

FAQ from Viewability Panel Audience 04.29.2015

Responses from:

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Q: Who is Publicis Health Media using to measure viewability?

A: (PHM) PHM is using a combination of vendors to measure viewability. Depending on the brand's needs we typically leverage either Integral Ad Science or DoubleVerify.

Q: Who is driving the viewability discussions -- advertisers, ad agencies or publications/media?

A: (EHS) Ad agencies have been the first to begin the discussions. However, it is an issue that is going to affect all parties. Advertisers rightfully only want to pay for viewable impressions, but a lot of the burden falls to the Publishers to make sure their ad placements are viewable.

Q: Has ad pricing run parallel to the viewability or are buyers not responding to this value metric?

A: (EHS) In our experience, ad pricing has not had to increase, yet, because Publishers have yet to be held to viewability standards by withholding agreed upon rates for impressions. When Publishers begin to be affected monetarily (if they are), the industry may see a shift in ad pricing.

Q: Where should a publisher focus its attention when the majority of ROS impressions are delivering high viewability, but one or two isolated ROS campaigns are underperforming?

A: (EHS) Focus on the type of ad (Rich, Flash, Standard, HTML5), the creative size, the duration the ad has been running, the placement of the ads (are you running more in one placement that seems to be underperforming), mobile v. desktop, content where the ads are running, be sure that the ROS is truly ROS (sometimes ads that are paying less money are trafficked to lower visibility placements – in other words, do you have different deals for different types of campaigns?)

Q: How about 100% share of voice and roadblocks)? Are those buys subject to the same viewability rules?

A: (CMI) Yes, there is no reason why a roadblock or 100% SOV buy shouldn't meet viewability standards.

Q: How can viewability be considered an accurate measurement when it doesn't include mobile or Safari impressions?

A: (PHM) Vendors using the browser optimization method can indeed measure viewability in Safari. The MRCs viewability transactional guidelines are directed to Desktop environments, not mobile.

(Moat) A lot of vendors do have difficulty measuring viewability on Safari and also Mobile, but it is not impossible. As you can see from the [independent test across vendors](#) it is possible to measure both of these without projecting results.

(CMI) It is not impossible to measure Mobile, the industry is waiting on clear guidelines which have changed frequently.

Q: Are you able to connect viewability to post impression performance? I'll assume message awareness, but what about conversion? Site visits? Behavior change? Search activity? Interest?

A: (EHS) Agencies/advertisers have that access to brand.com websites will have to start to conduct those types of studies.

(Moat) Moat does not cookie anything through our analytics, but we integrate with a number of other companies, such as attribution companies to measure post impression performance.

(CMI) CMI is starting to understand the correlation of all KPIs, including viewability, engagement metrics, site visits, and ideally increase in awareness.

Q: What does the panel say the role of the quality of content plays in viewability? Does the panel feel that viewability is more important than proper context?

A: (Moat) Context is highly important to a brand, but also bear in mind there is no value if the ad was never seen in the first place. Ultimately people go on websites to consume content, so matching up the content to the advertiser is very important.

Q: How is viewability improved?

A: (EHS) Redesign, moving ad placements into content areas, offering different sizes of ads. See our document on “Best Practices for Advertisers” and “Best Practices for Publishers,” at [Viewability Toolkit](#)

(Moat) Viewability is dependent on a number of factors, from ad size, format and ad serving technology. To truly understand how well it is performing on your sites, you need to perform a test across the sites at a placement level. Moat also provides Viewability Diagnostics that show the impressions that are served that are NOT viewable. This is essential to understand the performance as well and make the necessary changes.

Q: How does the panel consider the role of creative load times? If the publisher calls for the ad, but the load takes too long and no view occurs (I believe timing for viewability begins at full ad load). Should that also be a "cost of doing business" for publishers? That we are unable to monetize those impressions that would otherwise be viewable.

A: (PHM) This is a valid question. The best course of action here seems to be holding an advertiser’s banner to the IAB specified K-weight for optimum load times.

(Moat) If an ad takes a few seconds to load and someone scrolls before the ad loads, then this would be classified as a non-viewable impression. The advertiser pays for that ad, but it was not seen. This has a huge effect on site viewability.

(CMI) It is my understanding that the counting begins when the ad loads if the viewability is being measured via the ad server. However, it is done differently – from the ad call, if the viewability is measured from the publisher end.

Q: From a technical standpoint, how are the different measuring technologies dealing with the viewability discrepancies with rich media and iframes?

A: (Moat) Moat uses different approaches (Geometric and Browser Optimization) depending on the scenario. For cross-domain iframes (hostile iframes), Moat uses Browser Optimization to “see through” the iframe for both display and video, to accurately measure viewability.

Q: What are the discrepancies when an ad tag is third party or direct?

A: (EHS) Third party ad tags can increase latency, it is best to be sure all ad tags are up-to-date.

Q: Can you elaborate on "good" bot traffic vs. "bad" bot traffic?

A: (EHS) Good bot traffic refers to Search Engine spiders or crawlers. We want search engines to crawl our sites in order to put our pages into their search index so that our site will come up in search results. According to IAB, "The bad actors are organized criminals, usually operating outside of the United States and are often funded by larger criminal organizations. The bad actors are not just gaming the system they are engaging in organized criminal activity." Here is a list of some bad bot activity:

1. Domain Laundering: low quality site steals the identity of a respected publisher to steal ad sales
2. Impersonators: most advanced malicious non-human, fake search engine bots, spy bots, masked by proxy servers
3. Hacking Tools: site and server hijacking bots
4. Adware: programs that are making ad calls without the user's knowledge
5. Data Center Traffic: traffic that comes from a data center where there are no humans.

