Audiences not Platforms – breaking down audience silos

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Background

The proliferation of platforms and devices across which consumers can access digital content has driven a seismic shift in the dynamics of the news industry: for publishers, it has driven huge opportunities in terms of building scale and influence both domestically and globally; and has created enormous challenges in both the monetisation and measurability of increasingly fragmented audiences both on and off platform.

At the same time, advertisers and brands are also faced with considerable challenges in this cross-platform reality. The rise in continuous partial attention means that attention is now a scarce commodity – in a world of digital clutter and noise, how do you get consumers to pay attention to your messages? Quality media environments are also scarce. The rise in programmatic has meant that brands are increasingly concerned with where and when their ads are appearing and consequently how context affects how their brands is perceived by consumers.

The challenge

Guardian News and Media is one of the leading innovators in the development of digital newsbrands formats. By 2014, the Guardian brand comprised a dynamic combination of over a hundred print and digital properties – ranging from the original printed newspaper, sections and supplements through to desktop site sections, mobile site sections, apps and off platform content.

Not surprisingly, audience data for the various components of the brand were fragmented and of varying type and depth, ranging from the industry, gold standard audience measurement primarily for the print products through to basic site centric counts for some of the digital platforms reaching audiences both off and on site.

This silo based measurement resulted in advertising being planned, measured and bought in isolated, platform-specific deals with no acknowledgment of the wider, cross platform news consumption context in which newsbrands now operate and no way to estimate and, therefore, leverage the true scale of the Guardian's total audience in an increasingly competitive marketplace .

The NRS (National Readership Survey) – the UK's Joint Industry Currency for press measurement - could only provide cross platform measurement for the print properties plus the largest web based channels, therefore, the Guardian addressed this challenge by developing an ingenious solution called *Audiences not Platforms* (ANP).

The *Audiences not Platforms* database allowed the Guardian to sell an audience centric and platform neutral offering to advertisers and agencies while evaluating the total Guardian reach. The use of the TouchPoints Channel Planner allowed comparative reach and frequency analyses of any combination of Guardian properties within a cross-media campaign.

Producing *Audiences not Platforms (ANP)*

The requirement

The Guardian identified the need for:

- a cross platform planning tool that spoke in the language of both strategic and implementational planners.
- audience comparablity across different media and channels was a necessity.
- the required planning metrics were as follows:

  - Cross platform reach and frequency, both at a campaign level and broken out by platform.
  - Impacts, OTS and GRPs.
  - Cost Per Thousands (CPTs) comparisons.
  - Granularity of reporting across:
    - individual online sites (e.g. football vs news vs. business etc.) on desktop and mobile.
    - individual print sections (e.g. daily news sections vs. weekend vs. weekend magazines).
    - individual apps; e.g. iPad editions app, android app, iOS app.
    - off-platform reach (e.g. on Facebook instant articles, Flipboard etc.).
  - Individual platform and channel comparisons required across all metrics.
  - Earned media / word of mouth reach estimates.

Methodology

Given that the Guardian needed any solution it produced to be directly relatable to the wider communications environment, it chose the IPA's TouchPoints Survey – a long established cross media, cross platform media planning tool which also incorporates the UK's only, industry available, cross media channel planner – it is produced by the UK communications agency trade body as the foundation of the modelling process. As well as considerably reducing the research investment required from producing a new planning tool from scratch, a further benefit of using TouchPoints came through the credibility and industry acceptance that the tool has by being produced by the IPA.

The TouchPoints Channel Planner provided the basic cross-industry channel planning functionality required by newsbrands, but it lacked the depth and granularity of audience data required to cover all the Guardian's channels as TP was restricted to using the output of the NRS database for audience estimates for the newsbrands' print channels and the output of the UKOM/comScore database for their major digital platforms, therefore, the standard TouchPoints Channel Planner only included media channels which achieved a minimum reach threshold across any / all media.

However, TouchPoints is uniquely designed around the Daily Life Hub Survey to enable customisation and the addition of supplementary audience data. Therefore, rather than re-invent the wheel, a decision was taken by the Guardian to model its missing data points on to the TouchPoints Channel Planner – resulting in a customised version of the tool that could be provided for free to all existing media agency TouchPoints subscribers.

