



Mobile Advertising Guidelines for Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA)

Mobile Web Advertising Guidelines

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Introduction	01
Mobile Web Banner Advertising Overview.....	01
Mobile Web Banner Advertising Units.....	02
Methodology.....	02
Technical Specifications.....	03
Design Principles and Style Guides for Mobile Web Advertising.....	04
Technical Requirements for Mobile Advertisers	05
Who We Are.....	06
Supporting Associations.....	06
Appendix Mobile Web Banner Advertising Examples.....	07

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Introduction

This document describes guidelines for the creation, formatting and use of advertising banners to be applied on the Mobile Web across Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA).

The guidelines document is the result of ongoing collaboration in the EMEA chapter of the Mobile Marketing Association's (MMA) Mobile Advertising Committee. It is a working draft recommendation for characteristics of Mobile Web banner advertisements. At the current stage of development, it also includes limited educational elements that will be elaborated further in a separate document, which is anticipated to form part of a set of MMA's EMEA Mobile Advertising Guidelines covering other inventory types such as downloadables, messaging, video/TV and Bluetooth.

The document has been created collaboratively with representatives from parties in the mobile marketing ecosystem, including mobile operators, content providers, agencies, brands and technology enablers. It is intended to promote the development of advertising on the Mobile Web by (i) reducing the amount of creative effort required for a mobile ad campaign, (ii) providing an effective experience on the majority of mobile phones and (iii) providing an engaging consumer experience. Although adherence to this recommendation is not mandatory, it presents a baseline whose widespread adoption will accelerate market development.

The target audience for these guidelines is all stakeholders involved in the commissioning, creation, distribution and hosting of advertising on the Mobile Web across the EMEA region.

A glossary of terms used in this document is available from MMA (<http://www.mmaglobal.com/glossary.pdf>).

The Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) has been providing thought leadership and customised advice for mobile standards, guidelines and best practices since 2003.

Mobile Web Banner Advertising Overview

What is the Mobile Web?

Today's mobile phones let users do much more than make and receive calls. Besides voice services, mobile users have access to data services such as text messaging, picture messaging, content downloads and access to Mobile Web sites. Some of these data services are becoming media channels in their own right because they carry both content and advertising.

Most mobile phones sold over the past few years include a Web browser, which can be opened from an icon on the main menu. Besides displaying Web pages, the browser also can initiate access to various other types of content, such as wallpapers, ringtones and games. Such downloadable content has different technical requirements than Web browsing and will be addressed in separate mobile advertising guidelines.

Mobile Web usage is advanced in most Asian countries, while its adoption across EMEA and the United States is growing. In the United Kingdom, an estimated 15 million mobile users accessed the Mobile Web in March 2007 alone (Source: MDA).

The Mobile Web is fast emerging as a mainstream information, entertainment and transaction source for people on the move and thus away from a PC. Browsing the Mobile Web is similar to traditional PC-based Web browsing and provides users with access to news, sports, weather, entertainment and shopping sites.

However, there are some significant differences between general access to the Web and access to the Web from mobile phones:

- The mobile phone is an extremely personal device. One mobile phone typically has one unique user. This makes the mobile phone a precisely targeted communication channel, where users are highly engaged with content. As a result, the mobile channel delivers excellent campaign effectiveness and response levels.
- The environment in which people interact with their mobile phone does not lend itself to detailed information search and delivery. Instead, mobile users seek quick and convenient access to information and services when they are out and about. Space on the mobile phone screen is at a premium, and users have limited input mechanisms, so Mobile Web sites need to be easy to navigate using just the keypad.
- The broad range of today's mobile phones – with different form factors, screen sizes and resolutions – presents a challenge for the display and optimal viewing of content and advertising. This document's recommendations directly addresses this challenge.

Many operators provide a 'home page' that is configured to work well with their subscribers' browsers. The operator portal (or carrier deck) provides a variety of links to branded, mobile-specific external sites to make it easier for the subscriber to navigate. Increasingly, mobile users browse outside their operator portal. 'Off-portal' sites are becoming important destinations for Mobile Web browsing with sites such as Yahoo!, Facebook, BBC and Sky offering tailored mobile experiences.

Most mobile phones sold today support XHTML (also sometimes known as WAP 2.0), in addition to, or instead of, the older generation of WAP 1.0 / WML technology. XHTML enables a much richer user experience, as well as access to a wider range of Mobile Web sites.

What types of mobile ad campaigns can I run?

Mobile is already valuable as a stand-alone medium. But it's also well-suited for a vital role in fully integrated cross-media campaign plans, including TV, print, radio, outdoor, cinema, online and direct mail. Mobile provides a powerful instant and interactive response path, often initiated via other media, such as consumers sending a keyword to a short code via SMS.

