

Making Measurement Make Sense and the First of Five Solutions: The Shift to Viewable Impression

I. WHAT IS MAKING MEASUREMENT MAKE SENSE?

1. What is Making Measurement Make Sense, and what is its goal?

[Making Measurement Make Sense](#) is an industry-wide initiative dedicated to making digital media more hospitable to brands by evolving the way the value of interactive advertising is measured. The immediate intent is to make digital media measurements directly comparable to those of traditional media, while maintaining the ability to evaluate the unique value that interactivity brings to brand campaigns. The end-goal is to supply marketers with the metrics and models they need to: intelligently allocate their budgets between digital and other media, invest more confidently in digital media, and increase accountability, performance, and marketing budgets overall.

The greatest asset of this ambitious initiative is its leadership. Making Measurement Make Sense was founded in February 2011 by the [American Association of Advertising Agencies](#), the [Association of National Advertisers](#), and the [Interactive Advertising Bureau](#) with the direction, encouragement, and support from leading members of these trade associations. Senior executives from major marketers, agencies, publishers, research firms, technology vendors, and others from across the ecosystem have worked together to forge this endeavor and arrive at solutions through consensus. The [Media Rating Council](#) (MRC), an impartial entity committed to ensuring quality and transparency in media measurement, has agreed with the solutions provided by the initiative and has taken on a governance role to help implement them. The leadership of the MRC and the incorporation of viewpoints from across the vast media and advertising ecosystem ensure a process and outcome that's transparent, accountable, and supported by industry.

Making Measurement Make Sense is not producing a proprietary product. Its intent is to revolutionize the way digital media is measured, planned, and transacted across the advertising industry in order to make it a more valuable medium for everyone involved in brand advertising.

2. Who is involved in Making Measurement Make Sense?

The [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative was founded by [American Association of Advertising Agencies](#), the [Association of National Advertisers](#), and the [Interactive Advertising Bureau](#) with the direction, encouragement, and support from leading members of these trade associations. The initiative was strengthened by support from the [Newspaper Association of America](#) and the [Online Publishers Association](#). To support some of the early goals of the initiative,

Making Measurement Make Sense employed the services and advisory of [MediaLink](#) and [Bain and Company](#).

The Making Measurement Make Sense initiative would not be what it is—a change agent based on marketplace consensus—without the more than 150 marketers, publishers, agencies, and senior executives from various disciplines such as operations and research that have provided insights and direction. For a more comprehensive list of participants, please see: measurementnow.net/whos-involved.html

In 2012, the [Media Rating Council](#) took on a leadership role. It has agreed with the solutions provided by the initiative and has taken on a governance role to help implement them. It is also responsible for establishing and managing a process for developing, testing, and institutionalizing interactive media measurement standards.

3. What is the role of the Media Rating Council in Making Measurement Make Sense?

The [Media Rating Council](#) (MRC), a non-profit industry association formed at the behest of Congress in 1964, is tasked with securing for the media industry and related users, audience measurement that is valid, reliable, and effective. It accomplishes this objective by developing and writing standards and conducting audits, performed by an independent firm, to verify compliance with these standards. The institution, led by CEO George W. Ivie, looks out for the fairness, quality, and precision of tools and currencies for all media. The MRC has agreed with the solutions provided by the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative and has taken on a governance role to help implement them.

One of the primary goals of the Making Measurement Make Sense initiative was to create or identify an entity separate from the individual trade associations that could establish and manage an ecosystem-wide process for developing, testing, and institutionalizing measurement guidelines specific to interactive media. The entity must be media agnostic and have great expertise in measurement. It should be equipped to take a leadership role in managing this change in measurement and future changes. The Making Measurement Make Sense team identified MRC as the ideal candidate for the role.

