

# The Media Audit

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **"Advertising On Internet Today Similar To Local TV Advertising in 50s, and Early 60s" says TMA**

The founder of a 29-year-old qualitative media audience rating firm, says Internet advertising today seems to be in the same stage of development that television advertising was in during the late 50s and 60s.

"Back then, " says Bob Jordan, co-chairman and co-founder of The Media Audit, "television ratings simply didn't exist in the 50s"

According to Jordan: By the early 60s there were a number of companies vying for recognition in the radio and television ratings business. But there was no accepted ratings leader on the national scene and the only local market surveys available were for New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. The circumstances resulted in local TV advertising being sold on the basis of testimonials and success stories. Scandals, congressional investigations and subsequently the formation of the Broadcast Rating Council, predecessor to today's Media Rating Council eventually solved the problems of those days.

In the Internet advertising industry today, just as in the broadcast industry of the early 60s, there are several companies vying for market dominance, this time for web site audience measurement. Media Metrics, Net Ratings and PC Data use panel based surveys wherein software meters are downloaded onto the panel member computers to collect web usage information. In spite of the dominant market positions achieved by Media Metrix and Net Ratings there is still no clear standard of acceptance by advertisers. In fact, there is considerable disagreement about the validity, and subsequently the value, of today's web site ratings.

Today's Internet audience measurement disagreement, says Jordan, is caused by the conflicting data produced by web site tracking software that all web sites have on their sites, and the data produced by more traditional surveys.

The disagreements are over audience size, i.e. -- unique visits to a site. The rating services define measurement by geography based on the county of residence of the people being surveyed. Web site tracking software counts everyone logging onto the site. Tracking software can't distinguish the geography of the person logging on to the site, unless it requires registration.

Advertisers want, - and must have - data to define the size and the demographic profile of the audience, and until they can be provided with that by the web rating services, the Internet will never become the force that it has been projected to be.

The Media Rating Council, or some comparable organization, must become the arbiter of standards for the measuring of web site audiences.

Jordan sees another parallel between TV of the 60s and the Internet media of today. Today, says Jordan, 60 to 70% of television buys are based on local audience profiles and in a very few years most Internet buys will be based on local audience profiles as local spot buys become an accepted way to beef up national schedules in selected markets."

In 1998 when his firm started providing data on local media web sites "we found very little interest" among advertising agencies and media buying firms, says Jordan. Everyone was focused exclusively on national survey data. Even a lot of local media web sites had little interest in local audience data. "Many local media web sites are a part of corporate groups and they wanted to sell the aggregate of the group as a national site," says Jordan, a 40-year member of the market research industry.

But that's all changing, claims Jordan.

In the last 18 months his firm has signed up 189 local media web site subscribers that include 68 daily newspaper sites, 49 television sites and 64 city guide sites. And as the sites begin to focus on local information, agencies and media buying services will follow.

"Content is what the Internet audience is looking for and when they want community or local information, the most obvious place to go is to a local media's web site," he says. "We've been providing local media surveys for almost 30 years, but right now the Internet web sites are driving our business. They represent 19.4% of our growth during the past two years. And, remember, all we do are local surveys."

The Media Audit, a syndicated media ratings service currently covering more than 80 markets, provides both quantitative and qualitative data for media web sites as well as for traditional media. In addition to comprehensive audience profiles, The Media Audit provides trend data on market penetration and market share.

Traditional media - print, broadcast and outdoor - have used The Media Audit surveys in sales, marketing and management for more than 29 years. In 1998, the surveys started providing data on local media web sites. The surveys now contain more than 400 fields of qualitative information in addition to quantitative measurements of local media audiences.

The Media Audit has more than 1700 clients that include radio and television stations, cable television networks, cable television operators, daily newspapers, alternative weekly newspapers, city and regional magazines, shopper publications, outdoor billboard companies, and direct mail houses. In addition, TMA clients include local Internet web sites for daily newspapers, television and radio stations, alternative newspapers, shoppers and city guides. The client base also includes more than 500 advertising agencies, media buying services and advertisers.

The Media Audit is a product of International Demographics, Inc., a 29-year-old Houston firm that is engaged exclusively in syndicated, multiple-media surveys conducted at the local market level.

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