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## ABC National Newspapers

Changes have been agreed to the ABC National Newspapers & Web Traffic Reporting Standards. We have updated the latest Reporting Standards to incorporate these changes and you can now view or download these from our website [www.abcstandards.org.uk](http://www.abcstandards.org.uk).

### Have a suggestion or a query about a rule?

As an ABC member you can ask us to look at any aspect of the information we publish or the rules behind them. If you have any suggestions or comments please contact ABC's Commercial Director, Jan Pitt ([jan.pitt@abc.org.uk](mailto:jan.pitt@abc.org.uk)) or any member of the [ABC National Newspaper Reporting Standards Group](#).

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#### 1. Digital Editions

- Ability to report by circulation and/or Publication Active Views (PAVs)
- Option to report circulation or PAVs on front page of ABC certificate
- Purchaser's details no longer required for copies sold at less than 20%
- Minimum 20% price for gift subscriptions removed
- Listing of Digital Edition products included in claim

#### 2. Voucher Subscriptions

- Removal of reporting the voucher subscription offers in the period
- Minimum voucher subscription term reduced from 4 weeks to 2 issues

#### 3. Paid Multiple Copies

- Caps for different audience type/locations simplified and rationalised
- General cap introduced that provides flexibility for new routes to market
- Ability for caps to be exceeded providing evidence of demand available for audit
- Restriction removed on caps where multiple titles distributed at a particular location

#### 4. Consolidated auditing

- Option for monthly certificates to be audited on a quarterly cycle

#### 5. Web Traffic

- Breaking out automated traffic becomes optional
- For certificates of two months or more the domain/inventory listing is only reported for the final month

Setting the standard



## 1. Digital Editions

To allow you to better demonstrate the range and reach of the digital and print editions on one ABC certificate you will report Digital Edition copies as follows:

- a) Within the certificate, at your option:
  - By circulation only
  - By Publication Active Views only
  - Both circulation and Publication Active Views
- b) On the front page of the certificate (if both claimed) you can choose whether to display circulation OR Publication Active Views.
- c) Within the certificate a list of Digital Edition products included in the claim

To remove a restriction to reporting sold Digital Edition copies, the purchaser's name, postal and email address are no longer required for copies sold at less than 20% of standard price. The 20% minimum price on gift subscriptions is also removed.

### **Amendment – effective from July 2018 Reporting Period (List of Products from August 2018)**

Shading denotes new text added and strike-through text removed:

## DIGITAL EDITIONS [extract]

### **5. Digital Edition copies must meet requirements of the relevant print category except where varied by this section.**

- a) Digital Edition copies can be claimed only for specified circulation categories depending on the sector. The requirements of those categories in relation to print copies apply to Digital Edition copies except as varied by this section.
- b) In relation to all paid categories you must be able to demonstrate the copy has been sold and at what price.
- ~~c) If the purchaser pays less than 20% of the UK print copy price or it is received free:
  - i) ~~You must capture their name, postal address and email address.~~
  - ii) ~~You can only claim one Digital Edition copy per individual~~
  - iii) ~~You cannot claim the copy if you have provided a paid or free print copy to the same individual (where known).~~~~
- iv) For Corporate Subscription Digital Editions:**
  - There must be a contractual arrangement between the purchaser (a third party employer) and the publisher for at least two issues.
  - The copies are purchased by the third party employer for its employees
  - The claimed quantity must be restricted to those employees that have personally opted to receive/view the Digital Edition. *For example: A company takes out a subscription for each of its 100 employees. If only 40 of those employees personally register to receive/view the digital edition then only those 40 copies may be included on the ABC Certificate.*
- d) Gift subscriptions, where the recipient receives a subscription as a gift from a paying subscriber (up to a maximum of 12 gift subscriptions per subscriber), can be claimed as Digital Edition Single Copy Subscription Sales as follows:
  - ~~i) The amount paid for the gift subscription must be at least 20% of the relevant print Basic Annual Subscription Rate (BAR).~~
  - ii) The recipient's email address must be provided.
  - iii) The recipient is deemed (for ABC purposes) as having paid for the subscription.