The modelling approach

The Guardian commissioned Telmar, the global software company, to use the IPA TouchPoints Channel Planner as a Hub on to which to fuse the best available audience data for each Guardian property - these comprised existing industry sources, the Guardian's own online metrics plus some specially commissioned research to fill in any gaps - to produce a holistic database comprising all the Guardian's many properties.

The process involved four key stages:

Stage 1: A data audit and collection phase, pulling data from industry currencies (such as UKOM, NRS and ABC), web analytics systems (such as Google Analytics and Omniture Site Catalyst) and various consumer-centric surveys to assess reach and profile over fifty channels, sections and platforms.

Stage 2: A cross platform survey served to users across all platforms – offline and online - to assess channel and section usage cross-over to a highly granular level. Key survey details were as follows:

    a. 2,000 responses in total across all platforms.
    b. Online survey distributed via the Guardian's "Brand Aid" panel to capture iPad subscribers, Mobile App Subscribers, Mobile Web and Print readers.
    c. Print readers were also directed to the survey via offline links in the paper to ensure full coverage among low interent penetration households.
    d. Designed to capture the long tail of less-engaged website users, the survey was also distributed via an online intercept on site.

Stage 3: A data modelling phase performed by Telmar, fusing the data collected on to the IPA's TouchPoints Channel Planner tool. Where possible, audience profiles were matched and weighted to industry currencies, but where such sources were not available (e.g. ipad app), the profile of the Guardian's own ipad app user panel was employed.

Stage 4: Following a rigorous data Quality Assurance exercise and process of stress testing the models created, the resulting planning tool was made available through the two major UK industry media planning software bureaus – Telmar and IMS. Both systems were already embedded with media agencies which ultimately helped overcome the hurdle of trial and acceptance.

FIGURE 1: Example of ANP codebook in Telmar Media Planner software

FIGURE 2: Example of ANP published media schedule in Telmar Media Planner software

Target	1										Population	50,916 (000) (100.0% of Con
Survey	IPA Touchpoints 6 - Audiences Not Platforms Edition										Sample Size	51,199
Weight	Respondent Weight										Comp. Target	All
Display	Single Schedule											
Calc Method	Respondent Engine, Resp-Engine R&F method											

Insertions	Uses	Audience [000]	Audience %	Total GRPs	Total Impacts [000]	Reach [000]	Reach %	Base CPT	CPT	Total Cost
Guardian Sport (Saturday editio	5	446	0.88	4.38	2,231	1,011	1.99	0.00	0.00	0.00
Guardian Film [desktop]	470.71%	106	0.21	1.96	1,000	611	1.20	0.00	0.00	0.00
Guardian Sport [desktop]	166.13%	602	1.18	1.96	1,000	729	1.43	0.00	0.00	0.00
Guardian Business [desktop]	350.99%	142	0.28	1.96	1,000	524	1.03	0.00	0.00	0.00
Guardian Cook (Saturday edition	5	610	1.20	5.99	3,048	1,412	2.77	0.00	0.00	
Guardian Sport [mobile browser	214.26%	467	0.92	1.96	1,000	815	1.60	0.00	0.00	
Guardian News [mobile browse	86.95%	1,150	2.26	1.96	1,000	904	1.77	0.00	0.00	
Guardian Money [mobile browse	607.95%	55	0.11	1.96	1,000	670	1.32	0.00	0.00	
The Guardian (Monday to Friday	5	703	1.38	6.91	3,516	1,979	3.89	0.00	0.00	
The Guardian (Saturday) [print]	5	1,073	2.11	10.53	5,363	2,440	4.79	0.00	0.00	
Guardian Travel on Saturday [p	5	571	1.12	5.61	2,855	1,330	2.61	0.00	0.00	

Media Types

Media
- (•) ALL
- ( ) National Newspapers
- ( ) ANP Digital Sites and Apps

Group Vehicles...
☑ Sort by Mediatype
☑ Automatically Recalculate
Recalculate Now

