

Q4 and Full  
Year 2019  
**Video Benchmarks  
Report**

# AdBridge™ Insights

As we begin a new decade, digital video advertising continues to evolve and opportunities abound for marketers to deliver their messages.

This report, based on aggregate performance metrics for video ads served from ER's AdBridge, captures data for Q4 and full year 2019. Campaigns for a diverse set of brands across multiple categories are tracked, providing an industry-wide snapshot that identifies trends across performance metrics, such as video ad completion and invalid traffic rates, as well as breakdowns by media destination (premium publisher vs. media aggregator) and device (desktop, mobile, tablet and CTV). In addition, benchmarks specific to Direct to Consumer (DTC) brands are included in this report. Read on to find out how video advertising played out in Q4 and full year 2019.

## **Premium Is a Safe Bet and Pays Big Dividends**

Premium publishers are still preferred with 81% of all ads served into premium environments in 2019. Advertisers likely want to see and know exactly where their ads will appear, rather than leaving that decision to an algorithm. Are we seeing less programmatic buys taking place? At ER we still serve and measure billions of ads through DSPs, but we're seeing far fewer impressions served through that channel versus premium direct. CTV remains a hot topic in video advertising with its steady growth, consumer appeal and strong preference for premium publishers. There are multiple factors playing into the hands of premium publishers who will gladly continue accepting payment for their inventory. After all, they're spending big bucks on competitive, quality programming and as additional streaming services continue to evolve and folks reach for those scissors to cut cords, premium will continue to be... well, premium.

## **Media Aggregators Shining Brightly Too, Especially in Key Areas**

While the percentage of impressions served to media aggregators has fallen (from 26% in Q4 2018 to 19% in Q4 2019), we see strength for aggregators in a few other areas that are quite significant. Completion rates are a key performance indicator among media buyers, who would like to ensure their ads are being watched all the way through. In the past year, completion rates among media aggregators have risen more than 12%—from 73% in Q4 of 2018 to 82% in Q4 2019. That is a significant jump and it bodes well for all parties as aggregation offers a layer of efficiency and scale for marketers seeking reach and frequency beyond premium direct buys.

Media aggregators have also made some significant improvements in combating invalid traffic. Levels of GIVT in Q4 2019 declined to about 2%, a significant reduction from Q4 2018, when levels were above 5%. General invalid traffic will continue to threaten the integrity of the digital video ecosystem, but there are many levers in place across the ecosystem to filter out invalid impressions and increase buyer confidence.

## Steady as She Goes

While big shifts can be notable and interesting, seeing stability in trends over time provides media strategists with new paradigms for planning and a confidence that the media landscape is more predictable than in the early days. 2019 proved to be just that—steady. For now, at least. Beyond the aforementioned areas we've pointed out, a lot of metrics remained quite stable throughout 2019 and finished where they started. For instance, the use of 30-second ads, the share of ads served to CTV, average completion rates, average click-through rates and average time spent were all fairly unchanged throughout the year.

The digital video advertising ecosystem certainly keeps us all on our toes. At ER, we are fortunate to serve and measure digital video campaigns through a variety of media outlets and for a diverse cross section of brands. We hope our industry benchmarks provide a healthy mix of metrics that matter to you.

As our data keeps growing, our spreadsheets get wider and our insights get deeper. We're happy to share our [trend data](#), that you can download with quarterly metrics dating back to Q1 2016.

Let us know how we're doing. Do you find these reports helpful? Do you have questions stemming from what you've read here? Feel free to drop us a line by emailing [marketing@extremereach.com](mailto:marketing@extremereach.com).

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**Definitions**

**PREMIUM PUBLISHERS**

Direct sellers of digital inventory; generally broadcast networks or content providers

**MEDIA AGGREGATORS**

Sellers of inventory from multiple sources including programmatically sold traffic. These are generally ad networks, DSPs, or agency trade desks

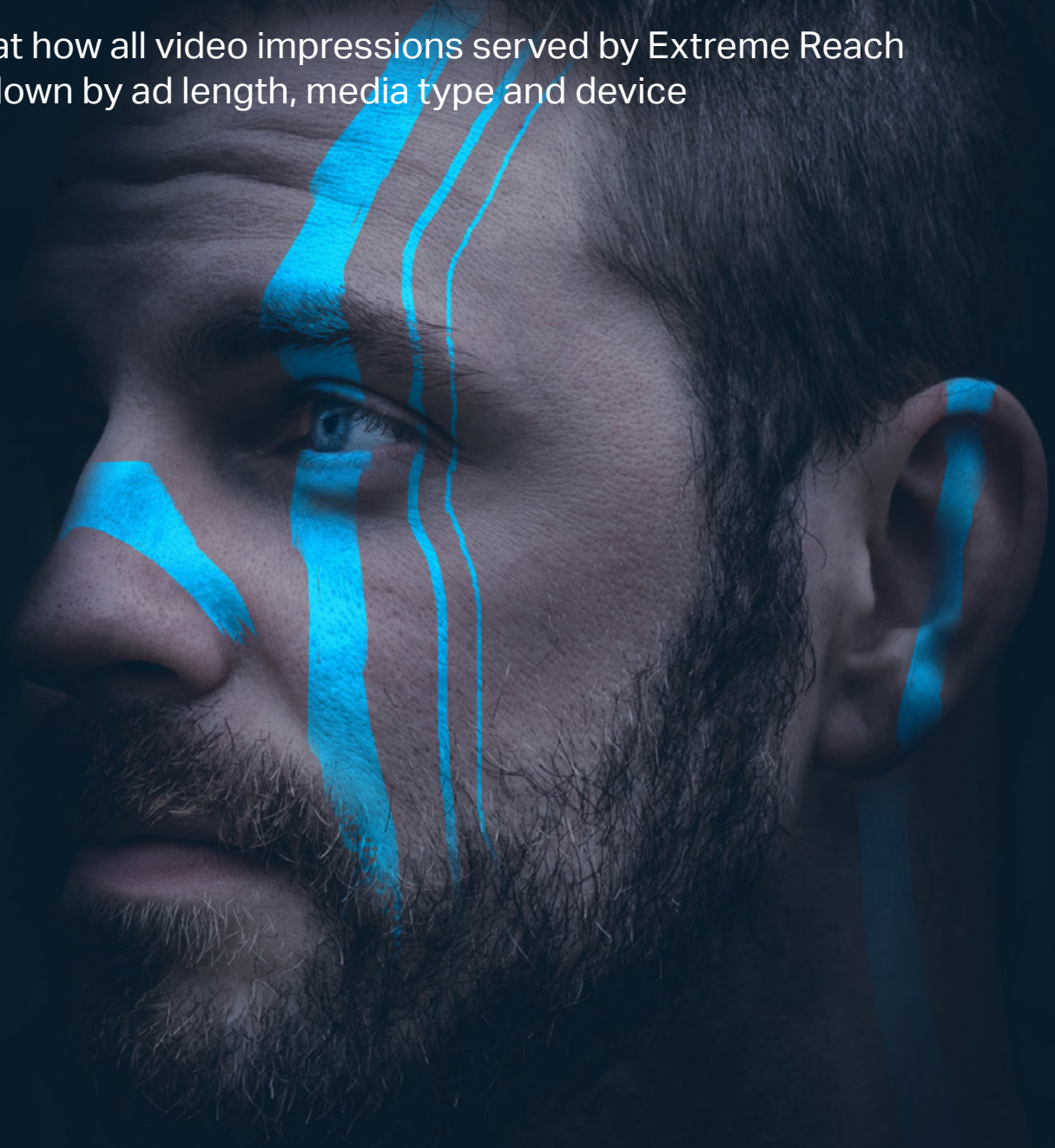
**DTC BRANDS**

Digital natives who sell directly to consumers, whether online or in their own brick and mortar stores, and put a strong focus on social media and content

4th Quarter  
2019

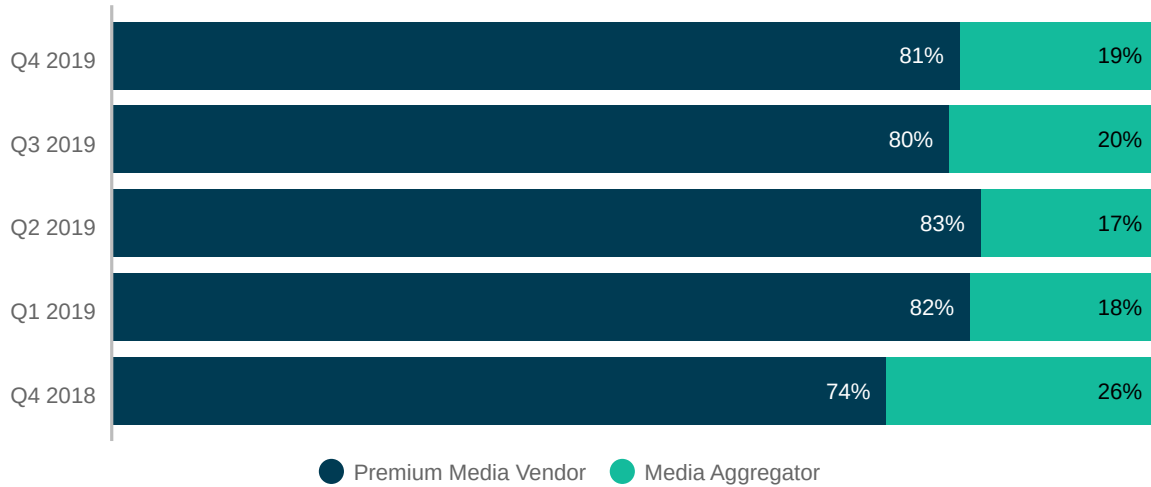
# Overall Breakdown of Video Impressions

A look at how all video impressions served by Extreme Reach break down by ad length, media type and device



## Impressions by Media Type

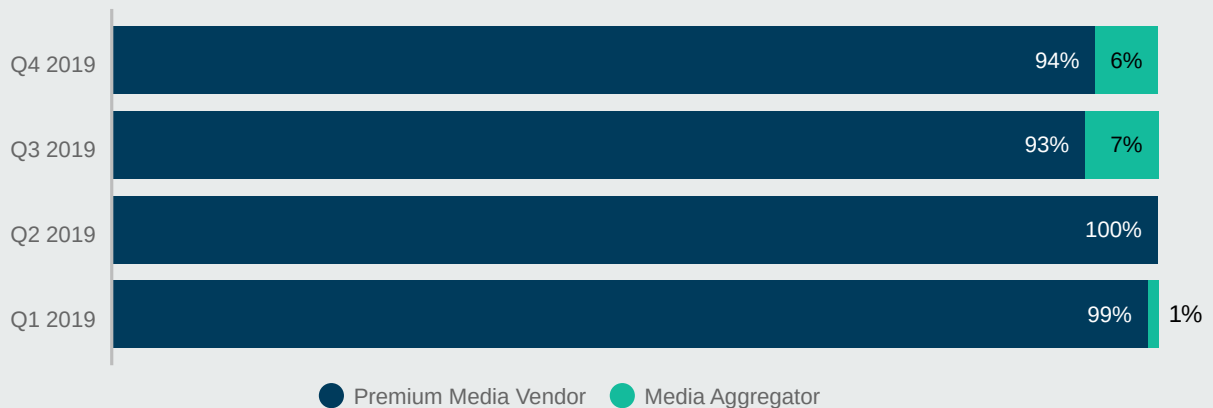
In Q4 2019, premium pubs accounted for 81% of impressions served, a slight increase from last quarter (80%) and a slight decrease from two quarters ago (83%). Looking back a year though, premium pubs are up 9% in Q4. Media Aggregators declined 5% from Q3 and 27% from a year ago.



