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The New York Times

February 11, 2017 Saturday
Late Edition - Final

Facebook Takes Steps to Improve Advertising Data After Criticism

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SECTION: Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 5

LENGTH: 623 words

Facebook said on Friday that it would agree to an audit of information it provides to marketers and provide them with **new, more precise measurement data**, less than two weeks after **Procter & Gamble, America's biggest advertiser, criticized the lack of transparency** provided by digital ad platforms.

The social network, which came under scrutiny last year for repeated **inaccuracies in its tools for measuring ads**, also said Friday that it would give marketers new options for buying video ads this year.

For example, marketers might pay only if an ad was viewed to completion or if the sound was on. The nonprofit Media Rating Council will conduct an audit to "verify the accuracy of the information" **Facebook** gives marketers, the company said in a blog post, adding that it was also working with 24 third-party measurement companies.

Facebook announced the changes after Marc S. Pritchard, the chief brand officer at Procter & Gamble, demanded that the digital ad industry "grow up," criticizing the different ways platforms, including **Facebook** and YouTube, define whether an ad has been viewed and the lack of accredited outside sources used to measure digital ad performance.

While technology has let advertisers "venture where no creative has been before at lightning speed," it has too often led to bad **advertising** accompanied by even worse viewing experiences, Mr. Pritchard said on Jan. 29 at a conference held by the Interactive **Advertising** Bureau.

He said that, as part of an effort to change the situation, Procter & Gamble would start accepting the Media Rating Council standard on ad viewability and work with third-party measurement companies that are accredited by the group. If companies are not willing to comply, he said, they will lose its business. Procter & Gamble, with brands including Gillette, Crest and Charmin, is the biggest advertiser in the United States, spending \$2.4 billion in marketing last year, according to Kantar Media.

"We spend enormous amounts of time trying to understand, analyze and explain the differences between **Facebook**, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, Pandora, YouTube and the dozens of different viewability standards claimed to be right metric for each platform," Mr. Pritchard said, according to a copy of his remarks given to The New York Times. "Think about that for a moment. It would be like each N.F.L. football team having a different standard of yards needed for a first down."

Facebook, which made nearly all of its \$27.6 billion in revenue last year from **advertising**, has been trying to win marketers' faith back since September, when it apologized for overstating video viewership.

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The mistake, followed by several other disclosures of erroneous measurements, spurred an industrywide reassessment of the metrics used by digital **advertising** platforms, which are drawing more marketing dollars every year. **Facebook's** revenue last year, for instance, soared by more than 50 percent.

The social network, in its post on Friday, said that it would provide marketers with new data on display ads, including the milliseconds they appear on a screen. Its new video ad buying options will include "two-second buying," where at least half of an ad's pixels are in view for two seconds or longer, which **Facebook** noted complies with the Media Rating Council's video standard.

"**Facebook's** actions on media transparency are a positive step forward, particularly coming from one of the largest media players in the industry," Mr. Pritchard said in an emailed statement. Procter & Gamble was "encouraged by the responsiveness and leadership **Facebook** is demonstrating, and we hope it builds more momentum to create a clean and productive digital media supply chain."

URL:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/10/business/media/facebook-takes-steps-to-improve-advertising-data-after-criticism.html>

LOAD-DATE: February 11, 2017

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

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