



Worldwide Readership Research Symposium

11-14 October 2009

Call for Synopses



READING IN THE FUTURE: METRICS FOR NEW BUSINESS MODELS

The Digital Revolution

What now? We are living with the first consequences of the digital revolution, some seen as opportunities, some as threats. Economic slowdown and environmental issues may further entice readers towards paperless reading. In this new environment **'reading' and 'readership' are in need of redefinition** and traditional print media are looking for the right guidance.

But business is never that simple. The digital reading platforms – online, mobile, social networks, digital readers (or e-books), even digital TV – provide welcome new opportunities for consumers, publishers and advertisers alike. However, they by no means proclaim the wholesale replacement of the printed platform of magazines and newspapers. **Consumers want them all**, which one they choose at any one moment depends on mood, circumstance and price. What we would like to know is: how exactly is their behaviour changing, how will they behave in future, and what are the influencing factors?

While the business complexities of content provision, advertising targeting, as well as the economic conditions of the advertising market are changing, and return on investment often remains elusive, all players in this game must **rethink their business models**.

What makes a particular platform attractive – for the consumer – for my brand – for my business – cannot be left to guesswork. The investment decisions made by media brands on the one hand and by ad decision makers on the other, for **multi-platform solutions** and sensible proportions, must be based on reasonable expectations and solid information.

What are the answers? Which form of advertising will be best for the digital medium – display, banner, personal messaging and interactivity – and what will be their role? What is most profitable for the print medium? What works best with consumers? Where will I find these consumers? Where will they read? What will they read? Which platform will they choose? What are the business implications?

This then is the theme of our next Symposium, **READING IN THE FUTURE: METRICS FOR NEW BUSINESS MODELS**.

Online Research

Research is vital to understand this new environment and provide pointers for the future. Much research is done using the internet. Many decisions are taken based on online panel sampling results. However, much confusion exists about the **validity of online** research.

We welcome proposals for contributions which help us understand the research itself: about sampling, response rates, bias and results replication. What standards should we expect and must ensure for receiving representative, trustworthy, consistent, valid results?

New Forms of Reading

Readership online is in itself a subject of research, and such research is being done both offline and online. What are the merits of either method? What do the results tell us about the trends of online reading?

What are the qualitative differences between reading online and reading of print? Are they of different kinds? Do consumers view them as different? What is the **exact nature of online reading**? How does online reading affect the reading of traditional printed editions of newspapers and magazines and vice versa? What are the total, combined audiences of individual multi-platform media brands? How are they calculated? How do the measures compare?

To hear answers to (and reports about attempts to answer) these and similar questions will be of great interest.

Readership Research in Need of Change

Media research appears out of date to some users. There are many reasons for this. One is the changing nature of the media environment, which requires more than the 'silo' approach we still take to our industry media research; another are **new technology** devices which we could use to make the research **more accurate, more relevant and perhaps more economical**; furthermore, there are response rate problems, and – last but not least – the well recognised but widely ignored model bias problems inherent in the Recent Reading model. Some people doubt that progress can be made without lowering our traditionally high standards. How do we respond?

We welcome proposals for papers which will up-date us about developments on **alternative methods** of measuring print audiences (e.g. Specific Issue Readership), on the use of new technology (e.g. CASI, mobile phones etc.), on passive measurement (e.g. passive meters and RFID), and on the subject of response rates and response rate effects in readership studies.

Media Brands, Consumer Brands and Multi-Media Planning

Can the same piece of research serve equally **multi-media planners and publishers** wanting to know about the business environment of their brands? What research exists that answers their questions? How is it conducted? What can we learn from it? What are the benefits and what are the constraints of such research? Proposals for papers which will demonstrate the pros and cons of such single-source, time-budget and other studies with historical evidence are very welcome.

The Business of Publishing and the New Definition of Reading

Much of the content available for reading online is provided by publishers. The internet and other digital devices are in effect **new distribution outlets**. What effect has this on the business of publishing, particularly as it affects the print platform? What research is needed to cover both the new and old platforms? Does the new definition of reading across all platforms make **circulation measures** less relevant? What do online **impressions** mean? How should we view the changing relationship between circulation and readership?

Meanwhile **special interest publications** are proliferating and thriving – whether designed for the growing 'grey' market or for minority hobbies and lifestyles, including the interests of foreign residents. Where do these publications fit in? How do we satisfy their research needs? We welcome proposals for contributions shedding light on these questions, backed up by findings of research.

Quality of Reading, Advertising Effectiveness and Return on Investment

Engagement, quality of contact, affinity – how are they measured on different platforms? **How comparable** are these measures across platforms? How comparable are they in terms of **advertising effectiveness**? If the metrics from which we deduce return on investment are different by platform, are they fair? Proposals for contributions based on new studies which will help us understand these issues are most welcome.

Technical Issues

We will not neglect technical issues. Issues of model bias, **questionnaire length**, questionnaire content and title confusion have not gone away. We will be pleased to receive synopses for papers about technical tests and their findings, including those concerning sampling, response rates, interview methods, questionnaire construction and analysis issues.

Analytical Tools

The subjects of **data integration**, database exploitation and the use of analytical tools are of equal importance and we welcome proposals about new developments in this field.

A Worldwide Symposium

Not all media researchers in the various countries worldwide share the same concerns. We welcome synopses based on **multi-country** studies and studies from individual countries which may have different experiences and solutions than those underlying the concerns expressed in this Call for Synopses, and particularly studies which demonstrate the **value of reading** on whatever platform it occurs.

A Symposium of Wide and Diverse Experiences

At Valencia 2009, we will bring together speakers and delegates from agencies, advertisers, publishers and research agencies, including specialists in digital media. By addressing the issues expressed in this Call for Synopses, we hope to provide valuable **insights for present and future**.

As at previous Symposia, there will be formal presentations of the selected contributions, and the ensuing discussions will be recorded and published afterwards in addition to the book of papers provided to all delegates at the start of the Symposium.

Synopses for Original Papers by 20 March 2009

Authors wishing to submit synopses for original papers should do so by Friday 20 March 2009 at the latest, addressed to the Secretariat.

Synopses should not exceed 300 words. They should enable the Programme Committee to judge the likely quality of the final written paper and its usefulness to delegates. Final written papers which show no results and no supporting data are **strongly discouraged**.

Each synopsis must include:

- The title of the proposed paper (do not change this for the final written paper, please!)
- The name of the author(s)
- Their organisations and positions
- Their emails, telephone numbers and postal addresses

Invitations to write full papers (and to present them at Valencia in October 2009) will be sent to selected authors towards the end of April 2009. Written final papers will be required by the Secretariat not later than 2 September 2009.

We trust that this Call for Synopses stimulates you to submit your synopsis. In case of doubt or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Erhard Meier, Symposium Chairman (erhardo2@gmail.com)

Dawn Mitchell, Symposium President (DawnMitchello1@aol.com)

14th Worldwide Readership Research Symposium

Valencia, Spain

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Key Dates:

Synopses to be received by 20 March 2009

Papers invited in late April 2009

Registration Forms available May 2009

Full papers to be received by 2 September 2009

Valencia symposium 11-14 October 2009

Synopses should be sent to the Symposium Secretariat

Email: Sandy@readershipsymposium.com

By fax: +44 (0) 20 8861 8008 or 8861 5515

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