4. What is the Blue Ribbon Task Force?

Early in the initiative, highly regarded leaders from across the ecosystem, including marketers, agencies, and publishers, came together as a group entitled the Blue Ribbon Task Force. Their role: to function as a steering committee for the initiative. For a list of members, click [here](#). This group helped articulate the [Five Guiding Principles of Digital Measurement](#), which set clear priorities for the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative. Since the [Media Rating Council](#) (MRC) has taken on oversight for implementation of these principles, these advocates are meeting with the MRC and the trade association leaders for periodic updates and to provide insight.

5. What is the Viewable Implementation and Implications Working Group at the Interactive Advertising Bureau?

The Viewable Implementation and Implications Working Group at the [Interactive Advertising Bureau](#) is housed within IAB Ad Technology Council, and its role is similar to its name. It is a team of ad technology experts exploring how the viewable impression can be technically implemented and the technical implications of viewable impressions on the industry. Output from this group will flow to the Emerging Innovations Task Force for inclusion in the new viewable impression standard and to the broader ad tech and ad ops industry.

6. What is the Emerging Innovations Task Force and what is its relation to Making Measurement Make Sense?

The Emerging Innovations Task Force is responsible for revising existing digital media measurement standards, and is currently writing an update with display and video viewable impression language. To shift to a viewable impression standard from a served impression standard is the foundational objective of the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative. It is the first of the [Five Guiding Principles of Digital Measurement](#).

This group will also be composing the language used to define the upcoming Digital GRP standard for digital and cross media platform measurement, another objective of the Making Measurement Make Sense initiative.

The [Media Rating Council](#) runs meetings of this group and is the primary author of the updated language. The Emerging Innovations Task Force benefits from the participation of individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds, such as marketers, agency executives, and IAB member companies, and it is currently expanding.

7. Digital media is known for being quantifiable. Why aren't digital media measures comparable to those of other media?

The very nature of interactivity enables more measurement. We can now measure myriad consumer behaviors and ad capabilities, such as—How long did a video play? How did the user interact with the ad? Did the user click, share, or just hover? But digital media has not been directly comparable to legacy media because its measurement has not been based on the “opportunity to see.” Other media have this quality built-in. Television commercials are rendered on screens. Radio ads are broadcasted. This is not the case with digital media. Foundational technology has only measured if an ad has been served, not if it rendered on the screen fully enough and for long enough time for consumers to see it. As such, one of the key goals of the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative is to establish the viewable impression.

8. What is the relationship between Making Measurement Make Sense and measurement vendors?

Measurement vendors are not official participants of the initiative, but they have been in frequent communication with the initiative team members. The goals of Making Measurement Make Sense are greater than that which can be accomplished through a research or measurement request for proposal. Its recommendations are meant to be impartial and transparent, non-proprietary. The initiative leaders are driving industry-wide change based on consensus. Questions in front of the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) leadership include: How does the ecosystem want to do business? What are the core metrics the ecosystem would like to be standardized? What do buyers

really need? The answers must be arrived upon independently of the specific products that measurement vendors offer.

9. Are any vendors accredited based on the Making Measurement Make Sense standards?

Several vendors have requested audits from the [Media Rating Council](#) (MRC) of their methods for measuring viewable impressions. The MRC is legally required to honor such requests. Each company, however, can only be validated against the MRC's own stringent methodological standards, the company's own disclosed measurement capabilities, and a variety of proposed measurement standards, as the viewable impression standard is not yet finalized. Transitioning from a served impression standard to a viewable impression standard is the number one guiding principle in the [Five Guiding Principles of Digital Measurement](#) as defined by the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative.

II. PROCESS, TIMELINE, ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. What inspired the creation of the Making Measurement Make Sense initiative?

It all started with industry need. Brand marketers expressed interest in increasing their spend on interactive advertising, but to do so, they needed metrics that were comparable to existing media and based on the fundamental opportunity for consumers to see the ads they placed. Sellers wanted to satisfy these desires of marketers, but didn't have the tools to do so. Some businesses began offering measures for viewability to bridge this gap. There was clear need for an industry-wide, transparent, and standards-based solution to the measurement challenge—and the trade associations came together to address it. The result is [Making Measurement Make Sense](#).

