









# MEDIA

CREATIVE GUIDELINES &  
SPECIFICATIONS

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# 1. CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

Content policies apply to ad creatives, landing pages, any inventory, or other content connected to advertising transactions. Ads must be distinguishable from a publisher's content and cannot be content or links on a publisher's site.

## 1.1 PROHIBITED CONTENT

The following content is prohibited: hate speech, defamation, tobacco, explosives and weapons, nudity, pornography, obscenity, references to sex or sexuality, illegal and recreational drugs, illegal pharmaceuticals or paraphernalia, illegal activities, violence, profanities, morally reprehensible content, piracy, misappropriation of copyright, trademark, trade secret, or patent, counterfeit goods, government forms or services, dangerous or derogatory content, shocking content, sensitive events, animal cruelty, malware, spyware, auto-downloads, auto-redirect, content that interferes with navigation or with other ads, unusual CTR, deceptive content that intends to, or does, induce user action through misleading appearance or behaviour, fake hyperlinks, content resembling Windows, Unix or Mac dialogue boxes, fake interactivity, free gifts, links to quizzes and surveys, misleading claims, content enabling dishonest behaviour.

## 1.2 RESTRICTED CONTENT

The following content is restricted and may serve only under specific conditions: gambling, pharmaceuticals and alcohol.

# 2. CREATIVE GUIDELINES

The following recommendations apply to creatives of any type.

- The duration of animated ads must be 30 seconds maximum
- The number of cookies set per creative must be 25 maximum
- The number of HTTP/HTTPS (fourth party) calls per creative must be 100 maximum
- Flash creatives and/or any Flash content, including Flash-based pixels, are not allowed
- Third-party creatives must not exceed 40% of a user's CPU. Common causes of high CPU use are continued animation, heavy animation sequences, and animation that surpasses the 30-second limit. If applicable, you can use the Task Manager feature in Windows to check for compliance with this rule
- All creatives must be free of applications including, but not limited to, ActiveX, viruses, exit pops, spyware, and malware
- Creative coding may not use cross-domain scripting or set, read, write, modify or delete cookies in unapproved domains
- Creatives may not use locally shared object (LSO) technologies or device fingerprints for purposes of online behavioural advertising, ad delivery, reporting, or multi-site advertising. LSOs include: Flash cookies, browser helper objects and HTML5 Local Storage. Prohibited uses include, but are not limited to: storing user IDs, interest segments, user browsing history, or other unique user data
- All creatives must open in a new tab or window, and should not navigate away from the publisher's page
- On all creatives with partially black, white, or transparent backgrounds, you must add a visible border of a contrasting colour to the majority background colour of the creative

- Strobing, flashing backgrounds, or otherwise distracting ads are not allowed
- Ads may not play sound automatically and audio must be user-initiated on click. Users must have the option to mute all audio in the ad
- Ads may play video automatically, as long as the audio is muted
- All sound and animation (including video) must stop upon the exit click
- Pop-unders, timed or intermittent pop-ups, mock system warnings and pages that automatically initiate surveys or a download are prohibited
- The landing page must match the language, brand, and offer of the creative
- Each creative must have a single discernible brand or product offering associated with it
- Creatives may not rotate brands
- All creatives must contain sufficient brand notification and their branding must not be obfuscated (too small, too faint). At least one of the three things below must be included:
  - a clearly identifiable logo: if the only branding is the logo, that exact logo must also be on the landing page
  - a landing page URL: if the only branding on the creative is a landing page URL, that URL must be the URL the creative has as its landing page
  - a distinct brand name: if the only branding on the creative is a distinct brand name, the brand name must not be an actual word and when it appears on the creative it cannot be confused for other, non-branded text
- Ads may only click through to one domain. Creatives that click to different domains within the same tag must be separated into their own ad tag. Creatives that click to multiple domains from the same creative unit are not allowed
- Prior to running on any inventory, all creatives must pass an audit process to check technical and content criteria, and evaluate them against the requirements of our sellers, including AdX and AppNexus. Impression capping, geo-targeting or similar blocking technology set outside our platform will interfere with the audit process and must be removed while the creatives are being audited
- The click-through URLs of all creatives must lead to landing pages that are crawlable
- HTML5 ads must include `<!DOCTYPE html>` declaration and must contain a `<html>`, `<head>` and `<body>` tag. Ad dimensions must match the placement dimensions to prevent distortions, and should have an ad size `<meta>` tag within the `<head>` tag. General guidance and specifications for ad designers and creative technologists can be found [here](#).
- All creatives must be SSL-compliant and all calls made within the ads must be SSL-enabled. This includes all assets, trackers, ad responses and fourth-party calls to other technologies within the ad unit. All servers involved require full SSL certification. Note that the landing page is the only part of an ad that does not need to be secure as it is not loaded by the creative

We actively encourage acknowledgment of the initial Better Ads Standards developed by the Coalition for Better Ads following a comprehensive consumer research. More information can be found [here](#).

