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Media Rating Council Issues Update
To Invalid Traffic Detection And Filtration Standards

Changes are first comprehensive overhaul to Standards originally issued in 2015

New York, NY June 25, 2020 – The Media Rating Council (MRC) today issued an update to its *Invalid Traffic (IVT) Detection and Filtration Standards*.

The additions and revisions in these updated Standards are intended to modernize the *Invalid Traffic Detection and Filtration Guidelines Addendum,* originally issued by MRC in October 2015, to more fully account for the range of invalid traffic threats and related issues that exist in today's online environment. The establishment of a regular process to update IVT standards was anticipated and explicitly recognized in the original 2015 *Guidelines*, and while several single-subject memos have been issued since its release, this update marks the first comprehensive overhaul since their creation, and supersedes all previous updates.

The *IVT Standards* seek to bring industry measurement standards for the filtration and disclosure of invalid traffic in line with emerging risks in the current digital media environment. These standards are considered an addendum to all digital measurement guidelines and standards issued by the MRC and, as such, all who are seeking first-time accreditation or continuation of accreditation for any digital measurement processes are assessed against them, in addition to any other applicable digital measurement guidelines. Current MRC-accredited digital measurers will have a one-year grace period, beginning today, to come into compliance with any applicable new or enhanced provisions included in this update.

The main goal of the *IVT Standards* is to ensure that measurers have in place processes to continually detect and assess new invalid traffic scenarios as they emerge in the online environment. The MRC defines Invalid Traffic generally as traffic or associated media activity that does not meet certain quality or completeness criteria, or otherwise does not represent legitimate traffic that should be included in measurement counts. Among the reasons why traffic may be deemed invalid is that it is a result of non-human traffic (spiders, bots, etc.), or activity designed to produce IVT.

The updated *Standards* include a number of important additions and revisions to the MRC's previous IVT guidance, among which are:

- The addition of more specific Sophisticated Invalid Traffic (SIVT) areas.
- The addition and updating of previous interim guidance on data center traffic requirements.

- The addition of specific requirements on risk assessment by platform and relevant traffic segment, as well as a requirement to directly link these to specific controls for each.
- New requirements to disclose a "decision rate" metric (defined as the percentage of all impressions intended for measurement where sufficient information was obtained to make a valid or invalid decision), along with definitions, calculations and requirements for supporting partial detection decisions.
- The addition and updating of previous interim guidance on requirements and disclosures associated with sampling approaches to IVT detection and filtration.
- New requirements for the treatment and disclosure of purchased and acquired traffic.
- The formalization of requirements, previously documented in MRC's Brand Safety Supplement, for the use of Machine Learning and Human Intervention in IVT detection practices.
- The addition and updating of previous interim guidance on up-front filtration requirements.
- The addition and updating of previous interim guidance on mobile in-app requirements and added OTT-specific considerations.
- The addition of guidance and requirements for logged-in and subscription-based environments.
- New detailed IVT discrepancy resolution procedures and requirements.

The update was created with the participation and input of a large group of digital measurement practitioners as well as a group of industry technical experts. A draft version was issued in February, which was subject to a 30-day public comment period.

The full *Invalid Traffic Detection and Filtration Standards Addendum* can be viewed and downloaded at www.mediaratingcouncil.org.

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.mediaratingcouncil.org.