These examples illustrate the ways brands and marketers use the mobile channel to engage and interact with consumers:

- Click-to-call (users place an outgoing call to the content provider or advertiser)
- Click-to-locate (users find the nearest outlet, or car dealer or movie theatre, enabled by location-based services)
- Click to order brochure (users receive marketing materials by supplying their postal addresses)
- Click to enter competition (users enter text or sweepstakes to win prizes)
- Click to receive email (users receive email and link to on-line site by supplying their email address)
- Click to receive mobile coupon (users apply for a mobile coupon that provides access to an event or restaurant / store discount)
- Click-to-buy (users make a purchase that may include some form of mobile or credit card payment)
- Click to download content (users download content, including logos, wallpapers, or ringtones to their mobile phones)
- Click to enter branded Mobile Web sites (users click a banner to get connected to a standing or campaign-specific Mobile Web site)
- Click to forward content (users forward relevant content to friends, creating viral a campaign effect)

How do I buy Advertising on the Mobile Web?

Buying advertising on the Mobile Web is similar to buying display advertising on the desktop Web. Graphical, interactive display ads are the predominant ad unit. Although in most cases Mobile Web banner ad impressions can be purchased by CPM (Cost per Thousand) or CPC (Cost per Click), mobile offers more enhanced forms of ad targeting. The Mobile Web eventually will be able to offer advertisers targeting opportunities such as context of mobile use, location, time and behaviour.

Some operators and publishers that have Mobile Web sites sell mobile ads directly, while others outsource their inventory to be sold by a third party, either as premium inventory or as part of a mobile ad network.

Mobile Web Banner Advertising Units

Today's mobile phones are becoming increasingly sophisticated, with high-resolution screens, sophisticated Mobile Web browsers and high-speed access, all of which allow high-quality and media-rich Mobile Web ad banners. To give marketers and brands an opportunity to leverage these improvements, the MMA's EMEA Mobile Advertising Guidelines examine the properties of Mobile Web ad banners.

Network and back-office technology identify mobile phone models, browser characteristics and screen resolutions in order to serve mobile ads that are optimised to match the capabilities of each mobile phone. In order to accommodate the wide range of mobile phone characteristics, advertisers will be required to produce and provide their banners in various pre-defined dimensions, which are discussed later in this document. The ads served are selected from this set of pre-defined sizes based on the particular mobile phone model's capabilities and according to the best-fit principle. As a result, advertisers can increase campaign effectiveness by offering larger and richer ads that are more legible on high-resolution devices. (Some examples are discussed in the Appendix.)

If the artwork is to be delivered directly to consumers, it should be made available in the format that their phones can support. Most mobile phones support JPEG and GIF. High-end mobile phones also support PNG, while legacy phones generally support WBMP. If the artwork is being delivered to the consumer via an intermediary, advertisers are advised to discuss the best format with them to see if that party can convert between formats.

Methodology

Key considerations while producing this recommendation were to:

- Limit the effort required to produce creative material
- Ensure that advertisements display effectively on the majority of phones
- Provide an engaging, non-intrusive consumer experience

The recommendation consists of a set of aspect ratios, actual banner dimensions, maximum file sizes and file formats.

Aspect ratios

The recommended aspect ratios are 6:1 (default) and 4:1 (extended) because:

- Having two aspect ratios provides flexibility of layout and positioning in different contexts.
- 6:1 is the default recommendation that every publisher should be able to deliver.

- 4:1 is the extended size for optional use in campaigns for those who have the possibility to offer bigger ad formats within their sites.
- Keeping the aspect ratio constant simplifies resizing of images and reduces effort.
- Both are sufficiently large to provide an effective advertising experience, yet small enough not to be intrusive.

Banner dimensions

The recommended banner widths are 120, 168, 216 and 300 pixels.

An analysis of mobile phones in the market found that the usable screen widths fall into distinct clusters. That environment has several benefits:

- Keeping the banner widths to four limits the effort of creative production.
- The widths chosen provide a good fit for the majority of mobile phones, limiting the amount of redundant “white space” left on the browser.
- The widths chosen provide for an exact pixel height for both ratios defined, which simplifies scaling of the creative.

The maximum file size for the largest static Image Banner has been set at 5 KB.

Other aspects

Additional aspects that have been considered, but have not yet been fully integrated into the recommendations, include:

- Automatic resizing of Mobile Web banners: This is a capability used by some providers, but not all. It bears possible challenges with some creative material that does not scale well (e.g., text, graphical details). There is also no common practice regarding which banner sizes should be provided of the image to be resized.
- “Advertising” signifier: Some providers and/or markets require altering advertising images to inform consumers that an image is an advertisement and/or that it is clickable. Advertisers should be aware that a portion of their creative space may be hidden by such signifiers (e.g., the leftmost or rightmost border of the banner).
- Animated Mobile Web banners: There is no common practice so far. However, it is recognised that animated banners will require larger file sizes than static banners defined in this document.
- Colour depth of Mobile Web banners: The committee sticks to limiting file size and will continue observe the need for possible further recommendations.

