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Morse: Be Prepared for Major Changes in Nielsen Audience Measurement /Also a Snapshot of October Ratings Trends



Dr. John Morse attended the recent Nielsen quarterly client meeting and would like to share some of the critical information that he provides for Byron Media clients. He notes, "There are major changes imminent in their national audience measurement service. There have been many promises and false starts. Now it is really happening, starting with the Nielsen month of January 2016 (which begins December 28th):"

Here are some of the key elements that you will see next year:

1. The National People Meter (NPM) will be renamed **National Panel Expansion (NPX)**. This move is based on:
 - Additional homes in the national sample
 - Incorporating local market set meters into the national sample
 - New algorithms for inferring demos (that replace diaries).

In January, 2016 the number of meters goes from 25,920 to 40,330. Because most of the new homes will come from local markets, they will need to be weighted into the national panel as is currently the case with the top local market meters.

The increase in homes will mean moving from an "effective" sample size of 17,066 to 26,667. ("Effective" refers to the usable units after weighting them in.). Nielsen has calculated that this will increase reliability of the audience data by 31% and will help provide reportability for low-rated networks/programs.

2. In December 2015, **total digital usage** from all sources will be measured including screens beyond traditional TVs.

Initially the Nielsen "total audience" (the capability to measure any video, audio, or text – content or ad – when it is seen, by whom, and on what device) will be proprietary to each client. Their goal is to incorporate this information into a publicly syndicated report during 2nd Q 2016.

This option includes ratings from LIVE through 35 days recording/playback and captures VOD and OTT in the panel **IF** the programmers include tagging . . . either a watermark or an audio signal. Otherwise, Nielsen cannot measure.

3. **The key elements of Nielsen's total content ratings are:**

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- Inclusion of all platforms, including DVR playback beyond 7 days and OTT/VOD

4. Total content ratings will enable comparable metrics for TV and Digital Video.

The metrics across platforms will be:

- Average audience rating
- Unique audience (reach)
- Views (number of video starts)
- GRP% (total views expressed as a % of the universe)
- Average frequency
- Total and average time spent viewing

5. Comparable Metrics among different platforms.

How can impressions/ratings be made equivalent between TV, PC, Smartphones, and Radio? The Nielsen approach is to answer the 3 "hows"---How many? (Cume or Uniques); How often? (Days per week/minutes per day); How long? (Minutes per week).

Dr. Morse added, "Nielsen is also about to introduce a technique aimed at addressing "unidentified audience," which occurs when the TV is left on but no one has checked in as a viewer. About 3% of homes are not included in the daily reporting due to incomplete persons data.

Now instead of excluding this viewing information, Nielsen will use persons data when the date is complete and a new "viewer assignment" model to complete data that's missing. This moves Nielsen into the inference modeling world, an action to which some researchers strongly object."

For a free copy of Dr. Morse's complete Nielsen meeting report, [contact us](#).

NIELSEN RATINGS TRENDS IN OCTOBER 2015: Is the Decline Continuing?

Broadcast and Premium Pay Down; Cable and Spanish Nets Up

Dr. Morse points to some significant contrasts between networks. "While overall ratings have trended down recently (year over year), there have been large differences between network types. The average primetime numbers for the 108 cable nets (+4% in households) and 13 Spanish nets (+3% in households) moved upward. The seven broadcast nets (-8%) and 11 premium pay cable nets (-13%) were down.

For Adults 18-49 the report indicated that the cable nets were up 4%, broadcast down 10%, and premium pay down 14%. The Spanish nets were also down 4% reversing the trend of their primetime numbers.

Additional data revealed that the average cable net had a coverage area household rating of 0.3 total day/0.5 primetime/premium pay (0.5 total day/0.2 primetime) and Spanish nets (0.1 total day/0.2 primetime). The average

primetime; premium pay (0.5 total day/0.9 primetime) and Spanish nets (0.1 total day/0.3 primetime). The average household rating for the broadcast nets was 3.5.”

SOURCE: Nielsen Media Research.

Whether it's audience measurement, distribution or ad sales, marketing/promotion, multi-platform, or program content and scheduling, Byron Media has made the bottom-line difference for companies.

For further information please contact John@ByronMedia.com or call 212-726-1093