



December 2011

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## ABC Business Magazine Reporting Standards (UK)

Changes have been agreed to the ABC Business Magazine Reporting Standards. We have updated the latest Reporting Standards – 2011 Version 3 – to incorporate these changes and you can now view or download these from our website [www.abc.org.uk](http://www.abc.org.uk).

### 1. Digital Editions – editorial content

For issues distributed from January 2012 onwards a digital edition will be able to include additional editorial content up to about 25% more than that carried in its parent print edition (previously 5%).

The amount you can *reduce* the editorial in the digital edition remains unchanged at up to about 5% of the editorial carried in the parent print edition.

*The amendments made to the Reporting Standards are shown below by shading and struck-through text.*

#### J2 DEFINITION OF A DIGITAL EDITION [extract]

- ~~**Editorial:** A digital edition must carry substantially the same editorial as the parent edition (no more than circa 5% change). For example: This might allow a late breaking or major story to be added prior to (or after) publication, or an article from another print edition to be swapped.~~

**Editorial:** For issues distributed from January 2012 onwards the editorial in the parent edition must be substantially published in the digital edition as follows:

- You can reduce the editorial by up to about 5% of the editorial carried in the parent edition.
- You can publish additional editorial in the digital edition, up to about 25% more than the editorial in the parent edition.

Publishers must declare editorial changes when submitting their claim to ABC and be able to demonstrate they fall within the permitted parameters.

Note: Editorial may include electronic enhancements or be adapted to take advantage of the medium.

*For example: a picture used in the print edition relating to editorial could be substituted with a video clip in the digital edition.*

Setting the standard



## **2. Digital Editions – threshold for obtaining purchaser’s information / rate banding**

1. From reporting periods ending January 2012 onwards the threshold above which publishers do not need to obtain the digital edition purchasers’ details is changed from 50% to 20% of Basic Cover Price/Basic Annual Subscription Rate. Note: copies above this price point still need to be proven to payment.
2. Currently the rules require digital edition copies to be analysed into rate bands by comparing the price they are purchased at with the price for a print copy – a digital edition copy sold in the US will therefore be compared against the US print copy cover price for example. Although overseas print copy prices are usually set significantly higher to reflect the additional costs of overseas delivery, digital edition copies are generally sold for the same price in the UK and overseas.

Therefore from audit periods ending December 2011 paid digital edition copies will be analysed by comparing the price paid with the UK print copy Basic Cover Price (single copy sales) and UK print copy Basic Annual Rate (subscriptions).

*The amendments made to the Reporting Standards are shown below by shading and struck-through text.*

### **J3 PRINCIPLES OF REPORTING STANDARDS [extract]**

The following overarching principles must be complied with for the inclusion of digital editions on the ABC certificates:

- All digital edition copies claimed on the certificate must be 'opted in' copies, i.e. they have either been purchased or an individual has personally requested a free copy of the digital edition. From reporting periods ending January 2012 onwards there are two exceptions:
  - For the conversion of controlled print requests – see section J7.1
  - For Society/Association/Organisation copies – see section J7.
- The distinction between copies that are paid for at a rate above or below 20% of Basic Cover Price (single copy sales) or Basic Annual Rate (subscriptions) ~~at a higher rate, paid for at a lower rate (as defined in section J6)~~ and those that are free is important because the requirements regarding the information you collect about the recipient and notifications to them are different (see below).

### **J6 REQUIREMENTS - PAID DIGITAL COPIES**

- For paid digital edition copies ~~that are sold:~~
  - ~~At a higher rate, this being~~ If the end purchaser has paid at least 20% ~~50%~~ of the UK print copy Basic Cover Price (single copy sales) or at least 20% ~~50%~~ of the UK print copy Basic Annual Rate (subscriptions), you do not need to capture the purchaser’s name and address details for audit and do not need to include these in the total distribution list (see below).
  - ~~At a lower rate, this being~~ If the end purchaser has paid below 20% ~~50%~~ of the UK print copy Basic Cover Price (single copy sales) or 20% ~~50%~~ of the UK print copy Basic Annual Rate (subscriptions), you do need to capture name and address details for audit and must include these on the total

distribution list (see below) as they must be de-duplicated against free digital edition copies and free print copies.

- The minimum term of digital edition subscriptions is the same as for print copies, i.e. the minimum of three months or three issues, whichever is the greater.
- All subscription copies purchased at more than 20% of UK print copy BAR, a higher rate (i.e. that are above the minimum UK 50% price point) even if more than one copy is purchased in a single transaction, will be classed as single copy subscriptions for ABC reporting purposes
- You must calculate the rate band in which single copy sales of digital editions are claimed will be calculated by comparing the price paid against the UK print copy Basic Cover Price. The rate band in which digital edition subscriptions are claimed will be calculated by comparing the price paid against the UK print copy BAR for subscriptions.

*For example the BAR for a print subscription is £200. Its digital edition is marketed for a subscription rate of £80. For rate band reporting purposes an £80 subscription to the digital edition must be reported according to  $80/200 = 40\%$*

### **3. Digital Editions – free requested copies**

The current requirements for telephone, internet and email requests are based on the completion of a form and the capturing of the individual's answer to the ABC Personal Identifier Question.

For requests made from January 2012 publishers may, with the approval of ABC, be able to take advantage of alternative solutions for capturing and proving that an individual has requested a digital edition copy of the publication.

*The amendment made to the Reporting Standards is shown below by shading.*

#### **J7.1 Records required for free digital editions [extract]**

- All free digital edition copies must be valid and comply with the requirements for the corresponding print copies except insofar as these are varied by this section.
- All supporting documentation must comply with the requirements for the corresponding print copies except insofar as these are varied by this section and must be retained for inspection at audit.
- Documentation must clearly indicate that the digital edition is requested (except for copies claimed in the Society category from reporting periods ending January 2012 onwards).
- Postal and email addresses must be collected for all free digital edition copies claimed.

#### **Variation: Controlled free requested copies (section H4)**

The ABC Personal Identifier Question used in telecommunication and internet/email requests provides an audit trail to enable the auditor to validate the request to third party evidence.

If you employ alternative auditable systems which will demonstrate the validity of the request you can use these subject to ABC's approval.

The ABC Business Magazine Reporting Standards Group discussed and approved these changes. If you would like the Standards Group to review any current reporting standard or if you would like more information about how the above changes affect you, please contact your ABC Account Manager Alden Arnold ([alden.arnold@abc.org.uk](mailto:alden.arnold@abc.org.uk)) or Ben Wignall ([ben.wignall@abc.org.uk](mailto:ben.wignall@abc.org.uk)).

Setting the standard



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