THE SOUTEAST ASIA VIEWABILITY

WHITE PAPER

TubeMogul

💼 INTRODUCTION

SAVVY MARKETERS KNOW THAT VIEWABILITY IS MORE THAN A CURRENCY-METRIC TO BUY MEDIA. IT CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CAMPAIGN THAT WORKS OR DOESN'T WORK; ONE THAT IS EFFICIENT AT DRIVING OUTCOMES OR COSTLY.

As the viewability space continues to evolve in Southeast Asia and around the globe, expanding into mobile and onto connected TV sets, marketers need to stay abreast of these changes. TubeMogul has long been a leader in viewability measurement. Our goal is to give advertisers the tools to use viewability to create more effective and efficient advertising campaigns.

This paper is a key part of that toolset for SEA brands and agencies. It outlines the changing video viewability landscape, provides an update on the expansion of viewability standards to more devices and takes a deep dive into what has been learned about viewability over the past year.

1 // The Value of Media Quality, TubeMogul & Integral Ad Science, 2015

As a first step, it is worth discussing what "viewability" is. It's a relatively nascent word, and has already shown that it can mean different things to different people.

WHY ISN'T EVERYTHING VIEWABLE?

Viewability came to the forefront because brands and agencies wanted to be sure they were buying ads that had a chance to be seen. And that's what viewability represents now: it is a signal that a person had a chance to see an ad. The challenge is that no one can know at the moment an ad is sold whether it will be viewable or not, because it relies on user behaviour. In the simplest case, a user may click on a link, cause an ad to be called and then close that browser window half a second later. Neither publisher nor advertiser can know that action will occur before it happens. A user might also visit a page with a full screen of text followed by a video. When that page is first loaded, the video is off-screen and will only play if the user scrolls down to it. It may or may not end up being viewable. Again, no one can know for certain if that will occur when the ad is sold.

VIEWABILITY VS. FRAUD

As you'll see in the definitions, fraud – anything other than a human viewing a real page where an ad might reasonably be accessed – is different to viewability. No marketer wants to buy fraudulent impressions, and everyone in the advertising value chain should be actively flagging and avoiding non-human traffic. Ad fraud should be considered and removed from any viewability calculations.

MORE THAN ONE PATH TO VIEWABILITY

Even with the IAB standard in place, some marketers are looking at other ways to assess viewability. What these all boil down to is: how good a chance does a user need to see the ad? A reasonable advertiser might want viewers to see more pixels for longer before they think they had a fair shot at being viewed.

In the extreme, one could imagine viewability defined as most of the pixels viewed for 100% the length of the ad. That looks a lot like the the viewable completion metric. The IAB viewability standard reflects (largely, but not entirely) the design of the page. A viewable completion depends on the user's behaviour, their willingness to wait for the video content and their reaction to the ad creative itself. And this points to the potential challenge: stricter viewability measures can blur the lines between what the publisher is responsible for delivering and creative effectiveness. Publishers may not want to take responsibility for user engagement with creative, or may at least charge a premium for that responsibility.

VIEWABILITY BEYOND THE DESKTOP

At the same time that viewability measures are increasing within the digital space, they are also proliferating across devices. Since viewability is a valuable metric, it could possibly be found efficiently in places like mobile in-app video and on connected TVs. The IAB is evolving its measurement for these environments - currently there is guidance but no standard. However smart brands and agencies are already assessing how these channels affect their viewability goals (see: What can Advertisers Do?).

Perhaps the future holds a standard currency metric across all devices. If so, it's unlikely to just be viewability – user attention will have to be part of the formula as well. For instance, we know that more people are watching TV with their smartphones in hand. So, should a marketer buy a mobile ad with a 70% chance of being viewable or a TV ad that is, by definition, 100% viewable? Which one is more likely to have a viewer's attention? Further research will have to help answer that.

📄 VIEWABILITY DEFINITION

We define viewability as the opportunity an ad has to be seen by a human. Measuring video viewability depends on more than just the ad's location on the web page and how much of the video player is in view. It also depends on whether the ad is actually playing and for how long.

In June 2014, the MRC and IAB set a definition for the standard in viewability measurement: For a video ad, at least 50% of the player's pixels must be in-view for at least two consecutive seconds.
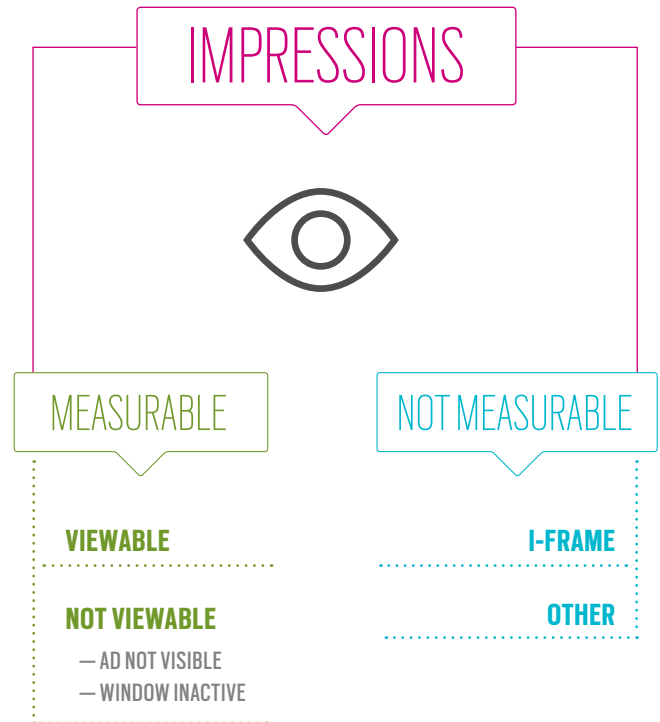
This standard can be implemented using any number of technologies. For the purposes of this paper, viewability metrics are determined using Open Video Viewability (OpenVV) technology across VPAID-compatible inventory.