### DTC

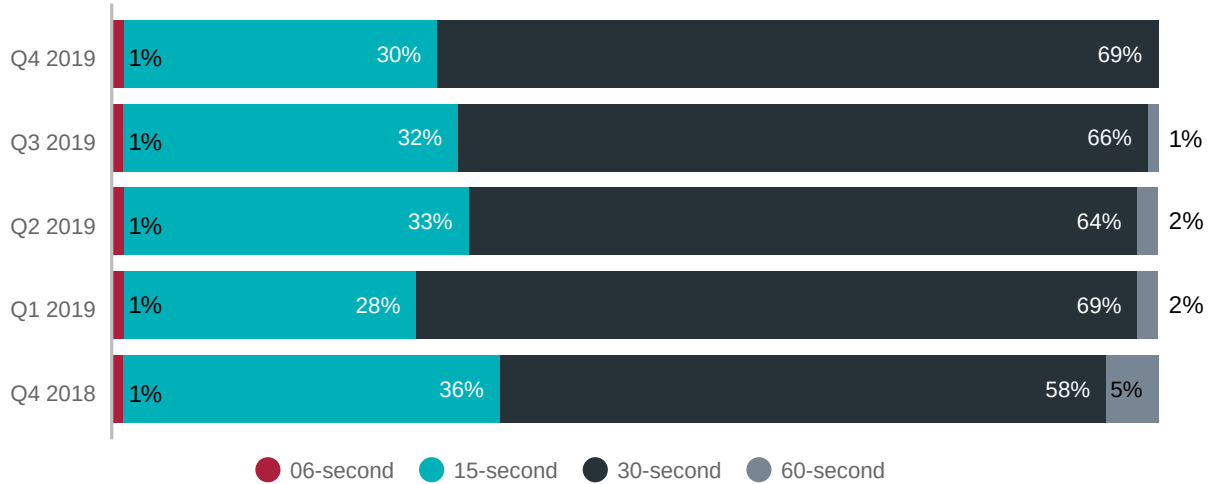
DTC brands continue to choose premium publishers as their media outlets of choice for delivering that direct to consumer messaging. Those premium publishers received a 94% share of impressions for Q4, whereas aggregators netted just 6% in Q4. Premium publishers had all the glory just two quarters ago when 100% of DTC impressions ran in their apps and programs.

The average for the full calendar year: 95% Premium, 5% Aggregators.



## Impressions by Ad Length

In Q4, 30-second ads accounted for 69% of all impressions measured. While 30-second spots grew nearly 19% over Q4 2018, 15-second ads decreased by about 17% during the same period.



**DTC**

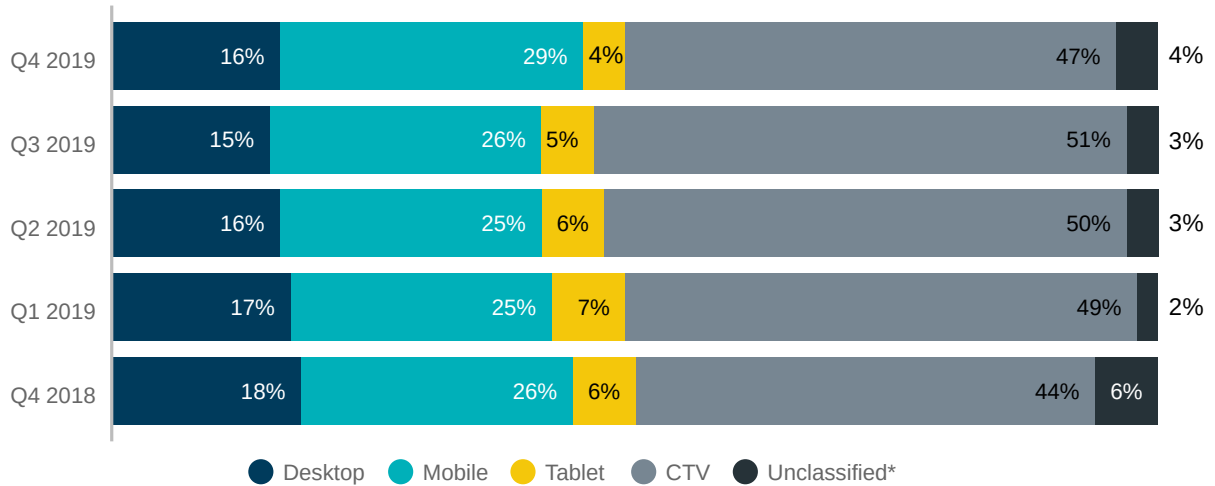
Q4 witnessed another resounding preference for the 30-second ad among DTC advertisers, coming in at 93% to just 6% for 15-second spots. 15-second ads are much more prevalent in the mix across all advertisers however -- to the tune of 30%.

The average for the full calendar year: 95% for 30-second ads, just 4% for 15-second ads. The remaining 1% is made up mostly of longer ad lengths.



## Impressions by Device

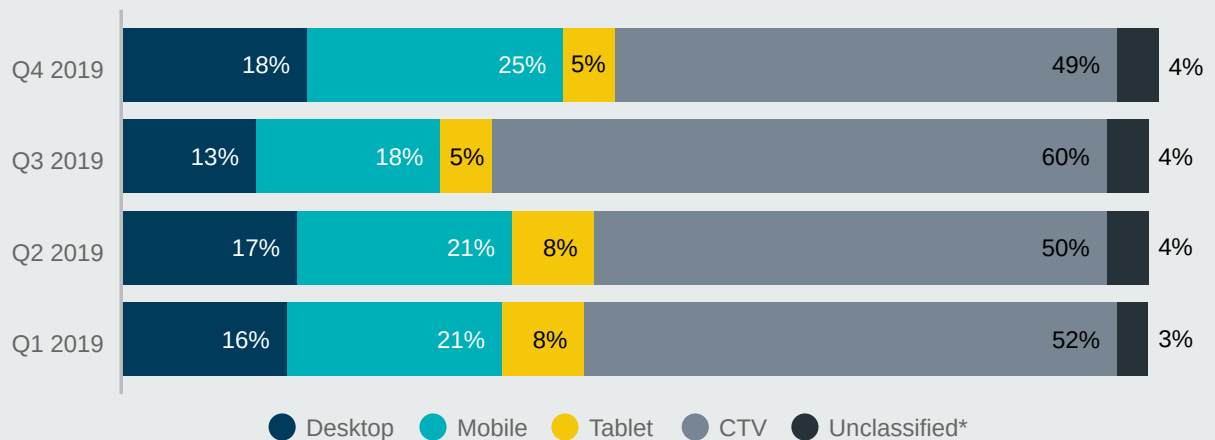
CTV still accounts for nearly half of all impressions, and fairly steadily so at 47%. CTV use in 2019 peaked in Q3 at 51%, and still reigns supreme. Mobile continues its slow and steady rise as the second contender, accounting for as much as 29% of impressions served in Q4.



### DTC

When looking through the device lens and the preferred platform for DTC brands, it's no surprise that CTV tops this chart at 49% of all DTC brands electing to use CTV. The impression breakout by device closely mirrors the device breakout among all brands overall, with mobile coming in second followed by desktop impressions.

The averages across the full calendar year: 54% CTV, 21% Mobile, 16% Desktop, 6% Tablet and 4% Unclassified.



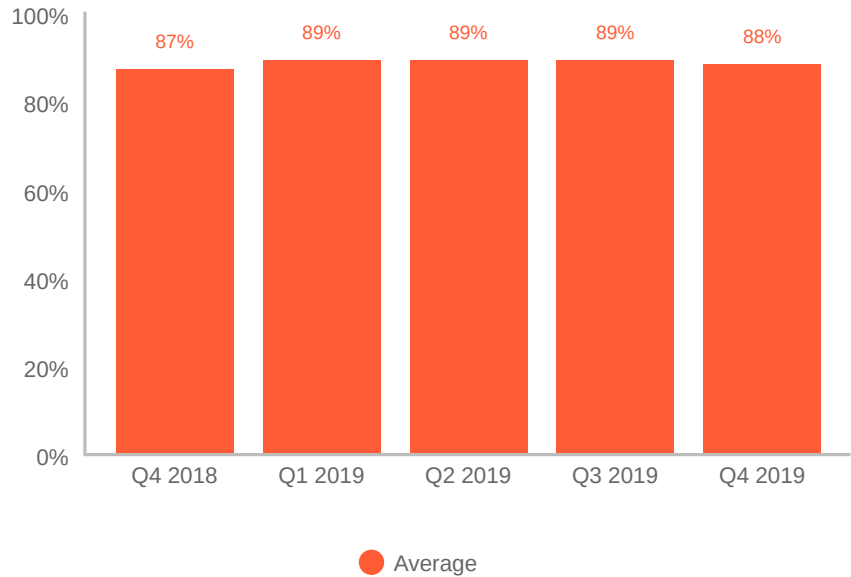
# Video Completion Rate

Percent of Impressions where video played  
all the way through



## Average VCR

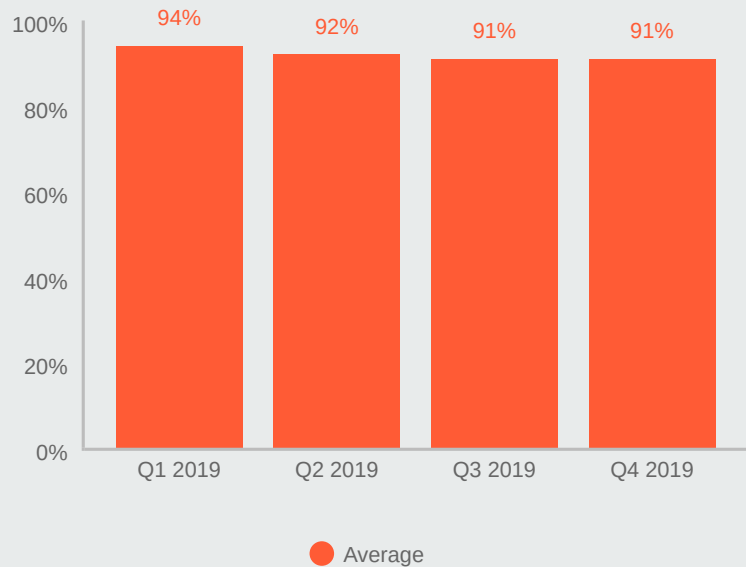
The average video completion rate (VCR) across all vendors remained impressively steady at around 88% with very little fluctuation from quarter to quarter in 2019.



