

Online Advertising and Ad Tech Glossary

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The AppNexus Online Advertising and Ad Tech Glossary provides definitions of common and important terms relating to online advertising, ad tech, and ad trading.

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A-C

acquisition

When a [user](#) signs up, makes a purchase, or performs some other desired action in response to an ad displayed on the Internet. Also called a [conversion](#) or action. See also [CPA](#).

ad agency

A company that provides services such as planning, creating, buying, and tracking advertisements and ad campaigns on behalf of a client. Often, people confuse media agencies, which are allocators of marketers' spending across channels – with creative agencies, which are responsible for the creation of actual ads and campaign content.

ad call

When an open slot of ad space is available on the Internet, a user's browser sends requests to ad exchanges or ad servers to send an ad. This request is known as an ad call. Ad calls include information from browser cookies and ad tag information such as publisher ID, size, location, referring URL, and other specifications and data needed for the ad to serve. See also [ad tag](#).

ad pod

An ad pod is a linear grouping of video ads designed to fit into the same placement slot and play back to back.

AdChoices Icon

"AdChoices" is part of the Digital Advertising Alliance (DAA) Self-Regulatory Program for Online Behavioral Advertising. The clickable icon associated with this program (technically named the "Advertising Option Icon") can be placed overtop of creatives in order to give consumers a better understanding of and greater control over ads that are customized based on their online behavior. See the icon and read more at the [DAA's website](#).

ad exchange

An ad trafficking system through which advertisers, publishers, and networks meet and do business via a unified platform. An ad exchange allows advertisers and publishers to use the same technological platform, services, and methods, and "speak the same language" in order to exchange data, set prices, and ultimately serve an ad.

ad network

A company that serves as a broker between a group of publishers and a group of advertisers. Networks traditionally aggregate unsold inventory from publishers in order to offer advertisers a consolidated and generally less expensive pool of impressions, but they can have a wide variety of business models and clients. In the context of ad trafficking and ad tech, the term "[network](#)" is generally taken to mean an ad network.

ad server

The computer or group of computers responsible for actually serving creatives to websites, or for making decisions about what ads will serve. An ad server may also track clicks on ads and other data. Major publishers, networks, and advertisers sometimes have one or more of their own ad servers. For example, AppNexus offers several types of ad servers, each with different capabilities and features.

ad tag

A piece of HTML on a webpage that will contact an ad server and ask for an ad. The tag informs the browser to open a small window (say, 468x60 pixels), and place whatever content is returned from some location (like `http://ad.adserver.com/imp?Z=468x60&s`) in that window. Note that ad tags are related, but not identical, to [placements](#), which are actually part of the information embedded into ad tags. Here is an example JavaScript ad tag:

```
<SCRIPT language='JavaScript1.1'  
src="http://ad.adserver.net/adj/N4617.somdomain.com/B2850779;abr=!ie;sz=250x250;ord=[timestamp]?" ></SCRIPT>
```

ad unit

A single unit of ad space. Sometimes used instead of [placement](#) or [ad tag](#).

ad targeting

Ad targeting is the practice of targeting ad content to user and contextual data. Ad targeting can involve demographic targeting such as gender, age, or geographical region (when available), as well as behavioral data such as recent pages visited or searches completed. Often known just as "targeting" in online advertising.

advertiser

An entity that shows its [creatives](#) on [publisher](#) web pages in order to enhance brand awareness, induce the [user](#) to make a purchase, etc.

agency

See [ad agency](#).

API

An API, or application programming interface, is a programming method used to interact with software, applications, or tools. APIs provide a simplified querying language that allows consumers or developers to access underlying databases and hardware without disrupting stability or reliability, and without knowledge of underlying programming languages. They may be based on a variety of programming languages and models, but the types of APIs used by consumers to interact with Web-based software or apps are often known as SOAP or REST services, which consist of a set of specifications for remote calls that enable consumers to interact with data and systems without the risk of disrupting their function. For example, AppNexus uses a RESTful API to facilitate interaction with its Web-based software.

attribution

Attribution refers to how to determine which advertisement was responsible for triggering a conversion or acquisition – literally which ad is attributed with having caused the conversion. The most common attribution model is [last view/last click](#). As ad tech advances, other models of attribution are also being used. Also called conversion attribution.

backfill

Inventory that is not pre-sold, also known as [remnant inventory](#). Can also refer to one ad network filling unsold inventory for another ad network.

banner ad

A basic image or flash display ad, rather than a rich media unit.

behavioral data

Information collected from a users' online actions, for example, things they've searched for in the past and types of website they frequent. Advertisers sometimes use this type of data in their campaigns to match relevant users with their offers. Data privacy laws ban the collection of information that is deemed to be "personally identifiable," such as physical addresses, credit card numbers, and social security/taxpayer ID numbers (among other things) without the permission of the individual.