2. What has been the general process of the Making Measurement Make Sense initiative?

Once the need for an industry-wide advancement in interactive media measurement became clear, the trade associations came together to address it. Their initial objective was to create a consensus-building process to establish the concepts, tools, and metrics for this shift, and to identify or establish an organization to manage this change from the present into the future. To start, they convened groups of expert industry participants, such as those in the Blue Ribbon Task Force, to delve into the challenge at hand, and hired consultant to help drive the process and consensus. This initial exploration resulted in the [Five Guiding Principles of Digital Measurement](#)—number one of which is to transition from a served impression standard to a viewable impression standard—and the [Five-Part Digital Marketing Measurement Solution](#), which provides initial timelines, a plan for pilot tests, and guidance for implementation.

The [Media Rating Council](#) (MRC) has agreed with the solutions provided by the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative and has taken on a governance role to help implement them and to maintain the new currency in the future.

The creation of the viewable impression standard has been a top priority. Pilot tests have taken place and technical solutions that enable viewable impression measurement are being adopted.

Currently, the MRC has issued an [Advisory](#) against transacting on the viewable impression until key challenges are solved and new guidelines are finalized. It is expected that by the end of 2013, the MRC will lift its Advisory and buyers and sellers will be able to perform reliable and accountable transactions on the new metrics. For more, please see [What is the process of developing the viewable impression? Section 3 #2]

There is an ongoing process to act on and bring to life all five solutions for all of the [Five Guiding Principles of Digital Measurement](#).

3. The initiative is in its third year. What were the key achievements of the first two years?

- [February 2011](#)—The ANA, 4A's, and IAB [joined forces](#) to establish “[Making Measurement Make Sense](#).”
- [June 2011](#)—Leading marketers, agencies, and publishers agreed on the [Five Guiding Principles of Digital Measurement](#).
- [September 2011](#)—The initiative released [Five-Part Digital Marketing Measurement Solution](#), which provided initial timelines, a plan for pilot tests, and guidance for implementation.
- May 2012—The results of pilot tests guide Making Measurement Make Sense to a display viewable impression as 50% of an ad seen for one second.
- August 2012—[Media Rating Council](#) (MRC) takes leadership role.
- [November 2012](#)—MRC issues the “[Viewable Impression Advisory](#)” announcing that the definition of the viewable impression is sound, but that for many display ads viewability cannot be measured. It advised against transacting on viewable impressions until the issue of non-measurement is solved.
- [November 2012](#)—IAB releases [IAB SafeFrame 1.0](#) for public comment. These specifications will increase measurability of viewability.
- [March 2013](#)—IAB issues a final version of the [IAB SafeFrame 1.0](#) specification.
- [June 2013](#)—MRC issues an update to the November 2012 “[Viewable Impression Advisory](#)” announcing that the intention is to lift the Advisory by the end of 2013.

4. What are the Five Guiding Principles of Digital Measurement as defined by Making Measurement Make Sense?

Principle #1 – Move to a “viewable impressions” standard and count real exposures online.

Today we count “served impressions” as recorded by ad servers. Often, ad units are not in a viewable space to the end-user or fail to fully load on the screen – potentially resulting in substantial over-counting of impressions. Viewable exposures are increasingly the norm across other media and better address the needs of brand marketers.

Principle #2 – Online advertising must migrate to a currency based on audience impressions, not gross ad impressions.

Brand marketers target specific audiences. Marketers need to understand the quality and number of exposures against their targets – and the respective reach and frequency of such exposures. The

existing digital currency makes this extremely difficult. Moreover, the practice of selling ad impressions makes cross-media comparisons extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Principle #3 – Because all ad units are not created equal, we must create a transparent classification system.

