

The Attention Value of Mediabong as an Online Video Delivery Platform for Advertisers (abridged)

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Executive Summary: The purpose of this whitepaper is to apply The Economics of Attention framework to analyze and compare Mediabong's attention value as a new online video-delivery platform (OVDP). Using a rigorous statistical analysis and experimental data, two proprietary OVDPs are compared to the standard inread format. The author finds, among other things, that Mediabong's two OVDPs deliver more video exposure and attention to the ad than the standard format. Further, in terms of active engagement, one of the new formats is more engaging while the other is less engaging.

Section 1. What is Mediabong?

Mediabong is an advertising technology company that developed a proprietary online video delivery technology termed Syncroll. In contrast to other standard online video delivery platforms, Syncroll provides multiple and continuous opportunities for advertisers to show video ads to online audiences by synchronizing two video players so that the second can start where the first stopped. In addition, the latest version of Syncroll allows the second player to "hover" on top of the website's content, in effect producing a continuous form of video playback that follows users as they scroll down on a webpage.

Mediabong was founded in 2011 and today is based in Paris with offices in New York and London. In 2016, Mediabong became the biggest video syndicator in France through its unique approach to syndicating video ads. In May 2015, the company announced it raised \$5 million in a Series B funding to expand to the US market. For more on Mediabong, please visit <http://www.mediabong.com>.

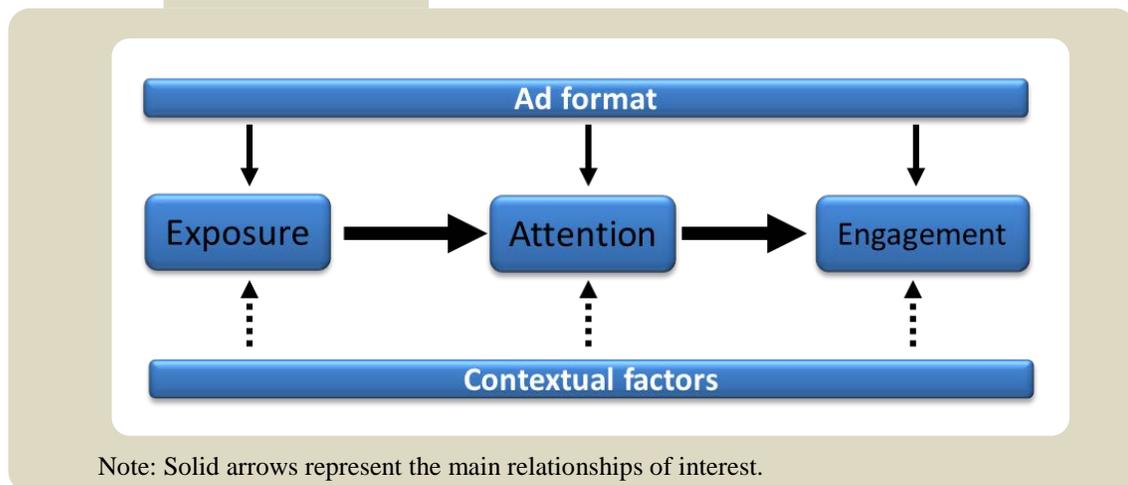
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Section 2. Economics of Attention Framework used to assess Mediabong platform.

The Economics of Attention. The standard video delivery format used in text-rich websites such as news, blogs, and topic-specific articles is composed of a video player that has a fixed position in the browser relative to the content. It is often placed in the top and center of the webpage so as to capture the highest amount of attention from readers. This format is termed 'inread.' Mediabong created a new online video delivery platform (henceforth OVDP) that synchronizes with the inread player and floats on top of content so as to follow the online viewer as she scrolls a text-rich webpage.

In order to assess the quantity and quality of Mediabong's OVDP, I propose a conceptual framework based on fundamental principles of [The Economics of Attention](#). A person exposed to video ads while browsing the Internet will have partial control over her exposure to them. Exposure is a function of (a) the type of ad format chosen by the web publisher, and (b) contextual factors such as website design, time of day, day of week, etc. Upon being exposed to an online video, the viewer can allocate attention to the video ad or not depending on the ad format and contextual factors as well. Lastly, she may or may not engage with the video ad.