WHY VIDEOS ARE NOT SEEN

There are two common reasons a video is not seen:

1. Consumer Ignores: This is the natural rate of viewability, similar to the concept of the natural rate of unemployment in economics. It recognises that some viewers will always ignore an ad if given the opportunity. Online, this happens by viewers muting them, opening another tab/window or scrolling down to wait them out.

2. Fake Pre-Roll: These are video ads that a viewer has no intention of watching. Usually, these videos play automatically, unmuted, in small, banner-sized (300x250) players on a page, often below the fold.

IMPRESSIONS

MEASURABLE	NOT MEASURABLE
VIEWABLE	**I-FRAME**
NOT VIEWABLE	**OTHER**
— AD NOT VISIBLE	
— WINDOW INACTIVE	

VIEWABILITY RATE = VIEWABLE / MEASURABLE X 100

It is worth noting at this point that a standard does not mean complete consistency. Because there are multiple accredited technologies for measuring viewability, different vendors may report different viewability rates even when measuring the same campaign. The best way to measure and optimise for viewability is to work consistently with the same partner over time.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VIEWABILITY AND FRAUD

Ad fraud occurs when advertisers buy digital impressions that have no potential to be viewed by a human user. Suspicious or non-human traffic (aka "bots") mimic human behaviour, resulting in advertisers paying for ads that are never seen by a real person. Focusing exclusively on viewability alone does not necessarily negate these non-human views.

Non-human traffic detection can and should be part of viewability measurement. Many advertisers factor it in, since an ad is only valuable if it is seen by a human.

