

Glossary of Digital Media Terms

DIGITAL MEDIA GLOSSARY

A/B Testing

A testing technique that enables you to test one thing against another. i.e. (A) versus (B). You could test creative, images, copy, CTA's, targeting, ad units etc. If (A) works better, it will become the 'Champion' you will then drop (B) and put another 'Challenger' against it.

Ad Blocker

Software on a user's browser which prevents advertisements from being displayed.

Ad Network

An aggregator or broker of advertising inventory for many sites. Think of them like a sales representative for hundreds of websites within a network. For example, the Google Display Network (GDN).

Ad Serving

This technology is used by advertisers to serve ads onto a publisher's website. It is critical to measurement of campaigns and more advanced options offer the ability to serve dynamic content (see DCO).

Ad Units

Types of ad formats or templates, each with different specifications e.g. MREC, Leader board, Skyscraper, Carousel, Video etc.

AI

Artificial Intelligence is intelligence demonstrated by machines. In digital marketing machine learning is being applied to social media listening, ad campaign optimisation and conversational commerce through chatbots.

Anonymous data

Defined under GDPR as "data rendered anonymous in such a way that the data subject is not or no longer identifiable". The classification of anonymous requires that the anonymisation is irreversible.

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API

Application Programming Interface. A methodology to allow data transmission from one platform to another. For a martech/adtech solution, generally refers to a documented set of functions by which other technologies can integrate for the purposes of inserting data or extracting data.

APPLE – AppTrackingTransparency

Apple mandates that the AppTrackingTransparency framework must be used if an app collects data for the purposes of tracking individuals across apps and websites. The framework prompts a user to opt-in before tracking is allowed. Some tracking methods are disabled at a technology level by Apple – the IDFA returns a value of all zeros if the user is not opted-in – while others, such as hashed email address, are mentioned in their User Policy and Data Use guidelines but not enforced at a technical level at this stage.

APPLE – ITP

Intelligent Tracking Prevention. Apple's methodology, used in the Safari browser, to block third party cookies and other tracking methods. In some cases, Safari will remove first party cookies and items from Local Storage if they deem they have been used to facilitate a tracking use case. See also Link Decoration and CNAME.

APPLE – SKAdNetwork

StoreKit Ad Network. Apple's methodology for privacy-first advertising measurement, using aggregate data instead of user-level data. SKAdNetwork will be the only compliant measurement methodology available for users that do not opt-in to AppTrackingTransparency.

ATS

A competing third-party cookie replacement standard proposed by LiveRamp and built on a similar methodology to UID 2.0 leveraging hashed emails as an alternative tracking identifier.

Attribution

A category of methodologies used to measure marketing & advertising performance, in order to determine the most effecting method of driving towards a campaign goal such as a mobile app install or an ecommerce purchase. Advertising attribution is typically reliant on third-party identifiers such as third-party cookies and MAIDs due to the nature of journeys that go across websites and apps.

Attribution window

A boundary of time within which a certain campaign is determined to have played a meaningful role in achieving the campaign goal. In the past, attribution windows have varied by vertical in alignment with their typical customer acquisition journeys, but Apple's restrictions have meant only short windows (1 day, or in some cases 7 days) remain feasible.

Authenticated

Refers to a logged in or known user state, where a set of data is available to identify an individual rather than a device – such as an email or phone number rather than a cookie or a MAID.

Behavioural Targeting

A technique used by online publishers and advertisers to increase the effectiveness of their campaigns. Behavioural targeting uses information collected on an individual's web browsing behaviour such as the pages they have visited or the searches they have made to select which advertisements to be displayed to that individual.

Brand Safe

In the past an advertiser would buy a specific placement in a specific publication. However, in programmatic media the advertiser does not know the exact website or placement of their ad. There have been examples of banks advertising credit cards on porn sites and brands being shown in front of ISIS videos on YouTube. This has driven the rise of premium programmatic offerings where the websites in the network are checked to be brand safe.

CCPA

California Consumer Privacy Act. Introduced in May 2018 with the goal of empowering California residents with data rights. While similar in many ways to GDPR, the philosophical goal of CCPA is to create transparency for Californian residents.