Fig. 1 Framework



These three stages of exposure, attention and engagement collectively dictate the amount and quality of attention garnered by any OVDP while controlling for contextual factors. This framework is depicted in Figure 1 and is used in this whitepaper to

evaluate the attention value of Mediabong's OVDP relative to standard online video tools in the market.

Exposure is the opportunity-to-see the video player, not attention to the ad per se. In order to measure exposure of an ad, I use the standard industry metric of 'player viewability.' A player is viewable in its entirety (100%) for x seconds if all the pixels of the player are visible to the viewer during that time. Since standard OVDPs are generally static, their viewability can reduce to less than 100% with user scrolling. Three other viewability metrics are assessed for each OVDP. For example,

- Player viewability at 75% = number of seconds when 75% to 100% of a player's pixels is viewable onscreen.

A fully viewable player does not necessarily mean that the ad being shown is viewed in its entirety. There are multiple ways in which people can avoid attending to an entire ad. They can look away, they can scroll away, or they can skip or stop the ad if the OVDP allows for this option. In order to measure attention towards the ad, I measure the percentage of the video ad that was shown to the viewer, also known as view-through rates (VTR). Four VTR metrics are assessed for each OVDP. For example,

- VTR 25% = Indicates whether or not a person exposed to a video ad watched it for at least 25% of its length.

Finally, a person can go from passively attending to the video towards active attention, or engagement with the video. When people become more engaged with the ad, they interact with the player in a positive way. I use three engagement measures, two of which indicate positive engagement (increased interest), and one that indicates negative engagement (decreased interest) with the ad. These measures are as follows:

- Click on ad: whether or not a person clicks on the ad. A click on the video ad takes the user to the advertiser's webpage.
- Sound ON: Whether or not a person clicks on the player to unmute the audio. The default sound of the player is OFF in all ad formats in this study.
- Close ad: Whether or not a person clicks on the close button or the skip button located on top right of the player.

Section 3. Establishing the attention value for Mediabong.

Online video-delivery platforms (OVDPs) vary in the extent to which they capture attention, retain attention and engage viewers. In this whitepaper, I conduct a randomized field experiment with a control group in order to compare three OVDPs:

Inread: The standard approach to deliver video ads in text-rich content websites is to insert one static video player within the text, usually at the beginning of the article.

Inread + sync: Mediabong created a new version of inread that automatically pauses the video ad when the player's visible surface is < 50%, e.g., when users scroll down the article, and a second video screen appears, usually at the end of the article, with the video synchronized to start where the first video was paused.

Syncroll. Mediabong created this format to not only synchronize the second video with the first inread player but also to follow the reader as she is scrolling down. The player "hovers" on top of the website's content, playing the ad as readers scroll down the webpage.

In order to compare the exposure, attention and engagement values of Syncroll with those of Inread+sync and Inread formats, a comprehensive field experiment was done. The field experiment data was collected by Mediabong using a procedure determined by the author. During a period of seven days, from 15 to 21 of April 2016, the three OVDP formats were used to show 10 different video ads (ranging from 25 to 32 seconds long) in six websites, four of which were for French readers and 2 for American readers.