bidder

A bidder is a piece of technology that uses proprietary code and algorithms to analyze bid requests and respond with bids and creatives in real-time auctions. For example, AppNexus hosts a bidder that represents [AppNexus Console](#) clients' buy-side settings.

bidding strategy

A bidding strategy is the way a buyer calculates a bid in an ad auction. It can mean bidding a flat [CPM](#) or bidding a variable price based on past clickthrough or conversion rates.

bid request

A request sent to a [bidder](#) that asks it to return a bid for a given impression. Bid requests include data points about the user and the impression being sold.

blacklist

A list of domains or apps that a buyer does not want to buy ad space on.

brand

A company's product line and the image and reputation of that line. Many stakeholders in the ad tech industry have guidelines or requirements for the use of branding in creatives. Can also refer to a specific company name, such as Coke, Target, Honda, and so on.

campaign

In advertising, a campaign is a set of media that has a shared themes and ideas to market a specific brand, product, or concept. An online advertising campaign is simply an ad campaign that focuses only on web and/or mobile media that dictates a buying strategy for purchasing Web or mobile [inventory](#). Most campaigns also include criteria such as a specific start and end date, daily or overall budgets, frequency restrictions, and targeting based on user or inventory data.

CDN

Content delivery network. A CDN delivers static content, such as creative image or flash files. Usually, CDN providers have servers across the globe configured to deliver content as quickly as possible, which is why it's typical for ad servers to rely on them.

click log

A server-side log of predefined information gathered when when a user clicks on an ad.

click-through rate

See [CTR](#).

click URL

If a publisher is being paid on a [CPC](#) basis and wants to track clicks, they can provide click-tracking URL where it is possible to ping them each time a user clicks on an ad. Click URLs can also be used by to record clicks en route to a [landing page](#). See also [publisher click-tracking](#).

cloud

In general, a computing cloud is a networked group of servers accessible through remote means. In ad tech, this usually refers to cloud computing infrastructure on which an ad platform of some kind runs. Data or processes existing within such a network is sometimes said to be "in the cloud".

container tag

See [tag container](#).

contextual data

Information on the contents of the webpage that a user is viewing upon ad call, usually used for ad targeting. For example, if the user is viewing a newspaper article about travel, an airline may wish to display on that page. See also [semantic targeting](#). This is distinct from [user data](#).

conversion

When a user signs up, makes a purchase, or performs some other desired action in response to an ad. Also called an [acquisition](#) or action, especially to distinguish conversions/acquisitions from clicks in payment methods ([CPC](#) vs. [CPA](#)).

conversion attribution

See [attribution](#).

conversion funnel

This describes the path a consumer takes from seeing an ad or otherwise hearing about a brand or concept (the broad end of the funnel) to possibly navigating an e-commerce website and finally taking a desired action such as making a purchase (the narrow end of the funnel). In a simplistic example, many users see an ad, fewer click, fewer visit a site, fewer purchase. Various stages of the funnel may be used as a proxy for measuring the effectiveness of advertising, and funnel events do not need to be linear.

conversion pixel

A pixel that fires when a user "converts" by clicking on a ad, registering, making a purchase, or completing another action. Advertisers can place conversion pixels on a [landing page](#), registration page, checkout pages, or elsewhere to track conversions.

cookie

A parcel of text sent by a server to the cookie file in a browser and then sent back unchanged by the client each time it accesses that server. HTTP cookies are used for authenticating, session tracking, and storing information about specific users, such as site preferences or buying habits. Advertisers often use cookies to track the number and frequency of advertisements that have been shown. See also [first-party cookies](#) and [third-party cookies](#).

cost plus

A payment model in which advertisers agree to pay the cost of media plus an additional [CPM](#) or % profit margin on top.

CPA

Cost per action/acquisition. A payment model in which advertisers pay for every action, such as a sale or registration, completed as a result of a visitor clicking on their advertisement. Note that an "[acquisition](#)" is the same as a "[conversion](#)".

CPI

Cost per install. A payment model in which mobile advertisers pay each time a user installs their app.

CPC

Cost per click. A payment model in which advertisers pay each time a user clicks on their advertisement.

CPM

Cost per *mille*, or thousand (*mille* = thousand in Latin). A pricing model in which advertisers pay for every 1000 impressions of their advertisement served. This is the standard basic pricing model for online advertising. See also [CPC](#) and [CPA](#).

CPVM

Renamed. See [vCPM](#).

creative

The actual graphical advertisement itself. Common creative formats include GIF, JPEG, JavaScript, HTML, and Flash.

creative tag

Similar to an [ad tag](#), this is a snippet of code that gives the location of the [creative](#), which is usually a content delivery network (CDN) or an [ad server](#).

