial for publishers to capture more traffic and views by creating long-form content for SEO benefit.

Conclusion

With Black Friday and Cyber Monday fueling the growth of retail sales for the year, it's no wonder that the same quarter is equally important for online shopping and other related content. Online video consumption reaches its peak around specific holiday-themed content during this period and helps to increase CPMs for publishers and other digital media outlets. By optimizing for the high usage and CPM rates, publishers and advertisers can easily make the most of their busiest quarter simply by following best practices and using clearly defined data to set their video marketing strategy.

As online video continues to expand beyond traditional outlets to connected TV, OTT platforms, and other media, the holiday season is certain to continue to drive revenue and growth for the greater video industry.

JW Player is able to apply segmentation that identifies the content of videos served across the JW Player universe based on dozens of data points available only to JW Player including classification, transcription, semantics, and image recognition data. The result is a level of ad targeting for video that's not available with previous page-level based solutions—and at a scale that no-one else can match.

About JW Player

JW Player is the most powerful & flexible video platform powered by the fastest, most-used HTML5 online video player. We combine world-class software with unique data insights to help digital businesses deliver amazing video experiences, grow audiences, and maximize revenue. JW Player pioneered video on the web over a decade ago and continues to innovate as the world's largest network-independent platform for video delivery and intelligence.

JW Player powers over 10B monthly video plays across 12,000+ publishing sites. Our video player is the number one source of all views on the open web.

“JW Player helps advertisers find premium, scarce instream video opportunities like no other with our one-of-a-kind programmatic solution. During the busy holiday season, it's a chance to truly optimize ad spending at scale.”

—Michael Schwalb | GM of Data & Advertising, JW Player

