

Solutions for News Media

Helping our
news media
clients increase
their revenue



Executive Summary

Advantage solutions for news media have developed and evolved into robust, global solutions for managing subscriptions—print, digital, and bundles. These solutions include a wide array of features supporting business initiatives and goals: entitlement management, delivery flexibility, payments and payment plans, local editions, premiums, and more. As the revenue mix of advertising and subscriptions has changed over the last decade for news media publishers, AdvantageCS has worked closely with our clients to ensure software capabilities needed to support publishers as they develop products for their audiences across many channels.



Monetizing news content has been challenging for news media, who compete with free, general news content in many markets. With the advent of “fake news,” readers are being driven more and more to tested, familiar brands, which has both strengthened these brands and provided avenues for growth.

Advantage is uniquely positioned to evolve with news publishing, already counting on leaders in the news industry in multiple markets with whom it has established partnerships for development. This whitepaper outlines some of the capabilities specific to news media which are already helping our news media clients to increase their revenue.

Packages for Digital and Print

Advantage facilitates the bundling of digital and print for the news audience. Readers who want access to digital news with a print Sunday edition delivered to their door can have it. Conversely, print subscribers can have access to the digital edition, with pricing flexibility to reflect how the publisher wishes to allocate the income across the components of the package.



Since print is based on issues, and digital access or editions based on time, Advantage has created synchronized packages of digital and print which allow the end customer to receive the appropriate number of issues during the time period of the digital access without the need for comparing issues to time. Advantage makes this determination and keeps the package of digital and print synchronized over time, even taking into account events which could affect the length of one of the package components, such as a print subscription becoming undeliverable due to a customer moving and not providing a forwarding address.

The components of a synchronized package are tied together and renewed together, even as changes are made to the days the print is delivered, through price changes, and the like. Seasonal addresses are managed perfectly for those readers who migrate. The mix of content a subscriber may be receiving is often more important to back-end systems for fulfillment, revenue allocation, etc. The reader should be shielded from that complexity and presented with a subscription to “stuff” for a period of time—synchronization is designed just for this purpose.

Upgrades, such as a subscription going from just digital to digital + print, are all managed smoothly with any payments already made being correctly applied to the new package with its components, and the difference being collected from the customer. Likewise, downgrades would cause a credit to be created, which can result into a refund, depending on the business rules. This system flexibility allows marketers the opportunity to diversify their offerings and cast a wider net to see what sticks. Ultimately, the customer wins too as the control over what they want is not limited to what a system may offer.

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Payment Options

Payments in Advantage can be made as recurring charges on credit cards, direct debit or EFT, digital wallet payments (e.g., PayPal), billed after service (“pay as you go”), or even installments (“4 easy payments”). The recurring charges may be on any frequency you wish—daily, monthly, quarterly, annually, etc. All sensitive credit card payment handling is done through the Advantage Card Vault, which is certified for PA-DSS compliance. We have integrated with approximately 20 processors, including Worldpay, Ogone, Authorize.net, CyberSource, DataCash, FirstData, and others.

Pricing Flexibility

As new pricing models have emerged, Advantage has been enhanced to manage them. Pay-per-view, time-based access (any length from 1 hour to multiple years), issue-based delivery, and packages of these can be managed in Advantage. Free or paid trials, introductory pricing, step-up pricing over multiple months or years, and regular price increases are easily managed. Advantage also supports many other models—volume-based pricing, package allocation based pricing, list pricing, promotional pricing, discounting, and the like.

Premiums, Editions, Entitlements and More

Premiums may be products which are included for a particular offer, or the end customer may select from a list of available premiums, or the premium may be a longer term on the subscription or a lower price. Premiums may be earned at order time, when a certain percentage is paid, or within a certain number of responses. Premium fulfillment is pushed by Advantage to the publisher's warehouse system.

Multiple edition handling is core to Advantage. Our earliest clients had local editions, with some clients sending out different editions depending on demographic information.

Issue groups are established to define which issues a customer receives, such as Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or Thursday and Sunday only, for example. There is no limit to the number of issue groups that may be established. This model is very common with newspaper publishers where a weekend edition plus digital access appears to be a prevailing model for customers.

Entitlements are also fundamental to Advantage's core functionality. For print, the fulfillment of the issues is triggered in Advantage and mail files are created for the distribution warehouse(s). For European newspapers, this can include alternate delivery. For entitlements to digital access or editions, Advantage controls who gets access to what and for how long. The digital content systems may have this information pushed from Advantage or it may get this through an integration with the Advantage Single Sign-On product. AdvantageCS has developed integrations with multiple content platforms for this purpose

Open Architecture and eCommerce

Advantage is designed with a powerful extensibility framework, allowing seamless integration with other applications. The Advantage API has over 5,000 methods, allowing our clients to integrate Advantage with other applications. A workflow event structure allows events in Advantage to trigger rule-based actions which can involve integrated 3rd party applications.

Our **eCommerce platform** is built on an open-source CMS, and provides a shopping cart, customer self-service, an administration panel for theming and branding, a landing page design tool for marketers, and plug-ins for Google Analytics and other tools. It is built on a REST API.



Summary

AdvantageCS is a global leader in subscription management solutions. Together with our full-service partnerships, Advantage can fit into any model on the spectrum of an in-house operation to fully outsourced, SaaS cloud solution. Monthly updates ensure that our clients have access to the latest technology and innovations.

News media companies in the US, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands are among our satisfied, successful clients.

