

# MOBILE ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND DEFINITIONS

## SUMMARY

Mobile advertising is essential for brands and advertisers to reach the millions of users who use smartphones and tablets in their everyday lives. In the past several years marketers have made great strides and formed partnerships to enable rich mobile ads with a wide array of possibilities for user interactions or “engagement.” But “engagement” itself can be a slippery, hard-to-define term.

In early 2014, IAB released a paper written under the auspices of Making Measurement Make Sense (3MS) that defines engagement in a cross-screen world. Most of the metrics identified apply in mobile, and we recommend a thorough review of the principles and metrics definitions there. Some mobile-specific variations exist, and this brief document supplements the 3MS paper with things ad buyers need to know to master mobile-specific engagement.

## DEFINING “ENGAGEMENT”

In 2014 the IAB, under the auspices of Making Measurement Make Sense (3MS), released [“Defining and Measuring Digital Ad Engagement in a Cross-Platform World.”](#) This document (hereafter referred to as the “3MS Paper” or “3MS Engagement Paper”) provides an important framework for discussing and assessing the many metrics that may be used to quantify “engagement.”

3MS is a vital, industry-wide initiative that seeks to solve the fact that digital generates all manner of metrics and data, most of which are unique to digital, and don’t map to offline metrics. Business decision makers therefore need a focus on comparable metrics, while recognizing that digital and the digital advertising experience are unique.

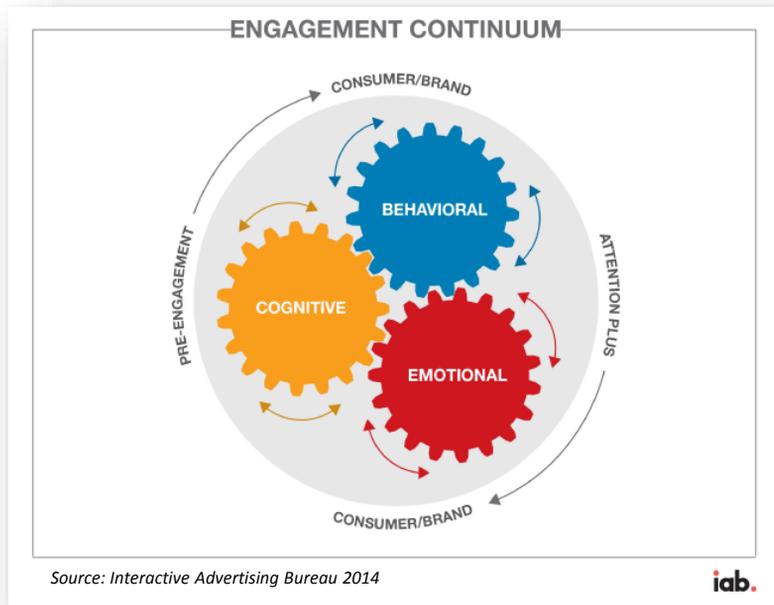
Consumer relationships with brands certainly predate digital and mobile—indeed, they may even predate “advertising.” But for new brands in a mass market, advertising is what brings brands to mass awareness. Measuring someone’s relationship to a brand, and how advertising influences that relationship (over and above simply tracking sales) is what engagement is all about.

The paper defines engagement as:

**“A spectrum of consumer advertising activities and experiences—cognitive, emotional, and physical—that will have a positive impact on a Brand.”**

In particular, the 3MS Paper establishes a framework that looks at three categories of metrics:

- **Cognitive:** Maps to changes in awareness, interest, and intent due to the advertising
- **Behavioral:** User-initiated interactions inspired by the advertising
- **Emotional or affective:** Measures how the advertising made the viewer feel about the brand



## COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT

The classic Core Cognitive Metrics from advertising research apply directly in the digital and mobile world, and are generally measured in similar ways (e.g., in general via pre/post or exposed/control surveys). We don't believe there are mobile-specific nuances or other metrics beyond the core ones defined in the 2014 3MS Paper:

- Ad/Campaign Awareness
- Brand Message Recall
- Attribute (i.e., characteristics of the product) Recall
- Change in Message/Attribute Recall and Association
- Change in Brand Awareness/Familiarity
- Change in Purchase Intent
- Change in Brand Consideration

## BEHAVIORAL ENGAGEMENT

The 2014 3MS Engagement Paper defines 19 behavioral engagement metrics, including four that are specific to social media.

