

ANNOUNCEMENT

BACHELOR THESIS

KEYWORDS

- Display Advertising
- Viewability
- Viewability Rate
- MRC Standard

TOPIC: AN EVALUATION OF THE 50/1 VIEWABILITY RATE TARGETING OPTION

According to the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB), online advertising spend in the United States totaled \$59.6 billion in 2015, which amounts to an increase of 20.4% over 2014. A bulk of online advertising is made up by display advertising, which comes in several formats, including banner ads, rich media and more. Even though these growth rates are impressive, the digital advertising market is struggling with some challenges. Specifically, there is declining confidence in display advertising effectiveness and efficiency (Morrissey 2011).

One reason for the declining confidence in the market are cases of fraud that have become public in recent years. Even worse, common practice in the market is to pay for ads served, i.e., as soon as the ad is displayed to the user, regardless of where on the page it appeared. Certainly, an ad served doesn't necessarily equal an ad viewed, as the ad might be displayed as an inactive tab page impression or below the page fold.

In recent years, however, there is increased interest in shifting from a served impression to a viewable impression among advertisers as well as publishers and in an attempt to set standards the Media Rating Council (MRC) already issued viewable measurement guidelines in 2014. The MRC calls for desktop display ads to be considered viewable if 50% of their pixels are in view for a minimum of one second (MRC 2015). Even though this is only a guideline and not a regulation, several industry players, e.g., comScore vCE, Google Active View, AdTech, etc., already adopted this standard. Hence, advertisers have the possibility to target a specific viewability rate across publishers, which is the percentage of ad impressions counted as being viewable according to the 50/1 standard (DoubleClick 2016).

It is conceivable, though, that this provided viewability targeting option is misleading for two reasons. First, it does not reveal viewability rates of specific ad slots but only on a publisher level. Second, this viewability targeting option is not as complete as it could be. For example, Meetrics and Platform161 offer their clients the possibility to bid on viewability targets through combinations of three viewable minimum areas: 50%, 75% and 90% of pixels in view, as well as four minimum duration classes : 1 second, 3 seconds, 5 seconds and 10 seconds (Rowntree 2016).

The aim of this thesis is, thus, to investigate whether targeting this viewability rate (the percentage of ad impressions counted as being viewable according to the 50/1 standard) is a good policy for getting highly viewable ads or whether an advertiser risks losing highly viewable ad slots by following this targeting option. To do so, the student will be given a sample of served display ad impressions including the necessary variables (e.g. the publisher, the pixel percentage in view, exposure time) and is expected to conduct an empirical analysis based on the provided data set.

LITERATURE & LINKS:

DoubleClick (2016), "Active View metrics," (accessed October 10, 2016), [available at https://support.google.com/dfp_premium/answer/3154105].

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MRC (2015), "MRC Viewable Ad Impression Measurement Guidelines," [available at http://mediaratingcouncil.org/081815%20Viewable%20Ad%20Impression%20Guideline_v2.0_Final.pdf].

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