CSV

Comma separated values. A data file structured in a table form with fields separated by commas. This is one file format used to transmit multiple creative tags during bulk sending.

CTR

Click-through rate - literally, the rate or frequency at which users click through to a [landing page](#) from an ad.

D-L

DAA

The Digital Advertising Alliance. An online advertising industry association, made up of many other organizations, and dedicated to self-regulation. Possibly best known for the [Advertising Option Icon](#). Read more on the [DAA's website](#).

daisy chain

When the linking of several ad tags, usually from different exchanges, ad servers, or ad networks, creates a "waterfall" – or "daisy chain" – of impressions passing from tag to tag. If no creative is found via the demand available to Ad Tag 1, the impression can be passed to Ad Tag 2, Ad Tag 3, and Ad Tag 4 to see if demand is available there, and so on until a creative is found and served.

data management platform

In ad tech, a data management platform (DMP) is a centralized system for gathering first-party data, integrating with third-party data, and applying this data to one's advertising strategy. A DMP may offer the following features: estimating the likely reach for a user segment, measuring the lift from using data, acting as a financial clearing house between data buyers and sellers, and assisting publishers in monetizing data on their users. DMPs most commonly work with [user data](#) but may also work with [contextual data](#), or other types of data.

data provider

A business that provides data about users. Advertisers can use the information to better target users. This data may include enriched user data or contextual data that exchanges, ad servers, or ad networks may not gather or manage in-house, but use in [ad targeting](#). Data privacy laws ban the collection of information that is deemed to be " [personally identifiable](#) ," such as physical addresses, credit card numbers, and social security/taxpayer ID numbers (among other things) without the permission of the individual.

decisioning

The automated process by which an ad server, ad platform, or exchange literally decides where, how, and to whom to serve an ad. This can be based on an auction prioritizing certain kinds of online ad space, prioritizing advertisers based on relationships and prior agreements, or other methods.

deduplication

Sometimes known as "deduping" – means removing duplicate entries or events in a data set. Effective [programmatic buying](#) is dependent on getting accurate and useful data sets, and deduplication is often a step in that process. For example, if a user clicks twice on the same creative but these two actions are only linked to a single [conversion](#), it's possible to dedupe the associated data set to prevent it from counting second clicks.

default creative

A default creative is a creative that runs as a backup in an open Internet ad space, in the case that no other creatives are available. A default creative can be a literal creative, say an in-house ad, or it can be a redirect in the form of a third-party [ad tag](#) to a third-party [ad server](#). A default creative may also be called a "reserve creative."

default tag

If no impression can be found for an ad opportunity, a default [tag](#) may be served. The tag is passed to a third-party [ad server](#) to see if demand can be found there (this happens in the case of [daisy chaining](#)) or to simply pull a creative from that server. Sometimes called a [passback](#).

demand

Advertising demand, or the desire to buy ad space and display creatives.

demand side platform (DSP)

A company that allows advertising clients to buy digital media on several different selling systems, or exchanges, through one interface. For more information about this process, see [bidder](#).

direct response

A term applied to marketing or advertising that is designed to solicit a direct response which is specific and quantifiable. In online display advertising, examples of this can include clicking on an ad, making a purchase, signing up for a newsletter, and so on.

display advertising

Online advertising is often divided into "display" and "search." Display ads are images and search is text based. Display ads, sometimes referred to as banners, come in standardized ad sizes, and can include text, logos, pictures, or rich media.

Direct Marketing Association (DMA)

An independent nonprofit organization of "data-driven marketers" whose stated mission is to "advance and protect responsible data-driven marketing". For more information, see the [DMA website](#).

direct media buy

A pre-brokered agreement between an advertiser and publisher to deliver a certain amount of specific inventory for a preset cost.

DMA

Designated market area or demographic metropolitan area. A geographic area originally defined as a group of counties that made up a cohesive television market. May also stand for the [Direct Marketing Association](#).

DMA OBA compliance

The Direct Marketing Association has been heavily involved in creating guidelines for online behavioral advertising (OBA), or advertising to people surfing the Internet based on their past browsing history. For more information, see the [DMA Website](#).

DMP

See [data management platform](#).

DR

See [direct response](#).