IMPRESSIONS PURCHASED

NON-HUMAN TRAFFIC   HUMAN TRAFFIC

NOT MEASURABLE   MEASURABLE

NOT VIEWABLE   VIEWABLE
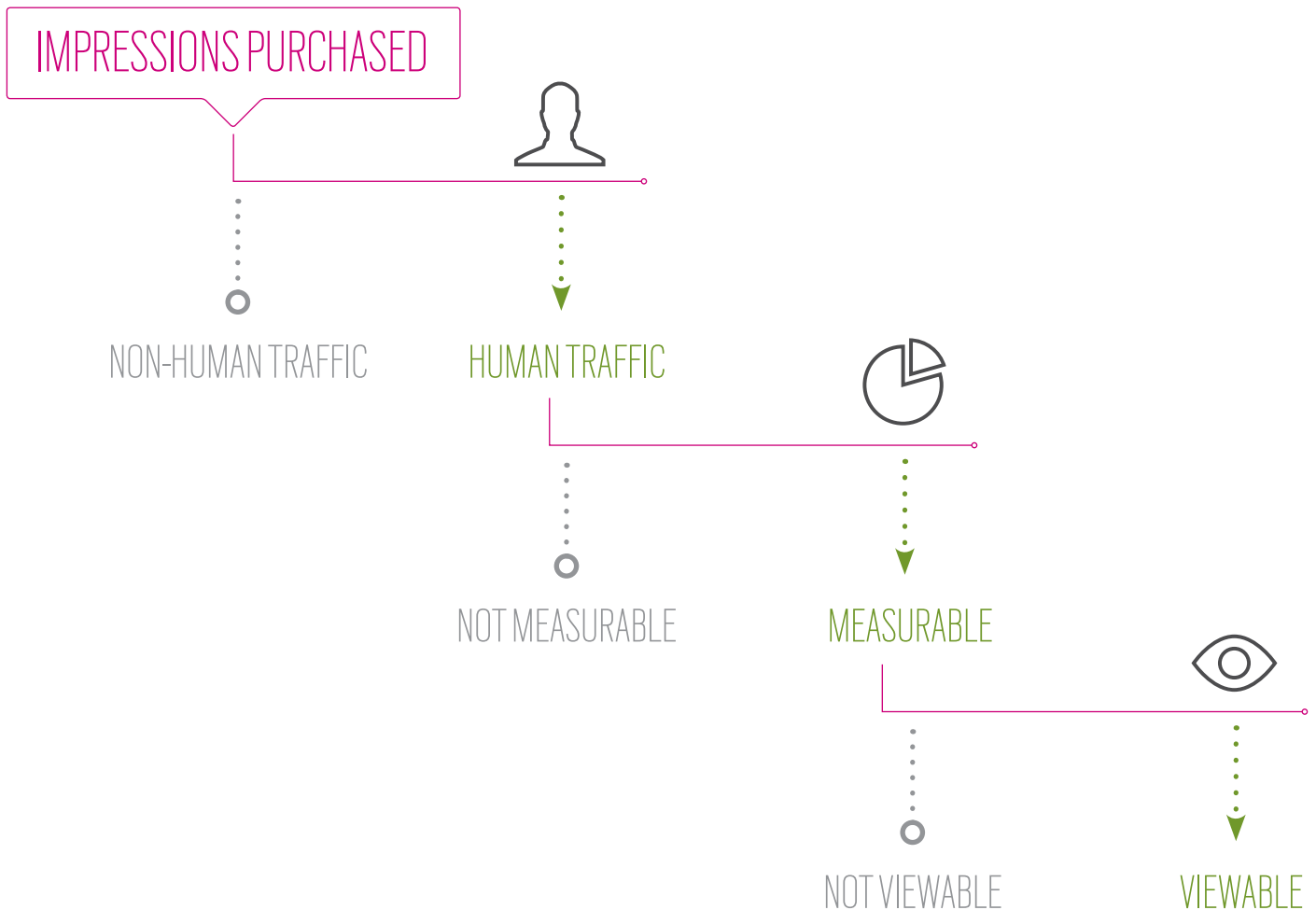
⤴ MEASURABILITY

Measurability is defined as the percent of successfully measured ads divided by the total number of ads served. There are two reasons an ad may not be able to be measured for viewability in this study: either the technology tracking viewability does not cover all of the different video player types, or a video ad is loading in an iframe.

Historically, unmeasurable ads meant that a significant portion of activity flew under the radar and was not factored into the viewability rate. Technological developments over the last year have increased the measurability rate. As measurability continues to rise, we get closer to being able to find the viewability of all impressions.

