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Display Advertising Creative Format Guidelines: Quick Reference Guide

Creative Unit Name	Initial Dimensions (WxH in pixels)	Maximum Expanded Dimensions (WxH in pixels)	Max Initial File Load Size	Max Additional Initial File Load Size for OBA Self-Reg Compliance (Note 1)	Subsequent Max Polite File Load Size	Subsequent Max User-Initiated File Load Size	Subsequent Max User-Initiated Additional Streaming File Size	Max Video & Animation Frame rate	Maximum Animation Length (i.e. Flash™)	Max Video Length	Audio Initiation	Hot Spot	Z-index Range	Max Percentage of CPU Usage (Note 3)	Minimum Required Controls	Labeling Requirements, Font Size, etc.	Submission Lead-Time	Implementation Notes & Best Practices
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Universal Ad Package (UAP)	Medium Rectangle	300x250	Expansion not allowed for this unit	40 KB	5 KB	Not allowed for this unit	Not allowed for this unit	Not allowed for this unit	24 fps	15-sec	Video not allowed for this unit see "In-Banner Video" & Rich Media units below	Must be user-initiated (on click: mute/ unmute); default state is muted	Not to exceed 1/4 size of ad. Only initiated when cursor rests on hotspot for at least 1-sec. Must NOT initiate audio.	0 - 4,999	20%	N/A	Ad unit content must be clearly distinguishable from normal webpage content (i.e. ad unit must have clearly defined borders and not be confused with normal page content)	Min 3 business days before campaign start	Best Practice: For times when the user's browser does not support creative functionality (i.e. Flash™, HTML5), provide a standard image file.
	Rectangle	180x150	Expansion not allowed for this unit	40 KB	5 KB	Not allowed for this unit	Not allowed for this unit	Not allowed for this unit	24 fps	15-sec	Video not allowed for this unit see "In-Banner Video" & Rich Media units below	Must be user-initiated (on click: mute/ unmute); default state is muted	Not to exceed 1/4 size of ad. Only initiated when cursor rests on hotspot for at least 1-sec. Must NOT initiate audio.	0 - 4,999	20%	N/A	Ad unit content must be clearly distinguishable from normal webpage content (i.e. ad unit must have clearly defined borders and not be confused with normal page content)	Min 3 business days before campaign start	Best Practice: For times when the user's browser does not support creative functionality (i.e. Flash™, HTML5), provide a standard image file.
	Wide Skyscraper	160x600	Expansion not allowed for this unit	40 KB	5 KB	Not allowed for this unit	Not allowed for this unit	Not allowed for this unit	24 fps	15-sec	Video not allowed for this unit see "In-Banner Video" & Rich Media units below	Must be user-initiated (on click: mute/ unmute); default state is muted	Not to exceed 1/4 size of ad. Only initiated when cursor rests on hotspot for at least 1-sec. Must NOT initiate audio.	0 - 4,999	0.2	N/A	Ad unit content must be clearly distinguishable from normal webpage content (i.e. ad unit must have clearly defined borders and not be confused with normal page content)	Min 3 business days before campaign start	Best Practice: For times when the user's browser does not support creative functionality (i.e. Flash™, HTML5), provide a standard image file.
	Leaderboard	728x90	Expansion not allowed for this unit	40 KB	5 KB	Not allowed for this unit	Not allowed for this unit	Not allowed for this unit	24 fps	15-sec	Video not allowed for this unit see "In-Banner Video" & Rich Media units below	Must be user-initiated (on click: mute/ unmute); default state is muted	Not to exceed 1/4 size of ad. Only initiated when cursor rests on hotspot for at least 1-sec. Must NOT initiate audio.	0 - 4,999	0.2	N/A	Ad unit content must be clearly distinguishable from normal webpage content (i.e. ad unit must have clearly defined borders and not be confused with normal page content)	Min 3 business days before campaign start	Best Practice: For times when the user's browser does not support creative functionality (i.e. Flash™, HTML5), provide a standard image file.