CDP

Customer Data Platform. A persistent, real-time, unified customer database that is accessible to other systems. Typically, CDPs have flexible integration methods that allow for data to be ingested from anywhere (via tag, SDK, API or in batch) and distributed to anywhere (via pre-packaged integrations or via API). Will also usually support both client-side and server-side data collection & distribution, removing reliance on cookies.

Client-side

Also referred to as "front-end". Refers to tracking, measurement or interactions that happen directly on a user's device, such as in the web browser or on their phone. Data is sent directly from a user's device through to the martech or adtech vendor.

CNAME

A Canonical Name record, used to map one domain to another. Used by some martech and adtech vendors to allow their cookies to be set as first party (e.g. analytics.yourbrand.com instead of analytics.vendorbrand.com). Recently identified as a circumvention tactic and targeted by Apple in ITP.

Contextual Targeting

A means of publishers targeting advertising solely based on their own first party data, and without the need to leverage advertiser data or third-party cookies. For example, allowing advertisers to target "Car Intenders" based on content consumed and on-site behaviour.

Cookie

A small packet of information, localised to your device, containing some piece of data related to your device or your behaviour.

Cookie – First Party Cookie

A cookie placed on a website directly by the owner of the website. There are many uses, including remembering user preferences/settings, shopping carts, and to tie together user sessions for the purposes of analytics.

Cookie - Third-party cookie

A cookie placed on a website by someone other than the owner of the website. Generally used for cross-site tracking, and in particular, adtech.

CPRA

The California Privacy Rights Act (CPRA) was passed into law in November 2020. It works as an addendum to the CCPA – strengthening the rights of California residents and tightening business regulations on the use of personal information (PI).

CRO

Conversion Rate Optimisation. A conversion rate is how many people go from just browsing on a website to providing their data and becoming a lead, or ultimately buying. Optimising aims to make adjustments (often through testing) to the ads, the landing page and the UX to ensure the highest conversion rate.

Data - First party data

Data collected directly by a brand about customers & prospects. Includes data captured through behavioural interactions, transactions, subscription data, social data and intent data from owned properties.

Data - Second party data

Data collected by another brand and shared via a data sharing agreement. Typically, the sources will be the same as first party data, with the caveat that it is owned and collected by another brand. Often used to increase data scale, reach new audiences and predict behaviours.

Data - Third party data

Data collected by data brokers & aggregators, collected by various means and made available for purchase. Typically, third party data is made available via marketplaces vs the bespoke relationship required for second party data, and the quality of the data sources may vary significantly depending how the aggregator sourced the data. Often used to increase data scale, reach new audiences and predict behaviours.

Data - Zero party data

Data intentionally and proactively shared with a brand. May include explicit preference centre data and other data provided by users with the expectation it will be used for a more personalised, relevant experience.

Data broker

A supplier of third-party data.

Data Lake

A repository of unprocessed data. Data may be of mixed types: structured & unstructured. Typically requires larger storage requirements and is more flexible than a data warehouse environment. A data lake provides avenues for exploration and data may be loaded without a specific purpose in mind.

Data Warehouse

A repository of structured, processed data built for a particular purpose. Typically serves specific business needs. Data is not loaded to the data warehouse until a use for it has been defined.

DCO

Dynamic Content (Creative) Optimisation engine is display advertising technology that creates personalised ads based on data about the view at the moment of ad serving. e.g. if you have just visited a website, the content in the ad might change, if you are in a certain segment the content will change, if the weather hits a certain temperature the ad content will dynamically change.

Deep linking

A methodology used to allow links to open an app and take you directly to the product / topic of interest. Used to ensure a seamless user journey from a user clicking on an ad through to being able to complete a purchase, rather than a broken journey where they need to manually navigate through to find the product / topic of interest. An additional complexity is added if the user does not yet have the app installed – this was previously possible through a technique called deferred deep linking, allowing the user to resume the journey once the app is installed, but has been impacted as part of Apple's IDFA changes.

Deterministic matching

Refers to the process of identifying a device or an individual based on a pseudonymous or known identifier like a MAID, cookie or an email address. A common example of deterministic matching is Facebook Custom Audiences, where businesses upload lists of customer email addresses in order to target them within the Facebook ecosystem.

Device ID

A generic term often used interchangeably with MAIDs. Sometimes used to categorise any pseudonymous identifier that represents a device, rather than an individual, including cookies and MAIDs.

