

Consumer Magazines: Digital Copies – rule clarification August 2021

We previously communicated (November 2020) a rule change that allowed you to report an issue (or issues) comprised solely of digital copies on a Consumer Magazine certificate (i.e. an issue does not need a 'print parent').

We have updated the Digital Editions section to provide greater clarity on how this affects reporting, along with replacing references to 'Digital Editions' throughout the standards with 'Digital Copies' where appropriate.

The text below shows the changes made to the Digital Editions section for your information.

DIGITAL EDITIONS COPIES

Definition

A digital edition is an edition of the print publication. Digital Copies are copies of a publication published electronically as a unit.

Eligibility and options for reporting

1. Digital Copies can be reported on a Consumer Magazine certificate providing they meet the relevant circulation and other requirements detailed in these Standards.
2. How the digital copies may be claimed will depend on whether print copies are also claimed and, if they are, whether the digital copies meet the requirements to be classified as an edition of the print publication. The scenarios are:
 - a) The magazine is only published in digital format – the Digital Copies will be reported on their own certificate.
 - b) The magazine is published in both print and digital formats (either for all issues or a mix where some issues are either print or digital only):
 - i) You may:
 - o Claim the print and digital copies on the **same** certificate, providing the digital copies meet the requirements to be classified as a Digital Edition of the print publication.
 - o Choose to claim the print and digital copies on **separate** certificates, even though the digital copies meet the requirements to be classified as a Digital Edition of the print publication.

If the digital copies cannot be classified as a Digital Edition of the print publication you can register the Digital Magazine as a **separate product** and report the print and digital copies on **separate** certificates.

Definition of a Digital Edition

3. To qualify as a **Digital Edition**, that edition must be a Digital Edition is sufficiently similar as to be considered the same product as the print Parent Edition. In particular:
 - a) A Digital Edition must be identified as an edition of a print publication reported on the ABC Certificate (the Parent Edition). This means it must carry a logotype/masthead incorporating the generic name of the Parent Edition and be consistent with the general appearance of the Parent Edition.
 - b) A Digital Edition is published electronically as a unit.
 - c) It may be reformatted to suit the different delivery medium. *For example: changes in page size or order.*
 - d) Editorial or advertising may include electronic enhancements or be adapted to take advantage of the medium. *For example: pictures replaced with video*
 - e) Compared to the print Parent Edition you can change editorial content, providing at any point in time:
 - i) A minimum of about 75% of the editorial in the print Parent Edition is present in the Digital Edition.
 - ii) Additional editorial, not in the print Parent Edition, can be added to the Digital Edition up to about 25% of the total editorial by volume in the print Parent Edition

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You must declare editorial changes when submitting your claim to ABC and be able to demonstrate they fall within the permitted parameters.

- f) A Digital Edition may include live social media feeds, news feeds and/or video feeds. These will be ignored in relation to the editorial change requirements.
- g) A Digital Edition must carry all of the ROP (not classified) advertisements (by number and advertisers) that appear in the print Parent Edition unless agreed otherwise with the advertiser/agency.
- h) You can sell advertisements for inclusion in the Digital Edition only.
- i) If editorial or advertising renders the Digital Edition illegal for publication the specific advertising/editorial may be removed. In this instance you can ignore the relevant editorial/advertising from your calculations of changes.
- j) Digital Editions and their Parent Edition must be published on or about a common distribution date.

Note: In cases where individual issues do not have a Parent Edition (being only published in one format/edition only), then requirements 3e, 3g and 3j above do not apply.

REQUIREMENTS

1. ~~Digital Edition~~ Digital Copy claims and plans are required

- a) ~~Digital Edition~~ Digital Copy claims must be audited by ABC Staff Auditors
- b) You must register your intention to claim in advance of the publication of the issues as part of the audit is carried out during the reporting period.
- c) You must provide planned distribution dates in advance and notify us of any changes.

~~2. A Digital Edition is sufficiently similar to be considered the same product as the print parent edition [moved to definition above]~~

32. ~~Digital Edition~~ Digital Copies are opted in

- a) The individual must have either specifically purchased the ~~Digital Edition~~ Digital Copy, or requested to receive/view it (*this maybe demonstrated by active opening – see section 4cii below*).
- b) Free ~~Digital Edition~~ Copies do not need a specific request if they are claimed as Membership Copies.

43. ~~A Digital Edition is~~ Digital Copies are published and available to the consumer

- a) You must provide ABC with free access to the ~~Digital Edition~~ Digital Copies for every issue.

