

Ad Guidelines Release Notes

January 2015

Background

In February 2014, IAB Canada's **Ad Guidelines Task Force** which was comprised of the list of individuals named below, met for the first time and began visualizing where the IAB Canada ad guidelines need to go to address the future of digital advertising.

The digital advertising industry uses IAB Canada's ad guidelines as the measure to which all digital advertising is created. Creatives, project managers, media planners, publishers and the like, look to IAB Canada for guidance when creating digital advertisements for their clients. It is our duty at IAB Canada to ensure that what we release as guidelines makes sense for the marketplace as a whole.

The last release of IAB Canada's guidelines happened in January 2012, and much has changed since then.

- There has been massive proliferation of **new devices** such as smartphones & tablets
- New mobile operating systems such as Apple's iOS and Google's Android have **little Flash support**, meaning that cross device creative must now be built in HTML5
- **Screen resolutions are increasing** quickly and are available on any device - even smartphones
- **Connection speeds continue to increase** considerably, both for Wi-Fi and mobile

The biggest change to the guidelines is the introduction of HTML5 file sizes that will help the industry leverage this new technology to build truly cross-device, high quality creative. The file size allowances increase proportionately to the size of the creative.

Due to many publishers moving to responsive design, all new fixed ad sizes being introduced match to a common aspect ratio. For example, the 300x50, 600x100, and 900x150 in this release are all a 6:1 aspect ratio. This will make it easier for the industry to transition to larger sizes as screen resolutions increase over time. It also makes building HTML5 creative much more efficient, and will help as IAB Canada transitions to responsive ads in the future, which is already being discussed by the US IAB.

Finally, it is widely known that smartphone advertising investment in Canada is abysmally low when compared to the reach available. According to a recent comScore study, 78% of Canadians 13+ own a smartphone¹. IAB Canada is optimistic that the new smartphone ad products in this update, built in HTML5, will help spark much needed revenue growth in the area of smartphone advertising.

¹ comScore, Inc., MobiLens, Canada, Persons: 13+ - March 2014

The IAB Canada Ad Guidelines Task Force consisted of:

Chad Borlase, <i>SapientNitro</i>	Jeffrey Martin, <i>Addictive Mobility</i>
Robert Brown, <i>Cineplex</i>	Erwin Orriell, <i>Omnicom Media Group</i>
Ben Cormier, <i>Google</i>	Jeff Radecki, <i>IT World Canada</i>
Julie Ford, <i>IAB Canada</i>	Dan Seaman, <i>TC Media</i>
Christine Gullage, <i>Shaw Media</i>	Julia Shen, <i>Microsoft Advertising</i>
Ian Hewetson, <i>eyereturn marketing</i>	Peter Vaz, <i>McLaren McCann</i>
Jeff Hopson, <i>Sizmek</i>	Paul Vincent, <i>Neuranet</i>
Helena Kranjec, <i>IPG Mediabrands</i>	Devin Wiles, <i>Google</i>
Alexie Lopez, <i>JUICE Mobile</i>	

Within these release notes you'll find commentary around our Canadian Universal Ad Package (CUAP), smartphone sizes, responsive design and other helpful tips.

The Canadian Universal Ad Package (CUAP)

The Canadian Universal Ad Package (otherwise known as the CUAP) is the minimum recommended base from which all campaigns can be built from. The CUAP is a collection of ad units that are broadly accepted throughout the digital advertising industry; within ad servers, on publisher websites, etc.

New to the guidelines is what has been dubbed a “Large Leaderboard” measured at 900x150 pixels that is intended to replace the smaller 728x90. This size was chosen for two reasons: the 900 width allows for a publisher to fill the space of a Billboard across the top of their website, and the size translates well to a 6:1 aspect ratio.

We have also combined desktop/laptop/tablet into one, because ad sizes do not need to be different for these devices, and there is increasing convergence with the rise of hybrid tablet/laptops. If specific functionality for a creative is required, then it can still be built and targeted to that device.