Measurability increased by 40% from January to June 2016, with TubeMogul able to measure viewability for nearly 95% of VPAID impressions. Since this study, developments have been made to enable the measurement of ads served in iFrames which will be included in upcoming research.

Increasing measurability is crucial for advertisers. With low measurability, much of viewability is inferred and the number you see could be highly inaccurate. As measureability approaches 100%, advertisers can place real confidence in their viewability metrics.

Savvy agencies and brands should seek out partners with the highest possible measurability rates to get the best insight into viewability.

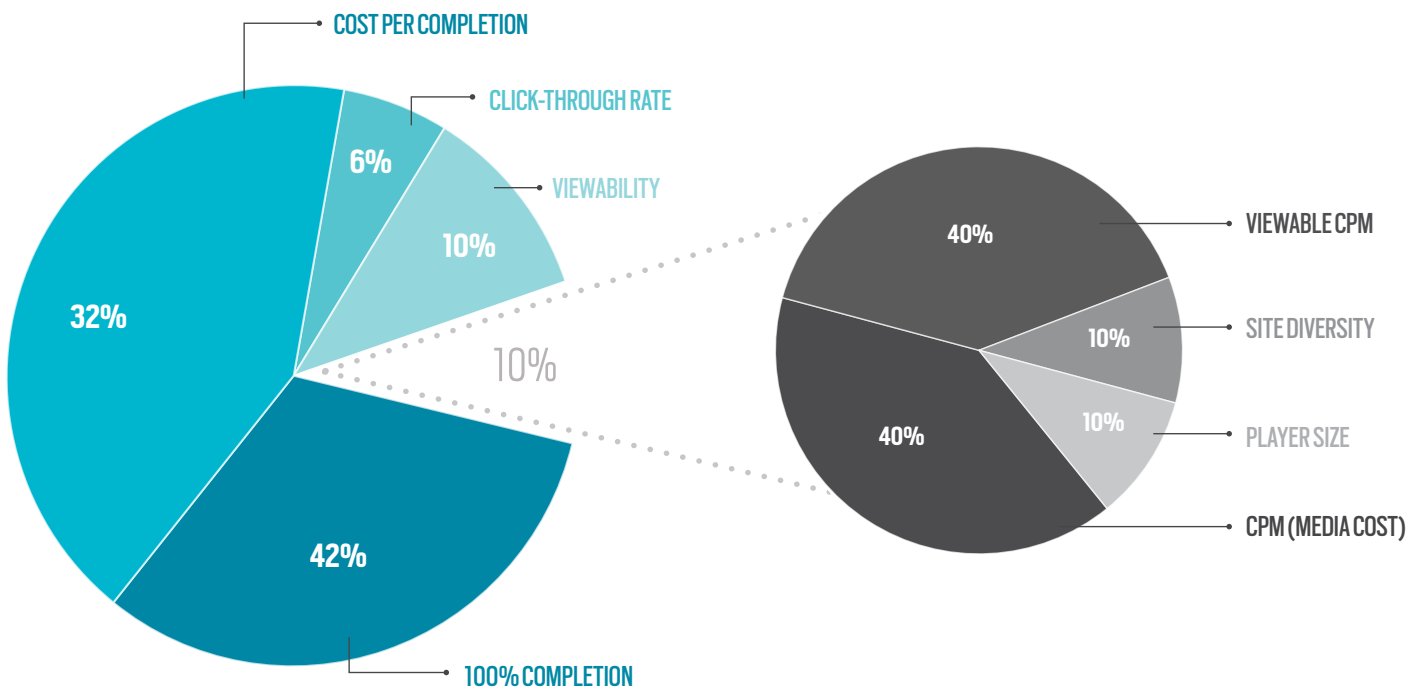## TUBEMOGUL: VIEWABILITY MEASURABILITY
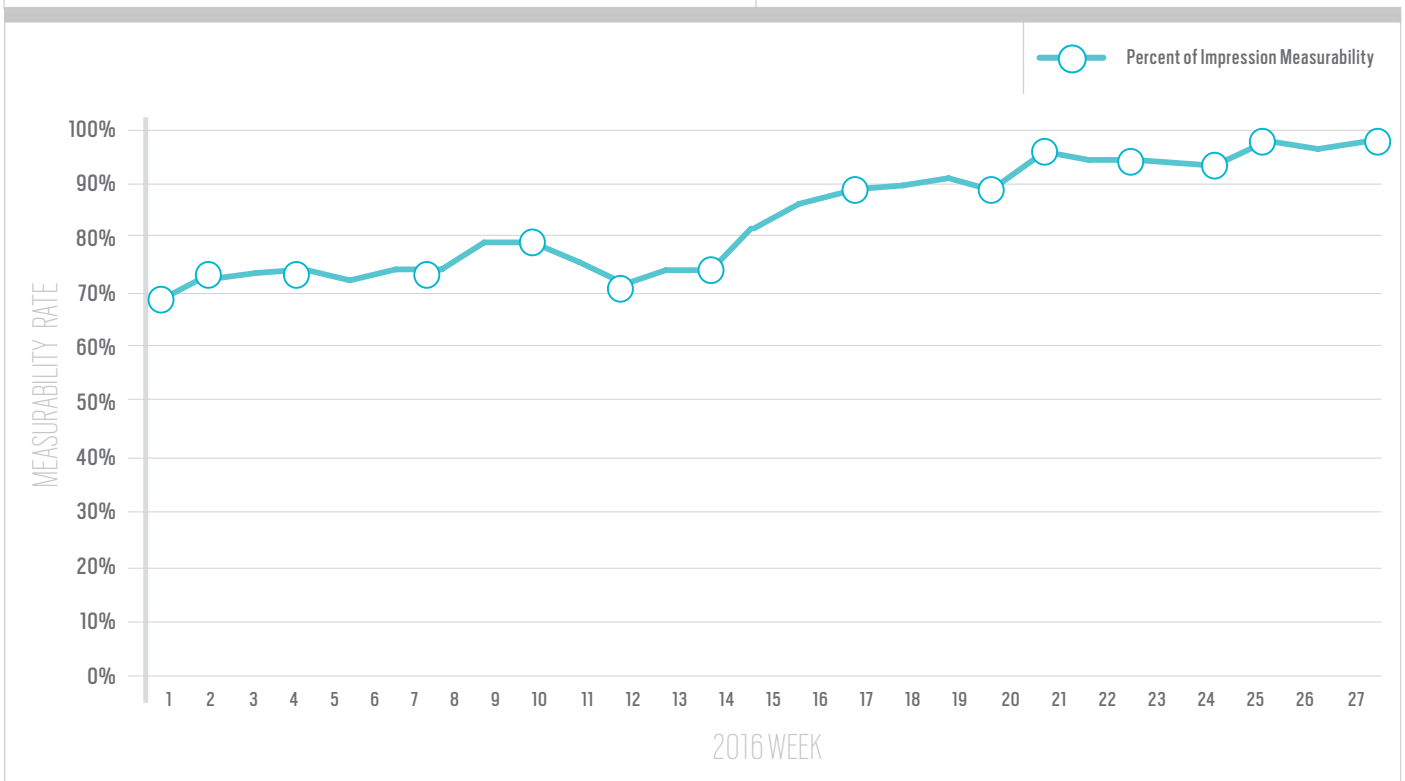
👁 VIEWABILITY IS BECOMING IMPORTANT TO ADVERTISERS