Creative Unit Name	Initial Dimensions (WxH in pixels)	Maximum Expanded Dimensions (WxH in pixels)	Max Initial File Load Size	Max Additional Initial File Load Size for OBA Self-Reg Compliance (Note 1)	Subsequent Max Polite File Load Size	Subsequent Max User-Initiated File Load Size	Subsequent Max User-Initiated Additional Streaming File Size	Max Video & Animation Frame rate	Maximum Animation Length (i.e. Flash™)	Max Video Length	Audio Initiation	Hot Spot	Z-index Range	Max Percentage of CPU Usage (Note 3)	Minimum Required Controls	Labeling Requirements, Font Size, etc.	Submission Lead-Time	Implementation Notes & Best Practices
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Abbreviations: px = pixel sec = seconds

Notes:

1. Industry self-regulation guidelines have been established for companies who use online behavioral advertising (OBA): <http://www.aboutads.info/participants>
2. "User Initiation" defined: User initiation is the willful act of a user to engage with an ad. Users may interact by clicking on the ad, and/or rolling over an ad (or a portion of an ad). With respect to user initiation for the purposes of these guidelines, a roll-over is defined as a willful pause of the user's cursor on the target portion of the creative
3. Percentage of CPU usage is based on the Publisher defined benchmark end user-CPU for its audience. Please consult with each publisher individually for their benchmark number for testing.
4. Publisher implementation note: Universal Brand Package (UBP) ad units are designed to be the only rich media ad unit displayed on a webpage. Because of increased file load size, displaying a UBP ad unit with any other rich media unit may compromise page-load performance.



Glossary of Terminology

Note: The following definitions describe terminology as it specifically relates to interactive display advertising creative designed for Internet websites.

Term	Definition
Animation	A programmatically generated display of sequential images, creating the illusion that objects in the image are moving. Not digital video, as it relates to this document (see the definition for "Video").
Audio	The audible file that may accompany ads. Advertising audio should never play without user-initiation.
Banner	Also known as "display ads", banner advertisements are a form of graphical ads embedded into a webpage, typically including a combination of static/animated images, text and/or video designed to convey a marketing message and/or cause the user to take an action. Banner dimensions are typically defined by width and height, represented in pixels.
Between-the-Page	Also known as "interstitial" ads, between-the-page ad units display as a user navigates from one webpage to the next webpage. The ad appears after the user leaves the initial page, but before the target page displays on the user's screen. Typically, the ad is self-contained within its own browser window, but may also appear briefly as an overlay on the target page rather than in its own browser window.
Billboard	An IAB Universal Brand Package ad unit template designed with options for rich interactivity to display prominently inline with Publishers' webpage content. A distinct feature of the Billboard is a close button that a user may click to collapse the ad completely if the user doesn't want to see the ad.
Button 2	A small rectangular standard ad unit with the size 120x60 pixels.
Byte	A unit of digital information in computing and telecommunications that most commonly consists of eight bits. Historically, a byte was the number of bits used to encode a single character of text in a computer and for this reason it is the basic addressable element in many computer architectures.
Campaign	The advertising period in which an ad delivery strategy is executed.
CLEAR Ad Notice	CLEAR is an acronym for "Control Links for Education and Advertising Responsibly," a set of technical guidelines developed by the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) and the Network Advertising Initiative (NAI) to empower members of the online advertising community to communicate their presence and behavioral advertising targeting practices (if any) to consumers in a simple and direct manner. Derived from: http://www.iab.net/media/file/CLEAR_Ad_Notice_Final_20100408.pdf
Click	An interaction between a website visitor and the browser in which the website visitor uses a device, such as a mouse, to move the cursor (or pointer) to an active area of the screen and then deliberately interacts with that area by clicking a button on their device, triggering an event. In the case of touch-screen devices, the user "clicks" by touching the active area with their finger or a stylus.
Close X	A creative control that enables a user to close an ad (remove it from view) or to reduce an expanded panel back to its original size.
Collapse	An event where the expanded panel of an expandable ad reduces to its original size, or disappears completely.
Controls	Active elements of an ad that enable a user to control the advertising experience. Examples of common controls include the "Close X" button in an expandable ad or the Play/Pause/Mute buttons in a video player.
CPU	CPU is an acronym for Central Processing Unit, the key component of a computer system, which contains the circuitry necessary to interpret and execute program instructions.
CPU Usage %	A guideline for the amount of central processing power used to display advertising content compared to what's available on an individual's computer. CPU usage percentage can be measured directly, during the execution of an online ad. In addition to file size, the complexity of drawings, gradients, slow moving animations and detailed moving elements can affect the number of calculations the CPU must make for each frame.
CPU Spike	A brief increase in central processing power, sustained for no more than a few seconds, experienced while "heavy" content is loaded/executed.
Creative	An advertising unit created by an ad designer, in accordance with publisher specifications and guidelines, for the purpose of communicating a marketing message to that publisher's audience. One creative may consist of multiple files in various formats, such as standard images, animation, video, execution files (.html, .js, etc.) and other files that work together for an interactive experience.
Creative Dimensions	Measured in pixels, the width and height of an ad unit (WxH). The width is always the first dimension listed, followed by the height dimension (i.e. an ad that is 300x250 is 300 pixels wide by 250 pixels high).
Cursor	The graphical representation of a "pointer" on a user screen, controlled by the user's interaction with controlling devices such as a mouse, mouse pad, stylus or other input hardware.
Expandable Ads	Rich media ads that can be enlarged to dimensions beyond the initial dimensions of the placement they fill on the webpage. The user initiates expanding events, sometimes after the ad initially expands briefly on its own to catch the user's attention.
Expanded Dimensions	The secondary dimensions of an expanding ad unit (after the ad is expanded). Initial dimensions are fit to the dimensions of the placement. Then, either by auto-play or by user interaction, the ad unit expands to its secondary dimension.