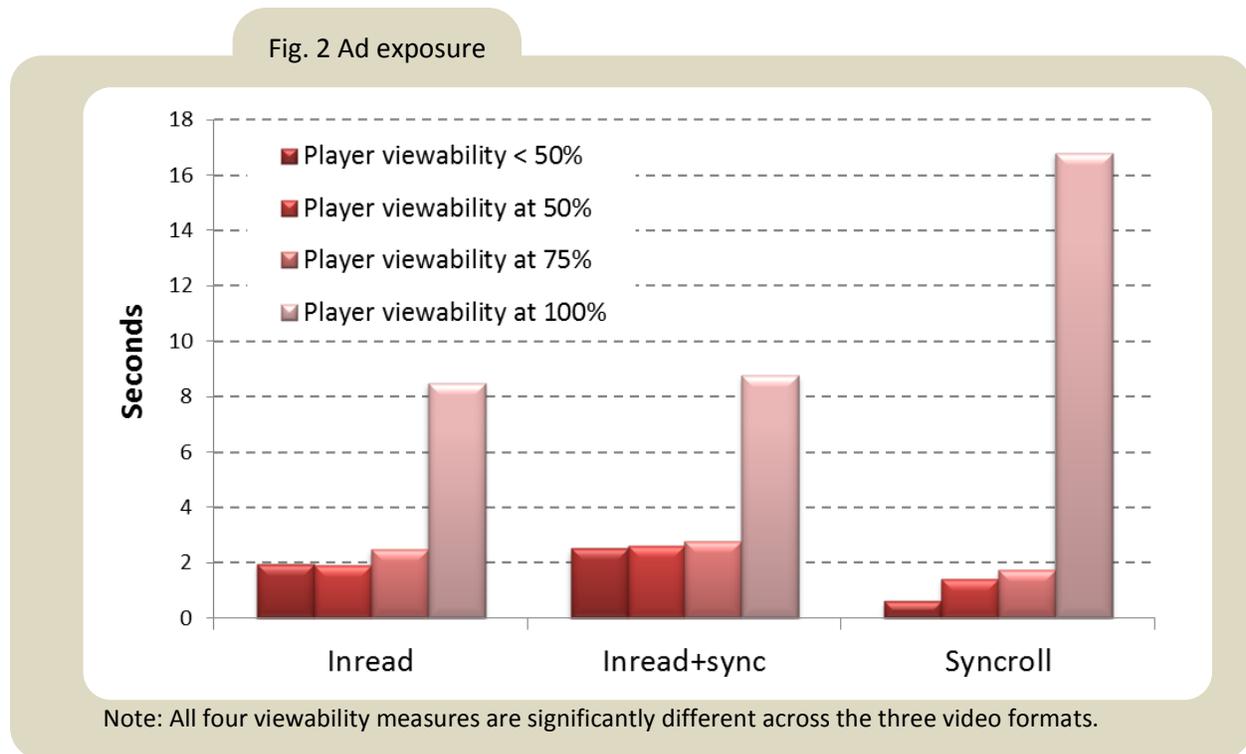
All six websites chosen were news or content publishers. All OVDPs had the same viewable screen size (500 x 280 pixels), were embedded in all websites at different times of the day such that in the morning (10am to 11am), afternoon (2pm to 3pm) and evening (6pm to 7pm) any given website had only one video format playing. Each combination of website-time-format-ad was shown to three different users per day, with all conditions randomized and counterbalanced. This experiment resulted in 71,508 browsing sessions by 55,561 uniquely identified individuals.

Section 4. Comparison among online video delivery platforms

Readers of text-rich websites have the Inread video player in full view for, on average, 8.5 seconds. For partial view—viability of 75%, 50% or less—it is around 2 seconds each. Compared to the standard Inread online video-delivery format, the Inread+sync format has only slightly higher viewability duration (significant at 5%).

As for the Syncroll format, 100% viewability, at 17 seconds, is around double that of the other formats. And, at the same time, the three measures of partial viewability are significantly lower. Collectively, these results show that ads in Inread+sync and Syncroll are shown for a significantly longer period of time, albeit with Syncroll the difference being substantially larger. See Figure 2.

Fig. 2 Ad exposure

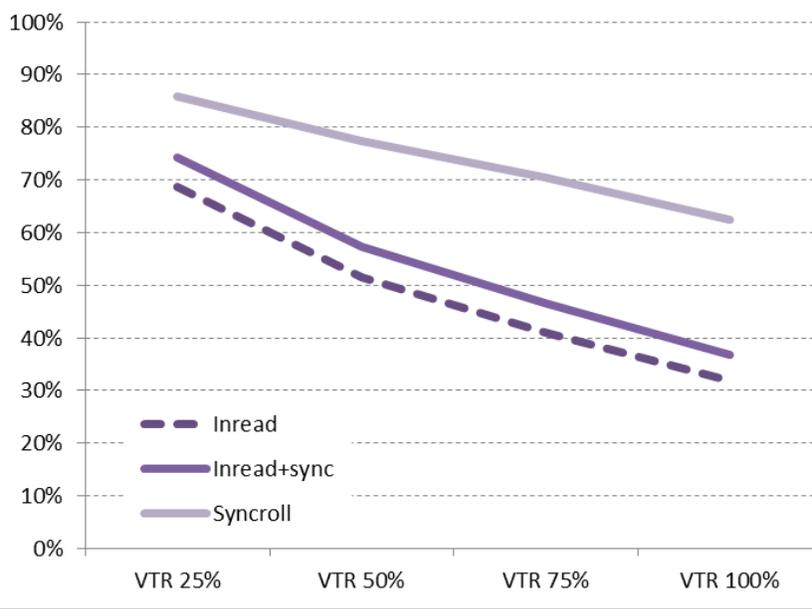


‘Viewability’ measures the opportunity-to-see ads, not whether people actually pay attention to them when played. In order to compare attention to the ad, I use the view-through metrics. The underlying assumption is that an ad that has more than 50% of the image shown, if not actively avoided, will be attended to. If a viewer does not desire to see the ad, she will actively skip or close it.