Other changes include:

- The use of dark grey borders around advertisements instead of black (this identifies the parameters of the ad against the publisher's website, to ensure consumers understand where the ad ends)
- HTML5 compressed file allowances vary depending on the total pixel being used; the kilobyte allowance accounts for all the files necessary for the ad, compressed into a .zip file
- Depreciated the 600x90 tablet size from our old guidelines; IAB Canada recommends the CUAP specifications for tablets moving forward
- Stronger guidance is written in the notes section around what to do/not to do

- A visual representation of all the ad units can now be found at iabanada.com/guidelines

Rich Media

Beyond the CUAP is where advertising starts to get interesting, especially for brand marketers. Our industry commonly refers to these advertisements as “Rich Media”, but essentially what we’re saying is that these units provide additional functionality such as being expandable/larger coverage and/or more interactivity (such as video, audio, social media, etc.) than standard ads.

Full-screen ads (on its own tab) were not in the guidelines in 2012, but they have been included in this new version. Many publishers have already started including full-screen ad products, but due to the large number of screen resolutions and aspect ratios it has been difficult for creative teams to build for. Therefore we have offered basic guidance in this release, as well as a reference chart with common resolution sizes for devices and their aspect ratios. We highly encourage companies to adapt to resolution sizes for full page ad units using aspect ratios. There is more on aspect ratios found later in these release notes.

Other changes include:

- Clearly labeled which direction expansions should happen
- The addition of a 300x600 expandable unit, which expands to 600x600
- OTP (over the page) ads have common sizes noted now (640x480 & 500x500)

Pro Tip:

- A frequency cap of one per 24 hours per user is highly recommended when displaying what may be considered intrusive advertisements (interstitials, OTPs, etc.); ensure there is a conversation with your clients around frequency capping

Video

The task force established that video is video, regardless of device or platform, especially due to the popularity of mirroring or sending video from smaller devices to larger screens (e.g. via AppleTV, Chromecast, etc.). The new guidelines no longer splice out video between smartphone, tablet and desktop. Instead there is light guidance around what to do when using video advertisements and what is commonly used.

Other changes include:

- For video ad creative, we recommend submitting 1080p (1920x1080) under 50 MB

Pro Tip:

- Publishers: ensure to follow, or are at least be familiar with, the IAB video protocols under the IAB Video Suite ([VAST 3.0](#), [VPAID 2.0](#), [VMAP 1.0](#))
 - [Digital Video Rising Stars](#) require VPAID to run correctly

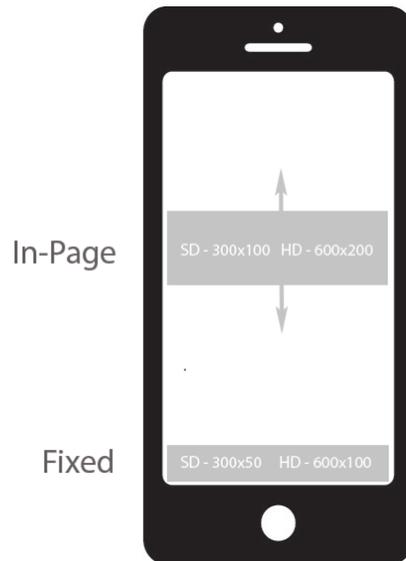
Smartphones

In early 2014, IAB Canada issued a survey to its Mobile Committee to gauge what ads were the most popular with their advertising partners, as well as what they would prefer to see within the ad guidelines.

The results of the survey, and multiple conversations within the task force, led us to remove several small smartphone ad units, and replace them with larger, high-resolution focused ones.

The original 300x50 was introduced when smartphone screens were 320px wide. By 2012 many devices were already double that at 640px wide, and now many are even 1080px wide. Therefore larger and HD ad units were recommended and have been added in.

The smartphone sizes have notes indicating whether the ad is for a fixed or scrollable position. The smaller 300x50/600x100 is recommended for fixed positioning, and the larger 300x100/600x200 is recommended for placement within a scrollable page, and to load only as it comes into view. View the diagram below as reference when planning.



