IAB Europe Ad Marker Implementation Guidelines for Video

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Executive summary

This document covers the use of the Ad Marker in Europe for companies to provide enhanced transparency and control over Online Behavioural Advertising (OBA) to users in video advertising environments, in support of the [European Self-Regulatory Principles for OBA](). This document is complementary to the Technical Specifications for implementing the IAB Europe OBA Framework and EASA BPR (Technical Specifications). Its purpose is to set out guidelines for the implementation of the Application of Self-Regulatory Principles in video players.

Advertising in a video player, be it on a desktop or a mobile device presents distinctive technical challenges as compared to the more traditional browser-delivered advertisement, which in turn translate to specific challenges related to providing enhanced notice and choice for ads delivered in such environments. Due to these technical issues, the Technical Specifications, when laid out initially by IAB Europe and adopted by the EDAA, did not describe how enhanced notice and choice should be provided in video advertising scenarios.

Currently the state of technology and widely-adopted industry standards has evolved significantly; these Guidelines have been developed, therefore, to support companies to give users access to the same insight into, and control over video advertising as they enjoy in the more traditional desktop environment.

Scope

These Ad Marker Implementation Guidelines for Video (the "Guidelines") cover the provision of notice and choice for ad campaigns in video players, both on desktop and mobile environments. These Guidelines are based on the principles addressed by the IAB Europe OBA Framework, and should be read in conjunction with the existing Technical Specifications for implementing the IAB Europe OBA framework and EASA BPR in Europe (Technical Specifications) and IAB Europe Ad Marker Implementation Guidelines for Mobile (Guidelines for Mobile) which define the Ad Marker.

The Technical Specifications cover already a number of cases where video ads are delivered in-page (i.e. not via a dedicated video player). However, at the time of releasing the original Technical Specifications, the technology standards did not accommodate delivering an advertising icon in a video player. Hence, without explicitly excluding the delivery of the Icon for video ads, the original Technical Specifications did not address the case where an advertisement is delivered inside a video player. These Guidelines bridge that gap, allowing participating players to deliver the Icon in video ads in a consistent manner across the industry.

The Ad Marker remains the visual representation presented to users to learn more about the ads they receive. Consistent and proper use of the Ad Marker reinforces the application of consumer-friendly standards for Online Behavioural Advertising (OBA) in video advertising scenarios.

The Guidelines propose initial specifications for the video environment. Additional versions may be issued as the [European Digital Advertising Alliance (EDAA)]() receives implementation feedback.

When to use these Guidelines

Video ads currently are presented in multiple formats, most commonly in-stream as part of the delivery of video content, but also in other formats where a video ad is presented independent of video content (for example, freestanding in-page or in-banner video ads).

These Guidelines are intended to provide guidance for video ads to industry players seeking to provide users with enhanced transparency, consistent with the [European Principles on Online Behavioural Advertising](#). The use cases include, but are not limited to, in-stream formats (pre-roll, mid-roll, and post-roll).

In-Stream Video Ads

In-stream video ads typically run before (pre-roll), in the middle (mid-roll), or after (post-roll) streaming video content and may be accompanied by a companion in-page ad.
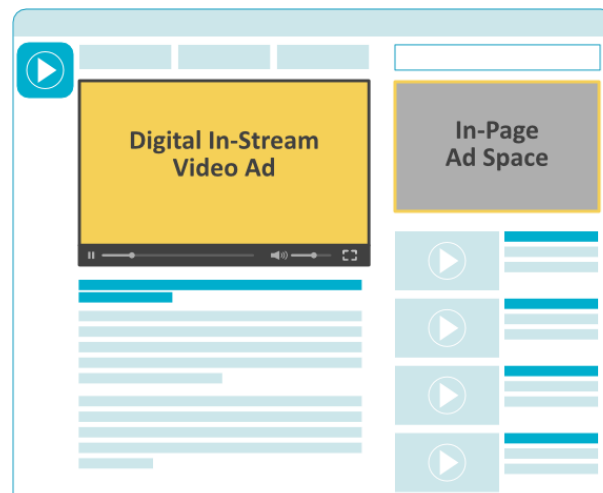

Figure 1 - Example of an In-Stream Video Ad

Implementation inside the Video Ad

Depending on the video player or ad format, the Ad Marker or Icon may be served as an overlay in video ads[1]. When an overlay is possible, this section provides examples of appropriate implementation. In the event that a particular player format does not permit the display of an overlay, a serving entity may employ the alternative approaches covered later in these Guidelines.

