CIMM Launches Best Practices Study on Combining Smart TV and Set Top Box Data

The report will explore how both datasets complement each other and together can provide some of the data that the other lacks to create more nationally representative datasets of TV tuning.

New York, NY, May 1, 2020 – The Coalition for Innovative Media Measurement (CIMM) today announced the launch of a new study with Pre-Meditated Media and Janus Strategy & Insights to develop best practices in the emerging approach to building large scale, granular data sets to measure all forms of TV viewing by combining the anonymous viewing data from both Smart TVs and Set Top Boxes (STBs) in privacy-compliant ways.

Smart TV data can not only provide a broad footprint of data spread geographically across the country, but it can also help to refine the edit rules used for STB data. On the other hand, STB data provides a fuller picture of TV tuning for the majority of TV sets in a household.

The combined datasets still lack data on the viewing of broadcast networks in homes without either broadband access or pay TV subscriptions – so called “over-the-air (OTA)” households. However, the combination comes closer to providing data on the majority of U.S. households, which can then be further calibrated to provide the OTA viewing via more traditional panel methodology. Additionally, panels are still required to understand who is in front of the TV set, and how many people (co-viewing). Through this study, CIMM hopes to bring further transparency and industry confidence in using these new hybrid (data + panel) approaches to TV measurement that are gaining acceptance.

The study will be conducted in two phases:

- **Phase 1 – Review of ACR and STB Providers** available in market, including sample size, data captured and reported, data processing rules and availability through expert interviews with providers and aggregators to identify implications for next steps.
- **Phase 2 – Review of Existing Methods Used to Integrate ACR and STB Providers** to learn about best practices and potential obstacles through expert interviews with
companies currently integrating these data sets to identify specific design recommendations for creating an integrated reporting system

“STB data are currently being made available to some media measurement vendors (and also to audience-based planning and buying platforms); however, none of the vendors analyzing such data have a nationally representative footprint,” said Jane Clarke, managing director and CEO, CIMM. “This study aims to examine how Smart TV data can complement STB data to increase the value of the combined datasets.”

“Smart TVs can report viewing data in near real time, but the ACR data collected don’t represent all TV sets in the average home. STB data are sourced from a much larger household footprint than Smart TVs, however, calibrating the STB signals to viewing metrics and matching program names adds more time to the reporting process,” said Gerard Broussard, principal, Pre-Meditated Media. “We hope to find how, perhaps by combining the data, there might be a better solution for releasing more accurate tuning data on a timely basis.”

Howard Shimmel, president, Janus Strategy & Insights, added, “Our goal is to provide the industry with an understanding on how to leverage Smart TV and STB data together, not only helping to improve data quality within a household, but to create a blueprint for more nationally representative, deterministic TV viewing datasets that can be used for cross-platform planning, activation and measurement.”

Results of the study will be identified in a report to be released later this year.

About CIMM
The Coalition for Innovative Media Measurement (CIMM) is comprised of leading video content providers, media agencies, advertisers and TV/video distribution companies, along with research and technology vendors and consultants. CIMM aims to promote innovation and foster efficiencies in audience measurement for television and cross-platform video. In 2018, CIMM was acquired by the ARF (Advertising Research Foundation), with the goal of expanding the categories of members as well as our initiatives. CIMM initiatives to date have included exploration and identification of new methodologies in cross-platform audience measurement, with verification of these approaches through pilot tests and studies conducted with independent measurement companies. CIMM’s focus has been on two key areas: the current and future potential of television measurement through the use of return-path data, and new methods for cross-platform media measurement.

About Pre-Meditated Media
Gerard Broussard, Principal, Pre-Meditated Media, is an advertising research advisor with a broad diversity of experience covering digital and TV media, audience measurement, media strategy and marketplace analysis. Gerard has been most recently active in the areas of advanced targeting on TV, evaluating the quality of commercially-available target segments, programmatic digital and TV, addressable TV, Audio Content Recognition measurement and online video ad viewability. Gerard’s client list has spanned advertisers, media publishers, market and media research firms and major trade organizations. He has published many key industry reports, covering the topics of data quality for CIMM (Coalition of Innovative Media Measurement), advanced TV development (eMarketer), Efficacy of Modeled Target Segments for CRE (Council for Research Excellence) and digital programmatic in-housing for the IAB (Internet Advertising Bureau).
About Janus Strategy & Insights
Janus Strategy & Insights provides ongoing research consulting for both national and global companies, bridging the TV and streaming digital divide. A leader in strategy and positioning, they focus on emerging developments in attribution, advertising, and data to inform how audiences engage and act.