WHAT DOES A CATEGORY TRUST SCORE LOOK LIKE [TV] | 20 POINT BANDS

Executive Summary
100+ Highly Trusted: Industry Leader
Real industry leaders live here. Rigorous testing methodologies backed with photos, graphs and numbers a plenty. In-depth scores that give you the perfect picture of what a product is truly good at and good for.

90-100 Highly Trusted: Go to Guys
TL;DR - The "cream of the crop" so to speak. Strong testing methods, plenty of photos, charts and graphs, and all the numbers you could ever ask for. These publications are the most likely to give you useful info with clear scores worth trusting.

70-89 Trustworthy: Reliable Tier

60-69 Moderately Trusted: Passable Tier

<59 Not Trustworthy | Not Worth It Tier, Totally Unhelpful Tier, Not Even Once Tier

General Trust Score Range Language 90 - 100+

[Highly Trusted | Go To, Industry Leader Tier]
These publications are the ones worth listening to, and should be the first place you go to for useful information on products and how they perform. We talk about them like this:

- Above and beyond, excellent, very good, wonderful
- Obsessive, rigorous, extensive, thorough, granular, above and beyond, complete
- Long-term
- Quantitative

What's going beyond 100% look like?

INDUSTRY LEADER TIER.

TL;DR - Real industry leaders live here. Rigorous testing methodologies backed with photos, graphs and numbers a plenty. In-depth scores that give you the perfect picture of what a product is truly good at and good for.

RTings (103.85%) - Above and beyond quantitative testing, clearly labeled and supported with tons of photos, measurements, graphs and more. RTings actually runs long-term tests and obsessively measures anything and everything that can be measured. Scoring systems are extremely granular, often made up of dozens of subscores and help give the most complete view of a product to allow for a score to be looked up on virtually any spec or use case. Qualitative testing will appear, but it is almost always employed for testing things that are qualitative in nature to begin with. All of the custom questions are answered. Bonus points criteria are fulfilled. A category specific test method exists.

What does 90 - 100 look like?

GO-TO GUYS TIER.

TL;DR - The "cream of the crop" so to speak. Strong testing methods, plenty of photos, charts and graphs, and all the numbers you could ever ask for. These publications are the most likely to give you useful info with clear scores worth trusting.

PCMag (100%) - Similar to RTings, there is extensive quantitative testing here, with plenty of proof in the test results offered, including photos, graphs and measurements. Everything is organized to help allow easy reading of information, and the qualitative tests that appear are used to measure things that are qualitative anyway. Every custom question is answered and a category specific test method exists. The only thing that holds them back is they didn't fulfill the bonus criteria.

Sound And Vision (94.23%) - Very good use of quantitative testing here that is thorough and features charts and graphs to reference for proof. Only minor hiccups cause a loss in score here, such as missing a custom question.

General Trust Score Range Language 70 - 89

[Good Trust | Reliable Tier]
These publications are plain good, but offer less quantitative testing and results to make purchase decisions off of than the top tier ones.You can, however, base a purchase decision off of them. We talk about them like this:

- Effective, solid, good

- Healthy, sufficient
- Quantitative and qualitative

What does 70 - 89 look like?

RELIABLE TIER.

TL;DR - Generally speaking, these are solid publications and ample proof in the form of photos, charts and graphs. They begin to lag towards the bottom end, but are otherwise useful publications that a consumer could reference when making a purchase decision.

Trusted Reviews (84.62%) - Effective use of quantitative testing, some qualitative tests here, but not so many as to cause a problem. Results are provided alongside plenty of tester-taken photos, and losses in score come primarily from missing custom questions and not having a category specific testing method.

Gamesradar (80.77%) - Solid use of custom photos taken of products and included testing results in the text help to build confidence. However, not all of the custom questions are addressed, the bonus isn't fulfilled, and there are missing mentions and photos of the testing equipment used to obtain some of the test results included.

Digital Trends (73.08%) - Good information can be found in the reviews here, but a lot of custom questions (three of the four) go unanswered, which dings the overall score. Couple that with missing examples of equipment, charts and graphs, and the score suffers further. Providing healthy amounts of convincing information and photographs that help illustrate the more qualitative approaches to testing taken here help to keep the score sufficiently high.

General Trust Score Range Language 60 - 69

[Trusted | Passable Tier]
These publications offer some useful information, but fall noticeably short in different areas (usually related to quantitative testing.) They are most useful as a reference point when consulting higher scoring publications. We talk about them like this:

- Decent
- Sufficient, enough, passable
- Quantitative and qualitative

What does 60 - 69 look like?

PASSABLE TIER.

TL;DR - Better options exist. These publications are passing, but are best suited as a jumping off point for initial research.

Techspot (65.38%) - A lack of buying guides and a missing category specific testing methodology is enough to knock TechSpot down significantly, and other publications with similar scores will likely find themselves in the same place. While the information presented is passable and there are plenty of tester-taken photos, in-depth charts and graphs, it is not enough to make up for the lack of a testing method.

HD Guru (61.54%) - Despite the score, HD Guru actually has an excellent presentation of testing results and supporting photographs, but they are held back by their lack of a testing methodology as well as a couple more minor hiccups. Testing methodology is important - especially in cases like HD Guru where it is clear that there must be *some* kind of method to their reviews, as they feature the same sections and measure the same things. Transparency is vital in helping illustrate to the consumer what you value and how much, and in setting up a testing methodology, HD Guru would ascend a full tier - perhaps more.

There is a dividing line here between passing and failing. Below 60, a publication fails.

