

TAM Vs aMAP

POST CAS: Who shall Meter the Viewers?

For television advertisers 'who is watching what' is the core of their business. Till date no one knew it better than the TAM Media Research which has been measuring viewership trends for the past several years and its reports have formed the background for blue prints of most media projects. Now it has a rising competitor in aMap.

TAM

TAM or Television Audience Measurement is a 50:50 joint venture between Nielsen Media Research (NMR) / AC Nielsen and Kantar Media Research (KMR) /IMRB. So far it was the only body that had a TV measurement system in India. It works using people meter, a tool that is installed inside television sets that measures frequency of channel viewing.

Any research is however a mere collection of empirical data studied and formulated under assumptions. It can never be conclusive in nature but it can definitely lend a direction to decision making. Accordingly, TAM's method of measuring viewership data has been under storm by certain channel owners in the past years. They always felt that TAM, a company promoted by AC Nielson, which has stakes from Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. which also owns Star TV always showed Star at number one. Also TAM gives ratings to those broadcasters who subscribe to them. Small broadcasters do not get any mention in their list thus depriving them of advertisements. TAM also took over the only other rating agency INTAM and created a monopoly.

But media buyers are now rejoicing at the national launch of aMap, which claims overnight measurement of TV programmes. However, Siddharth Mukherjee, Director, Communications, TAM Media Research said in the media, "TAM has India's first digital/ platform neutral people meter called the TVM5, currently deployed across DTH-enabled homes. For TAM, TV viewership data comes as default. Our forte is in scientific interpretation of the data in the form of insights. Even with the existing sample size of 4,800 people meters, the panel represents the largest numbers of individuals in the world. After expansion to 10,300 people meters, this size will go up even further."

All the numbers mentioned above translates into an important fact that one peoplemeter determines advertising worth Rs 1 crore. Unfortunately the 15 million CATV houses in rural India are nonmetered with not a single peoplemeter present in any television set. TAM is ambitious about increasing the breadth of coverage not just in urban India but also in rural India, according to LV Krishnan ,CEO, TAM Media Research.

TAM asserts that there will be no change in the rating system in the post CAS era. The system is based on measuring frequency of the channel viewed by the panel home.

It is similar to the technology that is being used the worldwide across 30 other countries by AC Nielson TAM.

The agency plans to increase its representations of CAS homes in their panel once CAS becomes more acceptable in the four metros. The agency will be watching carefully the success of CAS in cable and satellite homes in order to decide which solutions to implement.

TAM is making high investments in improving its technology to make it more adaptable to CAS. It has the support of AC Nielsens international lab based in Australia and the financial backing of its parent company. In a CAS home, a viewer will have to use two separate remotes for the FTA and the pay channels, which necessitates the use of two connectors and a special detector. These detectors will be placed in digital and analogue boxes as part of the technology that would help in a smooth transition of CAS.

aMap

aMap is an overnight audience rating service from Decision Crafts Analytics competing with TAM now. It has already launched an audience research lab at MICA, Ahmedabad campus to gauge broad trends in TV viewing in tie-up with Mudra. The beneficiaries would include media planners, buyers, channel heads, academic institutions and public policy planners. It's Knowledge Center division will churn out customized information for the broadcasters, agencies and advertisers on TV viewing.

Audience Measurement and Analytics Limited (AMAL) is preparing for a national launch of aMap a system that claims to offer larger coverage than TAM.Overnight ratings is the norm followed by the world, commented Ravi Dixit, Director, AMAL Research and Knowledge Management. "Broadcasters like NDTV, TV Today Network, Sahara Group, CNBC TV 18 and Zee Telefilms have all expressed a desire to co-operate with our future- ready organization by signing up and subscribing to our services," Dixit said.

With its new sample size of 6,000 metered homes across India, aMap feels that it is giving a tough competition to TAM. AMap's geographical presence now spans markets like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Orissa, West Bengal, Bihar,

Jharkhand and Himachal Pradesh.

“ The biggest advantage is that aMap, unlike TAM, delivers data overnight, so that the previous day`s data can be accessed the next day by the user. We also allow brands to narrowcast to their target audience and go beyond demographics. Besides household criteria, parameters like vehicle ownership, gender, age, chief wage owner, education, occupation and type of dwelling are also taken into account. So, you can have the exact audience profile that you are aiming at,” said aMap CEO Tapan Pal. He also added that having two rating bodies will only be for the betterment of the industry.

AMap claims to have provided actionable, multi dimensional, all-India data across 29 reporting units on a panel of 6,000 metered homes. “This makes us the largest panel in the world and the first overnight panel in Asia. We have a well thought out promotional strategy for the existing and potential users which will get executed shortly, revealed Dixit.

Industry`s reaction?

Media buyers feel that having two different methods is bound to bring different results. These results have to be studied to reach a decision on which technology is better as money to the tune of some Rs 5,500 crore is involved. Though aMap`s claim of larger coverage and overnight ratings may define measurement system better it is imperative to reach a consensus.