Since the launch of viewability, advertisers have made progress in understanding the metric's importance. While it's still early days, viewability is becoming a key performance indicator for many advertisers who use it to gauge the strength of a campaign.

We see this in the way brands and agencies are using viewability in the TubeMogul platform. When selecting campaign parameters in the auto-optimisation tool, aside from ensuring delivery, video completion metrics (100% completion and cost per completion) are the most common performance goals. This is followed by viewability making up 10%, which has overtaken click-through rate at 6% - a sign of the growing understanding in SEA of the power of video for branding, rather than traditional direct response.

We expect to see the percentage of campaigns optimising to viewability as the primary goal increase, as education continues and it becomes more of a priority for brands and agencies.

PERFORMANCE OPTIMISATION GOAL: PERCENT OF CAMPAIGNS

COST PER COMPLETION

CLICK-THROUGH RATE

VIEWABILITY

6%

10%

32%

10%

42%

100% COMPLETION

VIEWABLE CPM

SITE DIVERSITY

PLAYER SIZE

CPM (MEDIA COST)
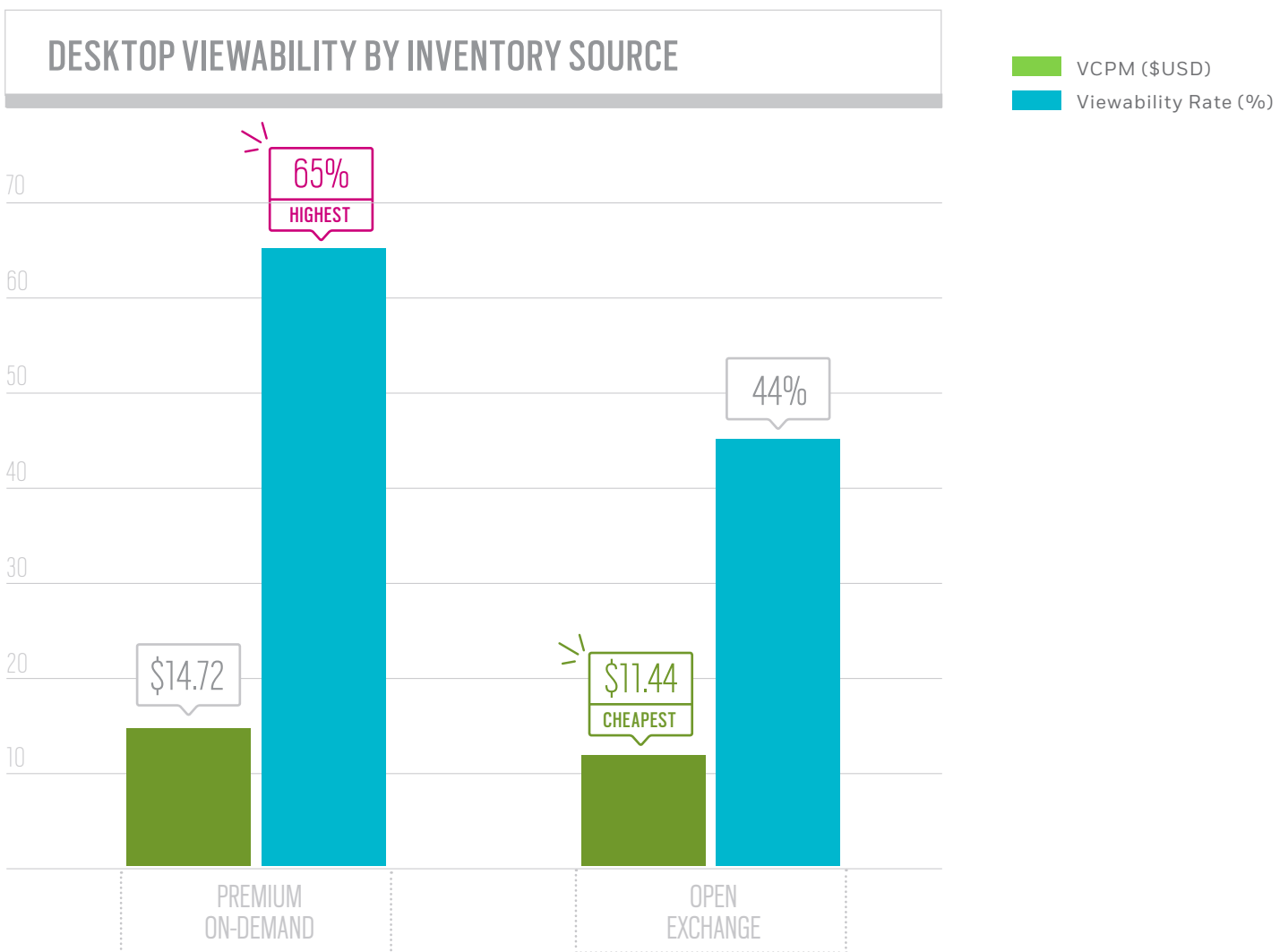
40%

10%

10%

40%

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◉ VIEWABILITY BY INVENTORY SOURCE

As viewability establishes itself as a metric, advertisers want to know how to find the best viewability possible.

One of the ways to increase a campaign's viewability rate is to optimise delivery towards more premium inventory, where larger player sizes and high quality content attract increased viewability. By opting to incorporate TubeMogul's premium On-Demand inventory or consolidate existing direct deals with publishers through software, advertisers can benefit from rates in the 65%+ range.

In fact, campaigns run across premium inventory, achieved an average viewability rate 48% higher than the open exchange. Interestingly, despite the disparity in viewability rate, the lower cost of media secured in the SEA exchange environment, resulted in a more cost efficient viewable CPM (VCPM). Savvy brands and agencies understand that using viewability as a currency metric forms only part of the story – enormous value is driven for campaigns delivered across quality and highly viewable premium publishers.

DESKTOP VIEWABILITY BY INVENTORY SOURCE

■ VCPM ($USD)
■ Viewability Rate (%)

Bar chart: Premium On-Demand — $14.72 (VCPM), 65% HIGHEST (Viewability Rate); Open Exchange — $11.44 CHEAPEST (VCPM), 44% (Viewability Rate).

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▷ WHAT'S THE ROLE OF PLAYER SIZE?

There's more to video viewability than inventory source or optimisation strategy. Factors like player size and page environment may not seem obvious, but are important variables to consider as they can significantly affect viewability.

For many, video player size is an afterthought. However, we found an important trend: as player width increases, so too do viewability rates. This is likely because larger video players occupy a bigger portion of the web page, increasing the likelihood of it being seen by attracting and holding the users attention.

There are also certain player width "hot spots" where viewability jumps. These correspond with players that have common HDTV-size pixel widths: a considerable increase is driven by players 500 pixels and above. Here, high viewability may stem from greater user engagement with high quality, tv-like content.

