

Comparing Television Ratings Conventions: Australian and American Approaches to Broadcast Ratings

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Abstract

While the broadcast ratings have provided a stable language and technology for talking about and analysing audiences globally there has been surprisingly little attention paid to the sometimes substantial, sometimes minor variations between ratings instruments internationally. In this paper we begin the consideration of differences and similarities between American and Australian approaches to broadcast ratings anchoring these to the nature of the ratings convention developed in each jurisdiction. The parties to the respective conventions in both countries bear a significant family resemblance to each other, but the relative distribution of power among the parties to the convention - ratings companies, broadcasters, advertisers and agencies—gives rise to identifiably different settlements. There arises distinct politics and practices of audience ratings that can tell us much about respective broadcasting systems.

Keywords

Audience ratings, broadcast ratings, history, ratings convention

Introduction

Media ratings systems provide an economic foundation for advertiser-supported and part-advertiser supported broadcast (pay-TV particularly) media. Consequently the nature of the audience measurement process affects the structure and behaviour of media companies and regulators alike. So when the techniques and technologies of the ratings change these changes can as Napoli (2003) observes have 'a significant effect on the economics of media industries (because these changes can affect advertiser behaviour), the relative economic health of various segments of the media industry, and the nature of the content that media organisations provide' (Napoli, 2003, p.65). This is because the ratings do more than analyse markets, they alter them. They are an active force transforming the broadcasting environment not just a camera passively recording it. Ratings are best thought of as an engine to analyse the broadcasting world rather than as photographic reproductions of it. This distinction between 'engine' and 'camera' was made by Donald McKenzie (2006) in his analysis of financial markets where statistical measures and calculations were used to standardize a range of market transactions in the finance industry. The distinction is a useful one for us because the international differences in how the audience ratings conventions developed between Australia in the United States are, the authors will argue, a reflection of the different 'engines' that built them and changed them over time. The authors, using historical methodology and interviews, show that broadly the Australian approach was more 'service' oriented while the United States more 'free market oriented'. The differences, as we will see, are important because the nature and credibility of the broadcast ratings differed substantially between the two countries.

The birth of broadcast ratings

In Australia, Bill McNair, the founder of the McNair ratings system, gave his account of the need for audience ratings in his 1937 work *Radio Advertising in Australia*. McNair lamented that in Australia "systematic research has hardly been tried. The agencies with competently staffed research departments are in the minority; and on matters affecting newspaper and magazine circulations and radio owners' listening habits very little information has been collected." (1937, p.44). Of those who tried to do surveys of audiences, "in most cases the results have not been published, this has been of little use to the great body of advertisers. The few surveys on which information can be obtained have differed widely in method and

scope." (1937, p.248) At the same time, McNair noted with envy an American situation where there was greater understanding of and acceptance of survey based research but this was tempered with some alarm at the problems that had emerged in the United States in the wake of market and audience research taking off.

In America when consumer research first obtained recognition, the new technique was quickly abused. Business executives with no statistical training would run off long questionnaires abounding in irrelevant and ambiguous questions, and have them taken by untrained interviewers from door to door through all sorts of unrepresentative localities. Completed questionnaires which showed unfavourable results were freely discarded in order to make the final percentages more impressive. Such methods could not but cast discredit on the whole practice of consumer research. (1937, p.248)

McNair worried away at this American free for all situation in which the good, the bad and the ugly could co-exist with little means of distinguishing among them. He took it upon himself to promote independent and rigorous audience and market research in Australia. His book is a report on his own surveys of the radio audiences and listening habits of the time, pitched to convince the media industry and advertisers alike of the need for sustained survey based research of broadcast audiences. We can also see from his book just how uninterested radio companies initially were in this research and how difficult it was for him to secure cooperation from the public. "In spite of all the foregoing precautions, this first stage in the investigation was not altogether the success that had been hoped for. Out of some 300 radio owners who received questionnaires, only 58 returned them, and some of these failed to answer every question." (1937, p.273)

