Gaming and Esports Advertising Framework

As the gaming ad market continues to grow rapidly and demand for innovative new formats intensifies, we have worked with our members and industry partners from the UK, Europe and US to create a unified advertising framework for gaming and esports. Our aim is that this framework will enable further growth of the gaming ad market in a sustainable and efficient way, ensuring that key terms are standardised and that there is shared understanding within the industry. The below framework can be used internationally and we will continue to update it as the market evolves.

Contents

1 Player

A lean-in user who is directly influencing gameplay.

1.1 Environment

The hardware, software and runtime context around an ad experience.

1.1.1 Equipment

The hardware used to operate a video game.

1.1.1.1 Console

Propriety computer systems specially made for playing video games such as home consoles, handhelds or hybrid consoles.

1.1.1.2 PC

Personal computer systems that can run video games.

1.1.1.3 Mobile

Personal smart phone devices and tablets that can run video games.

1.1.2 Game

The software required to play a video game

1.1.2.1 Publisher

The company that publishes a given video game title that has been developed either internally or by a 2rd party developer.

1.1.2.2 Title

The name of a specific video game.

1.1.2.3 Player Mode

The descriptor as to whether a gaming experience is individual or alongside other players.

1.1.2.3.1 Singleplayer

There is one player within the game environment.

1.1.2.3.2 Multiplayer

There are multiple players interacting with each other inside of the game environment. Multiple players can be interacting online, locally or both.

1.1.2.4 Revenue Model

The system by which a given video game generates revenue for the publisher.

1.1.2.4.1 Free

A purely advertising business model, no purchase is required of the game or available within the game.

1.1.2.4.2 Upfront Cost

An initial sum of money paid before the acquisition of a video game. May also include other preliminary costs.

1.1.2.4.3 Subscription

A business model in gaming that applies subscription fees to access the game.

1.1.2.4.4 Freemium

An advertising business model, but with the addition of microtransactions that represent low-cost purchases that provide some form of additional content to the user.

1.1.2.5 Player Perspective

The in-game perspective of a player in a given video game title (video game titles can offer multiple perspectives)

1.1.2.5.1 2D

A game where the player's view is locked to a 2D plane on a top-down or side-scrolling perspective.

1.1.2.5.2 2.5D (Isometric)

A 2D game that uses 3D geometry for the environment and characters, but restricts the gameplay to two dimensions, meaning the 3D effect is purely visual.

1.1.2.5.3 3D

A game where the player's perspective of objects and the environment has a sense of changing length, height and depth creating a 3D effect.

1.1.2.5.4 AR

A perspective in which the player's view of the real world is partially altered to create gameplay.

1.1.2.5.5 VR

A perspective in which the player's view is fully altered to create a sense of being surrounded by the game environment.

1.1.2.6 Genre

The style or category of a given video game title (video game titles may have multiple genres).

1.1.2.6.1 Action

Action games emphasize physical challenges that require hand-eye coordination and motor skill to overcome. They center around the player, who is in control of most of the action.

1.1.2.6.2 Adventure

Adventure games normally require the player to solve various puzzles by interacting with people or the environment, most often in a non-confrontational way.

1.1.2.6.3 Arcade

A game that mimics the gameplay of classic arcade games, including pinball, platformers, and space invaders.

1.1.2.6.4 Puzzle

A game that emphasizes puzzle solving and can include a variety of word puzzles, logic puzzles or pattern puzzles amongst others.

1.1.2.6.5 Racing

Racing games involve the player competing against time or opponents using some means of transportation.

1.1.2.6.6 Role-Playing (RPG)

RPGs cast the player into the role of a character and allow the player freedom to influence their own story.

1.1.2.6.7 Shooting

Players use ranged weapons to participate in the action. Most shooters involve violent gameplay, however, some shooters have non-violent objectives.

1.1.2.6.8 Simulation

Simulation games are designed to closely simulate aspects of a real or fictional reality.

1.1.2.6.9 Sports

Sports games emulate the playing of traditional or fictional sports.

1.1.2.6.10 Social Casino

Games emulating casino or other gambling products, either with or without financial capital risked by the player.

