



# UNDERSTANDING CTV IN MENA



## Part 1 of 5: Foundations

### Introduction

As CTV continues to grow globally and across the MENA region, we asked members of the IAB MENA CTV Taskforce to share their perspectives on some of the key questions about CTV in MENA. In this 5 part MENAVoices Q&A and Video series we cover everything from Foundational knowledge through to Verification and Brand Safety. If you'd rather watch than read, Click on the MENAVoices Video badge to watch videos answers.



**Ramy El Kassis**  
Business Director  
DMS

### What exactly is Connected TV (CTV)?

Connected Television (CTV) refers to television sets linked to the internet, either directly (like a Smart TV) or through a gaming console or streaming device (e.g.Apple TV, Roku, etc.) enabling users to access online content, streaming services, and interactive features directly on their TV screens. This allows viewers to watch on-demand videos, browse the internet, download applications, and even engage with social media platforms, all from the comfort of their living rooms.

### Is CTV a format, a device or a channel?

Connected TV (CTV) is often understood to be an ad format, but this is incorrect. In reality, CTV is a device category that enables the delivery of various ad formats, similar to mobile phones and desktop computers.

CTV encompasses internet-enabled devices such as smart TVs, gaming consoles, and streaming devices like Roku and Amazon Fire Stick. These devices transform traditional televisions into platforms capable of streaming digital content. Advertisers can utilize this medium to deliver instream ads, which appear before, during, or after video content, and native ads, which seamlessly integrate with the content environment, or on OEM homescreens.

In the Middle East, where internet penetration and smartphone usage are high, CTV offers a unique opportunity to reach viewers in a more engaging manner. The region's young, tech-savvy population is increasingly shifting from traditional TV to online streaming platforms such as Netflix, Shahid, and StarzPlay.

However, it is crucial to understand that CTV itself is not an ad format. It is a versatile device platform that supports various ad formats, enabling advertisers to reach audiences effectively. Just like mobile and desktop, CTV is a critical channel in the digital advertising landscape, especially in regions like the Middle East, where digital consumption is on the rise.



**Kellie Hanley**  
Senior Director  
Teads

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**Hamid Davari**  
Ad Sales Director  
OSN

### What is the difference between OTT and CTV?

OTT refers to the delivery of video content over the internet, direct to consumers, therefore independent of traditional cable or satellite services. Some examples of OTT players are; Netflix, Shahid, OSN+, amongst many other great platforms. These services are accessible through smart TVs, streaming devices, gaming consoles, apps and the web. Therefore, not being exclusive to Connected Televisions.

CTV, on the other hand, specifically refers to the device type. Generally, TV screens or devices connected to TV screens, such as AppleTV or other streaming boxes, which are connected to the internet. These enable access to not only OTT services, but also social platforms such as Youtube, Twitch and others. Traditional linear ip or satellite TV services, can fall under CTV, if the service provider has advanced, connected, addressable advertising capabilities.



**Joey Feghaly**  
Growth Manager  
Shahid

### Is CTV advertising relevant for all verticals?

CTV advertising holds significant value for most industries due to targeted reach and content viewership data. This allows brands to target based on demographics, interests, and even content preferences, ensuring their message reaches potential customers who are actively engaged on a larger screen with relevant long-form content, where viewers are spending higher dwell time, maximizing impact.

The content viewership data further enhances relevance, as publishers on streaming platforms can leverage first-party data (crucial in a cookieless future) to segment audiences and create highly targeted placements that resonate deeply. Combined with a premium viewing environment and high engagement compared to traditional TV, this translates to impactful brand building and measurable results. Meaning overall the CTV's targeted approach, content-driven relevance, and reporting make it a compelling option for most industries.



**Audrey Louis**  
Head of Media Operations  
Equativ

### What targeting options are available in MENA?

Although there are some limitations, Connected TV advertising does offers a number of different targeting options to help brands reach their audiences, such as:

- GeoTargeting ( country, postcodes, city...)
- Demographics targeting ( Gender, Age, Income...)
- Behavioural targeting (ie: centre of interest based on the previous purchase of the user)
- Contextual targeting based on what the user is watching, like a program or specific content
- Platform or Device targeting (eg: gaming console, Apple TV...)
- Retargeting, Cross device targeting, Lookalike Audiences and Dayparting

All these targeting options help advertisers to create very customized and effective campaigns to engage their audience.





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## Part 2 of 5: Inventory and Buying



Ahmed Murtadha  
Programmatic Manager  
Publicis Media

### What are the different monetization models in CTV advertising?

**Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD):** A service that allows users to watch an unlimited amount of content for a recurring fee. Examples of SVOD services include Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+, LG TV and Samsung. From the region examples include Weyyak, Via, Yango, OSN Play, Todd, Ben Sports, Starz ON and Shahid.

**Advertising-based Video on Demand (AVOD):** A type of video streaming service where users can access the content for free but are served with ads during viewing. The revenue in this model comes from advertisers who pay to display their ads. Examples of AVOD platforms include Shahid and YouTube.

