

A self-help book

Curation 101

A simple guide to
curation. With pictures.

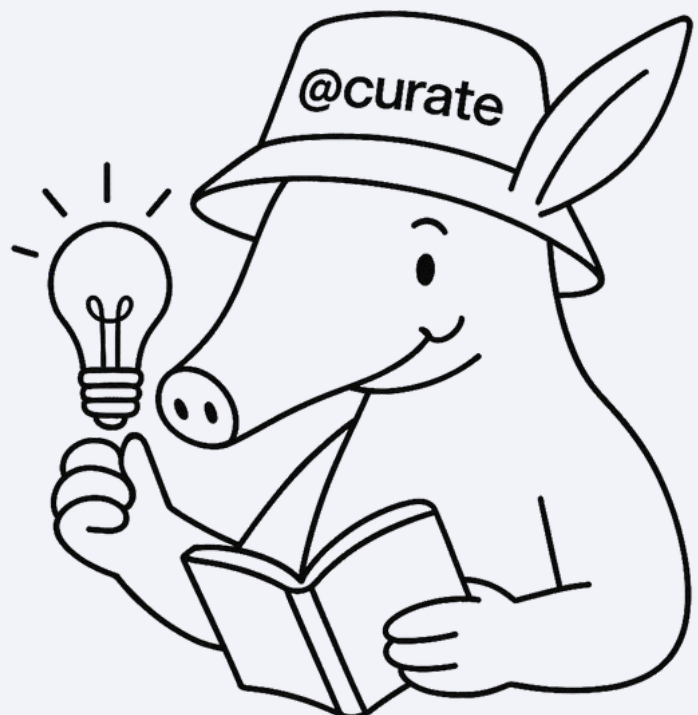


Introduction

The digital advertising industry, in general, loves to overcomplicate things. So, here's curation, explained simply, by an Aardvark named Archie, and some grumpy adtech nerds.

Chapters:

- Look at the absolute state of it
- The reality check
- What is curation?
- One analogy to rule them all
- Why should you care?
- Truth or lie
- Wrap-up

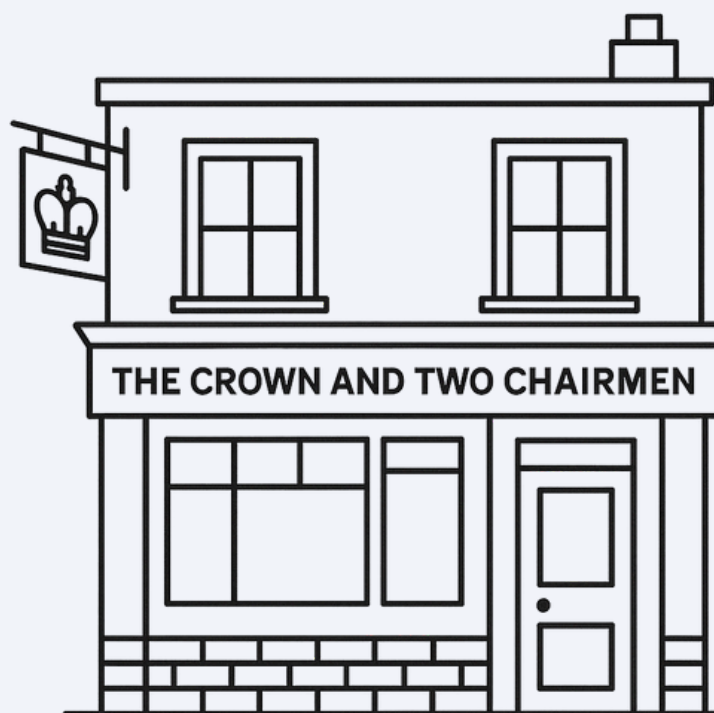


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Look at the absolute *state* of it.

Let's be honest. Most advertisers couldn't tell you where their money goes if you strapped them to a lie detector (we all know they aren't admissible in court).

Hidden fees, sketchy inventory, and a whole lot of "trust us" chucked around like Jaeger-bombs in The Crown and Two Chairmen.



The ecosystem isn't just messy - it's made for mess.

A glorious Jenga tower of middlemen where some players thrive purely by keeping things confusing.

But as budgets shrink and CFOs start asking awkward questions, the cracks are showing:

Brands want answers.

Agencies want control.

Publishers want power.

Everyone wants results.

And they all want it without the bollocks.

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The *reality* check



Here's the bit nobody likes to say out loud:

- Over **50%** of your ad spend never reaches the publisher. Poof. Gone. Like your New Year's resolutions.
- Inventory is flipped more times than a dodgy mattress on Facebook Marketplace, with every resell inflating costs and killing transparency.
- Bid shading, spoofed domains, data leakage: pick your poison. (It's like a toxic pick-and-mix, and you don't even get the good cola bottles.)

