

# Minute Media Protects Revenue Using Real-Time Data Insights and Alerts from Anodot



## About Minute Media

Minute Media is a leading technology and digital content company. The company's proprietary video and multimedia publishing platform, Voltax, powers the creation, distribution, consumption and monetization of third party publishers and advertisers as well as our own sports and culture content brands, including *The Players' Tribune*, *FanSided*, *90min*, *DBLTAP*, *Mental Floss* and *The Big Lead*.

## The Challenge

As Minute Media's business scaled, it became increasingly difficult to keep tabs on incidents that impacted user experience, revenue, and costs. The company needed a solution that could help:

- Identify underlying issues in the platform to prevent penalties with Google and other supply-side platforms
- Understand issues with the integrity of data aggregated from a wide variety of sources
- Improve the ad profit margins, especially during consistently changing patterns such as the pandemic
- Prevent revenue loss by quickly notifying of fraudulent bot clicks on video ads

## The Solution

Minute Media's AdOps, BI and SEO, and sales and marketing teams have integrated Anodot into their data aggregation and analysis. They're leveraging the platform to proactively protect revenue, investigate data integrity and platform issues, and improve ad performance.

## Main KPIs

### Revenue

by campaign / site

### VAST Video Errors

by campaign / site

### Number of Bids

by network / campaign

## Teams



BI



Marketing & SEO



Sales & AdOps

Founded in Israel in 2011, Minute Media is a leading technology and digital content company. Minute Media's owned and operated content portfolio now consists of six global sports and entertainment brands, which are powered by the company's own proprietary publishing platform. While its O&O content is quite notable, Minute Media considers itself a technology company.

Among the offerings is a video player used internally by Minute Media as well as externally by publishing partners who want to run ads and content on their websites but don't have their own content. The company's technology platform also includes video creation capabilities, a video management system, and a library of broad content.

Minute Media believes that video is the future of content, and it certainly is the company's future. Content provided to partners by Minute Media becomes ad-supported if it's hosted on the company's video player. The video player technology gets more than one billion video views per month from hundreds of millions of users globally. This enables a business model in which Minute Media shares ad revenue with its partners.

## Monitoring Google Ads at Scale Would Unlock Significant Value

Over the past decade, advertising funds have shifted from print to digital media. Using ad tech, advertising agencies and brands can target, deliver, and analyze their digital advertising efforts, thus using their budgets more effectively.

On the flip side of that coin, supply-side platforms (SSPs) enable web publishers and content owners like Minute Media to manage their advertising inventories, filling them with ads and crediting them with revenue when those ads are viewed.

Minute Media works with a number of different marketplaces and SSPs but works especially closely with Google Ad Manager. This particular provider is a significant revenue generator for Minute Media.

"Working with Google Ad Manager is a main reason we started to use Anodot to help us optimize ad performance," says data analyst Farangiz Fayz, who was working in AdOps at the time Anodot was chosen. She's now in the Business Intelligence (BI) group and responsible for building the data streams and alerts for Anodot to make them as relevant as possible for different internal teams and getting the most out of this important tool.

**Farangiz Fayz**  
Data Analyst, Minute Media

*"Anodot is perfect for our needs ...  
We're now able to see so many issues  
that we hadn't paid attention to before,  
or that we just couldn't catch in time."*

# Manual Monitoring a Major Obstacle to Company Growth

Minute Media has a tremendous amount of data that is both generated internally and collected daily from dozens of external revenue partners.

“The company in general is very data savvy,” says Tomer Cohen, VP, BI and SEO, who handles data infrastructure and analytics at Minute Media. “We track more than 700,000 metrics to look at our business from every possible angle. All the data is input to a Google BigQuery database so there is just one source of data for analysis.”

Collecting data from so many disparate sources leaves a lot of room for issues. Minute Media must ensure the validity of the data before it can be used. Anomalies need to be identified and addressed.

Prior to Minute Media adopting Anodot, data analysts extracted data and worked with it manually to try to spot anomalies or trends.

“Our processes were extremely manual before. The different teams would run reports daily to keep tabs on the metrics they wanted,” says Fayz.