54. ~~Digital Edition~~ Digital Copies must meet requirements of the relevant ~~print circulation~~ category except where varied by this section

- a) ~~Digital Edition~~ Digital Copies can be claimed only for specified circulation categories depending on the sector. The requirements of those categories in relation to print copies apply to ~~Digital Edition~~ copies except as varied by this section.
- b) In relation to all paid categories you must be able to demonstrate the copy has been sold and at what price.
- c) If the end recipient receives the ~~Digital Edition~~ Digital Copy free (typically in the categories Multiple Copy Subscription Sales, Controlled Free Circulation - individually requested, Free Requested Delivered and Membership Copies), you need to comply with either proof of notification or proof of active opening ~~copies may be claimed via either of the following methods:~~
 - i) ~~Proof of Notification~~ Notification method
 - o You must capture ~~their~~ the recipient's name and email address.
 - o You can only claim one ~~Digital Edition copy~~ Digital Copy per individual
 - o You cannot claim the copy if you have provided a paid or free print copy to the same individual (where known).

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- You must send an email alert to the individual informing them that the issue is available for view/download.
 - You must exclude copies where the email alert generates a hard bounceback measured at least 24 hours after the email was sent. A Hard Bounceback is where an NDN (Non-Delivery-Notice) such as an SMTP 550 error or other hard bounceback error message is received.
 - You must be able to provide evidence of the emails sent and Hard Bouncebacks received.
 - Recipients may be contacted as part of the audit process.
- ii) **Proof of Active Opening** ~~Actively opened method~~
- ~~Copies may be eligible for the categories Multiple Copy Subscription Sales, Controlled Free Circulation individually requested, Free Requested Delivered (regular or sample as appropriate) and Membership Copies.~~
 - Evidence of delivery to identifiable individuals must be demonstrated by the measurement of active openings of the copy.
 - The delivery process/database must have a mechanism to minimise the risk of significant duplicates to the same individual within the distribution method.
 - The auditor must have access to verify the claim in relation to the delivery process/database and measurement of active openings.
- d) For Multiple Copy Subscription Sales:
- i) The claimed quantity must be restricted to those individuals that have personally opted to receive/view the ~~Digital Edition~~ **Digital Copy**. *For example: A company takes out a subscription for 100 of its customers. If only 40 of these personally register to receive/view the digital copy then only those 40 copies may be included on the ABC Certificate.*
- e) Gift subscriptions, where the recipient receives a subscription as a gift from a paying subscriber (up to a maximum of 12 gift subscriptions per subscriber), can be claimed as ~~Digital Edition~~ **Digital Copy** Single Copy Subscription Sales as follows:
- i) The recipient's email address must be provided.
 - ii) The recipient is deemed (for ABC purposes) as having paid for the subscription.
 - iii) The recipient's geographical location for reporting purposes will be treated as being the same as that of the purchaser making the gift.
- f) You must retain and supply us on an issue by issue basis (or as otherwise agreed) a list of individual recipients for each issue (the 'Total Distribution List' (TDL)) which includes details of all the recipients of individually distributed print copies and all free ~~Digital Edition~~ **Digital Copies** (whether reported on one or two certificates and excluding those for which details are not known and supported by proof of active opening). We must be able to identify the circulation category/type each copy is claimed in. As referred to above, this list should exclude:
- i) Duplicate records (i.e. each individual on the list can only be claimed once - the print copy takes precedence).
 - ii) Individuals where Hard Bouncebacks have arisen from email notifications for free ~~Digital Edition~~ **Digital Copies**.
- g) You must supply us the claim for ~~Digital Edition~~ **Digital Copies** on an issue by issue basis (or as otherwise agreed).

65. Reported by rate, comparing price paid with the print copy price

Claiming by rate

- a) If you are also claiming print copies, paid ~~Digital Edition~~ **Digital Copies** must be claimed in the appropriate rate band by comparing the price paid with the relevant print copy Basic Cover Price (single copy sales) and the relevant print copy Basic Annual Rate (subscriptions) - whether reported on one or two certificates. Note:
 - i) Relevant price means the UK print price unless you opt to use the relevant local print price for copies outside the UK or the alternative BAR (see Single Copy Subscriptions section 6f).

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- ii) You can ignore the value (or perceived value) of any gifts, or other incentives (including bundled publications or media products that are not claimed for ABC purposes). However cash reimbursements to the consumer must be taken into account (excluding limited low chance lottery style promotions).

- b) ~~iii)~~ In the case of a digital only magazine, copies must be claimed in the appropriate rate band as defined by the ~~compare the price paid with the relevant~~ Digital Copy Basic Cover Price (single copy sales) and the relevant Digital Copy Basic Annual Rate (subscriptions).

