# Mobile Video Buyer's Guide

**PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR VIDEO ADVERTISING ON SMARTPHONES AND TABLETS**

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**This document was developed by the Mobile Video Task Force, part of the IAB's Mobile Marketing Center of Excellence.**


**About the Mobile Video Task Force:**
The Mobile Video Task Force is the IAB's primary forum for discussing and addressing challenges that arise from delivering video content and advertising on phones and tablets. It's mandate includes educational efforts, contributing to other IAB projects, and undertaking work on its own to streamline the creation and delivery of mobile video creative.

Representatives from the following companies participated in creating this *Mobile Video Buyer's Guide.*
AdTheorent
Allrecipes.com
BrightRoll
Celtra
Greystripe
Medialets
Mixpo
The New York Times Company
Rodale
Torrential
Turner Broadcasting System
The Weather Company
World Wrestling Entertainment
Xaxis

Special thanks to AdTheorent for assistance with the visual examples of mobile video ads throughout the guide. Special thanks to BrightRoll for assistance with the technical section of this guide.

**About the IAB's Mobile Marketing Center of Excellence:** The IAB's Mobile Marketing Center of Excellence, an independently funded and staffed unit within the IAB, is charged with driving the growth of the mobile marketing, advertising, and media marketplace. The Mobile Center devotes resources to marketplace and consumer research, mobile advertising case studies, executive training and education, supply chain standardization, creative showcases, and best practice identification in the burgeoning field of mobile media and marketing. Our agenda focuses on building profitable revenue growth for companies engaged in mobile marketing, communications, and advertising and helping publishers, marketers, and agency professionals understand and leverage interactive tools and technologies in order to reach and influence the consumer. More information can be found at: http://www.iab.net/mobile

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## Introduction

Mobile video is like the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup of digital media today: two great tastes that taste great together. Increasing video viewing on smartphones and tablets has helped drive the mobile video opportunity as the supply of in-stream video ads has increased; however in-banner and other forms of pre-roll mobile video advertising (e.g., before starting a game) also create opportunities to reach mobile consumers with video messages.
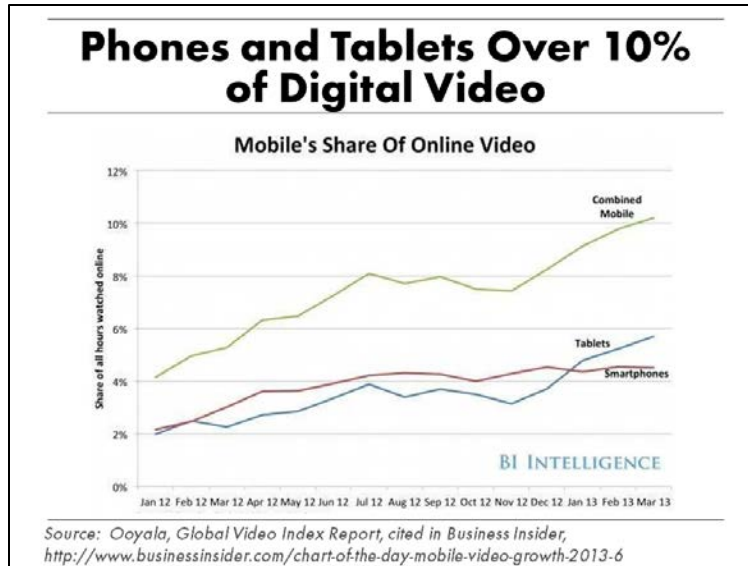
Why should you be interested in mobile video advertising? Video as a creative type overcomes one of the biggest objections to mobile ads: using sight, sound, and motion to tell a brand's story overcomes the limitations of screen size. Moreover, although rich media creative tools are steadily improving, porting a PC or a TV spot to mobile (making sure the content suits the unique aspects of mobile, as described later in this guide) can be easier than building a dynamic, immersive, rich media ad that works across the fragmented mobile interactive landscape.

This Buyer's Guide is intended to help creative designers and media planners learn their way around the mobile video landscape. It presupposes some knowledge of PC-based digital video, and seeks to highlight ways that mobile video is similar to, and differs from, the PC video world. The guide offers:

- Core stats on mobile video
- Frameworks for thinking about mobile video opportunities
- Definitions of key metrics
- Some questions to ask of sellers
- Basic advice on successfully tailoring video campaigns to the smartphone and tablet audiences.

## The Mobile Video Advertising Market Opportunity

In terms of mobile video viewing, Ooyala estimated that as of March of 2013, over ten percent of all online video was viewed on smartphones or tablets—with tablets recently outpacing phones as the prime device.