Display Ads

A form of online advertising where an advertiser's message is shown on a destination web page, the ad units are generally a Leader board, Skyscraper, MREC.

DMP

Data Management Platform. Used to collect and combine behavioural and customer data for the purposes of segmentation and audience creation, which are then distributed to other platforms for the purposes of targeting. May support multiple identifiers, but typically rely on third-party cookies as the primary means of identifying users.

DSP

Demand Side Platform is one of the three key technologies used in the buying & selling programmatic advertising ecosystem. It allows the advertiser and / or their agency to bid for advertising in an automated fashion. This is where the advertiser can manage their campaigns, setup automated bids etc. They plug into the Ad Exchange and SSP.

ELT

Extract-Load-Transform. Refers to a model of allowing the target system to do the transformation in place. Generally used for larger, unstructured or mixed structure data sets. Aligns philosophically with the Data Lake approach.

ETL

Extract-Transform-Load. Refers to a model of transforming data before loading it into the target system. Generally used for relational & structured data sets. Aligns philosophically with the Data Warehouse approach.

Expandable

Expandable banners. A banner ad which can expand after a user clicks on it or after a user moves his / her cursor over the banner.

Eyeballs

Slang term for audience. The number of people who view a certain website or advertisement. YouTube often refer to their viewers as 'active eyeballs' as they are choosing to not skip an ad and watch it. Versus TV which has 'passive eyeballs'.

Facebook

Brainchild of Mark Zuckerberg and portrayed in the film The Social Network. It is the social network of choice for Australians and is constantly evolving with new functionality to mimic its Asian counterparts.

Floating ads

An ad or ads that appear within the main browser window on top of the web page's normal content, thereby appearing to 'float' over the top of the page.

Frequency

The number of times an ad is delivered to the same browser in a single session or time period. A site can use cookies in order to manage ad frequency. Reach & Frequency is a traditional media buying methodology often used to generate broad awareness.

GAID

Google's equivalent to the IDFA – the Google Advertising ID. The GAID is a common device identifier that represents an Android device and is shared across all Apps used on that device, in part analogous to a third-party cookie. Currently, users are opted in by default, with the ability to opt-out at a device level in their phone settings.

GDN

Google Display Network is a network of websites which run Google display ads. The GDN provides the ability for an advertiser to target websites based on their ad words targeting.

GDPR

General Data Protection Regulation. Passed into law in 2016 with enforcement starting in 2018, GDPR was the first major change to data processing requirements worldwide and applies to the EU and anyone who processes data or offers goods & services to the EU. Philosophically, GDPR prompts businesses to enact data protection "by design and by default".

Geo Fence

Establishing an area that when the user is identified as being in that location an ad will show e.g. Near a particular retail environment.

Geo Targeting

The practice of using a geographical reference (where you are) for audience targeting, to trigger an action, prevent the display of an ad or to narrow content results e.g. If you want to find a cafe it is useless to you if it is 5,000 km away! This geographical reference is usually based on automated or assumed knowledge of an end user's location.

Header bidding

A programmatic technique where all advertisers can bid simultaneously for an ad placement.

HEM

Hashed email. Generally used to refer to a process where email addresses are encrypted (usually via the SHA-256 algorithm) and used as match keys between an advertiser and a vendor. The hashing process is used to ensure plaintext email addresses are not exposed during the matching exercise. Currently, hashed emails or a variation of this methodology are being used as the backbone for many of the proposed third-party cookie replacements.

IDFA

Demand Side Platform is one of the three key technologies used in the Identifier for Advertisers. Introduced by Apple in 2012 to give users more control over their privacy. The IDFA is a common device identifier that represents an Apple device and is shared across all Apps used on that device, in part analogous to a third-party cookie. Previously, users were opted in by default, with the ability to opt-out at a device level in their phone settings, however from April 2021 all users are opted-out by default, with each App now needing to request the user to opt-in if they want to leverage the IDFA.

IDFV

Identifier for Vendors. The IDFV is an Apple device identifier specific to each App publisher, allowing them to support tracking & measurement use cases across their Apps. The IDFV is in part analogous to a first-party cookie, in that it can only be used by the owner of the App and cannot be shared across other vendors or advertisers.

Impression

An impression is simply someone seeing an advert. They may not click on it or buy anything, but the ad has been served to that user's browser.