VIEWABILITY RATE BY PLAYER WIDTH (PIXELS)

		67%
	29%	
27%		
250–299	300–499	500–800
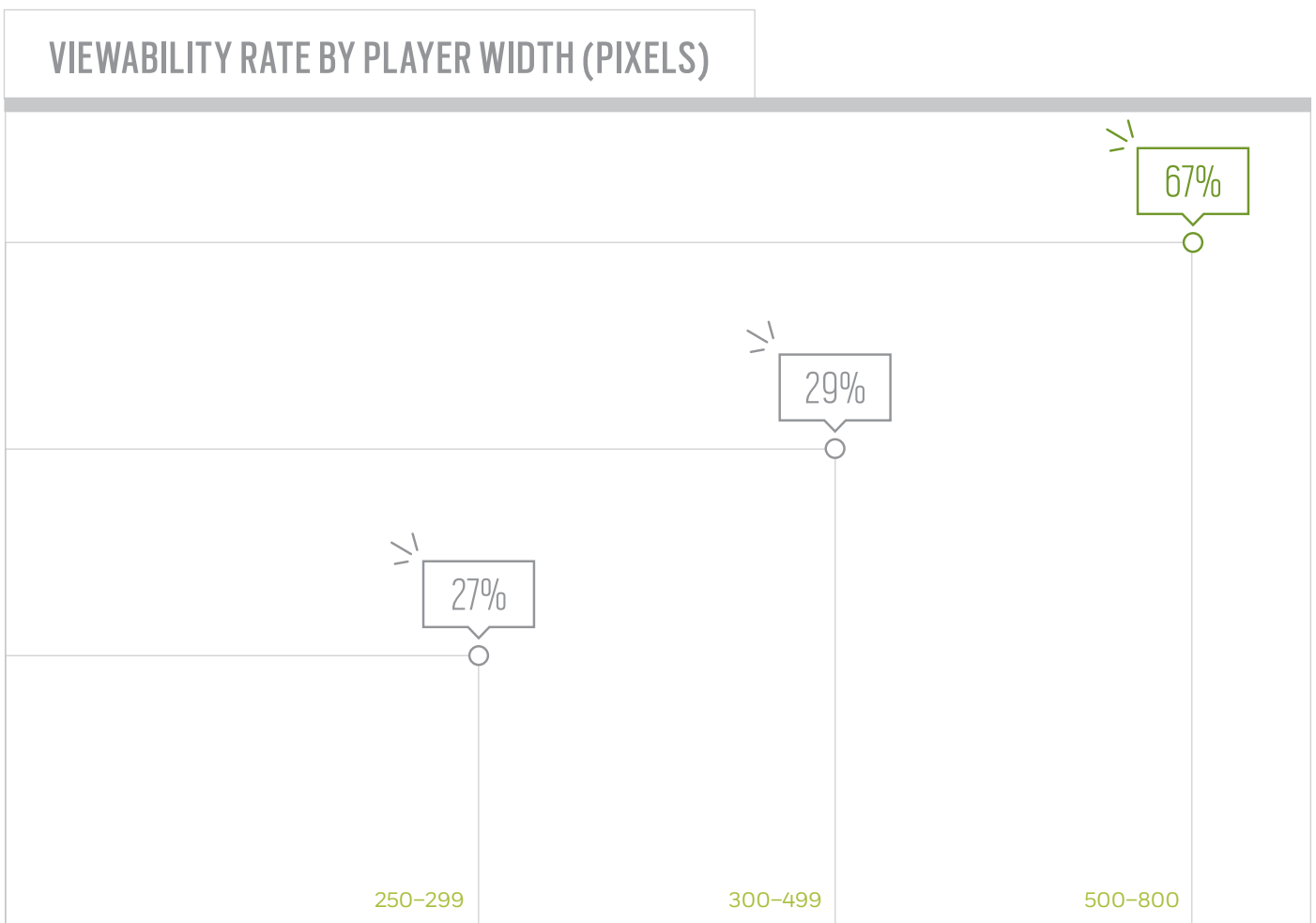
WHAT CAN ADVERTISERS DO?

To make the most out of a digital video campaign, there are a variety of viewability metrics and advertiser expectations that need to be managed.

Viewability hinges on a vast number of factors. The introduction of viewability measurement in mobile gives advertisers a welcome opportunity to diversify across screens and increase the overall viewability of a campaign. This is important given the prevalence of mobile in SEA markets.

While a definition for mobile video viewability is yet to be ratified, current MRC/IAB guidance for mobile is the same as it is for desktop: 50% in view for 2 consecutive seconds. Brands and agencies are taking this in their stride and actively leveraging mobile either on its own, or as part of a cross-screen strategy. Using TubeMogul, clients are able to measure mobile viewability based on the current guidance which has shown to produce strong results.

Take for example a campaign mix of desktop and mobile pre-roll video. The overall viewability rate increases by 22% with the addition of the new screen, compared to desktop only campaigns.

Higher viewability is achievable through a number of strategies. Optimisation, inventory types and player sizes are a few ways to maximise rates. Expanding campaigns across other devices that, by nature, have strong viewability is another. No matter what your marketing goals are, there are ways to incorporate the metric and make sure your ads are placed in front of the right eyes.

