

5 questions to ask your ad partners to protect your brand against invalid traffic on CTV

In just a few years, connected TV (CTV) has become one of the most popular ways to watch video content. CTV viewers are delighted to watch the content they're passionate about whenever they want. As for marketers, they love having the opportunity to combine the reach of TV with the relevance of digital.

It sounds like the perfect scenario. But just like in any good TV show, that's when complications arise and the bad actors show up.

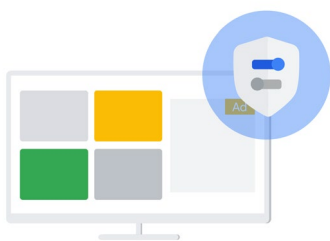
The potential for invalid traffic threats to CTV is increasing and it is posing a challenge for marketers at a time when they're under considerable pressure to make every dollar count.

There are a couple of reasons why CTV advertising is now a particularly attractive target for bad actors:

- 1. CTV advertising is becoming more prominent.** As user behavior shifts, ad spending in the CTV space is growing rapidly. According to [eMarketer](#), U.S. CTV ad spending will total \$8.11 billion in 2020 and will increase to \$11.36 billion in 2021.
- 2. CTV standards are still emerging and not yet widely adopted.** CTV is still an evolving technology. It consists of an array of devices and platforms, all with varying types of technical implementations. Although this gives users choice over how they stream content, it also poses a challenge for developing industry standards for CTV advertising. That's why collaborative initiatives aimed at shared standards that reduce the risk of invalid traffic on CTV are fundamental. Some of these protective tools are already available for publishers and media buying platforms to use and others are soon to be in the market.

So how can you protect your brand from bad actors while making sure you meet your business goals?

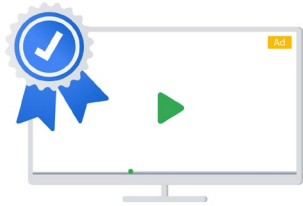
Based on our experience working with leading advertisers and industry bodies, we've compiled a list of questions you can ask your inventory and media buying partners to ensure that they're taking a standards-driven approach to promoting a safe CTV ads ecosystem.



What CTV-specific safeguards do they provide?

People's CTV viewing behaviors are largely different from how they consume content on smartphones or laptops. Make sure your media buying partners have a way to profile real-world CTV device usage patterns, and quickly spot behaviors that don't fit into those patterns.

Standard invalid traffic detection may not apply when using a server side ad insertion (SSAI) method, which is typically used for longer form "TV length" content on CTV. To work around this limitation, ask your partners how they vet CTV publishers using SSAI.



Do they use the IAB's Identifier for Advertising (IFA) standard as their core CTV identifier?

While device IFAs are not exempt from potential manipulation and spoofing, using them as a primary identifier to serve CTV ads provides an additional safety layer. Valid device IFAs are indeed harder to discover and fake than IP addresses. This is because, unlike IP addresses, IFAs are device-specific identifiers. They are generated and closely monitored by TV manufacturers and publishers which can provide an extra level of security.



Do they offer Programmatic Guaranteed deals for CTV?

To mitigate many of the tactics commonly attempted by scams, you can rely on guaranteed deals which provide a much more controlled buying environment and are generally much less susceptible to these attacks. Work with your partners to understand what guaranteed deals capabilities they offer and on what inventory.



What is their refund policy?

Avoid bad surprises, figure out ahead of time under which circumstances your CTV partners provide credits or refunds.



When will you be able to verify the list of their authorized CTV sellers using app.ads.txt?

The IAB Tech Lab has now released the authorized digital sellers list (ads.txt) specification and its mobile app counterpart (app-ads.txt) to address transparency and anti-fraud for Connected TV (CTV) and Over-the-Top (OTT) inventory. This update will arm you with the ability to model the complex relationships in CTV needed to ensure that a seller and inventory are legitimate. Make sure your trusted partners have reviewed the proposed [guidelines](#), provided feedback and are taking steps to implement this new standard.

Our collective success relies on the trust that advertisers and publishers place in digital advertising. We'll continue to work with the industry to identify new threats as they emerge and build solutions that provide a sustainable CTV advertising experience for everyone.

About Google Marketing Platform

Google Marketing Platform is a unified advertising and analytics platform that helps enterprise marketers make better decisions faster. With Google Marketing Platform, you're in control of every campaign, so you have the flexibility to adapt to the needs of your business and your customers. Learn more at g.co/marketingplatform.

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