

## **gemiusAudience**

### Issues in Online Audience Measurement

Research is about trade-offs. It is about satisfying complex practical needs while adhering to the firmest methodological principles. This is especially true for the world's most measurable – and most difficult to measure – medium.

Gemius has conducted online audience measurement for the past 5 years – gaining deep insight into the issues. Some of them are practical, business issues. Others are technical, methodological issues. All of them are important. And a good researcher will address them all. We'd like to discuss them with you.

**Scope of Reporting:** In television, you may have 30 or 40 or 50 channels. Online, consumers visit thousands of web sites. And in most markets, media buyers buy advertising from over 150 of them – often from many more. So what media are measured clearly matters – and the more consumer behavior the researcher captures, the better it is for the planner, the advertiser and the publishers that want to sell them advertising. But as in all media research, the smaller the audience, the harder it is to report on that medium.

**Audience measurement needs to cover the greatest number of available media. Otherwise, it has no value as a media planning tool.**

**Audience Coverage.** People don't just use the Internet at home. Nor do they just use it at work. Today, they use it at home, at work, in Internet café's, at university. Everywhere.

**Audience measurement needs to capture the broadest range of usage to show a complete picture of online consumer behavior.**

**Depth of Reporting.** When people buy online advertising, they don't just buy run-of-site campaigns. They buy those sections that will better meet their needs. Publisher rate cards are designed to differentiate prices. Media planners look for this differentiation to optimize their plan and reach their target. But reporting data for sections of even large web sites can be very difficult with limited sample sizes.

**Good audience measurement won't just report the domain – after all, advertisers don't buy the domain.**

**Data Practicality.** Campaigns rarely run for a whole month. So what use is monthly audience measurement data? Sellers and planners want to see what can be done in the time frame that interests them – they work in the real world, not a theoretical one.

**Online audience measurement cannot apply “one-size fits all” approaches to the media they measure – it has to reflect business reality.**

**Ensuring Demographics are Accurate.** Advertisers aren't interested in “users”, “cookies” or “browsers”. They care about “consumers” and “people”. They care about their target groups, about demographics and comparing the efficiency of the online medium to the offline alternatives.

**Online audience measurement needs to ensure that demographics are accurately measured and reported for all web sites reported.**

**Ensuring Traffic is Accurate.** Media buyers don't buy “time” on a web site. They buy “impressions” and “page views”. So media sellers and buyers need to be able to accurately talk about the available “impressions” on a web site.

**Audience measurement needs to ensure that its measurement of inventory is accurate.**

**Ensuring reach is accurate.** Since advertisers and media planners care about “people”, measuring the reach of each web site is essential. A “cookie” is not a “person” and should never be treated as one.

**Getting around the problem of cookie deletion is essential to accurately measure reach for web sites.**

**Maintaining compliance.** Good compliance is more than just trusting respondents to do what they're supposed to – good compliance is verifying that they have in fact done it.

**Ensuring the combination of demographics / traffic is accurate.** If advertisers and media planners care about people, demographics and target groups, and they're



buying traffic, then media sellers want to tell their advertiser precisely what kind of ad inventory they can deliver to that campaign's target.

**The ability of audience measurement to integrate demographics and traffic to say "x impressions to men, aged 15 – 25 with a reach of y%" is critical – and it must be accurate and consistent.**

**Cost.** If you've ever purchased audience measurement, then you probably believe that solving all of these needs would cost a fortune. But online is still a small medium, so no market can afford to spend a fortune on audience measurement.

**The market's needs must be addressed in an innovative and low-cost fashion.**