- i) Single copy sales
- ii) Single Copy Subscription Sales
- iii) Corporate Subscriptions

4. A list of the Digital Edition products included in the claim

## REPORTED DATA [EXTRACT]

...

- iii) Digital Edition copies are reported separately to the print copies, and as Publication Active Views and/or circulation. Circulation will be broken down by the following geographical areas: UK, ROI, Other Countries (i.e. no subset of UK is required).

## **2. Voucher Subscriptions**

To simplify reporting and allow media owners' greater flexibility in voucher subscription offers:

- a) The requirement to report the various voucher subscription offers in the period has been removed
- b) The minimum voucher subscription term reduced from 4 weeks to 2 issues

### **Amendment – effective from July 2018 Reporting Period**

Shading denotes new text added and strike-through text removed:

## VOUCHER SUBSCRIPTION SALES [extract]

4. For a contracted period and for a minimum number of issues (at least two)

- ~~a) The contracted period must include issues for a minimum period of four weeks.~~
- ab) You cannot claim sales of back issues.**

### **REPORTING**

You will report Voucher Subscription sales as follows, which will be broken out on the ABC Certificate:

...

~~4. A list of the Voucher Subscription schemes being offered/fulfilled during the Reporting Period, including:~~

- ~~a) The newspapers involved in the scheme~~
- ~~b) The issues involved in the scheme~~
- ~~c) The scheme duration~~
- ~~d) The price of the scheme.~~

## **3. Paid Multiple Copies**

To reduce administration and provide greater flexibility to publishers to make commercial arrangements:

- a) The caps for different audience type/locations have been simplified and rationalised
- b) A general cap "Other general retail / customer service location" is introduced that provides flexibility for new routes to market
- c) The ability for caps to be exceeded is introduced, providing evidence of demand is available for audit
- d) The restriction on caps where multiple titles are distributed at a particular location is removed

## Amendment – effective from July 2018 Reporting Period

Shading denotes new text added and strike-through text removed:

### CAPS BY SUPPLY TYPE [extract]

#### PRINCIPLES

1. Copies must meet the requirements of the Multiple Copy Sales category.
2. If the number of copies supplied is less than the cap then you must claim the actual supply
3. You cannot claim copies supplied over and above the cap
4. Caps cannot be ‘double-counted’ at a particular location already subject to its own cap
- ~~5. Caps may be restricted due to multiple publications being supplied~~
56. Caps are set by the Reporting Standards Group

#### REQUIREMENTS

3. You cannot claim copies supplied over and above the cap
  - a) If demand exceeds the cap at a particular location you may claim a greater number of copies than the caps below if you have documentary evidence demonstrating a commensurate level of demand. Note: You may ask us for advice before claiming a copy count higher than the cap
- ~~5. Caps may be restricted due to multiple publications being supplied~~
  - a) ~~If the distribution of more than one publication supplied under these Reporting Standards results in the cap at a particular location being exceeded (except for the transportation categories\*) then we reserve the right to restrict the quantities claimed for the publications involved. \*including airside, trains, boats, ships, coaches etc.~~
56. Caps are set by the Reporting Standards Group
  - a) You may ask apply to us or any member of the Reporting Standards Group to table a proposed cap to be considered for inclusion.

#### CAPS

Where caps refer to a quantifiable measurement for a location e.g. seats, rooms, attendance etc. then you must have evidence to support this.