The following ad experiences fall beneath a threshold of consumer acceptability and the above standards. Media IQ recommends alternative ad types or formats.

- Desktop Web
  - pop-up ads, auto-playing video ads with sound, prestitial ads with countdown, large sticky ads
- Mobile Web
  - pop-up ads, prestitial ads, ad density higher than 30%, flashing animated ads, auto-playing video ads with sound, poststitial ads with countdown, full-screen scrollover ad, large sticky ads

## 3. CREATIVE SPECIFICATIONS

### 3.1 DISPLAY CREATIVES

We are able to accept any creative size. The most common dimensions are listed below.

DESKTOP		
300 x 250	120 x 600	320 x 50
728 x 90	300 x 600	300 x 50
160 x 600	970 x 250	468 x 60

MOBILE		
Smartphone	Tablet	Interstitials
320 x 50	300 x 250	Smartphone
300 x 50	728 x 90	320 x 480
300 x 250	160 x 600	480 x 320
728 x 90	120 x 600	Tablet
160 x 600	320 x 50	768 x 1024
120 x 600	300 x 50	1024 x 768
320 x 480	300 x 600	
468 x 60	970 x 250	
300 x 600	468 x 60	
970 x 250	320 x 480	

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

MEDIA IQ HOSTED CREATIVES	
File Types	Size
JPG, PNG, GIF	150 KB maximum

THIRD PARTY HOSTED CREATIVES			
File Types	Initial Load Size	Total Load Size	Tag Formats
HTML, JS, CSS, JPG, PNG, GIF	40 KB maximum recommended	2.2 MB maximum	JavaScript, iFrame

### 3.1.1 EXPANDABLE CREATIVES

Expandable creatives are rich media creatives whose dimensions expand when a user interacts with them. Dimensions and expansion directions are supported based on inventory availability; the table below lists the most common ones, which offer larger inventory.

DESKTOP			
Base Dimensions	Expanded Dimensions	Base Dimensions	Expanded Dimensions
120 x 600	240 x 600	300 x 600	560 x 600, 600 x 600
160 x 600	600 x 600	336 x 280	672 x 280
180 x 150	600 x 150	468 x 60	468 x 180, 468 x 210
200 x 200	400 x 200	650 x 170	650 x 340
250 x 250	500 x 250	728 x 90	728 x 270, 728 x 300, 728 x 315
300 x 250	500 x 300, 600 x 250, 600 x 300		

MOBILE	
Base Dimensions	Expanded Dimensions
320 x 50	320 x 480 or full screen
300 x 50	300 x 480 or full screen

The requirements for expandable creatives are as follows:

- Ad expansions must be user-initiated. Click-to-expand and rollover-to-expand are allowed; auto-expand is not allowed
- Creatives must close on-click or mouse-off and must contain a prominent close "X" in 16-point font or larger, in the corner of the unit
- Ads must expand in one plain only, either left or right, up or down, and may not expand in two directions at the same time
- Expandable creatives will only serve on inventory that supports expandable ad units, but must still function when served into an iFrame
- Creatives should not try to expand in an unfriendly iFrame and should detect if they are being displayed in a friendly or an unfriendly iFrame by checking if the placement has access to the top-level domain. Creatives should not expect any type of client side file or JavaScript code to provide this information.
- Pop-outs and page takeovers are not allowed
- Media IQ cannot host expandable creatives; they are supported via third-party ad servers only

### 3.1.2. MOBILE INTERSTITIALS

Interstitial ads display when a user navigates from one page to another within a web browser, or while a user interacts with an app. The creatives fill the screen of the device as soon as the user leaves the initial page and before the next page displays.

Mobile interstitial impressions can be targeted by using creatives with the appropriate sizes, which vary according to specific exchange requirements. The most common interstitial dimensions are:

DEVICE TYPE	SMARTPHONE	TABLET
Portrait Size	320 x 480	768 x 1024
Landscape Size	480 x 320	1024 x 768

## 3.2. VIDEO CREATIVES

### 3.2.1 IN-BANNER VIDEO CREATIVES

In-banner video ads are video creatives that are played in standard display banner placements rather than in video players. Any banner placement may accommodate in-banner video creatives if allowed by the publisher.

### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

#### MEDIA IQ HOSTED CREATIVES

CURRENTLY NOT SUPPORTED

#### THIRD PARTY HOSTED CREATIVES

File Types	Initial Load Size	Total Load Size	Tag Formats
HTML, JS, CSS, JPG, PNG, GIF, MP4, WebM, WMV	40 KB maximum recommended	2.2 MB maximum	JavaScript, iFrame

### 3.2.2 IN-STREAM VIDEO CREATIVES

In-stream video creatives are played in video players on web pages. They are played before, in the middle of, or after other video content, and use VAST XML to ensure proper rendering in players. Companion ads are displayed in the webpage beside the video player and are accepted as display creatives for Media IQ hosted video creatives, and as elements of the VAST XML for third-party hosted video creatives.



## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

MEDIA IQ HOSTED CREATIVES					
Unit Dimensions	File Types	File Size	Video Length	Bit Rate	Frame Rate
1920 x 1080 (16:9) or 1440 x 1080 (4:3) minimum recommended	MP4, WebM, MOV	100 MB maximum	30 secs maximum recommended, 15 secs maximum preferred	20 Mbps minimum recommended	30 fps maximum

THIRD PARTY HOSTED CREATIVES						
Unit Dimensions	File Types	File Size	Video Length	Bit Rate	Frame Rate	Tag Format
Video ads can render in any sized player, e.g. 1280 x 720 (16:9), 640 x 480 (4:3)*	<p><b>Video:</b> MP4 must be included, WebM is recommended (other formats may be included, but may not be used)*</p> <p><b>Audio:</b> PCM or AAC preferred</p>	10 MB maximum	30 secs maximum, under 15 secs preferred	500 Kbps, 1200 Kbps and 2500 Kbps*	30 fps maximum	VAST URL, VPAID URL

COMPANION AD (OPTIONAL)				
Unit Dimensions	File Types	File Size	Animation Length	Frame Rate
300 x 250, 300 x 60, 728 x 90	<p><b>Image or HTML5:</b> HTML, JS, CSS, JPG, PNG, GIF</p>	20 KB maximum recommended	15 secs maximum recommended	24 fps maximum

\*Every creative should include a number of alternative assets that combine different file types, dimensions and bit rates, each designed for specific players and bandwidths. The video player will determine the most appropriate format to play based on the viewer's connection and screen size, thus ensuring a quality user experience. It is recommended to include an MP4 with at least 1920 x 1080 (16:9) or 1440 x 1080 (4:3) resolution for ads served against high-quality content.

In-stream video creatives are accepted according to policies below.

- Third-party in-stream ads and their companion banner ads must be served via a linear VAST tag
- No more than one VAST wrapper redirect to one VAST In-Line is permitted
- Media IQ supports VAST 2.0 and 3.0, and VPAID 2.0
- For each video ad served in the VAST tag, there needs to be a minimum of 2 separate nodes included, one for each of the following video formats: MP4 and WebM. Other formats can be included, but may not be used
- Make sure that all of your VAST tags include a specific consistent value for your company in the <AdSystem> node in the VAST XML
- Each VAST tag should include a unique value for the "id" attribute in the node. Two different VAST tags should not have the same Ad ID value. For instance:
  - VAST tag 1: <Ad id="3947179">
  - VAST tag 2: <Ad id="8741831">
- Each VAST XML document should contain the duration of the video with format 00:00:00
- All URLs inside the VAST document must be prefixed with https:// to serve on secure inventory
- It is recommended to provide both a skippable and a non-skippable version of each VAST tag; if only one creative can be provided, we recommend videos over 20 seconds to be skippable and videos under 20 seconds to be non-skippable
- The following tracking events are supported (wrapper may include more than one node per each event):
  - start
  - first quartile
  - midpoint
  - third quartile
  - complete
  - mute
  - unmute
  - pause
  - resume
- Black bars and letterboxing should be avoided
- Audio is not allowed for companion ads

## 3.3 NATIVE CREATIVES

Native ads are designed to function like natural content and are formatted to match the look and feel of the environment where they are placed. Media iQ serves native ads across a network of leading vendors; each renders the creative assets in formats that integrate seamlessly with their inventories.

The assets for native ads are required to meet the specifications below; optional assets make the creatives compatible with more publisher layouts, hence increasing their potential reach.