McNair's concern with the independence of audience ratings and research from media outlets has its own history, of which McNair was aware. In 1908 in Britain the *Observer* proceeded for damages against the Advertisers' Protection Society, formed in 1900 to ensure that manufacturers who paid for advertising would get better value for their money. Its first action was to invite newspaper owners to divulge circulation figures and when they refused they provided its members with private estimates for leading newspapers and journals. The Society had published an estimate of 5,000 for the *Observer's* circulation. The *Observer* could show that its net sales were over 80,000, but the Society was acquitted, "because, in the struggle for circulation which then consumed Fleet Street, there was no basis for more accurate estimates." (Harris & Seldon, 1959, p.14). After this court case newspapers began publishing their circulation figures The Society then embarked on a campaign for independently audited

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figures that led to the establishment of the Audit Bureau of Circulation in 1931. The United States, similarly, set up its Audit Bureau of Circulation in 1914 because of concerns with inflation of figures. With the establishment of the Audit Bureau the principle of syndicated research had become established in a contested environment.

Bill McNair also set the scene in Australia, like his counterparts in the United States like Hans Zeisel, for the first attempt at an academic and discipline based study of audience ratings, to the extent where he submitted his 1937 book as a PhD to a university in Scotland. His application was knocked back but his academic interest in audience ratings remained, like his competitive counterpart George Anderson.

McNair and Anderson mounted competing ratings systems through the 1940s into the 1960s. Both methods, personal interview and recall and diary, ran side by side as audience measurement techniques, ratings, until both firms merged under industry pressure in the 1970s. For the whole period, from 1944, through to the merger with Anderson Analysis, the debate about the two methodologies was personal and public.

“Now, the argument was centered around personal interviews versus diary. At that time, McNair was doing the personal interviews, in fact all through the fifties and early sixties anyway, the method for both radio and television was face to face personal interviews, house to house, very controlled samples and all about yesterday's listening and yesterday's viewing. And the argument was, because it's yesterday's listening, it's fresh in peoples mind, and they would be able to tell us, and most people do tell, exactly what happened yesterday ... Whereas, with the face to face one day recall method, you had to match samples each day so you got sample error each day. So you might have got a 30 news rating on 7 today, but it might have been 35 tomorrow and 37 the next day, and no one never knew if that was sample error or real. Some stations still bought it because they might have come out better on that survey than they did on the Anderson.” (Ian McNair 2000)

With two competing ratings services in the major Australian broadcasting markets ratings companies were operating on tight margins; there was little room for development of competitor ratings providers.

The motives for collecting audience ratings could also become personal, which often left Andersons especially on a financial tightrope because of George Anderson's commitment to

methodology and service in servicing regional television markets where they had a clear edge over McNair.

“It was personal. When we were measuring a country television station, we would over-provide, for the reason George said ‘it’s their livelihood. Forget the agencies, it’s the station that’s got to live or die by these numbers, and I want them to be right.’” (Don Neely 2000)

George Anderson also stuck by his diary methodology, even though there was no direct evidence at the time that it had advantages over recall. "George stuck by this methodology, this pre-listed personally placed, personally collected diary. And in latter years it was proved correct." (Don Neely 2000) When McNair and Andersons merged both protagonists had fallen out of the picture, with their sons or managers who had been with them for years taking over. Ian McNair's recollection of the reasons for agreement for using diaries and dropping recall were, he said, based on methodological grounds.

“Yes, they were using the diary method and when we merged we decided we would continue using the diary method. The main single reason that persuaded me and my colleagues about that, even though that wasn't the McNair method up till then, the main single reason was that being seven days, from the same respondent, we're able to work out reach frequencies much better than we could with the single day samples. And it wasn't so much personal interviews versus anything else, it was the fact that you got data over a whole week from a diary that really persuaded us to continue on with that method for both radio and television. That's what we did, right from '72 onwards.” (Ian McNair 2000)

In the United States, Archibald Crossley, the founder of broadcast ratings, was the McNair and Anderson contemporary and counterpart, and like Australia, there was a public education mindedness. There are some clues to why this was the case, as discovered by the authors in their interviews with Helen Crossley the daughter of Archibald Crossley. Helen Crossley was with her father when the methodology for broadcast ratings was being developed and, indeed, participated in the analysis.

