

# Reporting Standards

Website/App Activity



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trust in media

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## INTRODUCTION

This document contains the Reporting Standards for Website and App Traffic.

The PDF versions of the Reporting Standards are issued at a certain point in time. As Reporting Standards are updated periodically, please check our [website](#) to ensure you are using the latest applicable standards.

Any information included in the guidance sections provide examples of how the requirements might be complied with. We will add to or amend these over time where we consider there may be a benefit following the identification of specific circumstances or requests for advice.

If you have any queries regarding how the Reporting Standards affect you or any specific queries please contact the ABC Client services team on 01442 870 800 or email [info@abc.org.uk](mailto:info@abc.org.uk).

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## METRICS AND REPORTING

### DEFINITION

Activity on website(s) and/or app(s) in a given period.

### PRINCIPLES

1. **Prior registration of Website/App activity claims is required**
2. **Activity must be human-initiated and the associated content intended to be seen by the user**
3. **You must report one of the mandatory Unique User metrics**
4. **Additional optional metrics may be reported**

### REQUIREMENTS

1. **Prior registration of Website/App activity claims is required**
  - a) You must notify us of your intention to claim Website/App activity as early as possible so that we can provide advice on whether your claim is capable of being properly recorded and checked.
  - b) Our approach is to understand how the analytics tool you use measures and records your Website/App activity. We will review its configuration/implementation in order to establish that it will provide the relevant information in accordance with our Reporting Standards. This will require more audit work on our part if the claim, metrics or system used are more complex. If your claim includes information evidenced outside the analytics tool (for example a registration or payment database), then we will also need to review these processes/transactions.
    - i) To achieve this you will need to:
      - o Confirm the particular Websites/Apps to be registered, including how they are identified and managed in the analytics tool used.
        - You may include a number of different website(s) and/or Apps on the same certificate – for example the websites for multiple brands or your publishing company.
        - If traffic to Google AMP pages is reported, this will need to be identified and separately itemised on the certificate (unless it's de-duplicated and reported together – see below).
        - If you are opting to report a single de-duplicated user figure across multiple websites, apps, Google AMP pages, you'll need to be able to demonstrate how the users are identified and correctly reported.
      - o Confirm you will provide us with appropriate information to confirm metric counts and configuration settings. This may include ongoing access to your analytics tool's dashboard (on a review/read only basis) and if necessary for more complex claims, the underlying system data (e.g. logged records) or additional records such as user registration/payment records.
      - o Provide us with access to paid websites/app on request in order to facilitate our testing.
2. **Activity must be human-initiated and the associated content intended to be seen by the user**
  - a) To arrive at the best assessment of human-initiated activity, you will exclude robotic or simulated activity by applying appropriate filters, such as:
    - i) The IAB/ABC International Spiders and Bots list.
    - ii) Your analytics tool's in-built filter for robotic/non-human activity.

- b) You must apply appropriate filters to exclude internal traffic generated by users who maintain, develop or author the site.
- c) You may include traffic to syndicated content published on another website provided by a third party, as long as:
  - i) The user has an opportunity to see, and interact with, that content
  - ii) The content is not simply a logo, search box or similar

### 3. You must report one of the mandatory Unique User metrics

You must report the average monthly Unique Users for each website and/or App using at least one of the following metrics:

- a) Unique Users
  - i) A Unique User is defined as a unique and valid identifier, which has accessed the website/app during the declared period (being a calendar month for the mandatory metric) . *For example IP address +User-Agent and/or Cookie, Unique Device Identifier (UDID) for Apps.*
- b) Unique Users (Registered)
  - i) A Registered Unique User is defined as an account set up for a Unique User to request access to the website/app, which has accessed the website/app during the declared period (being a calendar month for the mandatory metric).
- c) Unique Users (Paid)
  - i) A Paid Unique User is defined as an account set up for a Unique User upon payment by that user to request access to the website/app , which has accessed the website/app during the declared period (being a calendar month for the mandatory metric).

### 4. Additional optional metrics may be reported

- a) Other industry-agreed metrics

Please see our Website/App Traffic Metrics Appendix for details. If you wish to report any of these please discuss this with us, so we can review the additional evidence and audit work involved.

