

## Data without borders: How the battle for friction-free advertising will be won

**Author :** Michael Bertaut

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The nation loves apps. It's a fact. We've all heard the hackneyed phrase, "there's an app for that", but it happens to be true. There are now more than 1.4 million apps on the **Apple** store, while some studies indicate we could be spending as much as [86% of our smartphone time within apps](#) themselves. Today there's even an app that monitors your other apps.

The most successful apps are often the ones that are simplest to use. And those that are most popular are now slowly expanding upon their original remit in a battle to become an all-in-one ecosystem that users never have to leave. **Wired UK editor, David Rowan**, highlighted the importance of a friction-free experience at the launch event for AdRoll Prospecting.

During his presentation, **Rowan** used an example from China, a country as in love with their mobiles as Britain is. Once a simple messaging app, W?ixìn (or WeChat) has now become an all-encompassing environment from which its users can run many aspects of their lives. Thanks to the developer opening up the API, service providers have developed more than ten million in-app solutions that allow users to do everything from booking doctor's appointments, to making payments at the push of a button.

While some apps are beginning to take similar steps in the West (**Facebook** Messenger for one) we're still using different apps for different activities. This means that while individual apps are becoming friction-free, for marketers the process of **advertising** across all of these ecosystems seamlessly is still far from it.

As apps like **Facebook's** messenger and even **Snapchat** continue to move towards becoming retail and service channels in their own right, they will become even more data-rich than they currently are. This will present a significant step-change for marketers, who until now could only dream of having such a wealth of first-party data all generated in one place.

In the meantime, initiatives like AdRoll's Prospecting, which to date has seen more than 1,800 advertisers globally pooling their data in the world's largest data cooperative; have already begun to break down the walls between ecosystems.

Friction-free for **marketing** is just as important as it is for apps. Data from **Nielsen** last year

revealed that on average [people use five apps most frequently on their smartphones](#), and without joined up thinking or a centralised approach to cross-app, cross device **marketing**, the risk is great that you could be blasting users with repetitive or irrelevant messaging. But with a large data pool to tap into, one from which you can segment users based not on broad-strokes measures such as age and location, but precisely targeted info such as on-site user behaviour, you can ensure that the ads you are serving customers across these different ecosystems is smooth and friction-free – not jarring and immersion breaking.

As David **Rowan** said, it's tools like these that “free us from friction” that will come out on top. And while he points out that we're still very much at the start of this mobile app journey, solutions such as Prospecting that can remove any friction from the experience today will certainly go a long way to helping **brand** marketers come out on top.

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