Description/Category	Cap
Transport (airside/airline, train, ferry, cruise ship, coach)	No. of seats (based on 1 journey per issue per transport method/location)
Train/Bus Station/ Park & Ride [new]	150 copies
Hotel/Apartment block [new]	No. of rooms
Events / Exhibitions	33% of attendance
Business [new] / School / College	33% of no. of staff/students
Hospital / Residential Home [new] / Prison [new]	50% of no. of beds
Conferences	50% of attendance
Direct Mailshots	No. of addressees
Supermarket / Major store / Petrol station / Motorway Services [new]	250 copies
Managed shopping centre / retail park [new]	Sum of individual outlet caps
Other general retail / customer service location [new]	50 copies

1. **Airside and trackside for international rail services** **75%\*\***
  - Total potential penetration will be the average number of seats available on the services to which the newspaper is supplied. This may be calculated with reference to number of short-haul and long-haul flights.
  - In relation to airline lounges:
    - Lounges that are designated for a named airline's passengers (e.g. BA Lounge) will not have a separate cap. Any copies supplied will count against the cap for the airline based on flight capacity as detailed above
    - For lounges that are not designated to an airline's passengers or are designated for two or more airlines' passengers publishers must apply to ABC for capping arrangements.
2. **Hotels** **80% London 65% elsewhere**

Total potential penetration will be the total quantity of available rooms per individual hotel. The quantity of copies that may be included, will be a maximum of the percentage penetration figure as an average across an ABC audit month. Supplies may exceed this figure on individual days (but may never exceed 100%), but where the average across the month exceeds this percentage, the quantity to be declared to ABC must be restricted to this figure. London refers to an address which falls inside of the M25 London Orbital Motorway.
3. **Boats** **33%\*\***

Total potential penetration will be the number of seats or cabins (as applicable to the boat being supplied to) on board the boat.
4. **Rail – carriages** **50%\*\***

Total potential penetration will be the number of seats available on the carriages of each individual train supplied to. This figure is a percentage by day by class.
5. **Events/Exhibitions** **33%**

Total potential Penetration will be the actual attendance figures from the event.  
The contract must also give both ABC and the independent circulation auditor full and free access to all distribution points copies have been supplied to for the purpose of ensuring the good distribution of the copies and for auditing the total potential audience figures supplied.
6. **Conferences.** **50%**

Total potential Penetration will be the actual attendance figures from the event.  
The contract must also give both ABC and the independent circulation auditor full and free access to all distribution points copies have been supplied to for the purpose of ensuring the good distribution of the copies and for auditing the total potential audience figures supplied.
7. **Direct Mail shots.** **95%**

Total potential penetration will be the quantity of addressees on the mailing list. These are such instances where a purchaser will supply a mailing list to the publisher or will utilise a mailing list themselves to mail individual copies to a list of persons. To qualify, copies must be delivered to the purchaser on the same day as the newspaper is cover dated.
8. **Schools (6<sup>th</sup> Form only).** **15%**

Total penetration is the number of 6<sup>th</sup> form students, restricted to term time only. Third party evidence of the number of students and term times must be available (this must be renewed annually).
9. **Universities/Colleges** **20%**

Total penetration is the number of students at the college, restricted to term time/active class attendance periods only. Third party evidence of the number of students and term times must be available (this must be renewed annually).
10. **Coaches** **50%\*\***

Total penetration is the number of seats on board the coach.
11. **Betting Shops** **50%**

Total potential penetration is the number of seats at the shop. Third party evidence of the number of seats must be available
12. **Hospitals: 50% of number of beds**

Total potential penetration is the number of beds at the hospital. Third party evidence of the number of beds must be available.

**\*\*The caps in these categories are based upon the average number of journeys per day.**

*For example:*

*A fleet of 10 aircraft each with 200 seats = 2000 seats. If the aircraft each makes 2 outbound flights per day this makes a total potential penetration of 4,000 seats. Therefore the cap (and maximum number of copies that can be claimed for that airline per issue) will be 75% x 4,000 = 3,000 copies.*

**Note:**

- The contractual arrangements with the customer (or the organisation authorized to purchase the copies on the customer's behalf) must include a requirement for them to advise the total potential penetration (or Estimated Passenger Capacity – 'EPC') and to revise if schedules or capacity changes significantly.
- If the arrangements specify that copies will be supplied at one end of the route for use also on return journeys, the EPC will be calculated on 'out and back' capacity, otherwise only outward capacity from the supply point will be taken into account.