“My father would bring them home, interview cards, and he trained me how to do tabulate data from them - 1, 2, 3, 4 across, 1, 2, 3, 4 across, to make bunches of fives that could be added up by hand. I got into that by the time I was 10. I remember that there were four radio networks across the top of the sheet, and you put your check

mark under whichever network the listener was reporting, so when you added them all up and counted them in piles of five, you knew how many listeners you had out of 20 calls." (Helen Crossley, 2008).

Archibald Crossley measured *exposure* in his radio ratings analysis. Exposure has become the *standard way* - the convention - for measuring broadcasting ratings. What we do know is that Crossley was pedantic about accuracy in his work and kept advertisers and users of ratings methodology continually informed - a carbon copy of Bill McNair in Australia. But here the similarities end.

For a start Crossley was hired by an organisation of radio advertisers the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting Inc (CAB) in 1929 to measure the "unseen audience". This made him unlike his Australian counterparts who established independent firms. Crossley, with no prior methodology to work from, created basic measurements for CAB that covered over 80 US cities for 16 years. His employees thumbed through telephone directories, called subscribers at random, and asked them what program, if any, they were listening to (telephone coincidental). Crossley ratings estimated the number of telephone subscribers tuned in to any show. No attempt was made to learn what they thought of the broadcast. These ratings became known as the "Crossleys" and were the currency for determining good and bad programs. "But even top stars like Jack Benny and Edgar Bergen worried more about their "Crossleys" than their hairlines. C.A.B.'s passing boomed Hooper. Of Crossley's 92 exclusive clients, 80 had switched to Hooper last week. Until a better system comes along, radio would continue to judge itself by telephone." (Anon. Time 1946).

But why did Crossley give up on audience ratings? The "cause of death" of CAB posed by *Time* was that "radiomen" decided that the industry-financed CAB was duplicating the independent telephone poll of C. E. Hooper (Anon. Time 1946). In the authors' interviews with Helen Crossley the reasons for Crossley's exit were not only related to the final rejection of CAB by his colleagues in 1946 in favour of Hooper. There were also personal reasons related to conflict with CAB. There was, firstly, CAB "jealousy" that they paid Crossley but in the market the ratings were known as "Crossleys"; secondly Crossley saw himself as a methodologist, not a salesman. As a consequence when Crossley sought additional funding from CAB to improve ratings methodology to cope with changes, CAB were "tight fisted about financing it. So, that was part of the dispute that he said he really couldn't continue unless there was more money to cover the new methods. So, that was part of the dispute, was how to get money out of these co-operative committee members to cover the additional costs." (Crossley 2008) According to Helen Crossley her father's decision to opt out of ANZCA09 *Communication, Creativity and Global Citizenship*: Refereed Proceedings: <http://anzca09.org>

broadcast ratings was an extremely emotional one and was not seen by him as "voluntary". Indeed, Archibald Crossley's wife wanted him to stay in the industry and Helen Crossley's enduring memories are of her mother trying to convince her husband to fight CAB.

Crossley's departure is not simply a matter of an individual leaving a market. Crossley's experience and his disappointment with the resourcing of ratings would be repeated. It was the first of many instances where ratings providers and would be providers came up against what their clients would be willing to pay. As Donald McKenzie in *An Engine not a Camera* points out in his analysis of economic systems, we should not forget that people shape the 'engines' and their role might be pivotal in events. Crossley's absence from the audience ratings market, as a devout methodologist concerned with accuracy and honesty and education of his clients, left the audience ratings market to private providers. Of these the most significant was Art Nielsen, also public education minded, whose move into broadcast ratings were subsidised by his consumer panel service with Nielsen's market edge being provided by his audimeter which mechanically tracked tuning in radio and subsequently television sets.