Allocating bundle prices

- ~~b~~c) If a subscription promotion includes a gift or product that is being claimed for ABC purposes (for example a bundled copy of a publication or access to a paid website) then the price paid must be allocated according to the following, moving down the list until one can be applied:

- i) According to the specific terms of the offer.
- ii) Where specific terms are not clear, by pro-rating the price according to the relative prices of the ABC claimed products*.
- iii) Where the specific terms are not clear and in the absence of a means of pro-rating the price paid, it should be divided equally between the number of ABC claimed products included in the sale.

~~*Note: If you choose not to include in your ABC claim any Digital Edition copies sold as part of a bundle you may choose to treat the Digital Edition as a non-ABC claimed product. Therefore you can allocate the bundle price across the other ABC claimed products.~~

Claiming a print and ~~Digital Edition~~ Digital Copy

- ~~ed~~ If a publication's ~~Digital Edition copy~~ Digital Copy is sold bundled as a package with the print copy (whether for a single issue or a subscription) then the treatment is as follows (~~from periods ending January 2021~~):

- i) **Reporting on a single certificate:** You can only claim one of these copies per issue ~~towards to be included in the average circulation on a single certificate.~~ You may choose whether to claim either the print or the ~~Digital Edition copy~~ Digital Copy (~~providing they are eligible~~) but you must adopt the same policy for all copies in the Reporting Period.

- ii) **Reporting on separate Certificates**

- You may claim both copies in the bundle, by claiming the publication's print copies on one certificate and ~~Digital Edition copy~~ Digital Copies on a separate certificate. If you do this:
 - o Both certificates must carry the statement regarding bundled copies (see reporting below)
 - o You may aggregate the print and digital copies on a Brand Report ~~not opt to report a Group certificate, aggregating these copies into a total circulation (but may do so via a Brand Report)~~ [Note – Not changing the requirement but Group certificates are covered under Reported Data section]

76. Optional metrics/breakdowns can be reported

- a) You may make a statement on the Certificate of the average number of additional ~~Digital Edition copy~~ Digital Copies per issue that have been paid for or requested free (where applicable) by individuals, but which are not included in the ABC claim because a print copy to those individuals has been claimed. Note: Only one additional ~~Digital Edition copy~~ Digital Copy per issue per individual can be included in the statement ~~claimed~~.
- b) You may report a breakdown of ~~Digital Editions~~ Digital Copies by browser, device or other identifiable and auditable metric.
- c) You may report, in addition to circulation, Publication Active Views for ~~the Digital Edition~~ Digital Copies. The definition and requirements for Publication Active View are detailed in the ABC Digital Publication Reporting Standards. *The definition is reproduced below for your convenience:*

Publication Active View:

1. Definition: A single copy of a publication actively opened by a device for viewing.
2. Principles:

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- a. A minimum of one page of an issue (or a day) opened/served on/to a device.
- b. Distinct action/event by the end user to view.
Note: a single action/request which results in both the content being downloaded/made available and the automatic opening of a page of the publication is not considered a distinct action/event. A further distinct action would be required such as opening a second page.
- c. The view request must be on an issue by issue (or daily) basis.

REPORTING

You will report total average ~~Digital Edition copies~~ Digital Copies as follows, which will be broken out on the ABC Certificate:

1. By geographical type:
 - a) United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland;
 - b) Other Countries
2. By circulation type:
 - a) As for print copies, in the same rate bands:
 - i) Paid Single Copies (Retail and Single copy sales)
 - ii) Paid Subscriptions (Single Copy Subscription Sales)
 - iii) Paid Subscriptions (Multiple Copy Subscription Sales)
 - iv) Paid Subscriptions (Requested Sponsored Subscription Sales)
 - ~~v) Paid Multiple Copies (Multiple Copy Business Sales)~~
 - vi) Membership Copies
 - vii) Free Copies - Controlled Free Circulation (individually requested only)
 - viii) Free Requested Delivered Copies
 - b) ~~Digital Edition~~ Digital Copy specific:
 - i) All You Can Read Sales
 - ii) Paid Multiple Copies (Multiple Copy Business Sales)
3. A statement of the total average number of print and ~~Digital Edition copy~~ Digital Copies sold bundled as a package (whether for a single issue or a subscription) where both the print and ~~Digital Edition copy~~ Digital Copy have been claimed on separate certificates. **Note:**
 - ~~a) For periods ending up to December 2020:~~ this is only permitted where the price paid for the package exceeds the relevant print copy Basic Cover Price (single copy sale) or relevant Basic Annual Rate (subscriptions) by at least 20%.
 - ~~b) From periods ending January 2021:~~ This is only permitted where the print and digital edition copies are claimed on separate certificates, in which case the statement must be included on each certificate.