All Schedules

	Total Uses	Reach [000]	Reach %	Total GRPs	Total Impacts [000]	Avg. Frequency	Total Cost
Total	43.97	6,170	12.12	45.20	23,013	3.73	0.00
National Newspapers	25	3,756	7.38	33.41	17,013	4.53	0.00
ANP Digital Sites and Apps	1896.98%	3,239	6.36	11.78	6,000	1.85	0.00

Horizontal / Vertical

FIGURE 3: Example of ANP reach data visualisation in Telmar Media Planner software

Telmar Graph Manager - [Graph showing Reach [000]]
File   View   Window   Help

New   Edit   Open   Save   Print

B I U A

Graph showing Reach [000]

Reach [000]

2,400
2,300
2,200
2,100
2,000
1,900
1,800
1,700
1,600
1,500
1,400
1,300
1,200
1,100
1,000
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0

Guardian Sport (Saturday edition) [print]   Guardian Sport [desktop]   Guardian Cook (Saturday edition) [print]   Guardian News [mobile browser]   The Guardian (Monday to Friday) [print]   Guardian Travel on Saturday [p
Guardian Film [desktop]   Guardian Business [desktop]   Guardian Sport [mobile browser]   Guardian Money [mobile browser]   The Guardian (Saturday) [print]

Insertions

| 1

IPA Touchpoints 6 - Audiences Not Platforms Edition © Telmar Communications Ltd, Mediaplanner v3.0.0 Release 159

Graph Theme   Graph Type   Data Options   Data

Chart

The launch

The roll-out of Audiences Not Platforms consisted of a two-month road show that saw the tool being introduced to every major media agency in London, Northern England and Scotland. It was seen by nearly 500 agency workers, and given to all agency TouchPoints subscribers for free, raising the profile of the Guardian in the process.

Business Impact

In terms of client businesses the impact could be broken down in to three key fundamental business benefits:

- **Simplicity** – rather than use multiple disaggregated planning tools and analytics systems (e.g. TGI, plus comscore, plus the National Readership Survey, plus Google Analytics etc.) to plan news brand campaigns, clients and agencies could now use one single source accessible via industry idea media planning software systems such as Telmar and IMS.

- **Efficiency** – time and again ANP was able to prove the budget efficiency of re-distributing monies from print to digital channels. Finding the optimal blend of print vs. desktop vs mobile vs. apps vs. off-platform ad inventory – planned at a highly granular site and section level, has enabled clients to see their budgets go further with news brands: maximise reach, GRPs and reducing CPTs (costs per thousand audience members reached).

    - For example, ANP enabled one major UK highstreet retailer targeting main household shoppers to re-allocate half of its print budget in to the travel and lifestyle sites on desktop, and the culture and fashion sites on mobile – digital channels that they had not explored before but were highly frequented by their target audience. The results saw campaign reach increase by 30% and GRPs by 44%, while cost per thousand was reduced by 30%, therefore, demonstrating the overwhelming efficiency of an audience centric, platform-neutral approach to campaign planning.

- **Effectiveness** – In parallel to ANP's launch, concurrent and independent research (through the Swedish ad effectiveness research agency RAM) has demonstrated the cross-platform brand multiplier effect for newsbrands. Invariably, those advertisers who work across multiple newsbrand platforms rather than one achieve higher brand uplifts and sales effects throughout the purchase funnel.

    - For example, an ANP planned campaign for a major UK car brand which ran in print, desktop, mobile and tablet sought to raise both purchase consideration and website visitation following campaign exposure. For the 51% of survey respondents who recalled seeing the campaign on multiple platform, they recorded 90% higher levels of brand consideration and over double the rate of website visitation intent vs. those who seen the campaign on just a single platform,

It was estimated that the introduction of ANP increased the the investment in cross platform campaigns booked by the Guardian for the duration of the first iteration of ANP's lifespan by **just over £5m.**

Customer Reaction

Industry feedback was extremely positive. However, one message came through loud and clear: to increase the use of ANP it needed to be produced for all newsbrands. Collaboration was required - not something newsbrands have always been known for!