Text Taglines are an optional feature that can be added to an image banner. Text Taglines have several advantages and disadvantages:

Pros:

- Most consumers are unfamiliar with image banners on Mobile Web sites. Many consumers also don’t realize that image banners can be navigated to and clicked on, whereas a text tagline is a lot clearer to consumers in that respect.
- An image banner with a text tagline usually generates higher click rates.
- Some (older) browsers cannot navigate graphical elements at all, in which case a text tagline is required to make the image banner clickable.

Cons:

- Image banners with text taglines together use more real estate (space in the usable browser window), typically at the expense of other Web elements, such as navigation and content.

There is no consistent best practice and hence no clear recommendation regarding the use of additional text taglines. Instead, media owners and publishers need to make a case-by-case decision about what best suits their business requirements.

Irrespective of using additional Text Taglines, the committee recommends that advertisements contain some form of call-to-action clearly identifiable by the user (e.g., “find out more ...”, icon, button).

Technical Specifications

Table 1: Technical Specifications – WAP 1.0		
Ad Unit	Technical Specifications	Sample Creative
Standard Text Banner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 lines of text maximum • Up to 16 characters per line • Max. 35 characters total, including spaces 	
Standard Image Banner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 x 15 pixels • B & W, 1-bit bitmap • < 200 bytes file size 	
Standard Image/Text Combination Banner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 x 12 pixels • B&W, 1-bit bitmap • Text: Up to 16 characters • < 200 bytes files size 	

Technical Specifications - Mobile Web









Table 2: Static Image Banners in default 6:1 aspect ratio		
Ad Size	Technical Specifications	Sample Creative (approx. size)
X-Large Image Banner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 x 50 pixels • <5 KB file size • .gif, .png, .jpg 	
Large Image Banner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 216 x 36 pixels • <3 KB file size • .gif, .png, .jpg 	
Medium Image Banner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 168x 28 pixels • <2 KB file size • .gif, .png, .jpg 	
Small Image Banner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120 x 20 pixels • <1 KB file size • .gif, .png, .jpg 	
Text Tagline (optional) ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 24 characters for X-Large • Up to 18 characters for Large • Up to 12 characters for Medium • Up to 10 characters for small 	View Program

Table 3: Static Image Banners in extended 4:1 aspect ratio		
Ad Size	Technical Specifications	Sample Creative (approx. size)
X-Large Image Banner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 x 75 pixels • <5 KB file size • .gif, .png, .jpg 	
Large Image Banner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 216 x 54 pixels • <3 KB file size • .gif, .png, .jpg 	
Medium Image Banner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 168x 42 pixels • <2 KB file size • .gif, .png, .jpg 	
Small Image Banner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120 x 30 pixels • <1 KB file size • .gif, .png, .jpg 	
Text Tagline (optional) ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 24 characters for X-Large • Up to 18 characters for Large • Up to 12 characters for Medium • Up to 10 characters for Small 	View Program

¹Some providers allow a text tag below the banner ad.

Design Principles and Style Guides for Mobile Web Advertising

Mobile Web design principles and style guides have been available for years, and the adoption and adherence to those principles by site owners and publishers is increasing for the benefit of the industry. Those principles include:

- Limiting user input to numeric or short sequences of text due to the limitations of the keyboard on most devices.
- Limiting the overall data volume of a Mobile Web page to no more than 20 KB so the download time isn't longer than most users will wait.
- Limiting the number of retrievals (e.g., of images) per Mobile Web page to 10 in order to reduce page loading delays caused by roundtrip times for each retrieval.

Mobile advertising does not require any particular design principles and style guides in this respect. Existing general guidelines should apply to Mobile Web sites containing image banners, as well as to those Mobile Web sites linked to by image banners (post-click), such as jump pages, campaign sites and self-contained permanent third-party Mobile Web sites.

More detailed design principles and style guides for Mobile Web sites can be found at the W3C Mobile Web Best Practices site at www.w3.org/TR/mobile-bp/.

The committee also recommends that Mobile Web sites conform to W3C mobileOK Basic 1.0 guidelines, which are available at www.w3.org/TR/mobileOK-basic10-tests/.

