

# Creative Specification | Linear Video

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## Overview

This specification covers linear video ad formats that are **third-party served** (ad is delivered via IAB's Video Ad Serving Template (VAST)) **linear video advertisements**.

## Deliverables

<i>Ad components</i>	<i>File Type</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Max File Size</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> Party Video Media File	mp4-h264 (preferred)	1280x720 (min)	50MB
or			
3 <sup>rd</sup> Party VAST 3.0	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
<b>Ad Types</b>			
Linear Video	YES	YES	YES
Linear Video   VPAID	YES	YES	N/A
<b>Linear Video Ad Slots</b>			
Pre-Roll	YES	YES	YES
Mid-Roll	N/A	N/A	N/A
Post-Roll	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Ad Serving Capabilities</b>			
3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Tracking	YES	YES	YES
3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Ad Serving	YES	YES	YES
Standard Video Metrics <sup>2</sup>	YES	YES	YES
Clickthrough URL	YES	YES	YES

IAB Ad Standards			
VAST 2.0	YES	YES	YES
VAST 3.0	YES	YES	YES
VPAID 1.0 (Flash)	N/A	N/A	N/A
VPAID 2.0 (JS)	YES	YES	N/A

<sup>1</sup>Given 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.

<sup>2</sup>Standard Video Metrics: Impression (Ad video start), First-Quartile, Mid-point, Third-Quartile, Complete  
Creative longer than 30 sec in length requires a skip function on all MSFT properties.

Linear Video

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

<sup>1</sup>Video 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.

## 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](#)

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### IAB VAST Templates

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Versions Supported	VAST 3.0
VAST Payloads Supported	Inline Ad Wrapper Ad (3 chained wrappers max <sup>1</sup> )

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### 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Served – Video Media Files

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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	120 seconds maximum
Frame rate	29.97 fps

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Field Order	None, progressive scan only
Audio Format/Codec <sup>1</sup>	MP3, MP4, AAC supported
Audio Bit rate	196 kbps recommended
Sample Rate	44.1 kHz recommended
Bus mode	Stereo

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Served – VPAID Media File

Versions & Formats	Version 2.0: JavaScript only
Detailed Spec	For more details, refer to the VPAID Creative spec

<sup>1</sup>Some 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.

<sup>2</sup>Where 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.
- 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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: ad parameters, or media files.

## 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 Click<sup>1</sup>
- First Quartile
- Midpoint
- Third Quartile

- Complete
- Pause<sup>1</sup>
- Mute<sup>1</sup>
- Unmute<sup>1</sup>
- Close<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Where this creative behavior is supported on the platform.

## Examples:

### MSN Video

The screenshot shows the MSN Video player interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a settings icon. Below the search bar are navigation tabs: Tuned-In, Downtime, Animals, Comedy, Pop Culture, People & Places, Wonder, News, Sports, Life & Style, Hair & Beauty, and See All Videos. The main video area displays an advertisement for Farmers Insurance. The ad features the Farmers Insurance logo, the text "FARMERS INSURANCE" in large blue and red letters, and "auto | home | life | business" below it. At the bottom of the ad is "farmers.com". To the right of the video player is a "NEWS PLAYLIST" section with several video thumbnails and titles, including "NY Prison Break Investigators Seek Accomplices", "Convicted Killer in New York Prison Break on Third Escape...", "Teen dragged by Texas officer speaks out", "Witness describes controversial McKinney pool party arrest", "Cleveland Activists Aim to Force Murder Trial in Tamir Rice Case...", and "'Flying saucer' test fails". Below the video player, there is a caption for the video: "NY Prison Break Investigators Seek Accomplices", an "AP" logo, "Duration: 01:14 | 8 hrs ago", and social sharing buttons for "SHARE", "TWEET", and "EMAIL". At the bottom right, there is a "FARMERS INSURANCE" logo and a "LEARN MORE" button.

## 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>