Contesting the audience ratings convention

Unlike McNair and Anderson, Crossley did not have the same control over his destiny even though broadcasters and advertisers could and did put pressure on the two Australia broadcast ratings companies over time. By the 1940s the principle of "current opinion/view/actions" based on probability sampling principles as the basis for future estimates was established in the US and Australia. The Gallup Poll in the US 1935 for example was important here. The broadcast ratings drew on the credibility of opinion polling and came to occupy a similar position as regular repeatable information to be used predictively (Beville 1985). A.C. Nielsen in the US moved into radio ratings in 1936 although the company itself was established in 1923. Gallup set up business in 1923 and the first Gallup poll was delivered in 1935. Nielsen and Hoopers took over Crossley's work.

In Crossley's absence a significant gap between broadcasting ratings as currency and the underlying standards governing their use grew up with competing ratings systems in operation. The 1963 Congressional committee into broadcast ratings established in the US came about precisely because methodologists in the area of standards and measures in the US Federal Government had concerns about how and what broadcast ratings companies were 'selling' to broadcast markets. Media company owners, including Lyndon Johnson, also had concerns about distortions in the market, especially in the wake of the Quiz Show scandal.

The Quiz Show spiked ratings (hyping) by rigging the success of one of its star performers by giving him all the answers to questions in advance. The subsequent Congressional Hearings, once they opened the 'black box' of broadcast ratings, started to discover some of its problems.

The hearings suggested that the illusion of exact accuracy was necessary to the ratings industry in order to heighten the confidence of their clients in the validity of the data they sell. This myth was sustained by the practice of reporting audience ratings down to the decimal point, even when the sampling tolerances ranged over several percentage points. It was reinforced by keeping as a closely guarded secret the elaborate weighting procedures which were used to translate interviews into published projections of audience size. It was manifested in the monolithic self-assurance with which the statistical uncertainties of survey data were transformed into beautiful, solid, clean-looking bar charts' (Bogart, 1966, p.50)

The US Congressional committee also found that some of the audience ratings companies were completely bogus and not even conducting surveys. The US committee was the first serious independent analysis of audience ratings methodology and conventions. It is also an important cultural marker because it signals the first time that the auditing of broadcast ratings became systematic and taken for granted. In Australia McNair and Anderson had already acted as a default audit.

Gale Metzger who started as a young researcher with Art Nielsen, founder of Nielsen's ratings, and later became in his own right a major figure in audience ratings research in the United States recounted the 'life traumatising' event of the Congressional hearings for Nielsen and other companies.

"I think there were two factors involved in the Congress getting involved. Number one, many of the Congressmen owned broadcast facilities. Lyndon Johnson was one who made a fortune on the growth of media and they were not unique in that regard. So they had a personal interest in the ratings because they realised that was determining the value of their assets ... And then in the United States there was the 'quiz show scandal'. It was determined those programs were rigged. And there was not this pure measurement of knowledge and skills and understandings, but rather it was something that was being set up by the producers and the results were preordained. And they realised then that people were doing this in order to get more

measured audience and to sell more advertising. And this was all driven by ratings and they went “What are these things called ratings?” (Metzger 2008)

The Congressional hearings led to the establishment of an independent ratings council in recognition that broadcast ratings were not just a commercial matter but in the *public interest*. They also ensured that the market leader, A.C. Nielsen increased its dominance in the media marketplace. The hearing of course also led to a media industry much more sensitive to how audience ratings worked. Metzger when he finally left Nielsen set up his own company, Statistical Research Inc, that ended up being the broadcasters' company-of-choice for conducting independent research on audience ratings. Indeed, Metzger was employed by CONTAM to review the impact of Peplemeters after they had been introduced. The CONTAM review increased broadcasters and network dissatisfaction with the Nielsen monopoly. Metzger as a result was invited by the networks and advertisers to set up a competing system to Nielsen.