Unlike traditional media, which have a limited number of inventory types (e.g., 30-sec spot, full-page back cover), digital has a myriad of units. [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) advocates a transparent classification system, adhered to by all publishers. Such a system will enable marketers to identify and spotlight the best offerings for brand building, and for other marketing objectives.

Principle #4 – Determine interactivity “metrics that matter” for brand marketers, so that marketers can better evaluate online’s contribution to brand building.

Currently, the industry is awash in digital interaction metrics. However, these metrics are not necessarily relevant for brand marketers. Aside from click-throughs, there are few standards for enabling reliable comparison across sites. The industry must identify and define the specific metrics most valuable to brand marketers and define and implement reliable standards for existing metrics.

Principle #5 – Digital media measurement must become increasingly comparable and integrated with other media.

Measurement solutions must facilitate cross media platform planning, buying and evaluating of marketing and media. This is a substantial issue that hampers analysis and decision making throughout the ecosystem.

5. How do these principles translate into practical solutions?

[Making Measurement Make Sense](#) participants took the [Five Guiding Principles of Digital Measurement](#) and turned them into a [Five-Part Digital Marketing Measurement Solution](#), also referred to as the Five-Pillar Solution.

1. Define Impression: Shift from a “served” to a viewable impression standard
2. Establish Audience Currency: Introduce an online Gross Ratings Point metric, providing reach and frequency reporting of viewable impressions
3. Standard Classification of Ad Units: Implement a classification system and taxonomy for banner, rich media, and streaming video ads
4. Brand Ad Performance Metrics: Define standard and transparent metrics for view-through reporting and cumulative social activity
5. Brand Attitudinal Measures: Establish standards and vendor validation to improve the methodology for online brand attitudinal studies

6. What is the timeline for completion of all five parts of the Making Measurement Make Sense solution?

The [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative will extend beyond the parameters described in the [Five-Part Digital Marketing Measurement Solution](#), also referred to as the Five-Pillar Solution. For example, the viewable impression standard must be applied to mobile, and cross-media metrics must be devised. Also, defining standard brand ad performance metrics must extend to metrics beyond the two most pressing needs of the marketplace, standard definitions for view-through reporting and cumulative social activity. The great scope of its goal--to make measurement make sense--is a significant reason why the Making Measurement Make Sense initiative will benefit from the long-term governance and change-management role of the [Media Rating Council](#) (MRC).

There are, however, target dates of completion for the Five-Pillar Solutions:

1. On January 1, 2014, media sales transactions are expected to be conducted on a viewable impression measurement standard. To facilitate this advancement, by the end of December 2013, the MRC expects to lift its [Advisory](#) against transacting on viewable impression and issue the finalized viewable impression standard for display advertising. A viewable impression standard for video is likely to come on its heels. This accomplishment would complete the “Define Impression” part of the Five-Part Digital Marketing Measurement Solution.
2. In March 2014, the MRC expects to issue a Digital Gross Rating Point standard, which will define how reach and frequency reporting of viewable impressions. This accomplishment would complete the “Establish Audience Currency” part of the Five-Part Digital Marketing Measurement Solution.
3. By May 2014, an ad classification system and taxonomy for banner, rich media, and streaming video ads is expected to be ready for use in insertion orders. These new parameters have been defined by a group of senior executives from across the ecosystem, led by the [Interactive Advertising Bureau](#), [American Association of Advertising Agencies](#), and the [Association of National Advertisers](#). The next steps are vetting the proposed taxonomy and in-market testing. This achievement would complete the “Standard Classification of Ad Units” part of the Five-Part Digital Marketing Measurement Solution.
4. By May 2014, the MRC expects to define standard and transparent metrics for view-through reporting and cumulative social activity to provide clarity and comparability to brand ad performance metrics. This accomplishment would complete the initial description the “Brand Ad Performance” part of the Five-Part Digital Marketing Measurement Solution, but will not satisfy the full need of the marketplace. Other brand ad performance metrics, such as those indicating engagement, will be standardized in the future.
5. By July 2014, the MRC intends to have vendors of digital brand attitudinal metrics validated against existing MRC standards to establish reliability and accountability in these measures. This achievement would complete the “Brand Attitudinal Measures” part of the Five-Part Digital Marketing Measurement Solution.