Four view-through measures are used to detect attention. These measures capture the extent to which viewers watched less than one quarter (VTR 25%), half (VTR 50%), three quarters (VTR 75%) or the entire ad (VTR 100%). Naturally, due to viewer abandonment, when aggregated across people, these metrics should decrease over time irrespective of the video format. This is shown in Figure 3. In addition, the figure shows that Inread+sync have a very similar decrease rate as Inread, albeit a slightly higher VTR at any point. This difference is still statistically significant. And similarly to viewability rates, the VTR rates for Syncroll are significantly higher than the other two formats and decrease at a much slower rate. This shows once again that Syncroll is the ad format that draws much higher attention given its ‘hovering’ feature.

The average lift gained by using Syncroll instead of Inread varies from 25% more attention (or 1700 basis points) for the first quarter of the ad to 96% more attention (or 3100 basis points) for the proportion of people that watch the entire ad. For an advertiser paying CPMs of \$30, the cost per thousand completed views would be \$94 with Inread and \$48 with Syncroll, a sizable savings.

Fig. 3 Ad attention

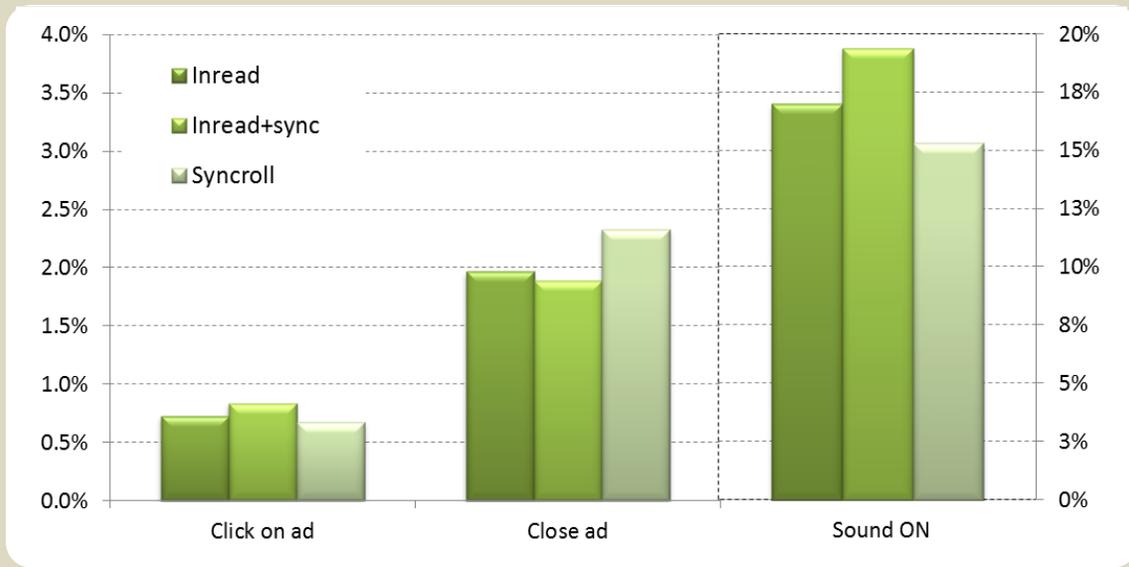


Note: All four VTR (view-through) measures are significantly different across the three video formats.

One of most desirable properties of video ads by advertisers is a high click-through rate. The results of the experiment shows that Inread ads have click-through rates of 0.73% (see Figure 4). Inread+sync ads have a higher click-through rate of 0.84% (n.s.) whereas Syncroll ads have a lower click-through rate of 0.68% (n.s.). The only significant difference between click-through rates is Syncroll versus Inread+sync.

As for ad closing rates, a measure of disengagement, the Inread+sync format has statistically the same close rates as Inread ads, whereas Syncroll has significantly higher rates than the other two formats. Lastly, for the act of clicking the sound On in the player (the default is muted audio), Inread+sync has a significantly higher sound On rate than Inread and Syncroll has a significantly lower rate than Inread.

