



Research Request – Cross-Media Audience (Video Phase I)

Media Rating Council

March 6, 2018

Introduction

The Media Rating Council (MRC), in its ongoing effort to develop standards for cross-media measurement, is seeking research regarding the use of duration weighting in cross-media video measurement. Further, the MRC is seeking data to dimension the impact of and any challenges to a move to requiring 100% of pixels as the viewability criteria for input into cross-media video (MRC is not anticipating exploring any changes at this time to the minimum time component of 2 continuous seconds for video, however, we will, of course, be monitoring any relevant observations about time criteria as well). As members of the *Cross-Media Audience Measurement Standards* Working Group, we are asking for volunteers to provide data to MRC (on a confidential basis, if requested) to help inform our deliberations for this purpose. **See the ‘Research Request Specifics’ section toward the end of this document for exact details of research and data requests.**

Background on Duration Weighting

The concept of duration weighting for video ads was introduced for the first time in MRC’s *Digital Audience-Based Measurement Standards* (issued December 7, 2017). The *Digital Audience-Based Measurement Standards* stipulate that when digital video audience metrics are intended for use in cross-media comparisons and aggregations, these should be calculated on a duration weighted basis, which means that the viewable impression on which the estimate is based should be discounted by the duration of the exposure in relation to the total length of the video advertisement. This duration weighted GRP would then be reported along with the corresponding non-duration weighted (traditional) GRP measure.

While MRC believed it was important to introduce the concept of duration weighting in advance of a *Cross-Media Audience Measurement Standards* document (as a means to notify and prepare the industry), any previous duration weighting requirements for cross-media audience measurement will be superseded by the guidance contained in the *Cross-Media Audience Measurement Standards*. The *Cross-Media Audience Measurement Standards* require an equitable application of duration weighting across all media involved. In other words, duration weighted digital video GRP estimates are expected to be compared or reported with duration weighted video GRP estimates for all other media types included.

We recognize the challenges that will be inherent in requiring duration weighting for media that have differing measurement systems that currently may be less capable of the highly

granular time measures available today in digital. Balancing this knowledge of current state measurement practices across different media types with an understanding of their potential capabilities, along with our desire to achieve fairness in measurement of all media, is central to MRC's considerations. The overall objective is to foster consistency as much as possible, including consistency in the levels of time granularity applied.

Duration weighting provides a measure of how much time across all delivered viewable impressions was spent relative to the total creative unit length. Duration weighting also accounts for differing ad length, makes separate GRPs for creatives of different length more comparable and normalizes exposure across platforms and media. However, the concept of duration weighting as spelled out in the *Digital Audience-Based Measurement Standards* implies a direct linear relationship associated with the time a digital video ad is in view and how well that ad delivers on its goals (whether a viewer is "effectively exposed"). While the MRC believes some form of duration weighting will be necessary for cross-media video measurement, further research is being requested to better understand this relationship and, how to better operationalize it in duration weighted measurement calculations.

The actual segment of an ad viewed may have differential value. For example, segments of an ad with strong branding presence may represent more effective exposure. Further, viewable duration during concurrent usage of other media or repeat (or single) exposure may have differential effectiveness. Finally, exposure to differing media may likewise carry differential effectiveness.

The concept of exposure effectiveness and the translation of it into the contribution of differing levels of exposure to audience and effectively operationalizing it into standard audience metrics calculations are the main objectives of MRC's request for research in this area. This includes the consideration of any effective exposure thresholds (such as a level of time or percentage of total length of a video ad above which an ad exposure fully contributes to audience measurement in cross-media environments) to help further equalize audience measurement in cross-media comparisons and combinations.

Some key questions for which we are seeking insights through the duration weighting research that working group volunteers can make available to us are:

- Is there a direct linear relationship between viewable duration and exposure effectiveness or is there a point of diminishing marginal utility that can be applied in a standardized manner?
- Are there specific media considerations that may differ between digital video content and linear video content or by viewing device (personal or mobile device vs. linear TV or OTT environments)?

- Are there different measurement capabilities or limitations or other restrictions related to measurement (such as limits to granularity) of viewable duration specific to certain media environments or devices?
- What is the impact of Brand placement (position of branding within video ad content) and pod placement (position of a video ad within a group of video ads) on the relationship between viewable duration and exposure effectiveness?
- What impact does concurrent usage (such as simultaneous exposure to linear and digital video media) and repeat viewing of video ad content have on the relationship between viewable duration and exposure effectiveness?
- Is there merit to considering an “Effective Exposure” threshold such as a specific amount of time or a percentage of ad unit length above which a viewer is “effectively exposed” (and can serve as a qualifier for cross-media audience)?
- Are there biases introduced by duration weighting for certain formats or creative lengths and how can they be accounted for?
- Are there any special considerations for re-purposed TV content in digital media?

