



Media release

Audit Bureau of Circulations Singapore announces new reporting rules for newspapers and magazines in print and digital formats

Singapore, 10 August 2012 – The Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) Singapore today announced a new set of rules and guidelines for auditing and reporting of circulation numbers of newspapers and magazines to include digital editions. It fine-tunes the current rules for print editions. The new rules and guidelines will apply immediately in the current audit and certification.

This follows a year-long review by ABC in 2011 to examine the industry's evolving needs for statistics in media reporting and verification. With increasing proliferation of personal computers, smartphones and tablets, consumers are gradually migrating to digital platforms for consumption of news, information and entertainment. The multitude of digital platforms complements the traditional print media and presents numerous opportunities to advertisers and publishers in reaching out to a wider audience. Publishers and advertisers are embracing and responding to the changing media landscape by actively developing digital strategies to deliver their editorial and advertising content.

ABC recognised the need to revamp its circulation audit rules to include digital editions as part of the total distribution and circulation of publications. With the inclusion of all media formats, the revamped ABC audit report and certification would give a comprehensive picture of a publication's total media footprint. This would provide media buyers and sellers with thorough and reliable data of each publication.

Please refer to Annex A for a summary of the revamped audit rules and guidelines.

Mr Arthur Sung, Chairman ABC Singapore, said: "Given the speed and magnitude of digitalization across the media scene right now, ABC feels strongly the need to put in place an auditing process to better account for the growing users within the digital editions of the numerous publications that are already established in the market. We are proud to have arrived with this new robust auditing process to tackle these growing digital platforms and see this initiative as an important first step to keep pace of our service offerings with the changing communications world."

Ms Irene Ng, VP of Sales, Samsung Asia Pte Ltd, said: "With the consumption of digital media gaining momentum, an independent audit process to ascertain the end users of such platform is definitely important as it adds another level accountability to our media investment. I am sure our media owners would see this as an added validation to the usage of online media."

Mr Adam Hemming, MD, Zenith Optimedia, said: "With the proliferations of consumers accessing media content via digitally enabled platforms, this initiative by ABC to independently account for such users and their consumption within these digital editions of print medium is definitely timely. Especially so when we anticipate this trend of consuming content via digital

format will continue to explode. This independent audit will serve our industry well to account for the effectiveness on such media."

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About ABC Singapore

ABC Singapore is jointly owned by the Advertising Media Owners Association Singapore (AMOAS), Association of Accredited Advertising Agents Singapore (4As), and the Singapore Advertisers Association (SAA). It is managed by a Board of Directors comprising three representatives from each owner organisation.

The function of ABC Singapore is to audit and certify circulation data for newspapers and magazines. The circulation data are used as by advertisers, advertising agencies and publishers reference to evaluate, promote and sell different media platforms.

ANNEX A

SUMMARY OF REVAMPED ABC RULES AND GUIDELINES

A. PRINT EDITION

1. Paid Circulation

a. Multiple Copy Sales

Previously, bulk supplies exceeding 100 copies sold to any party which do not result in bona fide single copy sales purchased by readers are not allowed as net sales. The new rules allow publishers to report multiple copies sales to a single party under “Multiple Copy Sales”. Multiple copy sales include copies sold in bulk to organisers of exhibitions, concerts or similar events or distributed free of charge to the final recipient to promote the interest of the purchaser. Publishers must produce the sales contract, invoice, payment proof and distribution evidence for the audit.

b. Hotel Sales

Copies sold to hotels for distribution to guest rooms, whether direct by publisher or through newstrade channel, may be included in net sales figures.

c. Standardisation of Price Bands

To provide transparency on the level of discounts given to publication sales, ABC will categorise all paid circulation sales into three price bands:

- i) At full rate (basic price)
- ii) At less than full rate but not less than 50%
- iii) At less than 50% of full rate

2. Free Circulation

a. Employee Copies

Under the new rules, publishers may include circulation copies served to employees, retired employees, correspondents and agents as free circulation provided adequate records are maintained by the publisher on employee payroll records, compensation paid to correspondents, agent billings and dispatch records.

b. Multiple Copy Request

ABC also approved the inclusion of multiple copy requests for use by patrons at specific locations under “Group Requested” copies. The request should include an acknowledgement by the requestor that the copies are intended for use by patrons at the following venues: Hospitals & Nursing Homes / Welfare Organisations, Restaurants, Doctor / Dentist Offices, Airlines and Other Public Places.

c. Exhibition & Conference Copies

ABC revised a previous rule which excludes copies given away at exhibitions or conferences from ABC averages unless each copy is backed by a document giving full details of the reader and signed and dated by the recipient. The new rule allows these exhibition copies to be included under "Group Requested" copies if publishers can provide the event attendee list, agreement from event management indicating that the event will accept a specified number of copies for redistribution and delivery receipts or confirmation by show management as proof of actual distribution to the event.

B. DIGITAL EDITION

Digital edition is used to describe distribution of a publication's content via electronic means. The digital edition must maintain the same identity of the print publication by maintaining the same name/logotype characteristics.

For a digital edition to qualify on ABC reports, digital editions must be consistent in character and content with the print edition. In addition, access to the digital edition – whether on a personal computer or mobile device, must be restricted to subscribers or registered users.

Digital editions can be classified as either replica or non-replica. Replica digital editions must have the same editorial and advertising content as the print edition. The layout is also consistent with the print edition. Replica digital editions may have additional editorial or advertising content. The most common example of a replica digital edition is a digital reproduction of the print edition in PDF.

Non-replica digital editions must be consistent in character and content with the print edition. However, they do not need to have the exact editorial and advertising content and layout as the print edition. Example includes an e-reader edition of newspaper without any advertising.

All digital editions (replica and non-replica) are reported separately from print edition in ABC reports. Only the print and replica digital circulations are totalled and reported as the total average circulation for the publication. Non-replica digital circulation shall be reported separately and not totalled with the core circulation.