Interstitial Ads

Ads that appear between two content pages. Also known as transition ads, intercommercial ads and splash pages.

JavaScript

A programming language used universally across the web to provide dynamic functionality. Almost all web-based adtech and martech solutions leverage JavaScript tags as their primary means of data collection and distribution.

Jump page ad

Page which is reached via click-through from button or banner ad. The jump page itself can list several topics, which are linked to either the advertiser's site or the publisher's site. This term has been replaced by Landing Pages and Pop-Ups / Interstitials.

Link decoration

The practice of adtech vendors appending a tracking code to a campaign that allows an individual click-through to be identified. Requires the same tracking code to be passed back to the vendor at the point of conversion. One of the mechanisms used to try and circumvent third party cookie deprecation that has since also been targeted by Apple in ITP.

Local storage

A more modern mechanic similar to cookies that is only 1st party, exists only on the local device/browser and cannot be leveraged for cross-site tracking. Allows larger structures of data to be stored in comparison to cookies.

MAID

Mobile Advertising Identifier. A categorisation that encapsulates IDFAs and GAIDs.

MMP

Mobile Measurement Platform. Typically used to provide mobile attribution by aggregating data across advertising networks. In some cases, also provides deep linking functionality.

Modelled Conversion

A methodology that allows anonymous data to be processed via machine learning in order to give a view of attribution in cases where traditional measurement is not possible. Google's methodology involves aggregating non-sensitive data such as historical conversion rates, device type and time of day to predict the likelihood of conversion events across the set of users who viewed or clicked on an ad. Google has indicated they will increasingly rely on modelled measurement methods moving forward.

Multivariate Testing

This is a more complex testing technique than A/B testing. It allows for multiple variables to be tested at the same time and determines which combination of variations performs the best out of all possible combinations. Often used to test website design where multiple elements are changed on a page.

OTT

An Over-The-Top media service is a streaming media service offered directly to viewers via the Internet. OTT bypasses cable, broadcast, and satellite television platforms that traditionally act as a controller or distributor of such content.

Pay-per-Impression

An advertising pricing model in which advertisers pay based on how many users were served their ads. See CPM.

Pay-per Lead

An advertising pricing model in which advertisers pay for each 'sales lead' generated. For example, an advertiser might pay for every visitor that clicked on an ad or site and successfully completed a form. See CPL.

Pay-per Sale

An advertising pricing model in which advertisers pay agencies and/or media companies based on how many sales transactions were generated as a direct result of the ad. See CPA/CPA (Cost Per Sale).

Performance Pricing

An advertising model in which advertisers pay based on a set of agreed upon performance criteria, such as a percentage of online revenues or delivery of new sales leads. See CPA, CPC, CPL, CPO, CPS, CPT.

PII

Personally identifiable information is any data that, when used alone or with other relevant data, can be used to identify an individual.

Pixel

See Tag.

Post click

Refers to a measurement methodology where a conversion is attributed back to a user having clicked on specific campaign advertisement.

Post impression

Refers to a measurement methodology where a conversion is attributed back to a user having seen a specific campaign advertisement, but not necessarily clicked. Reliant on cross-site identifiers like third-party cookies and MAIDs.

PPC

Pay-per-Click - an advertising pricing model in which advertisers pay based on how many users clicked on an online ad or e-mail message. If no one clicks, they don't pay. See CPC.

PreRoll

Form of online video ad placement where the advertisement is played before the content video plays.

Privacy Sandbox – FLEDGE

First "Locally-Executed Decision over Groups" Experiment. A revised Google proposal for privacy-first ad serving, incorporating industry feedback.

Privacy Sandbox – FloC

Federated Learning of Cohorts. Google's proposed privacy-first solution, where a user is not assigned an individual identifier, but any number of cohort IDs indicating interest and intent signals. Cohorts indicate a group of browsing activity, rather than a group of individuals, and cohort membership will change over time. Google has claimed that FLoC-based advertising will be 95% as effective as cookie-based advertising.

Probabilistic matching

Refers to the process of identifying a device or an individual without the use of a direct identifier like a MAID, cookie or an email address. Instead, other factors that in combination are likely to identify someone are used, such as IP address, location, screen size, browser version, language setting and more. Also referred to as "fingerprinting", this is one of the methods currently being targeted by Apple and is causing apps to be rejected from the App Store.