**Phones and Tablets Over 10% of Digital Video**

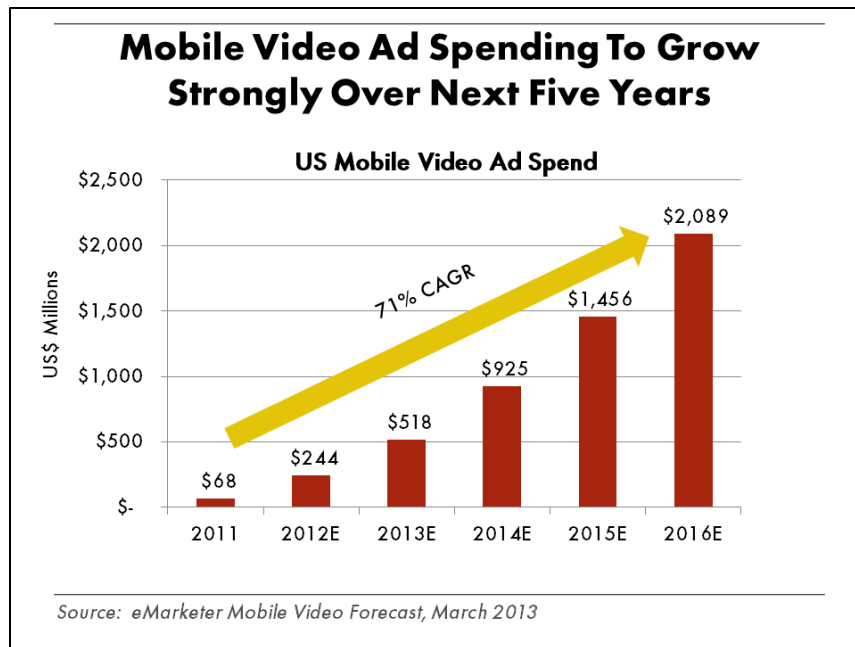Mobile's Share Of Online Video

Source: Ooyala, Global Video Index Report, cited in Business Insider,
http://www.businessinsider.com/chart-of-the-day-mobile-video-growth-2013-6

Smartphones and tablets are both proving themselves appealing devices for viewing video content—although the kinds of video and behaviors will certainly differ.  Smartphone video viewing appears to be fairly evenly spread though the course of a typical day, as befits smartphones' role as the go-everywhere interactive device.  Tablets, by contrast, show definite video viewing peak times—in the morning before work, and in the evening, overlapping TV's prime time.  In part this reflects the tablet use case as an in-the-home media consumption device.



**TV Prime Time is Also Prime Tablet Video Viewing Time**

26% of Tablet Video Views Happen From 8PM-Midnight

VIEWS BY TIME OF DAY AND DEVICE TYPE
While viewing patterns are similar between tablets and smartphones, the gap starting at 7 p.m. suggests a tradeoff: viewers favor their tablets over their mobile phones during primetime (8 p.m. to midnight), which represents 25.7% of the day's views.

Source: TubeMogul, Is There a Mobile Video Primetime in the United States?
http://www.tubemogul.com/research/report/56

Although at this early stage any forecast for mobile video ad growth must be taken with a grain of salt, it's worth sharing that eMarketer projects an over 70 percent compound average growth rate (CAGR) for mobile video ads in the US over the next five years, to reach over $2 billion by 2016.

## Mobile Video Ad Spending To Grow Strongly Over Next Five Years

### US Mobile Video Ad Spend

US$ Millions

- 2011: $68
- 2012E: $244
- 2013E: $518
- 2014E: $925
- 2015E: $1,456
- 2016E: $2,089

71% CAGR

Source: eMarketer Mobile Video Forecast, March 2013

## Market Frameworks: Ways to understand the mobile video market

Everyone uses the phrase "mobile advertising" in a broad, generic way, as though it was a single, monolithic medium. In reality the phrase masks a complex reality defined by a wide array of different advertising opportunities, as well as a host of different devices, operating systems, and form factors, all of which impact the true opportunities for marketers.

