2021 In-App Ad Placement Revenue Report

eCPM Forecasting For Mobile Game & App Publishers

Vungle

Table of Contents

Introduction

We now spend **more than 4 hours a day** on our mobile devices, dedicating unprecedented amounts of time and attention to the apps that keep our lives on track. As a result, advertisers have rushed in to capitalize on the opportunity, with mobile ad spend increasing 26% YoY to reach $240B. If you're an app publisher, you likely recognize the opportunity this represents.

As advertising dollars continue to pour into the mobile ecosystem, the fight for qualified audiences is intensifying, and the value of your users' attention grows ever higher, providing publishers the chance to earn more revenue by serving ads at a higher effective cost per mille (eCPM).

Consequently, deciding how to implement in-app ad placements can be one of the most important choices an app publisher makes. With so much at stake, publishers need to carefully evaluate how to balance earning potential with user experience. While the right choice can unlock a highly profitable revenue stream, the wrong one could accelerate churn or even cannibalize existing revenue.

With over a decade of experience driving in-app ad revenue for app publishers of all sizes, Vungle is passionate about helping developers succeed. That's why we analyzed more than **6.3b impressions** across **150 placements** from the Vungle mobile ad network. These placements were then grouped into **14 user experience categories** representing the industry's most

common ad implementation styles to produce a first-of-its-kind ad placement analysis that provides publishers with definitive insight into not only which types of ads to implement, but **how best to implement them.**

Our analysis revealed valuable insights including:

Gaming

- **Rewarded Ads Reign Supreme:** 3 of the top 5 placements by eCPM are rewarded, including the #1 spot.

- **Context Drives Rewarded Revenue:** Rewarded ad prompts placed within the context of an engagement loop generate 2.5x higher eCPMs than those placed in static menus or in-app storefronts

- **Don't Discount Interstitials:** Despite the industry's recent shift towards rewarded, interstitial placements deployed at the end of gameplay generate the second highest eCPM overall at nearly 75% of what in-game rewarded placements generated.

Non-Gaming

- **Non-Gaming Is Ready For Rewarded:** Rewarded ads generate nearly 2x higher eCPMs than interstitials and more than 3x the top display placement.

- **MRECs Beat Banners:** Medium rectangle ads (MRECs) produce 5x higher eCPMs than banner ads.

Methodology

Sample Size: This study analyzed over 6.3 billion ad impressions served across 150 placements within the Vungle mobile in-app advertising network during the months of January to September, 2020. All eCPM scores are weighted based on the impressions each placement accrued over the survey period.

Analysis period

Q1-Q3 2020

Total impressions

6,353,128,950

Placements analyzed

~150

Indexed eCPM Scores: All data sets in this report are based on weighted revenue averages that have been indexed relative to their top performing variants. Within each data set, each top performer has been assigned a score of 10/10, with all other variants assigned scores proportional to their difference from the top variant. The result is a set of values that can be used to estimate relative revenue earning potential.

Placement Segmentation: In order to actionably evaluate the efficacy of the industry's most common ad implementation approaches, all 150 of the placements analyzed in this study were assigned one of 14 user experience (UX) categories.

The result is a series of unique combinations of ad type (rewarded, interstitial, etc...) and UX category (end of level, in feed, etc...) that have been analyzed holistically to determine the most valuable approaches to ad implementation for publishers. For the purposes of this study, the term "placement" refers to a unique combination of ad type and UX type.

UX type criteria was determined by the Vungle ad monetization team and is described in detail on the next page.

Vungle

Display (Banner & MREC) UX Categories

In Feed

Ads appearing within a game or app's core content feed, e.g. scrolling through status updates on a social media app

Downloading Content

Ads placed on or around a dedicated download progress screen, e.g. one that appears while an update's progress is displayed.

End of Content

Ads appearing at the end of scrollable non-video content, e.g. at the conclusion of an article in a news app.

App Exit

Ads displayed via UI elements whenever a user takes steps towards leaving the app.

Always Visible

Ads anchored to a game or app's UI that remain persistent during app navigation, e.g. a banner ad locked to the bottom of the screen.

During App Search

Ads placed directly within the results page of an in-app search query, e.g. vertically arranged scrolling content results for a video streaming app.

Home Screen

Ads appearing on a game or app's primary navigation hub screen, e.g. the first screen shown to users upon launching the app.

During Content

Ads rendered within or around a piece of video or written content, e.g. a banner placed at the bottom of a streaming video.
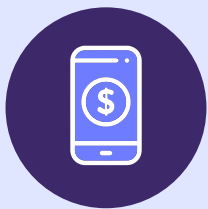
Interstitial UX Categories

End of Content

Ads delivered upon the conclusion of a piece of time-bound content, e.g. at the end of video playback in a streaming app.