**Ad-Supported SVOD: (AdSVOD):** A hybrid model that combines elements of SVOD and AVOD. In this model, users pay a subscription fee to access content, but they also see advertisements. The subscription fee is usually lower than a regular SVOD service because of the additional revenue from the ads. An example of this model is Hulu's lower-cost subscription plan. Examples include Shahid VIP.

**Transactional Video on Demand (TVOD):** Users pay for each piece of content they want to watch, rather than a subscription fee for unlimited access. There are two types: Electronic Sell-Through (EST), where the user permanently purchases a digital copy of the content, and Download to Rent (DTR), where the user rents the content for a limited period. Examples of TVOD services include Starz ON, iTunes, Amazon Video, and Google Play.

**Broadcaster Video on Demand (BVOD):** Typically streaming services provided by traditional broadcast companies, allowing viewers to watch content from their channels online, usually on demand. These platforms may operate on an SVOD, AVOD, TVOD, or hybrid model. Examples of BVOD services include BBC iPlayer and Yupp TV.

**Premium Video on Demand (PVOD):** This model allows consumers to watch very new or currently showing cinema releases at home for a higher cost than regular VOD. It's often used for movies that are still in theaters or just recently left, providing a premium home viewing experience. Examples of platforms offering PVOD are Amazon Prime, Disney+, and Apple's iTunes Store.

**Free Ad-Supported Streaming Television (FAST):** A service that offers free streaming channels to viewers, monetized by ads that play during the content. Examples of FAST platforms include Pluto TV, Tubi TV, and Peacock Free from NBCUniversal.





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## Part 2 of 5: Inventory and Buying



**Mazen Mansour**  
Digital Director  
PHD

### What are the ways to buy CTV inventory in MENA?

CTV ads can be bought through two methods: direct buying through IO booking or programmatic buying.

Direct deals allows for publishers to have full control to campaign targeting & optimization which includes frequency, budget, duration, audience targeting.

Programmatic campaigns on the other hand are executed using a self-serve DSP and there are few advantages that advertisers can benefit from:

- First benefit is Transparency and control where advertisers have the ability to view campaign performance in real-time through the DSP giving accountability to publisher on what is being delivered
- Second benefits is automation both in workflows and optimization. DSPs use auto-bidding algorithms that optimize in real-time against any given goal set
- Lastly Programmatic ensures workflow consolidation where all activity can run under one platform giving advertisers a holistic view of their campaign performance

Programmatic CTV is most commonly bought either via a Private marketplace deal or Programmatic guaranteed deal . However in the MENA region, most CTV media partners tend to offer their inventory through Programmatic guaranteed deals and that's due to supply in CTV.

Just like direct deals, PG provides the security of guaranteed impressions at a negotiated fixed price, ensuring predictable revenue for publishers and guaranteed volumed for advertisers. It's also worth noting that buying through PG can deliver media efficiency. Depending on the publisher, CPM tend to be 10-20% lower than direct deals

### Is CTV ad inventory available in all MENA markets?

CTV ad availability is spreading across MENA, with inventory growing in line with the region's increasing consumption of streaming content. Viewership is particularly high in GCC countries with the largest being Saudi Arabia due to its population size, with inventory also large across North Africa in Egypt, Morocco, and the rest of Levant (Jordan & Iraq). This increase is driven by factors like better internet access, affordable smart TVs, and the rise of both global and local streaming platforms. As content consumption keeps growing, CTV ad inventory is expected to expand in all MENA markets, presenting exciting opportunities for advertisers.



**Joey Feghaly**  
Growth Manager  
Shahid





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## Part 3 of 5: Planning



**Clare Fearon**  
Head of Programmatic  
GroupM MENA

### How does CTV fit in a Cross-channel campaign strategy?

Previously, watching TV nearly always meant watching on a physical television, nowadays 'watching TV' is a much broader term. This could take place on a variety of devices such as a games console, mobile device, a set top box or on platforms such as Shahid, Netflix or YouTube. With this digitization of TV, CTV integrates seamlessly into cross-channel digital strategies. We now can integrate not only planning, activation and measurement but crucially we have the ability to be responsive to campaign performance through dynamic and flexible budget allocation & optimisation that historically we didn't have with linear buying.

We can also apply common measurement frameworks, enabling quantification of media delivery based on normalisation of different quality and cost inputs across different types of video and display media. Research shows that when we utilise the digital capabilities of TV and run it as part of a cross-channel activation, TV is unmatched in terms of its impact on other channels.



**Ahmed Murthadha**  
Programmatic Manager  
Publicis Media

### How can marketers adapt their TV strategies to include CTV?

As Connected TV gains traction in the MENA region, marketers must adapt their TV marketing strategies for this evolving landscape. One crucial adjustment involves leveraging the data-driven nature of CTV advertising to deliver personalized messages. Analyzing viewer data enables marketers to tailor ads based on demographics, interests, and viewing behaviors, ensuring relevance and effectiveness.

Moreover, marketers should prioritize cross-device and cross-platform integration to maintain a consistent brand presence across various screens and channels. This entails optimizing ads for both traditional TV and CTV platforms while ensuring seamless transitions between devices.