Note: The following definitions describe terminology as it specifically relates to interactive display advertising creative designed for Internet websites.

Term	Definition
Filmstrip	An IAB Universal Brand Package ad unit template that is 350x3000 pixels, divided into five 350x600 pixel segments that scroll by user interaction through a 350x600 pixel placement "window."
Flash™	Software developed by Adobe used to build, generate, and play animated files. Also used to define the creative files generated by the program.
FPS	FPS is an acronym for Frames Per Second, the metric used to indicate the frame rate of animated or video creative content.
Frame Rate	The rate at which video frames or animated images display as the video or animated file executes, measured as the number of frames per second (fps).
GPU	GPU is an acronym for Graphics Processing Unit. In modern computers, the GPU handles graphical processing, decreasing the processing burden handled by the CPU.
Hot Spot	A "hot spot" is an area of an ad unit, which when rolled-over/rolled-on by the user's cursor, such rollover triggers an event (i.e. expand ad). The hotspot should never be larger than 1/4th the size of the original (collapsed) ad unit. The trigger event should not occur unless the user's cursor rests in the hotspot zone for at least 1-second. Hotspots should never initiate audio (audio should only be initiated by a click). When hotspots are used, the trigger event should stop immediately upon the user's cursor leaving the hotspot zone (i.e. ad collapses), and the ad unit should return to its original state.
In-Banner Video	A video delivered as part of (inside of) the display ad creative for a given placement rather than initiating the use of a video player.
Initial Dimension	The original width and height (in pixels) of an expanding ad. Expanding ads are designed to expand to dimensions larger than the initial dimensions.
Initial File Load	The size of the creative file(s) for an ad, measured in KB or MB, that load along with (inline with) the webpage files that load when a user first initiates a page load. The initial file load size of an ad is limited in order to preserve the page load performance and thus the user's web browsing experience.
Interstitial	See 'Between-the-Page'
Kilobyte (KB)	A multiple of the unit 'byte' for digital information, used to quantify computer memory or storage capacity equal to a 1,000 bytes (or technically, 2 ¹⁰ = 1,024 bytes). For the purposes of this document, this measure relates to creative file size. (See definition for Byte)
Labeling Requirements	The minimal requirements for distinguishing an online advertisement from regular webpage content.
Megabyte (MB)	A multiple of the unit 'byte' for digital information, used to quantify computer memory or storage capacity equal to 1,000 kilobytes (or technically, 2 ²⁰ = 1,048,576 bytes). For the purposes of this document, this measure relates to creative file size. (See definition for Byte)
Mouse-off	The act of a user moving the cursor away (off) from the hot spot of an ad. Mouse-off by a user may trigger an event, such as collapsing an expanding panel or stopping any animation in progress.
Mouse-over	The act of a user moving the cursor and resting it on the hot spot of an ad for at least one second. Mouse-over may trigger an event such as expanding the ad or initiating an animated sequence within the ad. Mouse-over may NOT initiate audio play.
OBA	Acronym for Online Behavioral Advertising. The collection of data from a particular computer or device regarding Web viewing behaviors over time and across non-Affiliate Web sites for the purpose of using such data to predict user preferences or interests in order to deliver advertising to that computer or device based on the preferences or interests inferred from such Web viewing behaviors. Online Behavioral Advertising does not include the activities of First Parties, Ad Delivery or Ad Reporting, or contextual advertising (i.e. advertising based on the content of the Web page being visited, a consumer's current visit to a Web page, or a search query). <u>Definition from page 10 of the Self-Regulatory Principles for Online Behavioral Advertising:</u> http://www.aboutads.info/resource/download/seven-principles-07-01-09.pdf
OBA Self-Regulation	Developed by leading industry associations to apply consumer-friendly standards to online behavioral advertising across the Internet, the Self-Regulatory Program consists of seven Principles that correspond with the "Self-Regulatory Principles for Online Behavioral Advertising" proposed by the Federal Trade Commission in February 2009 that also address public education and industry accountability issues raised by the Commission. <u>Definition derived from page 1 of the Self-Regulatory Principles for Online Behavioral Advertising:</u> http://www.aboutads.info/resource/download/seven-principles-07-01-09.pdf
Overlay	An ad unit that displays over the webpage content briefly when initiated.
Pause	A video, animation or audio control that enables users to stop the video, animation, or audio from playing until the user is ready to resume play.
Pixel (as a unit of measure)	The smallest unit of measure for graphical elements in digital imagery, used as the standard unit of measure for ad creative (i.e. 300x250 pixels). Pixels may also represent x/y coordinates relevant to a given space, such as the browser window, an application workspace or the user's computer screen. (See also "Tracking Pixel")
Play	A video, animation or audio control that enables a user to initiate (or avoid initiating) the video, animation or audio of an ad.
Polite file load	Withholding a portion of the total ad creative file size (besides any initial file load size) from loading on a page until publisher content has loaded.
Pop-up Ad	Any advertising experience where visiting a website in an initial browser window initiates a secondary browser window to deliver an ad impression directly above the initial browser window.