In the US, mobile operating systems are dominated by Android and iOS (combined they represent over 90% of the market). Fragmentation begins with device types (i.e., smartphones and tablets) and continues with the numerous device manufacturers, models, and screen sizes. This section reviews those and some of the other differences to keep in mind as you consider mobile video advertising from either a strategic or tactical point of view.
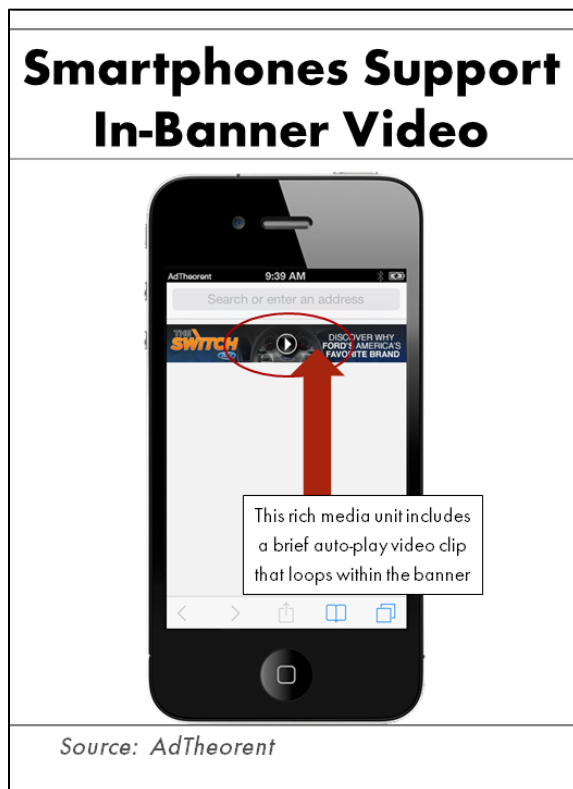
### In-app versus browser ads

Mobile video inventory includes inventory that displays in native mobile applications (apps) or mobile-optimized websites (browsers). From a technical standpoint, marketers can typically achieve the same creative video executions across both in-app and browser ads. Two benefits of in-app video ads include: 1) the user has taken the time to proactively download the app and is likely to be engaged with the app's content; 2) interactive mobile video ads that include elements beyond the standard linear video creative are usually easier to execute in an in-app environment. While ample amounts of both in-app and browser video inventory exist in the marketplace today, there is typically more in-app inventory available. Generally, unless the marketer has a very specific reason for wanting to show their video ads to users in either environment, it is encouraged not to differentiate between in-app and browser ads when planning a mobile video campaign.

| Type of Mobile Video Creative | User Engagement Level | Interactive Creative Executions |
|---|---|---|
| **Mobile Web/Browser** | Medium | Relatively Difficult |
| **Mobile App** | High | Relatively Easy |

**Pre-roll video ads versus in-banner video ads**

Mobile pre-roll ads are video ads that precede a piece of content that the user has selected to view, and are typically played inline or in a video player. As defined by the IAB Quality Assurance Guidelines, some examples of types of content that could follow a mobile pre-roll ad include videos, games, music or news. Mobile pre-roll ads are not to be confused with mobile in-banner video ads that may also play in a video player, but within the context of a banner and not preceding content. Others types of mobile in-banner video units include "push-downs" in which the banner unit pushes content down to deliver a full screen ad in the mobile browser. Sellers of mobile video inventory should disclose what mobile video ad formats they accept and buyers of mobile video should always know which formats they are purchasing.  Mobile pre-roll ads are typically more expensive than in-banner videos ads, but their benefits include: 1) an engaged user who is expecting to view some type of content following with video ad; 2) an ad that is likely to take up all or most of the screen on the mobile device; 3) an ad that is likely to have an audio component in addition to a video component.  For brand advertisers looking to drive branding metrics like brand awareness or brand affinity, mobile pre-roll ads are generally seen as more effective than mobile in-banner video ads.



Source: AdTheorent

| Type of Mobile Video Creative | User Engagement Level | Audio enabled? | Share of Device Screen |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pre-Roll** | High | Default typically on | Usually full-screen |
| **In-Banner** | Medium/Low | Default typically muted | Typically 25% of screen or less. |

**Inline versus Native Player**

Another factor media planners need to keep in mind when planning mobile campaigns is whether video creative plays inline (in the app or web experience the user is currently viewing) or in the native player on the

device.  This doesn't apply to video ads played in the context of video content; however, for video creative in other contexts, some devices or device operating systems (notably early versions of Android) force all video playback into the native player.  Using the native player has significant downsides, making the experience of pre-roll video ads that appear before non-video content much more disruptive, generally making it impossible to add interactive elements to the video, and curtailing the types of metrics and reporting that might be available.  In short, agencies should request or require inline playback of video whenever possible, and allow falling back to native player playback only when there is no other option.