7. What are the benefits of implementing these achievements?

The completion of the [Five-Part Digital Marketing Measurement Solution](#) will take the industry to a place where:

- The measurement of digital impressions is more consistent with other media
- The industry is able to leverage standard demographics used in other media

- The buying community can use standard metrics to determine the best possible way to allocate their budgets across media types in order to reach specific brand goals
- Over time, the models that brand marketers currently use to allocate their budgets across media will be modified to include digital media
- There is a consistent language to describe inventory
- Consistent, transparent, and credible measures are developed to track the effect of interactivity on building brands
- Digital media advocates can emphasize improved attitudinal measures and confidence relative to other media.

8. What are the 2013 goals for the Making Measurement Make Sense initiative?

2013 is the year for overcoming all of the obstacles and bringing to life meaningful viewable impression measurement for display and video ads. To achieve this goal, publishers will be implementing [IAB SafeFrame](#), a technical solution that increases the frequency in which viewability can be measured in display ads. Buy-side vendors will also be incorporating IAB SafeFrame functionality in order to capture IAB SafeFrame data. The reliability of viewability measures will continue to be tested. Benchmarks for the proportion of served ads that can be measured for viewability will be tested and set. The Emerging Innovations Task Force is writing language for display and video viewable impression standards that will be used to update existing measurement guidelines. They are also composing Digital GRP standards for digital and cross media platform measurement.

By the end of the year, as this work is completed, the [Media Rating Council](#) (MRC) expects to lift its [Advisory](#) against transacting on viewable impressions. The MRC will then begin to use the new viewable impression standard in its audits, and the industry will have a green light to plan, transact, and track performance using viewable impressions.

9. This seems like a long process, and the digital media industry is known for its fast pace of change. How will Making Measurement Make Sense solutions be relevant when produced?

In the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative, industry leaders are working together to drive an enormous change. Its achievements are based on wide-reaching consensus and marketplace demand from marketers. It has required publishers and vendors to adopt new technologies. It has incorporated the insights of more than 150 industry participants. Its progress represents the pace of industry change when transparency, accountability, and consensus are championed. By definition, the timing of its solutions will be relevant to the marketplace.

10. Does the Making Measurement Make Sense initiative apply to video? If so, how so?

Yes, the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative applies to video. In fact, it's expected that the video viewable impression standard will be published by the end of 2013, and that this will be used as a foundation of GRP standards for digital and cross-media measurement. Video, however, faces distinct challenges in viewability measurement because additional measures must be accounted for such as: how long the video played and if there was sound.

11. Does the Making Measurement Make Sense initiative apply to mobile? If so, how so?

Yes, the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative will be extended into mobile advertising. Definitions of viewability will be developed specific to mobile ads present on both the web and in applications. Considerations may include, for example, how in-application ads are generally positioned on the device screen, not below the fold, and therefore will generally be more viewable than mobile web ads. The distinct technical needs and solutions for measuring mobile ad viewability will also be explored.

12. Does the Making Measurement Make Sense initiative apply to search? If so, how so?

Search is not directly affected by the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative or the development of the viewable impression. Search marketing transactions are based on user actions, not impressions served or seen.

13. Does Making Measurement Make Sense initiative apply to direct response advertising?

The [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative is focused on the notion of measurement for the purpose of brand building. However viewability measurement may help direct response advertisers optimize their campaigns. They will be able to measure, for example, how many ads were viewed compared to the number of actions taken, resulting in a new and valuable perspective on conversion rates. When viewable replaces served as the denominator in the calculation of conversions, the rate goes up thus signaling higher value for that inventory.