## DTC

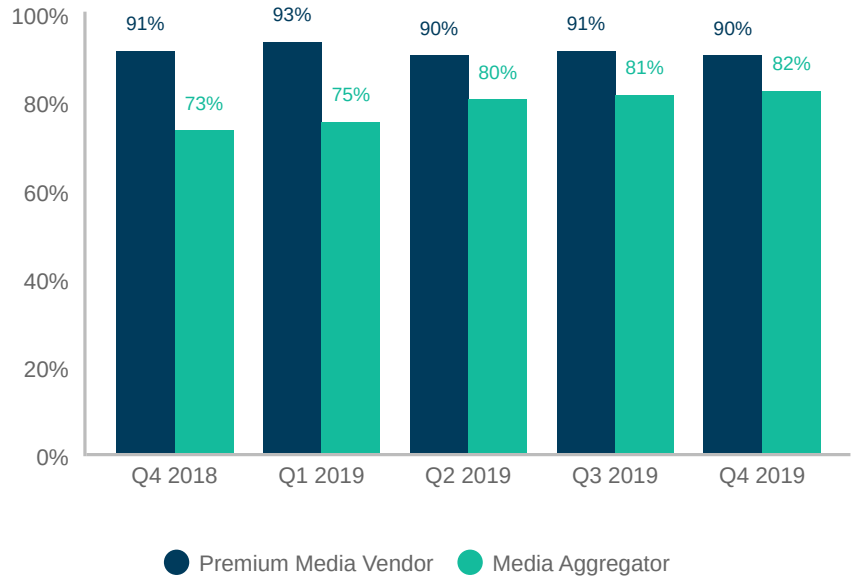
The average video completion rate for DTC brands in Q4 was 91%. DTC brands slightly edged out the overall average completion rate of all brands, which landed at 88% for Q4 and 89% for the full year 2019.

The average across the full calendar year: 92%



## VCR by Media Type

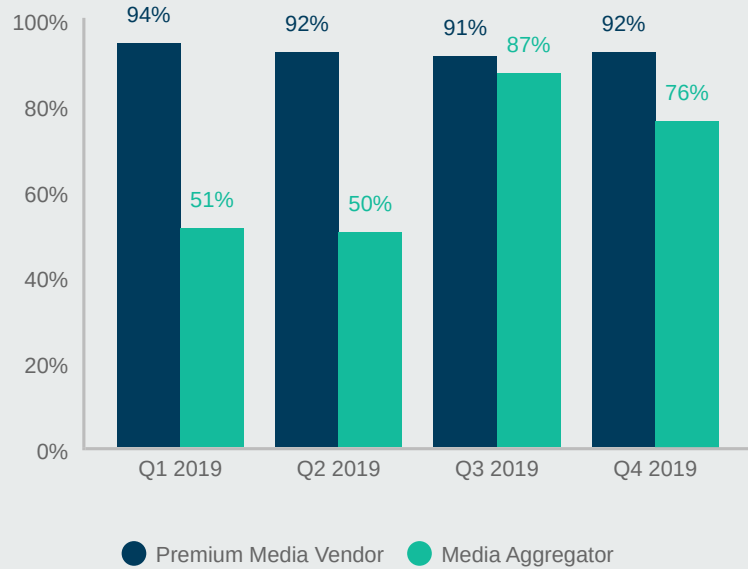
Completion rates for media aggregators have been gaining positive ground very steadily for five consecutive quarters, coming in at 82% for Q4. Premium publishers remained high at 90% for Q4 and averaging 91% for the full year.



## DTC

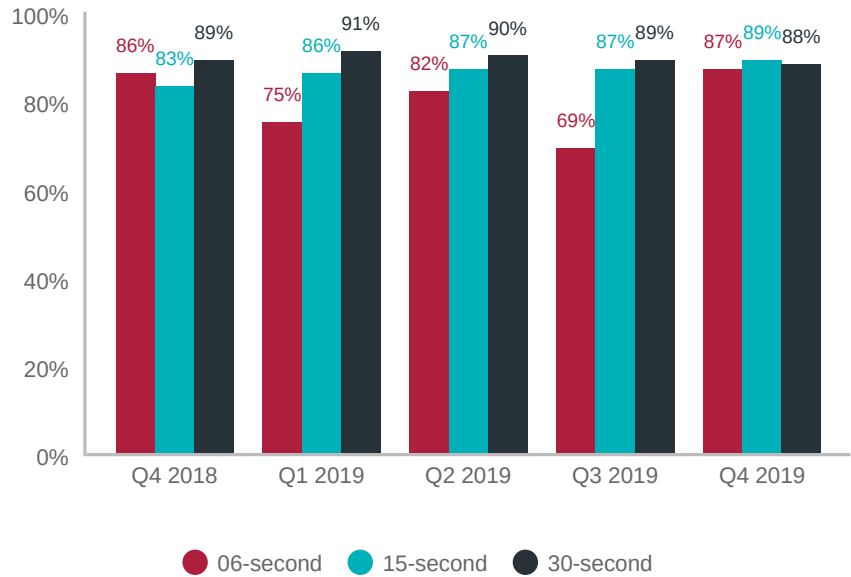
DTC brands advertising with premium publishers saw video completion rates of 92% in Q4, compared to 76% among media aggregators.

The averages across the full calendar year: 92% for premium publishers and 81% for aggregators.



## VCR by Ad Length

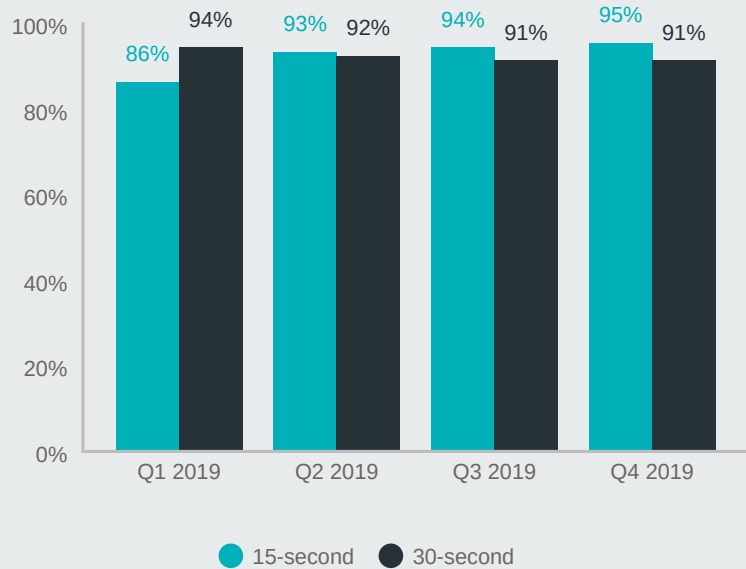
15-second spots have experienced some modest gains with respect to completion rates. The average completion rates for 15-second ads in Q4 was 89%, exhibiting a gain of just over 2% from Q3 but an increase of more than 7% from a year ago. 30-second spots are finishing right there too, at 88%, down just one percentage point from Q3 2019.



## DTC

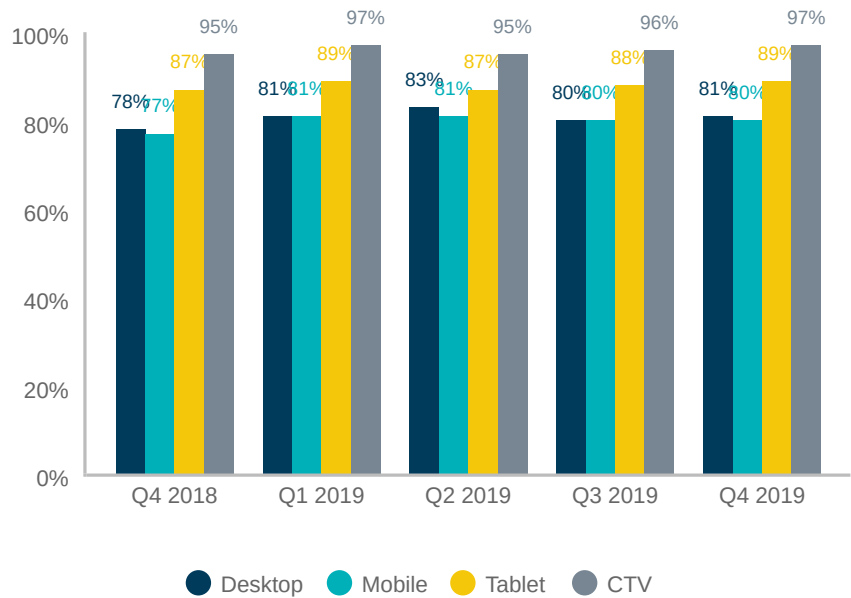
DTC brands achieved greater completion rates with 15-second ads (95%) compared to 30-second ads (91%). Over the course of the year though, these two ad lengths have swapped places. In Q1, 30-second ads had a higher completion rate.

The averages across the full calendar year have 15-second spots just barely edging out 30-second spots 93% to 92%.



## VCR by Device

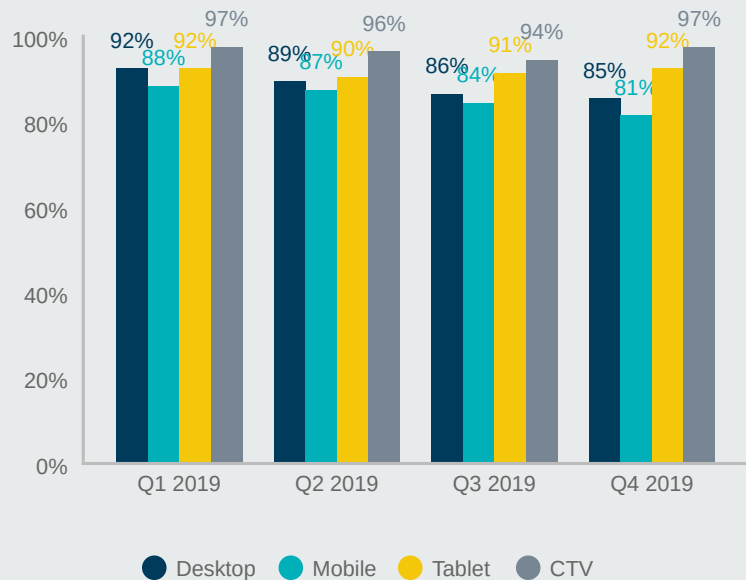
It really doesn't get much better than CTV, with completion rates finishing Q4 at 97% and averaging 96% for the full calendar year. Advertisers continue to garner the attention of their viewers for longer periods of time with CTV. Completions rates among tablet users are second-best at a very respectable 89%.