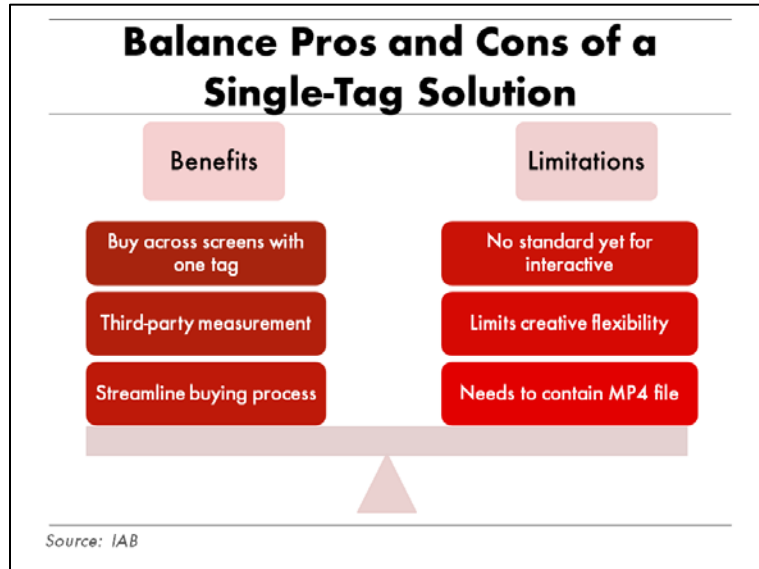| Type of Mobile Video Playback | **User experience** | Audio enabled? | Share of Device Screen | Interactivity | Metrics/ reporting |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **In the native player** | Interruptive—moves from app or browser to video player | Default on | Usually full-screen | Not available | Generally very limited |
| **Inline with the content** | Fairly seamless with current activity | Could be on or muted | Could be any share of screen size | Possibly available | Can be very good |

**Operating System Capabilities Matrix**

Adding to the challenges of delivering a mobile video campaign are the inherent differences in capabilities between mobile devices.  The chart below summarizes some of the key differences between the predominant versions of iOS (divided between phone and tablet implementations), Android, and Windows.

| Device/OS | Web capabilities | | | App capabilities | | | Native player capabilities/ limitations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Inline video | Autoplay video | VSuite Capable | Inline video | Autoplay video | VSuite Capable | |
| iOS: iPhone and iPad | No | No | VAST 1.0, 2.0 | Yes | Yes | VAST 1.0, 2.0 | No auto-start or inline capabilities; limited insight into video duration events. |
| Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich or later | No | No | VAST 1.0, 2.0 | Yes | Yes | VAST 1.0, 2.0 | No auto-start or inline capabilities; limited insight into video duration events. |
| Android Pre-Ice Cream Sandwich | No | No | VAST 1.0, 2.0 | No | Yes | VAST 1.0, 2.0 | No auto-start or inline capabilities; limited insight into video duration events. |

**Using third party tags**

Buyers should check with the publisher or ad technology platform they are working with, but generally all mobile video inventory sources can accept third party tags for ad serving purposes. These third party tags are often referred to as third party "VAST" or Video Ad Serving Template tags.

**Balance Pros and Cons of a Single-Tag Solution**

| Benefits | Limitations |
|---|---|
| Buy across screens with one tag | No standard yet for interactive |
| Third-party measurement | Limits creative flexibility |
| Streamline buying process | Needs to contain MP4 file |

Source: IAB

- **Taking third party versus using raw assets.** Buyers often choose to serve their mobile video through third party tags so that they can track and measure performance in a third party's system rather than relying on the tracking of the supply source.

- **Using a single tag to run across multiple screens.** Using a single tag to run across multiple digital screens helps streamline and simplify the buying process for the marketer and eliminate the need to send raw assets out to various vendors. It should be noted that, typically, third party tags running in a mobile video environment must call an MP4 file rather than an FLV file. Assuming the right codec is used for the mobile creative, there should be no problem with having a tag with different creative lengths for mobile and desktop.

**Building interactive video pre-roll ad units**

Mobile buyers are increasingly able to take advantage of some of the more advanced, custom interactive video ad units that have been popular in desktop for some time. There are currently competing views around what type of tags and standards to use for interactive mobile video pre-roll, since neither the IAB's mobile in-app rich media display standard of MRAID (Mobile Rich-media Ad Interface Definitions) nor the desktop video standard of VPAID (Video Player Ad-Serving Interface Definition) fully contemplate mobile video. IAB has begun a process to provide some guidance to ad creators seeking to combine MRAID and VAST/VPAID capabilities. And in the longer term, we expect to set those specifications on a convergence path.

