

# A Guide to Digital Editions – audit requirements & checklist (Consumer Magazines)



Setting the standard

## Overview

This guide is designed to help you understand the main issues and requirements when claiming digital editions on the Consumer Magazine certificate. Once you are registered and claim digital editions the certificate you receive including print and digital copies will be designated a '**Cross Platform Certificate of Circulation**'.

The first thing to do is to discuss your application to audit your digital edition with your ABC Account Manager. Some audit processes take place in 'real-time' on an ongoing basis throughout the audit period. As this cannot be done retrospectively, we will need to pre-approve your system in advance of you claiming copies. This process will be set in motion by you completing a Digital Editions Pre Approval Form and includes you setting up ABC online access to your digital editions for all distribution channels used – your own website, iPad, Zinio etc.

## There are three main principles that must be met in order to claim a digital edition:

- **Entitlement** - the individual must have 'opted-in' through payment of a subscription or via a request for free copies.
- **Availability** - the correct publication and issue must be available to download or view at the correct time.
- **Notification** (free circulation only) - Subscribers must be correctly notified of availability of current issue.

## The Pre-approval Process

The pre-approval process will ensure that the digital editions are compliant to the ABC Reporting Standards requirements. This includes documenting a detailed description of the payment trail for paid-for copies and testing that:

- **The editorial in the digital edition is not being reduced by more than 5% from that carried in the print version**
- **Additional editorial in the digital edition is not more than 25% more than in the print version**
- **Once published the digital edition is inert ( does not change until the next issue is published )**
- **The digital edition carries all the ROP advertisements that appear in the print edition, unless otherwise agreed with the agency/advertiser.**  
(Note that advertisements *may* be sold for inclusion in the digital edition only)
- **The required analysis of copies can be achieved** – this to include where applicable:
  - **For Higher Rate copies**
    - The quantity of paid-for copies sold at BAR ( or BCP for single copy sales)
    - The quantity of paid-for copies sold at less than BAR but not less than 50%
    - The quantity of paid-for copies sold at less than 50% of BAR but not less than 20%
  - **For Lower Rate and Free Copies**
    - The quantity of paid-for copies sold at less than 20% of BAR/BCP
    - The quantity of free copies
    - Details of any bundled packages – i.e. print and digital edition sold together.

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**Important:** Please note that if the price paid for a package bundling the print and digital edition is less than 20% above the UK BAR (subs) or BCP (Single copy sales) then only the print copy can be included in an ABC claim.

Once your systems have been pre-approved you may register your digital edition with us. Please contact your Account Manager for a pre-approval form and a registration form.

## Post Registration Checklist

Once your system is approved and you have registered to claim your digital edition, you will need to:

- Register [digitalcopies@abc.org.uk](mailto:digitalcopies@abc.org.uk) for a free subscription to the digital edition from all sources and send through log-in details.
- Send a print copy of your magazine every issue to us to perform journal checks, please send this to: FAO Digital Editions, ABC Ltd, Saxon House, 211 High Street, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 1AD
- Send us the proposed distribution schedule of both the print and digital version of the magazine
- Collate requests/subscriptions for digital version of the magazine

## The Audit

The audit is broken into two parts. Confirming the availability and notification of the copies is undertaken on an ongoing basis throughout the audit period. Entitlement to the copy is audited later when the print audit is conducted.

**Below are checklists for two audit process scenarios, depending whether you are claiming paid higher rate digital edition subscriptions, or lower rate paid subscriptions and/or requested free copies**

### 1. Paid-for (Higher Rate) subscriptions - defined as copies sold at 20% or more of the BAR or BCP

- Ensure you are receiving issue by issue reports throughout the audit period
- Ensure you supply ABC with the printed edition of every issue
- Ensure you supply ABC with access to every digital edition, every issue
- Inform ABC if you add a new type of digital edition

### 2. Paid-for (Lower Rate) and requested free copies

You will need to do the following on an every issue basis:

- Compile a digital distribution list of those who have requested a free digital edition and those who have paid at a rate less than 20% of the UK BAR or BCP.
- For requested free copies only, on or about the time of distribution of the paper version of the publication (parent edition) you will send email notification of availability of the digital edition, or a copy of the digital edition. This notification e-mail needs to include:
  - Date Sent
  - Time Sent
  - Name of Publication
  - Issue Identifier
  - Email Address
  - Size of file delivered (if sending digital edition)
  - A valid link to either the publication or download (if not sending digital edition)
  - 24hrs after sending out email notification, you will need to collate hard bounce backs and remove relevant addressees from distribution list.

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You will then need to combine the final Paid-for (Lower Rate) and Free digital distribution list with print version distribution list (Total Distribution List- TDL). This mailing list must be coded by circulation type and format (print, digital or both). The list must also include:

- Full name
- Postal mailing and email address
- The list should be de-duplicated and be net of bounce backs.

A single TDL must be available to ABC for every issue on an issue by issue basis and when requested by us, you will need to submit these lists to: [digitalcopies@abc.org.uk](mailto:digitalcopies@abc.org.uk)

You will also need to complete and submit a Digital Copy Analysis Form to [digitalcopies@abc.org.uk](mailto:digitalcopies@abc.org.uk) detailing the circulation claim by format, distribution date and issue ID.

For free copies a sample of recipients is tested on an every issue basis to confirm they received the notification

### At the end of the reporting period:

- You will still need to submit your ABC eReturn for the print version of the magazine as usual. There is an additional section on the eReturn menu, called 'Digital Analysis', for claiming the digital editions.
- Entitlement to the copy is audited later when the print audit is conducted

### How To Get More Information

The Consumer Magazine Reporting Standards are available from the ABC website [www.abc.org.uk](http://www.abc.org.uk). Section 18 details the reporting standards requirements for digital editions.

If you need to discuss any aspect of ABC please contact an ABC Account Manager (01442 870800)

This outline is intended as a brief user-friendly guide to the topic. It is not intended as a replacement for, or interpretation of, the relevant ABC Reporting Standards. In all cases where this guide and the Reporting Standards differ, the Reporting Standards will prevail TR/rev V7 14.03.12