Programmatic

Programmatic ad buying refers to the use of technology to purchase digital advertising through real-time bidding. It can apply to website display ads digital out-of-home and now television. Benefits include the ability to target an individual audience across multiple ad networks.

Pseudonymous data

Defined under GDPR as a substitution of the data subject.

Pseudonymous data allows for re-identification, such as cookies or MAIDs that can in theory be tied back to an individual user, or an encrypted email address that could be tied back to a person with the right encryption key. Any data that through a reversible process can be tied back to an individual is considered pseudonymous.

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Remarketing

Often referred to as Retargeting, uses tracking codes to identify a visitor to your website and then serve them an ad as they browse elsewhere on the Internet. This enables follow up messaging that can push a potential buyer further into the conversion funnel.

Rich media

Advertisements with which users can interact (as opposed to solely animation) in a web page format. These advertisements can be used either singularly or in combination with various technologies, including but not limited to sound, video, and with programming languages such as Java, JavaScript, and DHTML.

RON

Run-of-Network. The scheduling of Internet advertising whereby an ad network positions ads across the sites it represents at its own discretion, according to available inventory. The advertiser usually forgoes premium positioning in exchange for more advertising weight at a lower CPM.

ROS

Run-of-Site. The scheduling of Internet advertising whereby ads run across an entire site, often at a lower cost to the advertiser than the purchase of specific site subsections.

RTB

Real-time bidding is a means by which advertising inventory is bought and sold via programmatic auctions, similar to financial markets. See Programmatic.

SDK

Software Development Kit. A software package integrated into mobile apps; in the martech & adtech context, provides the equivalent functionality that tags do on the web.

Server-side

Also referred to as "back-end". Refers to tracking & measurement that happens on the server of the website or mobile app owner. Data is sent from the server through to the martech or adtech vendor, rather than from the user's device.

Skyscraper

A display media ad unit. A tall, thin online banner ad that appears on a website. The IAB guidelines recommend two sizes of skyscrapers: 120 X 600 and 160 x 600.

Split Testing

See A/ B Testing.

SVOD

Subscription Video On Demand (SVOD) services use a subscription business model in which subscribers are charged a regular fee to access unlimited programs. Examples of these services include Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+ and Hulu.

Tag

A short snippet of code, usually JavaScript, that collects and distributes data client-side from your website. A common example is the Facebook tag, triggered after a purchase is completed in order to ensure revenue is attributed back to a Facebook campaign and allow for analysis and optimisation.

Textual ad impressions

The delivery of a text-based advertisement to a browser. To compensate for slow Internet connections, visitors may disable 'auto load images' in their graphical browser. When they reach a page that contains an advertisement, they see a marker and the advertiser's message in text format in place of the graphical ad. Additionally, if a user has a text only browser, only textual ads are delivered and recorded as textual ad impressions.

Third-party ad server

Independent outsourced companies that specialise in managing, maintaining, serving, tracking, and analysing the results of online ad campaigns. They deliver targeted advertising that can be tailored to consumer's declared or predicted characteristics or preferences

TMS

Tag Management System. A central hub for tags, providing standardisation, control, traceability and auditability of what data is being collected from your site and by which vendors.

Trading Desk

A trading desk is where transactions for buying and selling occur. A media agency Trading Desk is a team within an ad agency that executes online media buying as a managed service. They use either proprietary technology or a demand side platform (DSP) to buy and optimise media campaigns.

Trafficking

Advertising trafficking refers to the process of technically setting up an ad campaign. An ad trafficker starts with an IO (insertion order) approved by the client and uploads the creative to the ad server. Various elements are set up in the ad server interfaces for trafficking: creative placements on the site or network, targeting options, campaign dates, capping, impressions or click volumes, CPM or CPC for automated invoice edition, access to campaign report for agency and advertiser.

UID 2.0

A third-party cookie replacement proposed by TheTradeDesk and championed by a range of adtech vendors and publishers. Reliant on hashed emails as an alternative tracking identifier.

UTM - Urchin Traffic Monitor

A campaign code standard adopted and popularised by Google after their acquisition of Urchin, providing a series of parameters allowing for tracking of traffic source, medium, campaign name, content and keyword term.