Other changes include:

- Depreciated the following sizes: 216x36, 168x28, 480x80, 300x90, 600x90 (tablet size)
- Increased the image file sizes allowances overall to match desktop & tablet: 40 KB, with HTML5 allowing 50-100 KB depending on ad size
- Adjusted the SD 300x90 to a 300x100, which aligns with a 3:1 aspect ratio
- HD sizes added in: 600x100(6:1) and 600x200(3:1)
- Full screen ads are also available under the full screen tab as cross-device guidelines

Pro Tips:

- Clearly define to the user what happens post tap; will the ad launch a call, download an app, find a location, etc.? This will help set expectations with the user.
- Publishers: Recommend practices that detect Wi-Fi and deliver richer creative

The Responsive Web & Aspect Ratios

Envision a time when the web is mostly responsive; what do we do about our industry’s stubborn preference for fixed position advertisements? This responsive web is not far away; in fact it is right around the corner. A recent IAB Canada survey discovered that 82% of companies surveyed are moving to responsive design².

² IAB Canada Mobile Standards Survey of the Mobile Committee – May-July 2014

Aspect ratios maintain their shape across different screen sizes, which allows creative to look similar cross-device. Peppered throughout the guidelines are hints as to how to work with aspect ratios moving forward. IAB Canada encourages creative agencies to test out building aspect ratio based advertisements. These guidelines are merely a base to work from. The possibilities are truly endless if you learn how to wield the guidelines successfully.

In the future we would like to not splice out desktop/tablet and smartphone as a separate areas of ad specifications. Rather, we hope to push the creative and technology communities to adopt responsive ad practices. In this new future, establishing key resolution break points for design, housing a tool of resolutions & aspect ratio sizes and other key information that is easy to do queries through, offer design best practices, and more, will instead be the most important elements found within our guidelines. Just like all things, adaptation is crucial.

With HTML5, we have the opportunity to move to responsive ads, and we predict smartphones will be the testing ground as that is where adaptation is most needed.

The responsive guidelines of the future will not likely be related to dimensions like the fixed sizes currently used. It will more likely have two components:

1. **Aspect Ratio** - These will be relevant for decades to come as screen resolutions increase. This is also consistent with print sizes and television.
2. **Resolution** - Which will increase over time and some low resolution ads may be removed. Screen size detection is happening already, considering if it is possible to show different ads by resolution size. And in a viewable currency environment, pricing for responsive ads may be more related to resolution than aspect ratio. Consider this: campaigns could have a premium associated to higher resolution sizes.

Note how the previous IAB Canada ad units do not share any common aspect ratios. In the future, this will change, as we designate only common aspect ratio sized ads.

IAB Ad Sizes	Aspect Ratios	Full Pages	Aspect Ratios
14 ad sizes all with unique aspect ratios		27 resolutions share 5 aspect ratios	
160x600	4:15	4096x3072	4:3
180x150	6:5	3840x2160	16:9
300x50	6:1	3200x1800	16:9
320x50	32:5	2880x1800	16:10
300x1050	2:7	2560x1700	3:2
300x250	6:5	2560x1600	16:10
300x600	1:2	2560x1440	16:9
580x460	29:23	2048x1536	4:3
728x90	364:45	1920x1440	4:3
970x250	97:25	1920x1280	3:2
970x415	194:83	1920x1200	16:10
970x550	97:55	1920x1080	16:9
970x66	485:33	1680x1050	16:10
970x90	97:9	1600x1200	4:3
		1600x900	16:9
		1400x1050	4:3
		1440x900	16:10
		1366x768	16:9
		1280x1024	5:4
		1280x800	16:10
		1280x768	16:10
		1280x720	16:9
		1024x768	4:3
		1136x640	16:9
		960x640	3:2
		960x540	16:9
		854x480	16:9

It is our hope that these release notes give companies a perspective from which to work from, to help continue growing our vibrant and inspiring digital advertising industry in Canada.