Note: The following definitions describe terminology as it specifically relates to interactive display advertising creative designed for Internet websites.

Term	Definition
Portrait	An IAB Universal Brand Package ad unit template that uses up to three interactive modules chosen (by the ad designer) from a variety of modular application options in a 350x1050 pixel space.
Progress Bar	A video or animation control that shows users the progression of the video or animation in relation to its total duration.
Progressive Load Video	A distribution method for serving video files in which the video file downloads progressively into the cache of a user's computer, much the same way images and other content elements are downloaded.
Pushdown	An IAB Universal Brand Package ad unit template designed for rich interaction in a space similar to, but larger than, an expanding leaderboard, with initial dimensions of 970x90 pixels and expanded dimensions of 970x415 pixels. When the ad is expanded, it "pushes" page content down rather than displaying over the top of page content as most expandable ads do.
Retraction	An event programmed into an expandable ad that causes the ad to be reduced to its original dimensions (i.e. the expanded portion of the ad retracts).
Rising Stars	See 'Universal Brand Package'
Rollover	The willful pause of the user's cursor on the target portion of the creative (the "hot spot"), such pause lasting at least one second in duration, before an action may be initiated by the ad (i.e. trigger an expand event, etc.). This one-second pause/delay requirement prevents unwanted, user-initiated actions and false reporting of user engagement. Rollover may NOT initiate audio.
Sidekick	An IAB Universal Brand Package ad unit template initially displayed as one of three standard ad unit dimensions, but upon user initiation, "pushes" publisher content to the left to display a canvas of up to 970x550 pixels full of rich interaction.
Skyscraper	A standard ad unit with dimensions of 160x600 pixels.
Slider	An IAB Universal Brand Package Ad Unit template designed with an overlay "slider" (90 pixels high) that rests at the bottom of a publisher's page and when prompted by user interaction, slides page content to the left for a canvas of 970x550 pixels full of rich interaction possibilities for user engagement.
Standard Ad Units	A set of ad specifications for standard image or animated in-page ad units that establish a framework for advertising inventory and webpage design.
Streaming Video	A distribution method for serving video files such that the video is played over a persistent connection between the browser and the ad server. Versions of the file at different levels of compression (quality) can be served based on detection of the user's Internet bandwidth.
Submission Lead Time	The number of business days (non-weekend/non-holiday days) prior to a campaign going live in which a publisher needs to validate advertiser submitted creative(s) for a campaign.
SWF	Acronym for Shockwave Flash™. ".swf" is the file naming extension used for animated files compiled using Adobe Flash™ software.
Tracking Pixel	A 1x1 pixel-sized transparent image that provides information about an ad's placement. In many cases, a tracking pixel is used to notify an ad tracking system that either an ad has been served (or not served, in some cases) or that a specific webpage has been accessed. Also known as: beacon, web beacon, action tag, redirect, etc.
Universal Ad Package (UAP)	A set of four ad units (728x90, 300x250, 160x600 and 180x150 pixels) offered by UAP-compliant publishers as a 'package' where ads in these four formats are used collectively across the publisher's site, enabling advertisers to reach more of the publisher's audience.
Universal Brand Package (UBP) Display Ad Units	IAB invited companies and individuals to submit ad templates designed to drive brand equity. Six templates were chosen to be validated by the market. Universal Brand Package Display Ad Units are designed to be the only ad on a page. Their file load limits are larger than for other ads, so not only would a Universal Brand Package Ad Unit overshadow any other ads on the page but they would also compromise the performance of the page should other rich media ads be allowed to load simultaneously.
User	An anonymous person who uses a web browser to access Internet web content.
User Initiation	The willful act of a user to engage with an ad. Users may interact by clicking on the ad, and/or rolling over an ad (or a portion of an ad). When a user engages the ad using a rollover action, the user's cursor must rest on the hotspot for at least one second before any action may be initiated in the ad. See the definition for rollover for more information.
Video (aka "Digital Video")	In online advertising, the digital recording of a physical event or animated files that have been transcribed into a digital video format.
Volume	A control that enables users to adjust the audio output of ad creative. Volume controls should always allow adjustment down to zero (0) output.
Z-index	Enumerated layers of elements and content on a publisher's webpage. Consideration of the z-element in page content design such as navigation, imagery, and ads is important for providing a seamless experience when page content overlaps (i.e. an expanding ad with a z-index that is lower [on the z-index scale] than navigational elements may give the appearance that page navigational elements are showing through the expanded portions of the ad).