## DTC

Connected TV began and finished 2019 with a firm grip on DTC completions with a whopping 97%. Likely a product of the environment - engaging, consumable long form content and, in most cases, unskippable ads. Rates were next highest for DTC brands with tablet users at 92%.

The averages across the full calendar has CTV at 96% and tablet at 91%.



# General Invalid Traffic Filtered Rate

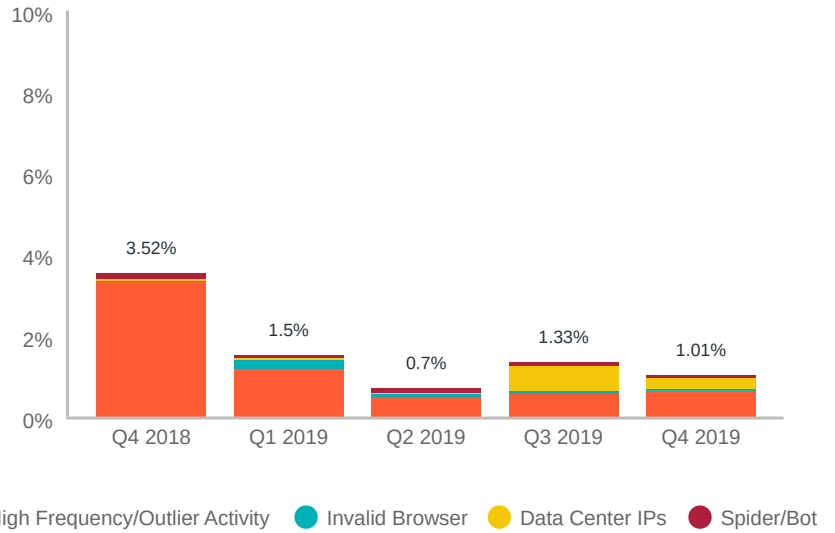
Percent of Impressions filtered from gross counts



## GIVT by Reason

The average rate of invalid traffic for video ads served by ER decreased by 25% from Q3 to Q4, down to only 1%. The picture was a bit bleak a year ago with average rates as high as 3.52%. Improvements of over 70% have gotten us to where we are today.

Of that 1 percent of ad traffic considered invalid, high-frequency traffic is the leading contributor at 0.62%. Data Center traffic represents the second largest contributor at 0.26%. Invalid browsers and spider/bot traffic complete the reasons at 0.07% and 0.06% respectively.



## DTC

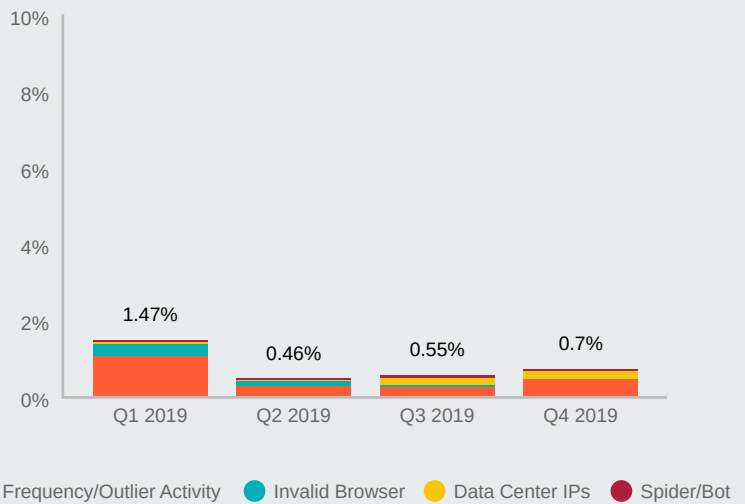
In Q4, the average GIVT rate for DTC brands settled at around 0.70%, an increase from 0.55% in Q3. Filtration rates under 1% are very, very good.

The average for the year is 0.73%.

High frequency traffic is nearly always the main culprit when evaluating GIVT, and it is definitely the largest contributor to invalid traffic. Given that the entire amount of filtered impressions is less than 1%, the numbers for each category are very small.

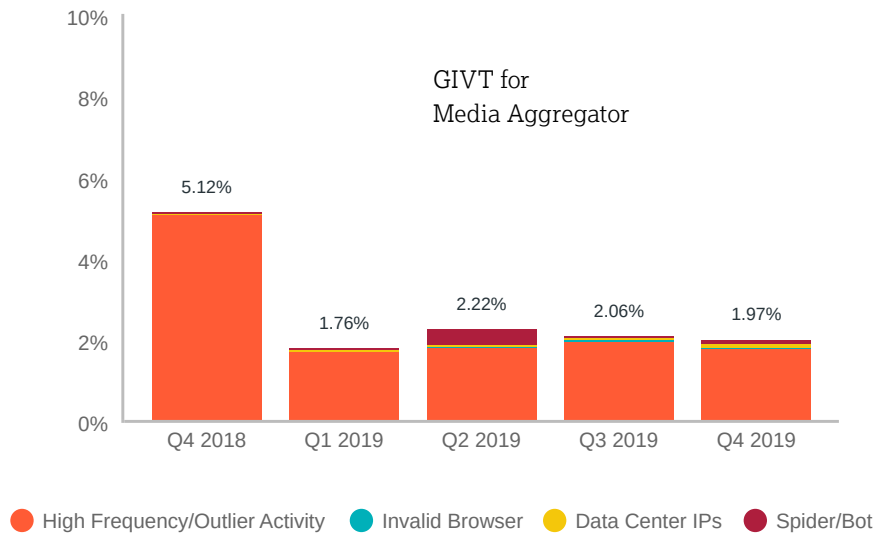
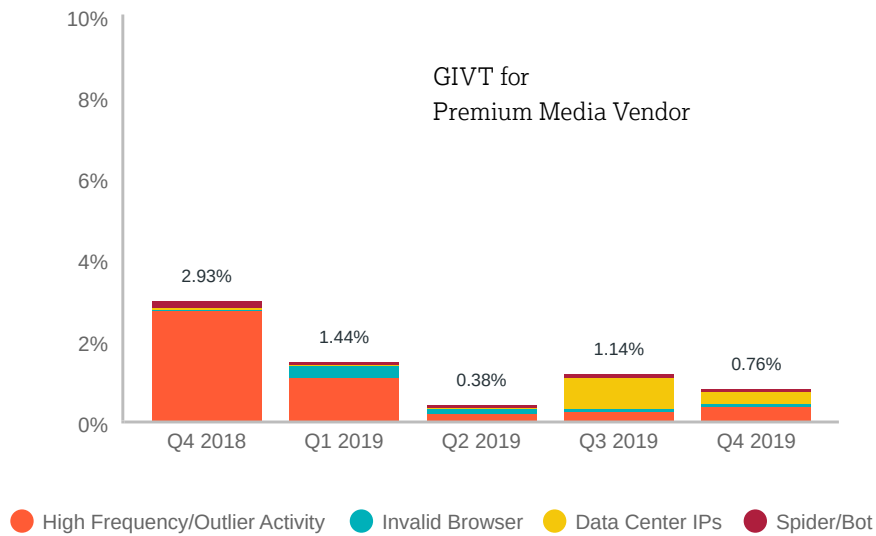
The year-end averages for the four categories of GIVT are as follows:

- 0.44% High Frequency Traffic
- 0.14% Data-Center IP Traffic
- 0.11% Invalid Browser Traffic
- 0.05% Spider/Bot Activity



## GIVT for Premium Media Vendor vs. Media Aggregator

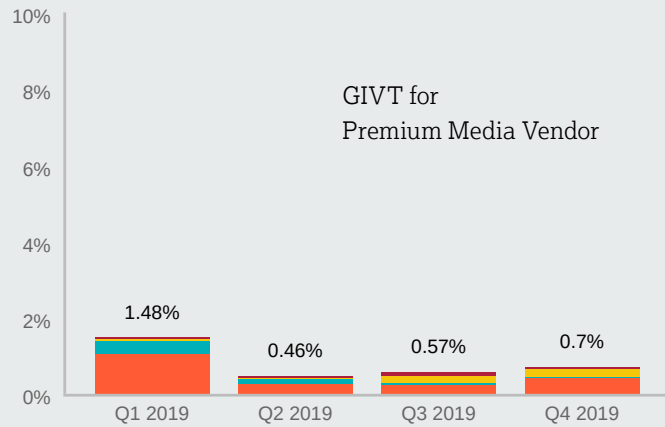
Average rates of GIVT for premium publishers was 0.76% compared to 1.97% for media aggregators. The breakout of reasons closely mirrors the overall reasons with aggregators tipping higher in the high-frequency department and premium pubs seeing more data center traffic. Again, positive improvements all the way around in both categories from one year ago.



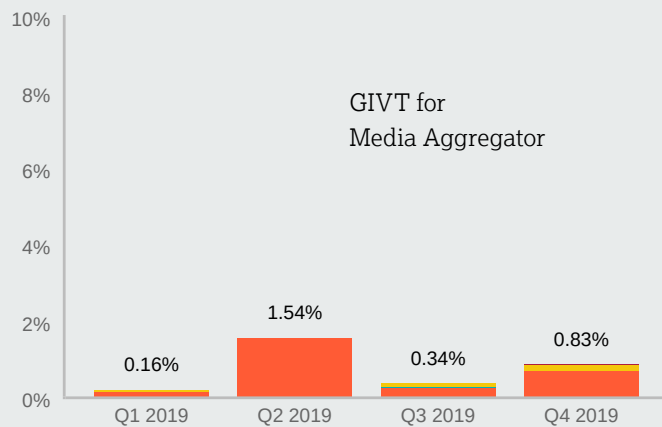
## DTC

The numbers for both premium publishers and aggregators were both less than 1% in Q4. Total filtered rate for premium publishers was 0.69% and 0.83% for aggregators.

Averages for the full calendar year were higher for premium publishers, at 0.74%, than for aggregators, at 0.55%.