End of Level

Game-specific ads deployed upon completion of a finite section of gameplay, e.g. successfully completing a puzzle in a match-3 style game.

Rewarded UX Categories

In Feed

Ads that can be triggered once a user has reached the conclusion of a content piece and/or has exhausted the currency required to continue, e.g. running out of credits in a dating app.

Reward Section

Ad prompts that can be triggered from the game's UI while not engaged in the core game loop, e.g. within a game's main menu or in-app purchase storefront.

Downloading Content

Game-specific ads that can be deployed upon completion of a finite section of gameplay and often have direct mechanical benefits, e.g. the option to apply a score multiplier in exchange for viewing an ad at the end of an endless runner.

Reward Section In-Game

Ads that can be triggered from the game's UI while a player is actively engaged in the core game loop, e.g. in the middle of completing a hidden object puzzle.

eCPM Scores: Mobile Games

Top 5 Ad Placements For Mobile Games By eCPM
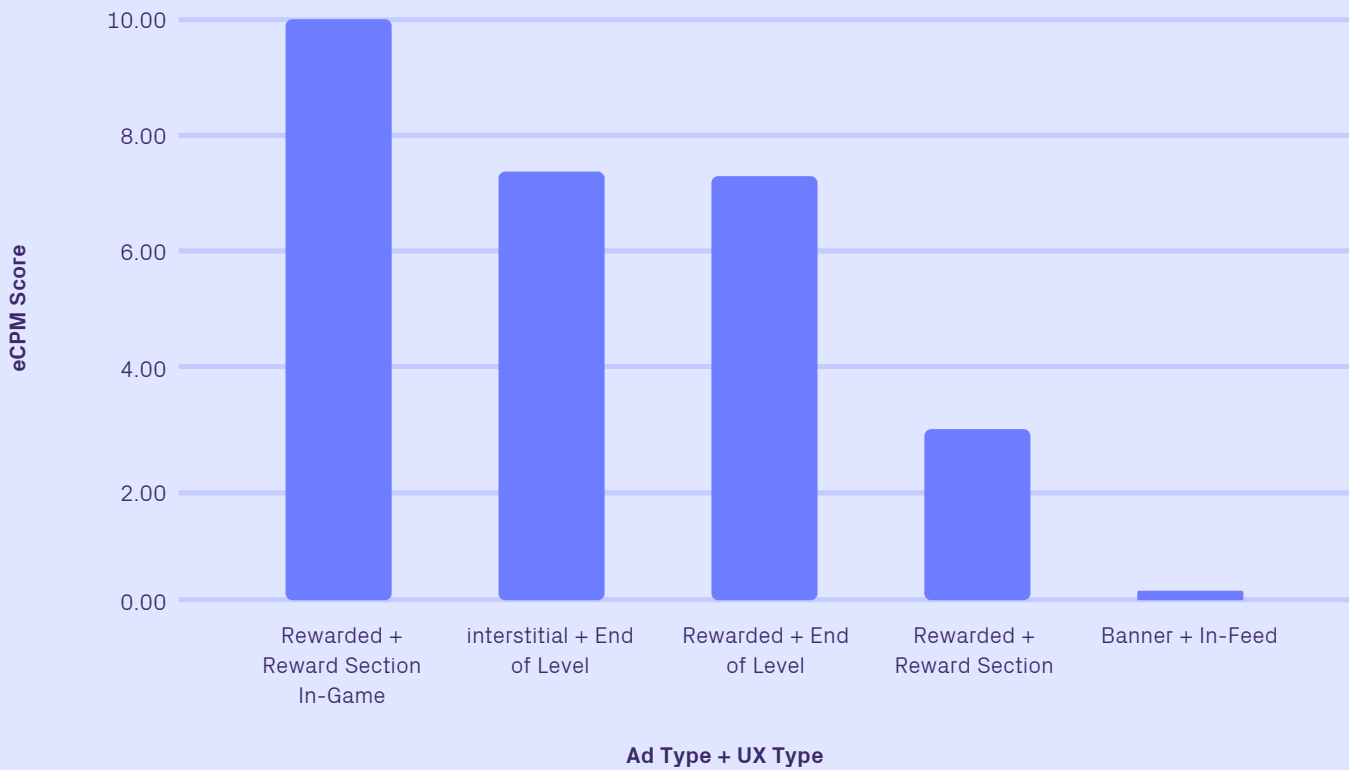
Ad type		UX Category	eCPM Score (out of 10)
	Rewarded	Reward Section In-Game	10.00
	Interstitial	End of Level	7.36
	Rewarded	End of Level	7.31
	Rewarded	Reward Section	2.80
	Banner	In-Feed	0.09

Of all mobile game placements, the highest eCPMs came from rewarded ad prompts that were contextually integrated into gameplay to offer clear and immediate value to players.