DSP

See [demand side platform](#).

dynamic creative

Many advertisers wish to show different ads to different customers; for example, an advertiser might wish to show rain gear to people who live in rainy climates and sunblock to those who live in sunny climates. Dynamic creatives refers to having a few different creatives and choosing the most appropriate one for the user through some automated means such as [audience segmentation](#) or based on frequency and recency. Many platforms have rules about how much creatives can vary within the same [placement](#) – for example, there may be limitations on [rotating](#) brands.

dynamic pricing

Purchase pricing for an ad impression that is determined via [real-time bidding \(RTB\)](#) rather than a predetermined rate.

eCPA

Effective Cost Per Acquisition. This is calculated by dividing your cost (or revenue) by the number of conversion events. Shows how much is spent in CPA when payouts are measured using another pricing model.

eCPC

Effective Cost Per Click. A translation from [CPM](#), [CPC](#), [CPA](#), and other pricing models so that they can be compared. Shows how much is spent in CPC when payouts are measured using another pricing model.

eCPM

Effective Cost Per Thousand. A translation from [CPM](#), [CPC](#), [CPA](#), and any other pricing models so they can be compared. Shows how much is spent in CPM when payouts are measured using another pricing model.

engagement metrics

In online advertising, engagement metrics are the metrics used to measure consumers' engagement with the ads they encounter online. Engagement metrics are used by digital media buyers to gauge the effectiveness of their advertising. This is most easily done by direct marketers who use [CPA](#) buying strategies, but there are a variety of other ways to measure the impact of ads via engagement. Some possible engagement metrics include whether a user has watched an entire video ad, if a user hovers over a creative with a mouse, and whether a user has clicked on an ad. More generally, the term engagement metrics may also be applied to a range of online behaviors, such as how long a visitor spends on a website.

Exchange

See [ad exchange](#).

expandable ad

Rich media [creatives](#) that can be enlarged beyond the initial dimensions of the [placements](#) they fill on web pages.

first-party cookies

[Cookies](#) that use the domain of the website a user is currently on. For example, if you visit [www.mysite.com](#) and the domain of the cookie is [www.mysite.com](#), then this is a first-party cookie. First-party cookies are usually used for login, user experience, and [retargeting](#) purposes. See also [third-party cookies](#).

first touch

An [attribution](#) model in which gives credit for the first impression a user saw. This may be used as an alternative to the [last view/last click](#) model, which gives credit for the last viewed or clicked ad.

flight

The lifetime of a campaign, from its start date to its end date. A campaign can also have no flight dates and continue indefinitely. A campaign that is active is said to be "in flight".

frequency

How often an ad is shown in a certain period, such as a single browsing session or a 24 hour period. Advertisers often want to limit frequency to avoid showing an ad to the same user too often, also known as overexposure. See also [recency](#).

frequency capping

The act of limiting, or "capping" how often a particular creative can be served to a user. For example, an advertiser might use frequency capping to ensure that an ad could be shown to the same user no more than three times per 24 hours. See also [recency capping](#).

guaranteed inventory

Inventory consisting of impressions sold ahead of time, rather than in a real-time auction via [real-time bidding](#). Called guaranteed because the publisher signs a contract with an agency committing to deliver the specified impressions in exchange for an agreed-upon sum. If the guarantee is not met, the agency will often request a "make-good," usually in the form of a credit. See also [premium](#) inventory.

ID synching

See [user ID mapping](#).

iframe

An HTML iframe tag tells the browser to open a mini browser window of a specified size inside the current window. This way the ad content cannot expand beyond the size specified and "take over" the screen.

impression

A creative served to a single user at a single point in time. Sometimes called an "imp".

in-banner video

In-banner video is a type of creative played in a standard banner rather than in a video player. Any banner placement may accommodate an in-banner video creative, if allowed by the publisher.

in-stream video

In-stream video is a type of creative played in video players on Web pages. This creative type uses [VAST XML](#) to ensure proper rendering in players and are shown before, in the middle of, or after other video content.

instance

Also called a virtual machine, virtual operating system, or virtual server, an instance is an individual guest operating system that runs on top of a virtualization layer on top of a physical server. Instances are the building blocks of [cloud computing](#).

Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB)

An online ad industry association focused on the growth of the interactive advertising marketplace whose stated goal is to educate "marketers, agencies, media companies and the wider business community about the value of interactive advertising". Read more at the [IAB's website](#).

interstitial ad

An ad that displays as a user navigates from one web page to the next. The ad fills the browser window after the user leaves the initial page, but before the target page displays on the user's screen.

inventory

Open digital spaces in which ads can be served and displayed. [Publishers](#) sell ad inventory.

JSON

JavaScript Object Notation is a lightweight data-interchange format based on a subset of JavaScript. JSON is a programming language often used for [APIs](#). It is a language-independent text format that uses conventions from the C-family, including C, C++, C#, Java, JavaScript, Perl, and Python. A JSON object looks something like this:

```
{
  "glossary": {
    "entry": "CPM",
    "definition": "See Cost Per Mille"
  }
}
```

landing page

The page to which a user is directed after clicking on an ad. For example, if a user clicks on a Cheese of the Month ad, they may be directed to [cheeseofthemonth.com](#), or to [cheeseofthemonth.com/signupnow](#) or some other landing page chosen by the advertiser. The landing page may be slightly different from the [click URL](#).

