

Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa

Reporting Standards

Digital Publications

Version 3 2015

Issued 1 October 2015

SECTION A

A1 INTRODUCTION

These rules describe how media owners report Digital Publications. We have listed below the key principles that underpin the rules. The Reporting Standards are written as if the primary user is the media owner ('you'). ABC is referred to as 'we'.

A2 KEY PRINCIPLES

1. A Digital Publication is not a website.
2. A Digital Publication does not have to have an associated print product.
3. Access to the Digital Publication is restricted, either by a paywall or registration gateway with a password requirement.
4. The Digital Publication must be published and available to the end user.
5. Editorial content can be changed.
6. Advertising (by advertiser) must be common within an edition, and once published remain unchanged (except for dynamically served advertising).
7. All transactions must be bona fide.
8. Once certified, you must report on a continuous basis.
9. Digital Publication audits must be carried out by ABC staff auditors.
10. To be reported on one certificate all editions must be branded in common.

A3 DEFINITION OF A DIGITAL PUBLICATION

A Digital Publication must:

1. Be edited, designed, and contain date-stamped content.
2. Be published periodically on a regular and known frequency. e.g. 6 days a week/weekly/monthly etc.
 - a. If there is not an identifiable and regular publishing frequency then the period of measurement will not be per issue, but will default to the number of days the publication is available. i.e. if available every day then the number of days would be 365 per year (366 in a leap year): or if only available on Sundays then the number of days per year would be 52. Where this is the case the rules will refer to 'daily' in parenthesis.

3. Be presented in a navigation format such that the publication is divided into defined pages of content presented together.

4. If accessed on a web site, be restricted either by a “pay wall” or a “registration” gateway with a password requirement. This does not prevent Digital Publications from including links to free to access website content.

SECTION B – METRICS

B1 METRICS

The following metric must be reported:

The metric for Magazine Digital Publications is **Circulation**.

The metric for Newspapers and Others is **Publication Active View**.

B1.1 CIRCULATION

1. Copies of a Digital Publication are opted in – either by request or payment.
2. Copies free to the end user or bundled must be de-duplicated.
3. The price paid for the Digital Publication (including if free) must be clear and conspicuous. If not then it must be claimed as a “bundled” copy.

B1.1.1 CIRCULATION TYPES –

Circulation paid by the end user

- a. Single copy sale- sale of a single issue in a single transaction
- b. Individual subscription – sale for a defined period, a minimum of 2 issues (or 2 days) in a single transaction

Circulation free to the end user

- c. Individually requested – a single issue request, from the end user within the last year.
- d. Individually requested - multiple – a single copy request for a defined period, a minimum of 2 issues.
- e. Free Society non-requested – to an individual entitled to receive the Digital Publication as part of their paid society membership.
- f. Bulk requested - multiple – a request for a defined period, a minimum of 2 issues requested by a business/organisation on behalf of its employees where the email address of each end user is obtained.

Other Circulation

- g. Bundled – a single copy or subscription sold as part of a package of products and/or services, and where the price paid for the Digital Publication is not clear and conspicuous.

B1.2 PUBLICATION ACTIVE VIEW (PAV)

1. Definition: A single copy of a publication actively opened by a device for viewing.
2. Principles:
 - a. A minimum of one page of an issue (or a day) opened/served on/to a device.
 - b. Distinct action/event by the end user to view. Note: a single action/request which results in both the content being downloaded/made available **and** the automatic opening of a page of the publication is not considered a distinct action/event. A further distinct action would be required such as opening a second page.
 - c. The view request must be on an issue by issue (or daily) basis.

SECTION C – REQUIREMENTS

C1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. You must register to report Digital Publications in advance of the issues (or days) to be claimed. This is to allow us time to inspect your systems and assess their suitability for audit, as well as allocate resource to enable the real time audit of the claimed digital publications' availability. We will confirm whether the Digital Publication has a recognised and regular publishing frequency or not.
2. You give us permission to contact any Digital Publication purchaser / end user at any point for further verification.
3. If non-dynamically served advertising (by advertiser) changes or there is a version not carrying advertising, this constitutes a different edition.
 - a. For circulation, this means the total average circulation by type and price. However, if the publisher is unable to report the circulation of each edition then a breakdown using an alternative agreed metric, for example Publication Active View, may be reported instead.
 - b. For Publication Active Views, this means the number of PAVs by edition.
4. You must tell us the planned publishing dates in advance and any subsequent changes to that schedule.
5. We will need to check on an ongoing basis that issues (or content) are available for download or view. You must therefore provide us with free access to all issues (or days) and editions of the Digital Publication.

C2 PUBLICATION ACTIVE VIEW REQUIREMENTS

1. A device may make a number of active views of an issue (or day), either together or at different times. Only one active view per device per issue (or day) can be claimed and reported.
2. You must be able to provide evidence of active views by browser.

C3 CIRCULATION REQUIREMENTS

1. An individual's copy can only be claimed if they have opted in – either by request or payment. The only exception is where a member of a society receives the Digital publication as part of their paid society membership.
2. For all free and bundled copies you must obtain details sufficient to de-duplicate multiple free copies to any one individual. This might be by obtaining email addresses for all.
3. For paid copies you must be able to provide evidence of the sale.
4. If the Digital Publication is sold as part of a package of goods and/or services then the price for ABC purposes will be indicated by the offer. If the price for the Digital Publication is not clear and conspicuous then it will be reported as a 'bundle copy'.
5. For free requests you must be able to provide evidence of the request.
6. Free end users must be sent an alert (for example by email) informing them that each issue is available:
 - a) If an alert to a free end user is undeliverable, you must remove the end user from your circulation claim, or ensure that the delivery details are corrected within 90 days.
 - b) You must include a specified ABC address on each alert.

7. For each issue (or day) in the reporting period you must be able to provide:

a. A circulation list that includes all end users', for example email addresses (except for copies sold through 3rd party vendors that do not provide this information – see b below).

The list must include coding to identify the type of circulation each copy is claimed as (for example paid single copy subscription) and the price paid for a single copy.

Each issue's free and bundled circulation must be de-duplicated to arrive at the claim by circulation type.

b. For all copies sold via 3rd party vendors (that do not provide end user details) evidence from the vendor of the number of copies by circulation type (for example paid single copy sale) and price paid.

8. You cannot claim back issues (or days) of Digital Publication copies that are free to the end user.

SECTION D – REPORTING

D1 GENERAL REPORTING

1. You must submit your Digital Publication claim to us by the submission deadline date.
2. Reporting is either 3-monthly, 6-monthly or 12-monthly depending on the frequency of the publication.
3. A statement detailing how advertising is served (e.g. static and/or dynamic) and a statement detailing if there is an edition not carrying advertising will be reported on the certificate.
4. You will report the following, which will be broken out on the certificate:
 - a. The number of issues published in the period, or if there is not an identifiable and regular publishing frequency then the number of available days will be reported along with a note to that effect.

D2 PUBLICATION ACTIVE VIEW REPORTING

1. Average Publication Active Views per issue (or day).
2. Only one count of an active view per issue (or day) can be reported.

D3 CIRCULATION REPORTING

You will report average total circulation for the period by circulation type and price per copy as follows:

- 50% and above
- Below 50%
- Bundle
- Free

Note: This analysis is a per copy (or day) price. So a total subscription price would be divided by the number of issues (or days) in the subscription period to arrive at the price per copy.