Sovrn: Transparency FAQs

Increased transparency in the digital advertising supply chain is important as this makes it easier for buyers to understand which suppliers in the chain add the most value. This set of Transparency FAQs has been developed by a group of IAB UK members from different parts of the industry to help buyers understand more about the companies operating in digital advertising. The questions fall under three different categories - Pricing, Placement and Data.

Contents

Pricing

Placement

Data

Pricing

What is your business model and how do you make money?

Sovrn Holdings, Inc is an online advertising technology firm based in Boulder, Colorado with offices in San Francisco, New York City, and London. We make money in a number of ways. We operate a programmatic ad exchange that places advertisements on publisher-owned websites, and we pay them a portion of the spend we receive from advertisers. We offer native commerce products that allow publishers to monetize links on their websites: advertisers pay a fee, of which we collect a portion before passing the earnings on to our publishers. Additionally, we offer financial and ad ops services to publishers for which we charge a fee.

Can you outline the full details of the agreement on a booking form / contract?

Every publisher and every buyer accepts the terms of their respective contract before becoming a partner with us.

Will you share who your trading partners are?

We're happy to share our trading partners upon request.

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Placement

Do you own the inventory you sell?

No, the inventory we sell belongs to the publishers we work with.

If you don't own your own inventory then how do you access inventory and which platforms do you use?

We work directly with publishers who host inventory on their web properties. We access that inventory through our proprietary platform that connects those publishers with advertisers.

Do you specify your media placements and positions?

Yes. Our supply partners provide inventory that fits those media placements and positions, and we then make that inventory available to potential buyers.

What insights do you provide back to advertisers?

We're a supply-side exchange, so we don't send any insights directly to advertisers. However, we do send information back to DSPs, which can work directly with advertisers.

Does the inventory you own or access include UGC content?

Yes. However, we have very strict guidelines, and every site we work with is evaluated by living, breathing humans prior to acceptance into the Sovrn exchange. We require all UGC to be monitored and moderated. As is the case with all the properties we work with, UGC cannot promote extreme acts of violence or contain hate speech, harassment, bullying, threats, or similar content that advocates against any group, organization, or individual.

What brand safety measures do you use?

Many. We have proprietary tools and processes, including a detailed, 25-point audit of all potential partners. We have multiple humans review every site, and we work with third-party partners (including Whiteops). In addition, we're dedicated to educating our publishers on the importance of the Ads.txt initiative. We work with the Light, Encrypted, AdChoice-supported, Non-invasive ads (LEAN) program of the IAB, and support the Coalition for Better Ads (CBA). In addition, we have been leaders in the advertising technology industry since our founding, and have been recognized by IAB, JICWEBS, and TAG for our role in combating ad fraud and promoting pro-transparency initiatives.

Which industry standards have you been certified against?

We are a certified TAG Platinum Partner by being independently certified in all four TAG programs: Anti-Fraud, Anti-Malware, Anti-Piracy and Inventory Quality Guidelines (IQG). We are also JICWEBS DTSG Brand Safety and IAB Gold Standard certified.

Do you have a policy in place for ad-misplacement?

Yes. It's connected to our brand safety policy, and is based on proprietary monitoring tools, transparent relationships with our buyers, and human oversight.

Are you happy to share your optimisation tactics?

We can optimize for our buyers in several different ways, both in private marketplaces as well as the open exchange. Many of these tactics use our demand path optimization capabilities. We work with our buying partners to understand their unique requirements for data, such as QPS, audience, geo, viewability, and contextual and brand safety restrictions, and we optimize to meet their needs.

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Data

Under GDPR what legal basis are you providing your services under?

It depends. We have different processes that are established under the basis of consent, contractual, or legitimate interest. For example, all of our fraud protection operates under legitimate interest. We're a registered member of the IAB Transparency and Consent Framework (TCF), and respect both consent and the GDPR initiative.

If consent is the mechanism then can you prove how you obtained it?

We use the IAB TCF consent string to obtain consent.

Are you using the IAB Framework?

Yes, we are registered with the IAB Europe's global vendor list. We are also a registered CMP with the IAB Europe.

What other 3rd party data partners require consent for your business to deliver its service?

Our privacy policy goes into greater detail, and it can be found here:
https://www.sovrn.com/privacy-policy/

What do you do with data you obtain from advertiser's campaigns or data tags?

We use information and data about our ad transactions to better position our publishers' inventory in our exchange, and to send the right requests to the right buyers at the right time. Likewise, collecting valuable information about our audiences allows us to differentiate our inventory and bring greater value to our publishers. We also work with marketers and other buy-side entities in order to analyze readership and audiences.

Are advertisers permitted to appoint their own 3rd party partners for verification and measurement?

Yes, they are permitted to do so.

Will you provide a link to your privacy and data policies?

Of course: https://www.sovrn.com/privacy-policy/

Will you share how you build audience, contextual and targeting segments?

We use internal processes and industry-standard services to assign categories to our wide-ranging inventory. From there, we can build audiences based on user visits to our categorized sites.

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