Fig. 4 Ad engagement

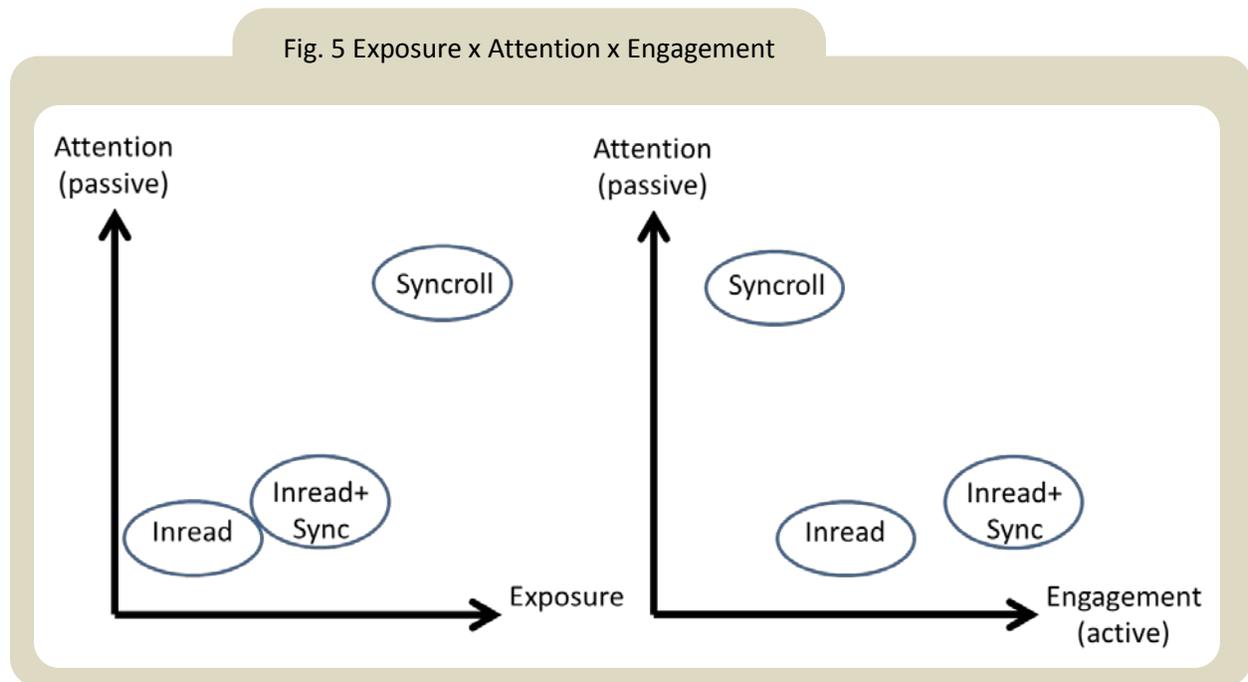


Note: Inread+sync and Syncroll have sig. different click-through rates; all three formats have sig. different sound on rates; Syncroll has a sig. higher ad closing rate than the other two formats.

Collectively, these comparisons show that Inread+sync ads are more engaging than Inread ads only when turning the sound on, whereas people likely find Syncroll ads more intrusive and tend to be more likely to close the ad or keep the sound muted.

Section 5. Brands that would benefit most from advertising with Mediabong.

The statistical analyses point to two major insights. First, the Inread+sync format, due to its extra second screen synchronization feature, is able to slightly increase exposure and attention to the ad, but significantly increase positive engagement. Second, the Syncroll format dramatically increases attention to the ad albeit at the expense of engagement, which is lower due to less unmuting and more closing. This can be partially explained by its ‘hovering’ and ‘user-following’ features. While these features make it more likely that viewers will pay attention to the video, it can also be seen as intrusive, in which case people not interested in the ad will have a higher desire to close, skip or mute the ad. Figure 5 depicts these insights.



The choice of which OVDP to use depends fundamentally on the end goal of the campaign: is it to generate awareness and future interest, measured in views, actions, measured in clicks, or a certain combination of both? The answer to this question should dictate which one of the three online video-delivery formats to use.

References

Teixeira, Thales. 2015. [“When People Pay Attention to Video Ads and Why,”](#) Harvard Business Review.