“After the Peplemeter review and the criticism around it, the networks decided that having this independent research to force Nielsen to improve wasn't enough. You really had to set up a better model. And that began the era of SMART, which was an acronym for Systems for Measuring and Reporting Television, whereby we were commissioned to really build a better system ... In 1999 we got the laboratory up and going and we were ready to go with it on a national roll out and 1999 was a crazy time; the internet craze and an extraordinary 20 per cent returns on investment in a lot of places ... We put up a \$100m proposal to roll out the service and part of that scheme was we would get \$50m from within the industry and \$50m outside. The \$50m outside was easy to get; the \$50m inside I was told was a slam-dunk in 1998, but in the 1999 we had some changes in management ... In any event, we were not able to get the internal funding and we shut down SMART in 1999. And the industry has gone with Nielsen ever since and you'll hear people who will call me and lament all that, but you know, you had your chance and they passed on their chance.” (Metzger 2008).

Metzger's SMART system, despite its folding, put pressure on Nielsen to adapt its system and many of the SMART innovations were subsequently adopted by Nielsen. In contrast the advent of people meters in Australia saw Nielsen establish itself in Australian broadcast ratings at the expense of the incumbent ratings provider with its history in McNair Anderson operations. Australian broadcasting had moved towards tenders and contracting broadcast ratings and away from a situation where a single firm or firms “set the standard”.

But there were also other pressures mounting on measurement of exposure as network audiences in the US declined with the rise of pay-TV and Pay-TV became an important client for broadcast ratings requiring adjustment to the ratings convention to accommodate their interests. This would put considerable pressure upon the business of ratings in the US from the 1980s just as it has in Australia in the 2000s. In the US this pressure centred around Nielsen which needed to accommodate network and pay-TV demands for change in the absence of an industry umpire; in Australia it centred around the network sponsored OzTam broadcast ratings and a ratings contract awarded to AGB Italia in 1999 rather than Nielsen as the Australian broadcasters sought a system more closely aligned with their own priorities. This brings us to the modern era of diversity of media services and the challenge to the 'single number' standard of syndicated audience ratings.

The Challenge to the 'Single Number'

The early ratings methodologies used families and social class definitions to segment the audience. McNair and Anderson even ran different definitions of the audience up until 1963. McNair used A,B,C,D,E and Anderson used A,B,C (upper, middle, industrial). The age categories for television were also different. The aim of this methodology was to produce relatively simple data for the production of figures for buying and selling data. The use of social class definitions affected the 'argot' or local language for reporting audience ratings. The term 'AB' for example began in 1959 in one of McNair's January/February reports when he started using Class AB (without separating them, as the company had done in previous reports).

Australia and the US did not differ significantly on this side of the methodology - the 'single number' principle governed media buying. However, as discussed above, the audience ratings conventions that governed the auditing regime in each country differed and, arguably, continue to differ significantly. The history of audience ratings is not therefore simply a history of the statistics of ratings. The relatively simple definitions of audiences in the McNair and Anderson surveys were not simple because early audience ratings experts had no idea on how to create more complex definitions of demographics.

The measures of two competing ratings systems which in Australia ran parallel to each other in the largest markets until the early 1970s were accepted because both were, in fact, a default audit, one system acting as a reference to the other. By the 1940s modern statistical, probability, sampling was also in place. The definitions of the audience also had,

underpinning them, assumptions about how many people might be surveyed or indeed included in the sweeps to represent whole nations.

The Peoplemeter was a new method for the measurement and collection of data and emerged in the 1980s as a way of capturing from households viewing information nearly all the time and transferring it directly from a set top box on the television to a computer. Interestingly diaries are still used for the Australian radio market but Peoplemeters for the most part dominate television. The Peoplemeter did not radically alter the classifications of the audience but it did introduce greater expectations of speed of delivery of the results of audience ratings. The original broadcast ratings convention in radio and television employed 'sweeps' over the year – more in Sydney and Melbourne; less in Brisbane and Adelaide and even less in Perth and the regionals. Electronic audience ratings allowed collection of the data all the time and for users of ratings to manipulate the results using software packages created for this purpose.