#### **4. Consolidated auditing**

You may opt to have your monthly certificates audited on a quarterly cycle (i.e. after certification). The aim of this change is to provide efficiencies and therefore cost savings through changing the timing of audit work across a set of certificates, whilst ensuring the risk of material misstatement is appropriately mitigated.

If any material misstatement of data is identified at audit this will be corrected by updating of certificates & reports (following processes already established in other ABC sectors). Details of the procedure are included in additions to the guidance.

#### **Amendment – effective from September 2018 Reporting Period**

Shading denotes new text added and strike-through text removed:

### **RETURN FORM SUBMISSION, AUDIT, CERTIFICATION [extract]**

#### **4. Each circulation claim is audited to verify it is in accordance with the applicable Reporting Standards**

- a) The audit must be carried out either by ABC Staff Auditors or, unless stipulated otherwise, an Approved Auditor appointed by you and approved by us.
- b) Requirements in relation to the auditor and audits will be covered by the ABC Byelaws, ABC Audit Programmes and contractual arrangements.
- c) Publications may opt to have their monthly certificates audited on a quarterly cycle. Known as 'consolidated auditing' this helps provide efficiencies through changing the timing of audit work across a set of certificates. Note:
  - i) You must tell us in writing if you wish to use this option.
  - ii) As certificates are issued based on the member's claim any subsequent material errors identified at audit will require an updated certificate be issued that identifies the changes. This replaces the member's original Certificate and must be used in its place.
  - iii) We may withdraw the option to utilise consolidated auditing if certificates are repeatedly re-issued to correct material errors in claims.
- de) We carry out inspections on all publications that are not audited by ABC Staff Auditors. The inspections are carried out by ABC Staff Auditors and all publications will be inspected at least once every two years on average and those publications with a publishing frequency of more than once a week will be inspected annually on average.
- ee) If following an audit or inspection we identify material problems with the Return Form or Certificate then we will propose to revise the claim. If a Certificate has already been issued we will issue an updated certificate that identifies the changes. This replaces your original Certificate and must be used in its place. The process is as follows:
  - i) We will send you a letter detailing the reason/problem giving rise to the amendment.
  - ii) You will have 10 working days from the receipt of this letter to provide any further information to us, or object to the revision of the claim.
  - iii) If you wish to object to the revision of the claim you must do this in writing to the Director of Audit who will investigate and provide a decision within 10 working days. If the objection is to a decision by the Director of Audit or the Chief Executive then the first level of appeal will be in accordance with the Review Procedure detailed in the ABC Byelaws.
  - iv) Subsequent Certificates ~~may~~ will not be issued until we have resolved all queries on a previous audit and issued the updated Certificate, if applicable.
  - v) We identify updated certificates on our website.