22%
Higher viewability rate for campaigns combining desktop and mobile compared to desktop alone

63%
Average viewability rate for a campaign with desktop and mobile

88% MOBILE ONLY

41% DESKTOP ONLY

63% MOBILE + DESKTOP

AVERAGE VIDEO VIEWABILITY BY SCREEN COMPOSITION
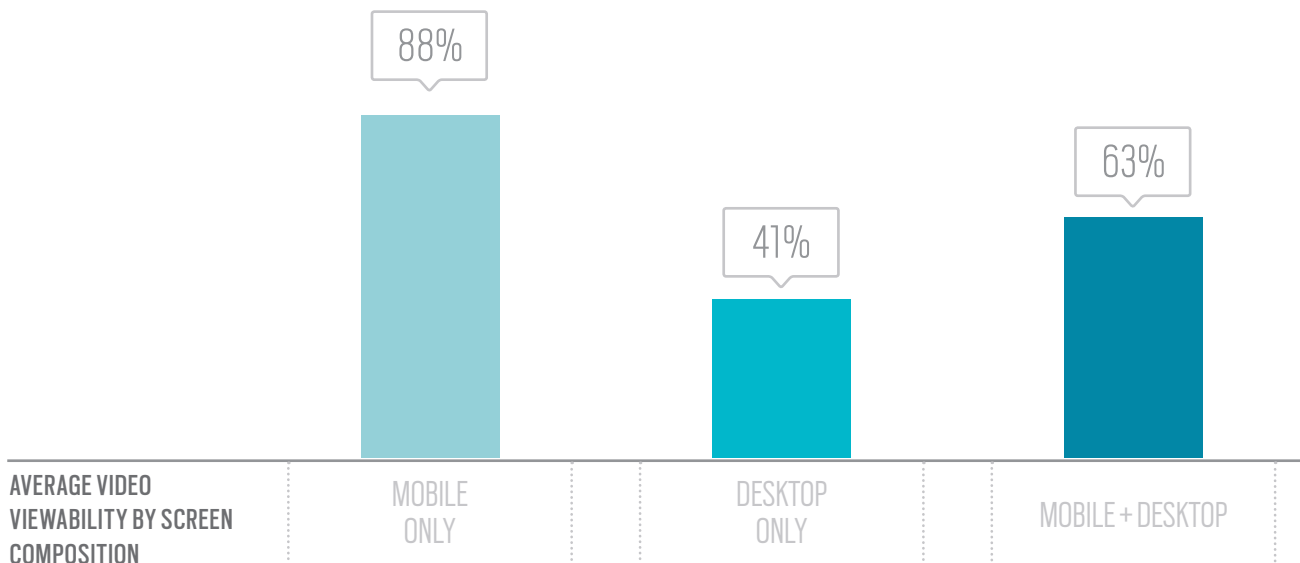
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METHODOLOGY

Data for this report is derived from digital video campaigns executed on the TubeMogul Platform in Southeast Asia from January 2016 through June 2016, spanning millions of desktop and mobile pre-roll video ad impressions.

Viewability metrics for desktop pre-roll are calculated using Open Video View (OpenVV) technology across VPAID-compatible inventory. "Overall Viewability" refers to measurable impressions from supply-side platforms (SSP) and ad exchange inventory. TubeMogul's definition for viewability complies with the Media Rating Council's standard.

Viewability rate for mobile pre-roll refers to impressions completed to 25% over total impressions.

INTERVIEW

Jessica Chuang | Director, Regional Marketing, G. China, SEA & IN | Hotels.com

What is your definition of viewability?

Viewability means our ads or videos can be viewed by a human being. This is particularly critical as we use digital media to extend our reach with our key target audiences such as millennials, who we know spend more time on digital formats than traditional TV. Viewability provides us guidance in understanding whether these audiences have had the opportunity to view our ads.

What's the standard you set for a viewable impression?

While we follow the IAB/MRC industry standards for a viewable impression, we know that these are restrictive particularly for video, as we aim to get our message across to our audiences. We therefore look at viewability as one of the metrics that determine the effectiveness of a publisher/campaign, together with metrics such as completion rates while pairing it with the media costs, as high quality inventory that is more likely to be viewable tends to be more expensive.

Is 100% viewability possible? Why or why not? And is it something that advertisers should be aiming for?

While 100% viewability might be possible it should not come at the expense of the consumer experience. We're mindful that it's extremely hard to achieve such high viewability standards and even start to become wary when viewability gets close to 100% as we look to understand how such good results can be achieved. Paying on a viewable CPM sounds attractive as it's another way to ensure advertisers get the exposure they're looking for, but ultimately it's about demand and supply and ensuring enough inventory is available to trade on a viewable CPM basis. If this cost structure helps increase the overall quality of the available inventory, then I don't see any issues.

Should advertisers pay a premium to ensure viewability? Are advertisers budgeting too little and do you believe prices will increase as we tackle the issue?

Everything has a price tag and this includes the price of viewable impressions. I believe the definition of premium for viewable impressions varies from one to the other. Each advertiser needs to evaluate the cost of an action generated per viewable CPM impressions vs percentage of viewability. At Hotels.com we create 2 types of video content: call to action retail and branding. For the former, we optimise the results to have the balance between actions and percentage views. For the latter, we want to drive higher completed views so that our messaging can cut through in the crowded environment.

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⚲ INTERVIEW

Niall Hogan | Managing Director, SEA | IAS (Integral Ad Science)

What's your definition of viewability and what's the standard you set through viewable impressions?

We follow the standard set by the MRC in the US and the regional IAB. For display, it's 50% of the ad for one second. For video, it's 50% of the ad for two continous seconds.

Do you believe advertisers think the standard is robust enough?

I think that most advertisers see this as a starting point, not an end. Before the standard was introduced, we had no way of talking about Viewability or what was considered in-view or not. The standard gives us a common currency and a starting point, and that's really important. It is up to individual advertisers to decide if they require more from their campaigns and the suppliers that they work with to deliver these on their behalf.