What has changed since McNair and Anderson's time is proliferation of media and fragmentation of audiences. In the US and Australia this has led to a new challenge to the audience ratings convention. In the US it is a challenge to the primacy of Niensens and in Australia it is a challenge to how its auditing regime can be maintained. Of particular interest in Australia is Foxtel and regional pay-TV group Austar, in conjunction with MCn, announcing in 2008 the launch of a new digital television audience measurement system (AMS) that would, the group argued, be the largest measurement system in Australia, providing viewing results from a panel of 10,000 Australian subscription TV homes (Bodey 2008). The system is designed to give the Pay-TV group information on how Australians are adapting to the digital TV environment, the acceptance of the new standard definition and high definition multi-channels and trends in time-shifted viewing. (Bodey 2008). Does AMS represent a return to the days of McNair and Anderson, with competing systems providing information to a skeptical market? Or is it simply a complementary service? Is it competitive and complementary simultaneously?

The interesting thing is that there is now measurement of many media, from use of mobiles through to television, but there is no agreement on a currency that covers all the measurements. In the original broadcast ratings convention audiences were relatively stable and there were few media. An audience 'rating' reflected an audience that had critical mass and was, hopefully, for example watching or listening to the medium. What has occurred is that the media industry has decided to do more measurement without a corresponding standard emerging. This is, if you like, more statistics but without a convention.

The other major trend in the contemporary moment is to buy large audiences. Google bought YouTube in 2006 for \$1.65 billion. At that time YouTube had over 100 million videos viewed every day and over 72 million individual visitors each month. Google has made its money from small text advertisements displayed next to Google search results. These advertisements deliver most of Google's US\$16.6 billion in revenue. This is a different model from traditional audience measurement and delivery of advertising to audiences. Google's approach is to buy massive audiences and to experiment with them. It does not need panels or samples because it has either a record of what its users do, or a site like YouTube, where the audience gathers. That audience in itself has economic value. This is a proprietary model and with it comes the dream of measuring the 'total' audience—no random sampling.

Conclusion

The broadcast audience ratings convention, or standard, on the authors' historical analysis, has had several important components. The convention:

1. Has exposure as the key measurement;
2. Must appeal to the inherent correctness of the measurement;
3. Uses a probability, statistical, sample;
4. Deliver a 'single number';
5. Is syndicated to reduce costs to subscribers;
6. Has generally been Third Party;
7. Is expected to work in the public interest (that is, accurately represent the public audience).

Media ratings systems traditionally provide an economic foundation for advertiser-supported media. Consequently the nature of the audience measurement process affects the structure and behaviour of media companies and regulators alike. Changes in the techniques and technologies of the ratings have “a significant effect on the economics of media industries (because these changes can affect advertiser behaviour), the relative economic health of various segments of the media industry, and the nature of the content that media organisations provide.” (Napoli 2003, p.65)

Although changes to the 'ratings convention' governing audience measurement can be disruptive, these changes are driven by the inevitable gap between the measured audience and the actual audience for a service or programs. With the advent of a more diverse and

fragmented media environment and fractionated audiences, increasingly demographically defined, this gap has become even more evident with the validity of ratings as currency for buying and selling media being challenged in the US. Napoli (2003) suggests that this is leading to a decline in quality and value of the ‘audience product’ - data on who is watching when - because of changes in technology and audiences.

