



Setting the standard

Executive Summary

Reporting Standards

Consumer Magazines

Version 1 2017

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Introduction:

This is an executive summary of the Reporting Standards for Consumer Magazines. For those who do not need a detailed knowledge of all the requirements, such as auditors and circulation staff, it highlights the definition and principles for each circulation type. If you do need a more detailed version then please visit www.abcstandards.org.uk where you can access the online interactive version or download a copy.

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RETAIL SALES (SALE OR RETURN)

DEFINITION

A copy sold to a retailer, on a sale or return basis, for resale as a single copy to a consumer.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy knowingly paid for by the consumer to the retailer
 2. Copies are purchased from the publisher by the retailer, on a sale or return basis, either direct or via the distribution chain (typically distributor and/or wholesaler)
 3. Cover price must be published on or inside front or back cover of the publication
 4. The price paid for the publication by the consumer must be clear and conspicuous
 5. There must be an incentive for unsold copies/net sale to be reported to the publisher
 6. If the final net sale and/or rate classification are not known then estimates must be made
 7. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by the consumer with the Basic Cover Price
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RETAIL SALES (FIRM SALE)

DEFINITION

A copy sold to a retailer, on a firm sale basis, intended for resale as a single copy to a consumer.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy made available for purchase by the consumer from the retailer
 2. Copies are purchased from the publisher by the retailer, on a firm sale basis, either direct or via the distribution chain (typically distributor and/or wholesaler)
 3. Cover price must be published on or inside front or back cover of the publication
 4. The price paid for the publication by the consumer must be clear and conspicuous
 5. The retailers' ability to vary supply must not be unduly restricted
 6. If the final rate classification is not known then estimates must be made
 7. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by the consumer with the Basic Cover Price
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SINGLE COPY SALES

DEFINITION

A single copy sold to a consumer direct by the publisher.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy knowingly paid for by the consumer
2. Copies are purchased direct from the publisher



3. Cover price must be published on or inside front or back cover of the publication
 4. The price paid for the publication by the consumer must be clear and conspicuous
 5. If the final rate classification is not known then estimates must be made
 6. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by the consumer with the Basic Cover Price
-

SINGLE COPY SUBSCRIPTION SALES

DEFINITION

A single copy sold and distributed to an individual or organisation for a contracted period.

PRINCIPLES

1. There must be a contractual arrangement between the subscriber and the publisher (or their agent)
 2. Single copy per issue, distributed to a known addressee
 3. Single copy knowingly paid for by the subscriber
 4. For a contracted period and for a minimum number of issues (at least two)
 5. Standard subscription rates must be published
 6. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by subscriber with standard rate
 7. The price paid for the publication by the subscriber must be clear and conspicuous
-

ALL YOU CAN READ SALES (Digital Edition only)

DEFINITION

A Digital Edition copy that a consumer has purchased and viewed as part of a multi-publication package.

PRINCIPLES

1. Copy is paid for and viewed by the consumer
 2. There must be a contractual arrangement between any third-party intermediaries/sellers and the publisher to purchase the copies
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REQUESTED SPONSORED SUBSCRIPTION SALES

DEFINITION

A single copy personally requested by and distributed to a known individual, but paid for by a third party sponsor for a contracted period.

PRINCIPLES

1. There must be a contractual arrangement between the sponsor and the publisher (or their agent)



2. Single copy per issue, requested by and distributed to a known addressee
 3. Single copy knowingly paid for by the sponsor
 4. For a contracted period and for a minimum number of issues (at least two)
 5. Standard subscription rates must be published
 6. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by sponsor with standard rate
 7. The price paid for the publication by the subscriber must be clear and conspicuous
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MULTIPLE COPY SUBSCRIPTION SALES

DEFINITION

More than one copy purchased by a known subscriber for a contracted period with the intention to distribute to the same group of, but unknown, individuals over the term of the subscription.

PRINCIPLES

1. There must be a contractual arrangement between the subscriber and the publisher (or their agent)
 2. Must be likely copies are received by the same individual(s) over the term of the subscription
 3. Copies are paid for by the subscriber
 4. For a contracted period and for a minimum number of issues (at least two)
 5. Standard subscription rates must be published
 6. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by subscriber with standard rate
 7. The price paid for the publication by the subscriber must be clear and conspicuous
-

MULTIPLE COPY SALES

DEFINITION

Copies purchased by a third party from the publisher, delivered and made available for pick up or receipt by consumers.

PRINCIPLES

1. There must be a contractual arrangement between the final purchaser (third party) and the publisher or an intermediary.
 2. Copies are paid for by the final purchaser.
 3. The publisher must receive a positive financial contribution per copy from the final purchaser.
 4. Copies distributed and made available for pick up or receipt by consumers.
 5. Claimed quantity should not exceed potential demand by the intended consumers.
 6. Reported by consumer type/location.
 7. The price paid for the publication by the final purchaser (and the intermediary if applicable) must be clear and conspicuous.
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MULTIPLE COPY BUSINESS SALES (Digital Edition only)

DEFINITION

A Digital Edition copy that has been purchased by a third-party and viewed by a consumer.

