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MRC INDUSTRY COMMUNICATION

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MRC Viewable Impression Advisory Update, November 2013

Since issuing the first MRC Viewable Impression Advisory in November 2012 and a subsequent update in June 2013, the MRC has continued its work to identify and remove obstacles standing in the way of widespread use of viewable impressions as a digital currency metric. We currently anticipate completing this work by year-end 2013, and lifting our advisory on transacting on viewability by the end of Q1 2014.

In the months since our last update in June, much progress has been made. A viewability measurement standard is near, with completion expected by year-end. At this point, the only significant outstanding issue is determining the duration requirement for a web-based viewable video impression. In addition, many viewability measurement providers have been engaged in MRC accreditation audits. To date, six vendors have been accredited by MRC for their viewability solutions. SafeFrame has been released by IAB, and has been adopted or is in-test across several publishers. Significant learning about the many factors involved with viewable impression measurement has taken place.

As a result, MRC believes the key remaining issue involves reconciling the viewability measurements of different vendors. To address this, we are about to launch a reconciliation project with the viewability vendors that have been accredited by MRC. This reconciliation process will exclusively utilize accredited vendors because their methods have been fully audited, and therefore we have a thorough understanding of the processes that underlie their viewability measurements. The reconciliation process will make it possible to fully understand and explain the differences that exist in viewable impression counts.

Based on what we have learned to date, it is our belief that differences in viewable impression counts among these vendors do not result strictly from differences in their viewable impression counting functions. Rather, a material component is related to other processes in which each vendor engages—including their filtration and/or verification functions—which ultimately affect their calculations of viewable impressions. MRC will further support this observation through the reconciliation project. It is our intention to provide guidance to both the industry and to the viewability vendors about how these differences should be accounted for and minimized moving forward.

As a result of this forthcoming reconciliation work, MRC expects to be in a position to have achieved the key learnings on this matter by year-end 2013, and to communicate these to the marketplace. However, this information may require certain marketplace adjustments, not only by viewability vendors, but also among digital advertising buyers and sellers, which would lead MRC to refrain from lifting its cautionary advisory until these can be sufficiently addressed.

Thus, we anticipate that MRC will fully lift its Viewable Impression Advisory by the end of Q1 2014.

About the Media Rating Council (MRC)
The MRC is a non-profit industry association established in 1964 composed of leading television, radio, print and Internet 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 and other standards MRC produces; 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 90 research products are audited by the MRC.

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