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ABC Business Magazines Reporting Standards

This document details changes that have been agreed to the Reporting Standards for Business Magazines. You can view the updated ABC Reporting Standards on our [website](#).

Have a suggestion or a query about a rule?

As an ABC member you can ask us to look at any aspect of the information we publish or the rules behind them. If you have any suggestions or comments please contact your ABC Account Manager, Charlotte Brown (charlotte.brown@abc.org.uk) or Lynn Kendrick (lynn.kendrick@abc.org.uk), or any member of the ABC team.

Summary

1. Reporting additional digital copies (effective from periods ending December 2023)

- **Previously:** There has been a lack of visibility on the ABC certificate of those digital copies that are circulated, but do not qualify to be included in the headline ABC average or Audit Issue circulation because:
 - A print copy is already claimed for those same individuals; or
 - The copy is distributed to a named individual, but there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate either that the copy has been requested or that the individual meets the Terms of Control.
- **New option:** You will now be able to report these digital copies in a separate table on your ABC certificate. For the avoidance of doubt, these additional copies continue to be excluded from the headline ABC average and Audit Issue circulation figures.

2. International Certificate – clarification (effective immediately)

- **Current requirement:** Publications may choose to report their ABC Business Magazine circulation using an International Certificate. On the International Certificate, the standard UK/Other Countries analysis is replaced with a geographical analysis of the Audit Issue by world region, with the option of an additional analysis by country.
- **New:** We've rewritten the text describing the International Certificate, to improve the prominence and clarity of what the International Certificate entails. There are no changes to the requirements or reporting for International Certificates.

Please see below for additional information on these changes.

1. Reporting additional digital copies [effective from periods ending December 2023]

There are some digital copies, which although circulated to a named individual, are not eligible to be included in a title's headline ABC average or Audit Issue circulation. This could be because:

- A print copy is already claimed for the same individual.
- The copy has not been requested.
- The publisher does not hold evidence the individual meets the Terms of Control for Controlled Circulation.

There is no move to include these copies in the headline ABC average or Audit Issue circulations, as doing so could undermine the integrity and credibility of these totals.

However, some publishers have expressed interest in being able to demonstrate these copies have been circulated by reporting them as a separate figure on their ABC certificate, as they can be relevant to commercial discussions.

Therefore, from periods ending December 2023 you have the option to report these additional digital copies on your ABC certificate in a separate table, as illustrated below:

Additional Digital Circulation

This table identifies additional digital copies that the publisher has circulated, but do not qualify for inclusion in the headline ABC Audit Issue Circulation and Average Circulation figures.

	Audit Issue	Average Circulation
Digital copies distributed to named individuals for which a print copy has already been claimed (i.e. Paid, Membership, Requested or Non-requested by name)	1,839	1,673
Digital copies distributed to named individuals that do not qualify for inclusion in ABC headline figures (i.e. Non-requested and Non-Controlled)	2,332	2,034

Note:

- This table is optional
- It is for reporting digital copies that you can demonstrate are distributed to named individuals, but are not included in your headline ABC average or Audit Issue circulation totals.
- It does not affect the digital copies currently included in your headline ABC average or Audit Issue circulations.

If you wish to explore this reporting option, please contact your auditor or Account Manager. We will work with you to identify the necessary evidence and determine any additional audit costs.

Standards amendments

The standards changes to reflect this option are shown below. Shading denotes text added, strikethrough text deleted

DIGITAL COPIES [EXTRACT]

2. Digital Copies are opted in

- a) The individual must have either purchased the publication, or requested to receive/view it, with the exception of copies:
 - i) Claimed as Membership Copies, Controlled Colleague-Requested and Controlled non-requested by name categories of circulation
 - ii) If they are Corporate Digital Subscription copies, where the individual is sent an email alert informing them that the issue is available for view/download.
 - iii) That are eligible to be reported in the separate optional additional Digital Copy table, for reporting copies that do not qualify for inclusion in the headline ABC average or Audit Issue circulations (see Reporting section 3 below).

4. Digital Copies must meet requirements of the relevant circulation category except where varied by this section

- a) Digital Copies can be claimed only for specified circulation categories.
- b) In relation to all paid categories you must be able to demonstrate the copy has been sold.
- c) If the end recipient receives the Digital Copy free:
 - i) You must capture their name and email address.
 - ii) You can only claim one Digital Copy per individual
 - iii) You cannot claim the copy if you have provided a paid or free print copy to the same individual (where known). Note:
 - You must have a common means of de-duplicating all individually distributed copies where details of the individual are required (for free and paid print copies and other free Digital Copies). *An example of how to achieve this would be by collecting an email address for all print and Digital Copies that require the individual to be known.*
 - You may opt to report in a separate additional Digital Copy table, those Digital Copies distributed to named individuals for which a print copy has already been claimed (see Reporting section 3 below).
- d) For Corporate Subscription Digital Copies:
 - i) There must be a contractual arrangement between the purchaser (a third-party employer) and the publisher for at least two issues.
 - ii) The copies are purchased by the third-party employer for its employees
 - iii) The claimed quantity must be restricted to those employees that have personally opted to receive/view the Digital Copy or been sent an email alert informing them that the issue is available to view/download. Note: Any email that generates a hard bounce back must be excluded. *For example: A company takes out a subscription for each of its 100 employees. If only 40 of those employees 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 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) In relation to free Digital Copies (where applicable):

