Press Release

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Two in three advertisers increase mobile marketing budgets as COVID-19 drives social and m-commerce growth

State of the Industry 2021: Mobile Marketing in EMEA - a WARC report in association with the Mobile Marketing Association EMEA (MMA EMEA)

15 June 2021 – The accelerative impact of COVID-19 on digital transformation has led to improvements in mobile marketing capabilities for advertisers. Growth in m-commerce and use of social media have provided brands with new opportunities to reach consumers, driving up mobile marketing budgets set to be worth $230bn globally in 2021 per WARC Data. However, privacy concerns could hamper mobile’s growth potential.

These are some of the findings included in State of the Industry 2021: Mobile Marketing in EMEA, an annual report released today by WARC in association with MMA EMEA, providing a current snapshot into how brands, agencies, media owners and tech vendors see the impact of mobile - its use as a tool for advertising effectively, as well as opportunities and concerns - as they adapt to changing consumer behaviours brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report is based on an online survey of 575 marketing professionals - a mix of client-side, agency, media owner and technology vendor marketers - carried out in April and May 2021 from over 30 markets by WARC, the global authority on effective marketing, in association with MMA EMEA, the world’s leading non-profit mobile trade association.

State of the Industry 2021: Mobile Marketing in EMEA highlights the following key insights:

1. The majority of marketing professionals are expecting growth in their mobile budgets this year

   In the 2020 survey, two in five (39%) were expecting an increase in the mobile marketing budget. This year, two in three (66%) say the same, indicating more confidence in both market conditions and in mobile as a channel.

2. Social is by far the most used marketing channel with mobile

   87% of respondents are using social in their mobile marketing strategy and, on average, a third of the mobile budget goes toward social. YouTube and Facebook are the platforms most used for display marketing.

3. M-commerce is one of the most important industry changes during COVID-19

   Overall, 68% of respondents are seeing increased m-commerce capabilities and two in five (42%) say uptake of m-commerce is one of the most important consumer behaviours.
4. Mobile marketing needs to overcome privacy concerns to realise growth potential

As we approach the end of the third party cookie as a means to target and measure, marketing professionals are facing more pressure. Three in five predict they’ll be affected by the ‘death’ of the cookie.

5. Video is catching up to non-video display as the leading form of mobile monetisation for media owners and tech enablers.

Subscriptions/memberships and e-commerce are also key focus areas.

6. The future of mobile technology seeks to connect the online and offline, particularly through AI and machine learning, IoT and voice

Respondents are investing significant portions of their budgets into mobile technology to ensure they keep up with the latest innovations in the industry, especially as interest in AI continues.

Summing up, Amy Rodgers, Managing Editor Research and Rankings, WARC, said: “As we emerge from the pandemic, with many workforces still working remotely and social and m-commerce technologies rapidly developing, mobile will play an important part in marketing strategies, as indicated by the acceleration of mobile ad budgets and the opportunities provided to advertisers as outlined in this report.”

“Whilst we have unsurprisingly seen an increase in mobile budgets across the region in the last year, we, at the MMA, have also taken a broader sounding on the future of marketing from marketers. One of their key insights is that digital transformations (which include mobile by definition) have accelerated significantly’, commented Chris Babayode, MD, MMA EMEA. “Getting stuff done took weeks not months. This trend is all set to continue, and we expect this to feed through as per the findings in our annual report across social, m-commerce, organisational structures, data and privacy governance.”

A sample report is available to download here. The full report, now in its sixth year, is available to WARC subscribers and MMA members. A similar report will be released later in the year for the APAC region.

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For further information, please contact:
Amanda Benfell
Head of PR & Press, WARC
amanda.benfell@warc.com
+44 (0) 20 7467 8125
www.warc.com

About WARC – The global authority on marketing effectiveness
WARC is an Ascential company, the path-to-purchase business that combines intelligence, data and insights to drive growth in the digital economy. We do this by delivering an integrated set of business-critical products in the key areas of product design, marketing and sales.

For over 30 years WARC has been powering the marketing segment by providing rigorous and unbiased evidence, expertise and guidance to make marketers more effective. WARC services include 18,000+ case studies, 90,000+ best practice guides, research papers, special reports and advertising trend data, webinars, awards, events and advisory services; has 1,200+ client companies, 21,500+ active users in 100+ countries; collaborates with 50+ industry partners; has offices in the UK, US, China and Singapore.

About the MMA:
Comprised of over 800 member companies globally and 15 regional offices, the MMA is the only marketing trade association that brings together the full ecosystem of marketers, martech and media companies working collaboratively to architect the future of marketing, while relentlessly delivering growth today. Led by CMOs, the MMA helps marketers lead the imperative for marketing
change – in ways that enable future breakthroughs while optimizing current activities. The MMA is committed to science and questioning and believes that creating marketing impact is steeped in constructively challenging the status quo encouraging business leaders to aggressively adopt proven, peer-driven and scientific best practices, without compromise. The MMA invests millions in rigorous research to enable marketers with unassailable truth and actionable tools. By enlightening, empowering and enabling marketers, the MMA shapes future success, while also propelling business growth.