

Broadcast Research Council to commission a more comprehensive TAMS audit

There have been rapid changes in the recent video viewing landscape exacerbated by the Covid-19 outbreak and the resultant accelerated changes in access to alternate video services and data. In this context, it is more important than ever that the industry remains confident in the TAMS (TV Audience Measurement Survey) panel, the core of South African TV measurement.



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The TAMS panel will continue to form the cornerstone of video audience measurement in South Africa as the industry moves forward on the path of including additional screens, platforms and services into Total Video (TV). To this end, the 2021 TAMS audit will be a more comprehensive and expansive audit than in previous years.

“In 2020 we planned an audit encompassing 50 household visits. Unfortunately, the audit was not conducted due to the Covid lockdown,” says BRC’s CEO, Gary Whitaker. “This year, the BRC will be validating the panel and implementing 200 coincidental household checks using a remote Covid safe methodology.”

During 2020, TAMS technicians were unable to carry out their normal maintenance activities resulting in The BRC commissioning auditors 3M3A, analysing the possible effect this would have on the panel and the data. The check was completed in July 2020 by comparing the panel data for two weeks in 2020, from 13-19 January and 6-12 July.

Overall findings

Overall findings determined that the panel had decreased in size from January to July by 8% from 10,727 to 9,907 with decay happening to all parts of the panel. The panel also saw the mean weight increasing slightly since there are fewer panel members to carry the universe weight. There was no significant increase in the standard deviation and the Panel Efficiency also remained the same.

At that point, the panel was still deemed to be a good currency overall for TV advertising in South Africa, however a more in-depth analysis will take place by means of the upcoming audit.

The broad scope of this year's audit will include amongst others, a technical check - viewing recording and reporting correctly as per the previous audit and ascertaining the general health of the panel. The audit will also include an environmental review; a qualitative review of factors including power supply and information on viewing on other platforms and devices.

Whitaker says, "The audit report will have significant input on informing our scope for future measurement including OTT/Streaming, leading into an RFP after the audit. Zero Ratings, which is a global phenomenon brought on by increased fragmentation, continues to challenge all industry players but measurement of OTT/Streaming, amongst other planned interventions, will offer some relief."

The audit will also include heavy analysis of the changes in the market landscape over recent years, changes to the data output as a result of adjustments to RIMS (Random Iterative Method Weighting) and the universe update to the PAMS universe estimates from the ES (Establishment Survey), more specifically Household and SEM universe estimates.

"The BRC is planning to commission the 2021 TAMS audit by the beginning of April and will run for a period of two months due to the intensive and expansive nature thereof," concludes Whitaker. "Results of the audit will be publicised shortly thereafter."

"We have been extremely aware of the impact the pandemic has had on all research, not only here in South Africa, but globally, and by commissioning extra surveys and checks, we will ensure that all of our data is correct, in good health, reflective of the situation and representative of the universe."

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