1.1.2.6.11 Music

A music video game, also commonly known as a music game, is a video game where the gameplay is oriented around the player's interactions with a musical score or individual songs.

1.1.2.6.12 Painting and Drawing

A game that uses art as the main way of interacting with the game world.

1.1.2.6.13 Trivia

A game where players are asked questions about interesting facts in many subjects.

1.1.2.6.14 Strategy

Strategy video games focus on gameplay requiring careful and skilful thinking and planning in order to achieve success.

1.1.2.6.15 Educational

A game with the explicit purpose to educate the player on a certain subject or topic.

1.1.2.6.16 Word

A sub-category of puzzle game that involves word and linguistic puzzles.

1.1.2.7 Distribution Scale

The informal categorisation of the resources used to develop, publish and distribute a video game.

1.1.2.7.1 AAA

Video games produced and distributed by major game publishers, typically having higher development and marketing budgets.

1.1.2.7.2 AA

Less commonly used than either AAA or Indie, AA games are games that have neither notably high nor low development and marketing budgets.

1.1.2.7.3 Indie

Video games typically created by individuals or smaller development teams without the financial and technical support of a large video games publisher.

1.1.2.8 Graphics Style

The artistic style of a video game as perceived by the player.

1.1.2.8.1 Photorealistic

An environment that appears visually realistic to the user.

1.1.2.8.2 Cartoon Stylized

An environment that contains elements which are unrealistic or exaggerated to the point of not being visually realistic.

1.1.2.8.3 Stylized

An environment that consists primarily of shape, form, colour and line to create a composition which may exist with a degree of independence from visual references in the real world.

1.1.2.9 Rating

A categorisation of games to determine the appropriacy of the content to various age groups.

1.1.2.9.1 ESRB Rating

An American rating board that assigns age and content ratings to video games using six age-based levels (Rating Pending, Everyone, Everyone 10+, Teen, Mature 17+, and Adults Only 18+).

1.1.2.9.2 PEGI Rating

A European rating board established to help consumers make informed decisions when buying video games or apps. PEGI has 5 age categories (PEGI 3, 7, 12, 16, and 18).

1.1.2.9.3 Apple App Store Rating

Apple's rating system for games on the Apple App Store, consisting of 4 ratings (4+, 9+, 12+, 17+).

1.1.2.9.4 Google Play Store Rating

Google Play Store's rating system uses local rating systems to categorise it's games (for example PEGI for Europe and ESRB for the USA).

1.2 Delivery Methods

Available mechanisms to deliver ads to the game. One might be tempted to classify this as an attribute of the ad, but it is the game software itself that executes insertions.

1.2.1 Direct

Manual transaction between a seller and a buyer, that requires direct communication, negotiation, signed contract, guaranteed budget and impressions, and fixed CPM.

1.2.2 Sponsorship

Ownership of all or an agreed amount of ad placements within a game by one advertiser for a specific time period.

1.2.3 Programmatic RTB

Automated auction-based environment where algorithm is used to decide which ads are placed in which position and to define the bid for each impression.

1.2.4 Programmatic PMP

A programmatic marketplace where real time bidding occurs, yet only select advertisers are allowed to bid on a vendor's inventory.

1.2.5 Programmatic PG

Somewhat automated direct transaction where both sides agree on the fixed price and guaranteed budget. The deal goes through the programmatic pipes, and allows buyers more control and visibility than manual transaction.

1.2.6 Open Marketplace

Standardised inventory made available to be bought programmatically.

1.3 Ad Context

The context within which an ad may be served.

1.3.1 Intrinsic In-Game

Sometimes referred to as Native In-Game or In-Play, these ad placements are "in the game", a seamless part of the gameplay environment.

1.3.2 Adjacent

The ad placement is "next to the game", such as a banner image ad below a mobile puzzle game.

1.3.3 Interstitial

The ad placement is "around the game", as gameplay stops and the ad itself becomes the focus.

1.3.4 Audio

The ad placement is purely audio in nature, overlayed during gameplay without pausing the game.

1.4 Ad Asset Type

The creative asset that may be served in a given ad context.

1.4.1 Image

The ad asset consists of a static image to be displayed to the user.

1.4.2 Video

The ad asset consists of a video to be displayed to the user.

