

The view of engagement

 By [Tyler Greer](#), issued by [VDX.tv](#)

19 Mar 2015

Unless you've spent the past few months hiding below the fold, you'll be aware that one of the trending topics in digital media is viewability. This is part of a new drive for accountability in the digital sphere, a channel which has spent a good deal of its existence claiming to be able to report on, well, everything. But whilst we quibble about who can see what where for how long, there may be more functional solutions to dealing with this issue.

Advertisers have quite legitimate needs for understanding viewability levels that go beyond simply wanting to ensure they are getting what they pay for. In trying to attribute success or failure to a particular campaign it is critical to have confidence that the playing field is level, and that all media placements are enjoying the same exposure to audience. And speaking of audience, what can response to these units tell us about them and how they respond to messages? For any of these to provide meaningful insight, campaign visibility is crucial.

As always, where there is crisis there is opportunity, and independent providers have wasted no time in offering verification tools designed to determine which placements have been seen and which have not. So we see publishers experimenting with selling 'seen only' placements whilst trying to grasp the implications for rates. And, of course, buyers who are trying to understand what constitutes visibility in the first place can then use viewability as a springboard for negotiations.

Group M has been the most active in this space, setting their own benchmarks for visibility which provide the "highest level of confidence that each paid ad translates into a reasonable opportunity for human exposure". That's good, as human exposure is a great goal. But perhaps human interaction is an even better one.

Another topic getting plenty of space right now is engagement. Providing users with a brand experience that is relevant, meaningful and measureable, whilst offering brands a format through which they can distribute the assets they pour vast treasure into producing.

Perhaps what we're failing to talk about is a natural intersection between these two topics, and how the latter may go a long way to solving the former.

Here's the deal: digital media offers the greatest scope for creative audience interaction of any media channel. Whether its opt-in video viewing, data entry, sifting through galleries, game play, clicks on selected fields, digital media offers reportable and verifiably human-only actions. When coupled with a buying model that only charges when interaction or engagement has been actioned, true viewability is achieved.

Clearly this carries with it other benefits; time spent with brand which in turn drives recall and impacts purchase decisions; distribution of content and product information that would otherwise sit on a website; and a filter for only charging brands to speak with the audience most interested.

But beyond all of the benefits inherent to this approach, one of the most critical is that it would enable buyers and brands to feel more secure about the level or campaign viewability they are seeking; surely something to be embraced and developed by the entire media eco-system.

About Exponential

Exponential delivers innovative advertising experiences that transform the way brands interact with audiences across desktop and mobile. Exponential's platform fuses one of the largest digital media footprints and proprietary data with user-centric ad formats designed to drive engagement and action.

Creativity and audience insights form the foundation on which they build smarter, more relevant solutions for advertisers and publishers. Exponential was founded in 2001 and has locations in 22 countries.

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