Background on Viewability

Viewability for digital display and video, mobile and desktop ad impressions has become a widely used transactional metric in the last few years. The MRC standard for viewable digital ad impressions (at least 50% of pixels in view for a minimum of one second for display, two continuous seconds for video) was a first step in a broader cross platform measurement plan. It was not purely an end in and of itself. From its inception, the viewable impression was intended to bring digital ad impression measurement closer to commonality with other media impression measurement, especially, but not only, to that of TV. The notion of comparably measured impressions is foundational to the ability to count and combine across media platforms.

It is clear that time spent viewing content and ads are an important tool for audience and media assessments. By definition, ad viewability measurement includes measuring for how long an ad was in view on screen at the required pixel level. Conceptually this “opportunity to see” (or OTS) the digital ad upon its delivery is aligned with the fundamental notion in marketing that advertising can have an effect on people who are exposed to it. “Opportunity to See” is basic to advertising; for example, TV and print each carry advertising that renders fully on a screen or page, respectively.

The *Digital Audience-Based Measurement Standards* specify that a viewable impression is the qualifying unit for inclusion of a digital ad impression in audience-based measurement. This holds for both digital only and cross media platform reach, frequency, rating and GRP

calculations. By doing so, digital audience based measurement approaches commonality with other media, making it easier to compare digital and other media for planning, buying and evaluating. Moreover, this accomplishes another goal, that of ensuring that, piece by piece, desktop and mobile, regardless of creative unit type, digital audience-based measurement is always comprised of viewable impressions.

However, MRC is considering reassessing the pixel requirement to raise it to a 100% minimum for cross-media reporting. Additionally, for digital-only campaigns we will consider encouraging movement to 100% of pixels as a viewability parameter. MRC is considering this approach for a number of reasons, including:

- Use of a 100% pixel threshold in cross-media comparisons and combinations introduces consistency between other forms of media.
- Traditional TV environments likely don't experience conditions where less than 100% of pixels of an ad are displayed on screen (and as a result, measurement likely does not include consideration of pixels).
- Use of a 100% pixel threshold reduces the need for custom viewability criteria (many of which feature 100% pixel requirements).
- At the time of initial studies conducted by MRC when setting viewability thresholds, data showed that if the 50% pixels criteria were met, the entire ad was viewable in nearly 80 percent of the cases; we believe that percentage is likely higher today, as properties are better optimized for viewability than they were in 2012. Additionally, the practice of viewable impression measurement and optimization for viewable conditions has matured so movement to 100% of pixels at this time may be less disruptive to the marketplace.

The MRC originally designed viewability requirements to serve as a minimum moment that represented opportunity to see, as well as a qualifier for digital audience, but also designed measurement requirements such that accredited measurement providers must be able to measure time and pixels at a granular level. As such, our expectation is that minimal technical challenges are present regarding a move to 100% of pixels for existing digital measurement.

However, we acknowledge this may still be impactful and may also be challenging in certain environments (for example, newsfeeds) where the current parameters are already a challenge. The objective of our request for data and research is to assess the feasibility of this change as well as to dimension the impact overall in specific environments.

Some key questions for which we are seeking insights through the viewability data that working group volunteers can make available to us are:

- What would the impact of moving to a 100% pixel requirement for digital video be? In other words, what percentage of viewable video ads would not also be viewable with a 100% pixel requirement (same time requirement of two seconds) that are viewable with the current pixel criteria (50%)?
- Are there differences in the impact of a move to 100% pixels within certain environments such as Mobile In-App environments or Newsfeed environments?
- Are there any technical challenges or limitations facing a move to a 100% pixel requirement in digital video and for cross-media?
- Are there any impacts of screen size in a cross-media environment and should ads that are fully in view, but not full screen be considered differentially depending on relative screen size?
- Are there any specific considerations needed for applying a 100% pixel threshold to certain large format ads?
- Does 100% of the ad in view represent a stronger criterion for OTS when compared to 50% of pixels, keeping time requirements constant? What empirical evidence of user recognition of ads exists to support a position on the required percentage of an ad that must be in view (again, based on exposure of an individual ad)?

Confidentiality of Submitted Research: Unless specified in advance by the source supplying the research, all data supplied to MRC for this project will be maintained under strict confidentiality. MRC will not share the identity of participants and will not share results of campaign on an individual or attributed basis with anyone nor any otherwise potentially identifiable data – any results that are reported from this testing will be generalized and anonymously reported by MRC.