Sizing of the Ad Marker

The Ad Marker consists of the Icon and the accompanying Ad Marker Text. Ad Marker Text is defined in the Technical Specifications, and the full list of approved texts per language can be found in Appendix A of that document. Reasonable efforts should be taken to ensure that the language of the Ad Marker reflects the User Language as per Appendix B of that document. Moreover, the Technical

Figure 2 - the Icon, and the Ad Marker (Icon & accompanying approved text) in English

Specifications also provide clarity on issues like sizing information for the Icon (a minimum of 12 x 12 pixels), for the Ad Marker expanded size (including the surrounding container) and behaviour at mouse roll-over, container opacity, rounded corner radius, text font and the allowed icon colour palette.

Similarly, issues relating to the behaviour of the Ad Marker in mobile environments are addressed in the Guidelines for Mobile. This includes the use of an invisible touch pad area to facilitate initial user interaction with the Icon.

The underlying assumption for the use cases addressed in this version of the Ad Marker Implementation Guidelines for Video is that the user can interact with the Ad Marker or Icon, whether by click or screen touch.

Positioning of the Ad Marker for In-Video Placement

The Ad Marker or Icon should not cover video player's controls or other elements of the player. When either the Ad Marker or the Icon is placed inside the video ad unit, it may be placed by the serving entity in any of the four corners of the video ad unit. This flexible approach is necessary because of the following considerations:
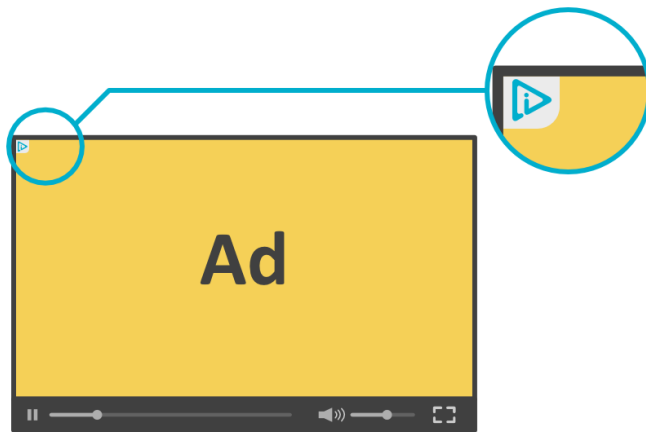
- EDAA's display guidelines generally advise that companies default to the upper right hand corner of the creative so as to minimize the possibility of duplication or visible clash in Ad Marker delivery by multiple entities. However, given that player formats and the positioning of player controls may vary among video ads, companies may choose alternative corners so as to avoid conflicts in user interaction.

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[1] Serving the Icon or Ad Marker for In-Video implementation may require integration via custom JavaScript, and/or the current state of art version of VAST (see "List of resources" at the end of this document)

- Other factors, such as the colouring of the video ad creative and avoiding conflict with embedded calls to action, may similarly necessitate flexibility for the serving entity in choosing which corner to provide the Ad Marker.

The Ad Marker or the Icon should not "float" within the video ad. Consistent with the EDAA's prior guidance, the Ad Marker or the Icon is placed directly in the corner of the ad with no spacing. Similarly, when the Icon is used in conjunction with the approved text, the Icon should be placed in the immediate corner of the ad with the approved text adjacent to the Icon. It is important to note that (a) the approved text is always displayed to the left of the Icon (see Figure 2) and (b) the rounded corner of the container surrounding the Ad Marker is always opposite to the corner of the ad where the Ad Marker is placed (for example, if the Ad Marker is displayed in the top-left corner of the ad, the bottom-right corner of the container will be rounded). Further details on the radius of the rounded corner are available in the Technical Specifications.

Figure 3 - Example of icon placement, upper left-hand of pre-roll video, showing the Icon only (collapsed display)

To accommodate other interactive elements within the video ad, one possible approach is to allow for 16 pixels of space at the top and bottom of the video ad to allow for the placement of the Icon or Ad Marker.
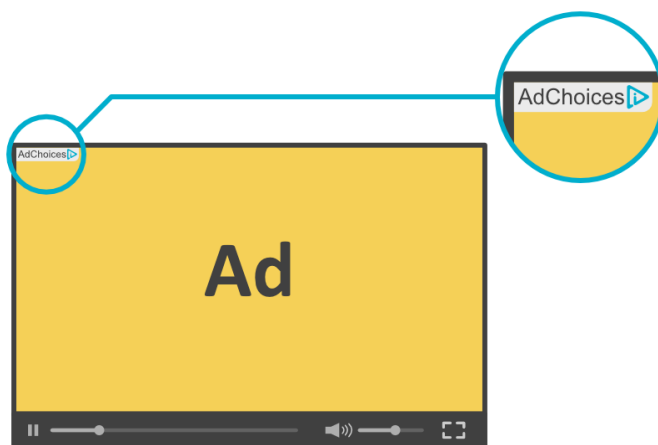
Figure 4 - Example of icon placement, upper left-hand of pre-roll video, showing the full Ad Marker (expanded display)