**Rich Mobile Ad Units Can Accommodate Multiple Video Placements**
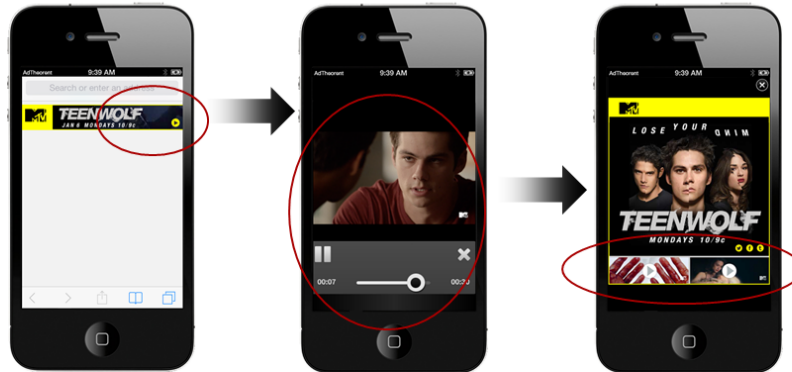
**1. Teaser Trailer**
The unexpanded state of the rich media unit includes a 5-second auto-play Teaser Trailer that loops within the banner

**2. Full Length Trailer**
Once the user taps the banner the unit expands and auto plays the full length trailer in the native video player of the phone

**3. Interactive Rich Media**
Upon video completion the user is taken to a rich media unit where they can click to re-watch the trailer or interact with other features

Source: AdTheorent, Tune-In Trailer (RM) Ad Type

## Technical Aspects of Mobile Video Creative

The process of preparing mobile creative so that it looks good and performs well across the broadest possible array of phone and tablet models involves technical finesse and some creative and design decisions.

**In general, while it's good to have a general understanding of the technical ins and outs of mobile video creative, buyers should rest assured that in most cases they simply need to provide the raw video source file.  A good mobile video partner will take care of the rest!**

Although a growing array of vendors will handle encoding or transcoding , and scaling video resolution on behalf of the buyer, buyers need some understanding of the technical aspects of creative optimization, if only to have a realistic sense of the time requirements to prepare creative for going in flight.  This section will look at several technical aspects of mobile creative.

**Encoding, resolution, and bitrate.**  Proper encoding is the beginning point of great viewer experience.  An immediate, high quality mobile video experience is the goal.  There are several important considerations that anyone encoding for mobile video delivery must address:

- Numerous operating systems and devices;
- Playback across a wide array of device and OS platforms;
- Videos should look good; and
- Buffering time should be minimized.

First, consider video codecs.  A "video codec"[1]" is an algorithm that encodes video streams—in other words the format of the video file.  Encoding using the standard codec is MP4 (technically known as H.264 MPEG-4

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[1] The word "codec" is a portmanteau, a combination of the words coder and decoder.

Advanced Video Coding) will reach over 90% of the mobile video audience.  By contrast, Flash video, long an industry standard codec for video creative assets on the PC-based internet, generally does not work on mobile devices.

Second, the resolution of the video should be optimized to ensure a good user experience.   Since a mobile video creative is a very short message in the palm of a consumer's hand, it's all the more important that the video plays seamlessly, without delays, stutters, or stops, or undue buffering times.  Picking the right resolution (that is, size and level of detail of the video file) or combination of resolutions ensures the video looks good on every device viewers might have.  A common approach in addressing resolution is to encode low, medium, and high resolution mobile video files.

- Low resolution:        640 x 480               (standard definition)
- Medium resolution:    1280 x 720              (mini-high definition)
- High resolution:       1920 x 1080             (true high definition)

These are then delivered based on the device parameters accompanying an ad call.

For example, in this encoding scenario, low resolution plays on older smartphones such as iPhone 3GS (circa 2009) and earlier; medium resolution plays on newer smartphones such as iPhone 4 (circa 2010) and tablets such as iPad 1 (circa 2010).  High resolution plays on the newest smartphones such as Samsung's Galaxy S4 (circa 2013) and tablets such as iPad 3 (circa 2012).

Third, bitrate, or bandwidth, is driven by carrier and data connection.  A bitrate is a measurement of data speed across a network, often in kilobits per second or kbps (1000 bits per second). This number correlates with potential bandwidth levels that a user may experience and should be in balance to the resolution of the stream.

Adaptive bitrate is a technique of detecting a viewer's bandwidth capabilities in real time and then adjusting the quality of the video stream accordingly.  Adaptive bitrate works by having multiple bitrates available that the server can provide based on the user's connection speed and ability.

**Video Delivery Options.**  As on desktops there are several ways to move video creative across the network to the viewer's device.  Most familiar, perhaps, is streaming, which delivers the bits that make up the video more or less in real-time, as the device converts them back into images and audio and displays them to the viewer.  Two other important delivery options are progressive download and pre-caching.

The majority of mobile video, particularly short-format video content,[2] is delivered via progressive download.  For example, YouTube, ESPN, and CNN all deliver via progressive download.

Technically, progressive download is video delivered by a regular HTTP web server rather than a streaming server.  Video delivered using this technique is stored (or cached) on the viewer's mobile device.  In contrast, streaming video is not stored.

