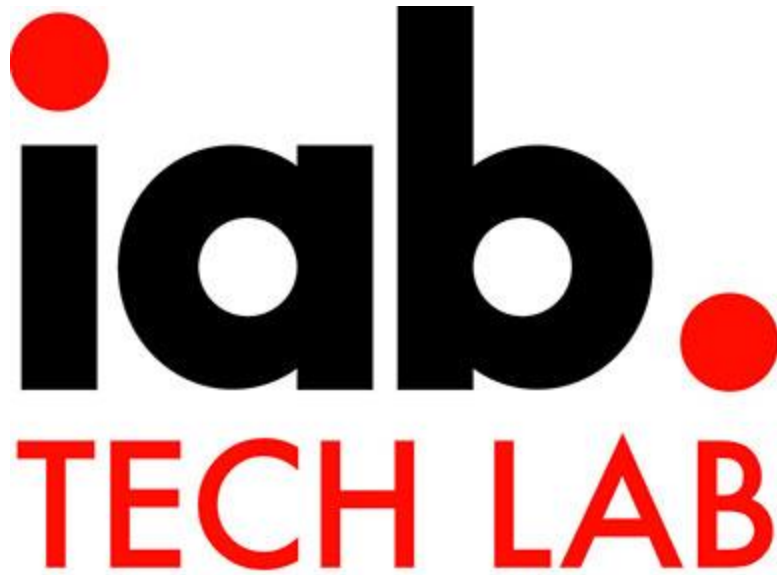




Programmatic Best Practices

Version 1.0

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Drafted by the [Programmatic Governance Council](#).

Please email support@iabtechlab.com with any feedback.

The Programmatic Governance Council membership can be seen here:
<https://iabtechlab.com/our-participant/?id=a7dQm0000005MEPIA2> .

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About IAB Technology Laboratory

Established in 2014, the IAB Technology Laboratory (Tech Lab) is a non-profit consortium that engages a member community globally to develop foundational technology and standards that enable growth and trust in the digital media ecosystem. Comprised of digital publishers, ad technology firms, agencies, brands, and other member companies, IAB Tech Lab focuses on solutions for brand safety and ad fraud; identity, data, and consumer privacy; cross-channel programmatic effectiveness and ad measurement; and the impact of LLMs and AI agents on advertising. Its work includes the OpenRTB real-time bidding protocol, ads.txt anti-fraud specification, Open Measurement SDK for viewability and verification, VAST video specification, Trusted Server, and the Agentic Roadmap initiative for agentic advertising. Board members and companies are listed at <https://iabtechlab.com/about-the-iab-tech-lab/tech-lab-leadership/>. For more information, please visit <https://iabtechlab.com>.

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Executive Summary:

This inaugural set of standard practices from the Programmatic Governance Council, seeks to define and promote shared business rules, norms, and principles that improve market efficiency and advertising effectiveness, reduce unnecessary transaction costs, and increase trust and transparency between buyers and sellers of digital media. Practically, these standards set a common understanding that a request should represent a real person or audience, an attested device, and a known and testable supply chain.

One of the core areas of focus in this initial version is the proliferation of bid requests associated with a single ad opportunity. By reducing the volume of requests and redundant auctions for the same ad opportunity, volume and processing costs are reduced throughout the supply chain. In addition, with less duplication to sort through, platform resources can be focused on more effectively optimizing toward advertiser goals. Beyond pure request reduction and resource conservation, simplified and transparent paths between demand and supply also increase trust within the ecosystem.

It remains that any participant in the ecosystem is free to choose their partners; the aim is the reduction of redundant requests by ensuring that requests are sent to each partner only once per underlying ad opportunity, per integration mechanism or inventory partner domain. As a general recommendation, companies are encouraged to clearly define and understand the business value of each integration partner.

These practices will continue to evolve with the industry. We expect to publish version updates as new key issues arise and principals bring their concerns and solutions to the Programmatic Governance Council.

1. Support IAB Tech Lab standards

Support the required fields and format of the most recent, widely deployed, production version of the OpenRTB specification, as well as keeping ads.txt and sellers.json updated.

