



MRC INDUSTRY COMMUNICATION

Contact: David Gunzerath, Assoc. Dir./SVP
dgunzerath@mediaratingcouncil.org

**MRC Interim Guidance on Mobile Viewable Impression Measurement
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As part of our ongoing standards development and other work associated with the Making Measurement Make Sense (3MS) initiative, the MRC has been preparing to launch the next phase of the digital advertising viewability measurement standards: guidelines specific to the measurement and reporting of viewable impressions in mobile web browser and mobile in-application environments.

In the desktop viewability guidelines MRC issued in 2014, we explicitly noted the need for further study to determine the suitability of those guidelines for mobile viewable impression measurement. Over the period following the issuance of those guidelines, it has become clear to us that certain attributes unique to mobile environments will require special consideration and study. Specifically, we believe: (1) technical characteristics of the mobile ad serving environment may require the development of new or enhanced methods for determining the viewability of mobile-delivered ads; and (2) the ways in which users interact with content and ads in mobile environments may have different patterns than those observed in the desktop environment, possibly creating differences in where the moment of “opportunity-to-see” occurs.

To begin to address these issues, we note that the desktop viewability guidelines included a working assumption, explicitly designed as a temporary measure, which held that ads appearing in mobile in-application environments could be considered to be 100% viewable. Today, we believe this assumption should no longer be made, as it is clear to us that not all mobile in-app ads are viewable.

In addition, MRC does not endorse the extrapolation of desktop-based viewability rates to mobile-based ads.

Accordingly, as of today, all previous MRC guidance on the measurement of viewable impressions of display and video advertising that appears in mobile environments is superseded by the interim guidance provided in this document.

Status of MRC Accreditation Proceedings for Mobile Viewable Impressions

No organization has been accredited as yet by MRC for mobile viewable impression measurement.

The criteria established in this document will provide a path by which organizations that do comply with the interim guidance noted herein can become accredited. We believe accreditation could be granted for mobile viewability measurement prior to the final completion of these guidelines contingent upon the demonstrated ability and commitment of the measurement organization to fully adopt the final mobile viewable impression measurement requirements, once these are completed.

MRC is already actively working with several organizations that have committed to seek accreditation for mobile viewable impressions. These organizations are in various stages of study, information sharing, auditing, and process validation. These proceedings are helpful to MRC for technical and processes-learning purposes, and helpful to the practitioners as they prepare to comply with mobile viewable impression guidelines as they evolve.

Interim Guidance

Based on MRC’s current knowledge and assessments, we believe the following are appropriate approaches to mobile viewable impression measurement and reporting for an interim period, until the necessary study, testing, and industry discussion occurs, which will allow MRC to develop more permanent guidance on these matters:

- 1) Viewable impression measurement of ads in mobile web browser environments should follow the existing guidance for viewability in desktop (50% of pixels in the viewable space of the browser for a minimum of one second (display) or two seconds (video)).
- 2) Viewable impression measurement of ads (either display or video) that appear in mobile in-app environments should also follow the existing guidance for viewability in desktop, subject to the considerations listed below, and consider the served impression to be viewable when a minimum of 50% of the pixels of the ad are in view for at least one second (display) or two seconds (video).
 - a. Both the pixel and time components must be measured and must satisfy the above minimum requirements for an ad to be counted as a viewable impression.
 - b. If both the pixel and time components associated with an ad are greater than zero, but one or both do not meet or exceed the above minimum requirements, the ad may be referred to as a “Loaded Ad.” It should not be associated with the term “impression.”
 - c. In the event that the measurer can determine that the pixels in view are greater than zero, but cannot make a determination about the time in view, that ad may also be considered a Loaded Ad, but not a viewable impression, even if the pixels in view meet or exceed the 50% threshold.
 - d. In the event that the measurer can determine the time in view is greater than zero, but cannot make a determination that even one pixel is in view, that ad should not be considered a Loaded Ad. It is simply a Served Impression (assuming it meets all the necessary requirements for a Served Impression as noted in the IAB/MMA/MRC Mobile Ad Measurement Guidelines).
- 3) Measurers should segregate mobile ad impressions from desktop ad impressions in their reporting, to the fullest extent possible. Measured Rates can differ significantly between desktop and mobile, in part because the range of viewability measurement solutions available is currently more limited in mobile environments. As a result, measurers should report separate Measured Rate statistics for those ads in a campaign that appear in mobile environments, both for Total Mobile ads and for Mobile Web ads.
- 4) For the purposes of viewability measurement, those ads launched onto an HTML page from within a mobile application and/or those ads launched into a browser embedded within the mobile application should be considered In Application ads.

The chart below provides a summary of the interim requirements for mobile viewability measurement, as well as for a Loaded Ad, and compares requirements to the current standard for desktop viewability.

Metric Name	Desktop Requirements	Mobile Web Requirements	Mobile In-App Requirements
Viewable Impression	Display: 50% of Pixels, One Second; Video: 50% of Pixels, Two Seconds	Display: 50% of Pixels, One Second; Video: 50% of Pixels, Two Seconds	Display: 50% of Pixels, One Second Video: 50% of Pixels, Two Seconds
Loaded Ad	N/A	N/A	Pixels in view are greater than zero, but: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time is less than one second (display ad) or two seconds (video ad); or • Pixels are less than 50%; or • Both time and pixels are below these thresholds.

We recognize that consistency and simplicity is desired by many buyer and seller practitioners. Therefore, it is our current intention that the use of the current desktop standards for viewability measurement, to the extent this is feasible in all situations, not only will assure a measurer that its approach will be compliant with this interim guidance, but also will comply with the final guidance that results from this project. While our observations to date of certain unique conditions within mobile in app environments lead us to suspect we ultimately may be able to consider a shorter time threshold for viewability in certain mobile environments than is currently required for desktop viewable impressions, we have not altered these requirements under this interim guidance, since our full environmental study/assessments have not yet occurred.

The above initial guidance was developed independently by the MRC and did not involve formal input from the viewable-impression working group (which is now forming). MRC is committed to these discussions and plans to issue consensus-based interim guidance during the third calendar quarter of 2015 – see below.

Planned Timeline

Our planned timing under which this project will take place is as follows:

- a) Initial interim guidance on mobile viewable impression measurement issued and effective as of today (contained in this document).
- b) Goal – Refined interim guidance, based on additional study, testing and the proceedings of the mobile viewable impression working group, is expected by the end of Q3 2015.
- c) Goal – A draft Mobile Viewable Impression Measurement Guidelines document to be prepared and issued for public circulation and comment by year-end 2015.

To Get Involved

MRC will be working with various industry trade associations, publishers, agencies, advertisers, and measurers over the coming months as we develop these Guidelines. We will be providing marketplace updates as warranted as this work progresses.

For questions about this guidance or to provide input into the mobile viewable impression guidelines through participation in the working group, please contact the MRC at: staff@mediaratingcouncil.org.