

Creative Acceptance Policy

All creative must meet the requirements of the MSA [Creative Acceptance Policy](#)

The User Experience

This specification covers linear video ad formats for **first-party served** (assets provided to Microsoft directly and hosted directly through Microsoft's ad server) **and third-party served** (ad is delivered via IAB's Video Ad Serving Template (VAST)) **linear video advertisements**. Please refer to the section and columns headers when reading this document as some elements of the specification vary depending on which party is serving the ad.

	MSN & Games			Video Ad Network		Connected TV	
	PC Browse	Mobile Browse	Ads-In-Apps	PC Browse	Mobile Browse	Xbox TV	CTV Network
User Experience							
Full Screen	USER CHOICE	USER CHOICE	ALWAYS	USER CHOICE	USER CHOICE	ALWAYS	ALWAYS
Ad Skipping	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Video Click Area ¹	PLAYER	PLAYER	BUTTON	PLAYER	PLAYER	N/A	N/A

¹Video Click Area refers to the location that upon a user's mouse click or tap will trigger the click through destination to open in a new tab/window. For linear video media files, the available options are "player" (clicking anywhere on the video player) or "button" (a 'learn more' button is shown during video playback). For VPAID assets, the VPAID application determines the video click area; see the VPAID specification for more details.

Ad Specifications

Video ad products vary on the type of ad formats or capabilities supported. Please refer to the table below for more details:

	MSN & Games			Video Ad Network		Connected TV	
	PC Browse	Mobile Browse	Ads-In-Apps	PC Browse	Mobile Browse	Xbox TV	CTV Network
Ad Types							
Linear Video	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Linear Video VPAID	YES	YES	N/A	YES	YES	N/A	N/A
Player Skin	YES	YES	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
NUads	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	YES	N/A
Linear Video Ad Slots							
Pre-Roll	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Mid-Roll	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	YES	YES
Post-Roll	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	YES	YES
Companion Ad Units							
300x60	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL	N/A	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL	N/A	N/A
300x250	N/A	N/A	N/A	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL	N/A	N/A
Ad Serving Capabilities							
1 st Party Ad Serving	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
3 rd Party Tracking	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	LIMITED ¹	LIMITED ¹
3 rd Party Ad Serving	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	LIMITED ¹	LIMITED ¹
Survey Script URL	YES	LIMITED ²	N/A	YES	LIMITED ²	N/A	N/A
Standard Video Metrics ³	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Clickthrough URL	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	N/A	N/A
IAB Ad Standards⁴							
VAST 2.0	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
VAST 3.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
VPAID 1.0 (Flash)	YES	N/A	N/A	YES	N/A	N/A	N/A
VPAID 2.0 (Flash)	YES	N/A	N/A	YES	N/A	N/A	N/A
VPAID 2.0 (JS)	N/A	YES	N/A	N/A	YES	N/A	N/A
MRAID 2.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	YES	N/A	N/A

¹Third-Party ad serving and tracking on Connected TV inventory is limited to select partners and is still in Beta testing. Please work with your account representative to evaluate whether your campaign could be considered for beta testing this capability.

²Given the nature of the mobile environment, this capability may or may not function properly or consistently. Failures must shutdown gracefully and cannot interrupt normal player/page behavior.

³Standard Video Metrics: Impression (Ad video start), First-Quartile, Mid-point, Third-Quartile, Complete

⁴Third Party Support only for Microsoft Certified Vendors. Vendor certification is required for each IAB standard and version. Work with your account team representative to verify certification or request certification for new vendors.

1st Party Served

Video Media File

Video Format/Codec ¹	MP4/H.264 preferred WMV, MOV, MPG, MPEG, MP4 supported
Frame Dimensions	1280 (w) x 720 (h) pixels, minimum
Ratio	16:9 required
Bit rate	3000 kbps minimum
File Size	75mb maximum file size

Duration	30 seconds maximum
Frame rate	29.97 or 30.00 fps
Field Order	None, progressive scan only
Audio Format/Codec ¹	MP3 or MP4 preferred AAC, WMA supported
Audio Bit rate	196 kbps
Sample Rate	44.1 kHz
Bus mode	Stereo