- b) Other optional analyses

If you wish to report optional analyses please discuss this with us, so we can review the additional evidence and audit work involved. Examples are:

- i) Country. *For example an analysis by UK/Rest of World, or country.*
- ii) Inventory sub-section
  - A sub-section is defined as a specific sub-domain; or set of sub-domains, or part of an app, with a common type of content. *For example; you may analyse by brand, group of sub-domains, named parts of apps, or a content section - such as 'jobs' or 'sport'.*
  - The description of the sub-section must reasonably cover the content of the inventory grouped within it.
- iii) User platform/device type
  - Descriptions must reasonably reflect the devices grouped under each heading, and be based on the supporting data. *For example: Computer, Tablet, smartphone etc.*
- iv) Other analyses derived from the metrics certified. *For example: averages, ratios, figures per day/week/Reporting Period, figures per month etc.*

## REPORTING

### 1. You must report Website/App activity for the relevant Reporting Period

- a) The Reporting Period must be a whole calendar month or any combination of consecutive calendar months (up to a maximum of 12).
- b) To remain registered you must report Website/App activity for certification at least once a year, as follows:
  - i) Within 12 months of registering with ABC
  - ii) Subsequent certificates must have Reporting Period end dates that are within 12 months of each other.  
*For example: a certificate for a period ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 must be followed by a certificate ending no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.*

### 2. You must report one of the mandatory Unique User-metrics

- a) For each Website/App you must report:
  - i) The website domain/URL or App name.
  - ii) At least one of the following mandatory metrics:
    - Unique Users (monthly average)
    - Unique Users (Registered monthly average)
    - Unique Users (Paid monthly average)

**Note:**

- o The above average monthly figures are arrived at by summing the reported figures for each calendar month in the Reporting Period, then dividing by the number of months.
- b) You may report two or more Websites/Apps on a single certificate (these can be from different brands), providing each is reported to the same Reporting Period. They will be listed individually with a figure for each.  
*For example:*

<i>Website/App</i>	<i>Average Monthly Unique Users</i>
<i>xyzhealth.co.uk</i>	<i>14,000</i>
<i>xyzbeauty.co.uk</i>	<i>8,000</i>
<i>xyz app</i>	<i>8,000</i>

- i) If you wish, and are technically able, you may opt to report a de-duplicated Unique User total across the reported Websites/Apps. *For example*

<i>Website/App</i>	<i>Traffic Sources</i>	<i>Average Monthly Unique Users</i>
<i>xyzhealth</i>	<i>xyzhealth.co.uk</i> <i>jobs.xyzhealth.co.uk</i>	<i>20,0000</i>

- c) The registered name for the product must appropriately describe the Website(s)/App(s) included.

### 3. You may report optional metrics

- a) You may optionally report:
  - i) Other industry-agreed metrics. Examples include Page Impressions, Visits, Visit Duration.
  - ii) Other analyses derived from the metrics certified. Examples include country, inventory sub-section, user platform/device type, averages, ratios, figures per day/week/reporting period etc.

We reserve the right to require appropriate explanations/descriptions to be added to any such optional information.

### 4. You may optionally report a description of the product and its content

- a) This statement will be verified at audit. *For example: 'The websites and app are updated daily to provide readers with up-to-date content whether on the move or at home.'* **Note:** This statement is not to contain market comparisons or traffic claims.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND RECORD KEEPING

### INTRODUCTION

This section sets out some key requirements relating to the overall reporting and auditing of your ABC claim.

