

# FROM GAMING ENGINE TO PROGRAMMATIC POWERHOUSE

How Optable Helped Unity Unlock Brand Demand  
for 256 Million Gamers in North America



# Overview

Unity, the leading platform to create and grow games and interactive experiences, possesses **one of digital advertising's richest behavioral datasets** but lacked the infrastructure to make it actionable for brand advertisers buying programmatically across channels.

Working with Optable, Unity launched Audience Hub, a **data collaboration platform** that turns **high-frequency behavioral signals from gaming into privacy-preserving audiences** for activation across mobile, ConnectedTV, web, and Digital Out-of-Home (DOOH). This platform **outperformed standard contextual targeting**, proving the immense value and potential of gaming audiences.

Audience Hub **enables secure collaboration** between Unity's first-party data, third-party enrichment partners like Experian, and advertiser demand **without exposing raw data**.

This partnership provides a blueprint for programmatic's future, illuminating how publishers with differentiated first-party data can evolve from channel-specific vendors into audience-led platforms central to omnichannel media strategies. The result is a **scalable framework that preserves consumer trust while making gaming data interoperable with standard programmatic buying workflows**.

## Strategic Objectives

- 01** Expand gaming audiences and data into the broader programmatic ecosystem in a way that aligns with how brands, agencies, and DSPs buy and activate media.
- 02** Move beyond game context to audience definitions that could be planned, targeted, and measured alongside other digital channels.
- 03** Ensure omnichannel activation beyond mobile apps into environments such as CTV, DOOH, and premium off-network inventory.

Together, these objectives aimed to make Unity's data a scalable, interoperable input to programmatic advertising rather than a siloed channel.

“Privacy regulations are dictating market shifts. With the decline of traditional IDs, advertising is becoming less effective for those who don't adapt and innovate. Unity had the scale and the data, but they needed the right infrastructure to expand activation to the larger programmatic ecosystem and to activate it in a way that aligned with where the industry was headed. **Optable provided that foundation.**”

— Vlad Stesin, Chief Executive Officer, Optable

# Challenges

Traditional identifiers are disappearing and privacy regulations are becoming tighter, contributing to a decline in the effectiveness of conventional targeting, but the demand for high-value audiences has never been greater.

At the same time, premium inventory sources like in-app and mobile gaming environments are increasingly desirable, yet successful web-based technology infrastructure and identity frameworks have struggled to translate to mobile and gaming environments.

Unity operates at the center of this dynamic, with over 256 million unique monthly active gamers in the US and access to first-party behavioral data — exactly the type of differentiated, high-engagement inventory that advertisers needed from its ecosystem. But the company faced a monetization challenge: non-gaming advertisers needed audience-based targeting and omnichannel activation that Unity's traditional contextual models couldn't deliver.

## The gap stretched across multiple dimensions:



### Contextual targeting alone wasn't enough.

Gaming excels at contextual targeting using signals like game genre and in-game behavior, but brand teams plan against standardized audience segments — demographics, psychographics, behaviors — that remain consistent across channels. Siloed gaming signals don't translate into the audience taxonomy brand buyers use.

As a result, Unity's value proposition remained strongest with endemic gaming advertisers, while **brand demand stayed underutilized**.



### Gaming audiences were trapped in mobile.

Unity's data was confined to mobile environments, limiting utility for advertisers running cross-channel campaigns. As media planning evolved toward omnichannel strategies, gaming inventory risked being left behind.

If Unity's audiences couldn't extend beyond mobile apps into channels like CTV or DOOH, they would remain a tactical add-on rather than a strategic pillar of media plans.



### No infrastructure for secure data collaboration.

With the acceleration of traditional signal deprecation and open web traffic decline, brand advertisers wanted to **match their first-party customer data with Unity's gaming signals** to create more precise segments. This required **infrastructure that didn't exist**: a secure environment where both parties could collaborate on audience creation and activation without exposing raw data.



### Manual processes for massive amounts of data.

Unity's ecosystem generated enormous volumes of behavioral data. Transforming these signals into actionable audience segments for advertisers required manual effort to analyze patterns, define segments, and test performance. The platform needed to accelerate audience creation and respond to advertiser needs in real-time rather than rely on a slow, manual process.

# Building Unity Audience Hub with Optable

## Why Unity Chose Optable

Unity faced a build-versus-buy decision. Building **privacy-preserving data collaboration**, **omnichannel activation integrations**, and **ongoing compliance infrastructure** in-house would take years. Partnering with a reliable platform that specialized in these challenges would accelerate time-to-market.

From decision to implementation, the beta phase launched in just six months. Optable provided secure, flexible audience activation, and infrastructure designed to scale while meeting evolving regulatory requirements.

Development has continued, with investment in new features, deeper customization, and expanded support for additional identity frameworks.

