IAB Tech Lab Podcast

Measurement Independent Certification

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Acast was founded in 2014 and is one of the most eminent podcast platforms, and a pioneer in the open podcast ecosystem, connecting all podcasting stakeholders to one common software infrastructure.

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AAM - Acast
IAB Tech Lab Podcast Measurement Report
Compliance Certification Guidelines v2.2

GUIDELINE	CONTROL	COMMENTS
I. Filtering		
Eliminate Pre-Load Requests	*Pre-loading of podcasts directly results in podcast downloads being counted when they should not. There are two IAB Tech Lab approved solutions to handle this:* • Policy put in place to prevent pre-loading in players and on websites (e.g. preload=none for HTML5). • Use a download threshold based on one minute of content, excluding any data used for header or other information, to determine if request was for a play/ download or for pre-loading.	Supported
Eliminate Potential Bots and Bogus Requests	*There are a number of scenarios where the raw requests include requests that should not be counted because they likely come from bots or from products that behave in ways that make them look like real downloads. IAB recommends that metrics providers filter potential bots and bogus requests. Filters shall include:*	
	• IP threat filtering	Supported
	• Domain threat filtering	Not Supported
	• User Agent filtering	Supported
	• 2 byte range filtering	Supported
	• Automatically triggered downloads (i.e. Apple Watch OS)	Supported
Handling HTTP Requests	HEAD requests - these should not be counted because this is typically used to check for changes because no data is transferred in a HEAD request.	Supported
	GET requests: a. 200 (ok request) should be counted b. 206 (partial request) A partial request should only be counted if the download covers the 1 minute rule, and de-duplication based on IP Address/UA is being done to cover cases where the user might be skipping ahead. Determining whether the requests cover the 1-minute requirement might require reassembling of the requests. c. 304 (not modified request) -> signal that user has existing file and wants to see if it changed. d. Platform specific statuses: • 000 (Akamai partial request) Handled the same as 206. • 302 (redirect) for redirection based measurement services.	Supported
II. Apply File Threshold Levels		
	To count as a valid download, the ID3 tag plus enough of the podcast content to play for 1 minute should have been downloaded. If the podcast is too small or if it isn't possible to compute the file and ID3 sizes regularly, complete file downloads (100% of the file, including the ID3 tag) should be used.	Supported
III. Identify and Aggregate Uniques		
Identifying Uniques (for Downloads &	*Identifying unique requests is important in counting downloads for an episode and in counting audience size. The following method is recommended, and the details*	

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Users)	*of the filtering methods should be kept transparent.*	
	Filtering using IP address + User Agent • A combination of IP (see below for IPv6 details) Address and UA is used to identify unique users and downloads. For example, if the same file is downloaded 10 times by 6 user agents behind one IP address that would count as 6 users and 6 downloads. • Other methods may be used to identify unique users. Alternate methodologies must be reviewed and approved.	Supported
Metrics for IPv6 Addresses	IPv6 addresses pose certain challenges due to the fact that IPv6 addresses are not static, with multiple new addresses being cycled on a singular device in a given time period. To address potential discrepancies, IPv6 addresses should be truncated to the first 64 bits before calculating uniques for the Listener and Download metrics. Note that the IPv4 or partial IPv6 can be hashed for privacy reasons without adversely affecting the calculations.	Not Applicable
Play-Pause-Play Scenarios	If a unique download is divided into multiple file requests, for example if a user plays the first half of an episode using a website audio player, clicks pause, and then resumes a half-hour later, then that should still be counted as one unique download. Care should be taken to not count these as multiple downloads/users.	Supported
IV. Generate Metrics		
Podcast Content Metric Definitions	**Download:** a unique file request that was downloaded. This includes complete file downloads as well as partial downloads in accordance with the rules described earlier.	Supported
	Listener: data that represents a single user who downloads content (for immediate or delayed consumption). Listeners may be represented by a combination of IP address and User Agent as described earlier. The listeners must be specified within a stated time frame (day, week, month, etc.).	Supported
Podcast Ad Metric Definitions	**Ad Delivered:** an ad that was delivered as determined by server logs that show either all bytes of the ad file were sent or the bytes representing the portion of the podcast file containing the ad file was downloaded. *This metric is only valid if the download was valid. As a best practice, this metric should only be pulled from valid downloads.*	Supported
	Client-Confirmed Ad Play: counts an ad that was able to prompt a tracking beacon from the client when the file was played. Whenever possible, metric should include information about how much of the ad was played using the markers: ad start, first quartile (25%), midpoint (50%), third quartile (75%), and complete (100%).	Supported
High Level Metrics	The Content and Ad metrics described above should also be made available at 3 levels – publisher/show/episode.	Supported
V. Publisher Player Recommendations		
Page 25	*Publishers are advised to factor in the following when they build their player/listener experiences.* *Hosting/measurement providers are advised to provide the following guidance to*	