2. Accounting and Supply Chain

A buyer should be able to identify the [ad request initiator](#) of a given bid request as well as the path the request traverses. This allows buyers to distinguish the source of the request across header wrappers, server side auction partners and other ad request initiator, making it easier to identify duplication.

- Support schain and ensure an schain object is included in each bid request.

3. Bid Caching and Bid Pooling

When a buyer places a bid for a given impression they should be assured that they will only apply to impressions for the same user (or audience, if user not specified), in the same content, in the same or a similarly-performing ad placement, with an equivalent user experience and within the TTL of the original bid.

- Do not store or apply bids beyond the impression expiration (imp.exp) or bid expiration (bid.exp).
- Only bid cache or bid pool across placements/opportunities that are materially the same.

4. Placements

A placement is a distinct ad slot within a digital property's content, defined by its format, position, and technical constraints. The goal of a placement or pod id, whether its GPID, TAGID, Ad Units, etc. is to accurately represent the ad opportunity being offered and accurately communicate to buyers what they're bidding on.

Sellers should always include one placement and/or pod ID (GPID or tagid) for each unique placement within a given context (e.g., URL, app page, video).

- Do not have more bid request-generating IDs (GPIDs, Ad Units, etc.) than there are placements on a page or ad slots in a video.
- Do not rotate IDs on a single placement that supports multiple formats (e.g., "Native" vs "Display" vs "Video"); instead use a single ID associated with a multiformat impression/multi-ad-format request as supported in OpenRTB.

5. Ad Refresh

Ad refresh, where ad exposures are cycled through an existing placement while the user remains on a page, is a common practice in display advertising. The OpenRTB specification supports ad refresh which is signaled through the Refresh object.

- Declare ad refresh truthfully within the OpenRTB bid object using the Refresh object.
- Build your ad-refresh setup to time the execution of auctions so they align with your defined minimum refresh interval (e.g., if the refresh is 30 seconds, do not run auctions every 5 seconds until the ad changes).

6. Request Duplication

Bid requests should be sent to each partner only once per underlying ad opportunity and per integration mechanism or inventory partner domain. Duplication falls into two categories: variation and replication (see the Glossary for definitions).

- Do not engage in replication.
- Do not duplicate bid requests via “fan out” behaviors such as exploding arrays into individual bid requests or giving every deal_id a separate bid request, to the extent supported by integration partners.
- Bid request recipients are expected to support multi-imp and multi-format requests and to be able to properly process other arrays in the request.
- It is understood that some duplication will occur where limitations of the current OpenRTB spec prevent adequate expression of value. When duplication is required to address these limitations, it should be constrained, incremental, and made observable to downstream systems. Limitations of the spec should not be a catch-all reason for wide-ranging duplication.
- To align incentives between bid requesters and bid respondents, demand participants should support multi-bid responses where appropriate, especially when TID is present in the bid request.
- Note: Instances of **variation** in which duplicated bids include material differences dictated by requirements such as privacy and transparency, will continue to exist and any such accommodations should avoid violating the above principles to the extent possible.

7. Request Integrity

- Unless prior arrangements have been made between the buyer and the seller directly, do not overwrite or remove objects or attributes.
- Do not alter IDs or their associations – for example, if a bid for auction xyz has transaction id abc, but is cached and later used in auction 123 with transaction id 456, do not trigger an auction win / render with transaction_id abc.
- Do not engage in silent ID bridging. ID bridging must be declared using the defined attributes in the eids object in OpenRTB. The buyerUID attribute guidance must be followed.

Glossary

Bid caching — retaining a bid response to apply to a future auction for a different opportunity than the one it was solicited for.

Bid pooling — organizing multiple valid bids within a single content session or pod to optimize for revenue or user experience, including competitive separation and IAB Tech Lab content or ad category conflict resolution.

Variation: multiple requests are generated for the same opportunity, but they traverse different supply chains or paths, contain materially different information in each bid request, or both.

Replication: bid requests are exact clones or the variance is not material.