III. THE VIEWABLE IMPRESSION

1. What is the viewable impression, and why is it important?

Transitioning from a served impression standard to a viewable impression standard is the number one guiding principle in the [Five Guiding Principles of Digital Measurement](#) as defined by the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative.

The viewable impression is the key to making digital media measurement comparable to that of legacy media. In television, radio, and print, the consumer has the opportunity to see the ad. Television commercials are rendered on screens. Radio ads are broadcasted. This is not the case with digital media. Foundational industry technologies only measure if an ad has been served, not how fully it rendered on the screen or how long it was present. The viewable impression and the technological innovations that support it, such as [IAB SafeFrame](#), answer this need.

The Making Measurement Make Sense initiative has defined a viewable impression for display ads as an ad where 50% or more is rendered on the screen and is present for at least one second. Special considerations are being made for large-sized units such as the [IAB Rising Stars](#) and video. The viewable impression standard for display and video are expected to be finalized by the end of 2013. These measures will be the basis of the Digital GRP which will increase the comparability between digital media and television.

2. What is the process of developing the viewable impression?

The number one guiding principle in the [Five Guiding Principles of Digital Measurement](#) is to transition from a served impression standard to a viewable impression standard. Once this principle was established, business leaders participating in the initiative then proposed that the industry would define the viewable impression for display ads as an ad 50% in view for one second.

This definition was tested on live campaigns by the [Media Rating Council](#) (MRC), and was found to be sound. But it came to light that viewability was not measurable for many display ads. The primary reason for non-measurability was cross-domain iframes. The MRC published an [Advisory](#) suggesting that companies wait to transact on viewable impressions until this and other technical problems could be solved.

The IAB technology solution, [IAB SafeFrame](#), has the ability to solve the cross-domain iframe issue. It should be actively adopted by publishers and buy-side vendors. In tandem, the Emerging Innovations Task Force is working to finalize the viewable impression standard and incorporate viewability measures into the existing digital media measurement standards that MRC uses as audit criteria. The IAB Viewable Implementation and Implications Working Group, overseen by the IAB Ad Technology group, is exploring how the viewable impression should be technically implemented and the technical implications of viewable impressions on the industry.

The MRC is expected to lift its Advisory by the end of 2013. At this time, MRC will issue the new definition of a display ad impression that incorporates viewability and the industry will have a written standard for a display viewable impression. The MRC will then begin to use this standard in its audits, and the industry will have a green light to plan, transact, and track performance using viewable impressions. The video viewable impression standard is also expected to be finalized by the end of the year.

3. When will the Media Rating Council lift its Advisory, and what does it mean when it does?

The [Media Rating Council](#) (MRC) expects to lift its [Advisory](#) against transacting on viewable impressions by the end of 2013. By this time, it is expected many of the challenges to measuring viewability will be solved and the MRC will issue the new definition of a display ad impression that incorporates viewability. The industry will have a written standard for a display viewable impression. The MRC will then begin to use this standard in its audits, and the industry will have a green light to plan, transact, and track performance using viewable impressions. The video viewable impression standard is also expected to be finalized by the end of the year.

4. What are the technical challenges to measuring viewability?

In pilot tests exploring the definition of viewability at 50% of pixels for one second, it came to light that for many display ads viewability was not measurable. The primary reason for non-measurability was cross-domain iframes.

A cross-domain iframe is a window through which advertiser content is delivered in a display ad. It is self-contained, easy to deploy, and is completely isolated from the rest of the publisher website.

This containment means that functionality within the ad is unable to access any information on the page where it is served. This protects the publisher and the consumer from security risks, but also restricts the measurement of viewability by the ad itself. [IAB SafeFrame](#), an IAB ad technology solution, helps solve this challenge.

