



Media Rating Council Releases Final Version of New *Digital Audio Measurement Standards*

New York, NY (January 18, 2018): The Media Rating Council (MRC) today issued its *Digital Audio Measurement Standards* as final. This first-of-its-kind standard outlines measurement and reporting requirements for digital audio advertising and content in either browser or application environments that require a software-based audio player. The principles noted in these *Standards* apply to digital audio ads and content regardless of whether they are delivered through a digital audio streaming environment or through a progressive download approach, including podcasts.

The document was developed in collaboration with a large working group of organizations involved in the digital audio industry, including digital audio ad buyers and sellers, digital audio content distributors, measurement services and others. Notably, the Radio Advertising Bureau (RAB), the National Association of Broadcasters' Committee on Local Radio Audience Measurement (COLRAM), and the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) participated in the project working group and as sponsoring association partners. A preliminary draft of the standard was previously issued for public comment in June 2017.

“These new standards will advance the state of digital audio measurement, and make it more comparable with measurement of other media types,” said George W. Ivie, Executive Director and CEO of the MRC. He went on to add, “As measurers step forward to be audited and ultimately accredited against these standards, buyers of digital audio advertising will be able to gain assurance that the measurements on which they evaluate their digital ad investments—whether those ads appear in streaming audio, audio podcasts, or other relevant digital audio environments—serve as a true reflection of the exposure of these ads to audiences.”

Among some of the most important provisions of the MRC's *Digital Audio Measurement Standards* are:

- A description of the approaches that should be applied to the measurement and reporting of digital audio under a variety of different content and advertising distribution models. These can include both reporting digital audio metrics on a standalone basis, as well as in combination with over-the-air audio simulcasts.
- A requirement that measurements occur on the client side. Server side transaction records are generally not considered acceptable for measurement of digital audio activity because they are subject to overstatement and significant inaccuracy, and are never permitted as a basis for digital audio metrics that rely on longitudinal data observations.
- A definition of an “Audio Ad Impression” that requires the ad to have been played with the digital audio player in a non-muted state and at a non-zero volume. In addition, these ads must be filtered for invalid traffic using methods that comply with the requirements of the MRC's *Invalid Traffic Detection and Filtration Guidelines Addendum*'s provisions for General Invalid Traffic (GIVT). The use of additional Sophisticated Invalid Traffic (SIVT) detection processes is strongly encouraged, and is required for audience metrics for digital audio.
- The introduction of the concept of an “Audible Ad Impression”—in a sense, the audio equivalent of a Viewable Ad Impression. While the standard puts forward certain requirements for this new metric (the ad also must play for a minimum duration of two continuous seconds, in addition to satisfying the requirements for qualification as an Audio Ad Impression), the standard also specifies that additional research will be conducted to determine the parameters by which an Audible Ad Impression will be defined on a permanent basis.

The MRC's *Digital Audio Measurement Standards* will serve as a primary assessment criteria for those digital audio measurers that seek to have their services independently validated through the MRC accreditation process.

The *Standards* document is available through a link at www.mediaringcouncil.org.

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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.mediaringcouncil.org.

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