And yet, we've all been nodding along like this is just "how the industry works."

NEWSFLASH!

It doesn't have to be this way. You are worth more than this stitched-up circus.

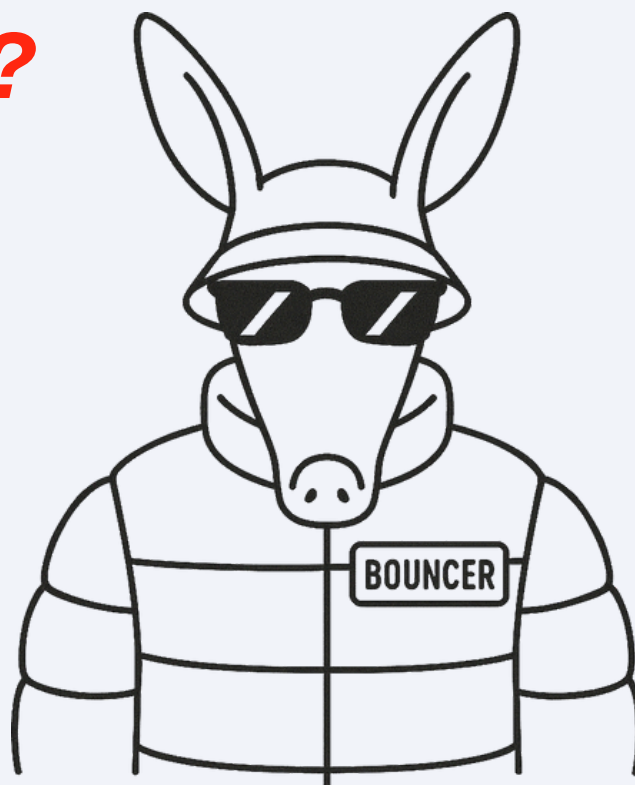
With the right tools, the right partners, the right strategy - and an open mind - you can do better. *Be better. See better.*

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What is *Curation*?

Imagine *Curation* is a nightclub bouncer.

Without it, everyone piles in: sweaty blokes, stag dos, 'Big Dave' trying to do the worm. With curation, you get the right crowd: Think the singers of Toto, Idris Elba, and the good dancers from strictly who haven't yet been cancelled for bad behaviour.



Less Spray & Pray. More Curated & Clever.

Curation isn't just another buzzword.

It's control: selecting, organising, and packaging the right inventory and data. Not casting the widest net, but the smartest one - based on quality, not quantity.

What it looks like:

- Carefully crafted media deals, activated in your DSP of choice
- Contextual + data-driven insights before you spend
- Vetted supply and full visibility into where the budget goes

Why it's better:

Traditional targeting = DSP guesses and half-baked data.

Curation flips the script: using supply-side intelligence to shape deals before the bid. It's a shift from reaction to precision.

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TRUTH BOMB



Not all “curation” is real. Some partners just reheat dodgy inventory and slap on a label. Proper curation = clean supply, deep tech, human oversight, plus a dash of AI. Programmatic doesn’t need a patch. It needs a reset. And curation is it.

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One *analogy* to rule them all

Many assume curation is just a PMP with a few small additions. But that simply isn't true. To help explain this further, we've taken a sports analogy which hopefully helps to clarify the difference.

Advertisers:

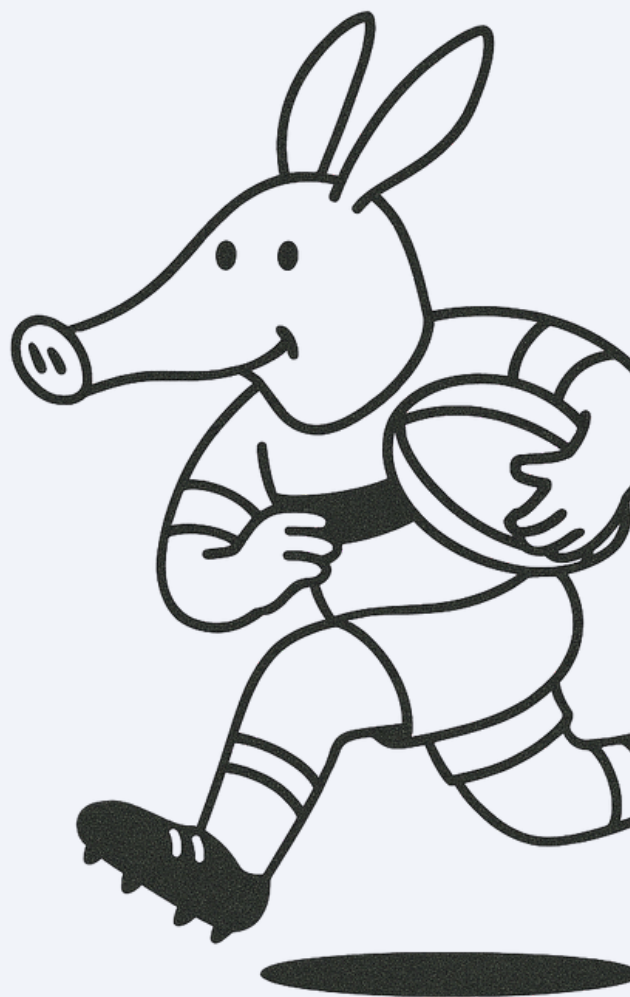
- Think of a PMP like buying one corporate box at a rugby match. Great view, guaranteed hospitality, but you're locked into one venue, one game, one night.
- Curation? That's a platinum pass - VIP boxes across every stadium, gig, and event in town, bundled up and handed to you with the celeb guest list included.