Z-Index Guidelines

Z-Index Range	Content Type	Details
< 0	Background Elements	None
0 - 4,999	Main Content, Standard Ads	Standard ad tags in place with regular content. Includes OBA Self Regulation Message (CLEAR Ad Notice)
5,000 - 1,999,999	Expanding Advertising	The entire expandable ad unit should be set within this range
2,000,000 - 2,999,999	Floating Advertising	Over The Page ads (OTP's)
3,000,000 - 3,999,999	Pop-up Elements	Chat windows, message notifications
4,000,000 - 4,999,999	Non-anchored Floating Elements	Survey recruitment panels
5,000,000 - 5,999,999	Expanding Site Navigation Elements	Drop down navigation, site warnings, etc. Only the expanding portion of navigation elements should be included on this level.
6,000,000+	Full-page Overlays	Full-window Over-the-Page (OTP) ads and Between-the-Page ads IF they cover page content

Note: ad designers should consult each publisher individually for their specific Z-index guidelines



Pop-Up Guidelines

Def.	Any advertising experience where visiting a website in an initial browser window initiates a secondary browser window to deliver an ad impression directly above the initial browser window.				
Freq.	Each user should be exposed to no more than one pop-up ad for each visit to an online site.				
Labeling	<p>Pop-ups should be clearly labeled with a header for the browser window with: 1. the network or advertiser name, 2. publisher name, and 3. browser type (if applicable).</p> <p>Example: "Advertising.com - CBS Market Watch - Microsoft Internet Explorer"</p>				
Specifications	Unit Type	Dimensions (WxH in Pixels)	Maximum File Load Size	Audio/Video Initiated	Close Box
	Pop-Up	300x250	40 KB Initially 100 KB Subsequent Polite File Load 2.2 MB for User-Initiated File Load	User-Initiated	Controlled by browser
	Pop-Up Large	550x480	Unlimited User-Initiated Streaming		



Delisted Ad Units

As of February 28, 2011

The following ad units have been retired as they are no longer commonly bought and offered throughout the market. Dimensions listed are the original (collapsed) dimensions of those previously used for for both standard and expanding ad units. Publishers may continue to offer and promote these ad units, however the IAB will no longer provide guidance on their use.