Another technical challenge is caused by the current means in which the industry filters out the non-intentional, fraudulent impressions. Fraud prevention is an ever-escalating race where any publication of one's methods for detection can be used by bad actors to circumvent that detection. But in the case of measurability, the variation in filters causes great variation in the number of impressions that can be measured for viewability, and thus widely different calculations of viewability rates. This is because viewability rates are calculated as number of viewable impressions divided by the number of impressions that could be measured for viewability. Non-human traffic must be filtered out before a rate of viewability can be accurately measured.

Technical challenges like these are what caused the [Media Rating Council](#) to release its [Advisory](#) against transacting on the viewable impression.

5. What's the problem with cross-domain iframes?

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6. What's the difference between not viewable and not measurable?

A not viewable impression was measured and was deemed not to fit the criteria of viewability. A not measurable impression was one in which the viewability was not ascertainable. One of the biggest challenges facing reliable viewability impression calculations is non-measurability caused by cross-domain iframes.

7. What is the accepted way to calculate a viewability rate?

Viewability rates are calculated as number of viewable impressions divided by the number of impressions that could be measured for viewability.

8. What is IAB SafeFrame?

The [IAB SafeFrame](#) initiative provides technology that safely allows for certain interactions between a publisher site and cross-domain iframes.

A cross-domain iframe is a window through which advertiser content is delivered in a display ad. It is self-contained, easy to deploy, and is completely isolated from the rest of the publisher website. This containment means the ad is unable to access any information about the page where it is served. This solution protects the publisher from security risks, but also restricts the measurement of viewability. Cross-domain iframes have caused viewability to not be measurable in a significant number of ads.

IAB SafeFrame helps solve this problem by allowing for communication about factors involving viewability, making viewability measurable and viewability measurements comparable between publishers, advertisers, and vendors. It also increases other types of web site-advertiser interactions that can enable advertising executions that are more attractive to consumers.

For more information about IAB SafeFrame and how to adopt, read this [IABlog post](#).

9. Who should adopt IAB SafeFrame? When? And what do they need to do?

The [Making Measurement Makes Sense](#) initiative encourages all owners of inventory to adopt [IAB SafeFrame](#), and all vendors selling viewable measures and rich media to have the external component enabled. Long tail members and other small publishers can work with their ad networks to adopt the measure. Likewise, all publishers can ask that their sell-side ad server implement IAB SafeFrame on their behalf. Adoption should take place as soon as possible to enable widespread availability of reliable viewability metrics. For more information about IAB SafeFrame and how to adopt, read this [IABlog post](#).

10. What is the position of the Making Measurement Make Sense initiative regarding the various vendor solutions for viewability measurement in market today?

The proposed viewable impression definition based on the work of the [Making Measurement Make Sense](#) initiative is grounded in ecosystem-wide consensus, transparency, and accountability. Currently the [Media Rating Council](#) (MRC) is overseeing the development of the viewable impression measurement standard.

Vendors are implementing viewability in the manner they see fit. Some implementations are very close to what the standard will likely become, and some are further away from it.

Several vendors have requested MRC audits of their methods for measuring viewable impressions. The MRC is legally required to honor such requests. Each company can only be validated against the MRC's own stringent methodological standards, the company's own disclosed measurement capabilities, and a variety of proposed measurement standards. The audits and accreditation provide disclosures about the strengths and weaknesses of specific measurement methods and technologies—valuable information for everyone in the market that is currently testing viewability.

On June 17, 2013, MRC published a summary of the capabilities of currently accredited viewable impression measurers. Click [here](#) to read it.

11. I'm confused, isn't the Media Rating Council already auditing and providing accreditation of viewable measurement solutions?

Yes. Several vendors have requested audits by the [Media Rating Council](#) (MRC) of their methods for measuring viewable impressions. The MRC is legally required to honor such requests. Each company can only be validated against the MRC's own stringent methodological standards, the company's own disclosed measurement capabilities, and a variety of proposed measurement standards. The audits and accreditation provide disclosures about the strengths and weaknesses of specific measurement methods and technologies—valuable information for everyone in the market that is currently testing viewability.

