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# IAB NEW STANDARD AD UNIT PORTFOLIO

## TRANSITION GUIDE

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## Executive Summary

The IAB New Ad Portfolio introduces two major changes to the IAB recommended ad unit guidance:

1. Flexible aspect ratio based ad formats
2. LEAN guidance for Light, Encrypted, AdChoice supported, and Non-invasive ads

Flexible size ad formats are a big departure from current fixed pixel size ad formats since they are defined by the aspect ratio of the width and height of an ad, and it is required that the ad maintain its aspect ratio to fill the maximum real estate available.

This cannot be achieved out of the box and requires a transition from both demand and supply as well as supporting ad tech in the supply chain.

LEAN guidance requires changes to ad content and execution of different ad types. This is relatively easy to transition to by adhering to new LEAN ad guidance.

This document outlines a suggested method developed for end-to-end testing for flexible aspect ratio based ad containers using current ad tech with different types of ads produced by creative platforms. The goal of this transition guidance is:

1. To enable publishers to implement a flexible sized ad slot that will maintain the aspect ratio
2. To allow publishers to accept different ad types during transition period- new ad units as well as past fixed size ad units

This guidance only represents one possible way of implementing flexible size ad units. The industry may develop other methods or each publisher may define their own technology or method based on their technology stack or revenue model.



**The following companies helped implement and test the new ad units:**

Adverline	Flashtalking	M Publicite
BBC	Flexitive	Main Ad
About.com	GroupM	MBWW
AOL	Gruhner & Jahr	Media Impact
Bloomberg Media	Havas	OMD
Burda Media	Hi-Media	PGAtour
Ciao People	IAB Ireland	Responsive Ads
Core Media	Independent Digital	The Guardian
DMG Media	iq media marketing	United Interned Media
Ekstra Bladet	Irish Mirror	Zodiak
Eniro	Journal Media	

We also want to extend special thanks to Flexitive, ResponsiveAds, and Flashtalking for providing the creatives for the testing of the new ad units.



## Transition Guidance

Transitioning to the IAB New Ad Portfolio requires two major changes from publishers and advertisers:

1. **LEAN Ads:** adopting LEAN guidance for ad delivery and functionality, which requires changing file weights for initial loads, implementing sub-load criteria, and complying with new LEAN guidance on ad functionality
2. **Flexible Size Ads:** implementing aspect ratio based ad containers by publishers and developing flexible ad creative by advertisers that can adjust the size while maintaining their defined aspect ratio

## Timeline

The IAB New Ad Portfolio guidelines are effective immediately upon final release of the ad specifications.

All publishers and advertisers must make commercially reasonable efforts to implement flexible size ad units and aspect ratio based creative development.

LEAN guidance should be implemented immediately as it only requires change of specifications for publishers. For advertisers, it will involve changing the development of creatives to new ad portfolio recommendations and including new guidance on file weights, initial load, sub-load, number of files, and shared libraries. Advertisers will also need to curtail delisted ad types and ensure allowed ad types are implemented as defined.

Ads units in transition (e.g. “Rising Stars”) should be delisted within six months (by January 2018) and publishers should move to the aspect ratio based ad units from the new flexible size specifications.

## LEAN Transition

LEAN guidance requires that publishers change their ad specifications and guidance as per the new ad portfolio recommendations and that advertisers adopt the new recommendations and build to the new ad specifications.

### Publisher Guidance

To comply with LEAN ads guidance, publishers need to apply the new recommendations as follows:

1. Publishers must change the recommended ad units, file weight, and other specifications to match the new ad portfolio as per sections:
  - Flexible Size Ad Specifications
  - Delisted and “In-Transition” Ad Formats
  
2. Publishers must change the ad functionality allowed in ads and other details, e.g. number of files allowed, exempt shared libraries, etc. as per the LEAN guidance in the “New Ad Portfolio” sections:
  - LEAN: Use Experience and Load Performance
  - LEAN: User Experience and Ad Content
  - LEAN: Non-Disruptive Ad Experience

For the publishers who have not yet switched to the new flexible size ad units, please use the table below to modify file weight specifications:

Current Ad Unit	Current Spec	Max Initial K-weight (kB)	Max Subload (kB)
Smartphone Banner	300x50, 320x50	50	100
Billboard	970x250	250	500
Super Leaderboard/ Pushdown	970x90	200	400
Leaderboard	728x90	150	300
Portrait	300x1050	250	500
Medium Rectangle	300x250	150	300
Large Rectangle	300x600	200	400
Skyscraper	160x600	150	300
120x60	120x60	50	100



<b>Full Page Flex</b>	Multiple sizes	200-300	400-600
<b>Feature Phones</b>	120x20	5	N/A
	168x28	5	N/A
	216x36	5	N/A

Publishers who have switched to flexible size ad units can use the flexible size ad specifications specified in the new ad portfolio.