WxH (in pixels)	Ad Unit Name
250 x 250	Square Pop-Up
240 x 400	Vertical Rectangle
336 x 280	Large Rectangle
300x100	3:1 Rectangle
720x300	Pop-Under
468 x 60	Full Banner
234 x 60	Half Banner
120 x 90	Button 1
120 x 240	Vertical Banner
125 x 125	Square Button
120 x 600	Skyscraper

IAB Display Creative Guidelines Release Notes

These updated Display Creative Guidelines are the work-product of an exhaustive 9-month cross-industry working group effort to bring the industry inline with the creative demands of brand advertisers. The IAB had two overriding goals for this update:

1) Issue guidelines that empower creative shops to exercise the limits of their imagination, only tempering creativity as it relates to positive consumer experience; and

2) Further simplify the digital supply chain by making these new guidelines easily accessible, adoptable and understandable.

While the accommodation of every individual concern is beyond reach, near universal approval of these specifications and guidelines was achieved by the Working Group participants. Despite a few inevitable compromises, these updated guidelines represent a quantum leap forward— they embrace and foster creativity in ways never before possible. These guidelines should empower marketers and their creative shops to re-imagine online advertising, the result of which will represent a new generation of rich interactivity and "sticky" consumer experiences.

Availability and Adoption

Please be advised that these IAB guidelines represent an industry recommendation. Accordingly, not all publishers, nor all IAB member companies, adopt these guidelines without modification relative to their own unique business offering. Marketers, creative designers and media agencies are strongly advised to consult directly with publishers in order to obtain their exact creative specifications.

Following the release of these Guidelines, the IAB will begin work on an update to its Creative Specs Database (www.iab.net/creativespecs) – the update is expected to be final in Q1 of 2012. The Creative Specs Database allows qualified agencies and their creative partners access to individual creative specs made available by participating publishers.

Balancing File Load Size with Consumer Experience

Balancing the requirements of advertisers and publishers while ensuring that the consumer experience remains positive were considerations that heavily influenced these guidelines. Two important factors were: creative file demands and page load performance.

A separate IAB working group studying the effects of ad load performance on consumer behavior has offered valuable insights based on real research surrounding page abandonment and other effects of compromised page load performance. Influenced by this research and the concrete rationalization that consumers visit websites primarily to consume site content, it was decided that initial file load sizes be constrained across the board. However, to compensate for the trend towards more rich media, two additional categories for file size loading were added: subsequent polite load and subsequent user-initiated load.

In creating the new categories for subsequent file loads, creative limitations are lifted once a user indicates their intent to engage with an ad (i.e. after a click or mouse-over). In adopting these new specs, creative shops should design ads that progressively load content in reaction to a user's engagement with the ad. The good news is that almost all publishers agree, once the user has shown their intent to engage with an ad, the page experience should yield to the ad's requirements for additional file weight to satisfy creative demands.

CPU Usage as a Gating Performance Factor

Ads that load faster can help web pages load faster, leading to higher user satisfaction, lower page abandonment, and most importantly for agencies and marketers, more brand engagement and increased opportunities for ads to yield higher conversions and click through rates.

Ads that use too much of a consumer's processing power, load slower. Accordingly, limits on the percentage of CPU usage were introduced in this update to the guidelines. Users' computers are limited in how much processing power is available for loading webpage elements and ads. The diversity of computers currently in use complicates the identification of a common CPU percentage across the industry— as such, creative designers should consult individual publishers about benchmark testing requirements based on the attributes of their unique audience.

Frame Rate Increase from 18 to 24-fps

The previous guideline for "Maximum Animation Frame Rate" was 18 frames-per-second (fps). While some in the industry argued for an increase to 30-fps, several research studies were presented to the working group that showed a significant increase in CPU usage when loading a file at 30-fps. Conversely, the increase from 18-fps to 24-fps was nominal. Another research study presented to the working group noted that for small-scale video playback (i.e. video played in a display ad on a computer screen), the human eye can't distinguish a quality difference between video played at 24-fps vs. 30-fps.

Increased Video Play Time

The previous guideline for "Maximum Video Length" for Rich Media Units was set at 15-seconds. In order to better facilitate the transition of television commercial content online, it was decided to increase this maximum to 30-seconds.

Animation Length vs. Video Length

In this update, the previous guideline for “Animation Length” was divided into two sub-categories in order to help highlight the distinction between non-video animation (i.e. Flash™ effects) and video (moving picture images). Traditional non-video animation often uses a different technology than video and these updated guidelines now allow for different display lengths for each.