General Trust Score Range Language <59

[Low Trust | Not Worth It Tier, Totally Unhelpful Tier, Not Even Once Tier]
These testers are failing. It could be from a lack of support and proof for their testing, from being fraudulent in their claims about testing, or from simply not offering up enough useful information. These publications aren't worth considering when you make a purchase decision, as even the higher scoring failures are still failures. We talk about them like this:

- Mediocre, poor, weak
- Vague, anemic, insufficient, unsupported
- Fraud
- Qualitative

What does 50 - 59 look like?

TL;DR - Hard to recommend. At this level, publications are just shy of passing, but any number of reasons are holding them back and keeping them from being worthwhile. Lack of a testing methodology and real photos are common points of failure here.

STRUGGLING TIER.

Reference Home Theater (59.62%) - An overall mediocre showing, brought on by not having buying guides, real photos for the reviews and no TV testing method. Publications with a score that's just barely failing are typically suffering from one too many missteps. Answering all of the custom questions and including actual photos taken by a tester would be enough to squeak them across the pass/fail line, for example.

Tech Advisor (51.92%) - At this point, the showings from publications are only going to get poorer. "Test results" are a mix of quantitative results with defined measurements and qualitative descriptions of how something performed. Half the custom questions aren't addressed, on top of a lack of any testing equipment being shown or mentioned and a missing testing methodology.

What does 30 - 49 look like?

NOT WORTH IT TIER.

TL;DR - With little useful objective testing, these publications are only really useful for getting a very basic idea about features and maybe the odd nugget of what something "feels" like.

Eurogamer (48.08%) - This is an example of how having effective review contents with tests, photos, graphs and charts can be undermined by problems elsewhere. Authorship is important in establishing expert authority in a publication, and if the author of a review has no way of verifying their existence and hasn't written much for the publication, this compounds when you stack it with a missing testing methodology. The review itself may not be weak, but the elements that help establish trust for the reader and confirm the publication can be referred to if they need information are, and that can hold a publication back as much as poor, unsubstantiated tests do.

WePC (40.38%) - By this point, it's common for some publications to be missing the required number of reviews for us to sample (which in turn means you can't really turn to them in general for reviews), and that is the case here. Even if you have a dedicated testing methodology and answer some of the custom questions, you run into issues with establishing trust and authority with a reader. Good reviews and mediocre presence mean that consumers cannot turn to you as a resource because there simply isn't enough there for them to hang onto, and that is the case here. Add onto that a methodology that hasn't been updated, unfulfilled custom questions and a lack of any kind of testing equipment proof and even a decent review will not save you from a poor score.

TechGuide (30.77%) - You can't be docked for not testing if you don't claim to test, but you also suffer in a general sense if that's the case. Anything said in a review becomes difficult to take at face value because it lacks evidence, and that results in a poor review with low trustworthiness. What remains is a review that has no dedicated testing methodology, no photos or proof of testing equipment, no information to address the custom questions and actionable data for a consumer to chew on. And the result of that is a very poor showing indeed.

What does 10 - 29 look like?

TOTALLY UNHELPFUL TIER.

TL;DR - Not worth using. Too little testing data, even on the qualitative side, and ultimately nothing you gain from these publications will be better than what you get from going even one tier up.

TV & HiFi Pro (28.85%) - When authorship becomes vague (for example, when a review is written by "Staff") the ability for the reader to trust who penned the review evaporates. The review is now being staked on the site itself, and unless the site is run by a single person, that means the credentials of whoever put together the review are entirely unknowable. When you stack this with missing proof of testing equipment, missing charts and graphs, and no testing methodology, it all comes together to produce a poor score. Even addressing some of the custom questions can only do so much to help prevent total freefall.

Techhive (20.77%) - This is where testing claims intersect with the purpose of our custom questions. Poor scores that drop this low do so for a reason. When you test things, you're going to get numbers and data to create charts and graphs to help support what you did. Showing these off is easy, which is why missing every single custom question is a huge red flag when you claim to test. If tests were performed but there's no data, only qualitative explanations of what the questions cover, was the testing actually performed? When you stack this with missing test methodologies, the consumer will have a difficult time believing the text in a review because there just isn't enough there to really support what's being said.

Top Ten Reviews (11.15%) - Between the testing claims with no evidence and the total lack of any custom photography, it's difficult to perform more poorly than this. When you don't have a testing methodology, any way to prove you've tested anything and all of your text is dedicated to a mixture of summarizing TV features and speaking qualitatively about things like picture quality and brightness, concerns about fraud become very real. If you tested, where's the proof?

What does 0 - 10 look like?

NOT EVEN ONCE TIER.

TL;DR - Avoid. There's no testing and concerns about fraud become common.

Vice (9.62%) - Not every publication that drops this low is doing something shady. Many are simply not doing much of anything. When you've only got buying guides to go off of and basically nothing else, from testing to methodologies to custom photos to any sort of product reviews at all, you're going to drop straight to the bottom in score. It's hard to use publications at this level as a resource for even their buying guides because nothing is substantiated.

Walmart (0.00%) - Sometimes your failure comes down to the simple fact that you are an ecommerce site, not a resource for consumers to get anything but the barest essentials of information about a category.

Curves With Moves (-4.23%) - When you've hit negative scores you become a very real candidate for probable fraud. Mentioning that you test on a buying guide (because you do not offer any product reviews at all) and then providing text that is effectively just a summary of features (and very little text at that) makes it impossible for a consumer to trust the publication as a whole, nevermind just their "expertise" in the category. Publications with negative scores are almost always failing to answer any of our scoring criteria *on top of* claiming to test without any evidence.

10 point band old text (unusued).