

Can viewability measure the effectiveness of online video ads?

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In late 2015, *Drum* published an article within which the author stated that in the following 12 months, viewability would re-emerge as a key industry issue and that digital video would be a key driving force behind this.

With more brands focusing their ad budgets on digital video over traditional television ads, the importance of being able to track their performance and effectiveness has thrust viewability to the forefront of discussion.



The general consensus within the industry when it comes to viewability is that due to differing standards and methodologies used to measure impressions, it alone isn't enough to act as a KPI.

The benefits of online video are clearly invaluable when it comes to user engagement.

The global standard definition for viewable impressions was introduced by the Media Rating Council (MRC) in June 2014 as 50% of the ad's pixels needing to be in view for a minimum of one second for display ads.

In addition, for video ads the MRC defines a viewable impression as 50% of an ad's pixels in view for a minimum of two seconds.

With this the global standard and advertisers shifting their budgets to utilise more online videos, can viewability truly measure the effectiveness of an online video campaign?

Perhaps...

Exponential recently carried out a piece of research to find how audiences engaged with online video. The study found that, using a combination of eye-tracking, facial coding and survey questions, users paid attention for twice as long when presented with interactive online videos. In addition, they also produced a higher ad recall, intent to purchase rates and boosted brand perception.

In addition, 40% of those interacting with the ad did so for more than 60 seconds.

The benefits of online video are clearly invaluable when it comes to user engagement and finding new ways to reach your audience. However, measuring engagement is much more subjective than viewable impressions.

This can present a significant challenge when speaking with a client who wants to see tangible results on the effectiveness

of a campaign. This is why viewability has become such a prominent topic of discussion.

Nevertheless, with the standard definition of a viewable impression for video being just two seconds, can this be described as an effective impression?

Furthermore, whilst viewability is able to measure whether a video ad has the opportunity to be seen, it does present a number of questions. Did the user pay attention? Were the brand messages communicated before the user clicked away?

But what about sound?

Another fundamental hurdle when using viewability to measure the effectiveness of an online video ad is audio. Through viewability you aren't able to tell if the user had the sound switched on their device for the duration of that ad. Therefore, automatically becoming ineffective if that particular advert relies heavily on sound.

Unfortunately, until the technology to measure viewability evolves further, there isn't one set solution to measure the effectiveness of an online ad. Many within the industry adopt a number of methods to measure a campaign's impact and of course the responsibility lies within the industry itself to continue creating content that is both targeted and engaging to its audience.

By creating responsive content we are putting ourselves in a much stronger position to ensure that a campaign delivers relevant impressions and maximum effectiveness.

***Insights and statistics collected from US, UK and South African data sources.**

About Exponential

Exponential Interactive delivers innovative advertising experiences that transform the way audiences interact with brands across desktop and mobile. Exponential's platform fuses one of the largest global digital media footprints and proprietary data with user-centric ad formats designed to drive engagement and performance. Creativity, data and audience insights form the foundation for building smart and relevant brand engagement and brand performance solutions for advertisers and publishers. Exponential was founded in 2001 and has locations in 22 countries.

For more information, please visit www.exponential.com

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