This includes ads that could be triggered via UI elements shown during a core gameplay loop and offered some form of progression or mechanical modifier as a reward. Examples include earning virtual currency, activating upgrades, and providing relief from in-game difficulty.

Interstitial placements also proved valuable for mobile game publishers when placed at the end of a level where their unprompted nature did not interrupt the player experience, followed closely by rewarded ads placed at the end of gameplay where they often offered players the chance to multiply their score in exchange for watching an ad.

Finally, rewarded ad placements within dedicated menus and banners deployed within content feeds offered publishers reliable revenue, though lower eCPMs that would necessitate a higher volume of impressions.

How To Take Action

If you haven't done so already, consider integrating a contextually relevant rewarded placement within your game loop that illustrates clear and immediate value to the player, like accelerating a countdown timer or earning the virtual goods needed to move beyond a difficult section of gameplay.

End of level interstitials should be next in line, followed closely by additional rewarded placements that offer bonuses upon level completion as well as those that can be accessed from the main menu.

Finally, consider adding banner ads within any high-traffic content feeds outside the core gameplay loop where they can generate meaningful revenue through a high volume of impressions.

Need Help Getting Started?

Contact Us

Vungle

eCPM Scores: Non-Gaming Apps

Top 12 Ad Placements For Non-Gaming Apps By eCPM
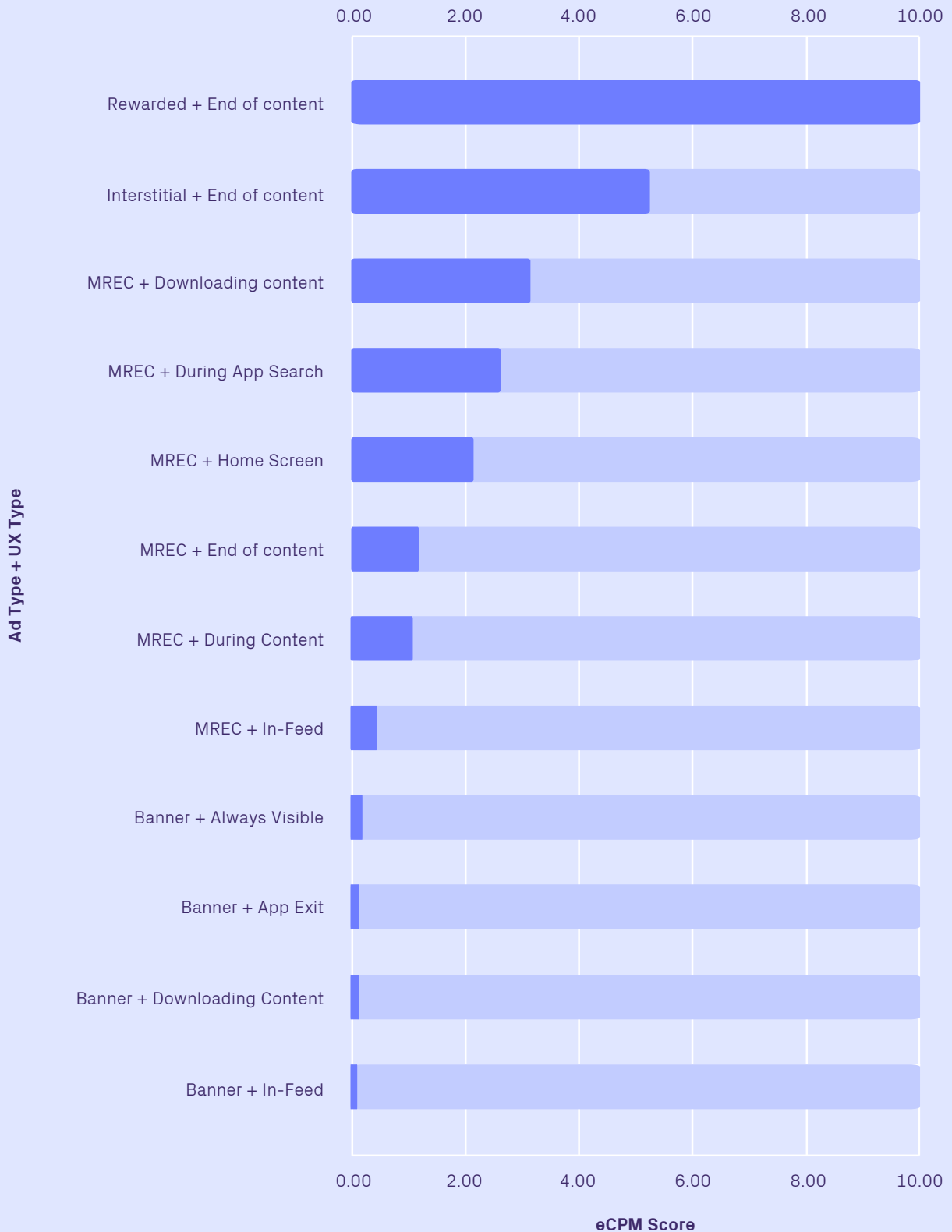
Ad Type + UX Type (vertical axis)

