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TALKS

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ONLINE TALK WITH Dr KAREN NELSON-FIELD ON  
THE POWER OF TV IN THE ATTENTION ECONOMY



In this edition of its Online Talks, egta had the pleasure of welcoming **Professor Karen Nelson-Field**, Founder and Executive Director of Amplified Intelligence, and Professor of Media Innovation at The University of Adelaide. The Online Talk was jointly hosted by egta and the Global TV Group on the occasion of [the World Television Day on 21 November](#).

The decks presented during this seminar as well as the recording are publicly available. The recording can be viewed [here](#), and the slide deck and presentation can be found [here](#).

During her presentation, Karen Nelson-Field shared her most recent work on the power of TV in the attention economy, notably in the DACH region (Germany, Austria and Switzerland), and the generalised findings from the *Not All Reach is Equal* series. She also discussed the meaning of these findings for the advertisement ecosystem and what role Amplified Intelligence plays to help drive positive business outcomes.

#### Karen Nelson Field – The Power of Attention

- Professor Nelson-Field and her team have worked on the *Not All Reach is Equal* series of research studies for about four years. The first research was conducted with ThinkTV in Australia and then replicated in Canada and the U.K. The most recent study was conducted in collaboration with Screenforce DACH, earlier this year pre-pandemic.
  - During the research phase, a vast amount of data is collected to analyse the cross-platform performance of ads against the most important attributes for ad effectiveness:
    - ✓ The performance of the “Ad cut-through” rate via the “attention” metric.
    - ✓ The performance criteria of “Sales uplift” via the metric of “product choice”.

#### Methodology and tech recap:

- Karen Nelson-Field uses app-based technology and machine learning models that track eye movement of viewers watching ads on different devices and platforms. The app, installed on study participants’ devices enables ad tracking and tracking of metrics such as scroll speed, if the phone is tilted, volume level, pixel’s quality and viewing time, while holding the creatives constant across platforms. It is worth noting that all lengths of ads were tested, from 6 seconds long 30 second spots.
  - The device’s camera is also intercepted to evaluate the level of attention, categorised by:
    - ✓ Active attention – the viewer is looking at the ad on the screen.
    - ✓ Passive attention – the viewer is looking around the ad but not watching it directly.
    - ✓ Non-Attention – the viewer is not watching the ad at all.
  - The most recent study, conducted in the DACH region, assessed the cross-platform performance of linear TV, BVOD, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook on mobile and TV.

#### Part A – What we already know:

- The repeated *Not all Reach is Equal* studies have revealed that the active attention and the STAS (Short-Term Advertising Strength, *see further explanation below*) index are significantly related with an  $r$  correlation coefficient of .82 (whereas 1 represent a perfect relationship). Active attention seconds likewise link to sales uplift.
  - Unsurprisingly, the inverse is also true - regression analysis is not required to prove that if no attention is paid, then no impact can be generated from the ad.
  - The STAS index indicates the Short-Term Advertising Strength on sales by analysing whether viewers were exposed to an ad and if they would buy the product advertised. An index over 100 means the ad has performed better than usual.

- The STAS index is the highest for BVOD and linear TV regardless of the device used, expressing the fact that TV delivers more sales uplift than any other platform. These findings have been consistent across the markets researched. While numbers have varied slightly, the patterns have stayed the same from one country to the other.

#### Part B: Findings we can now generalise

- By replication across the different markets, findings can now be generalised, including:
  - **Two seconds of attention is not enough.** Findings show that while two seconds of an ad can generate some short-term impact, advertisements viewed longer than for 2 seconds generate a higher level of STAS and slows ad decay.
  - **Attention and ad decay are related.** The more attention seconds, the longer the brand stays in the memory. Memory starts to kick in at around the 3-second mark.
  - **On average, each active attention second delivered 3 days in memory.**
  - **TV ad retention generates a greater impact at 28 days than either Facebook or YouTube ads do immediately after exposure.** This means that the STAS index for a TV ad 28 days after it is watched is higher than the index of a Facebook or YouTube ad on day 1.
  - **Even if an ad is viewable (by time-in-view standards) it does not mean it will be viewed.** When time-in-view is put in as proxy for attention, it tells little about if people actually watched the ad. It could just as easily mean that no attention was paid to the ad.
  - **No platform is immune to partial attention or non-attention.** However, more absolute seconds of ads play in favour of TV. The proportion of viewing is similar across platforms except on Instagram where active viewing is higher. But that is mainly explained by the fact that ads on Instagram are only a couple of seconds long.
- In summary, the research studies have found and generalised that:
  - TV generates more attention and sales uplift
  - Length of time that a TV ad impacts sales far exceeds any other platform
  - TV ads are up to three times longer in view

#### Part C: What we do with this information and how we can help to correct the market

- The findings do not solve the problems of the advertising ecosystem, which are:
  - The current media trading system tells very little about whether an ad is actually being viewed. Not all opportunities-to-see (OTS) are created equal and quality makes a big difference to business outcomes.
  - There is no transparency around this truth that not all ads receive the same attention.
  - CPM does not account for performance difference. CPM used to be a relative measurement of performance but is not any more. Some platforms overcharge relative to the ad performance according to the STAS.
- Nelson-Field and her team at Amplified Intelligence reached out to the industry and had discussions on the interest of using attention as a measurement for media planning and optimisation, as opposed to relying foremost on reach measurements.
- Amplified Intelligence is pivoting to play more of an active role in the solution. On Monday 23 November they roll out a new planning tool, built on the attention metrics measurements. The new platform, called *attentionTrace*, draws in company's CPM and weights it against the universal measure of attention viewing seconds.

- The goal of the new platform is not to add to the problem of the industry by promoting advertisers to negotiate the prices of CPM, but rather to pull the ecosystem up and allow advertisers to get more for their media dollars.
- Attention is hard to earn, but Nelson-Field's work has consistently revealed that the quality platforms of BVOD and TV, with their quality impressions, work harder for the brands.