1.4.3 Interactive

The ad asset consists of an interactive ad unit (for example a gamified ad).

1.4.4 Standard Branded Object

The ad asset consists of a skin for an object that is standardised across multiple games.

1.4.5 Bespoke Branded Object

The ad asset consists of a bespoke skin for a specific game or group of games.

1.5 User Information

Data on the player.

1.5.1 Frequency Capping

Limiting the number of times an ad is shown to a user within a session or a game, over a specified time period.

1.5.2 Demographic Data

Targeting based on specific audience segments defined by demographic characteristics (such as age or gender).

1.5.3 Geography

The location of a given user, as defined by available location data such as GPS or IP address.

1.5.4 Custom Audience Segment

A selection of users collated based off of specific targeting criteria. For example gaming mothers, gaming students or gamers with specific genres of interest.

1.5.5 Gamer Type

An informal designation of the engagement a gamer has with video games, and of the type of game they are likely to play.

1.5.5.1 Hardcore

A knowledgeable, active and committed individual with a high degree of interest or commitment to playing video games.

1.5.5.2 Midcore

A player with a broad range of gaming interests that is more likely to enthusiastically play different types of games, but without the amount of time spent and sense of competition of a hardcore gamer.

1.5.5.3 Casual

The term is often used for gamers who primarily play more accessible and often mainstream games, but can also refer to gamers who play less frequently than other gamers.

1.5.5.4 Hypercasual

A person who enjoys a game that is easy-to-play and extremely accessible, usually without any tutorial or instructions, and that are playable whilst multitasking. Hypercasual gamers are unlikely to identify as gamers at all.

2 Viewer

A lean-back consumer, who is spectating the gameplay but not directly influencing.

2.1 Environment

See 1.1

2.1.1 Live Event

A large scale live event such as an esports tournament, usually streamed across various platforms.

2.1.2 Passive Stream

An individual stream which lacks interactive features such as chat, emotes and polls.

2.1.3 Active Stream

An individual stream which includes interactive features such as chat, emotes and polls.

2.1.4 Video On Demand (VOD)

A prerecorded piece of gaming content available on demand by a viewer.

2.1.5 Game

See 1.1.2

2.1.6 Stream Genre

The labelled style or category of a given stream as labelled by the streamer.

2.1.6.1 Action and Adventure Stream

A stream featuring predominantly gaming content of the action and adventure genres.

2.1.6.2 Shooter Stream

A stream featuring predominantly gaming content of the action and adventure genres.

2.1.6.3 MOBA and Strategy Stream

A stream featuring predominantly gaming content related to the strategy genre, and specifically the multiplayer online battle arena sub genre.

2.1.6.4 Role Playing Games Stream

A stream featuring predominantly gaming content related to the role playing genre of games.

2.1.6.5 Card and Board Games Stream

A stream featuring predominantly gaming content related to virtual or real life card and board games.

2.1.6.6 Racing and Sports Stream

A stream featuring predominantly gaming content related to the racing and sports game genres.

2.1.6.7 Horror Stream

A stream featuring predominantly gaming content with a horrific element.

2.1.6.8 Fighting Stream

A stream featuring predominantly gaming content involving fighting and action elements.

2.2 Ad Context
See 1.3

2.2.1 Sponsorship
An event or livestream that is sponsored by one or several brands with real life branding conveyed over livestream or video.

2.2.2 Host-read
An ad placement or narrative, read by an influencer or host that is embedded within the content.

2.2.3 Intrinsic
Product placement within the content setup, such as branded clothing and props in view of the camera.

2.2.4 Adjacent
An ad that occupies screen real estate but does not cover any of the content.

2.2.5 Interstitial
A "commercial break" style ad context, that interrupts the content for a sponsored message. Includes pre-roll advertising.

2.3 Ad Asset Type
See 1.4

2.3.1 Image
See 1.4.1

2.3.2 Video
See 1.4.2

2.3.3 Interactive
See 1.4.3

2.3.4 Scripted
The ad asset consists of a pre-determined message to be verbally included in the content.

2.4 User
See 1.5

Thank you

IAB UK Gaming Group | IAB Games and Esports Marketplace Board