

The App Publisher Halftime Report

What's hot, not, and other superlatives from the first half of 2025



A Look Back at the First Half:

Most Overrated Trend

- 1 **Alternative App Stores**
- 2 Generative AI
- 3 Influencer marketing

OVER-RATED! It's never good when the crowd is chanting that at you. But what's the "Alternative"? Not being noticed at all. So they have that going for them.

Most Overused Buzzword

- 1 **AI**
- 2 Personalization
- 3 Sustainability

Is it time for AI to pass the ball? We're not saying it isn't making plays! But it's like that superstar player you constantly hear about — we eventually just get sick of it.

Biggest Roadblock to Growth

- 1 **Rising customer acquisition costs**
- 2 Creative fatigue and low engagement
- 3 User retention

Oof. It's getting harder to pay for a winner. But just like teams don't want to overspend on bad players, getting value in your ROAS is critical to stay in the game.

Biggest External Threat

- 1 **Regulation & privacy**
- 2 Economic and political volatility
- 3 Ad fraud

In sports, there are always elements you can't control — like weather. The storm brewing for the ad industry is privacy regulation, and publishers will have to adapt on the fly.

Biggest Myth

- 1 **AI will fix everything**
- 2 More impressions = More revenue
- 3 More data = Better outcomes

AI may be a star player, but it can't win the game on its own. Success comes from being smart on the field, and that needs a human touch.

A Look Ahead at the Second Half:

Emerging Monetization Strategy

- 1 **Hybrid Monetization**
- 2 In-app brand sponsorships
- 3 Loyalty campaigns

Winning teams aren't a one-trick pony. Publishers will win monetization by embracing versatility — combining ads, subscriptions, sponsorships, and more.

The NEXT Buzzword

- 1 **AI**
- 2 Predictive monetization
- 3 Tariffs

AI may be overused, but it's still the GOAT! From personalization to automated agents, plan to keep hearing about AI dominating the game.

What Controls Do Publishers Need

- 1 **Bidding/mediation transparency**
- 2 Attribution
- 3 Ad quality

Everyone blames the refs. But they can call it as they see it. Instant replay gives more transparency to a play — putting everyone on a level playing field.

Changes in Consumer Behavior

- 1 **AI-powered personalization**
- 2 Opt-in experiences
- 3 Thriftiness

The best offenses read the defense and make the perfect play. Adapt to your audience in real-time, and you'll score in bunches.

Emerging Ad Format

- 1 **Shoppable ads**
- 2 Rewarded video
- 3 Immersive ads

You can't score if you don't shoot. Giving users streamlined experiences that lead to direct conversions will be a big play in the second half.