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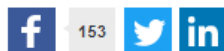
Down low, too slow – it's time to redefine Australian video consumption research

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The way that the average Australian consumes data has changed. However, the way we measure it has not. I feel it's time for a rethink.

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PwC's widely reported re-release of Facebook's controversial *My Screen: Video Consumption in Australia* report on 6 August is still making headlines for a number of reasons, including the notable removal of previously-included Nielsen and OzTam data.

However, if there's one thing that the report's authors, industry leaders, and

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commentators all seem to agree on, it's that the research itself – methods of data collection, individualising consumer profiles, the sources of data, even the pace of change in Australia and globally – is fraught with complexity, and problems.

In fact, the new report, in and of itself, highlights just how badly all the measurement systems are combined for media, and how largely useless it is for its original intent.

Around the world, these cobbled-together systems of measurement do not actually fulfil the needs of the marketing and advertising marketplace.

It's clear that Australian video consumption research is ripe for disruption. But by whom?

With Australian ad spend to **tip \$17 billion in 2019**, and digital spend accounting for more than half of that figure (and rising), we are faced now with an extraordinary opportunity to redefine the current research landscape. Collectively, it should be the responsibility – and burning ambition – of the key industry bodies to take ownership of the process.

There needs to be a common interest, to come up with a measurement system that is able to determine 'like for like' comparison of data.

“ *It's clear that Australian video consumption research is ripe for disruption. But by whom?*

The current landscape is fuelled by commercial interests – the likes of Neilsen, OzTam, and Roy Morgan – companies which have built their measurement systems for particular channels. And while they have tried to adapt, by bolting on additional services as they've been introduced, none of them has been integrated to enable consistent conclusions to be drawn from the new research being produced.

Instead, what the industry desperately needs is for industry bodies such as **ThinkTV**, the **Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB)**, the **Australian Data-driven Marketing Industry (ADMA)**, and the **Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA)**, to unite in their common interests, and develop and introduce a brand new system that enables a universal system of measurement and comparison.

In the new Facebook report's introduction, PwC states that “s an industry, the marketing and media community must be prepared to lean in to the challenges of measurement, transparency and the opportunities and limitations of the data we have. If we do not, then the ideological debates will continue and the ones to suffer will be the marketers seeking to efficiently reach the most appropriate audience, and ultimately their consumers.”

So as marketers and advertisers, lean in we must.

One of the biggest issues with the accumulation and collation of 'big data' is trying to get a picture of an individual from dozens of different sources. One source might report the average height to be 175cm, another that hair colour mostly brown, or mostly this gender or that, but these are just averages. There's no way of linking them all together and – essential for marketers – making meaning from them.

Facebook itself concedes that it's “almost impossible for anyone to build a picture of what consumers are actually watching, or where, thanks to splintered and incomplete data sets, and a lack of measurement on the growing number of ad-free video platforms.”

According to Facebook Australia's head of marketing science, Andy Ford, “e've seen screen consumption undergo more change in the past three years than in the previous 50, which is fundamentally challenging the principles of media planning. This has highlighted the decreasing efficiency of channels which are failing to hit a large chunk of their intended audience.

“While every brand has its own unique needs and there is no silver bullet, it's very

clear from (the) research that there has never been a more important time for advertisers to review their media buying plans to ensure they are maximising ROI,” Andy explains.

An effective channel mix needs to truly reflect the changing consumer viewing habits for time spent and the devices used. In doing so, advertisers will be able to maximise reach whilst also getting the right frequency.”

The industry has been talking about what’s needed for the best part of a decade. Australian marketers are in desperate need for cohesive media measurement, and unfortunately, Facebook’s report only serves to highlight the research industry’s many and varied inadequacies, rather than solve them.

In the words of AANA CEO, John Broome, “may the debate continue.” Indeed.

Darren Woolley is the Founder and Global CEO of TrinityP3, an international thought leader in marketing management, and a regular industry commentator thanks to his unique insights into the marketing industry. TrinityP3 is at the leading edge of decision making in the \$600 billion marketing, media and advertising industry and their global client base includes more than 50 of the world’s top 100 advertisers.



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