



Reach PLC Video Advertising Specifications

VAST Guidelines – Version 1.0 | Effective 05 March 2026

Reach PLC partners with Primis to deliver high-quality, in-article video advertising experiences across our premium publisher network. These specifications outline the technical standards and delivery requirements for video creatives running within the Primis player environment.

Following these guidelines ensures reliable ad delivery, optimal playback performance across devices, and full compatibility with industry standards.

Our goal is to provide advertisers with a high-impact video environment while maintaining fast page performance and a seamless user experience across Reach PLC websites.


Why These Specifications Matter

To maintain the highest quality video experience for both users and advertisers, all video creatives must adhere to the requirements outlined in this specification document.

Following these standards helps ensure:

- Consistent playback across devices and browsers
- Reduced latency and faster ad load times
- Accurate measurement and viewability tracking
- Reliable campaign delivery
- Compliance with IAB video advertising standards

Failure to meet these requirements may result in playback errors, delayed campaign launches, or creative rejection during validation.



General Requirements

Feature	Requirement
Security	HTTPS is mandatory for all VAST redirects, creative assets, and tracking pixels. Mixed content (HTTP) is strictly blocked.
Playback Method	Auto-play, Sound Off (User-initiated sound only)

Supported VAST & Frameworks

Feature	Requirement / Recommendation	Notes
VAST Versions	3.0, 4.0, 4.1, 4.2	4.1 Preferred. VAST 4.1 / 4.2 is strongly recommended to support advanced verification and server-side ad insertion (SSAI) workflows.
Mezzanine Files	Required for VAST 4.x	Include a high-quality mezzanine file to facilitate server-side transcoding.
Interactive Frameworks (Primary)	SIMID	The modern standard for secure interactivity on Desktop and Mobile Web.
Interactive Frameworks (Legacy)	VPAID 2.0	Supported on Desktop and Mobile Web, but deprecated.
Viewability	OMID	Open Measurement is required for viewability verification.
Restrictions	VPAID-within-VAST (SWF/FLV)	Strictly prohibited.



Video Asset Specifications

We recommend a Dual-Codec Strategy.

Please provide both H.265 (High Efficiency) and H.264 (Universal) renditions within the VAST response if possible.

Feature	Requirement	Recommendation / Notes
Duration	Mobile: 6–15s / Desktop: 15–30s (max 30s)	6s, 15s, or 30s
Resolution	Min 1280x720 (720p)	1920x1080 (1080p)
Aspect Ratio	16:9 (Landscape)	16:9 Mandatory
Codecs	H.265 (HEVC) + H.264 (AVC)	Dual-codec delivery recommended
File Type	MP4 (Mandatory), WebM	Provide multiple MIME types
File Size (Delivery)	High: < 20MB / Low: < 4MB	Allows for true 1080p HD on Wi-Fi while protecting mobile data.
Mezzanine Size	< 500MB	High bitrate source for transcoding.
Audio	Normalized to -16 LKFS	Aligned with Web/Online Video standards (± 2.0 dB tolerance).



Additional Guidance

Adding Interactivity & Call-to-Action (CTA)

Follow IAB Digital Video Ad Functional Guidelines:
To improve click through performance.

- **Implementation:** Use `<ClickThrough>` and `<ClickTracking>` nodes.
- **CTA Text:** Default to "Learn More". Use "Install Now" for App Store links.
- **UX Tip:** Ensure brand logo and key message are visible within the first 3 seconds.
- **Captions:** For auto-play environments, "burned-in" captions or VTT files are highly recommended to maintain engagement while sound is off.

Performance & Error Mitigation

To prevent "black screens" and latency:

- **Wrapper Limit:** Maximum 3 redirects (Strictly no more than 5).
- **VAST Response Time:** Under 500ms (Timeout enforced at player level).
- **Creative Load Time:** Under 2s.
- **Cache Busting:** Ensure all 3rd-party tags include the `[CACHEBUSTING]` macro.

Pre-Launch Validation Checklist

Before submitting tags, please perform the following checks:

1. **Validator Pass:** Test the tag in the IAB VAST Validator or Google Video Suite Inspector.
2. **HTTPS Check:** Confirm every URL within the XML starts with `https://`.
3. **Codec Check:** Verify the VAST XML contains `type="video/mp4"` nodes for both AVC (H.264) and HEVC (H.265).
4. **Landing Page:** Verify the Click-Through URL leads to a live, mobile-optimized page.



Additional Recommendations

1. VAST XML Coding for HEVC

To ensure the player correctly identifies the High-Efficiency file, the codec attribute is mandatory for H.265 assets.

- **Incorrect:** `<MediaFile type="video/mp4">`
- **Correct:** `<MediaFile type="video/mp4" codec="hvc1.1.4.L93.B0">`

2. Safe Zones (Clear Aperture)

- **Bottom 20%:** Do not place subtitles, legal disclaimers, or logos here. (Reserved for Player Controls).
- **Top Right:** Keep clear for "Skip Ad" or "Close" buttons.
- **Action:** Please verify all burning-in text is centered or within the "Title Safe" area (80% center).

3. Audio Limiting

- **Target Loudness:** -16 LKFS (± 2 dB).
- **Max True Peak:** -1.0 dBTP (Required to prevent clipping on mobile devices).

4. Frame Rate Cap

- **Requirement:** 23.976, 24, 25, or 30 FPS.

