



Guidelines for Identifier for Advertising (IFA) on OTT platforms

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Drafted by the [OTT Technical Working Group](#)

Latest version at <https://iabtechlab.com/OTT-IFA>

Please email video@iabtechlab.com with any feedback.

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Table of contents:

1. Overview	3
2. General Guidelines	3
3. Guidelines for Consumer Electronics Manufacturers	6
4. Guidelines for OTT App Publishers	7
5. Guidelines for Ad and Measurement Platforms	7
6. Appendix: Current support	8

1. Overview

In traditional browser environments, ad platforms rely on semi-persistent HTTP cookies to identify a user. This is used to deliver targeted ads as well as to control the ad frequency and ad rotation. Due to the wide variety of different Smart TV, Connected Device and other over-the-top (OTT) platforms, it cannot be guaranteed that devices support the traditional cookie-based semi-persistent device or audience management for ad-related activities. Without device or audience management, the same creative can serve more frequently than expected and frustrate audiences.

In order to maintain a high-quality audience experience within OTT environments, it is recommended that parties manage advertising-related activities through an identifier for advertising (IFA), while respecting the user's privacy settings. This is in line with best practices within the mobile industry, which makes it easier for technology vendors to support the OTT IFA.

A semi-persistent IFA is best used to manage ad related activities across sessions. Publishers may still use in-session methods (often using pageview timestamps and per video and session correlators) to manage ad related activities within an individual session.

This document also covers the concept of "Ad Tracking". Users must be able to opt-out of remarketing or audience measurement. This must be done by clearly offering settings in the app or device where a user can elect to opt-out. This parameter in turn would be passed along with the IFA to measurement and ad platforms to ensure that they follow the users' instructions.

In the following sections, these guidelines attempt to clarify the recommended technical details around the above topics.

Note - This piece is published by IAB Tech Lab. It is not intended to provide legal advice or opinion. Consult local law and/or advice of a locally licensed attorney for legal advice.

2. General Guidelines

These guidelines recommend that device manufacturers, app publishers and ad servers/measurement platforms implement an Identifier for Advertising (IFA) in line with the mobile industry's best practice.

In order to be compliant with these guidelines, devices and apps must store and send the following three parameters as part of any ad request:

1. An Identifier For Advertising (ifa)
2. An associated IFA type (ifa_type)

3. Limit Ad Tracking (lmt**) – an opt-out to respect the users’ privacy choices.

** “LMT” is the abbreviation used here instead of “LAT” so that we can be consistent with openRTB’s usage of this term, and also not cause confusion with the usage of the field “Latitude”)

Parameter	Example
<p>Identifier for Advertising (ifa)</p> <p>This is a REQUIRED parameter unless the user has opted in to limit ad tracking - in which case the IFA does not have to be transmitted. Optionally a synthetic IFA might be transmitted instead (explained below)</p> <p>The identifier for advertising (IFA) must be a unique value and must never be (or be based on) a hardware-specific ID such as MAC address or IMEI. The IFA may be based on IP Address, but should never be the IP address directly. Overall, the IFA must never contain any Personally Identifiable Information (PII).</p> <p>The recommended format for an IFA is universally unique identifier (UUID). The UUID standard contains 32 hexadecimal characters presented in the format 8-4-4-4-12.</p> <p>Note - The dashes are required if passed in a string representation.</p> <p>This 8-4-4-4-12 format is in line with modern industry leading implementations, including Apple IDFA, Apple tvOS, Android Advertising ID and Roku ID for Advertising</p> <p>Users must be able to reset the IFA, typically within the app or operating system settings area. A new, unrelated IFA must be generated whenever the IFA is reset.</p>	<p>ifa=01234567-89AB-CDEF-GH01-23456789ABCD</p>
<p>IFA Type (ifa_type)</p> <p>This is an REQUIRED parameter</p> <p>In addition to an IFA, Ad and measurement platforms need to identify the source of the IFA, whether that is device-generated (and therefore used across apps) or whether it is a publisher-provided IFA, or a temporary/session IFA. Without this context, the usefulness of the IFA is limited.</p> <p>The types of IFA are Device, Publisher (including apps), SSP and</p>	<p>ifa_type=string</p> <p>E.g.:</p> <p>ifa_type=idfa</p> <p>ifa_type=rida</p> <p>ifa_type=aaid</p>

<p>Session. The following are recommended values for the ifa_type parameter:</p> <p>dpid - the generic “device provided id”, but based on historical usage, common device type specific values can be used.</p> <p>rida - Roku id</p> <p>aaaid - Android id</p> <p>idfa - Apple id</p> <p>afai - Amazon Fire id</p> <p>msai - Microsoft id</p> <p>ppid - publisher provided id</p> <p>sspuid - SSP provided id</p> <p>sessionid - session id / synthetic id (described below)</p> <p>Note - Case-insensitive processing is recommended since some platforms may be using upper case values for backwards compatibility.</p>	<p>ifa_type=ppid</p> <p>ifa_type=sspuid</p> <p>ifa_type=sessionid</p> <p>etc.</p>
<p>Limit Ad Tracking (lmt)</p> <p>This is a REQUIRED parameter</p> <p>Limit ad tracking is a boolean value of 0 or 1. When LMT is set to 1, it signals that the user has requested that ad tracking and measurement be disabled.</p> <p>When LMT is set as true, the real IFA must never be sent with the ad request. A “synthetic” or “session” IFA can be sent (discussed below).</p>	<p>lmt=0</p> <p>lmt=1</p>

“Session” IFAs

There are some use cases that might require the generation of an IFA that does not have a long life span. For example, Publishers or SSPs might generate a temporary IFA in the absence of an IFA from the publisher/device, so that tasks like *frequency capping* can be supported. Another use case of such a temporary IFA is for *reach estimation* by measuring number of concurrent users. In these cases, the *ifa_type* should clearly be marked as a “sessionid”.