Q: We're seeing significant discrepancies between comScore / Integral AdScience viewability numbers and DFP viewability numbers. We expect that this is happening because DFP fires the viewability tracking technology sooner in the ad call than comScore and/or Integral where the position of the viewability tracking technology may be the last thing called - how are you dealing with this type of discrepancy other than using the IAB 10% clause?

A: (Moat) If there are discrepancies larger than 10% between 2 MRC accredited Vendors, then you should perform a detailed and granular consolidation between the two, to see where the differences occur. This should be at the site, placement, campaign and creative level by day.

Q: Does the panel envision any viewability capability for non-ad served items, like native advertising?

A: (Moat) Moat tracks both display, video and native ads already. For Native ads this can be both the teaser, as well as any full page native ad unit an advertiser maybe using.

(comScore) This is absolutely something that comScore is working on and can technically do today in terms of measurement. We are working with clients and partners to determine the best way to bring this solution to market at scale. There is currently no standard for this today.

Q: Some viewability vendors track mobile and some don't. Which vendors track mobile successfully and which don't? For those that don't, can you speak to your future plans to fold in mobile traffic into measurable impressions?

A: (Moat) Moat measures this and has done for a number of years.

(comScore) comScore will be able to measure this starting June 1.

Q: I am still confused about Safari--particularly whether viewable impressions delivered from a responsive design site on a tablet are factored into the viewability percentages. Are they?

A: (Moat) As per the ABC test, Moat is able to measure impressions on Safari.

(comScore) For comScore, viewability is detected via timing and geometric triangulation techniques. As part of this, comScore is not able to measure cross domain iframes delivered in Safari (which accounts for less than 5% of impressions). This means that comScore can measure 95% of impressions directly and projects the remaining 5% using insights from our 2 million person panel.

(CMI) For CMI, impressions from Safari will not be part of the calculation for viewability, they will be billed out per historic billing procedures (assuming there is no NHT).

Q: Are there solutions on the horizon for mobile?

A: (Moat) This is already possible on Moat.

(comScore) Beginning on June 1, comScore clients will be able to access daily reporting of unduplicated audience, viewability and validation metrics for mobile campaigns. This includes mobile ads delivered to browsers and/or apps on either smartphones and/or tablets.

Q: What are the most important factors for publishers to consider when shopping for an MRC accredited viewability tracking partner considering the drastic variance in numbers between vendors?

A: (comScore) Ask challenging questions to really understand the measurement solution in place. Are they able to filter out NHT? How do they do this? At what level (just IAB spiders and bots or enhanced filtration)? Can they measure whether or not a browser is in-focus? How does the vendor treat custom packages? Custom formats?

(CMI) Do a test with each vendor to better understand their capabilities and tracking abilities.

Q: What could cause the discrepancies we are seeing when two different ads of the same size and placed in the same position on the site, and measured by the same vendor, are producing vastly different viewability percentages?

A: (comScore) These differences could be for a variety of reasons. Generally speaking if the measurement vendors are using different technologies, then there are a variety of sources of discrepancy. As mentioned, one of the largest sources of discrepancy is NHT. One vendor might be catching and filtering a lot of NHT and the other might not. Also the amount of impressions the program is able to measure may also affect viewability.

(Moat) Usually this has to do with the number of impressions each vendor is actually able to measure for viewability. If one can only measure 80% and the other 99%, then this is often where the larger differences are seen.

Q: For publishers who have multiple ad units on a page in which an advertiser could appear at once (i.e. roadblocks) do you see a difference in viewability measurement accuracy in using several individual tags vs "double using" tags?

A: (Moat) No, we more often than not have publishers with multiple Moat tags on different ad units. This will not affect the accuracy of the data.

(CMI) We don't see a difference, however using separate tags may allow for more granular optimization both by the analyst as well as by the website.

Q: When an ad is clicked in less than one second, it's not considered a viewable impressions. Is there anything in the works to capture this and count as a viewable impression?

A: (comScore) The average engaged rate as measured by ComScore (those where the mouse hovers over the ad for greater than 0.5 seconds) is 40% and the average CTR is 0.11%. Therefore it is unlikely that clicks are occurring before 0.5 seconds.

Q: What is domain laundering?

A: (comScore) Domain laundering is one of the most common causes of NHT, and we are seeing the incidence of domain laundering increase rapidly. Domain laundering is actually quite complex and can be executed in a variety of ways. At a high-level, though, its best understood as a situation in which a nefarious player impersonates itself, often as a premium publisher, in an exchange environment to sell inventory to a buyer. Often, when this transaction occurs, neither the publisher nor the buyer is aware of what is happening.

Q: How can programmatic buying influence viewability?

A: (EHS) [The Sizmek study](#) says that programmatic does not perform as well for viewability as direct.

(CMI) Depending on what programmatic engine you use, you may be opening yourself up to a lot more NHT which will decrease viewability. If the Programmatic engine is running on trusted sites, then it depends on the inventory and bidding strategies.

Q: Have you seen any increase in CTR for campaigns that are viewable only, and/or is there a way to tie clicks to impressions for viewable impressions only (outside of DFP)? We have not been able to do this w/ comScore or Integral.

A: (EHS) [The Sizmek study](#) reports that ads with a viewability over 70% have a better CTR.

Q: Re: viewability for flash vs HTML5 - could this be due to users (i.e. ipad) who do not have flash installed, and therefore their viewability is significantly lower?

A: (EHS) Possibly, more research needed, see [Sizmek study](#).