Figure 5 - Example of Icon placement combined with 16-pixel space above or below the interactive element

Duration of Ad Marker Display

The display of the Ad Marker should persist through the entirety of the video ad, as permitted by network performance.

If the video ad contains an interactive element (such as a microsite), when the user suspends the video ad to engage with this element, it is not necessary to display the Ad Marker within the interactive element – provided that the Ad Marker remains displayed in the video ad itself when the user resumes engagement with the video ad.

Ad Marker Click-through: Overlay or Linking Experiences

The Technical Specifications strongly recommend that when a user clicks on the Icon or the Ad Marker, an interstitial page is displayed. If the interstitial page is not used, the default landing page is the Relevant OBA User Choice Site[2].

The preferred approach for video is that the serving entity opens the interstitial in an overlay, as this keeps the user in direct interaction with the video content or in-page video ad. However, if this implementation is not feasible, serving entities may link to the interstitial in a new window.

The interstitial - Overlay approach

The serving entity should pause the video ad once the user engages with the Icon or Ad Marker to open an overlay, and resume playing the video ad when the user clicks or otherwise activates a resume function, or closes the overlay. Alternatively, as long as the in-ad overlay does not cover the majority of the player interface, the serving entity may choose to have the ad continue to play behind the overlay.

When the user clicks the Icon or Ad Marker, the overlay opens and the video will either pause or continue to play if a partial screen overlay is presented.

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[2] as defined by the Technical Specifications

The overlay may fill the entire space occupied by the video ad. The text of the overlay may include the following elements:

- A link or button that links to the preference manager page
- Disclosures and other information relating to the serving entity or the advertiser, consistent with the EDAA Principles
- Links to pertinent privacy disclosures
- Link to the Relevant OBA User Choice Site

The overlay should also provide an action button that allows the user to close the overlay and resume ad playback.

In certain circumstances, the implementing entity may elect not to pause the video ad while serving the overlay. If the video ad is not paused, the overlay should cover less than 50% of the video ad creative.

Note: The overlay in mobile formats

In mobile formats where viewer legibility of the overlay may be an issue, an overlay that covers a substantial portion of the video may be implemented to accommodate the text of any consumer-facing disclosure and link to the Relevant User Choice Site or industry-developed choice tool.

Similar to the overlays served upon video pause, the overlay in this scenario may include the following elements:

- A link or button that links to the preference manager page
- Disclosures and other information relating to the serving entity or the advertiser, consistent with the EDAA Principles
- Links to pertinent privacy disclosures
- Link to the industry-developed choice tool or Relevant User Choice Site

The overlay should also provide an action button that allows the user to close it and resume the playing of the video ad.

The interstitial – New window approach

If an overlay approach is not feasible, serving entities can open the interstitial in a new window on user click through. Should this approach be chosen, the elements of the interstitial should be those prescribed by the Technical Specifications.

Implementation outside the Video Ad

Placement of the Icon or the Ad Marker Adjacent to the Video Ad

Entities that wish to serve the Icon or Ad Marker adjacent to the ad may use the same approaches previously recommended in the Technical Specifications and Implementation Guidelines for Mobile, working with Web Site Operators and App Providers, respectively, to secure such placement. This approach may be needed when there are limitations on the placement of overlays for the video ad unit.

Web Site Operator Notice

Web Site Operators and App Providers seeking to provide adequate disclosure through the Icon or the Ad Marker in connection with video ads may employ the additional forms of placement covered in the prior guidelines, including footer placement and in-app implementation approaches covered in the Implementation Guidelines for Mobile (which include, for example, the placement of the Icon at the point of app download and within settings menus for apps).

List of resources

- [IAB Europe OBA Framework](#)
- [Technical Specifications for implementing the IAB Europe OBA framework and EASA BPR in Europe](#)
- [IAB Europe Ad Marker Implementation Guidelines for Mobile](#)
- [Video Ad Serving Template 4.0](#)