last click

A type of [attribution](#) model that pays out on the last impression that was clicked on by the [user](#). This may be used as an alternative to the [first touch](#) model, which gives credit for the first impression a user saw.

last view

A type of [attribution](#) model that pays out on the last impression that was viewed by the [user](#). This may be used as an alternative to the [first touch](#) model, which gives credit for the first impression a user saw.

lift

The percent increase in performance (measured in ROI, CPC, CPA, etc.) that can be attributed to advertising (or some other marketing endeavor).

long-tail

Ad inventory with relatively low exposure or limited users, such as a personal blog with a very low number of followers, or numerous less desirable users, such as people who are very young, have minimal disposable income, or other factors that would make them unlikely consumers of a product or service. The long tail can be difficult to monetize.

lookback window

An amount of time taken into account when collecting data to be used for attributing conversions, a bid optimization model, or anything else. Common lookback windows are a day, 14 days, 30 days, etc.

M-R**marketer**

Generally a large advertiser that manages at least some of its own digital advertising. Also called a direct marketer.

media plan

A holistic view of a given advertiser's media buys. Often managed by a [media agency](#).

mediation

The process of sending [bid requests](#) to ad buyers outside of the AppNexus exchange via a client or server side redirection, with passbacks in case the buyer doesn't fill the impression. Mediation enables access to additional ad networks to maximize fill rates. There are two main categories of mediation: [web mediation](#) and [mobile mediation](#).

mediated ad network

An [ad network](#) that sits outside of RTB auctions for online inventory, but participates in auctions alongside [real-time bidders](#) and direct advertisers by setting up proxy "bids" that represent that network's demand.

metadata

Metadata is data about data. Metadata can be used to do things like label creatives or ad inventory with information like brand, size, and other constraints or data.

mobile device ID

A unique identifier for a mobile device. The device ID cannot be linked to [personally identifiable information \(PII\)](#). Different operating systems use different identifiers: IDFA (iOS), AAID (Android), and Windows Advertising ID (Windows).

mobile mediation

Mobile mediation typically involves server-to-server requests via two systems to determine if the buyer has an ad, or embedding an ad network's SDK within your SDK to make calls to the buyer's ad server.

MRAID

Mobile Rich Media Ad Interface Definitions (MRAID) is a common API (Application Programming Interface) for mobile rich media ads that will run in mobile apps

NAI

Network Advertising Initiative. An online advertising industry association focused on consumer education about [online behavioral advertising \(OBA\)](#). Read more at the [NAI website](#).

native advertising

Advertising that matches the form and function of the platform on which it appears, for example, the ad search term responses at the head of Google search results, or promoted Tweets in a Twitter stream.

network

Generally refers to an [ad network](#).

nonexclusive inventory

Inventory for which a given ad trafficker can't be certain where they are in the ad call daisy chain. They may be first or the ad call may have already passed through another platform as part of a [daisy chain](#).

O&O

See [owned and operated](#).

online behavioral advertising (OBA)

Advertising to people surfing the Internet based on their past browsing behaviors. See also [DMA OBA compliance](#).

optimization

The process of using historical data to adjust a programmatic approach to buying a piece of inventory. Frequently, this information will be used to either alter the bid price for a piece of inventory or determine if a buyer is willing to bid on a piece of inventory at all.

out-stream video

A type of video ad embedded within an article or other body of web content, mostly set to auto-play when the reader reaches the part of the page that contains the ad.

owned and operated

In online advertising, a type of [publisher](#) that both owns and operates its inventory sources. Different from a managed publisher, which does not own and operate its inventory sources but has a financial relationship with those who do.

passback

The redirecting of an [impression](#) back to an [ad server](#) when no acceptable bid is received from a mediated bid, in order to allow the next highest bidder a chance to win the impression. See also [default tag](#).

personally identifiable information (PII)

Information that can be tied to an actual named person, rather than an anonymous user ID. For example, names, social security numbers, residential addresses, and driver's license numbers would be considered PII. Many jurisdictions worldwide have explicit policies banning the use and tracking of PII in online advertising, and numerous ad traffickers do as well.

PHP session ID

A PHP session allows you to store user information on a server for later use. However, session information is temporary and will be deleted after the user has left a website. Sessions work by creating a unique ID (UID) for each visitor and storing variables based on this UID. The UID is either stored in a cookie or is propagated in the URL.

piggyback

This term usually refers specifically to a piggybacked [pixel](#). When pixel A has pixel B piggybacked on to it, then the firing of pixel A causes the firing of pixel B. This second firing can either be via a redirect or a server-side firing. Piggyback pixels may be used for tracking conversions in secondary systems.