PRINCIPLES

1. Copy is purchased by a third-party
2. Copy is viewed by the consumer

SOCIETY/ASSOCIATION/ORGANISATION CIRCULATION

DEFINITION

A single copy of an official Society publication distributed to a member of that society. *Note: 'Society' throughout this section refers to the Society, Association or Organisation as appropriate.*

PRINCIPLES

1. The publication is an official publication of the Society
2. Single copy of an issue distributed to an individual who is a member of the Society (or an employee nominated under a corporate society membership)
3. Copies reported by circulation type

CONTROLLED FREE CIRCULATION

DEFINITION

Copies sent free to a defined group of individuals.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy per issue, distributed to an individual.
2. Individual falls within defined criteria (Terms of Control)
3. Individual's details supported by third party evidence that is less than three years old
4. Copies reported either as requested or non-requested

NON-CONTROLLED FREE CIRCULATION

DEFINITION

Single copies distributed to individuals or organisations.

PRINCIPLES

1. Single copy per issue, distributed to an individual or organisation



MONITORED FREE DISTRIBUTION

DEFINITION

Copies distributed on a regular and consistent basis to known distribution points for pick up or receipt by consumers.

PRINCIPLES

1. Prior notification of distribution details and any changes to ABC
 2. Distribution follows a regular and consistent pattern to known distribution points
 3. Copies are made available at the known distribution points for pick up or receipt by consumers
 4. Quantity claimed should not exceed potential demand by the intended consumers
 5. Effective management controls over distribution
 6. Reported by distribution type
 7. Reported by distribution point type
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FREE RETAIL VOUCHER COPIES

DEFINITION

Single copies obtained free from a retailer by a consumer by means of a voucher.

PRINCIPLES

1. Free single copies are supplied to the consumer through retailers via the redemption of a voucher
 2. There must be an auditable incentive for only those vouchers redeemed by the consumer to be reported to the publisher
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SAMPLE FREE DISTRIBUTION

DEFINITION

Free copies distributed, on an irregular basis, using an existing ABC Free Distribution category

PRINCIPLES

1. Distribution uses an existing ABC Free Distribution method, without the need for a regular and consistent basis.
 2. Prior notification of distribution details to ABC
 3. Distribution must be of an existing edition claimed on the certificate
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DIGITAL EDITIONS

DEFINITION

A digital edition is an edition of the print publication published electronically as a unit

PRINCIPLES

1. Prior notification of Digital Edition claims and plans are required
2. A Digital Edition is sufficiently similar to be considered the same product as the print parent edition
3. Digital Edition copies are opted in
4. A Digital Edition is published and available to the consumer
5. Digital Edition copies must meet requirements of the relevant print category except where varied by this section
6. Reported by rate, comparing price paid with the print copy price
7. Optional metrics/breakdowns can be reported

BASIC COVER PRICE

DEFINITION

The Basic Cover Price is the standard published price for an issue against which circulation is reported.

PRINCIPLES

1. The Basic Cover Price is a recognised standard price
2. A cover price must be published to claim certain categories of paid circulation
3. Copies reported by rate, comparing price paid with Basic Cover Price

ISSUES TO BE INCLUDED/EXCLUDED

DEFINITION

All published issues for which the majority of the distribution took place within the Reporting Period must be included except for any issues allowed to be excluded according to this section.

PRINCIPLES

1. All issues published in the Reporting Period must be included
2. Published issues that are allowed to be excluded according to this section may be removed from the average circulation figure
3. Issues allowed to be excluded from the average circulation figure will be reported



EDITIONS

DEFINITION

An Edition is a version of an issue of the publication that varies from the Main Edition (the UK and/or ROI version that has the largest circulation), usually for reasons of geography, timing or content. How it has varied from the Main Edition will affect how or whether it can be included on the same ABC Certificate.

PRINCIPLES

1. An Edition must be in keeping with the overall issue to be reported on the same ABC Certificate
 2. Changes to an Edition may require a breakout on the ABC Certificate
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GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

DEFINITION

The Geographical Analysis is an optional breakout of the circulation into geographical locations.

PRINCIPLES

1. Publishers may optionally report a Geographical Analysis
 2. The circulation is analysed into standardised geographical locations
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REPORTING PERIODS

DEFINITION

Each ABC Certificate has a defined Reporting Period which identifies the date or dates it covers.

PRINCIPLES

1. You must report a continuous series of Reporting Periods on a mandatory frequency
 2. You can report optional shorter Reporting Periods
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CERTIFICATE TYPES

DEFINITION

The ABC Certificate is published by ABC for a specific period and contains the data and information that is subject to audit.

PRINCIPLES

1. You must report using a standard Certificate type
 2. You may choose to report using an optional Certificate type
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RETURN FORM SUBMISSION, AUDIT, CERTIFICATION

DEFINITION

The Return Form is a submission in which the circulation claim is reported to ABC for certification. Each circulation claim is subject to audit.

PRINCIPLES

1. A Return Form must be submitted for the registered product for every applicable Reporting Period
 2. The Return Form must be submitted by the Submission Deadline
 3. ABC will issue a Certificate based on the Return Form
 4. Each circulation claim is audited to verify it is in accordance with the applicable Reporting Standards
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