

How SparkNotes Balances Ad Revenue and User Experience While Growing Their Subscription Model

Ad Revenue Worth Staying for:

Sparknotes has stayed with Playwire for over 6 years, after seeing incredible revenue results from day one.

87% Increase in RPMs from High Impact Units:

The inclusion of high impact units like site skins have created new, lucrative revenue streams.

Successful Subscription Integration:

Playwire's flexible ad strategy supports SparkNotes' Plus subscription model launched in 2022, optimizing both ad-supported and ad-free experiences.

ABOUT SparkNotes

SparkNotes is the leading provider of educational study guides and literature resources, helping students understand complex academic material for over 20 years. With more than 1,000 guides covering English literature, Shakespeare, history, math, biology and other subjects, SparkNotes delivers clear, concise educational content to millions of students. Their mission is to help students make sense of challenging schoolwork through expert-created study guides, summaries, and analyses.

FINDING THE PERFECT BALANCE

Before partnering with Playwire, SparkNotes faced the challenge of effectively monetizing their vast educational content while maintaining an optimal learning environment for students. They needed a partner who could help them:

- ✓ Maximize ad revenue without compromising user experience
- ✓ Navigate complex legal requirements around student privacy
- ✓ Support their transition to a hybrid subscription/advertising model
- ✓ Maintain strict brand safety standards appropriate for educational content

"We needed more than just another vendor - we were looking for a true partner who could provide both revenue optimization and industry expertise. That's exactly what we found with Playwire."

**- Robyn Shambley,
SparkNotes**

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

SparkNotes found in Playwire a partner that understood their unique position as an educational publisher. The relationship quickly proved valuable across multiple dimensions:

EDUCATIONAL EXPERTISE

The SparkNotes team values Playwire's industry knowledge and educational approach.

"While we're experts in our business, having a partner who truly understands ad tech and can educate us on industry changes has been invaluable. The educational component of our partnership sets Playwire apart."

- Robyn Shambley, SparkNotes

RESPONSIVE SUPPORT

The partnership thrives on rapid response and proactive problem-solving.

"Time is everything in digital publishing. When issues arise, Playwire's team jumps into action immediately. Their responsiveness and follow-through are exceptional."

- Robyn Shambley, SparkNotes

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

Working closely with SparkNotes, Playwire developed a customized strategy that revolutionized their ad operations. The team implemented premium ad units, including high-impact skins that drive substantial CPMs while preserving clean, education-friendly layouts.

This approach created flexible ad experiences supporting both free and subscription users, while maintaining strict brand safety protocols essential for educational content. Throughout the implementation, Playwire provided comprehensive support for privacy compliance and cookie management, ensuring SparkNotes met all regulatory requirements for their student audience.

"The mutual understanding of our business objectives makes all the difference. Playwire consistently factors our unique needs into every strategic decision."

- Bridget O'Lavin, SparkNotes

SUPPORTING BUSINESS EVOLUTION

When SparkNotes launched their Plus subscription model in April 2022, Playwire helped optimize their ad strategy to support both business models.

"With our Plus subscription offering an ad-free experience, we needed to be strategic with our ad-supported model. Playwire helped us strike the perfect balance, giving users clear options while maximizing revenue."

- Robyn Shambley, SparkNotes

The partnership continues to evolve, with Playwire providing ongoing education about industry changes and new opportunities.

"Playwire's team consistently demonstrates their commitment to our success. They don't just understand our business - they actively help us grow it."

- Bridget O'Lavin, SparkNotes

TRUE PARTNERSHIP DRIVES RESULTS

For SparkNotes, the relationship with Playwire transcends typical vendor relationships. This collaborative approach has delivered significant results: strong revenue growth without sacrificing their educational user experience, a seamless transition to their subscription model, enhanced monetization through premium ad units, and expert navigation of complex privacy and compliance requirements.

The combination of technical expertise, strategic guidance, and responsive support continues to make Playwire an integral partner in SparkNotes' success.



*"Unlike other partnerships that feel directive, Playwire truly collaborates with us. They understand our objectives, respect our processes, and work alongside us to drive results. Every meeting is a productive working session **focused on mutual success.**"*

-Robyn Shambley, **SparkNotes**



Accelerate your business and uncomplicate your ad tech stack, because you deserve a partner and a platform that demands more for you.

Visit www.playwire.com/apply.