### PRINCIPLES

1. Evidence to support the claim must be retained and available for a minimum period
2. Transactions related to the claim must be bona fide 'arm's length' arrangements

### REQUIREMENTS

1. Evidence to support the claim must be retained and available for a minimum period
  - a) You must retain and be able to provide all records supporting the claim, including an analysis by each Website/App reported.
  - b) You must retain the records supporting the claim for a period of 6 months following certification of the claim or until the audit of the certificate for the subsequent Reporting Period has been completed if sooner.
  - c) Records supporting the claim must be retained and made available to us on request, in accordance with the ABC Byelaws.
2. Transactions related to the claim must be bona fide 'arms-length' arrangements
  - a) Transactions or arrangements (such as sales or distribution services) with your own organisation or Related Parties will initially be deemed as not bona fide 'arms-length' for ABC purposes, meaning they cannot be included in your claim. However, they can be included if you are able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of your auditor that these comply with the Reporting Standards and are bona fide 'arm's length' arrangements.
  - b) Related Parties for ABC purposes will include where:
    - i) One party has direct or indirect control of the other party; or
    - ii) The parties are subject to common control from the same source; or
    - iii) One party has influence over the financial & operating policies of the other party to an extent that the other party might be inhibited from pursuing at all times its own separate interests; or
    - iv) The parties, in entering a transaction, are subject to influence from the same source to such an extent that one of the parties to the transaction has subordinated its own separate interests.
    - v) Transactions between contract publishers and their clients are deemed not to be arm's length in relation to a specific publication produced for that client.

This means the following are considered Related Parties for ABC purposes:

- The publisher, its subsidiary, parent and fellow undertakings (and Directors of these)
- Associates and Joint Ventures (and their investors)



## RETURN FORM SUBMISSION, AUDIT, CERTIFICATION

### DEFINITION

The Return Form is a submission in which the activity claim is reported to ABC for certification. Each website/app activity claim is subject to audit.

### PRINCIPLES

1. **A Return Form must be submitted for the registered product for every applicable Reporting Period**
2. **The Return Form must be submitted by the Submission Deadline**
3. **ABC will issue a Certificate based on the Return Form**
4. **Each website/app activity claim is audited to verify it is in accordance with the applicable Reporting Standards**

### REQUIREMENTS

1. **A Return Form must be submitted for every applicable Reporting Period**
  - a) You must submit a Return Form for the Reporting Period you have chosen to report.
  - b) We will advise you how to submit your Return Form and by when. *For example, online via the ABC return website. However, if you have not heard from us at the appropriate time please contact us.*
  - c) You will submit your Return Form to us, authorised by an appropriate individual representing your organisation.
  - d) Whilst our systems contain some arithmetic and logic validation processes, the accuracy of the Return Form remains your responsibility.
  - e) Estimates and assumptions must not be made on the Return Form unless the Reporting Standards allow for them, or we have authorised them.
2. **The Return Form must be submitted by the Submission Deadline**
  - a) We will inform you of the applicable Submission Deadline.
  - b) It is your responsibility to ensure Return Forms are submitted by the Submission Deadline. Failure to do so can result in a penalty and/or cancellation of your product's ABC registration under the ABC Byelaws.
3. **ABC will issue a Certificate based on the Return Form**
  - a) We will publish the certified data on our website subject to any timing criteria applicable to the sector. We may also make arrangements to provide our data to be published via commercial data providers and to those who subscribe to our data services.
  - b) We will confirm when your Website/App Activity figures will become publicly available, normally 5 working days after a draft Certificate has been sent to you.
4. **Each Website/App activity claim is audited to verify it is in accordance with the applicable Reporting Standards**
  - a) The audit must be carried out by ABC Staff Auditors.
  - b) Requirements in relation to the auditor and audits will be covered by the ABC Byelaws, ABC Audit Programmes and contractual arrangements.
  - c) If following an audit we identify material problems with the Return Form or Certificate, then we will propose to revise the claim. If a Certificate has already been issued we will issue an updated certificate that identifies the changes. This replaces your original Certificate and must be used in its place. The process is as follows:
    - i) We will send you a letter detailing the reason/problem giving rise to the amendment.

- ii) You will have 10 working days from the receipt of this letter to provide any further information to us, or object to the revision of the claim.
- iii) If you wish to object to the revision of the claim you must do this in writing to the Director of Audit who will investigate and provide a decision within 10 working days. If the objection is to a decision by the Director of Audit or the Chief Executive then the first level of appeal will be in accordance with the Review Procedure detailed in the ABC Byelaws.
- iv) Subsequent Certificates will not be issued until we have resolved all queries on a previous audit and issued the updated Certificate, if applicable.



### Contact us

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