

SEQUENT ACCELERATOR AWARD

2025 Winner

The **Sequent Accelerator Award** celebrates technical advances in key aspects of marketing analytics – spanning the modeling processes, metrics, data acquisition, AI applications, insight dissemination, and organizational adoption.

In keeping with the spirit of the Marketing Effectiveness Accelerator (The Accelerator), this Award recognizes innovative solutions that deliver meaningful brand impact and advance the discipline of marketing analytics.

Nominee Details:

Perry Papadopoulos, Co-founder & VP, Product and Engineering, Adelaide

Perry Papadopoulos co-created and leads the development of Adelaide's AU, the first omnichannel placement quality score to achieve widespread adoption. AU replaces outdated proxies with a predictive, validated measure, distilling hundreds of signals and leveraging human attention research into a precise 0–100 score trained on full-funnel outcome data. AU powers measurement, buying, and optimization across 19 channels for every major holding company, 40+ premium publishers, and 125+ partners, including top DSPs and SSPs. Recognized by Adweek as “the attention economy’s most widely recognized metric,” endorsed by MediaSense as “outcome-driven” and “transparent,” under MRC review, and used as a currency by 2 top agencies, AU is redefining media valuation and fostering a healthier market where incentives align with positive results.

Extended abstract

Introduction

Perry Papadopoulos is Co-founder and VP of Product & Engineering at Adelaide and the co-creator of AU, Adelaide's attention-based media quality metric. He leads the teams that design the machine-learning algorithms powering AU ratings and operate the infrastructure delivering AU at scale across the global advertising market. Today, brands and agencies rely on AU to measure, optimize, and buy media; publishers use it to better monetize their inventory; ad-tech intermediaries depend on it to ascertain placement quality for trading.

Under Perry's leadership, AU has advanced from an early prototype to a trusted, independently validated market signal. This transformation has not only reshaped how media quality is defined but also laid the foundation for the first true media quality currency—a breakthrough the industry has sought for more than 40 years.

Early Innovation & Growth

Perry's path to AU began at Parsec, the first company to sell media on a cost-per-second basis. At Parsec, he drove early innovation in time-based advertising and learned a critical lesson: attention should be treated as an input into media decision-making, not as an end target. Building on that insight, he co-founded Adelaide and successfully raised capital at the height of the pandemic, determined to create a new standard for media quality. That vision became AU, a 0–100 media quality rating that predicts the probability an ad placement will capture attention and drive meaningful business outcomes. Unlike traditional metrics like viewability or click-through rate, AU is omnichannel, outcome-trained, and privacy-safe, giving advertisers a more accurate and reliable way to quantify media quality and allocate budgets effectively.

What began with support for just two channels has now expanded under Perry's leadership to 19 channels spanning display, online video, connected TV, social, audio, and more.

Since launching AU as a standardized, 0–100 score in 2021, Adelaide's predictive models have continually evolved to capture richer signals, improve calibration, and deliver insights consistently across formats, channels, and platforms.

Key innovations include:

- **Expanded outcome data inputs (2022):** *Incorporated a mix of survey-based brand lift, DISQO survey results, and engagement-based outcomes, as well as lower-funnel performance and sales data to strengthen predictive accuracy across outcomes. Built a model consisting of a hierarchical ensemble to create a widely predictive AU value.*
- **Rita acquisition (2024):** *Enriched AU with Rita's deterministic behavioral and ad exposure data, enhancing its ability to link cross-channel ad exposures to real-world actions such as product searches, app installs, and purchases.*
- **Evolution of exposure handling methods:**
 - **Initial approach:** *Focused on impact of the last meaningful exposure before a measured outcome (e.g., a brand lift survey), leveraging some aspects of last touch modeling.*
 - **Intermediate approach:** *Aggregated exposure data into quantile buckets to represent a user's "typical" exposure profile (e.g., mostly mobile, primarily short time-in-view, etc.). At this stage, a user's journey to outcome was normalized across exposures.*
 - **Current approach:** *Treats each exposure independently, with its contribution to the final outcome weighted as $1/n$, where n is the total number of exposures linked to a given user and their outcome. This fractional-credit method produces more accurate attribution when multiple exposures are involved.*

In parallel with these modeling advancements, Perry oversaw AU's first integrations into demand-side platforms (DSPs) and supply-side platforms (SSPs), embedding the metric directly into the systems where media buying and selling occur. These integrations marked AU's shift from an innovative planning and

optimization input—where buyers manually applied real-time insights—to a powerful programmatic signal that enables dynamic optimization at scale.

Scaling AU to its current levels also required significant architectural innovation. Perry guided the product through multiple phases as it matured into a global metric capable of scoring billions of impressions annually.

