



The ARF Says Audience Measurement Is At A Crossroads – With The Future Of Ad Supported Media At Stake

Calls for industry to undertake robust trials of inter-operable solutions and embrace greater transparency and cooperation

New York, NY September 14, 2021 – With the future of audience measurement unclear, the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) today called for the advertising industry to embrace greater transparency and cooperation, as well as to provide increased support for trials of inter-operable solutions that can address the gaps in existing single source approaches.

A failure to do so, says the ARF, could threaten the ad supported media model and ultimately the efficacy of advertising overall.

Scott McDonald, CEO and President of the ARF, says that while technology continues to promise ever-more-granular data, privacy concerns are threatening the ability to get a unified view across the increasingly fragmented media landscape.

“As more consumers move to SVOD, the overall ad inventory is reduced,” says McDonald. “This has short-term benefits for linear TV since it abets the trend of making it harder for advertisers to buy reach (a trend that reinforced valuations in this year’s upfront market); but the long-term is trickier since it reflects a growing segment of the population that may be ad averse. If we can’t get the targeting and frequency management right, we will undermine the efficacy of advertising overall – or at least the business model that has supported free media for a long time.”

In response, McDonald says the industry must resist the temptation to retreat to multiple walled gardens and “grade your own homework solutions” and rather work cooperatively to support efforts at the MRC, ANA, VAB, IAB and others - with an emphasis on finding solutions that can work inter-operably to foster the development of true cross-platform measurement.

The topic of the future of audience measurement and its ramifications will be a primary focus of [AudienceScience 2021](#), which will take place virtually from September 20th to the 22nd.

The conference will feature a keynote from Kelly Abcarian, EVP, Measurement and Impact, NBCU on “*Building A Better Measurement Blueprint*”; as well as Fireside Chats with Marc Pritchard, Chief Brand Officer, P&G, on “*Leading The Next Frontier Of Media Disruption*” and Radha Subramanyam, Ph.D., Chief Research & Analytics Officer, CBS Corporation; President, CBS Vision, on “*Scoring and Representation*.”

“The industry is at a unique moment in time as relates to audience measurement,” says McDonald. “With fragmentation of the media marketplace and increasing challenges to accessing the data needed for optimizing planning and buying, we face potential declines in ad effectiveness and with it, a threat to ad supported free media.

“But now is not the time for companies to look to solve these problems on their own. Cross-platform measurement is for the benefit of the industry as a whole and to get there we need to work together to find solutions that meet the needs of all.”

For more information on AudienceScience or to register, visit <https://thearf.org/event/audience-science-2021/>

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About The ARF

Founded more than 80 years ago, the ARF is dedicated to creating, curating, and sharing objective, industry-level advertising research to enable members to make a true impact on their advertising and build marketing leadership within their organizations. It has more than 400 members from leading brand advertisers, agencies, research firms and media-tech companies. For more information, visit www.thearf.org.