



## FAQ: BPA Electronic Circulation Auditing

**Question: Does BPA Worldwide audit electronic editions of both B-to-B and consumer magazines? What about publications that are electronic-only, with no print version?**

**Answer:** Yes to both questions. In addition to auditing electronic “replicas” of print consumer and B-to-B titles, BPA audits electronic-only publications (titles with no print version). We recognize that many publishers are launching electronic-only magazines or one-shots that have advertisers or sponsors, and may therefore be candidates for circulation audits. Contact BPA for more information about electronic-only publication auditing. The rules referred to below apply to audits of electronic editions (“replicas”) of existing print publications.

BUSINESS

CONSUMER

DATABASE

EMAIL

EVENTS

INTEGRATED

INTERACTIVE

NEWSPAPER

**Question: How is an “electronic edition” defined?**

**Answer:** BPA’s definition of an electronic edition has two parts. First, such a version must consist of: “multiple pages of content that are distributed electronically as a unit.” To meet this criterion, the electronic edition need not be a single file. However, if multiple files are used, the user must be able to navigate pages without changing screens, windows or programs. There must be a link on the page to allow the user to navigate from one file to the next.

The electronic edition must also be a “replica” of the print version in terms of editorial (not advertising), subject to the rules governing separate editions and the approval of the President.

BPA Worldwide rules governing separate editions do allow editorial content to vary somewhat, within established guidelines. However, the electronic edition must have the look and feel of the printed version. Separate advertising may be included, to allow the flexibility of running electronic-only advertising splits and enable advertisers to employ creative that takes advantage of Web site links and the audio-visual and interactive enhancements possible in the electronic medium, if they so desire.

**Question: Where and how are electronic editions reported on the BPA statement?**

**Answer:** Electronic edition copies of B-to-B or consumer magazines may be reported as qualified circulation (either non-paid or paid), as long as they meet the existing business publication or consumer magazine reporting rules for those categories of circulation, as well as the electronic requirements.

Qualified non-paid electronic distribution must be personally requested by the recipient or requested by the recipient's company (B7.29, C7.24). All demographic requirements established by the publisher for the print version apply to the electronic edition. Publishers must collect full mailing address details for all electronic-version subscribers, paid and non-paid.

To be considered a qualified paid or non-paid recipient of the issue, the electronic edition's subscriber must, at minimum, receive an alert instructing him/her that the issue is ready for downloading. The alert should contain a link to the location where the recipient may download/view the electronic edition. If an alert is undeliverable, the publisher has 90 days from the receipt of the hard bounce to either remove the individual from the electronic circulation file for the next issue, or correct the delivery details.

At the publisher's option, a publication may, instead of reporting alerts, report the number of subscribers who actually downloaded each issue, in the same Paragraphs, columns etc. as alert reporting (see below). To be reportable for an issue, the subscriber must download/view the issue within 60 days of the date that the publisher sends out email alerts for that issue to any subscribers. For example, if July issue alerts are first sent to any subscribers on July 1, all electronic recipients on the file have 60 days from July 1 to download/view the issue to qualify for reporting by the publisher (even if some recipients received their July issue alerts at a date later than July 1). Any issues not closed at the time of audit/filing circulation statements are to be estimated using a historical average. (See Rules B9.66 and C9.60.)

Electronic circulation must be reported separately throughout the circulation statement. Separate columns are used to report individuals receiving "Print Version Only," "Electronic Edition Only" and "Both Print and Electronic (unduplicated)" in Paragraphs 2 through 4 of the business report and Paragraphs 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the consumer report. Average qualified circulation is also reported separately for each of these three electronic categories in Paragraph 1 on the report's first page.

Subscribers who have opted to receive both print and electronic editions are counted only once on the report. They are categorized under the column "Both Print and Electronic (unduplicated)."

**Question: Can non-qualified electronic editions be reported?**

Electronic non-qualified advertiser and advertiser agency copies and non-qualified paid electronic copies (excluding sponsored) may be reported on the BPA Worldwide circulation statements, and audit reports; all other non-qualified electronic edition copies cannot be reported on BPA Worldwide circulation statements and audit reports.

**Question: What are BPA's audit requirements for electronic editions?**

**Answer:** Audits of electronic editions (and electronic-only publications) are subject to the same high standards of verification and procedural stringency that apply to print publications and all other BPA-audited media. (See Rules B10.4 or C10.4). With electronic circulation, BPA requires that media owners supply specific types of electronic documentation and formats.

Full summary statistics for electronic subscribers must be available. The publisher must be able to report electronic circulation within the columns previously described.

Additionally, SMTP logs must be available for each issue, as documentation of the alerts. The SMTP logs must contain the same information required for postal documentation. Specifically, the logs must indicate the email address for the recipient of the alert, the time stamp (date and time), and an issue ID that is unique to a particular issue. SMTP logs for every issue must be provided, as well as their corresponding summary reports. These SMTP logs, along with the electronic files, are to be sent to BPA immediately prior to audit. BPA will analyze the SMTP logs and compare them to the summary reports to verify distribution.