Key phases of AU evolution:

- **Normalized 0–100 score:** Established a standardized scale that makes AU scores comparable across all channels, normalized across creative and demographic characteristics.
- **Eye-tracking usage:** In the last five years, Adelaide has become one of the most prolific users of eye-tracking data, using data from nearly every leading provider, including Tobii, Viomba, TVision, Lumen, and Amplified Intelligence, to improve model accuracy and AU’s understanding of how users engage with various types of media and placements.
- **Advanced modeling methods (2023):** Transitioned from random forest to largely logistic regression-based models, enabling AU to maintain predictive accuracy while creating additional opportunities for model insight extraction and interpretation.
- **Norms Creation (2023):** Construction of a cross-channel, cumulative AU norms database that advertisers can leverage across various AU use cases, including activation, optimization, planning, MMM, and tagless measurement.

Impact Across the Industry

AU’s influence now extends across every corner of the media ecosystem. Equipping the market with a precise, omnichannel measure of media quality, it has reshaped how brands, agencies, publishers, and platforms plan, buy, monetize, and value media. For advertisers, AU has proven its ability to directly improve business outcomes:

- **Audi (2022):** Partnering with EssenceMediacom and Xaxis, Audi leveraged a custom AU-powered bidding algorithm to prioritize high-AU inventory. The result was a 69% increase in conversion rates across open exchange inventory and a 53% lower cost per conversion.
- **Diageo (2023–2024):** In a first-to-market analysis on Amazon’s retail media platform, high-AU media drove 4.2x higher conversion rates than low-AU placements. Across nine product lines, from aperitifs to vodka, high-AU exposures consistently outperformed, averaging 2.5x more conversions. By shifting spend from low- to higher-quality AU media, Diageo would capture a 12% increase in overall returns without raising budgets.
- **iFIT (2025):** iFIT was the first brand to integrate Adelaide’s AU data and Upwave brand lift measurement into its media buying strategy through The Trade Desk. Using AU pre-bid segments to target high-quality inventory and Adelaide and Upwave’s new Attention + Lift workflow, iFIT achieved a 61% increase in aided awareness, +17% in consideration, and +10% in favorability, according to native Upwave brand lift results. iFIT’s internal campaign analysis further showed that

audiences exposed to the AU-optimized campaign were 2.6x more likely to convert. The first-of-its-kind integration also reduced setup and analysis time by 80%, enabling iFIS to measure and scale performance in real time.

These results are not isolated; hundreds of advertisers across categories now rely on AU as a proven signal to boost performance and reduce waste, with several global agencies already transacting on it as a currency.

For publishers, AU has become a tool to surface, showcase, and monetize their highest-quality inventory. By packaging high-AU offerings into direct or programmatic deals, publishers can command stronger CPMs. The New York Times and the Wall Street Journal were the first to offer AU Guarantees in 2024, setting a precedent now followed by other premium publishers. These sell-side partnerships have shifted industry dynamics, enabling publishers to capture more demand while giving buyers greater confidence that their investments will deliver results.

Today, AU is used by every major agency holding company, more than 40 publishers, and over 125 platform partners. Programmatic integrations span over a dozen DSPs and SSPs, including leaders like The Trade Desk and Google Display & Video 360.

Validation

AU's predictive power and practical utility have been repeatedly validated through independent studies, in-market campaigns, and recognition from industry bodies.

In June 2024, Perry led AU through the pre-audit phase of the Media Rating Council (MRC) accreditation process, making Adelaide the first pure-play attention vendor to enter review. He also leads Adelaide's work on the IAB/MRC Attention Guidelines Taskforce and commissioned MediaSense's independent audit of AU (2025), which confirmed that the metric is outcome-driven, transparent, and dependable for optimization and media quality measurement.

Alongside industry validation, AU has received recognition in several forms. Adweek described it as "the attention economy's most widely recognized metric," and it has won awards, including:

- *Best Measurement or Analytics Capability (2024 AdExchanger Awards)*
- *Most Innovative Approach to Measurement – with PHD & Diageo (2024 AdExchanger Awards)*
- *Media Innovation – with Audi Switzerland (2023 Effie Award)*
- *Lead Gen Campaign – with Audi Switzerland (2023 IAB Europe MIXX Award)*
- *Brand Bravery – with Audi Switzerland (2023 Festival of Media Global Awards)*
- *Lower-Funnel Optimization – with Audi Switzerland (2023 Best of Swiss Web)*
- *Effective Use of Data – with Skoda Auto (2022 IAB Europe MIXX Award)*
- *Effective Use of Data – with Coca-Cola (2022 IAB Europe MIXX Award)*

Conclusion

The Sequent Accelerator Award honors solutions that combine technical advancement with meaningful business impact. Perry Papadopoulos' work on Adelaide's AU metric delivers on both fronts:

- **Technical advancement:** *AU is a predictive, omnichannel, outcome-aligned quality score that overcomes the long-standing limitations of legacy metrics.*
- **Business impact:** *AU has delivered documented, repeatable gains in brand lift, efficiency, and waste reduction—reshaping how advertisers invest, publishers monetize inventory, and platforms enable trading.*

Through Perry's leadership, AU has evolved from a breakthrough innovation into a trusted, widely adopted standard. His work has advanced the field of marketing analytics while delivering a practical tool that improves outcomes across the ecosystem and fosters a healthier, outcome-driven marketplace that rewards high-quality advertising experiences.