## GUIDANCE

### G4. Each circulation claim is audited to verify it is in accordance with the applicable Reporting Standards

#### Consolidated auditing:

- a) The publisher can opt to have audits of their monthly certificates conducted on a quarterly cycle (retrospectively, after certification)
  - i. Circulation claims are submitted via the Return system and certificates are published every month.
  - ii. Each month's circulation claims will be analysed by the ABC auditor and any unusual changes, or new information about areas of high risk that have come to light, are followed up with the publisher at that point.
  - iii. Every three months a final audit will be conducted, rounding up the quarterly cycle of work. This will include an on-site visit by the ABC auditor and a management letter on completion.
  - iv. Not all publishers will be audited on the same quarterly cycle.
  - v. Audit work at third parties (e.g. Dawsons/Media on the Move) will be conducted with a similar quarterly cycle, and the conclusions fed into the formal audit.
  - vi. The quarterly final audit must be concluded before the issue of the following monthly certificate (subject to the provisions of the appeal process explained below).
- b) There will be no change to our established materiality levels for all audit testing. These are the thresholds which determine the level of detail to which we conduct elements of work, and the cumulative error that might require certificate data to be restated.
- c) If the audit work reveals any material misstatement, this is raised with the publisher before certificate is updated.
  - i. We will follow the standard procedures set out in the ABC Reporting Standards, which requires the ABC auditor to set out the proposed changes, followed by a 10 day period to agree to the changes, provide further information, or lodge an appeal with the Director of Audit.
  - ii. As with all ABC audit decisions, members have the right to request a review of the decision, internally within ABC and ultimately to an independent panel of ABC Board Members under certain grounds. These procedures are set out in the Reporting Standards and ABC Byelaws (section 13).
- d) We envisage restatements to be very rare based on the history of data revisions.
  - i. Where audits are conducted prior to formal submission of the return to ABC, publishers will sometimes take the opportunity to make minor changes to circulation claims following feedback from the ABC auditor. Such non-material changes would not be made in the case of retrospective audits.
  - ii. If the publisher is concerned there is an increased risk of their reported figures being inaccurate then they should contact ABC as soon as possible, and may opt to have a full monthly audit, prior to certificate issue.
  - iii. If there are continuing issues that ABC considers may increase the likelihood of reported figures being inaccurate then we would need to revert to monthly full audits, possibly prior to certificate issue, to ensure that materially inaccurate figures are not certified by ABC for an extended period of time.
- e) Updated certificates will be listed as 'certificate updated' on the ABC website and on eAlert emails, including a link to the updated certificate. The certificate will include a statement summarising the changes made on the revised certificate. Data in interactive tables will also be updated.
- f) Audit fees for retrospective audits on a quarterly cycle are intended to be lower than for monthly audits prior to certificate issue, as efficiencies can be made such that costs will be lower.
- g) Publishers who use external auditors rather than ABC auditors may make similar arrangements. The publisher's auditor should contact ABC if issued certificates require amendment following their audit.

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## 5. Web Traffic

### a) Reporting Automated Traffic

The requirement to break out automatically refreshed traffic only applies to optional metrics (e.g. Page Impressions). As this often requires additional work to configure publisher's systems reporting this breakout is now optional

### b) Domain/Inventory listing

To reduce the volume of information reported, only the inventory listing for the final month will be reported on certificates that cover a Reporting Period of two or more months.

## Amendment - effective from July 2018 Reporting Period

Shading denotes new text added and strike-through text removed:

### SECTION B REPORTED DATA

#### B3. You may report optional metrics

- a) You can additionally report any agreed metrics listed in the Appendix.
  - i) The metric may be reported on a specific basis such as:
    - Selected days, weeks or months
    - A daily, weekly or monthly average
  - ii) You can report an App specific metric of any appropriate agreed metric in the Appendix. *For example: As Page Impressions is an agreed metric you can optionally report App Page Impressions.*
  - ~~iii) You must report a breakout of automatically refreshed content where this forms 5% or more of the metric certified. *For example: If Page Impressions are certified and automated Page Impressions exceed 5% of the total then the automated figure must be reported.*~~

#### B6. You must report the claimed inventory

- a) You must report on the certificate a domain/inventory listing of those domains, URLs or content identifiers (e.g. Apps) that cover at least the top 95% of the total Page Impressions relating to the Unique Browsers being certified.
  - i) The listing will be in descending size order of Page Impressions.
  - ii) You may optionally report a statement about an App in the claimed inventory, including whether it's paid or free. You must be able to provide evidence to support any statement made.
- b) If you report a metric breakout that is a set of domains or sections then you must report a domain/inventory listing for that breakout.
- c) For Reporting Periods of two or more months the domain/inventory listing will only be reported for the final month. Note: You must be able to provide, for audit, information on the inventory included in the claim for the whole Reporting Period