



## Customer Case Study: WPG Publishers

### WPG increases service levels to readers and advertisers, using BlueConic

*"BlueConic helped us to do a much better job of understanding and profiling our online visitors."*

Gert-Jan Schikker  
Manager New Media, WPG

*WPG Publishers enlisted BlueConic to profile anonymous visitors based on their cross-channel behavior. These profiles were then dynamically segmented and used to serve relevant content to individual visitors. This resulted in much higher conversion rates and a far better site experience for both anonymous and known visitors. It also enabled WPG to sell more premium content and to strengthen its negotiating position towards advertising agencies.*

#### Introduction

WPG Publishers is a multimedia organization consisting of various independent publishing houses operating in Western Europe, with an annual revenue of 160 million euro in 2013. The company has more than 25 independent brands in its portfolio.

Voetbal International ([www.vi.nl](http://www.vi.nl)) is one of these brands. It is the major source of information on soccer-related news, receiving over 10 million visits each month. In addition to its website, print magazine and television show, Voetbal International

offers soccer news in various digital formats — an iPad magazine, web radio, webTV, mobile apps and a webshop for selling soccer-related articles.

#### Situation

As with any sport, soccer is full of emotion and soccer fans feel a strong attachment to their favorite team. This means it is extremely important for a soccer website to offer the right content and advertisements to the right visitor, at the right time. Knowing who you have in front of you is the first critical step toward customer engagement.

Voetbal International learned this the hard way by promoting an ad for a new book on the soccer team Ajax to random visitors on its site. The website editors were quickly inundated with hundreds of angry emails from fans of competing teams such as Feyenoord and PSV, who demanded that they would never again be offered ads for Ajax products.

To avoid this situation from repeating itself, WPG began looking for a solution to



identify site visitors and offer them relevant content in real time. After an thorough evaluation, WPG selected BlueConic.

## Solution

The first step was to systematically collect information on anonymous and known visitors and then store the data in individual profiles. Over time, as visitors continued to interact via WPG's websites, social media and mobile channels, these individual profiles progressively built up to become a valuable source of visitor-specific information.

Next, WPG decided to serve relevant content in real time to each online visitor via BlueConic. For this, WPG implemented an algorithm that could predict the soccer team preference for each visitor. Pieces of content on the various online channels were categorized automatically and tagged with a number of "viewpoints" based on the actual content. The fine-grained scoring algorithm looked at various elements, such as the likelihood that a soccer team fan would view a particular piece of content, the context in which the content was viewed, the online channel used and the recency of the article viewed. Upfront, marketers also defined threshold values above which someone would be considered, for example, an Ajax fan.

Based on the cross-channel behavior of anonymous visitors, BlueConic determined the soccer team preference for each of these visitors, applying the scoring algorithm. With an accuracy rate of more than 90%, BlueConic could predict whether someone was an Ajax fan (or not).

Using BlueConic's real-time segmentation capabilities, marketers at WPG were able to show relevant information based on each visitor's individual preferences. In real time, BlueConic presented relevant content like an article or an advertisement that took into account the preferences for that individual.

## Results

The use of BlueConic to predict soccer team preference and repurpose this information to target relevant messages to individual visitors led to very positive results. For the first time, it enabled WPG's marketers to have individualized, highly-relevant dialogs with their entire online audience, in real time!

Applying BlueConic on all soccer-related sites gave a boost to conversion rates. As Gert-Jan Schikker, Manager New Media at WPG explains:

*"BlueConic helped us do a much better job of understanding and profiling our online visitors. With the ability to respond in real time to this additional visitor knowledge, we were able to nearly double our click-through rates on specific ads."*

Deeper insights into the behavior of its online visitors strengthened WPG's negotiating position towards its media service agencies. BlueConic helped WPG gather and control its own proprietary visitor data, making it less dependent on external vendors. Moreover, with in-depth insights into its online audience, WPG can now offer a much more relevant site experience to both its anonymous and known visitors.

In addition to better insights in individual visitor's behavior and preferences, BlueConic empowered WPG's direct sales team to sell more premium ads. The sales team, trying to sell online advertising space to sports-related businesses, now had an additional sales argument: they could offer and immediately apply relevant knowledge about the online visitors.

Gert-Jan Schikker, Manager New Media at WPG:

*"With the capabilities provided by BlueConic, we were able to increase our service levels to both our readers and our advertisers. As a result, we're now extending BlueConic into our other labels as well."*

As a spin-off to the success at the Voetbal International brand, other publishers and magazines in the WPG holdings have now started their own initiatives with BlueConic to offer more relevant content and improve their visitors' online experience.

### Benefits:

- Improved understanding and profiling of the audience
- Nearly doubled click-through rates on ads
- Better site experiences for anonymous and known visitors
- Ability to sell more premium content to advertisers
- Strengthened negotiating position towards media agencies