## Core Infrastructure

### Building the Foundation: Organizing & Enriching Identity Signals Across Unity's Network

At the core of Audience Hub is Unity's direct SDK integration into thousands of US games, enabling access to the opted-in audiences representing 256 million MAUs in the US.

Through Optable, these audiences can be further enriched by:



Connecting them to **privacy-preserving**, opted-in identifiers like UID2, RampID, ID5, etc.

This enables stronger insights across Unity's network and makes audiences available for activation across the broader advertising ecosystem.



Unity selected Optable as its technology partner to accelerate the launch of Audience Hub. The decision came down to **speed, capability, and trust.**





Optable became our connection to the programmatic landscape, giving our demand partners new ways to reach our audiences beyond gaming environments. The platform helps us make in-app inventory more accessible in programmatic, which has traditionally been difficult, and **it opens a much larger addressable market for advertisers.**

– Alex Blum, COO, Unity

## Activation Framework: Turning Gaming Data into Scalable Activation

Audience Hub is built on a privacy-preserving data foundation that translates gaming behavior into addressable, actionable audiences across devices and environments. No longer confined to mobile, gaming-derived insights can now inform targeting and measurement across every screen, fundamentally expanding Unity's value proposition.

To enable this, Unity and Optable developed activation integrations that connect Audience Hub to the broader programmatic ecosystem, including:

-  **Direct integrations with Unity's ad servers** for seamless targeting
-  **DSP connections** across major demand-side platforms that enable agencies and brands to access Unity audiences through existing buying workflows
-  **Cross-channel expansion** into CTV, DOOH, and beyond, extending gaming audiences into the fastest-growing programmatic channels where Unity's data was previously inaccessible
-  **Partner SSP integrations** providing the infrastructure to activate Unity audiences to premium off-network inventory across new channels
-  **Omnichannel capabilities** activating the same gaming-derived audience across multiple touchpoints in coordinated campaigns

## Signal Enrichment: Making Gaming Audiences Relevant to Every Category

To broaden the relevance of gaming audiences for brand demand, Unity integrated third-party data enrichment through partners like Experian, unlocking access to 3,400+ standardized audience segments.

This makes Unity's audiences accessible to brand advertisers across categories that were previously difficult to reach. Gaming behavior signals layer onto existing audience profiles, adding actionable insights into how familiar consumer segments engage with interactive entertainment.

Where required, only opted-in user data is made available within Audience Hub for audience creation.

## The AI Advantage

Optable's agentic AI infrastructure transforms the identity management and audience creation processes. An AI agent can analyze gaming behavioral signals at scale to generate audience segment recommendations tailored to advertiser objectives.

Identifying patterns across game genres, player actions, session frequency, and engagement metrics traditionally required weeks of manual data analysis. Agentic AI helps Unity make sense of massive amounts of unstructured data to rapidly isolate relevant gaming & 3rd party signals to suggest audience compositions for unique goals.

Through Unity's ongoing partnership with Optable, agentic AI has provided a major competitive advantage: the ability to respond to custom audience requests at the speed advertisers demand while ensuring new segments are rooted in actual behavioral data patterns. By continuing to utilize Optable's AI-powered solutions, Unity can unlock new ways to make its gaming data targetable and actionable for omnichannel advertising.

## Data Collaboration: Matching Advertiser Data with Gaming Audiences

Built on Optable's data collaboration infrastructure, Audience Hub enables advertisers to securely match their own first-party data with Unity's audiences without exposing raw data on either side.

Brands can upload their customer data to find their existing customers or build lookalike audiences within Unity's 3 billion gamer ecosystem.

This data collaboration capability **transforms Unity from a third-party data source into a secure environment** where brands' **proprietary customer data becomes actionable across multiple channels**, all while maintaining data governance and privacy compliance on both sides.

# The Results: Gaming Audiences Outperform Contextual Targeting

Across campaigns spanning multiple verticals, gaming-derived audiences activated through Audience Hub consistently outperformed standard contextual targeting — often by double- and triple-digit lift margins, validating the power of gaming-native signals.

These results leveraged Audience Hub's core capabilities: omnichannel activation across mobile, CTV, and premium inventory, and secure data collaboration enabling precise audience matching.

