UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL AUDIO AD SERVING

SUMMARY

Since audio streaming services became available, listeners now have access to Digital Audio on-demand anywhere, anytime. Digital Audio audiences have increased dramatically and new business models have emerged. eMarketer predicts a steady growth of listeners, from 159.8 million in 2014 to 183.4 million in 2018*. While demand grows, monetizing digital audio is dependent on establishing scalable technical efficiencies of ad serving. Following the footsteps of video, IAB and its members created the Digital Audio Ad Serving Template (DAAST) to solve these technical challenges and to drive innovation and growth across the ecosystem.

WHAT IS DAAST?

DAAST is an acronym for Digital Audio Ad Serving Template. It defines a standard structure for delivering the details of an audio ad from an ad server to an audio player using an XML schema. Modeled directly after the widely adopted IAB Video Ad Serving Template (VAST), DAAST is the first formal approach to standardizing audio ad delivery and addresses ad execution scenarios and formats unique to audio like voice recognition, logo tiles, and video.

WHO IS IT FOR?

DAAST should be used by both buyers and sellers of digital audio advertising. Specifically, for audio player platforms and ad serving vendors.

WHY DO WE NEED IT?

DAAST simply makes digital audio ad serving easier. It brings scalability to ad servers by freeing up time spent in operations to make things work, while also offering a standard method for tracking for advertisers. Instead of customizing ad tag formats for each audio content provider, ad serving vendors can create one ad tag using the template, which can then be parsed and executed by any DAAST-compliant player. Adoption and use of DAAST will enable a more automated and streamlined approach to digital audio ad serving, thus allowing room for innovation.

*source: e-Marketer, "Music Listeners Pump Up the Volume on Digital Radio" Feb 12, 2014

HOW DOES DAAST WORK?

1 The Digital Audio content provider programs its systems to recognize and execute DAAST ad tags

2 A consumer plays audio on their player or app

**3** The player makes a request for an ad at specified ad breaks, such as every 30 minutes or every 10th song

4 The audio ad vendor sends the DAAST ad to the player *

5 The player plays the ad, uniquely targeted to that consumer based on user or geo-data

6 The player tracks the ad experience and notifies the ad vendor as well as other parties specified in the DAAST ad

send ad please *send ad please* *send ad please*
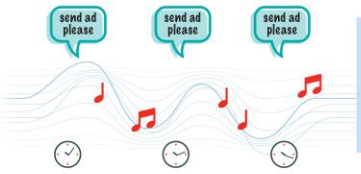
* When the player is using an "ad-injection" service, also called an "ad-stitching" vendor, the vendor uses DAAST to request an ad and to "stitch" it into a stream. The ad-stitching vendor also tracks the ad on behalf of the player.

HOW DOES IT IMPACT DIGITAL AUDIO?

The vision of DAAST is to bring scalability to audio ad serving operations, invite innovation for audio ad formats and ultimately attract more advertising dollars into the digital audio advertising ecosystem.

VAST (IAB's Video Ad Serving Template) became available at a critical time for digital video, enabling growth and expansion with interactivity. We anticipate that DAAST will provide a similar solution for audio.

Additionally, DAAST documentation includes education about digital ad serving and unique methods for audio ad serving. For instance, the use of an intermediary ad-injector service is a common approach in digital audio when the player is unable to process the ad. The ad-injector stitches content and ads into the stream so that ads can be dynamically inserted and tracked on behalf of the player.

Traditional ad serving only supports client-side tracking (counting a response that comes directly from the client, or device). Ad-injectors introduce server-side counting (counting from a server on behalf of the client). While the industry determines how to officially count Digital Audio ad impressions with efforts by the MRC, DAAST accommodates this approach.

This technical specification provides support for a standardized method for tracking, so marketers can derive more value from the audio ad experience, and as adoption increases so will the technical efficiencies in audio ad serving. Together, the marketing and technical benefits will further expand the digital audio marketplace, and open opportunities for innovation. As the digital audio market evolves, so too will DAAST to meet and support market needs with iterations of the specification.

Learn More at iab.net/DAAST
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You can review the public comment version of DAAST 1.0, at iab.net/DAAST and comment via email at **jessica.anderson@iab.net** through **Friday, October 10, 2014.**
IAB Digital Audio Committee will evaluate comments, make necessary changes, and release a final version.