The Telegraph and The Guardian are the top two quality newsbrands in the UK, often vying for the top spot in terms of cross-platform reach. Together they reach over 40% of all UK adults and two thirds of all AB adults. A collaboration between the two seemed like the ideal solution.

Making it happen was straightforward. The Guardian opened up the methodology for free – acknowledging that the potential reward for newsbrands as a whole was far greater than any consultancy fee. The methodology remained the same as with the first ANP, but was scaled up so that it could accommodate both brands along with the burgeoning number of channels across which they publish content.

Eighteen months after *Audiences Not Platforms* was first released, *ANP2* was rolled out to the market, featuring over 200 online and offline channels and sections for the Guardian and Telegraph and broadening its appeal and application greatly.

ANP2 became a powerful commercial positioning tool. For example, with news brands in total reaching 40 million people monthly (NRS PADD September 2014) and Facebook reaching 34 million (comScore September 2014), an audience centric approach to planning allowed news brands to place themselves on a scale comparable to one of the dominant digital players, and for the Guardian and Telegraph to demonstrate that over half of newsbrand audiences could be reached through their two titles alone,

Audiences Not Platforms won both AOP publisher and IAB Europe Research awards, whilst being shortlisted in the Mediaweek Award research category.

Industry commentators praised Audiences Not Platforms collaborative approach to audience planning: "Why the Guardian and Telegraph's 'Audience not Platforms' partnership could lead to much more," while commenting that it "also addresses the need for greater transparency on the effectiveness of multi-platform campaigns."

ANP's development since its launch

The vision of ANP was one of the key factors in the newsbrands industry's decision to resign from the primarily print focussed NRS in 2014 and recreate it as a' brand first' measure of published brands in the form of the PAMCO AMP service – the first results of this will be published in full in early 2018. Consequently, further development of the ANP technique is now on hold for newsbrands whilst they wait to see what AMP delivers.

In the meantime, the ANP approach has been adopted by both the audio and television/video industries. In 2016, Global Radio utilised the ANP technique to add its digital audio properties (DAX) into the TouchPoints Channel Planner allowing the industry to analyse the total performance of radio within a cross media campaign.

Quote from Ollie Deane, Director of Commercial Digital of Global Radio

 'It is significant that DAX is on TouchPoints for three reasons: 1. In recognition that digital audio is a major digital behaviour that forms a significant part of people's lives. 2. It enables agencies to plan how audio can work alongside many different channels and for different audiences. 3. Since DAX went onto TouchPoints we have seen a large increase in advertisers syncing the delivery for audio campaigns with locations such as poster sites and store lists'

In 2017, the ANP technique has been used to include all VOD channels in theTouchPoints Channel Planner again allowing the performance of VOD to be evaluated within the television/video market and the wider communications market.

FIGURE 4:Example of ANP VOD media schedule in Telmar Media Planner software

Quote from Vicky Fox, Head of XMP, OMD

'The addition of VOD channels to the TouchPoints Channel Planner means that we can evaluate what VOD adds, in terms of both reach and frequency, to both the broadcast channel delivery and the wider communication plans on a far more accurate and consistent basis than we have been able to do in the past'.

Conclusion

Audiences not Platforms' pragmatic approach is proving to be an invaluable methodology for all communication channels to demonstrate their true scale and effectiveness in an environment of rapid change and new product development where the more traditional audience measurement techniques find it difficult to evaluate the new, smaller primarily digital channels.

Authors:

Ian Gibbs, Data Stories

Ian Gibbs is the founder of Data Stories: an independent data consultancy focused on all things digital, advertising, media and publishing related. Drawing on fifteen years of experience in market research, data analytics, digital advertising and strategic planning following stints heading up the Guardian's insight team and running digital ad effectiveness research at Millward Brown, Data Stories employs a broad data-driven skill set to help clients solve their business problems.

Lynne Robinson, Institute of Practitioners in Advertising

In her role as Research Director of the IPA, Lynne represents the UK's advertising agencies interests across all forms of media research.

In 2004, she led the development and subsequent launch of the IPA's cross media, cross device survey, TouchPoints, which is now conducted on an annual basis in the UK.

Lynne is a frequent speaker at industry events.

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