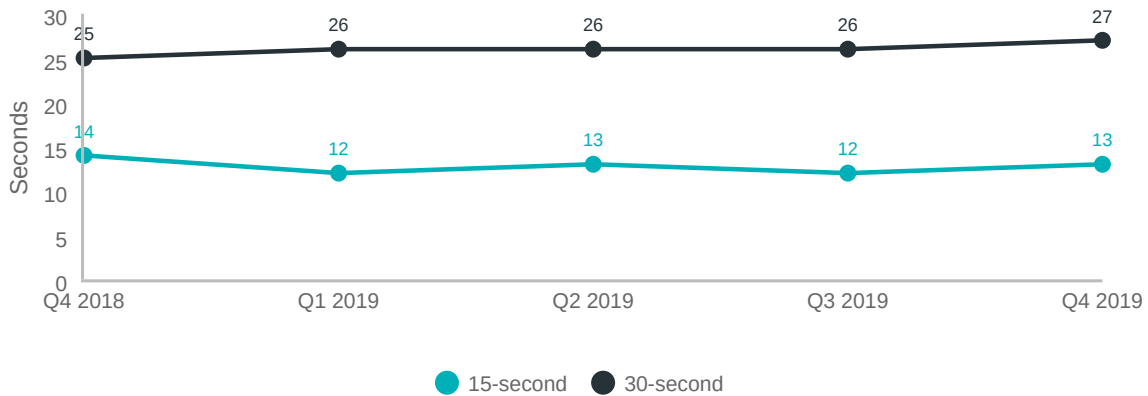


● High Frequency/Outlier Activity ● Invalid Browser ● Data Center IPs ● Spider/Bot



● High Frequency/Outlier Activity ● Invalid Browser ● Data Center IPs ● Spider/Bot

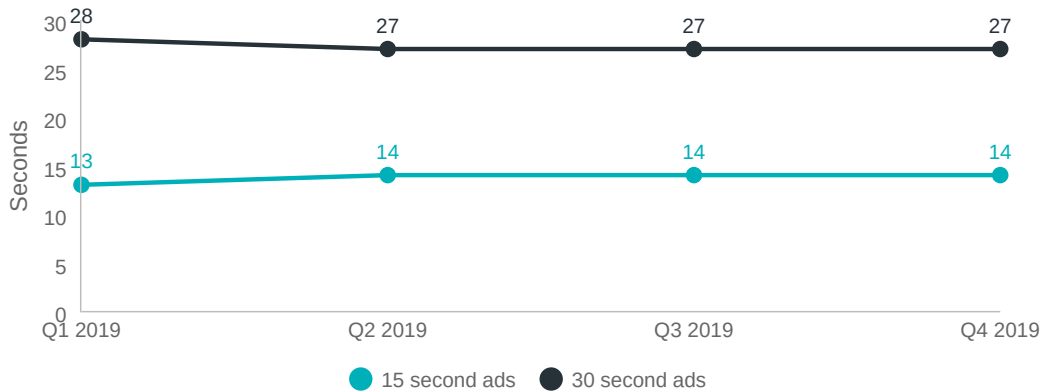
# Average Time Spent by Ad Length



## DTC

The average time spent with DTC brands' ads was 28 seconds for Q4, which breaks down to 14 seconds for 15-second spots and 27 seconds for 30-second ads.

The overall averages for the year for all ads served by ER were very similar at 28.6 seconds for the overall average, 13.9 seconds for 15-second spots and 27.4 seconds for 30-second ads



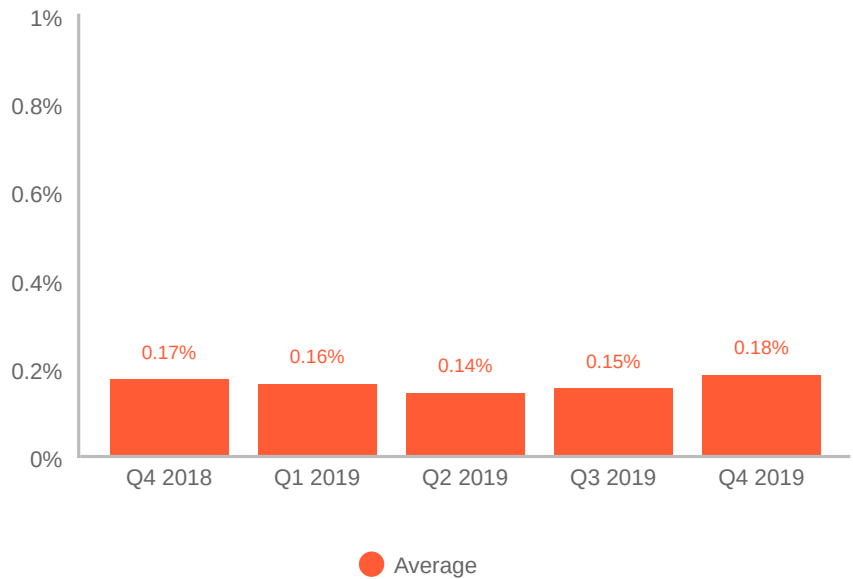


# Click-Through Rate / Engagement

Number of clicks divided by the number of impressions

## Average CTR

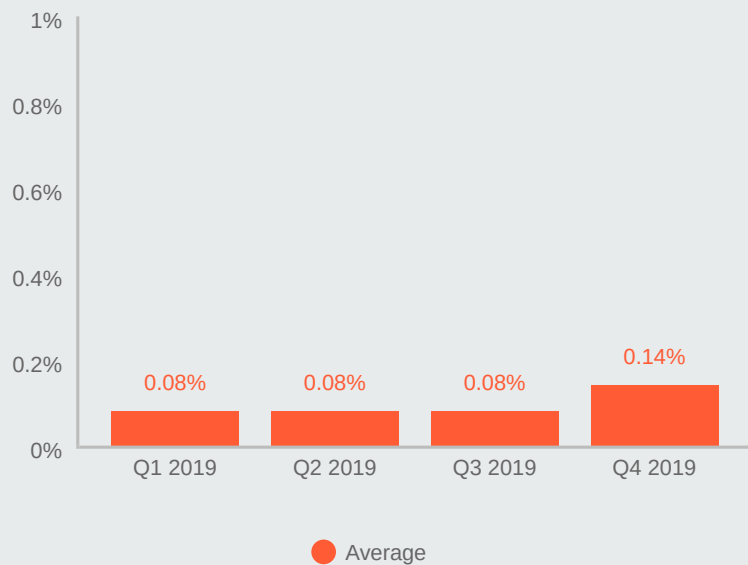
The average click through rate across both premium publishers and media aggregators was 0.18%, representing a 20% increase from Q3 2019 and a 6% increase from Q4 2018. Remember, these numbers are very small in the grand scheme of things, so big moves in click through rates are not always that telling.



## DTC

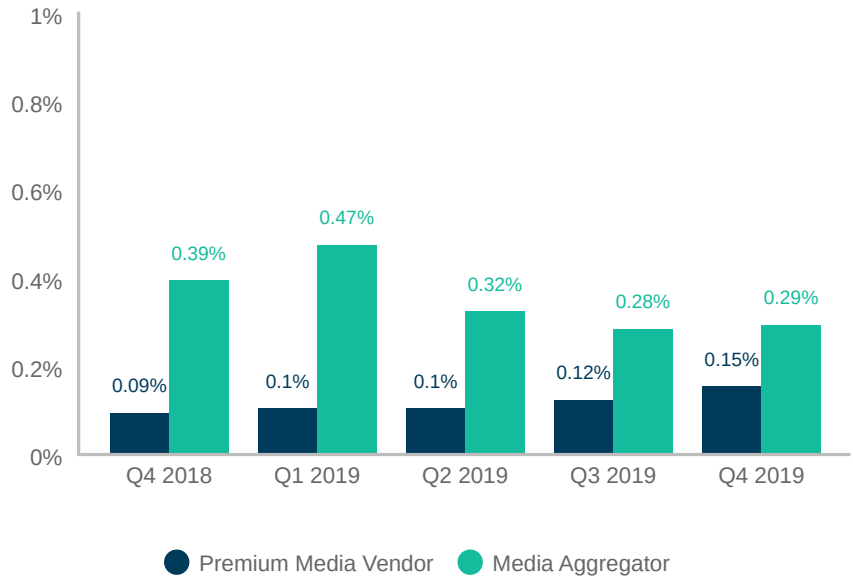
DTC brands enjoyed a solid 75% increase in click throughs in Q4 2019. CTR rates among DTC brands were rather stagnant during the first three quarters of 2019.

The full year average, thanks to that impressive fourth quarter growth, was 0.10%



## CTR by Media Type

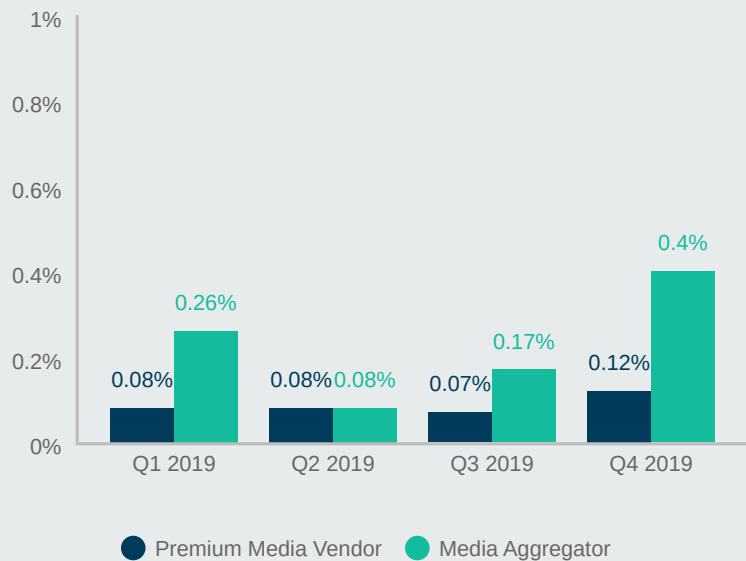
Click through rates for premium publishers has been steadily rising over the past five quarters, however we need to be reminded that premium publishers also account for greater amounts of CTV impressions which are inherently not interactive, ie: not clickable. Aggregators have seen a similar rise over the last quarter but are down from 0.39% in Q4 2018 to 0.29% in Q4 2019.



## DTC

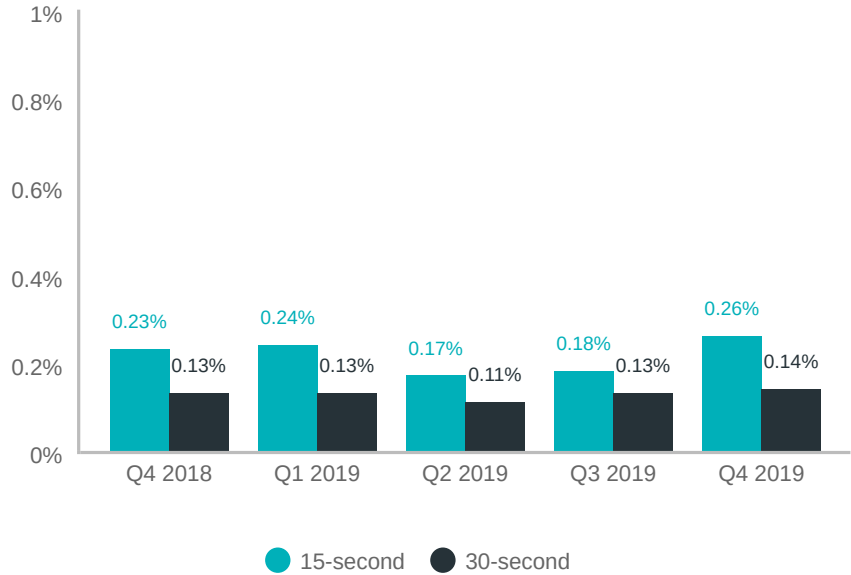
The Q4 CTR growth was due in part to a strong finish to the year from media aggregators, topping out at 0.40% for the quarter and marking a 135% increase from Q3. The CTR rate for premium publishers finished at 0.12%. Remember: half of premium inventory comes from CTV.

