



MRC Updates Invalid Traffic Detection and Filtration Guidelines, Issues Draft for 30-Day Public Comment Period

New York, NY (February 5, 2020): The Media Rating Council (MRC) today issued a draft version of an update to its *Invalid Traffic Detection and Filtration Guidelines*, marking the opening of a 30-day public comment period.

The updated guidelines are intended to modernize the *Invalid Traffic Detection and Filtration Guidelines Addendum*, originally issued by MRC in October 2015, to more fully account for the range of invalid traffic (IVT) threats and related issues that exist in today's online environment. While the 2015 Guidelines have been previously updated on an interim basis through the issuance of single-subject memos, today's draft marks the first comprehensive overhaul to the Guidelines since their creation.

George W. Ivie, Executive Director and CEO of MRC, commented upon release of today's draft, "When we first issued MRC's *Invalid Traffic Detection and Filtration Guidelines Addendum* in 2015, we indicated there would be a need to continually update the provisions contained in it in order to keep pace with a rapidly changing environment. The thorough updating of our IVT requirements as represented in the draft we've released today is critical to helping to ensure that current IVT detection and filtration practices remain relevant as the nature of invalid traffic continues to evolve."

The IVT Guidelines finalized in 2015 sought to modernize industry measurement standards for the filtration and disclosure of invalid traffic to better address emerging risks in the digital media environment. The guidelines are an addendum to all digital measurement guidelines and standards issued by the MRC and, as such, all MRC accredited digital measurement services are assessed against them, in addition to any other applicable digital measurement guidelines.

A main goal of the IVT Guidelines is to ensure that measurers have in place processes to continually detect and assess new invalid traffic scenarios as they emerge in the online environment. The MRC defines Invalid Traffic generally as traffic or associated media activity that does not meet certain quality or completeness criteria, or otherwise does not represent legitimate traffic that should be included in measurement counts. Among the reasons why traffic may be deemed invalid is that it is a result of non-human traffic (spiders, bots, etc.), or activity designed to produce IVT.

The new Guidelines draft includes a number of important enhancements to the MRC's previous IVT guidance, among which are:

- The inclusion of updates and clarifications of requirements for General Invalid Traffic (GIVT) and Sophisticated Invalid Traffic (SIVT) detection techniques to reflect the evolved threat landscape, as well as enhancements to baseline GIVT requirements.

- The introduction of a required “Decision Rate” calculation to provide data to users about a service’s IVT detection coverage levels, and to identify sources and inventory with low coverage.
- The expansion and formalization of traffic sourcing detection and disclosure requirements.
- The provision of guidance for IVT detection and filtration in “logged-in” environments, and guidance on account invalidation IVT techniques.
- The enhancement of Business Partner Qualification requirements, including requirements on client access controls and stricter onboarding.
- The formal incorporation, inclusive of new updates, of previous interim guidance issued through MRC memos on Data Center Traffic, Human Labeling, Sampling, Up-Front Techniques and In-App IVT.
- The expansion of guidance on Up-Front filtration to include pre- and post-bid approaches.
- The expansion of In-App guidance to also include Over the Top (OTT) environments.

The draft can be accessed and comments registered through links available at www.mediatingcouncil.org.

MRC invites comments on the draft, and will consider those it receives between now and March 6th for inclusion in the final document. The final version of the *IVT Guidelines* update is expected to be issued early in the 2nd quarter of 2020.

About MRC

The Media Rating Council is a non-profit industry association established in 1963 comprised of leading television, radio, print and digital media companies, as well as advertisers, advertising agencies and trade associations, whose goal is to ensure measurement services that are valid, reliable and effective. Measurement services desiring MRC accreditation are required to disclose to their customers all methodological aspects of their service; comply with the MRC Minimum Standards for Media Rating Research as well as other applicable industry measurement guidelines; and submit to MRC-designed audits to authenticate and illuminate their procedures. In addition, the MRC membership actively pursues research issues they consider priorities in an effort to improve the quality of research in the marketplace. Currently approximately 110 research products are audited by the MRC. Additional information about MRC can be found at www.mediatingcouncil.org.

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