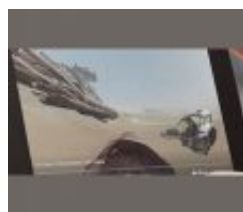


Autoplay is everywhere, but not all advertisers are buying

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Date : June 18, 2016



Autoplay is everywhere, thanks (or not) to platforms and publishers pushing them onto people's screens. But advertisers still say they are reluctant to fully trust these ads that count views even as people scroll quickly by, or display in a hidden corner of the screen, simply because they were already playing.

Advertisers also are skeptical of the sound-off feature of **autoplay** videos, some demanding more assuring guarantees from publishers who have been pushing the format.

WPP, for instance, has a fairly strict view when it comes to video ads. It wants proof they are registering with the consumer on the other end, for one.

"We don't avoid **autoplay**. When we can buy with a sound-on, duration guarantee, we are fine. When we cannot, we have started to measure average number of seconds viewed and the recall measures from those views," said **Rob Norman**, chief **digital** officer at WPP's GroupM.

The policy shows that advertisers aren't all sold on the power of muted video ads, and when they are without sound, they want feedback that shows a user did pay attention.

Autoplay video used to be considered an online scourge before **Facebook** ironed out some the kinks and made them silent.

The debate over their effectiveness in **advertising** is still raging, and it's wrapped up into questions of what counts as a view. Platforms and publishers have inconsistent standards.

Facebook counts video as being viewed after three seconds. It also has a guaranteed view where a video counts as viewed if it occupies the full screen, regardless of how long it plays. **Snapchat** counts a view after a video loads, regardless of how long it plays.

"Views need to be held to the same accountability across platforms, and right now it's like the Wild West," said **Chris Tuff**, director of business development at 22squared.

The question of viewability and the effectiveness of ads without sound got attention again this past week when **Snapchat** finalized its long-anticipated deal with Moat to analyze video ads on

its platform.

The deal emphasized that Moat would tell advertisers not just how long consumers viewed ads on **Snapchat** but how many did so with the sound on. **Snapchat** contends its video ads stand out from **Facebook** because of the sound issue, because by one measure 85 percent of **Facebook** videos are seen without sound on.

“Some **brands** prefer more traditional in-stream video. That said, there are many high-value **autoplay** formats where advertisers know exactly what they are getting but see tremendous value because of audience reach, scale, targetability and more,” said **David Burch**, head of communications at TubeMogul.

Some advertisers who won’t buy **autoplay** on principle, according to publishers. “From their perspective, they want user initiation to show that there was intent,” said **Jarrold Dicker**, head of ad products at The Washington Post.

The Post and other video vendors are scrambling to make advertisers more comfortable about going with silent **autoplay** video.

Publishers who are pushing the format contend that the most effective **Facebook** videos these days, paid or free ones, are overlaid by bold text to create a narrative when the sound is off. **Facebook** also teaches **brands** how to capture a user’s attention in the first three seconds. It’s also introduced pricing plans that can guarantee viewers get to the end if the advertiser pays more.

The Washington Post has developed a tool that lets advertisers create video ads **designed** for **social** media, with the sound off.

“The benefits to **autostart** are massive, and tools that allow for text overlay and more will broaden video to beyond just clicking and listening,” **Dicker** said.

This article first appeared in www.digiday.com