What is the viewer experience?  Progressive download simply enables playback of a full video file to start prior to completing the full download of that file (minimizing wait time).   Once a few seconds of video are downloaded and buffered, the video begins playing.  Downloading continues in parallel until  the video file is

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[2] Typically defined as 10 minutes or shorter in duration.

complete.  Ideally, the viewer will have the same experience as streaming video.

Pre-caching of mobile video is a third delivery strategy.  In this case, the entire video file is delivered to the device and stored locally, sometimes well in advance of being requested or viewed.  This means there is no buffering, and very high quality video files can be delivered in this way.  Additionally, video can be delivered when the device is connected via wi-fi, helping the consumer avoid using their 3G or 4G data plan.

On the negative side, pre-cached ads may be viewed significantly after being downloaded, or not at all. Requesting ads ahead of delivering or showing them can have a negative impact on campaign pacing/delivery, as well as reporting—while IAB has established guidelines for counting pre-cached ads, it's a very different model to the familiar real-time counting that happens with streamed or progressively downloaded ads.


## Mobile Video Creative Decisions

Most mobile video creative is fairly straightforward today—TV-commercial-style 15- or 30-second spots. However there are a few key characteristics that creative designers should consider when planning mobile video creative.  Make sure you know what's feasible and practical given the publishers and platforms the campaign is running on.  Things to think about include:

- Duration
- Orientation
- Interactive Elements
- Companion banners and leave-behinds



Source: AdTheorent

**Duration.**  While many marketers just starting out in mobile video simply repurpose spots created for TV or PCs, we expect video made for mobile will perform better.  One key aspect to that is duration.  The general recommendation for mobile is to restrict creative lengths to 15 seconds or less, to avoid driving away consumers or prompting them to skip the ad.  There may be more leeway to go longer for a tablet video ad, and for ads

that run alongside long form content.  However more research needs to be done to determine user acceptance and effectiveness.

**Orientation.**  The ability to change a handheld device from portrait to landscape is powerful, but can also lead to disrupted user experiences.  Some publishers offer ad formats that run as a banner then the device/app is in portrait mode, with a call to action to change to landscape.  Creative designers should be sure they know how an app or site responds if the orientation changes.  Particularly for video creative, ad designers may want to consider locking the orientation if possible, so that a viewer's experience isn't disrupted by an accidental change (imagine a full-screen landscape video clip that is either shrunk down or cut off on the edges if the screen changes to portrait mode in the midst of playback).

**Interactive Elements.**  Marketers should not generally expect that mobile ad inventory will allow interactive elements or overlays in the video frame currently.  Such features do not work at all for creative that plays in the native player on the device; and may be spottily supported for in-browser video.  However, interactive capabilities became steadily more widely available in mobile video during 2013, and we expect that trend to continue in 2014.  These should help prove or verify the value of video advertising to buyers and sellers alike.

**Companion banners and leave-behinds.**  As with interactive elements, companion banners and leave-behinds (static units that fill the video frame after the video finishes) are not necessarily common in the mobile world today.  However, there are examples of both phone and tablet units that run video in a frame surrounded by a static banner skin that reinforces the brand and offers social media and other interactive capabilities. Buyers should check with the publishers on the media plan to verify which, if any, support these.

## Mobile Video Advertising Metrics

Digital video advertising in a mobile environment can be measured similarly to how traditional non-mobile digital video advertising has been measured. However, advertisers should be aware of the impact device fragmentation and other unique-to-mobile factors can have on the scope of mobile digital video ad metrics. For example, mobile web video advertising on an iPhone in the native player cannot support video click-throughs at all, including event tracking. Definitions of common video metrics are included and followed by a matrix that breaks out limitations based on popular device platforms. Performance benchmarks are included when available.

| Type of Creative | Key Performance Indicator | Secondary Metrics |
|---|---|---|
| In-banner | View Rate (rate at which they initiate the video compared to impressions of the display banner/ad unit) | Time spent (% viewed, % complete).  Also, clicks and interactions especially for DR |
| Pre-roll | Time spent (% viewed, % complete) | Clicks (For VAST ads, interactions outside of primary click is currently not supported until wider adoption of VPAID 2.0) |

**Impression:** The measurement and reporting of digital mobile video impressions should be governed by the IAB Broadband Video Commercial Measurement Guidelines, found here: http://www.iab.net/iab_products_and_industry_services/1421/1443/1479. The measurement and reporting

of the companion ad should be governed by the IAB Interactive Audience Measurement and Advertising Campaign Reporting and Audit Guidelines, found here: http://www.iab.net/media/file/US_meas_guidelines.pdf. Note that companion ads are not widely supported in mobile environments due to player and device limitations. For example, some smartphones only play video in a full-screen native player and thus do not support companion ads. Also, rich VPAID ads do not exist due to technical limitations with mobile players.