<p><b>290%</b> CTR lift and <b>193%</b> engagement lift <i>vs. leading third-party segment benchmark*</i></p>	<p><b>Playable &amp; End Card Format Campaign</b></p> <p>In a test using interactive ad formats, Audience Hub significantly outperformed traditional third-party data in capturing attention and driving interaction. The results demonstrated that <b>gaming-derived audiences deliver significant performance improvements</b>.</p>
<p><b>140%</b> engagement lift <i>compared to app-based contextual targeting*</i></p>	<p><b>Public Sector Campaign: Genre-Based Targeting</b></p> <p>A high-profile public sector campaign leveraging genre-based segments like Sports/Action confirmed that <b>player behavior translates to cross-channel engagement</b> and can be used to <b>predict deeper content interaction</b>.</p>
<p><b>140% → 169%</b> engagement lift <i>within two weeks*</i></p>	<p><b>Period-Over-Period Optimization Across Accounts</b></p> <p>Performance improved as the platform matured. Notable accounts demonstrated accelerating gains, proving that running more campaigns through Audience Hub enhances the optimization capabilities of the platform as the system learns which gaming signals correlate most strongly with advertiser outcomes.</p>
<p><b>32%</b> CTR lift and <b>25%</b> engagement lift <i>for brand advertisers using gaming audience segments*</i></p>	<p><b>Cross-Category Brand Performance Across Campaigns</b></p> <p>Additional campaigns using <i>Sports/Action/Role-Playing</i> segments achieved strong gains across categories that historically found gaming inventory challenging to leverage. Omnichannel activation capabilities unlocked new advertiser categories for Unity, proving gaming segments drive performance beyond mobile-only advertisers.</p>

## Key Takeaway

Audience Hub's gaming-first approach, powered by secure data collaboration infrastructure and omnichannel activation, consistently beat standard contextual targeting by double- and triple-digit margins.

The results provide quantitative proof that privacy-preserving gaming audiences capture attention more efficiently and scale performance over time — especially when brands can match audiences with their first-party data and activate them in cross-channel campaigns.

\*Results from a single campaign comparing Audience Hub-augmented targeting to standard app-based contextual targeting, May-June 2025. CTR (click-through rate) measures the percentage of ad impressions that resulted in a user click. Engagement rate measures the percentage of users who took an explicit action within the ad unit, such as interacting with a playable or tapping an end card. Individual campaign results may vary

# Strategic Repositioning in the Market

Since launching Audience Hub, Unity has seen meaningful momentum across advertiser demand, deal structure, and engagement, particularly from brand and non-endemic advertisers seeking audience-led activation.



## New Revenue Streams

Categories that previously viewed Unity's audience as irrelevant or inaccessible now run significant spend through gaming-derived audiences, debunking the myth that only endemic gaming campaigns are suitable for those audiences.



## Operational Efficiency

The platform standardized and automated audience creation and activation workflows previously done manually. Now, teams can configure and launch new audience segments in hours, not weeks, enabling faster responses to higher-value partnerships.



## Market Positioning

Unity is no longer competing solely on contextual targeting within gaming environments. The company now offers differentiated audience capabilities that make gaming data an integral part of how brands plan, activate, and measure omnichannel campaigns.



**Watch the interview** with Chris Feo, SVP of Programmatic at Unity, to learn more about the strategic vision behind Audience Hub.

# CTV Activation and the Future of Gaming Monetization

Unity aims to remain at the leading edge of in-game advertising through innovations that improve game monetization for publishers while making the gaming space more accessible and effective for both endemic and non-endemic advertisers.



## CTV as a Primary Pillar of Audience Extension

As more gamers shift to living room screens, Unity's ability to connect gaming behavioral data to CTV, PC, and console activation becomes increasingly strategic. The challenge mirrors the original Audience Hub problem: gaming data trapped in one environment (mobile) needs to become actionable in another (CTV) without sacrificing privacy compliance or identity resolution quality.

Optable's infrastructure extends across CTV environments, enabling Unity to resolve the same gamer across mobile gaming sessions and CTV viewing behavior. This cross-environment identity resolution unlocks new use cases: retargeting mobile gamers and measuring the incremental impact of coordinated cross-channel activation.



## Continued Evolution of Optable Partnership

Ongoing work will **develop capabilities supporting seamless activation across premium environments, like CTV and DOOH.**

As the partnership develops, Optable's AI agent capabilities will play an increasingly central role in allowing Unity to **rapidly analyze emerging gaming trends, identify high-performing audience segments, and respond quickly and precisely to advertiser demands.**



# Unlock Omnichannel Interoperability With Optable

For Unity, Audience Hub represents how gaming data can become central to programmatic advertising strategies.

Unity's gaming audiences are now integral to brand media plans, driving performance, informing cross-channel strategies, and proving that **in-app and gaming environments represent some of the most valuable inventory in programmatic advertising.**

The partnership with Optable illustrates how robust identity and audience infrastructure can unlock measurable impact across the modern media landscape. With Optable, Unity has transformed from a gaming-specific vendor with channel-bound silos to an audience-led platform at the heart of omnichannel media strategies.

## Ready to Unlock the Full Potential of Your Data?

Optable helps brands and platforms uncover, activate, and scale high-performing audiences — all while prioritizing privacy and security.

Whether you're looking to improve engagement, increase campaign performance, or better organize and activate your first-party data, our team is here to help.

Let's build smarter, privacy-preserving audience strategies together.

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