Companion 300x60

Dimensions	300 (w) x 60 (h) pixels
Format	PNG or JPG supported SWF supported on limited product set. ² If provided must have a static backup.
Max File Size	40kb

Companion 300x250

Dimensions	300 (w) x 250 (h) pixels
Format	PNG or JPG only
Max File Size	40kb

Companion Player Skin

Dimensions	1600 (w) x 900 (h) pixels
Format	PNG or JPG only
Max File Size	500kb
Content Rules	Special content rules apply; see detailed player skin spec here: <<INSERT SPEC URL>>

Other Specifications

Click-thru URL Length ³	450 characters, max
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¹Source assets provided for first party serving will be transcoded into multiple renditions using certified codecs and containers for all MSFT video ad properties. On rare occasions, some source formats or codecs encounter transcoding issues, if this occurs your account team will reach out for assets in a different format/codec.

²SWF 300x60 companion supported only on MSN & Games PC Browse inventory. If SWF companion is supplied, a static companion file must also be provided as a backup. See required information regarding use of Flash (SWF) companions here: http://advertising.microsoft.com/submitads_flash

³Where applicable. Not all products support click-thru URLs; refer to the Video Product Matrix for more details.

Video

Linear video files can be submitted in any of the accepted formats listed above. Submission of the asset to the account team is the responsibility of the advertiser / agency. Timely delivery is required for an on-time launch; delays in asset receipt can result in campaign under delivery.

Please note that in addition to the technical specifications above, these requirements must be considered prior to submission:

- Video must be submitted by the advertiser/agency pre-edited and in a web-ready state. No leaders or trailers should be included. Microsoft Advertising does not provide video editing services.

Companions

- Companions are optional
 - Note that should companions be provided, not all pages/products support companion banner slots.
- GIF and animated GIF formats are not supported.
- Rich Media and expanding companions are not supported

3rd Party Served

Important Note for Third-Party Ad Servers

All third-party ad servers must meet the below requirements:

- **Vendor certification is required** for each IAB standard and version. Work with your account team representative to verify certification or request certification for new vendors.
- **Third Party Served VAST tags are required to return an ad each time the tag is called.** Ad tags provided by agencies/advertisers or their contracted vendors should not restrict ad responses based on upstream or buy side targeting or capping. Publisher targeting will be enforced at the time of booking per the IO contract. This includes, but is not limited to: GEO targeting, Audience or BT targeting, frequency capping, Dayparting, etc... Furthermore, ad tags provided on a specific advertiser/brand IO contract should not rotate in ads from advertisers or brands not covered on the IO contract.

The following scenarios are deemed acceptable occasions when the ad may not return or may change its ad response: Ad tag is outside the agreed upon flight dates; ad is rotating between multiple ad creatives for the same brand. Note that while ad rotation is supported, all ads returned must comply with the [Creative Acceptance Policy](#)

IAB VAST Templates

Versions Supported	VAST 2.0
VAST Payloads Supported	Inline Ad Wrapper Ad (3 chained wrappers max ¹)

Video Media Files

Video Format/Codec	MP4/H.264
Required Rendition Frame Sizes & Bit Rates	HD: 1280x720 @ 3000 kbps SD: 640x360 @ 750 kbps Mobile HD: 1024x576 @ 1500 kbps Mobile SD: 320x180 @ 450 kbps
Ratio	16:9 required
Duration	30 seconds maximum
Frame rate	29.97 fps
Field Order	None, progressive scan only

Audio Format/Codec ¹	MP3, MP4, AAC supported
Audio Bit rate	196 kbps recommended
Sample Rate	44.1 kHz recommended
Bus mode	Stereo

Linear VPAID Creative

Versions & Formats	Version 1.0: Shockwave/Flash AS3 Version 2.0: JavaScript & Shockwave/Flash AS3
Detailed Spec	For more details, refer to the VPAID Creative spec here: <<INSERT URL>>

Companion 300x60

Dimensions	300 (w) 60 (h) pixels
Format	PNG or JPG supported SWF supported on limited product set. ² If provided must have a static backup.
Max File Size	40kb

Companion 300x250

Dimensions	300 (w) 250 (h) pixels
Format	PNG or JPG only
Max File Size	40kb

Companion Player Skin

Dimensions	1600 (w) 900 (h) pixels
Format	PNG or JPG only
Max File Size	500kb
Content Rules	Special content rules apply; see detailed player skin spec here: <<INSERT SPEC URL>>

Other Specifications

Click-thru URL Length ³	450 characters, max
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¹Some platforms can support up to 4 chained wrappers; however 3 is the recommended safe limit for all platforms. A wrapper chain is defined as the number of wrapper ads that can be returned before the player receives an inline ad.