These social media metrics are particularly important in mobile, given the deep synergies between mobile and social sharing.

Two of the other behavioral metrics, taps and swipes, are mobile-specific, at least until touchscreen laptops become more commonplace.

**Viewthroughs** are also defined in the 3MS Paper. We remind advertisers that mobile viewthroughs can be more complex to track and measure than web ones. In particular, tracing a consumer's path from app to app or from app to web requires more technical capabilities than a web viewthrough does, so marketers should adjust expectations (and question vendors) about their ability to deliver viewthrough metrics.

In addition to the behavioral metrics already defined by the 3MS Engagement Paper, IAB's Mobile Measurement Task Force suggests three additional mobile-specific metrics. We do not intend for engagement metrics to proliferate wildly, but **location**, **movement (shakes and tilts)**, and **calls** are important and already widely-used metrics for mobile campaigns.

- **Location:** Assessing whether an ad exposure prompted someone to visit a specific location is used as an ROI metric, but as with many other digital ad metrics, location visits can also be considered a form of behavioral engagement with an ad. This is particularly the case if the call-to-action is to visit a location to undertake an action, like participate in a contest or attend a free event. It can be measured by working with any of a number of specialized vendors focused on geolocation technologies and solutions. For more on this, please see IAB’s [Marketing ROI and Location Data](#) paper from February, 2015.
- **Movement/Shakes or Tilts:** Because smartphones and tablets contain accelerometers, it is possible to track how viewers move them prompted by an ad (e.g., shake to roll dice or make a cocktail). These metrics can be captured via web or app ad analytics.
- **Calls:** Tap-to-Call ads are an exciting, mobile-optimal form of advertising. Tracking calls as a behavior has several variations (completed calls lasting longer than a minimum time duration is preferred over total calls) but is an important behavioral metric.

## EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The core emotional engagement metrics defined in the 2014 IAB paper are:

- Change in Baseline Brand Perception
- Change in Baseline Brand Favorability
- Change in Baseline Brand Loyalty
- Physiological Response

Measuring changes in perception, favorability, and loyalty work for mobile and all digital campaigns, and would be measured in similar ways.

Around **Physiological Response** metrics, we observe that smartphones and wearables both have very interesting possibilities around directly measuring physiological response to advertising, through the wide array of sensors built into the device. Naturally advertisers must take care that efforts to measure such responses are done only with explicit consumer awareness and consent.

- How do you track ad engagement in mobile applications? What metrics do you use to do that? Do those differ from what you use for mobile web?
- How do you track ad engagement on mobile web? Do you require cookies for any engagement metrics you use? If so, how do you get around the limitations on browser acceptance of third-party cookies?
- Have you had testing done to verify the accuracy of your engagement metrics? What were the results?

By and large, digital engagement metrics that work on PCs will carry over to mobile devices successfully, and the framework established in the 2014 IAB Engagement Metrics paper adapts perfectly to mobile platforms.

In addition, the rich interactive possibilities on smartphones and other mobile devices open up some additional possibilities around behavioral engagement, as well as potentially unlocking the physical aspect of emotional engagement in ways never before possible for advertisers.

We hope this Digital Simplified, combined with the 2014 3MS Engagement Paper, will help marketers expand their thinking to the richer, better metrics beyond the click or tap. Such rich metrics provide a much more accurate view on the success of ad campaigns in the mobile—and cross-screen—world.

Learn More at [iab.net/mobile](http://iab.net/mobile) and [iab.net/digitaladengagement](http://iab.net/digitaladengagement)  
 IAB Contact: Joe Laszlo, Senior Director of the IAB Mobile Center • [mobile@iab.net](mailto:mobile@iab.net)

## QUESTIONS TO ASK VENDORS

## FINAL THOUGHTS

This IAB: Digital Simplified was created by the IAB Mobile Measurement Task Force as a companion and complement to the 3MS “[Defining and Measuring Digital Ad Engagement in a Cross-Platform World](#),” released Feb., 2014.