

Oracle attempts to 'shoot the messenger'

 By [Oresti Patricios](#)

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I write to respond to a recent article by Oracle's Chris Hitchens headlined: *Oracle, MultiChoice refute claims by Ornico*.

Hitchens' column is in part not truthful and in my view is an aggressive attempt to "shoot the messenger" of what has been bad news regarding the error ratings of commercials broadcast on DStv.

Hitchens states "that Oracle were not consulted on" the findings of Ornico data which recently revealed that that the bungling of commercial broadcasts by local television stations had reached a new high and that advertisers could be losing millions from commercials that had not been broadcast or had been broadcast erroneously. Both Hitchens and Oracle need to realise that Ornico is an independent media and brand intelligence company, and as such we are not beholden to any broadcasters. As such we do not have a legal, moral or ethical obligation to consult Oracle on the findings of any research that relates to error ratings of commercials flighted or not flighted on DStv. Ornico's position is that of an independent auditor of commercial flightings, and as such we do not and will not consult Oracle on reports or research related the verification of broadcast commercials.

Communications *did* take place

Hitchens states that Oracle requested Ornico's source data and that "To date, despite repeated requests, we have not received a response from Ornico or Oresti Patricios who was quoted extensively in the article." This is an untruth. In substantiation I wish to offer the following:

- I was phoned and emailed by Brenda Wortley, head of research and strategy for Oracle on 17 November 2009. I communicated with Wortley indicating that I would attempt to get client permissions to offer Oracle source data on our research, but informed her that the source data was subject to client confidentiality;
- On 18th November I received an email from Chris Hitchens demanding the source data by the end of that day;
- On 19th November I received another email from Wortley requesting said source data. I informed Wortley that our client preferred not to make the data available to Oracle. I suggested that I meet with Oracle to discuss the issue.
- On 19th I drafted a response to Hitchens and Wortley which was copied to Peter McKenzie the CEO of Oracle stating that Ornico had approached our client for source data, but permission to share that source data had been denied by the client. I then invited Oracle to participate in an open forum to discuss the issue of commercial broadcast error rates with the media, other research houses, media buying agencies and interested members of the advertising community.
- I followed this with a call to Peter McKenzie requesting a meeting to discuss the issue. The message from McKenzie's office was that "it was too late".
- Oracle then sought to take the matter to their lawyers and issued their statement to the media.

An invitation to join the debate

In his statement Hitchens says: "Both MultiChoice and Oracle totally refute the Ornico claims that errors are being made on the enormous scale... MultiChoice and Oracle also take great offence to the Ornico claims that these alleged errors are costing advertisers large sums of money. Given the perceived negative perceptions and the potential damage to our business and reputation, MultiChoice and Oracle have demanded an immediate retraction of this article and a public apology from Ornico."

I would like to categorically state that Ornico cannot and will not apologise for telling the truth regarding commercial broadcast errors. It is not our intention to malign either Multichoice or Oracle, but to point the errors which are an ongoing industry concern and to do so for the common good of the industry.

Ornico will be holding an open round table to discuss this issue with other research houses whose results also indicate high commercial broadcast error ratings. Oracle is again invited to this endeavour, as are members of the media, interested media agencies and other members of the advertising community.

It is my hope that instead of trying shooting the messenger Oracle will meet with Ornico and other verification and research agencies at an open, public forum that will investigate this issue for the greater good of advertisers in South Africa.

ABOUT ORESTI PATRICIOS

Oresti Patricios, CEO of the OrnicoGroup (www.ornico.co.za), has long been on the cutting edge of the media, advertising and branding industries. He has an MBA at GIBS and did his thesis on social media when Twitter was barely a twit. He has always driven his vision of dominating African media & brand intelligence. Contact Oresti on tel +27 (0)11 884 5041 or email Oresti@ornicogroup.co.za and follow @orestaki on Twitter.

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