### 3.3.1 DISPLAY NATIVE CREATIVES

#### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Element	Required?	Description
Advertiser Name	Yes	The name of the brand that displays in the creative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The advertiser name must be maximum 25 characters</li> </ul>
Headline	Yes	The headline for the creative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The headline must be maximum 25 characters and maximum 18 characters per word</li> </ul>
Body Text	Yes	The description for the product or service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The body text must be maximum 90 characters and maximum 18 characters per word</li> </ul>
Call To Action	Yes	The text exhorting the user to perform the required action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The call to action must be maximum 15 characters</li> </ul>
Logo	Yes	The advertiser's logo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The logo must be a transparent PNG</li> <li>The logo can be minimum 320 x 320 and maximum 2000 x 2000 pixels and must have a ratio of 1 : 1</li> <li>The image file size must be maximum 1200 KB, but 150 KB maximum is recommended</li> </ul>
Image - Rectangular	Yes	The image to promote the product or service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The image must be JPG or PNG</li> <li>The image can be minimum 1200 x 627 and maximum 2000 x 1047 pixels and must have a ratio of 1.91 : 1</li> <li>The image file size must be maximum 1200 KB, but 150 KB maximum is recommended</li> </ul>
Image - Square	No	A square image to promote the product or service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The image must be JPG or PNG</li> <li>The image must be 627 x 627 pixels</li> <li>The image file size must be maximum 1200 KB, but 150 KB maximum is recommended</li> </ul>

Element	Required?	Description
Landing Page URL	Yes	The URL where users will be redirected when they click the ad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The URL must be maximum 1024 characters</li> <li>The URL must begin with "http://" or "https://"</li> </ul>
Impression Tracking URL	No	The URL of one or more third-party impression trackers to call when the ad is displayed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The URL must be maximum 1024 characters</li> <li>The pixel must be secure (HTTPS) and contain a valid SSL/TLS certificate</li> </ul>

### 3.3.2 VIDEO NATIVE CREATIVES

#### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Element	Required?	Description
Advertiser Name	Yes	The name of the brand that displays in the creative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The advertiser name must be maximum 25 characters</li> </ul>
Headline	Yes	The headline for the creative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The headline must be maximum 30 characters</li> </ul>
Body Text	Yes	The description for the product or service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The body text must be maximum 140 characters</li> </ul>
Call To Action	No	The text exhorting the user to perform the required action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The call to action must be maximum 60 characters</li> </ul>
Logo	Yes	The advertiser's logo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The logo must be a transparent PNG</li> <li>The logo can be minimum 300 x 300 and maximum 2000 x 2000 pixels and must have a ratio of 1 : 1</li> <li>The image file size must be maximum 1200 KB, but 150 KB maximum is recommended</li> </ul>
Image	Yes	The image to promote the product or service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The image must be JPG or PNG</li> <li>The image must be 627 x 627 pixels</li> <li>The image file size must be maximum 1200 KB, but 150 KB maximum is recommended</li> </ul>

Element	Required?	Description
Video	Yes	The video to promote the product or service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The video must be MP4 or VAST</li> <li>• The video dimension must be 16 : 9</li> <li>• The video file size must be maximum 100 MB</li> <li>• The video length must be maximum 60 secs</li> <li>• The video cannot loop</li> </ul>
Landing Page URL	Yes	The URL where users will be redirected when they click the ad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The URL must be maximum 1024 characters</li> <li>• The URL must begin with "http://" or "https://"</li> </ul>
Impression Tracking URL	No	The URL of one or more third-party impression trackers to call when the ad is displayed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The URL must be maximum 1024 characters</li> <li>• The pixel must be secure (HTTPS) and contain a valid SSL/TLS certificate</li> <li>• The pixel must redirect to a 1 x 1 image</li> </ul>

## 3.4 AUDIO CREATIVES

Audio creatives are delivered to audio players on devices or browsers using VAST XML. Companion ads are displayed in audio players that support a visual component.

### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

#### MEDIA IQ HOSTED CREATIVES

File Types	Size	Audio Length	Bit Rate	Sample Rate	Volume
MP3	1 MB maximum	15, 30 secs recommended	192 Kbps minimum	44100 Hz	-4 dB recommended

#### THIRD PARTY HOSTED CREATIVES

File Types	Size	Audio Length	Bit Rate	Sample Rate	Volume	Tag Format
MP3 and OGG must be included	1 MB maximum	15, 30 secs recommended	192 Kbps minimum	44100 Hz	-4 dB recommended	VAST URL

#### COMPANION AD (OPTIONAL)

Unit Dimensions	File Types	File Size
300 x 250, 640 x 640	JPG	30 KB maximum