Publishers:

- Running your own deals can feel like flogging single match tickets at the gate. Sometimes you sell out, sometimes you don't.
- With curation, it's more like selling access to the VIP circuit - guaranteed big spenders, no rowdy stag dos in your seats, and everyone leaves saying "we'll be back next season."

Agencies:

- Managing a dozen PMPs is like trying to schmooze every stadium, arena, and theatre in the city separately. You'll be ghosted more times than if you went on Tinder.
- Curation puts it all in one package: one contract, all the venues, all the perks. You just bring the client and look like the hero who knows the doorman everywhere.



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Why should you *care*?

Because curation isn't just another shiny new word - it actually delivers.

Better Campaign Outcomes

Curated packages = smarter targeting, higher-quality placements, and stronger results.

Improved ROI

Hit unique, valuable audiences at scale. More transparency. More control. More bang for your buck.

Operational Efficiency

Less faff, fewer middle-margins, faster deals. It's programmatic without the admin hangover.

Risk Mitigation

Curation = cleaner pipes and stronger brand safety. So your client's logo never ends up next to dodgy clickbait.

Publisher Revenue Boost

More relevant ads = happier advertisers = more money in publishers' pockets. Simple maths.

Enhanced Control

Clearer insights into where ads run, how they perform, and what's working. Agencies get transparency, clients get trust.

That's curation. Less faff. More value.
Like an ice-cold pint at midday on a Tuesday.



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Truth or Lie?

Curation is hot right now. But it's also wildly misunderstood. Let's bust a few myths.

Myth #1: Curation is just a Private Marketplace (PMP)

Curated deals often flow through PMPs, but the magic happens *before* the deal ID - layering data, context, and supply signals. It's shaping inventory, not just repackaging it.

Myth #2: "It's another middle layer taking a cut."

Wrong. @curate's fixed CPM model kills revenue-share opacity. No hidden markups, no inflated costs. Just clear, predictable pricing.

Myth #3: "It limits scale."

Done right, it unlocks scale by stripping out the noise and surfacing what matters. Less waste. More relevance. Smarter scale.

Myth #4: "It's just a short-term hack."

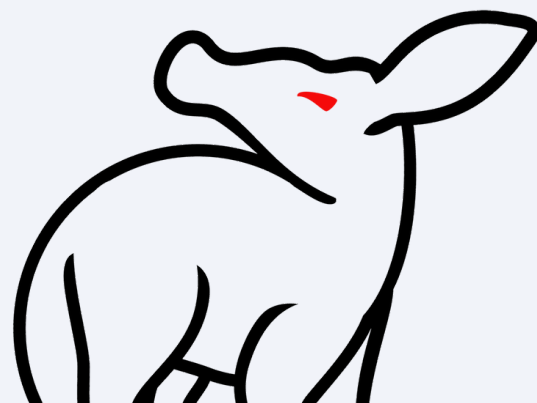
Nope. Curation is the foundation for the future — privacy-safe, AI-driven, performance-focused. Not a patch. A reset.

Myth #5: "It's not beneficial to the publishers and doesn't add value."

Smart curation puts publishers at the forefront, creating bundled marketplaces of high-performing inventory where publishers control the price.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Real curation equals better media buying. And with @curate, you finally see it.



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Wrap-up

That's it.

Curation = filtering out nonsense so advertisers, publishers, and agencies can stop crying into their CPM reports. You're welcome.

Still don't get it? Then we give up. There's no hope. You, dear reader, cannot be saved.



With love, *Archie* and *Anne*.
Adtech's most loved mother and son duo.