- i) You must send an email alert to the individual informing them that the issue is available for view/download.
 - ii) 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.
 - iii) You must be able to provide evidence of the emails sent and Hard Bouncebacks received.
 - iv) Recipients may be contacted as part of the audit process.
- g) Where both a print and Digital Copy are circulated to the same individual:
- i) You can only claim one of these copies per issue towards the average circulation.
 - ii) You may choose whether to claim either the print or the Digital Copy (providing they are eligible) but you must adopt the same policy for all copies in the Reporting Period.
 - iii) You may opt to report in a separate additional Digital Copy table, those Digital Copies distributed to named individuals for which a print copy has already been claimed (see Reporting section 3 below).
 - iii) ~~As an option you may add a statement about the total average number of print (or Digital) copies per issue circulated, including any that have been excluded from the average circulation because they represent the individuals' second copy. For example:~~
 - ~~You circulate, in total, 1,000 printed copies and 500 Digital Copies. Say 200 of those receiving the print copy also receive a Digital Copy. For these 200 you must decide whether you wish to claim their print copy or their Digital Copy. Say you decide to claim their print copy. This means you can claim 1,000 print copies and 300 Digital Copies = 1,300 [i.e. Digital = 500 - 200 duplicates].~~
 - iv) ~~You may show the extent of circulated copies excluded from the average by making an optional statement of the total average number of print (or digital) copies per issue that have been circulated but are not all paid for~~

REPORTING [extract]

You will report total Digital Copies for the Audit Issue as follows, which will be broken out on the ABC Certificate:

3. Optional additional Digital Copies table

If you choose to report it, this table identifies additional digital copies that the publisher has circulated, but which do not qualify for inclusion in the headline ABC average and Audit Issue Circulation figures.

	Audit Issue	Average Circulation
Digital copies distributed to named individuals for which a print copy has already been claimed (i.e. Paid, Membership, Requested or Non-requested by name)	1,839	1,673
Digital copies distributed to named individuals that do not qualify for inclusion in ABC headline figures (i.e. Non-requested and Non-Controlled)	2,332	2,034

2. International Certificate – clarification (effective immediately)

The Standards have been revised to enhance the visibility and clarity of International Certificates. It's important to note that these revisions do not introduce any changes to current requirements or reporting.

Standards amendments

Shading denotes text added, strikethrough text deleted.

REPORTED DATA [extract]

REQUIREMENTS

1. ~~Total Average Circulation~~

You must report the total Average Circulation per issue for the Reporting Period analysed into UK and Other Countries, unless you choose to report the international circulation option, in which case you must report a geographical analysis of the Audit issue circulation instead.

2. ~~Total Audit Issue Circulation~~

You must report the total Audit Issue Circulation analysed into UK and Other Countries, unless you choose to report the international circulation option, in which case you must report a geographical analysis of the Audit Issue circulation instead. The Audit Issue Circulation must be broken out by Print and Digital Copy (as applicable) as shown below:

1. Type of Certificate

You may choose to report either a 'Standard' certificate of circulation or an 'International' certificate of circulation. You must report the Total Average Circulation and Audit Issue circulation as follows:

a) Total Average Circulation

- i) 'Standard' certificate - analysed into UK and Other Countries, and by print and digital copies. You may opt to provide a more detailed geographical analysis if you wish.
- ii) 'International' certificate – analysed by print and digital copies. You must report a geographical analysis of the Audit Issue circulation.

b) Total Audit Issue Circulation

- i) 'Standard' certificate - analysed into UK and Other Countries, and by print and digital copies by circulation type as shown in the table below.
- ii) 'International' certificate – analysed by print and digital copies by circulation type as shown in the table below. You must also include as a minimum a geographical analysis of the Audit Issue circulation by World Region. You may opt to provide a more detailed analysis, such as by country.

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GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS [extract]

DEFINITION

The Geographical Analysis is an optional breakout of the circulation into geographical locations (mandatory if you have chosen an International certificate type).

REQUIREMENTS

1. Publishers may optionally report a Geographical Analysis

- a) You may report a Geographical Analysis as an optional table added to the Standard Certificate. (Note: It is mandatory if you have chosen an International certificate type).