Average CTR for the full year were 0.26% for aggregators and 0.09% for premium publishers.



## CTR by Ad Length

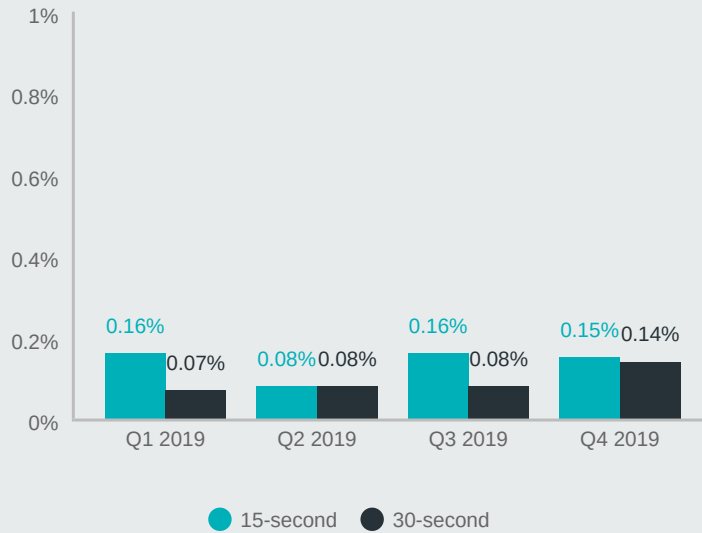
The numbers illustrate that more viewers click on 15-second spots than on 30-second spots. Click through rates for 15-second ads were 0.26% for Q4 up from 0.18% in Q3 2019. 15-second ads have also seen the most fluctuation throughout the year whereas CTR's for 30-second spots have remained relatively steady at 0.14% for Q4 and an average of 0.13% for the year.



## DTC

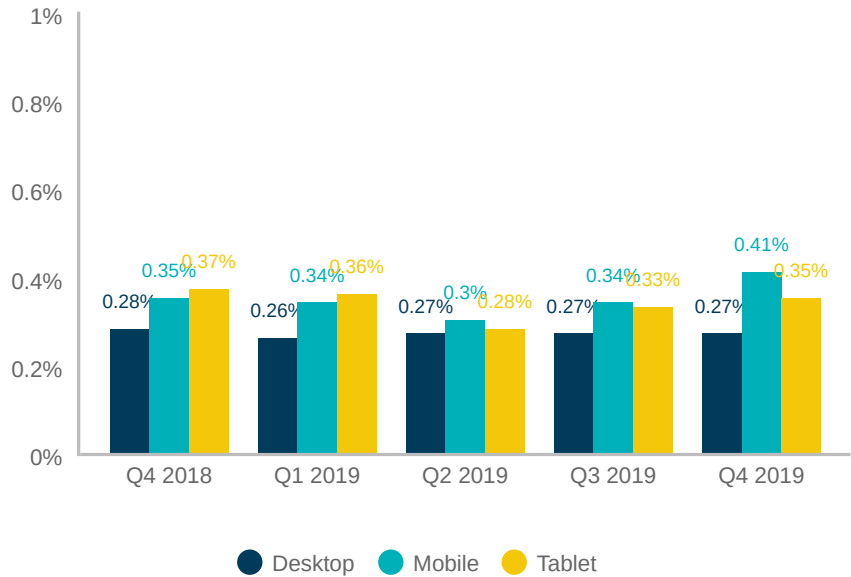
When we slice CTR by length (:15 & :30) we see very similar click through rates for both premium publishers and media aggregators for Q4. The 15-second spot barely edged out the 30-second spot in spurring viewer interaction. The first three quarters of the year saw some fluctuation in rates, especially among aggregators.

The averages for the year when looking at lengths, put 15-second ads at 0.15% and 30-second ads at 0.09%



## CTR by Device

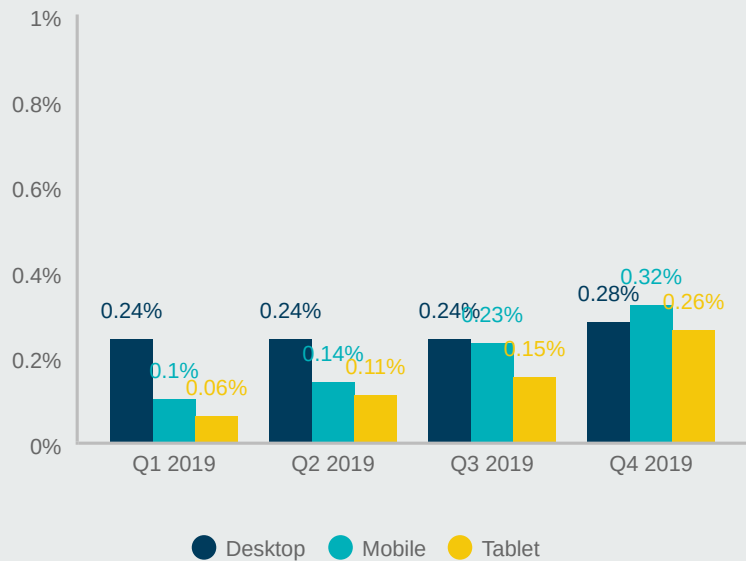
Mobile devices continue to lead the way in terms of click throughs at 0.41% for the quarter, followed closely by tablet users at 0.35% and desktop at 0.27%.



## DTC

Similar to metrics for brands overall, mobile ads bring the strongest click through rates. For DTC brands, and Q4 specifically, mobile measured in at 0.32% followed closely by desktop (0.28%) and tablets (0.26%).

For the year, desktop actually led CTR among DTC brands at 0.25%.



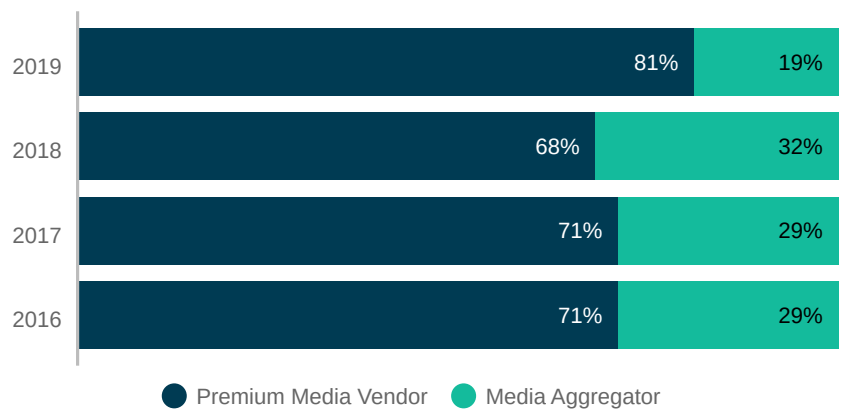
# Full Year 2019

# Overall Breakdown of Video Impressions

A look at how all video impressions served by Extreme Reach break down by ad length, media type and device

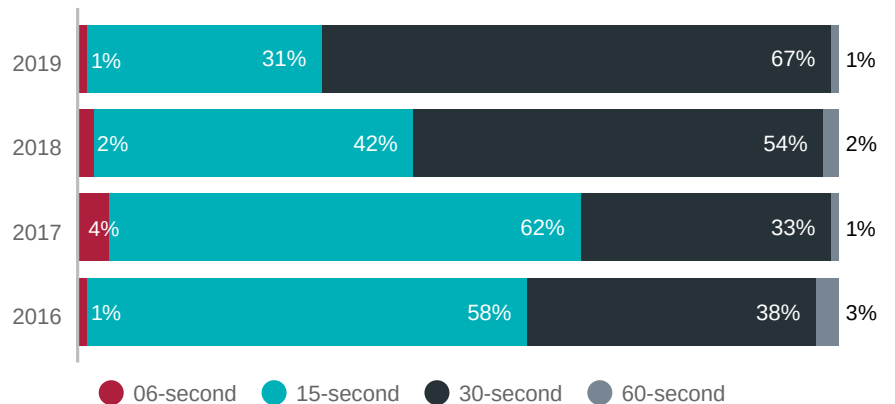
## Impressions by Media Type

At 81% for full year 2019, premium publishers experienced a significant jump in the overall share of impressions versus full year 2018 -- an increase of 19%. In 2019, premium was the place to be.



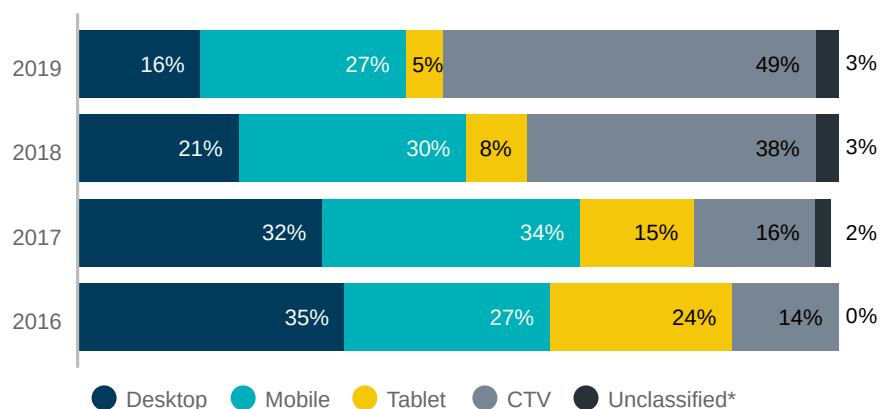
## Impressions by Ad Length

The 30-second ad continued its meteoric rise, reaching 67% of overall ad impressions in 2019, an increase of 24%. The affinity for 30-second ads has now more than doubled since 2017. Conversely, the 15-second ad accounted for just under a third of all impressions at 31%, marking a 26% decrease over the prior year and a drop of exactly 50% from two years earlier.



## Impressions by Device

No big surprise, but for the full year end picture, at 49%, CTV ended up taking nearly half of all impressions. That represents an increase of 29% from last year and over 200% from just two years prior. Those impressions had to come from somewhere and naturally we witnessed some drops across desktop, which was down 24%, mobile -- down 10%—and tablet, which decreased by 38%.