²SWF 300x60 companion supported only on MSN & Games PC Browse inventory. If SWF companion is supplied, a static companion file must also be provided as a backup. See required information regarding use of Flash (SWF) companions here: http://advertising.microsoft.com/submitads_flash

³Where applicable. Not all products support click-thru URLs; refer to the Video Product Matrix for more details.

VAST Inline Ad Responses

- Inline ad responses are expected to provide only one (1) ad per VAST ad call. Tags may rotate the response upon refresh, but may not provide more than one ad element within the XML document.

- The duration node must be formatted as HH:MM:SS per the IAB specification. Furthermore, the duration node should represent the ad unit length (or expected ad unit length if unknown at time of VAST rendering) – it is not permitted to return a duration of 00:00:00 or 00:00:01.
- Media files present in the ad response should provide the full range of supported frame sizes and bit rates, sorted in order of preference HD, Mobile HD, SD, Mobile SD (specifications as indicated in the above table). Please do not attempt to perform device/bandwidth detection to scope the available media files list; players will make the appropriate bit rate selection client-side.
- Survey tags are supported on PC Browse inventory on MSN and Video Ad Network; however if the page security prevents fly-overs; surveys should silently fail. Pop-up and pop-under windows are not supported on any product.

VAST Wrapper Ad Responses

- Ad tag tokens will not be evaluated at runtime by the player. The VAST ad tag URI should be returned fully decorated by the ad server returning the wrapper ad response. This includes but is not limited to cache busting tokens.
- The maximum number of chained wrappers supported is currently 3 with the 4th tag expected to provide an inline ad response. Chains longer than this number cannot be guaranteed for delivery or reporting accuracy.
- Per the IAB specification, the wrapper ad tags may provide tracking events only, no additional assets may be delivered through the wrapper payload. This includes but is not limited to: Companion Banners, Survey tags, ad parameters, or media files.

Notes about Companions

- Companions are optional
 - Note that should companions be provided, not all pages/products support companion banner slots.
- JPG or PNG static format is required for all companions. GIF is not supported
- SWF is optional; but VAST served SWFs must still supply a static image backup. Note: SWF is not supported for skins, rails or Video Ad Network companions
 - See required information regarding use of Flash (SWF) companions here: http://advertising.microsoft.com/submitads_flash
 - Flash Version 9 Minimum
- A static resource version is required; however, VAST delivered HTML and IFRAME based companions are supported. To indicate preference/priority, the VAST companions will be evaluated in the sequence that they are provided within the VAST tag.
- Companion ads are placed in the DIV on the page identified in the player widget scripting that **matches the size** of the companion served, *not* by the DIV name. Only one companion of each size may be served. If a size mismatch occurs, the companion will not be displayed. Companions will be sandboxed to protect the top level DOM.
- Expanding companions are not supported

Other Specifications

IAB Specifications

Digital Video Ad Serving Template (VAST) :: <http://www.iab.net/vast>

Privacy Policy

Video advertisements played on all Microsoft properties and partner properties will comply with the [Microsoft Advertising Privacy Policy](#).

Related Video Specifications

Linear VPAID:

http://advertising.microsoft.com/en/FriendlyName/SharedDocs/auto/CreativeSpec/CreativeSpec_CS300_C35707_L35788.pdf/Linear_VPAID.pdf

Player Skin Specification:

http://advertising.microsoft.com/en/FriendlyName/SharedDocs/auto/CreativeSpec/CreativeSpec_CS299_C35707_L35788.pdf/Video_Player_Skin.pdf

Vendor Certification Requirements

All vendors must submit test tags to Microsoft for certification. Certification is provided on a per-spec basis (i.e. VAST 2.0, VPAID 1.0, VPAID 2.0, etc...). Once a vendor is certified for a specification, re-certification is not required unless the vendor changes their implementation in such a way as to invalidate previous certifications. Work with your account team representative to verify certification or request certification for new vendors.