Research Request Specifics

The details of the research request are described below:

Project Contact:

Each participating organization contributing research should identify a single point of contact who will be the lead in interacting with MRC and following up on questions. Please include the contact information for this contact, including e-mail and telephone contact with all communication.

MRC Contact:

The MRC personnel involved in this project are:

- Ron Pinelli -- rpinelli@mediaratingcouncil.org
- David Gunzerath -- dgunzerath@mediaratingcouncil.org
- George Ivie -- givie@mediaratingcouncil.org

MRC telephone number: 212-972-0300

General:

Provide a brief description of your research, measurement environment and methodology. Include as applicable information on:

- If survey based research is involved details should include (but not be limited to):
 - Nature of research, objectives and parameters;
 - Sample selection and control methods (online opt-in, non-probability, probability, etc.);
 - Survey collection instrument including method, conditions and questions;
 - Controls for and considerations of biases; and
 - Editing, cleaning and projecting of results.
- If passive or census measurement is involved details should include (but not be limited to):
 - Coverage of mobile web and application, linear video and OTT as well as specific newsfeed environments;
 - General description of assets used (scripts, meters, fingerprinting or watermarking, SDKs, MRAID, etc.);
 - Any mechanisms in place to identify device and environment;
 - Served Impression counting methodology (count on download vs. render)
 - Viewability technology (ies) used;
 - Polling granularity or state change monitoring frequency;
 - User interactions measured; and
 - General measurement capabilities and limitations (e.g., video, display, device or OS coverage, ability to measure screen size or ad size/space and time dimensions, etc.)

Note: MRC accredited, known sources are preferred where possible. Some of the above requests for information may already be known if use of an audited and accredited measurement methodology is involved. Participating organizations should note any aspect of the research or data provided that includes accredited measurement in lieu of some of the above.

Specific Duration Weighting Data Requirements:

We believe the research requests related to duration weighting to be challenging and therefore they are less defined at this stage. As a result, this document is not proscriptive as to the exact form or nature of the research we receive. It is likely that results of this initial call for research and consideration and may lead to more defined and focused data requests in the future and we encourage suppliers of research to discuss format and content in advance with MRC.

Specific Viewability Data Requirements:

For each submitted campaign, participants should be prepared to supply MRC with the following information at the placement level:

- Specifics concerning the ad type, ad format, ad size, and any special features about the ad that should be considered (for example, whether it is an expandable ad, or a multi unit ad, a non-IAB standard ad unit, or any other attribute that distinguishes it from a typical display or video ad).
- The precise dates on which the ad measurements reported began and ended.
- Compliant served/rendered impressions as a basis for subsequent interaction and time measurement.
- Environment (news feed, slide/swipe, etc.).
- Device and OS, including OTT.
- Production data from production campaigns. This data should be filtered to exclude invalid traffic and should be segregated or include fields that allow segregation (where possible) by ad type (display and video) and environment or platform (desktop, mobile web, mobile in-app, OTT, etc.).
- Granular time data is critical. Include when the impression was sent, rendered, then within viewable port with time increment and time/duration in view (at least 10th of a second granularity, if possible).
- Pixel data is essential, cross-tabbed with time including determination of percent pixels in view by time across intervals focused in differences between 50% and 100% and levels in between.
- User interactions with ad content -- capture if possible, linked with time from ad-load and pixels in view. We aim to test these interactions statistically, linked with time from

ad-load and pixels in view, so accumulating counts of actions by time and pixel levels would be helpful. Include (where applicable):

- X-out
 - Scrolling to or away
 - Clicks/Taps
 - Swipes
 - Any other points of interaction captured (excluding recall data)
- Averages are acceptable, across many campaigns, etc., as long as origination parameters are fully described.

In addition, all participants will be asked to comply with the following test parameters:

- To the extent feasible, all participants will be asked supply or at least maintain any supporting data that exists for the submitted campaign, to allow for further in-depth investigation of certain cases as deemed necessary by MRC. This may include maintaining samples of the ad creative (or providing links to it), records of the impression-level pixel and time measurements, pertinent details concerning the ad's placement (the site or app on/in which it appeared, etc.), and any other variables that would enable a fuller understanding of unexpected or unusual measurement results. Granular data allows deeper analytics and statistical evaluation.
- Volunteering organizations should provide in writing to MRC information on basic details of the research (including method of generating activity and anticipated timing) to be included in its testing at the earliest possible time, and no later than April 30, 2018.
 - All test data collection should begin between April 30, 2018 and May 31, 2018.
 - Earlier submissions are encouraged.
 - All test data and research should be delivered to MRC no later than June 30, 2018 (although our hope is that this data can be delivered sooner).

We thank you and your organizations in advance for your participation in this effort.