

Outsmart Payout: Out of Home building the standard for trust and transparency

Advertisers are right to demand granular, independently verified proof that their campaigns ran. Out of Home agrees, which is why the industry invested in [Payout](#) to meet that demand.

Trust is the foundation of every pound invested in advertising. Buyers need to know that what they paid for is fully delivered when and where it was meant to be, and they need that proof quickly, consistently, and from a source they can rely on. The Out of Home industry and its customers want exactly the same thing.

It is worth clarifying how much the medium has already done. A few years ago, proof of play in Out of Home was exchanged peer-to-peer, media owner by media owner, in multiple formats that buyers manually reconciled.

Today the UK industry has a single, standardised, independently audited system of record, it is called [Payout](#), and it consolidates verified delivery data across the major media owners in one place. Alight Media, Bauer Media Outdoor, Global Outdoor, I-Media, Limited Space, JCDecaux, Ocean Outdoor and Open Media all send their play data to Payout.

Out of Home as an industry chose and heavily invested in this leadership position.

So, when the question is asked: should Out of Home be independently verified? Our answer is a resounding “yes, and it already is.” The more useful conversation is regarding how a medium should be verified, and here the material differences between Out of Home and online really matter.

The online approach doesn’t transfer.

Third-party tracking tags, variously called wrappers, containers, pixels or chameleon, were designed for online, and they solve a specific online problem. The web is a one-to-one, addressable environment in which an impression is served to an individual device, and third-party tech is needed to observe an event the publisher cannot otherwise independently prove.

Out of Home is a fundamentally different medium. It is one-to-many and broadcast by nature, and the media owner operates the physical network end to end. The proof that an advertisement played comes directly from the system that drives the screen — not from a retrospective tag. Another important difference is that online advertising display cannot

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be inspected, it is entirely dependent on trust in the reporting. Whereas Out of Home delivery can be physically inspected by anyone.

Applying the online model to Out of Home does not add a layer of rigour on top of the existing data. It adds a second, less complete measurement alongside the data already captured at source and independently verified.

What good verification actually requires

Strip the technology back and advertisers need three things from verification. Out of Home's industry model is built to deliver all three.

Independence. Verification cannot be something any single seller marks for itself. Payout is governed jointly by the sell-side, through Outsmart, and the buy-side, through the IPA, which represents the largest buyers of OOH advertising. It is built and operated by an independent technology partner, and it is independently audited by mediasense — an audit that includes real-time observation of plays, reconciliation against differing media owner systems, and simulated failure scenarios. Independence here is not an afterthought; it is designed in.

"mediasense [formerly PwC's UK marketing and media team] has increased the frequency of their auditing of Outsmart data to quarterly. The scope of the tests will continue to include the accuracy of the Payout data, as well as the effectiveness of processes and controls that underpin the validity of the data and data segregation."

Adam Edelshain, VP Client Solutions, mediasense

"Independent verification is the bedrock of a mature advertising market. At Adwanted, we were honoured to help build Payout, a world-first Out of Home verification platform that brings together industry posting and delivery data for buyers in one place. Independence is central to its design. Adwanted owns no inventory, nor are we measured on campaign performance. Our role is to build the best possible platform for industry verification, with the methodology independently audited and approved by mediasense."

Nigel Clarkson, Managing Director, Adwanted

Consistency. A campaign that runs across multiple media owners should report the same way wherever it ran against one standard, one data format and one platform. That comparability is precisely what a patchwork of different third-party tags across different estates would dismantle, returning the industry to the fragmentation it has worked hard to leave behind.

Integrity. Because Payout operates across the whole market, it can do what no single tag on a single screen can: detect and reject duplicate records and prevent the same screen reporting two different ads at the same moment. That market-wide validation is what protects buyers against inflated or double-counted delivery, and a safeguard that depends on aggregation, not on tags, something that isn't possible in online.

A single, trusted version of the truth.

There is a reason why the industry holds the integrity of this data to such a high standard. The same delivery data that proves a campaign to a buyer is the operational record that runs the campaign, underpins revenue recognition, and is subject to rigorous financial controls.

It is, in the truest sense, a single version of the truth. Making that audited source data directly and granularly available to customers is a stronger foundation for trust than spinning up a parallel measurement that was never designed for the medium.

The right conversation

Digital Out of Home screen networks are intentionally architected to continue to play content even when online connectivity is lost. This means that sometimes plays are only reported when the screens regain connectivity. This isn't a verification issue; it is the reality of running a physical broadcast network at scale.

Our ambition is to keep advancing, broader adoption, richer data, faster and easier access so that buying Out of Home continues to be more transparent than buying any other channel. And that ambition is being delivered on our roadmap: to deepen trust, we have moved the mediasense audit to a quarterly cycle; to improve speed, the system is being optimised to be able to accept delivery data into the system as quickly as possible.

With media owners targeting sending data within 15 minutes; to enrich what the data shows, we are beginning to integrate Route impact data, so delivery can be reported in audience impacts and not only plays, as well as starting the work to use the data for econometrics and marketing mix modelling (MMM); and to complete the picture, we are adding Proof of Posting for Classic Out of Home, so the same standard of accountability holds across every format.



“Outsmart Payout’s use of Route data is a major step forward for Out of Home. It enables faster, more reliable and more transparent delivery data that can power campaign-based impact scoring and unlock stronger econometric and mixed-media modelling across the industry.”

Euan Mackay, CEO, Route

We welcome scrutiny and the rising expectations from advertisers; this is exactly what we need to make sure we continue to push in the same direction.

The way to raise the bar is to build on what is already working, not to import a tool designed for a different medium to solve a problem Out of Home has already overcome. Out of Home has set out to be the most accountable medium in the market. We intend to keep it that way together with the expert buyers and partners who built this with us.

Tim Lumb, Outsmart.

