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ADVERTISERS GIVEN GUIDELINES FOR MAGAZINE ISSUES ON TABLETS

Advertisers may soon have a better sense on how to place ads in the tablet universe. On Monday, the MPA (the Association of Magazine Media, formerly Magazine Publishers Association) announced guidelines on tablet metrics – measurements to estimate business performance. The organization developed the guidelines, which are strictly voluntary, with the assistance of various magazine executives, hoping to help advertisers understand how to measure consumers of magazine media on tablets. "The tablet guidelines have been created to recognize the need within the advertising community for greater insight and understanding into how to best leverage this powerful new platform," said Nina Link, President and CEO of the MPA, in a press release. "Tablets are one of the fastest growing consumer electronic devices in history. They are ideally suited to leverage the incredible strengths of magazine media content. Tablets create a highly immersive experience for readers; a dynamic, new environment for advertisers to connect with magazine audiences; and almost unlimited opportunity for our brands." The recommended guidelines were developed by the MPA Tablet Metrics Task Force, which was created to assist in establishing guidelines and metrics for tablets. The Task Force, which has been meeting since the last quarter of 2011, is comprised of representatives from seven magazine media publishers, including Bonnier Corporation, Condé Nast, Forbes, Hearts Magazines, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, Meredith Corporation and Time, Inc. The MPA Executive Committee was also consulted by seven advertising agencies. The guidelines include the following recommended metrics for magazines, agencies and advertisers: Total consumer paid digital issues; total number of tablet readers per issue; total number of sessions per issue; total time spent per reader per issue; and the average number of sessions per reader per issue. The Task Force additionally compiled an initial set of terms and definitions with a suggested common language for publishers and advertisers. Voluntary time frames for releasing tablet metrics were also announced. The recommended release of metrics data is 10 weeks from the time of the newsstand on-sale date, or seven weeks from the newsstand on-sale date for weekly publications. The time frames were designed to offer a four-week period for gauging metrics data and a two-week period for analysis. According to Link, the MPA's research found that readers were still reading issues on their tablets a month or even later beyond the on-sale date of the publication, and the recommended time frame was intended to encompass that extended period. The organization also hopes to shorten the time before metrics data is reported as it learns more about how the readers are engaging content. "This voluntary release timing is the most accurate method we have of capturing the incredible engagement that readers have with their tablet issues," Link said. She added that the guidelines "are an exciting first step in an evolving process, and they will continue to be refined and revisited by the MPA Tablet Metrics Task Force."

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