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	publishers using their own players.	
	Do not implement Auto-play except where listener intent is implied. This will result in a bad user experience for the user with audio they were not expecting to hear.	Supported
	Do not Pre-load unless the intent was clearly to play the podcast.	Supported
	Use header information located at the start of the podcast to prevent a full download when not needed.	Supported
	File request - For a full download, ask for the entire file at once. For a progressive download, ask for the file in slices at a byte range that is more than 2 bytes at a time. This way a full download can be distinguished from a progressive download.	Supported
	Do not modify the enclosure URL when requesting media or add extra parameters.	Supported
	Do not cache podcast episodes on your servers. Always download the latest episode from the enclosure URL for every app listener initiating a download.	Supported
	Use the GUID -- as opposed to episode URL, title, publication date, etc. -- to identify new episodes in the RSS feed that should be automatically downloaded to a listener's device. The GUID is designed to be persistent through changes to hosting environments, titles, or other details.	Supported
	Employ an "automatic download unsubscribe" behavior, For example, after a number of inactive downloads (episodes never played), stop auto downloading additional episodes.	Supported
	Do not automatically download all episodes (e.g. back catalog episodes) by default. This behavior creates unnecessary drain on the publishers' servers as well as consuming listeners' bandwidth. It also creates a spike in downloads on server logs that require resources for troubleshooting the spike, explaining it, and addressing it.	Supported
VI. Valid User Agent Structure (optional)		
	Provide enough details in the user-agent header to allow it to be consistently differentiated from the user agent of other devices.	Not Applicable
	Recommend that platforms be conservative in adding unnecessary information to the user-agent string, and in encoding practices.	Not Applicable
	Recommend that platforms submit their user-agent header value to the IAB Spiders and Bots inclusion list so that it is not considered a bot and can be a signal used to determine the device information.	Not Applicable
	If the app or platform does employ the use of bots to index content, it is recommended to specify a user-agent that is distinct from the application user-agent and includes the word "bot" to clearly identify its use case.	Not Applicable
	Recommend use of the following pattern to build the user-agent in order to provide a consistent structure for all parties who consume the details: **<app name>/<app version><device info> <os name>/<os version><other info>** For example:	Not Applicable

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	AppName/1.2.3 DeviceBrand DeviceModel OSName/1.2.3 LibName/1.2.3	
VII. Accounting for Changes in Technology		
	Have practices in place to account for mass market technology changes in their measurement reports. Such practices might include setting reasonable data thresholds to trigger warnings about anomalies in the data, a course of action to address instances when anomalous data occurs, or a subscription to common development sites that report known issues or updates.	Supported
VIII. Transparency		
	Keep a Document of Methodology (DOM) to share with relevant parties on methodology that might impact counts. At minimum, the DOM should include the following:	
	• **Measurement window:** Indicate whether the type of time window used for counting is static or rolling.	Supported
	• **Self-audit:** Record self-audit completion and any findings at least twice a year. Annual recertification may count toward self-audit record.	Supported
	• **Uniques:** The methods and metadata used for identifying uniques.	Supported
	• **Handling IPv4/IPv6:** The methodology for hashing and/or truncating IPv4 and/or IPv6 addresses.	Supported
	• **Inclusion list:** Record re-validation of inclusion lists at least every 90 days.	Supported