Example usage within ad requests:

`https://adserver.example.com/adrequest?ifa=01234567-89ab-cdef-gh01-23456789abcd
&ifa_type=ppid&lmt=0`

`https://adserver.example.com/adrequest?lmt=1`

`https://adserver.example.com/adrequest?ifa=00000000-0000-0000-0000-
000000000000&ifa_type=rida&lmt=1`

`https://adserver.example.com/adrequest?ifa=00000000-34sd-gfss-sd54-
12345678abcd&ifa_type=sspid&lmt=1`

https://adserver.example.com/adrequest?ifa=12340000-34sd-gfss-sd54-88223678xcdf&ifa_type=sessionid&lmt=1

3. Guidelines for Consumer Electronics Manufacturers

Consumer electronics manufacturers and app stores must implement within the operating system, 2 parameters above (IFA and LMT) along with a reset IFA function. They must provide an API or SDK for app publishers to read the IFA, in a similar way to Apple IDFA, Android Advertising ID or Roku RIDA.

The benefit to the user is that they have a single area within the platform for the management of identifiers for advertising, similar to the leading mobile platforms. App store submission guidelines should ensure that app publishers use the platform-provided APIs where they provided in preference to the in-app method.

It is recommended that access to the relevant *privacy policy* and *terms of use* should be located near the IFA-reset and limit ad tracking (LMT) settings within the UI settings or Privacy Settings of the platform navigation.

It is noted that although the IFA is PII-safe, some ad platforms request that IFAs are only respected when transmitted over secure connections (e.g., HTTPS).

4. Guidelines for OTT App Publishers

In authenticated environments, a publisher generated IFA can be used to manage ad-related cross-platforms activities.

Device manufacturers and app publishers should follow both industry best-practice (aka 'app store submission guidelines') and adhere to regulatory and legal obligations for displaying the privacy policy within platforms and applications.

If the manufacturer's operating system provides a method for managing the identifier for advertising, then OTT apps must use the manufacturer-supported method in preference to an in-app IFA. This ensures that the user has a common mechanism for managing the identifier for advertising across different apps. The device manufacturer must provide a documented and supported application programming interface (API) for app publishers to read the identifier for advertising and users privacy preferences from within OTT apps.

If the device operating system does not provide a system-wide identifier for advertising, the publisher must implement the identifier for advertising (IFA) functionality within the OTT app. The user must be able to reset the identifier for advertising and elect limit ad tracking within one of the 'settings', 'about' or 'info' areas of the app.

It is recommended that access to the relevant *privacy policy* and *terms of use* should be located near the IFA-reset and limit ad tracking (LMT) settings within the publisher app user interface.

Where publishers employ server-side ad insertion (SSAI) or ad stitching the same ethos must be respected, although the ad-serving environment may be more complex. Publishers are advised to work with server-side ad insertion vendors to ensure that identifier for advertising (IFA) and limit ad tracking (LMT) remain respected. This value should be propagated to the ad server(s) from the server to server call.

5. Guidelines for Ad and Measurement Platforms

Ad and Measurement platforms can use the identifier for advertising (IFA) for ad related activities including, but not limited to, frequency capping, remarketing, reporting, audience measurement and fraud detection, while respecting the user's choice around tracking.

If the ad request indicates that the user has elected to limit ad tracking by setting limit ad tracking (LMT) flag, it must be respected - especially with regard to remarketing or behavioral retargeting. If limit ad tracking is requested, the ad platform must ignore the IFA, even if it is included in the request. When limit ad tracking is requested, the ad platform must never pass the IFA to any 3rd party.

Note : If the SSP does not receive an ID from the publisher, they are not required to generate one to pass along upstream.

6. Appendix: Current support

Identifier for Advertising (IFA) is already supported by many mobile, OTT and Smart TV platforms, publishers, ad servers and measurement platforms. The following is not intended to be an exhaustive list. We will maintain a more up-to-date list on the [IAB Tech Lab Wiki](#), which will be updated on request by companies that have support within their products and who want to be included in this list.

Note – in the future we could implement a compliance/certification program around compliance to these guidelines if the OTT Tech Working Group and IAB Tech Lab determine that doing so would help the industry.

Apple Identifier for Advertising (Apple IDFA) (Apple TV as well as iOS devices)

<https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT205223>

Android Advertising Identifier (AAID) (includes Android TV)

<https://play.google.com/about/monetization-ads/ads/ad-id/>

Amazon Fire TV

<https://developer.amazon.com/public/solutions/devices/fire-tv/docs/fire-tv-advertising-id>

Roku ID for Advertising (RIDA)

<https://sdkdocs.roku.com/display/sdkdoc/Roku+Advertising+Framework#RokuAdvertisingFramework-RIDA>

Xbox, Windows 10

<https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/windows/apps/windows.system.userprofile.advertisingmanager.advertisingid.aspx>