Below are two examples of the types of acceptable records that could be found in a SMTP log file. (The record format samples are “wrapped” because they are contained in a Word document):

```
Nov 10 2002 04:05:22 YOUR_EMAIL_SERVER_NAME sendmail[MESSAGE_ID_1]:  
ISSUE_ID_Nov2002: to=<userA@somewhere.com>, mailer=esmtplib, pri=943596,  
relay=email3.somewhere.com. [1.2.3.4], dsn=4.0.0, stat=Deferred: Connection timed out with  
email3.somewhere.com.
```

```
Nov 10 2002 04:05:22 YOUR_EMAIL_SERVER_NAME sendmail[MESSAGE_ID_2]:  
ISSUE_ID_Nov2002: to=<userB@somewhereelse.com>, mailer=esmtplib, pri=943596,  
relay=somewhereelse.com., dsn=4.0.0, stat=Deferred: Connection refused by  
somewhereelse.com.
```

If a publisher opts to report downloads/views, additional logs and summaries must be provided. Since these are most likely Web logs, there must be an identifier (not necessarily email address) to indicate which recipient downloaded/viewed the magazine. This is critical to BPA’s verification that each subscriber is counted as only one download/view. Other information as outlined for the alert logs is also required here.

BPA Member Relations Managers and auditors can provide all of the detailed requirements, and guide members through the process.

**Question: How does the electronic auditing process work?**

**Answer:** To ensure that a member’s system has the required logging and statistical report formats in place and available before a standard audit is conducted, BPA requires an electronic pre-audit.

For the pre-audit only (not the standard, 12-month audit), publishers have the option of having a separate, special audit of electronic distribution, or having the electronic distribution audited during their regular, annual circulation audit.

The separate, special pre-audit of electronic distribution consists of analyzing a single issue, and allows publishers to report electronic data for the first time on a six-month circulation statement.

For the special pre-audit, the selected issue's subscriber galley must be forwarded to BPA's Electronic Auditing Department, along with that issue's log files. A series of cross-checks between the galley and logs are done, and request of the electronic edition must be verified for a random sample of names selected from the electronic subscribers. If all data is in order and the logging and statistical reports meet BPA requirements, electronic distribution data can be reported on the publisher's next six-month circulation statement. At the time of the

publisher's next annual circulation audit, log files and statistical reports will be required for all issues reporting electronic distribution.

*To ensure reportability and a seamless auditing experience, we also urge BPA members planning to report electronic circulation for the first time to contact us and review the file format and reporting requirements before commencing actual electronic-version circulation marketing efforts.*

If a publisher chooses to have electronic distribution audited in conjunction with the annual circulation audit, the log files and statistical reports for each issue involving electronic circulation reporting, as specified above, must be made available. If all data is in order and the logging and statistical reports meet BPA requirements, electronic distribution will be reported in an audit report covering the twelve-month audit period.

*Note: Circulation statements that include electronic circulation claims are not released until an electronic pre-audit has been passed by at least one title within a media owner's stable of publications and magazines.*

**Question: What costs are associated with electronic-version auditing?**

**Answer:** Auditing electronic distribution costs \$195 per hour for each hour used by BPA's Interactive Auditing Department to analyze the alert or download/view logs. For the annual audit, this total is added to the standard BPA fee schedule, which is based on the average total bound for the printed version, plus the average electronic copies reported. If additional audit time is required, overtime charges of \$109 per hour also apply. For an electronic pre-audit, all time is billed at \$195 per hour.

**Question: How does BPA ensure that its rules are adapted as this new medium evolves?**

**Answer:** BPA's rules continue to be amended as publishers and advertisers learn more about the nature and dynamics of this medium. We are advised in this capacity by our Electronic Task Force, comprising media owners, media buyers and electronic vendors. As with all BPA rules, recommendations for changes in electronic rules are reviewed by our worldwide committees and advisory boards, our Auditing Policies Committee, and our Board of Directors, then voted on by the Board.

**Question: How can we learn more about initiating a BPA electronic audit?**

**Answer:** We encourage members and prospective members to contact us with any questions or input you might have regarding electronic reporting and auditing procedures.

In addition to contacting your regional, full-time member relations manager (MRMs' contact information is located at [www.bpaww.com/contact/member\\_relations.htm](http://www.bpaww.com/contact/member_relations.htm)), feel free to contact our Senior VP, Auditing, Rich Murphy ([rmurphy@bpaww.com](mailto:rmurphy@bpaww.com); 203.447.2804).

**About BPA Worldwide** A not-for-profit organization since 1931, BPA Worldwide is governed by a tripartite board comprising of media owners, advertising agencies and advertisers. Headquartered in Shelton, Connecticut, USA, BPA has the largest membership of any media-auditing organization in the world, spanning more than 30 countries. Worldwide, BPA serves 3,000 media properties—including more than 1,900 B-to-B publications, more than 400 consumer magazines and newspapers, more than 300 Web sites, plus events, email newsletters, databases, wireless and other advertiser-supported media—as well as more than 2,600 advertiser and agency members.

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