

## **What you need to know about the Adalytics report on the Google Video Partner network, and what you can do about it**

A recent [Adalytics report](#) on Google Video Partner Skippable in-stream ad inventory asserts that the inventory often doesn't meet Google's policies and standards. The assertions are serious in nature.

The report is about YouTube campaign spend that goes through Google Video Partner (GVP) websites and apps, specifically relating to TrueView skippable in-stream ad inventory. The author believes many advertisers are unaware that when they invest in YouTube, a significant portion of their investment is run on 3<sup>rd</sup> party websites and apps, instead of YouTube. These third-party websites and apps are the Google Video Partners (GVP). The TrueView skippable in-stream ad format is popular with advertisers because of its perceived high-quality standards and consumer experience.

Google have challenged the validity of the report's methodology. You can see [their response here](#).

### **ISBA is working across the industry to assess the validity of the report's findings**

ISBA has met with Marvin Renaud, Google's Director of Global Video Solutions and author of Google's response to discuss each of the report's findings in more detail. We'll update members in due course.

We've met with Adalytics to ensure we understand their findings and methodology.

Media Ratings Council (ISBA is a member) is looking into the claims. Their current audit scopes with Google focus primarily on YouTube and not GVP.

There are important questions as to what level of data ad verification companies have access to, to be able to effectively detect the various forms of ad fraud outlined in the report.

ISBA represents the interests of advertisers and will advocate for better practices and greater transparency for our members.

### **What could this mean for advertisers?**

If the findings are true:

- Many advertisers have potentially paid for ad space that they shouldn't have been charged for.
- The consumer experience of ads served is to a lower standard than Google represents for this product.
- Many of the issues would likely be current and ongoing.

## **What is Trueview Skippable In Stream Ads?**

TrueView is Google's proprietary cost-per-view, choice-based ad format that serves on YouTube, millions of apps, and across the web. TrueView gives advertisers more value because they only have to pay for actual views of their ads, rather than impressions.

Viewers can choose to skip the video ad after 5 seconds. If they choose not to skip the video ad, the YouTube video view count will be incremented when the viewer watches 30 seconds of the video ad (or the duration if it's shorter than 30 seconds) or engages with your video, whichever comes first.

### Publisher policies (GVP)

To be eligible to receive skippable ads, including TrueView ads, these additional policies apply:

- Video ad placements must be audible by default.
- Scroll-to-play ads are not permitted for TrueView.
- For mid-rolls, the video content's duration must be at least 10 minutes.

The publisher policies outline further requirements/standards publishers must comply with to be TrueView Skippable In-Stream Ads.

### **Key issues outlined in the report:**

Numerous examples of TrueView In Stream ads served in non-compliant ways. Many of the examples show TrueView In-Stream ads served as out-stream ads.

### Inventory and format quality

When cross-referencing TrueView ad campaign placement reports from advertisers, approximately 80.7% of the subset of their budget that went to Google Video Partner websites, was found to be delivering against sites which were identified as serving videos ads in muted, auto-playing, obscured, or out-stream video slots.

- Example: Ads running behind paywalls on news sites. The consumer cannot see any of the ad, as they are completely obscured by a subscriber paywall. The ads run from start to completion, in a completely muted, non-visible state. The back-end signals shown in the report suggest that the ad is reported to Google as a completed Trueview in-stream view.

12.3% of ads served are made for advertising sites (MFAs). The report defines MFA's as:

- Highly paid inbound traffic audience mix
- Excessively high density & frequency of advertisements
- Click-bait content

### Brand safety concerns

- Examples of ads served against websites owned by entities in sanctioned nations.
- Ads served against content discussing “sensitive current events like war, death, or tragedy.
- Ads served on apps for children as young as 2yrs old, with screenshots of reviews criticising the intrusive and disruptive nature of the ads.

The report primarily covers activity in the USA. It also found examples impacting the European Parliament and many US government bodies.

For a full overview of the issues reported, [see here](#).

### **What can you do as an advertiser?**

Advertisers should investigate their investment in YouTube and work with their partners to understand their exposure to GVP inventory when buying YouTube campaigns.

The focus of the report is issues with TrueView Skippable In-Stream ads not being served in line with Google’s format and inventory standards. For example, an In-Stream ad served in an out-stream format. Or ads running on Made For Advertising sites. Advertisers should investigate whether the format quality of their GVP investment was in line with Google’s policies and the advertiser’s expectations for both format and inventory quality.

When buying Video Action Campaigns in YouTube you can’t opt out of GVP in the front end. Google have advised us that advertisers that wish to opt out can by raising a ticket with Google or speaking with your Google representative, they can opt you out via the backend.

For a more detailed overview of the situation click [here](#), or you can speak to [Nick Louisson](#), **Director of Agency Services** or [Clare O’Brien](#), **Head of Media, Performance & Effectiveness** at ISBA if you have further questions.