



December 2011

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ABC Consumer Magazine Reporting Standards (UK)

Changes have been agreed to the ABC Consumer Magazine Reporting Standards. We have updated the latest Reporting Standards – 2011 Version 5 – to incorporate these changes and you can now view or download these from our website www.abc.org.uk.

1. Digital Editions – editorial content

From reporting periods beginning January 2012 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.

18.2 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: From reporting periods beginning January 2012 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.

Setting the standard



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.

2. Digital Editions – threshold for obtaining purchaser’s information/reporting

1. From reporting periods beginning January 2012 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. From reporting periods ending December 2011 digital edition copies will be reported in one place on the certificate alongside print copies (but not combined).

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

18.3 PRINCIPLES OF REPORTING STANDARDS

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.
- The distinction between subscription copies that are paid for at a rate above or below 20% of Basic Annual Rate at a higher rate, paid for at a lower rate (as defined in section 18.6) 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).

18.6 REQUIREMENTS - PAID DIGITAL COPIES

- The publisher must be able to prove that all paid copies have been paid for. See section 18.6.2 for more details.
- ~~Whether additional requirements apply depends on whether the digital edition copies are paid for at a higher rate or at a lower rate or whether they are corporate subscriptions (see section 18.6.1).~~
- ~~Copies are defined as being at a 'higher rate' if the end purchaser has paid:~~
 - ~~At least 50% of the UK print copy Basic Cover Price (single copy sales); or~~
 - ~~At least 50% of the UK print copy Basic Annual Rate (subscriptions).~~
- Any paid subscription copies purchased at a 'lower rate', being below 50% of the UK print copy BCP or for less than 20% 50% of the UK print copy BAR, may be eligible to be reported in the separate table (i.e. not alongside print copies) can be claimed providing the following requirements are met:
 - The purchaser’s name, postal address and email address details must be captured

- Their details are included on the Total Distribution List and de-duplicated against other paid ~~lower rate~~ digital edition copies sold at less than 20% of UK print copy BAR, free digital edition copies and mailed 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
- 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 $80/200 = 40\%$

18.4 REPORTING OF DIGITAL EDITIONS ON THE ABC CERTIFICATE [extract]

The principle behind reporting digital editions on the ABC certificate is that an individual has explicitly asked the publisher (i.e. opted-in) for copies by this mode of distribution.

- Digital editions will be reported on ABC certificates separately to print copies (but not combined) ~~represented on certificates: separately from print copies as follows:~~
 - ~~Paid for digital edition copies at a higher rate (as defined in section 18.6) and excluding corporate subscriptions will be reported on the certificate alongside (but not added to) print copies~~
 - ~~Free digital edition copies, corporate digital edition subscription copies and paid for digital edition copies at a lower rate (as defined in section 18.6) will be reported in a separate table which will be accompanied by a summary containing both higher rate and lower rate digital edition copies and an overall total digital edition copy figure.~~

18.6.1 Corporate subscription digital copies [extract]

- ~~Corporate subscriptions to digital edition copies may be reported on the separate digital edition table (i.e. they will not be included with the higher rate paid digital edition copies alongside the print circulation).~~
- A corporate subscription is defined as a subscription purchased by a business/organisation on behalf of their employees. Subscriptions purchased on behalf of customers or members would not qualify as a corporate subscription.
- A valid postal mailing address and e-mail address must be collected for the recipient of every corporate subscription copy claimed. Each corporate subscription digital copy claimed must be included on the TDL for each issue (see section 18.6).
- The number of copies claimed must be restricted to those individuals who in addition to being covered by a corporate subscription have provided their personal details and personally opted to receive/view the digital edition.

For example: A company takes out a subscription for each of its 100 employees. If only 40 of those employees personally register to receive/view the digital edition then only those 40 copies may be included on the ABC certificate.

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.

18.7.1 Records required for free digital editions

- 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.
- Postal and email addresses must be collected for all free digital edition copies claimed.

Variation: Society or Controlled free requested copies (section 13.6)

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 Consumer 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 charlotte.brown@abc.org.uk or terry.rossiter@abc.org.uk.