To enable the easy transition of TV broadcast commercials online, these updated guidelines now allow for a full 30-seconds of video animation in-banner. The majority of TV broadcast commercials are 30-seconds in length. As such, when incorporating broadcast TV video into display ads, additional non-video animation (i.e. Flash or HTML5 effects) may be required to gracefully load the video player and provide additional user interface controls and features. Accordingly, these guidelines propose a distinction between video animation and non-video animation, allowing 15 seconds of animation to accompany a 30-second video ad.

Z-Index Range Use Recommendations

The Z-index represents layers of elements on a webpage. When ad elements and other page elements are layered incorrectly, proper display of either page content or ad content (or both) may be compromised. The accidental “collision” of competing elements on a webpage that share the same Z-index value leads to a poor consumer experience, in the form of distorted or mangled images and text. Accordingly, the establishment of an industry accepted z-index hierarchy and associated numerical range is crucial to solving the occurrence of collisions. Please note that adoption of these new Z-index guidelines by all publishers will take time. Creative designers are advised to consult directly with publishers for their individual Z-index guidelines.

Submission Lead Time

In order to ensure timely and smooth campaign launches, this new guideline was added to allow publishers the minimum time required to test ad creative on their webpages prior to campaigns going live. Time, money and even user engagement can be lost when an ad doesn’t display properly on a webpage at the start of a campaign. Minimum submission lead times recommended in this document are an important step to improving the process for releasing a quality ad experience on publisher’s webpages. Advertisers, creative designers and media agencies are strongly advised to consult directly with publishers for their individual submission lead-times.

HTML5 and Flash™

Prior to the wide adoption of devices like the iPhone™ and iPad™, Flash™ formatted creative was widely accepted and easily displayed across the industry. In today’s market, adjustments have to be made to accommodate ads across multiple display devices. HTML5 has provided one solution, but is not yet widely adopted and requires different creative specifications than Flash formatted creative. Requests were made to call out a separate category of creative specs to accommodate HTML5 ads, but for this release of creative guidelines, it was decided to keep the specs “technology neutral.” An addendum for HTML5 for display advertising best practices is currently being pursued.

The Super Leaderboard

Added as a provisional unit in January 2012, the Super Leaderboard is the result of industry demand for a wider Leaderboard option. The industry has seen an increase in wider screens since the IAB Leaderboard was introduced in 2003. At 728x90, the Leaderboard spanned page content sufficiently for the smaller screens of the day. Today, however, site content is designed for wider screens and the traditional 728x90 Leaderboard leaves awkward blank spaces to either side of the ad. The 970x90 Super Leaderboard spans the width of publisher content designed for today’s wider screens. It provides more brand space and eliminates the awkward blank spaces that surround the narrower traditional Leaderboard. The 970 width also mirrors the width of the IAB Pushdown and Billboard units and, as such, simplify the creative development of these units. An optional 970x66 unit enables publishers to offer something more subtle while still allowing for brand space and is the same size as the resting state of the alternate IAB Pushdown. If adoption proves successful, this new 970-wide unit will eventually replace the 780-wide Leaderboard. The 780x90 Leaderboard is still endorsed by the IAB and will remain so until industry adoption is obvious.

Delisted Units

In a move to embrace the enhanced creative requirements of brand marketers, the industry has created and adopted several new rich media ad units—the “IAB Universal Brand Package”. Other units whose usage has decreased over time have been retired. Accordingly, these delisted units are identified herein. It should be noted that while some companies may still promote and use delisted units, the IAB no longer provides guidance on their use and implementation.

Constructive Feedback Welcome

In updating these guidelines, the IAB and its member companies have made every reasonable attempt to include the perspectives of the entire digital supply chain. We realize however, that not every party involved in this vast ecosystem will have had an opportunity for individual influence. As such, we invite you to provide your constructive feedback. Most importantly, **we are interested in hearing directly from the creative designers, creative directors and creative technologists that use these guidelines. Please email constructive feedback and input to chris.mejia@iab.net.** When providing your feedback, be sure to mention the exact category name of the guideline(s) for which you are referencing in addition to real-world use-case examples. We’ll do our best to consider your input when making future updates to these guidelines. Thank you!

About the IAB

The Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) is comprised of more than 500 leading media and technology companies that are responsible for selling 86% of online advertising in the United States. The IAB educates marketers, agencies, media companies and the wider business community about the value of interactive advertising. Working with its member companies, the IAB evaluates and recommends guidelines and practices and fields critical research on interactive advertising. Founded in 1996, the IAB is headquartered in New York City with a Public Policy office in Washington, D.C. For more information, please visit www.iab.net.