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New standard fine-tunes Web ad targeting

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CNET News.com

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A new way to target and track digital ads is slowly gaining industry support

A new standard for targeting and tracking digital ads is gaining industry support, but it still has a long way to go before it gets a collective nod from ad agencies, digital publishers, broadcasters and device makers.

The standard, called the Ad-ID platform, is a Web-based method for coding any type of ad linked to a digital delivery system, such as interactive TV or on-demand cable. Under Ad-ID, all advertisements get a 12-digit unique identifier that's used to track them from creation to distribution. The identifier lets an ad agency and a distributor share data and lets ads be linked to analysis such as demographic data on people to whom the ads have been delivered.

By examining descriptive information linked to the ad's code, a cable company, for example, could ship a tailor-made ad to a household. The information might include the ad's target audience, any restrictions to use of the ad, clearance status, start date and end date.

The Ad-ID schema could go a long way to unifying disparate digital delivery systems for ads and usher in the electronic age for advertisers by making the process simpler and more valuable, executives backing the system say.

"Ad-id is essentially a UPC code for advertising -- barcodes helped the checkout process and revolutionised the grocery industry. This is the same concept for facilitating digital convergence," said John Kaiser, sales and marketing director for the American Association of Advertising



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