**Video Click-through:** Occurs when a user clicks on the linear mobile ad and is taken to the advertiser's web landing page. Note that many smartphones cannot track video click-throughs since they render video through the native players. Additional functionality can be programmed into mobile app video players on smartphones to allow for video click-through events including player overlays and calls to action that are displayed after a video has played. According to a Jun Group analysis of 10.2 million mobile and online video views from early 2013, mobile video ads had an average interaction rate of 5%, as compared with 2.4% for online video ads.[3]

**Completed view:** Occurs immediately upon completion of the mobile video play. User must complete the video view at normal speed. (Also sometimes called **Completed Play** or **View**.)

**Time spent viewing:** Amount of mobile video viewed at normal speed in seconds or other appropriate time-based units; if a rewind event occurs during play, time spent viewing may be calculated on total amount of video viewed at normal speed (i.e. including additional amounts of video viewed after rewind).

**Quartile metrics:** Percentage of mobile video viewed continuously at normal speed. If a rewind event occurs during play, percent complete may be calculated on total amount of unduplicated video viewed at normal speed. Each section of video may only be considered once in the calculation. While theoretically any percentage duration could be reported back to the advertiser, in practice by far the most common partial-play metrics are the quartile percentages (25%, 50%, 75%).

**Other Events and Metrics**
The following events are less prevalent in current ad formats but are defined in order to give optional guidance if offered:

**Audio mute:** Indicates when a user taps or otherwise activates the mute control. Should not be considered an accurate substitute for the "state" of the audio.

**Audio un-mute:** Indicates when a user taps or otherwise actives the un-mute control. If the un-mute control is the same as the mute control, the reporting should be able to differentiate the two events. Should not be considered an accurate substitute for the "state" of the audio.

**Video Full Screen:** Indicates when a user taps or otherwise activates the full screen player during mobile video ad playback. The full-screen video will generally (and by preference) play inline, but in some cases may launch the device's full-screen native player.

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[3] Mediapost, "Mobile Video Ads Drive Higher Engagement, Study Finds," Oct. 1, 2013, http://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/210388/

**Pause:** Indicates when a user taps or otherwise engages with their device in order to pause a mobile video advertisement. Note that many mobile devices will automatically pause a pre-roll when it is clicked (and a browser is opened with the pre-roll's destination URL.)

**Rewind:** Indicates when a user taps or otherwise engages with their device in order to rewind a mobile video advertisement.

**Resume:** Indicates that a user, after having paused a pre-roll, continues watching the mobile video advertisement.

**Errors:** Indicates that the playback of a mobile video ad suffered a technical issue during playback. Given the fragmented state of the device market, the mixed reliability of mobile data networks, and the lack of stability in emerging mobile web and app technologies, a higher propensity of errors can occur in the mobile ad space.

**Survey Exposures:** While the IAB VAST specification defines a method for survey exposure, note that mobile devices often restrict the use of 3rd party cookies thus hampering the ability of advertisers from accurately exposing and surfacing users for mobile ad studies.

**Device, Carrier, Bandwidth, Operating System, and Language:** Some mobile ad servers and video platforms support the targeting capture of device model, mobile carrier, bandwidth, and mobile operating system. Advertisers have been known to value subsets of these users differently (e.g. Apple iPhone users) based on demographic and socioeconomic assumptions.  Ad servers can also target based on the language of the OS (via the user agent).  This offers another way to do certain kinds of demographic targeting, for example of bilingual Hispanic users.

**Geo-Targeting:** Most mobile ad servers support the capture and targeting of a user's geographic location. While country-based targeting is relatively straightforward, it should be understood that it is difficult to determine a more granular location (e.g. Designated Market Area) of users on non-Wifi mobile carrier connections due to limitations with mobile carrier IP addresses. Apps and websites can request user permission to determine the location; however, many impressions do not offer geo-targeting beyond the country level due to technological limitations and user experience concerns.


## Publisher Best Practices

Buyers of mobile video inventory should expect some variability from one publisher, platform or ad network to the next in terms of their exact creative specifications and requirements. Mobile video is still a young medium, and evolving rapidly as devices and user behavior continue to change.  However, buyers should expect and require clear answers from their publisher/ad seller partners on three key topics:  creative guidelines, business rules, and available metrics for tracking and reporting.

**Creative Guidelines:  Clear specs on what video formats and times are allowed or accepted.**
As publishers observe users watching video across platforms, they are making less of a distinction between content collections for mobile and the PC-based web. Unfortunately, that does not hold true for advertising. While users are consuming content in similar ways across devices, mobile video advertising should adapt to the device it's being consumed on and the content it is being consumed with.