Technical Requirements for Mobile Advertisers

1. Advertiser/merchant site infrastructure
 - Advertisers will keep up with traffic demands and are responsible for all costs, communications, hosting, hardware and software, as well as all costs of implementation for their site or associated click-through pages.
2. Ad format serving
 - Ad serving infrastructure will serve the formats defined in these guidelines to phones on-the-fly based on device-type detection and according to the best-fit principle, where the format choice is based on the one that best fits on the usable screen of the mobile phone.
 - Content that cannot be displayed by a device should not be delivered. For example, if a device does not support GIF, then that format must not be served to that particular mobile phone.
3. Ad format testing
 - It is recommended to carry out tests prior to launching a campaign.
4. Automatic resizing of ad formats (optional and to be verified)
 - Ad serving infrastructure may be capable of performing automatic resizing, where a standard format is dynamically adjusted to exactly match the phone's display while maintaining the aspect ratio of the standard format.
 - Based on committee members' early experiences, automatic resizing works well and provides value such as the ability to support large screens. The absence of MMA guidelines should not stop stakeholders from continuing to collect experiences in the field of automatic resizing by working along their own guidelines.
 - Advertisers are advised to ensure that their creative is suitable for automatic resizing, especially in cases where visual detail is essential.
5. Animated ad formats (optional and to be verified)
 - When serving animated banners, it should be verified that each mobile phone browser supports this animation.
 - File size restrictions should be considered carefully.

Who We Are

About the Mobile Marketing Association

The Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) is the premier non-profit global association that strives to stimulate the growth of mobile marketing. The Mobile Marketing Association is an action-oriented association designed to clear obstacles to market development, to establish guidelines and best practices for sustainable growth, and to evangelize the mobile channel for use by brands and third-party content providers. MMA members include agencies, advertisers, hand-held device manufacturers, wireless operators and service providers, retailers, software and services providers, as well as any company focused on the potential of marketing via the mobile channel. The Mobile Marketing Association's global headquarters are located in the United States.

For more information, please visit www.mmaglobal.com

About the MMA Mobile Advertising Committee

The MMA Mobile Advertising Committee, with active committees in North America, Asia Pacific and Europe, Middle East and Africa, has been established to create a library of format and policy guidelines for advertising within content on mobile devices. By creating mobile advertising guidelines, the MMA ensures that the industry is taking a proactive approach to keep user experience, content integrity and deployment simplicity as the driving forces behind all mobile advertising programs.

EMEA Mobile Advertising Committee

The EMEA Mobile Advertising Committee, chaired by Enpocket and Vodafone Group Services, developed these guidelines in collaboration with MMA member company representatives from:

EMEA Mobile Advertising Committee		
AdMob Inc.	Mobile Dreams Factory, S.L.	Qualcomm
AKQA Mobile	Mobile Enterprise Ltd.	ScreenTonic UK Ltd.
Alcatel-Lucent	Mobile One2One	Sports.comm Ltd.
Amobee Media Systems	MOBILERA	Telenor Nordic Mobile
Bundesverband Digitale Wirtschaft e.V.	Mobixell Networks (Europe) Ltd.	Tempos 21
Buongiorno	MoviDream	The Coca-Cola Company
Dynetic Mobile Solutions, Inc.	mTLD Top Level Domain (.mobi)	The Weather Channel Interactive
Enpocket, Inc.	Net Think Iberia	T-Mobile UK
Ericsson AB	Nokia Corporation	Turkcell
Greystripe Incorporated	Openwave	Universal McCann
Incentivated Limited	Orange UK	Vodafone Group Services Ltd.
Microsoft (MSN & Windows Live)	Out There Media Holding GmbH	Yahoo!

References

The following links provide additional sources of information and reference:

- MMA Consumer Best Practices Guidelines (www.mmaglobal.com/bestpractices.pdf)
- Mobile Marketing Association Web site (www.mmaglobal.com)
- Mobile Marketing Association NA Mobile Advertising Guidelines (www.mmaglobal.com/mobileadvertising.pdf)
- W3C Mobile Web Best Practices (www.w3.org/TR/mobile-bp/).
- W3C mobileOK Basic 1.0 (www.w3.org/TR/mobileOK-basic10-tests/).

Supporting Associations

The following associations support the MMA's Mobile Advertising Guidelines.



Contact Us

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Glossary of Terms

The MMA maintains a nomenclature glossary for all terms within MMA guidelines, education documents and research. The glossary is available at <http://www.mmaglobal.com/glossary.pdf>

APPENDIX

Mobile Web Banner Advertising Examples

The following images illustrate how the Mobile Web enables a variety of different creative implementations for advertising campaigns.

Standard Text Banner



Image Banners with Text Link



Image Banners in 6:1 aspect ratio



Image Banners in 4:1 aspect ratio





The Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) is the premier global non-profit association that strives to stimulate the growth of mobile marketing and its associated technologies. The MMA is a global organization with over 450 members representing over forty-two countries. MMA members include agencies, advertisers, hand held device manufacturers, carriers and operators, retailers, software providers and service providers, as well as any company focused on the potential of marketing via mobile devices.