PII

See [personally identifiable information](#).

pixel

A pixel is a way to track user data. Originally, all pixels were literally snippets of code that called for a 1X1 transparent pixel to be delivered to a webpage by a third-party server. Nowadays, pixels may either be literal pixels or be javascript based. When the pixel loads, the third-party server can record information such as the IP address of the user's computer, URL of the page, and time the page was viewed. See also [conversion pixel](#) and [segment pixel](#).

placement

A term describing the object that represents a piece of inventory. Publishers embed placements into web pages' [ad tags](#). This same object may also be called an [ad tag](#) or an ad unit, but this is slightly inaccurate, as placements *contain* tags and *represent* units of available ad space.

pop ad

An ad that displays in a secondary browser window. [Pop-up](#) ads display in front of the initial browser window, while [pop-under](#) ads display behind it.

pop-under

An ad that displays in a secondary browser window directly behind the initial browser window. See also [pop-up](#) .

pop-up

An ad that displays in a secondary browser window directly in front of the initial browser window. See also [pop-under](#).

PPM

Profit per thousand, or *mille* impressions (*mille* = thousand in Latin). A useful measurement for [ad networks](#), whose goal is to buy cheaper inventory and sell it at higher prices.

premium inventory

The term "premium" can be used in different ways, but it most commonly refers to publisher inventory that is sold through direct channels in advance – in other words, [guaranteed](#) inventory. Often premium inventory is from a site's home page, or has some other elevated level of desirability. See also [remnant inventory](#).

premnant inventory

A portmanteau word of premium + remnant. "[remnant inventory](#)," or non-[guaranteed](#) inventory has an unnecessarily negative connotation, when this inventory might be first-rate.

programmatic buying

Buying through automated means, for example, by setting up a campaign in an RTB exchange or other automated system. This is opposed to more manual buys where you are in contact with a sales team, or other "offline" mechanism.

PSA

Public service announcement. On many ad serving platforms, a PSA will serve if there are no acceptable bids on a piece of inventory and the publisher does not have a [default creative](#) set.

publisher

A source of [inventory](#). Publishers are generally either managed or owned and operated. An owned and operated publisher receives 100% of the profit for impressions sold. This is opposed to a managed publisher: a publisher that does not own its inventory but has a financial relationship with those who do.

publisher click-tracking

When a publisher keeps track of clicks on their ads. If a publisher is being paid on a [CPC](#) basis and wants to track clicks, they can provide [click-tracking URL](#) where it is possible to ping them each time a user clicks on an ad.

query string

A way to pass data to a web application as part of a URL. For example, at AppNexus a buyer can target ads based on the information in the querystring. The query string comes after a "?" in the URL, for example:

```
http://www.mysite.com/photos?query_string=17
```

reach

The number of unique user IDs that can be reached by online advertising. You might broaden your reach by targeting new inventory, or evaluate the reach inherent in some set of user data such as "male clothes shoppers."

real-time advertising

In real-time advertising, ads are shown as the result of [real-time bidding](#) auctions.

real-time auction

See [real-time bidding](#).

real-time bidding (RTB)

Bidding that happens via automated auctions on online ad inventory in real time. A real-time bid is often dynamically generated based on past performance of [creatives](#), [inventory](#), user groups, and other parameters. Real-time bidding also implies multiple bidding systems or exchanges making calls to each other in real time.

recency capping

A way to limit the showing of an ad over time. For example, an advertiser might want to avoid showing an ad to a specific [user ID](#) more than once per hour.

retargeting

[Targeting](#) users who have performed an action in the past, who may therefore be more likely to perform the same or a similar task in the future. For example, an advertiser might wish to put a [segment pixel](#) on their website and then target users who have visited the website in the past because they are more likely to make a purchase.

remnant inventory

Inventory sold after [premium inventory](#) has been pre-sold by a direct salesforce. Remnant inventory is sometimes synonymous with real-time inventory, and is often the target of programmatic buying. Because remnant has an unnecessarily negative connotation, other terms that have been experimented with are "premnant" (premium + remnant) or "secondary premium." Also sometimes called "tier 2" or "class 2."

reporting

In ad tech, reporting data for both buyers and sellers, such as much money spent, impressions seen, impressions sold, and revenue earned. Because automated programs can be used to track spending, impressions, and earnings, online advertising has helped buyers to understand the value of their marketing budgets in new ways.

request

In general, the term "request" can refer to any attempt by one's browser to retrieve a page, including page elements such as ads, from a server on the Internet. In ad tech it usually applies to a request for a creative or ad tag.

reserve creative

See [default creative](#).

reserve price

The lowest price at which a bidder or member will sell an impression.

REST

Representational State Transfer. A type of [API](#) protocol that operates on POST, GET, PUT, and DELETE commands.

rich media

Rich media refers generally to media that has non-standard characteristics such as: Larger than ~40k, out-of-banner (OOB) behavior, features like "post to Facebook," plays video within a banner, or in-creative metrics collection. [Expandable](#) creatives are examples of rich media creatives.