If a publisher has custom ad unit formats, they must use the sizing grid defined in the new ad portfolio to determine the file weights for initial and subload.

## Advertiser Guidance

To comply with LEAN ads guidance, advertisers need to apply the new recommendations as follows:

1. Advertisers must start building the ads to new LEAN guidance as specified in the “New Ad Portfolio” sections:
  - LEAN: Use Experience and Load Performance
  - LEAN: User Experience and Ad Content
  - LEAN: Non-Disruptive Ad Experience
2. Advertisers must ensure that the new ads adhere to
  - Initial load and subload guidance
  - Number of files limits
  - Use of shared libraries

## Flexible Size Transition

There is no one way to implement a flexible container. It will depend on publisher technology and their website design. To help with this transition the team at IAB Tech Lab, along with member companies representing publishers and creative platforms, performed extensive testing for implementing flexible size containers. The goal was two-fold:

1. Avoid page stutter which requires that the container should allocate required space for the ad based on aspect ratio of the ad unit and the screen size
2. The ad container should be able to accept the following four types of ad formats:
  - Flexible and responsive HTML5 ads that can scale according to the ad container size
  - Fixed size HTML5 ad units that can fit inside the container
  - Fixed size static image ad units that can fit inside the ad container
  - Aspect ratio based static images that can scale up or down based on the container size

## Publisher Guidance

In order to implement flexible sized ads, it is necessary that the first change is made by the publisher which involves implementing the flexible ad container. Based on the testing performed to run and test flexible size ads, here are some considerations for publishers for a smooth transition:

1. **Initially implement for direct sold** inventory where the ad trafficking is managed by the publisher teams to ensure controlled transition
2. **Use the “Transition Fixed Size Ad Units”** to determine the right new ad unit for existing fixed size ad unit. E.g. 1x1 ad unit for current 300x250 fixed size ad unit.
3. When there is no transition fixed size ad unit, it is a new ad unit and can be introduced in new ad slots, but the publisher may not be able to accept current fixed size ad units in this container
4. **Setup new ad unit or modify the configuration of the inventory ad** unit to be of type custom or fluid size or an option that can accept multiple sizes. See Appendix B for DFP setup used during testing



5. **Implementation details for flexible size ad containers** are summarized and available in the following web pages. These outline potential methods of implementing flexible containers. But publishers can define alternate methods
  - a. <https://seansd.github.io/IAB-Standards/ad-container-meta-data/index.html>
  - b. [https://flexibleads.iabtechlab.com/src/slot\\_definition\\_techniques.html](https://flexibleads.iabtechlab.com/src/slot_definition_techniques.html)
6. IAB Tech Lab has also developed a “**Flex Ads Testing**” **utility software for publishers here** (<https://github.com/InteractiveAdvertisingBureau/flex-ad-testing> ). This can help insert a flexible container as well as point to ad server inventory to test and view ads in a test page. It is setup for DFP but allows custom code for other ad servers
7. The **demo pages** that were used for testing are available here- <https://flexibleads.iabtechlab.com/>. This page summarizes all the testing as well as has links to test pages (e.g. for 1x1 ad unit, the link is [https://flexibleads.iabtechlab.com/samples/dfp/adbundle\\_1x1.html](https://flexibleads.iabtechlab.com/samples/dfp/adbundle_1x1.html)) that demonstrate flex ad containers and all four types of ads being served in a flex ad container through DFP ad server. In addition, we have publisher test pages also demonstrating flexible ad container implementation and ads being served through different ad servers
8. See Appendix A for all the test scenarios that are implemented in the demo pages

## Automation or Programmatic Guidance

For buying and selling automation, OpenRTB 2.5 (<http://www.iab.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/OpenRTB-API-Specification-Version-2-5-FINAL.pdf>) enables the use of aspect ratio based banner definition in the format object (section 3.2.10) where the bid request can define both the new ad unit aspect ratio as well as fixed size transition ad unit dimensions. This should allow the publisher to accept both types of ads.

This option **must be used only after** the publisher or SSP has implemented flexible sized ad container.



## Advertiser Guidance

To implement the new flexible size ad units, advertisers must consider the following:

1. Define the ad **creative with the size range** in perspective. The size range defines the minimum and maximum width and height the ad creative can expect.
2. The ad creative must be able to **scale up and down** between the size range
3. The ad creative **should not modify the page elements** but implement passive methods like width and height style parameters of the ad's div or iframe element set to 100% or auto
4. Static image ads should be aspect ratio based and preferably higher size of '2' pixel density
5. Advertisers should work with publishers to understand if publisher will accept both flexible ads as well as fixed size ad units during the transition

## Appendix A

The following scenarios were tested to ensure that proper guidance for transition to new flexible sized ad units can be developed.

