

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

Hearst introduces AI-backed advertising tool

June 11, 2024



The lifestyle publisher is introducing an audience-targeting product called "Aura." Image credit: Hearst

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Hearst Magazines is using first-party reader data to propel its growing suite of digital solutions.

The lifestyle publisher is introducing an audience-targeting product backed by artificial intelligence (AI). Called "Aura," Hearst's launch draws on behavioral, contextual and commerce signals and is expected to, at scale, connect marketers with the most valuable and engaged consumers.

"At Hearst, we're not waiting to be told that cookies are obsolete," said Lisa Ryan Howard, global chief revenue officer at **Hearst Magazines**, in a statement.

"We've built a next-generation targeting capability at the axis of privacy and performance," Ms. Howard said. "Aura is the first data solution built off first-party data and AI-enabled proprietary content taxonomies, enhanced with purchase signals derived from thousands of product-specific clicks made across our sites each day.

"Aura takes into consideration billions of signals from our readers each of whom has many layers around their interests and shopping intentions and we're thrilled to introduce this new solution to the market."

Strategizing for scale

Aura analyzes Hearst's first-party data and the purchase actions of 145 million monthly visitors from its more than 25 U.S. brands.

The publishing house says in a statement that the tool provides a more comprehensive picture of a user than ever before and makes predictive and informed decisions about which ads to serve.

"Using rich first-party data from our trusted fashion and luxury, lifestyle, autos, enthusiast and wellness brands, Aura provides an unmatched and nuanced understanding of our audience," said Mike Nuzzo, senior vice president of data and insights at Hearst Magazines, in a statement.



AURA

HEARST MAGAZINES

The tool feeds into Hearst's digital marketing strategies. Image credit: Hearst

"For example, through contextual and behavioral signals, we can derive that a pet food shopper visiting one of our sites also happens to be a trail runner and family vacation planner," Mr. Nuzzo said. "This multilayered understanding of our readers ensures that an advertiser accurately targets its most valuable customers and unlocks new ones at the most opportune moments."

In beta testing, Aura sparked a double-digit click-through rate increase at scale compared to third-party audience targeting efforts that use cookies.

In late 2024, Hearst plans to expand the feature's application across a portfolio of 50 global brands, reaching 300 million users with its digital investment. The publisher has long experimented in the ad sales department ([see story](#)).

"At Hearst Magazines, we are focused on premium advertising experiences that drive audience attention and engagement," said Jen Dorre, senior vice president of ad product at Hearst Magazines, in a statement.

"With Aura targeting, this convergence has consistently demonstrated an increase in attention quality with more privacy-forward outcomes than third-party, cookie-based targeting solutions."

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