# Highlights form the MMA Webinar

# The Next Wave of Verification:
# Carrier Networks
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Procter & Gamble Chief Brand Officer Marc Pritchard recently said this about verification: ""Brands have come to their senses and will no longer accept self-reporting without verification."

Typically, when brands talk about verification, they're talking about transparency and viewability, but the same need for a better truthset is also becoming apparent concerning location data. In this MMA webinar, Jake Moskowitz, vp/measurement of Placeast, Kevin McGinnis, CEO of Sprint's Pinsight Media, and Benjamin Bring, vp/media director of Ansible, discussed the need for location verification, using carrier networks as the foundations for data accuracy.

To that aim, Placecast's Moskowitz said during the webinar that the company has started talking to the Media Rating Council about accreditation for its Location Verification product to further assure advertisers about location data.

According to a recent study from *Ad Age* and Factual, issues around data are at the very top of marketer concerns about location. Eighty percent said they are concerned about quality, almost 71 percent are concerned about the reputation of individual providers, and 65 percent are concerned about transparency.

How Marketers Are Using Location Data
Location data accuracy is becoming more important as its usage expands. Spending on location is expected to double in the next four years, but making sure that data is accurate is crucial to that growth. Here are four ways marketers are currently using location data not all of them to do with advertising:

1. **Geofencing.** Still the most common use for location data, it is for real-time location-based targeting.

2. **Segments based on historical visits**. This is used for objectives such as targeting people who often visit the same retailer.

3. **Attribution:** Location data is used to see if a campaign drove store visits.

4. **Insights:** This type of tracking helps retailers answer questions such as where they should open their next location.

Even as marketers are increasingly using location data, their concerns about quality are well founded. Problems with data accuracy across the whole ecosystem can range from 13% to 88% inaccuracy-- and wide ranges can even be found within an individual vendor. There are three main reasons for inaccuracy:

1. **Incentives.** A bid request in an exchange goes for twice the cost if it includes lat/long information, so the value chain is motivated to make location data look better than it actually is.

2. **Technology.** A phone's settings, and the version of the app or SDK the user has installed on their phone are just some of the things that can affect accuracy.

3. **Pattern recognition.** While often used to clean data, it can miss events that are inaccurate, and it can filter out events that are accurate.

Why Is Carrier Data so Accurate?
Carrier data isn't affected by any of these, so it is a true dataset, with four distinct properties:

- **Reliability:** Carrier grade technology provides a truthset for device location.

- **Always-on:** It's the only data source to capture all location activity on each mobile device.

- **Scalable:** It has a census-like overlap with the measured audience.

- **Independent:** Originally designed for network maintenance, its origins have nothing to do with ad tech.

In essence, it's a highly persistent data source with fewer gaps than other sources. Every event on a carrier network has a geo-tag, from texts to emails. All of this provides a persistent deterministic footprint. Therefore, carriers are not reliant upon probabilistic techniques to make assumptions in between the different times a stand-alone app "sees" a user. Also, since most individuals have only one carrier, it is the most pristine and uncorrupted mobile record available today, and data sets are similar from carrier to carrier.

Pinsights provided a look at the persistence and scale of the data it gets from its parent, Sprint. It sees 600 location events per day per user with location being updated about every minute and a half. This equates to 20 billion location events that translate to one billion routes daily. An app, by comparison, might see a user's location once or twice per hour.

And then, of course, there's the accuracy. One person from a major DSP recently explained, "As it relates to location, publisher or SDK sourced location solutions are unverified, while carrier location is verified."

How Placecast's Location Verification Product Works

Placecast is looking to bring the benefits of carrier data to the entire marketing ecosystem. Its product works like this: once it receives data from carrier partners, it deterministically matches it against datasets provided by clients and then matches the time stamp and compares the location and time provided by the carrier and by the client. In standard reports, it provides reporting back on the percentage of data points or impressions within certain radii of where users were supposed to be -- based on the campaign or data set specifications.

As marketers deal with location data, it's important to be able to delineate between accuracy and precision, Moskowitz said: "We see the term accuracy used frequently in this industry when people actually mean precision. … Precision is needed to measure store visits, but we feel, there hasn't been nearly enough focus on accuracy. It doesn't matter if a data point has nine decimal places if the device was actually three miles away. That's where location

verification comes in."

The carrier data Placeast has is a combination of cell towers, GPS, multi-lateration, and tower triangulation, giving it multi-layered horizontal accuracy. Multi-lateration data offers much higher precision than straight cell tower data, and about two-thirds of the data used for location verification by Placeast is determined via multi-lateration and GPS; the rest is at the cell tower level.

Placecast's carrier data has a precision range of one kilometer down to ten meters. With location data with that level of accuracy, the capabilities of all of the use cases are enhanced, ensuring that optimization, targeting and insights are much more accurate.

A Location Verification Case Study

Ben Bring of Ansible presented a case study that used Placecast to see how accurate location data for a recent campaign was. A question he frequently asks is: "How do we get a viewability-like metric in place to protect ourselves from wasted spend and increase performance for our clients?"

The campaign was for an in-app campaign for a regional casual dining chain in the Southeast, and the marketer was looking to geo-fence within a five-mile radius. For the purposes of the study, the campaign was managed through one vendor.

What Ansible and the restaurant chain discovered that as much as 35 to 40 percent lay outside the geo-fence, with some coming from as far away as Seattle. He outlined several best practices that can aid marketers when using location data:

1.  Compare vendors before running media.

2.  Verify audiences before targeting them. If an automotive brand is targeting people who have visited car dealerships, make sure the underlying location data used to track those visits is accurate.

3.  A/B test to optimize live media against location data.

4.  Check the accuracy of visits for campaigns that use cost-per-visit pricing or when doing an attribution study.

To conclude, Moskowitz said, "When it comes to location data it's important to remember that no one dataset can keep the needs of every use case. Every dataset has positives and negatives -- and the truth is carrier data is no different. But one thing that carrier data is ideally suited for is to verify the accuracy of other datasets."

To see the presentation and listen to the whole Webinar, click here.