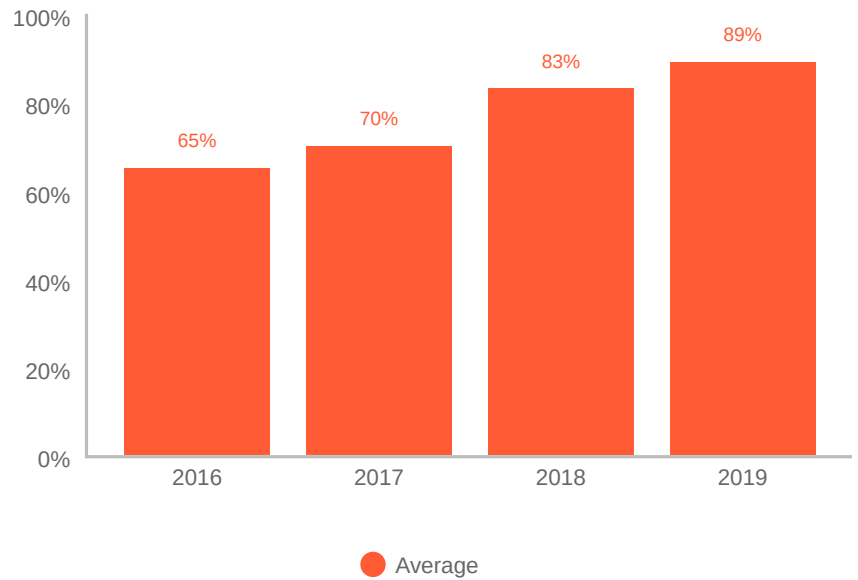


# Video Completion Rate

Percent of Impressions where video played all the way through

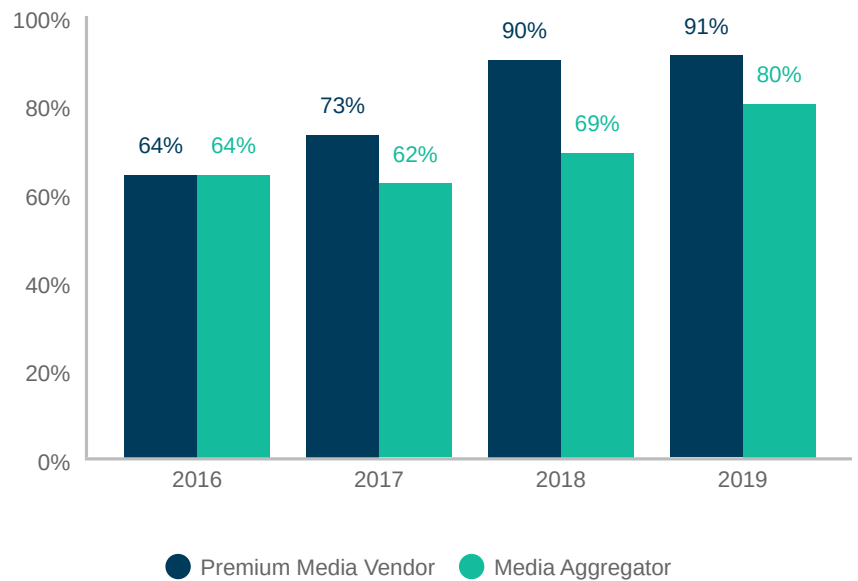
## Average VCR

As we will see in the following charts, CTV remains the darling in most categories, especially when it comes to completion rates. Overall, more ads were viewed to the bitter end in 2019 -- 89% in fact, marking a 7.2% increase over last year. Looking at trends, completion rates have been rising over the past four years, making for some very happy advertisers, no doubt.



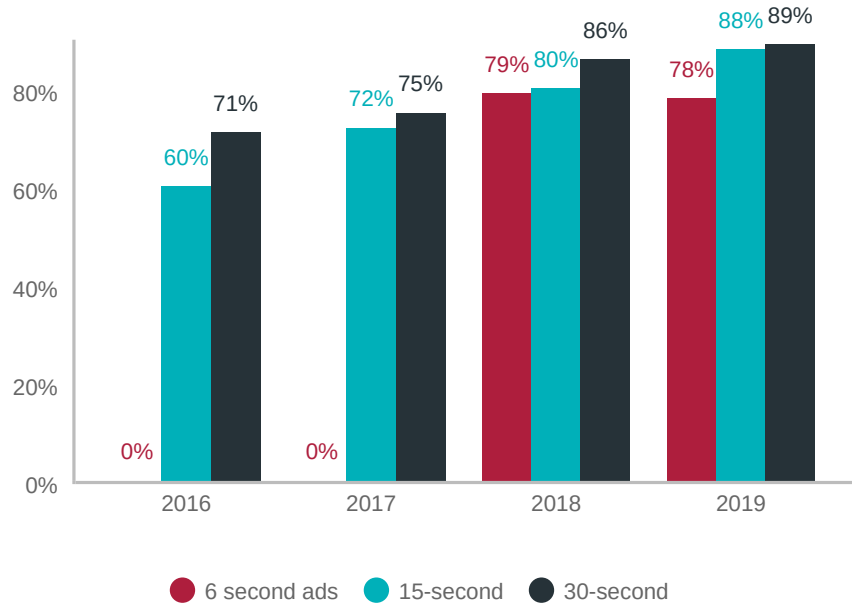
## VCR by Media Type

Completion rates among premium publishers grew by a modest one percent, topping out at 91%, and have been continually rising over the past several years. Media Aggregators won the award for most improved in this category though, as their overall completion rate rose a whopping 16%, landing at 80% in Q4.



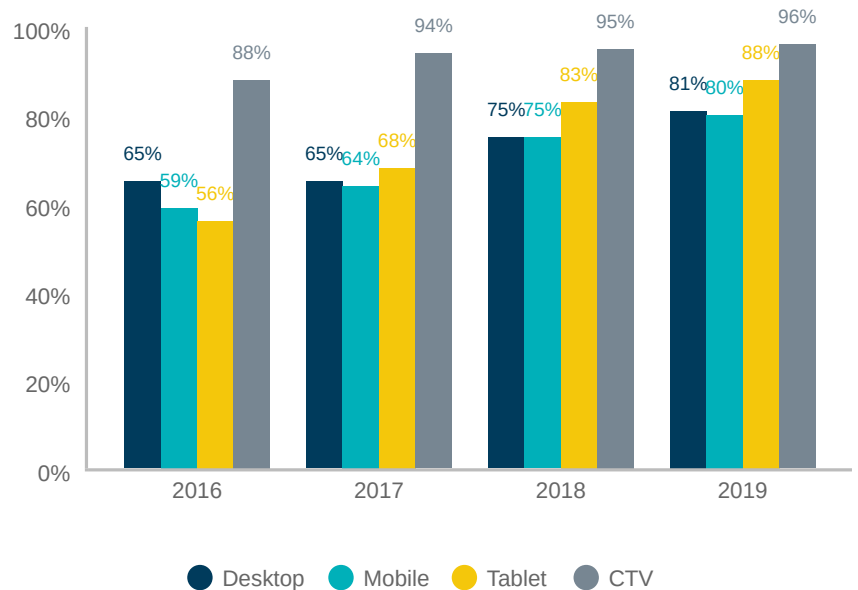
## VCR by Ad Length

30-second ads continue to capture viewers' attention the longest (at 89%) narrowly skirting beyond 15-second ads and showing overall completion rates of 88% for Q4. Both represent a steady growth over the prior year with 3.4% and 10% increases, respectively.



## VCR by Device

CTV had the highest completion rates in 2019 at 96%, up from 95% in 2018. It is clearly a captivating medium with programming that keeps viewers tuned in. In addition, viewers rarely have the option to skip ads on CTV. Our metrics show that viewers are staying engaged on all devices. Desktop, mobile and tablets all experienced increases in completion rates by 6% to 8%.

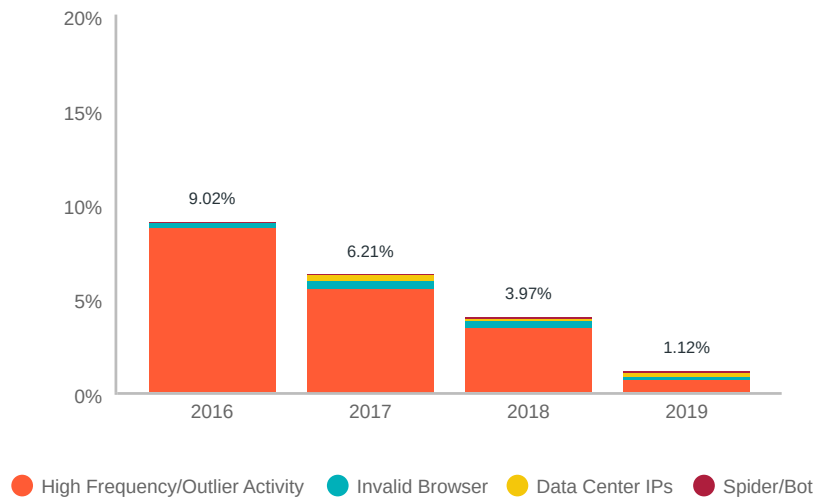


# General Invalid Traffic Filtered Rate

Percent of Impressions filtered from gross counts

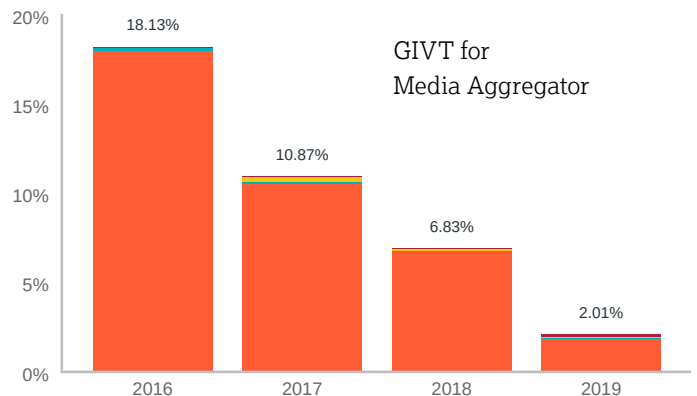
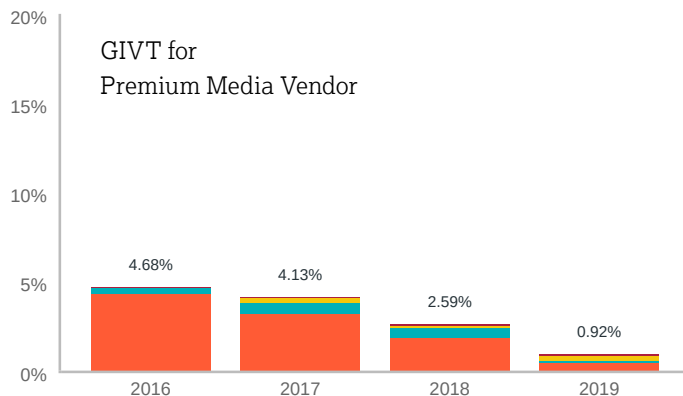
## GIVT by Reason

Due to the nature of the digital video ecosystem, there will always be minor fluctuations in numbers related to data center traffic/IPs, valid user agents and spider/bot traffic. One thing is for certain, it's nice to see overall IVT numbers continue their downward trend.



