

Just read a great article at the Neiman Journalism Lab site [about Google's plans to help the content](#) industry. In a nutshell the concept is to utilize Google's Checkout, their payment system, to enable publishers of news and other premium content to both sell their content as part of subscriptions and/or via micropayments. What caught my interest was the concept of allowing multiple publishers to work together to offer subscriptions or premium content together.

Could Google convince Newscorp and say the New York Times Company to work together to offer a "super subscription" to their publications online and then divvy up the proceeds on a pre agreed basis, much as they do with advertisers and site publishers ?

Maybe.

It would take a lot of work and a lot of convincing and negotiating to get it right. Then , even if you could get these cats and dogs to finally live in harmony , the question would arise as to whether or not Google Checkout has enough users. Right now they don't. Which would mean most users would have to sign up for CheckOut. Would people go through the process of signing up for Google Checkout in order to participate in these "SuperPublication Subscriptions" ? .

I dont think they would. In fact, while its a great idea on Google's part, I think Google Checkout has more to gain than the publishers.

That said, this same approach could be a digital media nirvana to Amazon and its users.

Amazon has pretty much everyone's credit card. They have a growing user base for Kindle.They already sell digital video downloads and rentals, as well as music. They even sell good old fashion magazine and newspaper subscriptions.

They have the ability to create the path of least resistance for users to purchase and consume digital media.

I thought [it was a good idea for media conglomerates to package all their digital assets](#) into subscription offers. Its a far better idea for a marketer like Amazon to package cross company offerings into bigger and better packages.

While their Kindle revenue shares , IMHO, are far too beneficial to Amazon, if they can work out a fairer revenue share for Kindle distribution, things could start to get very interesting.

Across all the digital assets that Amazon sells, the packaging and marketing options are endless.

Like the freemium approach ? ,Package the USA Today, NY Times, Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, Investors Business Daily into a single price subscription for Kindle Delivery. Price it a big discount for the first 30 days, with an automatic expansion to full subscriptions at a price that is a discount to their individual subscriptions. With Free Website Access included.

Want to make the bundle more attractive ? Bundle in a movie download. A book delivered to Kindle. Music. Software.

When they come up with even better ideas, Im sure the Publishers, Movie Distributors, Music Distributors, Software Vendors will be more than happy to give you OEM prices if you commit to minimum quantities.

In fact, it could be even more interesting if Amazon took a page from Google and allowed Marketers to bid on digital content to include in subscriptions, product bundles or one off sales and then market and resell them.

Think of the ecosystem of content sales that could be created if Amazon (or EBay or Google) created a "wholesale" market for content where marketers could bid on 100 annual Wall Street Journal Subscriptions , 100 Downloads of the movie Wall Street, and 100 copies of the book "Random Walk Down Wall Street" to be sold as "Graduation Gifts for Business Majors"

Lame example, but you get the point.

In a world where the marginal cost of delivery of digital content is almost zero, why not throw it out there to be bid on so that great marketers can come up with great marketing and sales programs ?

Why not take those marketing and sales programs and offer them for sale right on Amazon ? They already have a wholesale sales program that leverages their marketing, order processing and physical fulfillment advantage for 3rd parties. Why not create the same type of program specifically for digital media and the same Amazon advantages, as well as their cloud services to let anyone who wants to participate quickly create a digital media store? This could be the ultimate market for digital media.

Its hard to find ways to sell content, particularly content in any one silo, be it news, sports, business, etc. When you start looking at how to package any digital content into products and letting the market help set pricing, things could get very interesting very quickly.

Ebay allowed products to be aggregated and sold by anyone. Google allowed anyone to quickly and easy buy advertising and reach a huge audience. Both based on an auction system. An Amazon Media Market could create a bourse that leveraged the vast amounts of creativity out there to find new ways and models to sell digital media.

It certainly could not make things any worse...