Rising Stars

A set of interactive rich media creative types defined by the [Interactive Advertising Bureau \(IAB\)](#). They include Billboard, Filmstrip, Slider, Portrait, Pushdown, and Sidekick. There is also a set of Mobile Rising Star ad units, which include Filmstrip, Pull, Adhesion Banner, Full Page Flex, and Slider. See examples at the [IAB website](#).

ROI

Return on investment. Literally, how much profit is made when money is invested. ROI can also be an idiom for whether or how much a given action or risk pays off, both in ad trading and business in general.

ROE

Run of exchange. A term meaning inventory available for purchase on an ad exchange.

RON

Run of network. A term meaning all inventory managed by a network.

ROS

Run of site. A term meaning all inventory available on a certain website.

RPM

Revenue per thousand, or *mille* impressions (*mille* = thousand in Latin). Related to the [CPM bidding strategy](#).

rotating creative

When a single ad tag is set to send one of several different creatives. Brand and other guidelines for creative acceptance may set limits on how much creatives may vary when associated to a single tag. For example, AppNexus bans a single tag from showing ads for multiple brands. See also [dynamic creative](#).

RTB

See [real-time bidding](#)

S-Z

second price auction

An auction type in which the bidder who submitted the highest bid pays a price equal to the second highest bid. Also known as a Vickrey auction. This auction type has been in use for over a century for the purchase and sale of a variety of goods and services, and is based on game theory as applied to auction dynamics. It's a commonly used auction type in online ad trading.

segment

A group composed of members of a target audience identified based on the webpages they visit, the actions they take such as making a purchase or completing a sign-up form, or data such as gender or geographical region.

segment data

See [user data](#) and [contextual data](#).

segment pixel

A pixel that marks a user as belonging to a certain [segment](#). For example, an advertiser might place a segment pixel on the homepage and mark all visitors to the homepage as "homepage visitors."

semantic targeting

In theory, semantic targeting means figuring out what the content on a webpage is really about and being able to place ads based on that content. For example, if a website says "sunny weather," is it about great beach vacations, or is it about skin cancer, and do you want to advertise flights to Florida on it or not? However, the term is often used by different people to mean slightly different things, and is often used to be synonymous with [contextual](#) targeting.

skin creative

A creative that wraps, acts as a wallpaper, or otherwise surrounds page content with ad content.

SSP

See [supply side platform \(SSP\)](#).

supply

See [inventory](#).

supply side platform (SSP)

Analogous to a [demand side platform \(DSP\)](#), an SSP enables publishers to access demand from a variety of networks, exchanges, and platforms via one interface.

tag

A snippet of HTML, generally either JavaScript or an IFRAME, that tells the browser to request some content from an ad server. Tag is often used to mean an [ad tag](#) but may also be a creative tag or some other kind of tag. A tag is provided by an ad server or exchange and placed in the webpage by a publisher.

tag container

Many advertisers and their media buyers use a number of [tags](#) for tracking impressions, clicks, conversions, and other data. Some use tag containers to manage these disparate pixel tags and make it easier to change them via a single source. When a page loads, the tag container code displays the code for all tags stored within the container.

targeting

See [ad targeting](#).

technology providers

Third-party entities who may assist various parties involved in Internet advertising by providing access to bidders or other technology.

third-party cookies

[Cookies](#) with a different domain than the website a user is currently on. For example, if you visit [www.mysite.com](#), an AppNexus cookie with the domain [ib.appnexus.com](#) would be a third-party cookie. See also [first-party cookies](#).

timestamp

The date and time that a specific event – such as a click or [conversion](#) – occurred. Useful in reporting functions and [attribution](#). For example, at AppNexus, the timestamp format is YYYY-MM-DD HH:MM:SS. In this format, 12:15 PM on New Year's Day 2015 would be 2015-01-01 12:15:00.

trading desk

A buy-side trading entity housed within or working for advertising agencies. Also known as an agency trading desk or ATD. ATDs are usually the programmatic arms of holding companies. Independent trading desks, known as ITDs, are another kind of trading desk, and are usually outsourced managed services firms that run programmatic ad buys on behalf of [advertisers](#) or agencies.