Furthermore, investing in innovative measurement and analytics tools is crucial for evaluating the performance of CTV campaigns accurately. Marketers should leverage advanced analytics to track key metrics like reach and frequency, allowing for data-driven optimization and campaign refinement in real-time.

By embracing the opportunities presented by CTV and adopting a more targeted, integrated, and data-driven approach, marketers in the MENA region can effectively navigate the evolving TV landscape and drive impactful results.



**Sahar El Choufi**  
Sales Manager  
DMS

### Are interactive formats applicable to CTV advertising?

Interactive ad formats are becoming more important for advertisers as they strive to create engaging user experiences. This is no different when we are discussing CTV. Brands and advertisers can use QR codes in CTV ads to allow viewers to engage with commercials using their smartphones. By scanning a QR code, users can be directed to a specific landing page, download an app, or receive a discount code for a brand in ways that streamline the customer experience.





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## Part 4 of 5: Measurement



**Clare Fearon**  
Head of Programmatic  
GroupM MENA

### How do you measure the success of CTV campaigns?

TV has historically been the mainstay of branding and upper funnel reach building campaign objectives. However, in the new era of programmatic and digitisation, we now have the ability to track CTV exposure to the onward lower funnel consumer activity previously only possible on clickable media. We also have additional formats beyond TVCs as well.

There are core KPI's such as Impressions, Viewability and View Through Rate which are available and useful as health metrics for all campaigns. Beyond this, and starting with campaigns focused at the top of the funnel, awareness can be measured on in-target reach and frequency plus incremental reach vs linear where its applicable.

Brand lift studies can take this further and show brand impact in terms of aided vs unaided awareness as well as overall consideration and opinion.

Moving further down the funnel advertisers can measure purchase intent directly and indirectly via web traffic measurement or in store via footfall. Beyond this, and here we have one of the most exciting and innovate areas of measurement recently, which is attributing CTV campaigns to sales uplift both offline and online, demonstrating true ROI for advertisers.

Collectively, these advances mean that CTV not only delivers against all strategies within the funnel, but has a comprehensive and intelligent framework of methodologies that can effectively measure performance and demonstrate advertiser value in both robust and relevant ways.

### Are there any major privacy concerns with CTV advertising?

CTV advertising leverages data from smart TVs, streaming devices, and apps to deliver personalized ads to viewers, as well as provide measurement capabilities. While this enables advertisers to tailor their messages and maximise engagement, it also raises privacy issues. Viewers may feel uneasy knowing that their viewing habits and personal information are being tracked and used for targeted advertising, so their consent must be sought.

CTV is a fragmented landscape, making it challenging for viewers to understand how their data is being collected and shared across different devices and services. This can add to privacy concerns.

To address these issues, industry stakeholders must prioritise transparency and consent in CTV advertising practices. This includes providing clear information to viewers about data collection and usage, as well as empowering them with control over their privacy settings. This consent can be sought through information on the TV screens, or on other digital devices linked to the same account. Some forward-thinking broadcasters have even created video content featuring celebrities, fully explaining what data is being collected, what it is being used for, and how the data is being protected.



**Hitesh Bhatt**  
Senior Director  
Pubmatic





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## Part 5 of 5: Brand Safety and Verification



**Anshul Jaiswal**  
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UM MENA

### How can marketers ensure brand safety in the CTV environment?

Ensuring brand safety in the CTV environment involves multiple practices, the primary being relied on a foundation of high quality inventory at app or content level. Since the channel is fairly new, there are still a lot of challenges to address and very few robust solutions with not so great accuracy levels.

The most efficient way right now is to make sure all the app or content where the ads might appear have proper categorization. Also, the buyer should ensure that CTV publishers are not relying on their 'extended network' inventories to scale up the campaign. These networks often contain newly onboarded apps with lower CPMs however in absence of proper categorization, there's always a massive risk of brand being exposed to unsuitable content.

Also, whether the buying is programmatic or direct, it should always be ensured that basic brand safety filters are in place. DSPs do have certain filtration methods which are efficient enough to do few pre-bid filtration.

Lastly, 3rd party measurement solutions are evolving with few more advanced filters to keep the brand safety in check. For example: there are filters which can determine if the impression was served when the device was turned off, resulting in advertiser spends wastage.

To summarize: 1. Advertisers/Agencies should ensure that publishers or networks are fully transparent with their inventory and ensure each of their app is accurately categorized.

2. Ensure all the publishers permit advertiser side protections
3. Publishers should ensure their apps are automatically paused when TV screens are turned off
4. Brands can partner with independent 3rd party measurement providers for advanced filters

### Is CTV inventory compatible with verification services?

Verification is not only possible on CTV, but it is necessary. Viewability challenges and Brand suitability can hinder advertising effectiveness leading to buying inefficiencies and even outright waste which poses a risk towards brands, sometimes they can occur even when buying CTV inventory directly from a publisher or distributor – making them even more detrimental to the bottom line than many would suspect. However, advertisers have the power to solve these challenges. By working with third-party providers, they can both protect and measure their CTV campaigns, which will allow them to optimize their buys and increase efficiency.



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