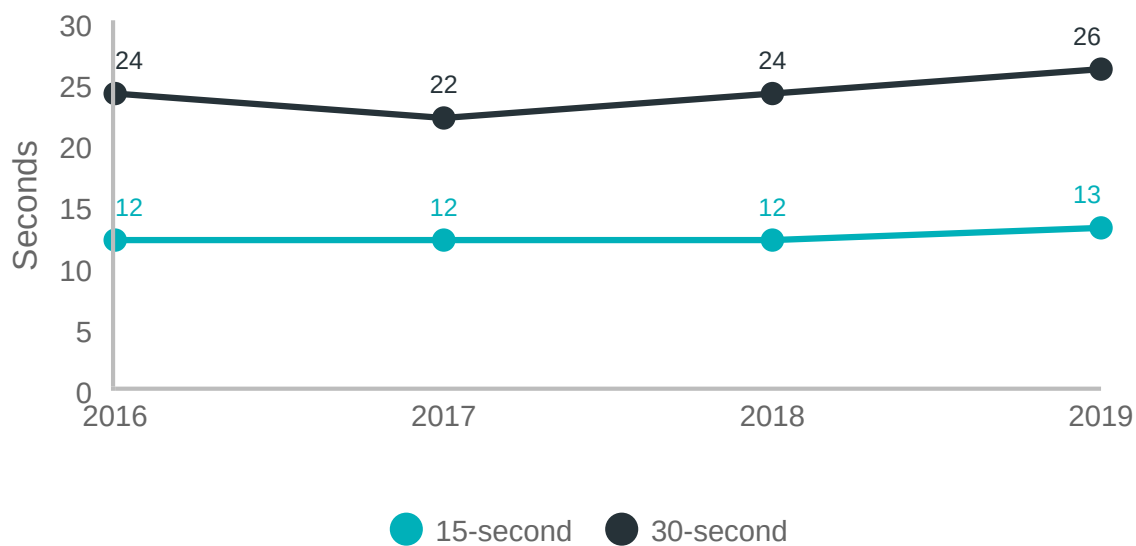
## GIVT for Premium Media Vendor vs. Media Aggregator

IVT among premium publishers is down 2.59% for the full year 2018 to just under 1% in 2019. Media Aggregators have seen similar improvements, landing at just over 2% for 2019, down from 6.83% just a year ago. Please keep in mind that while these changes in reported numbers appear as significant gains, the overall number of impressions is really quite small.





## Average Time Spent by Ad Length

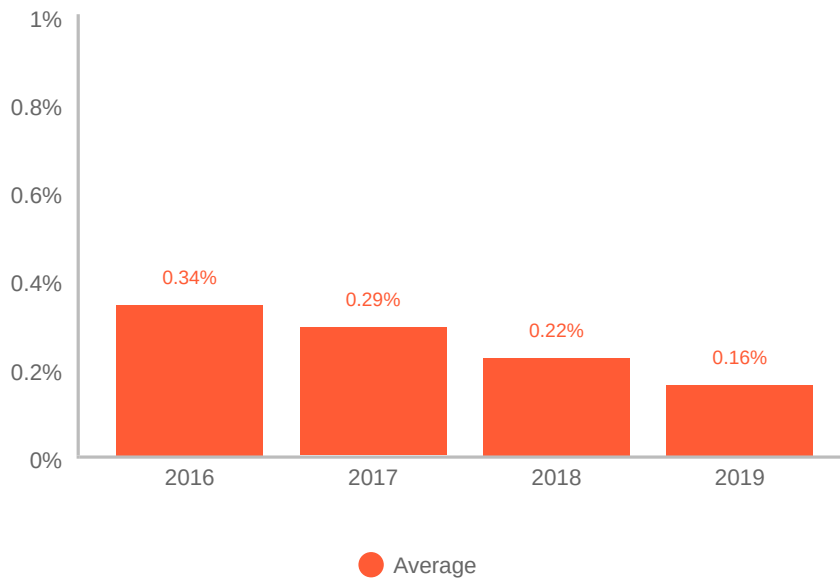


# Click-Through Rate / Engagement

Number of clicks divided by the number of impressions

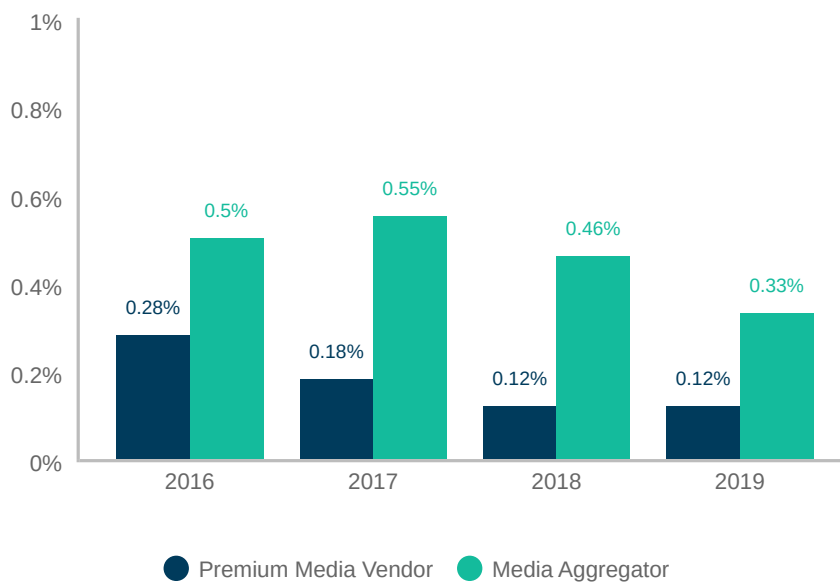
## Average CTR

As we've noted in previous reports, click throughs are on the decline and are being replaced by other KPIs. The average CTR in 2019 was just 0.16%.



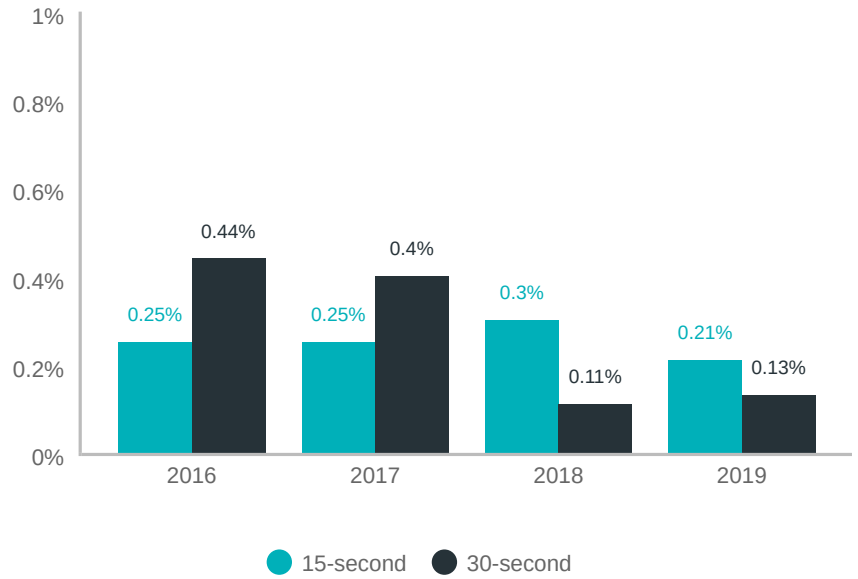
## CTR by Media Type

The surge of impressions in CTV has also been a likely culprit of the waning click through rates we've seen, given that click through is not an option on CTV. In 2019, the rate for premium publishers held steady at 0.12%, while the rate for aggregators dropped by more than 28%, landing at 0.33%.



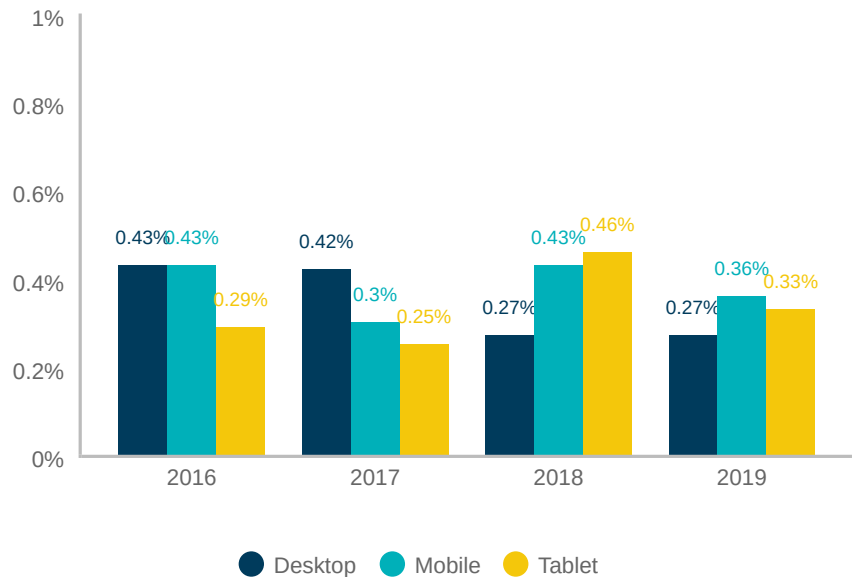
## CTR by Ad Length

Click through rates for 15-second ads had a slight edge over their 30-second counterparts in 2019, though the rate declined from 2018. And although 30-second ads counted for nearly two thirds of all impressions measured in 2019, the story has reversed over time. In 2016 and 2017 30-second ads commanded click through rates as high as 0.44%. Completion rates among 30-second ads in 2019 sit at around 0.13%.



## CTR by Device

Given that CTR's are down in general, the picture becomes clearer when looking at CTR by device type. CTV is not considered a clickable environment, so CTV is out from the beginning, but desktop, mobile and tablet were all down in 2019 versus rates in 2018, as evidenced by this chart.



**AdBridge from Extreme Reach** is complete asset management for TV and Video ad creative. AdBridge integrates all forms of asset preparation and delivery with Talent & Rights Management. When in-house and external teams work in one central platform, it's fast and easy to manage, deploy and track ad assets across today's complex media landscape, with total control and the assurance of compliance everywhere.

[Extreme Reach](#) revolutionized the way advertisers control the deployment of their creative and how the media sources those ads to execute campaigns. The company's creative asset workflow platform, AdBridge™, is built upon a decade of innovation and integrates all the paths and processes required by today's complex media landscape.

The company proudly serves the best and biggest brands, agencies, production companies, media destinations, performers and rights owners. With over 200,000 registered users and nearly fourteen million creative assets in its care, ER connects the creative flow between the buy and sell sides of the advertising ecosystem.