UGC

See [user-generated content](#).

uniques

Individual users, as represented by a [unique user ID](#). A unique user ID is not associated in any way with [personally identifiable information](#) (PII), so it cannot identify a specific unique individual. Also, an individual may be associated with multiple user IDs due to clearing browser cookies or using multiple browsers and multiple devices. Additionally, for mobile devices, a unique user ID may be associated with multiple device IDs (for example, Apple IDFA, OpenUDID, and others). See [reach](#) to learn more about individual users/user IDs.

u nique user ID

Also sometimes called a UUID. A unique, anonymous user ID for a given user profile that may be stored in a user's browser cookie and/or in the a server-side cookie store. Ad traffickers are not permitted to associate these IDs in any way with [personally identifiable information \(PII\)](#), and user IDs do not necessarily equate to a unique individual. An individual may also be associated with multiple user IDs due to clearing cookies or using multiple browsers and multiple devices. Additionally, for mobile devices, a unique user ID may be associated with multiple device IDs (for example, Apple IDFA, OpenUDID, etc.).

user

A target customer for advertisers. The person browsing the web who will see an ad.

user agent

This usually refers to a browser application. For example, Mozilla 5.0 is a specific user agent.

user data

Information about [users](#) that makes them more valuable to advertisers. User data can include age, gender, location, intent to purchase, demographics, psychographics, wealth, past purchases, and more. User data is generally associated with a [UUID](#) found in a cookie rather than any [personally identifiable information](#). User data is distinct from [contextual data](#). Often used interchangeably with segment data and audience data.

user data store

A place where data about a user is stored. In online advertising, this often refers to a user's browser cookie. Sometimes, certain user data may be stored server-side for a limited period of time. This data is periodically expunged from server records in order to prevent it from drastically slowing server function, and does not contain [personally identifiable information \(PII\)](#).

user-generated content

Content on a website that was posted by users and not a centralized publisher. This includes social media posts as well as blogs, wikis, podcasting, images, videos, audio files, and other forms of media created and posted by users of an online system or service. Some sites support user content through advertising. Others are supported by donations, subscription fees, or a combination of methods. Examples of sites that emphasize or are built around user-generated content include Tumblr, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Wikipedia, YouTube, Vine, and SoundCloud.

user ID

See [unique user ID](#).

user ID mapping

Each buyer and seller may assign their own different IDs to a user. Without knowing that Seller S's user ABC is the same as Buyer B's user 1234, it is impossible for B to value an impression from S. To allow for attribution and valuation, different parties must synchronize their IDs by mapping one ID to another. For example, AppNexus assigns every user it sees a unique ID that's stored in the user's browser cookie. The AppNexus member or bidder maps the AppNexus ID to their internal user ID with the AppNexus User ID Mapping Service. Also known as user ID syncing.

user sync pixel

A pixel used to synchronize user IDs assigned by different parties during an auction, generally to apply frequency, recency, and other decisioning data. See also [user ID mapping](#).

UUID

See [unique user ID](#).

VAST

Video Ad Serving Template. This is an XML-based video ad serving protocol. It was created to provide a uniform way for video content to be transferred from ad servers to video players on web pages. For details, see the [Interactive Advertising Bureau \(IAB\) VAST documentation](#).

video quartiles

A quartile is 1/4th of something. Media players fire a series of engagement pixels as the video continues to play. These pixels typically indicate how many quartiles of a video has been played, firing at 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100% completion.

vCPM

Cost per *mille*, or thousand, viewable impressions (*mille* = thousand in Latin). A pricing model in which advertisers pay for every 1000 viewable impressions of their advertisement served. [Viewability](#) refers to whether an impression was actually seen by the user, and can be determined according to a variety of methods.

VMAP

Video Multiple Ad Playlist (VMAP) specification. This is an XML template that video content owners can use to describe the structure for ad inventory insertion when they don't control the video player or the content distribution outlet.

VPAID

Video Player Ad-Serving Interface Definition. [VAST](#) supports relatively simple in-stream video ad formats that are not executable. VPAID was created to support more interactive rich media video formats. For more information, see the [Interactive Advertising Bureau \(IAB\) VPAID documentation](#).

vendor

In online advertising, a vendor generally refers to a company with a specific product or service such as creating or delivering rich media, maintaining a [CDN](#), or providing third-party data.

viewability

A measure of whether an ad has been seen by a given user. Viewability measurement is achieved using javascript embedded within each creative, which is then called for each individual ad impression. The script launches automatically as the page loads and immediately starts measuring if and when the creative is viewable based on a variety of measures. These may include whether a web or browser tab is in focus,

whether a particular ad is in view of a user based on where on the page the user has scrolled to, how long an ad was visible based on these metrics, and other factors. The most commonly used bidding strategy based on viewability is CPVM. In 2015, the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) released industry standards for viewability. To learn more, see the [IAB website](#).

web mediation

Mediation that takes place over the Web. Web mediation involves trafficking an ad network's tags. The tags are called when the seller ranks the networks proxy bid higher than any other demand. If the buyer doesn't take the impression, a passback tag set up by the seller informs the ad network to go to the next highest bidder or ad network.

yield management

Broadly, this term refers to selling the right things to the right customer at the right time for the right price to maximize revenue. In online advertising, it generally refers to maximizing the revenue of publishers and their impressions using tools such as price floors.