If buyers and sellers are not satisfied with the current guidelines, they should go to the MRC or their IAB, and request that it be looked at again. Obviously, they'll be consulted in any process to redefine the metrics. Once the market, and by that I mean buyers and sellers, have agreed on what the metrics should be, technology companies and vendors can be consulted, to advise on what is actually possible and can and can not be counted as viewable.

Are advertisers trying to change the metrics?

Recently, a lot of advertisers have been coming to us looking for customisable metrics. We can accommodate those requirements based on advertiser needs. For example, we worked with GroupM to measure 100% of the ad when it's in-view. Other customisations we can analyse include measurement of different percentages of the pixels in view or the lengths of time that the ad is in view for.

Why are they trying to change the metrics?

If you are an advertiser, and paying for digital advertising space, I would imagine that 50% of an ad in view for 1 second, doesn't feel like a great deal. It also feels like a pretty arbitrary number – advertisers are asking, where did that 1 second come from? Where's the research? The important thing for advertisers, is to work with a vendor to measure each and every campaign, and to identify the optimum viewability percentage and lengths in view for that product or service being advertised. Each campaign will be different and will need a different set up from suppliers to achieve the optimum performance.

There is alot of talk around 100% viewability – is that even possible?

100% viewability is possible. But, to achieve it, publishers would probably have to deliver 130% on impressions. Campaigns will need to be over-delivered in order to meet that requirement.

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INTERVIEW

Hiren Desai | Director - Digital Leadership | Carat , Singapore

Do you believe advertisers should be buying on a viewable CPM basis?

Absolutely. If I'm doing a branding campaign and my objective is only to push the message across, I would love to buy on a viewable impression basis. That really helps in terms of identifying that we are reaching our target audience, exposing the ad to them sufficiently and giving the viewer enough time to notice our communication. If I'm trying to sell something or drive traffic to my website, I wouldn't entirely bid on viewable CPM because it isn't as relevant. It really depends what your end objective is and how you want to communicate to your audience.

Is the technology available to buy on a viewable-CPM basis?

We are in a position to buy on a viewable CPM basis. If you look at some DSPs, they've started giving this option. The technology is available to use.

Should advertisers pay a premium to ensure viewability?

Advertisers will only pay more because we are fundamentally dealing in an auction environment. If you have limited supply combined with strong demand – and the demand is for highly viewable inventory, then advertisers will end up paying more. It's simply the way things work. if buying on a viewable CPM basis, then that restricts inventory options even more. Therefore, price will have to increase. It's not a premium that someone is charging. It's basically a fundamental of the demand/supply rule and buying on a viewable CPM basis means that the advertiser has made a decision to buy an exclusive inventory that everyone is after.

Do you think there's anything unique to the Southeast Asia region regarding viewability that marketers should be aware of?

In Southeast Asia, brands have just started monitoring their viewability. Marketers are still looking at their current viewability rather buying against higher viewability. We are moving a little slow in this part of the world. What this region needs to do is begin buying vCPM inventory via DSPs that allow this while we all wait for direct publishers to also start offering inventory on vCPM. Right now, everyone is just talking about it but very few are putting this into action.

What is the future of viewability?

There are still inventory sellers who are adamant in not selling their inventory completely on viewable CPM. This has to change and is currently our strongest barrier to growth. Pressure is mounting as some ad-tech companies already offer bidding on vCPM. Simultaneously, few agency network have also started having partnerships and buying towards viewability. Eventually this will trickle down to the entire industry as a whole.

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☰ GLOSSARY

CPM

The price of 1,000 ad impressions.

DSP

Demand-side platform. A company that provides technology for media buyers to purchase ad placements. TubeMogul is a Demand-Side Platform. Contrast with the Supply-side platform (SSP).

Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB)

Industry body that plays a leading role in raising the profile, positive perception and growth of the digital industry throughout Southeast Asia.

iFrame

HTML embedded code which pulls content from another source into the website video player.

MRAID

Mobile Rich Media Ad Interface Definitions. A standardized set of commands, designed to work with mobile (HTML5 and JavaScript), that developers creating rich media ads use to communicate what those ads do (expand, resize, etc) with the apps they are being served into.

MEASUREABILITY

A body whose mission is to secure for the Industry and related users, audience measurement that is valid, reliable, and effective.

NHT

Non-human traffic. Refers to fraud and the deliberate practice of attempting to serve ads that have no potential to be viewed by a human user.

Open Video Viewability (Open VV)

Open Video Viewability is an open-source code solution for video viewability that can be easily adopted across the digital video ecosystem.

SSP

Supply-side platform. An ad-tech company that works with publishers to help them sell their inventory for the most money possible.

Viewability Rate

Percentage of measurable impressions that were viewable.

Viewable CPM (VCPM)

A pricing model that accounts for the cost of media and the viewability rate of that media. To calculate VCPM, divide the eCPM by the viewability rating.

Viewable Video Impression

As defined by the IAB, a viewable video impression is one where 50% of a video player's pixels are in view in an active browser tab for any two consecutive seconds.

VPAID

Stands for Digital Video Player Ad-Serving Interface Definition. The VPAID ad format allows a rich interactive user experience with in stream video ads. Not only does it provide a deeper experience for the user than VAST, but it captures and reports how the user interacts. Advertisers can use this information to improve their creative and technical specifications.