### Flexible ad container with aspect ratio based HTML5 ads

Ad Unit Name	Transition Fixed Size Ad Unit (Size in px)	Ad container Aspect Ratio (Width:Height)	Suggested ad unit Dimensions
<b>6x1</b>	Smartphone Banner 300x50, 320x50	6:1	<b>600x100</b>
<b>4x1</b>	Billboard 970x250	4:1	<b>1800x450</b>
<b>1x3</b>	Portrait 300x1050	1:3	<b>450x1350</b>
<b>8x1</b>	Leaderboard 728x90	8:1	<b>900x112.5</b>
<b>1x1</b>	Medium Rectangle 300x250	1:1	<b>450x450</b>
<b>9x16</b>	N/A	9:16	<b>450x800</b>

### Flexible ad container with fixed size HTML5 ads

Ad Unit Name	Transition Fixed Size Ad Unit (Size in px)	Ad container Aspect Ratio (Width:Height)	Suggested ad unit Dimensions
<b>6x1</b>	Smartphone Banner 300x50, 320x50	6:1	<b>320x50</b>
<b>4x1</b>	Billboard 970x250	4:1	<b>970x250</b>
<b>1x3</b>	Portrait 300x1050	1:3	<b>300x1050</b>
<b>8x1</b>	Leaderboard 728x90	8:1	<b>728x90</b>
<b>1x1</b>	Medium Rectangle 300x250	1:1	<b>300x250</b>

## Flexible ad container with aspect ratio based static image ads

Ad Unit Name	Transition Fixed Size Ad Unit (Size in px)	Ad container Aspect Ratio (Width:Height)	Suggested ad unit Dimensions
<b>6x1</b>	Smartphone Banner 300x50, 320x50	6:1	<b>600x100</b>
<b>4x1</b>	Billboard 970x250	4:1	<b>1800x450</b>
<b>1x3</b>	Portrait 300x1050	1:3	<b>450x1350</b>
<b>8x1</b>	Leaderboard 728x90	8:1	<b>900x112.5</b>
<b>1x1</b>	Medium Rectangle 300x250	1:1	<b>450x450</b>
<b>9x16</b>	N/A	9:16	<b>450x800</b>

## Flexible ad container with static fixed size ads

Ad Unit Name	Transition Fixed Size Ad Unit (Size in px)	Ad container Aspect Ratio (Width:Height)	Suggested ad unit Dimensions
<b>6x1</b>	Smartphone Banner 300x50, 320x50	6:1	<b>320x50</b>
<b>4x1</b>	Billboard 970x250	4:1	<b>970x250</b>
<b>1x3</b>	Portrait 300x1050	1:3	<b>300x1050</b>
<b>8x1</b>	Leaderboard 728x90	8:1	<b>728x90</b>
<b>1x1</b>	Medium Rectangle 300x250	1:1	<b>300x250</b>

## Appendix B

The following describes the ad unit setup in Google DFP (DART For Publishers) ad server as used in testing and for the ads being served on the demo pages here- <http://flexibleads.iabtechlab.net:8080/>.

### Ad Unit Inventory, Delivery Line Item and Creative Setup

1. DFP Inventory Setup is done using size “Fluid”. This allows to select different sizes during line item and delivery setup.
2. DFP delivery or line item is setup using the following:

Ad Type	Line Item Inventory size	Creative Target Ad Unit Size	Other Creative Settings
<b>Flexible size HTML5 Ads</b>	1x1 (Custom)	1x1	Creative Type: Third Party Safe Frame: No
<b>Fixed Size HTML5 Ads</b>	Fixed Size in pixels (e.g. 300x250 for medium rectangle in Flexible 1:1 container)	Fixed Size	Creative Type: Third Party Safe Frame: No
<b>Aspect Ratio Static Image Ads</b>	1x1 (Custom)	1x1	Creative Type: User defined Template (see below for details)
<b>Fixed Size Static Image Ads</b>	Fixed Size in pixels (e.g. 300x250 for medium rectangle in Flexible 1:1 container)	Fixed Size	Creative Type: Image

## User Defined template for Aspect Ratio Image Ads

The user defined template is setup to let users define the width and height for the iframe as well as image file and click through URL:

Template Variable	Value
Imageheight	Max or auto (default is max)
Imagewidth	100% or other percentage (default is 100% to occupy full width of the ad container)
Imagefile	Upload file link
Clickthrough	Clickthrough URL

In addition to the template variables, it is also necessary to define the code snippet that will use the above variable and deliver the ad creative to the ad container.

This is an example snippet used during the test:

```
<a href="%c[%ClickthroughURL%]" target="[%Targetwindow%]"></a>
```

Please note that the variable names (those in between % signs) will change based on individual setup.