

Creative Specification | Linear Video

Last Updated – June 12, 2018

Overview

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.

Deliverables

<i>Ad components</i>	<i>File Type</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Max File Size</i>
1 st Party Video Media File	mp4-h264 (preferred)	1280x720 (min)	50MB
or			
3 rd Party VAST 2.0	mp4-h264 (required) + others	1280x720 + others	±5MB + others

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		
	PC Browse	Mobile Browse	Ads-In-Apps
Ad Types			
Linear Video	YES	YES	YES
Linear Video VPAID	YES	YES	N/A
Player Skin	YES	YES	N/A
Linear Video Ad Slots			
Pre-Roll	YES	YES	YES
Mid-Roll	N/A	N/A	N/A
Post-Roll	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ad Serving Capabilities			
1 st Party Ad Serving	YES	YES	YES

3 rd Party Tracking	YES	YES	YES
3 rd Party Ad Serving	YES	YES	YES
Survey Script URL	YES	LIMITED ¹	N/A
Standard Video Metrics ²	YES	YES	YES
Clickthrough URL	YES	YES	YES
IAB Ad Standards			
VAST 2.0	YES	YES	YES
VAST 3.0	N/A	N/A	N/A
VPAID 1.0 (Flash)	N/A	N/A	N/A
VPAID 2.0 (JS)	YES	YES	N/A

¹Given 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.

²Standard Video Metrics: Impression (Ad video start), First-Quartile, Mid-point, Third-Quartile, Complete

Linear Video

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

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.

1st Party Served (MSFT Hosted) – 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	120 seconds maximum – MSN Only 30 seconds maximum – all other Msft publishers
Skippable	Every 30 sec.
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
1 st Party Served (MSFT Hosted) –300x60 Companion Banner	
Dimensions	300 (w) x 60 (h) pixels
Format	PNG or JPG supported
Max File Size	40kb

1st Party Served (MSFT Hosted) – Player Skin

Dimensions	1600 (w) x 900 (h) pixels
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Format	PNG or JPG only
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Max File Size	500kb
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Content Rules	Special content rules apply; see separate player skin spec
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Other Specifications

Click-thru URL Length ²	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.

²Where applicable. Not all products support click-thru URLs; refer to the Video Product Matrix for more details.

1st Party Served Ad Submission Guidelines

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.
- Flash (SWF, FLV), GIF and animated GIF formats are not supported.
- Rich Media and expanding companions are not supported

Third-Party Ad Served Video (VAST)

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
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VAST Payloads Supported	Inline Ad Wrapper Ad (3 chained wrappers max ¹)
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3rd Party Served – Video Media Files

Video Format/Codec	MP4/H.264
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Required Rendition Frame Sizes & Bit Rates	HD: 1280x720 @ 3000 kbps SD: 640x360 @ 750 kbps Mobile HD: 1024x576 @ 1500 kbps Mobile SD: 320x180 @ 450 kbps
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Ratio	16:9 required
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Duration	120 seconds maximum
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Frame rate	29.97 fps
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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
3 rd Party Served – VPAID Media File	
Versions & Formats	Version 2.0: JavaScript only
Detailed Spec	For more details, refer to the VPAID Creative spec
3 rd Party Served – 300x60 Companion Banner	
Dimensions	300 (w) 60 (h) pixels
Format	PNG or JPG supported
Max File Size	40kb
3 rd Party Served – 300x250 Companion Banner	
Dimensions	300 (w) 250 (h) pixels
Format	PNG or JPG only
Max File Size	40kb

3rd Party Served – Player Skin

Dimensions	1600 (w) 900 (h) pixels
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Format	PNG or JPG only
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Max File Size	500kb
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Content Rules	Special content rules apply; see detailed player skin spec
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Other Specifications

Click-thru URL Length ²	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.

²Where applicable. Not all products support click-thru URLs; refer to the Video Product Matrix for more details.

Third Party Served Ad Guidelines

VAST Inline ads:

- 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 ads:

- 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.

Third Party 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 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. **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 Third Party Served Ad Policies

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.

Server-to-server ad calls

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.

Metrics & Reporting

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.

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.

Examples

MSN Video

msn video

Tuned-In Downtime Animals Comedy Pop Culture People & Places Wonder News Sports Life & Style Hair & Beauty See All Videos

Advertisement: video will play in 2 seconds

FARMERS INSURANCE
auto | home | life | business
farmers.com

NEWS PLAYLIST

- NY Prison Break Investigators Seek Accomplices
Associated Press NOW PLAYING
- Convicted Killer in New York Prison Break on Third Escape...
Wochit News UP NEXT
- Teen dragged by Texas officer speaks out
Reuters
- Witness describes controversial McKinney pool party arrest
FOX News
- Cleveland Activists Aim to Force Murder Trial in Tamir Rice Case...
Wochit News
- 'Flying saucer' test fails

NY Prison Break Investigators Seek Accomplices

Duration: 01:14 8 hrs ago

SHARE TWEET EMAIL

FARMERS INSURANCE LEARN MORE

Policies and guidelines

Creative Acceptance Policy

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

Privacy Policy

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

IAB Specifications

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