

# Independent Media Audit

A private, conflict-free analysis of a paid media program — conducted from platform data the client already holds. Engagements range from a focused search allocation analysis to full omni-channel audit. Applied proactively in operating contexts, performance improvement programs, and commercial due diligence.

## WHAT THIS IS

Every major ad platform reports its own return on spend. Add those numbers up and they exceed total company revenue — because they can't all be right simultaneously. At a 20% operating margin, a platform-reported \$1.06 return on \$1 spent is a money-losing equation. C3's independent audit replaces platform self-reporting with analysis built from the client's own data.

C3 has operated as an independent AI-powered measurement platform since 2011, with zero commercial relationships across all media vendors, platforms, and agencies. The platform attributed 2.49 billion consumer touchpoints in February 2026 — scale that produces signal reliability at a level no sample-based approach can replicate.

## WHAT THIS FINDS

- Invalid traffic (IVT) inflating platform-reported conversions. Industry rates: 19% web display, 29% mobile app, 18% CTV (Picalate, Q2 2025).
- Channel saturation — spend past the point of diminishing return. In one engagement, saturation analysis confirmed approximately half of YouTube investment had crossed that line.
- Platform self-report discrepancies. Signal verification for a major automotive advertiser surfaced a traffic anomaly platform reporting had not flagged — triggering a formal third-party investigation.

**Recoverable waste typically identified: 15–25% of analyzed spend.**

## WHAT TRADITIONAL AUDITING MISSES

- CPM benchmarking establishes whether the rate was competitive — not whether the spend produced a real return.
- Agency audits are conducted by parties with a direct financial stake in the channels being measured. The conflict is structural.
- An independent audit also establishes a verified data foundation — the prerequisite for any AI initiative to produce reliable output.

*“Traditional auditing asks whether the rate was fair. C3 asks whether it worked.”*

**Independence.** C3 Metrics holds no financial relationship with any media vendor, platform, or agency. Engagements are compensated solely by the client. All findings are the client's exclusive property — never pooled, benchmarked against, or disclosed to third parties.

## C3 METRICS · INDEPENDENT MEDIA AUDIT

### SCOPE — DATA SOURCES REQUIRED

Source	Access or Export Required
<b>Paid Search (Google Ads, Microsoft Advertising)</b>	Campaign-level exports, branded and non-branded segments. Google Ads and Microsoft Advertising. <i>Required for Search Allocation Analysis and all full-audit tiers.</i>
<b>Paid Social, Programmatic, CTV / Video, Affiliate</b>	Platform exports and DSP delivery reports at campaign level. Full-audit tiers only.
<b>Direct Mail + Offline (Linear TV, Radio)</b>	Drop schedules and post logs where available. Full-audit tiers only.
REQUIRED SUPPORTING SOURCES — FULL AUDIT TIERS	
<b>GA4 + Media Plan + Agency Reports</b>	Conversion signal baseline; planned vs. actual spend; cross-reference for platform-reported figures.

### DELIVERABLES

Deliverable	Description
<b>Written Findings Report</b>	Red / yellow / green findings prioritized by estimated dollar impact. Each finding identifies the data source, the discrepancy, and the recommended action.
<b>Live Readout Session</b>	Structured walkthrough with the C3 team, included with every engagement.
<b>Delivery Timeline</b>	Search Allocation Analysis: 2–3 weeks. Full audit: 90 days from receipt of complete data. Accelerated scope available for due diligence.
<b>Minimum Spend Threshold</b>	Search Allocation Analysis: \$500,000 annual paid search. Full audit: \$10M annual / \$2.5M for the analysis period.

### ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS

Search Allocation Analysis	Retroactive Analysis 3 Months	Retroactive Analysis 6 Months	Prospective Data Collection
<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$50,000 – \$75,000</b>	<b>\$75,000 – \$100,000</b>	<b>Custom</b>
Primary paid search platforms, branded and non-branded. Standard exports only — no attribution infrastructure required. Includes an AI test blueprint: approved budget, test structure, and independent measurement framework. Every engagement to date: 6–23% efficiency gain, same spend. Scenarios bounded by operational reality, not theoretical maximums.	Report-level analysis, most recent 3 months. Full channel coverage. Fastest path to complete findings. Identifies IVT, saturation, and platform self-report discrepancies.	Broader analysis window for more reliable saturation and trend findings. Preferred for programs with seasonal spend variation or recent budget shifts.	Ongoing signal collection with log-level IVT verification. Custom scope and delivery. Suited for continuous monitoring or deal-time diligence.

**Privacy.** C3 Metrics does not operate pooled benchmarking databases. Client data is not shared with other clients, used to calibrate models for other engagements, or disclosed to any third party. All findings belong exclusively to the client.