- Traditional video ad formats can work well with traditional long-form video content.  I.e., someone watching TV on their smartphone will likely tolerate 30-second spots fairly well.
- Users viewing short videos on-the-go can be easily distracted from the content, therefore many publishers limit the advertising pre-roll length to 15 seconds.
- The technology for mobile video is still being developed, though at a rapid rate. While VPAID may be standard on the PC-based web, many publishers are still working towards its acceptance on mobile.

## Business Rules:  Delivering video ads to maximize user experience

You can expect publishers to keep the mobile video ad-to-content ratio higher than the ratio seen on web. Publishers are mindful of the number of distractions mobile users face and may limit ad exposure to keep users engaged. While the web is filled with a variety of options for video ad delivery - overlays, postrolls, midrolls, and more, mobile ad products for video remain simple for consumers and advertisers with most publishers relying on prerolls as the main product.

In addition, buyers should have a clear sense of the rules publishers and networks in the media plan have set on three other key variables that affect user experience with content:

- **Skippability of ads:**  Many publishers have established rules to allow viewers to skip ads that play for more than a certain time threshold.  These can vary from seller to seller, and some may permit buyers to override a viewer's ability to skip, forcing them to watch an entire ad.  Buyers should have a clear understanding of a publisher's rules going in, and a sense of how those rules may impact success metrics for the campaign.
- **Autoplay ads versus user initiated ads:**  As with the PC-based web, depending on the context or placement of a mobile video ad, it may start playing automatically, or it may require a user interaction (e.g., a tap) to begin playing the ad.  There are positives to both autoplay and user-initiated ads, so we don't recommend one or the other.  However, these categories will impact metrics, and again, a buyer that knows how many of the impressions in a media plan fall into which category will have more realistic expectations about the campaign metrics he or she will see.
- **Incentivized ads:**  These are user-initiated mobile video ads that offer the viewer a modest digital reward such as points, virtual goods, or content in exchange for viewing the full ad.  The MMA refers to these ads as "value exchange video units." [4]

## Available Metrics:  What gets reported back to the buyer

As discussed in the previous section, mobile video metrics available vary by publisher but you can generally expect third party impressions and clicks to be available. The following metrics are being actively deployed by publishers, but their availability will vary:

- Completes
- Quartiles
- Engagement (time spent, shares, etc)

More on the cutting edge/testing phase are guaranteed audience metrics, validated by comScore validated Campaign Essentials (vCE) and Nielsen Online Campaign Ratings (OCR).

Publishers should have a clear list of available metrics for buyers, along with any restrictions or limitations on availability based on operating system, device, or other technological constraint.

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[4] Mobile Marketing Association, Mobile Video Lexicon Task Force Recommendations, July 2013, http://www.mmaglobal.com/bestpractice

# Starting points for mobile video advertising

Finally, the authors of this buyer's guide would like to offer a checklist of advice for buyers of mobile video ad inventory.

## Planning

- ✓ Work with video enabler partners to ensure a good user experience.
- ✓ Build time for your video vendor to re-encode and mobile-optimize video creative into the timeline for delivery to avoid late creative issues.
- ✓ Make sure your landing page is mobile-optimized, not just the ad creative.
- ✓ Consider user behavior when evaluating creative and setting campaign expectations
- ✓ Think about the action you want your user to take if there's an interactive element.
- ✓ Apply contextual or audience targeting to ensure you're reaching the right user at the right time.
- ✓ Select the right metrics to assess success, and review analytics based on campaign objectives. If you are looking to generate a high VCR but have a strong call to action in the creative, a high CTR may be preventing users from completing the video.

## Creative Execution

- ✓ Keep creative short and punchy  –particularly for smartphones, where user patience is low, so the best performing creative will usually be 15 seconds or less.
- ✓ Develop (or at least re-edit) creative for mobile devices, rather than repurposing TV spots. If creative needs to be repurposed, adding rich media and interactive functionalities will greatly improve performance.
- ✓ Don't rely too heavily on the audio to convey the core message.
- ✓ Make sure your creative will run in-line so that the user is not taken out of their experience and into the native player.
- ✓ Keep campaign goals top of mind when developing mobile creative. Be sure to include a call to action or interactive elements if looking to drive CTR.

## Conclusion

There's a great deal to recommend mobile video advertising as an early foray into smartphones and tablets: video is a great medium for conveying an emotional, brand-related message; consumers are increasingly thinking of their phones and tablets as video devices; and the technical hurdles for video can be easier to overcome than for complex rich media ads.

We hope this guide has helped make you smarter about the mobile video universe:  knowing what to expect and what questions to ask will help ensure that early mobile video efforts are successful, and lead to more mobile video in future media plans.