“When I was in AdOps, I used to run reports on number of clicks, viewable impressions, measurable impressions—pretty much every metric you can imagine. I’d have to manually pivot all that data every day and do some Excel conditional formatting just to see where the changes were from day to day. Every day I would send out emails of anything unusual that I noticed across the reports. The tedious part is that I’d have to do this for every single platform we support. It was all so time-consuming.”

Fayz says there were many areas of the business they couldn’t keep tabs on because there just wasn’t enough time in the day. “We’d do daily updates of the biggest revenue generating partners and ignore the smaller ones that could potentially represent more revenue for us overall.”

With manual processes being untenable, especially as the company grew, Minute Media began looking for an automated solution to identify anomalies in the business data. The main need was for an intelligent tool to reveal underlying performance problems in real time and eliminate the manual trial and error method they had been using. Anodot was the one tool that could be adapted for many use cases.

“Anodot is perfect for our needs because, once we mapped out all the metrics and dimensions available across the many platforms, we were able to see so many issues that we hadn’t paid attention to before, or that we just couldn’t catch in time to make a difference, according to Fayz. “We can get a more granular picture all at once to feed to different areas of the company.”

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## Detecting Revenue Leaks with Greater Speed & Accuracy



# Anodot Reveals Granular Issues Impacting Ad Performance

The company has numerous use cases for Anodot's autonomous anomaly detection capabilities. One of the big ones is reclaiming revenue from Google Ad Manager.

At the end of each month, Google has a process where they deduct revenue from all publishers according to their own internal algorithm.

"It's not always apparent to us how that works, but they will hint about the performance of what we're running," Fayz says. "The deduction can be a big hit on the overall revenue that we generate. We take that as a lead to investigate further so we can optimize our ad performance to reduce these monthly deductions."

One example issue that Google can deduct revenue for is invalid traffic (IVT), such as fraudulent clicks generated by a bot, which can bleed revenue from a campaign. "Anodot can tell us exactly which unit the bad traffic is coming from and which partner was bidding on it," says Fayz. "We can look into the bid level data in the API [application programming interface] and then we can further question Google on these penalties."

Viewability is another big issue that Minute Media keeps tabs on. Whether an ad can even be viewed on a video player depends on many conditions. Minute Media works with VAST and VPAID tags—industry standards meant to ensure that ads can play and interact as expected. Both standards have multiple versions that perform differently depending on what browser a person is using, such as which device, region, or operating system.

Different video types with these tags are prone to errors, and Minute Media aims to distinguish between a good display ad and a bad display ad. Using Anodot, the company is able to pull up to 400 VAST error types, and each type has a specific explanation that allows someone to investigate the conditions of the errors and, hopefully, resolve them and keep them from happening again. These types of errors lead to negative customer experience as well as revenue loss.

## Grouping Related Anomalies to Support Root Cause Analysis



# Anodot Helps Protect Minute Media's Bottom Line

One of the most important uses for Anodot is to help Minute Media maintain compliance with Google Ad Manager's strict operating rules.

"Most of our revenue is derived from video, and that's why we have so many Anodot alerts built around the video player's performance," says Cohen.

For example, if there's a problematic behavior with the player on one of our partners – say a high click-through rate – this can lead to a penalty with Google and reflect on all the sites that are monetizing on their account. If one partner site has a problem, all of their partners suffer a penalty because they are all under one Google account. To address this, their team created Anodot alerts on things like click-through rates and other behaviors that Google monitors closely.

Cohen says that when Google issues a penalty, all the partner sites will be out of Google's ad serving for at least a couple of days, which can lead to revenue losses in the hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars.

"The compliance issue alone is enough for us to justify using Anodot because it helps lower our risk of lost revenue," says Cohen. "Being a data-oriented company, the need for this tool is fairly clear. We get a lot of value from using Anodot anomaly detection to protect our business."

There are lots of opportunities for content providers that get it right. It's a highly complex business with a lot of moving parts. Anodot Autonomous Detection is an invaluable tool for Minute Media to keep its business on track and its opportunities wide open.



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