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12. What's the hold up? Why is it taking the Making Measurement Make Sense initiative longer to produce a viewability measure than vendors?

[Making Measurement Make Sense](#) is evolving industry-wide digital media measurement practices based on ecosystem-wide consensus, transparency, and accountability. The initiative requires the participation and agreement of a vast array of individuals from across the expansive advertising and media marketplace. The viewable impression standard is a foundational element of this change. Details of the guideline must be discussed and debated before they can be finalized. Vendors have no such restrictions.

13. As a publisher, won't I lose money if I move to viewable and it decreases my sellable inventory?

There may be some short-term revenue change. Initially the transition will require financial expenses and resources, as this shift in currency will be the catalyst of many changes. In addition it may decrease inventory. But the end result is expected not only to be higher CPMs, but also a greater investment in digital media from marketers. The upside potential is quite significant.

With the viewable impression, marketers will have assurance that their ad has had the opportunity to be seen, and they will also be encouraged to purchase digital media because of its comparability to legacy media. This is an essential shift in order for marketers to be able to more intelligently allocate their budgets between digital and other media, invest more confidently in digital media, and increase accountability, performance, and marketing budgets overall. Additionally, the brand impact of digital media will improve by definition, because unviewed impressions--that people could not see and therefore could not be influenced by--are removed from the calculation.

While change can be uncomfortable, the outcome is likely to be a stronger, bigger, more prosperous interactive advertising industry, and advertising industry overall.

From another perspective, if a buyer is asking for a transaction based on viewable impressions, and a publisher isn't transacting on them out of fear of losing inventory, that publisher will lose the sale. Publishers that aren't able to take the risk may lose out altogether. Publishers that move forward are likely to reap great reward.

14. My clients are requesting to transact on viewable impressions now. Is that advised since the standard is still being developed?

No. The [Media Rating Council](#) (MRC) has issued two Advisories both of which say, “It is still premature at this time to transact on viewability.” Until this [Advisory](#) is lifted, which is expected by the end of 2013, sellers are strongly recommended not transact based on viewable impressions.

Instead, use this time to prepare for the transition. Learn about the new dynamics of transacting on viewability. Adopt [IAB SafeFrame](#). Decide how you’ll evaluate viewability vendors. Update your business plan and your sales materials. Review the design of your website. Do experimental transactions to learn more. Be ready for the moment that the Advisory is lifted. The demand for viewability from marketers is great. When the industry gets the green light from the MRC, those publishers ready for viewable impressions are likely to have an advantage.

15. How should I evaluate existing viewable impression vendors?

A seller or buyer interesting in working with a vendor to measure viewable impressions should pursue a thorough understanding of the vendor’s processes, especially if this measurement is to be the basis of a transaction.

Some questions to ask:

- Are you audited by the [Media Rating Council](#)?
- What criteria do you use to determine if an impression is viewable?
- What are the limitations of your method? Can you measure viewability in spite of iframes?
- Does your technology report all three critical viewability metrics: viewable, not viewable, and not measurable? Note, the distinction between not viewable and not measurable—a not viewable impression was measured and was deemed not to fit the criteria of viewability; a not measurable impression was one in which the viewability was not ascertainable.
- Do you filter non-intentional/fraudulent traffic? If so, at what point in the process is this filtration applied, before or after the viewable rate has been calculated?

The answers to these questions will help publishers and advertisers understand the nature and value of services, and move toward productive conversations about viewable impression measurement and discrepancies.

16. After the viewable impression standard is finalized, will I be able to continue selling or buying advertising on served impressions?

The short answer is yes. But it is a question only the marketplace can answer. If buyers would like to transact based on served impressions, then publishers are free to do.