eCPM Score (horizontal axis)

Categories (top to bottom):
- Rewarded + End of content
- Interstitial + End of content
- MREC + Downloading content
- MREC + During App Search
- MREC + Home Screen
- MREC + End of content
- MREC + During Content
- MREC + In-Feed
- Banner + Always Visible
- Banner + App Exit
- Banner + Downloading Content
- Banner + In-Feed

Top 12 Ad Placements For Non-Gaming Apps By eCPM

Ad type	UX Category	eCPM Score (out of 10)
Rewarded	End of Content	10.00
Interstitial	End of Content	5.35
MREC	Downloading Content	3.15
MREC	During App Search	2.60
MREC	Home Screen	2.07
MREC	End of Content	1.17
MREC	During Content	1.05
MREC	In-Feed	0.43
Banner	Always Visible	0.17
Banner	App Exit	0.09
Banner	Downloading Content	0.09
Banner	In-Feed	0.07

Despite being relatively rare, rewarded ads generated the highest eCPMs for non-gaming apps. Their lack of adoption is understandable given that most non-gaming apps lack a virtual economy to support rewarded mechanics, but this contrast suggests an untapped opportunity.

Among non-rewarded ad types, interstitials were the most profitable with the "End of Content" UX category seeing the highest

eCPMs, though even those generated nearly half as much per impression compared to rewarded placements.

Banners and MRECs stand apart from rewarded and interstitial ads and can generate anywhere from 1-30% as much revenue per impression compared to rewarded ads.

How To
Take Action

Rewarded ads represent an immense revenue opportunity for non-gaming app publishers.

Despite earning 2x the eCPM of the next leading format, rewarded ads remain relatively untapped. Consider experimenting with rewarded ad placements that can be used to promote engagement with your app. Examples include content credits in a media app, or swipes in a dating app. Those looking to stick with interstitials should make sure they're being delivered at intuitive breaks in the app experience

Finally, consider running down the list of display ad placement opportunities and prioritizing any integrations you might be missing. Content downloads, in-app search, and your app's home screen are all profitable opportunities for adding MRECs, which generate at least 2.5x higher eCPMs than banners.

Need Help Getting Started?

Contact Us

Vungle

Conclusion

No matter what type of apps you publish, an informed ad monetization strategy pays dividends, and that means prioritizing efforts effectively. Results of this year's report demonstrate that rewarded ad implementations should be top priority for any publishers looking to make their first push into ad monetization. Interstitials remain a strong contributor for anyone looking to diversify their ad strategy, and explorations into display formats should start with MRECs and then move into banners.

Finally, the importance of a supportive and knowledgeable ad monetization partner can't be overstated. As a leading mobile ad network with more than a decade of experience, Vungle works directly with our publishing partners to help them find the optimal ad placement opportunities for their apps. We offer expert consultation and creative support so that publishers can deliver a premium ad experience that maximizes revenue and engagement. To learn more about how Vungle can help you make the most out of the insights found in this report, visit our website and get in touch.

Get in touch!

About Vungle

Vungle is the trusted guide for growth and engagement, transforming how people discover and experience apps. Mobile app developers partner with Vungle to monetize through innovative in-app ad experiences that are inspired by insight and crafted with creativity.

Advertisers worldwide depend on Vungle to acquire high-value users through premium ad experiences designed by Vungle Creative Labs, the company's multidisciplinary team of creatives, technologists, and data scientists, and programmatically optimized for maximum return on ad spend by AlgoLift, its proprietary machine learning engine.

Vungle's data-optimized ads run on over 1 billion unique devices to drive engagement and increase returns for publishers and advertisers ranging from indie studios to powerhouse brands, including Rovio, Pandora and Microsoft. The company is headquartered in San Francisco and has offices around the world in Los Angeles, New York, Helsinki, London, Berlin, Beijing, Tokyo, Seoul, Singapore.

For more information, visit **www.vungle.com** or follow the company on Twitter **⊡Vungle.**