The below is an example of some, but not all, of the certification requirements for VAST 2.0 third-party ad serving vendors:

1. Vendors must comply with the IAB VAST 2.0 standard as documented at <http://www.iab.net/guidelines/508676/digitalvideo/vsuite/vast>. All required elements and formatting per the IAB specification are strictly evaluated during certification; failure to provide the expected values in the expected format will impede vendor certification.
2. Vendor ad servers, CDNs, and all server-side resources referenced in the VAST tag must allow Microsoft & Microsoft partner domains (*msn.com; *.fwmrm.net; *.s-msn.com) to access cross-site data via the following methods:

- a. Crossdomain.xml file: Root directory must contain a "crossdomain.xml" document. This crossdomain file must permit the above domains access; furthermore, if the ad server is providing HTTPS tags, the crossdomain file must permit unsecured access to these domains as well:

Example file:

```
http[s]://<server>/crossdomain.xml
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<cross-domain-policy>
  <allow-access-from domain="*" />
  <allow-http-request-headers-from domain="*" headers="SOAPAction" />
</cross-domain-policy>
```

- b. CORS HTTP Headers: Server response headers must contain 'allow origin' CORS HTTP headers as documented at: <http://www.w3.org/TR/access-control/#access-control-allow-origin-response-header>. Allow origin headers can reply with a wild card or by echoing the source origin. Please refer to the w3 documentation for details on the benefits/risks for both options.

Example CORS response header:

Access-Control-Allow-Origin: *

3. The <Impression> node must be present in the VAST response and contain a valid URI. "about:blank" is acceptable if no other impression URI is available.

Other Considerations

Discrepancy rates between ad servers

Microsoft does not provide guarantees relating to 3rd party served discrepancies, but will commit to investigate discrepancies that exceed accepted industry standard discrepancy rates.

Microsoft does not currently employ server-to-server ad calls for vendor ad tags. Furthermore, it is strongly preferred that Microsoft provided ad tags for third-party sourced inventory are called directly from the client, however, server-to-server ad calls can be supported provided the following attributes are communicated to the MSFT ad server on the ad call (work with your account team to get specific query-string parameters for these attributes).

- Client IP Address

- User Agent

Max tracking pixels per event

While no hard limit is enforced on the MSFT properties, the maximum recommended number of tracking pixels per event is set at five (5). This limit is proposed to reduce risk of latent or dropped event tracking and ensure discrepancy rates within industry norms.

Secure VAST tags / Pixels / Click-Thrus (HTTPS/SSL)

At the time of this publication, user content is still mostly consumed over HTTP channels. While secure tags will function on HTTP pages, certain prerequisites are required to ensure full functionality (see vendor certification requirements above). Note that as the vendor certification requirements indicate, the crossdomain.xml must allow secure and unsecure access, this is required for all end-points including the tracking pixels and click-thru endpoints.

Data Reported

The following events are supported across the video product portfolio for first-party and third-party served ads.

Video Events

- Play (Impression)
- Video Click¹
- First Quartile
- Midpoint
- Third Quartile
- Complete
- Pause¹
- Mute¹
- Unmute¹
- Close¹

¹Where this creative behavior is supported on the platform.

Companion Events

- Impression
- Companion click-tracking is not specified in the VAST 2.0 Spec. Vendors are requested to implement a redirect tracking link on the click-through URL as necessary.

Note: Microsoft does not provide guarantees relating to 3rd party served discrepancies, but will commit to investigate discrepancies that exceed accepted industry standard discrepancy rates.

Data Collection

- Microsoft permits advertisers to collect user-provided personal information (for example, through web forms embedded in ads).
- Advertisers may be required to modify ad units or provided additional disclosure in order to be acceptable for advertising on Microsoft sites.
- Advertisers wishing to collect personal information within advertisements (according to specifications above) must follow these guidelines:
 - Clearly identify organization
 - Provide link to privacy policy (usually adjacent to the web form's "submit" button)
 - Identify purpose for collecting information

Ad Submission Guidelines

All creative must meet the MSA [Ad Submission Guidelines](#)