In this paper we have seen that there are significant differences between the US and Australian audience ratings conventions in practice even though they share a very similar overarching convention, as described above. The US for much of its history has had a 'competitive' model in which Nielsen has come to dominate as a free standing company. Australia has had a succession of models first competing providers with different methodologies pursued with integrity; and then a broadcaster defined ratings contract which ratings companies tender for and in which broadcasters call the shots. In the US model, ratings provision is free enterprise and the kinds of methodological “events” that are the Australian ratings contract tenders have no American equivalent. What there is, however, in its stead is ongoing methodological discussions through membership of the American Association of Public Opinion. But it is only when the market is affected in any substantial way, often negatively, that interventions occur, as in the Congressional Hearings or, indeed, in the case of Metzger’s SMART system. In Australia, in contrast, the broadcast ratings companies themselves went out of their way to make public the 'black box' of ratings and how the methodologies work. The current US model, with due respect to the US Media Ratings Council, maintains monopolistic conditions with little oversight of the operation of the audience ratings system familiar from the Australian situation. Indeed the different interests of both pay-TV and network TV in the ratings have weakened the position of organizations like the Media Ratings Council. Australia has lost its duopoly conditions in generating audience ratings, but has an auditing regime in place that is more stringent than in the US. The Australia auditing regime is also backed up by intense public interest in broadcast ratings methodology. Table 1 provides a brief overview of the differences.

Table 1 – Broad similarities and differences between US and Australian broadcast ratings regimes

US	Australia
Weaker auditing regime	Strong auditing regime through ratings contract
Media Ratings Council losing its authority	Appointed auditing and tight controls

Self-regulating companies (near monopoly provision)	Companies dependent upon continuing to secure ratings contract
Systematic education of clients and public in the nature of ratings (Art Nielsen)	Systematic education of clients and public in the nature of ratings (Bill McNair & George Anderson determined to inform customers and public)
Demand for more electronic measurement	Perceived appropriateness of existing (eg Northern Territory in Australia still uses paper diary for TV and radio and regional Western Australia)
Less public interest in broadcast ratings	Media and public interest in methodology courtesy of “ratings tournaments”.

The fifth point in Table 1, demand for electronic measurement, has not been discussed in detail in this paper but is itself an interesting one. At the time of writing this paper, Commercial Radio Australia (CRA) declared that it was satisfied with the paper diary method for measuring radio broadcast ratings, rejecting more complex electronic techniques that allowed second by second data collection. These types of decisions show that any ideas on convergence at the global level in the market of audience ratings needs to be tempered by an understanding of the complexity of the audience ratings conventions and the local forces that shape them.

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Determining Values Depicted in Advertisements: A Study of Prime-Time Television in New Zealand

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Abstract

Values permeate cultures and are shaped by socialising forces - one of which is television advertising. This study presents a literature review on values and constructs a framework with which to determine the values prominent in New Zealand's prime-time television advertising. Content analysis is used to objectively and systematically code each commercial for the values embedded in its words and images. This paper demonstrates that the values of cheapness, immediacy, informality, family and enjoyment all rate highly in New Zealand's television advertising.

Keywords

Values, advertising, television, New Zealand, content analysis

Introduction

A rich literature has identified and described values (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, 1961; Rokeach, 1973). Advertisements have been analysed for the values depicted in them (Pollay and Gallagher, 1990). Values in advertising have been studied in many countries around the world including China (Cheng, 1997), Israel (Hetsroni, 2000), the U.S. (Okigbo, Martin and Amienyi, 2005) and many others. New Zealand has not yet featured. Mass media – including television – are very present in New Zealand; the average person in this country watches over 20 hours of television per week (NZTBC, 2009). With an average of 12.5 minutes of advertisements per hour (NZTBC, 2009), which values are viewers being exposed to in this country?

Values portrayed in mass media may reflect and/or influence the culture of a nation. Leiss, Kline, Jhally and Botterill (2005) explained, that in the past:

the forms of privileged discourse that touched the lives of ordinary persons were church sermons, political oratory, and the words and precepts of family elders. These discourses informed our relationship to goods, to each other, and to our social world. Such influences remain with us, but their prominence in the affairs of everyday life and their rhetorical force and moral authority have diminished considerably as the marketplace expanded and as the mass media grew in prominence (p. 4).

Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli (1986) said that instead of education or religion, television “is the source of the most broadly shared images and messages in history...Television cultivates from infancy the very predispositions and preferences that used to be acquired from other primary sources...The repetitive pattern of television’s mass-produced messages and images forms the mainstream of a common symbolic environment” (pp. 17 - 18). Proponents of this ‘cultivation theory’ advocate that television has the potential to play a key role in shaping society (Gerbner and Gross, 1976; Rubin, Perse and Taylor, 1988).

Cultivation theory suggests that television is a primary socialising force because exposure to it has been proven to shift the audience’s perception of reality towards that of television. Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach and Grube (1984) developed a model explaining the impact that television

can have on changing people's values. These authors suggested that when facing inconsistencies in values, people change their own values, attitudes, and behaviour. This team argued that when people recognise inconsistencies in their belief systems, they experience a sense of dissatisfaction, leading to reassessment and change. As individuals continue to develop their personal values, congruence arises across nationalities and cultures begin to coalesce around similar values.

Countries have identities that emerge from a number of sources – geography, history, politics and the values held by its citizens. An individual's set of values is integral to their being. Some values are universal, while others are more society-specific. Every culture has a set of values that it imparts on its members (Pollay, 1983). Rokeach (1973) defined a system of values as “an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance” (p. 5). Whereas strong family ties, schools and religious adherence once formed the backbone of a person's value system, other influences are now at play.

The objectives of this paper are two-fold. Firstly, a list of values drawn from international and New Zealand literature will be created. Secondly, definitions of items in that list will be used to code values found in the visual, written and oral content of a sample of commercials shown during prime-time television in New Zealand. Given that values are central to people's existence and that overseas researchers have demonstrated that television does have a persuasive power, it would seem natural to be interested in examining the values that are portrayed in New Zealand television advertising. Given the absence of a study on television advertising in New Zealand as it relates to values, this paper is timely and exploratory.

Literature Review

Academic Debate

Advertising's overall aim is to sell products, services and/or ideas. In order to do this on television, images, words and sounds are used to grab attention, hold interest, create desire and ultimately lead to action (AIDA). However, there is debate as to whether advertisements (the images, words and sounds used) mirror society's values, change its values or actually do both. On one side of the debate, O'Guinn, Allen and Semenik (2000) have argued, “Advertising has to be consistent with, but cannot easily or quickly change values” (p.159). These authors admit, however, that attitudes “can be changed through a single advertising campaign or even a single ad” (p.159). On the other side of the debate, authors such as de

Graff, Wann and Naylor (2001) suggest that marketing techniques, including television advertising, have caused an all-consuming epidemic of materialist values. The UNESCO MacBride Commission took the position that advertising “tends to promote attitudes and lifestyles which extol acquisition and consumption at the expense of other values” (p.110). Also, many advertisements, in their plea to grab attention present contested, competing and contradictory values; some commercials will not depict any values.

Looking at the debate from a different angle, Richard Pollay (1986) set the stage for “revising our ideas about the interplay between advertising and the social system in which it operates” (p. 19). He elaborated that “while it may be true that advertising reflects cultural values, it does so on a very selective basis, echoing and reinforcing certain attitudes, behaviours, and values far more frequently than others” (p. 33). Pollay (1986) described advertising as portraying a “distorted mirror” of society’s values. He wrote:

The intent of advertising, especially in the aggregate, is to preoccupy society with material concerns, seeing commercially available goods or services as the path to happiness and the solution to virtually all problems and needs.... Commercial persuasion appears to program not only our shopping and product use behaviour but also the larger domain of our social roles, language, goals, values, and the sources of meaning in our culture” (Pollay, 1986, p. 21).

Although the debate over causality has not been resolved, it would in any case be fair to say that advertising does have highly persuasive powers because of its very nature. Advertising can reach us through various media; it can reinforce the same message repeatedly; it is created by highly knowledgeable people with research backing; and, it is being targeted at people who are increasingly less committed to other previously powerful socialising forces – religion, extended families and educational institutions (Pollay, 1986). Although individuals may feel immune to the effects, research has indicated otherwise.

Regarding the intellectual debate concerning the dialectical relationship of advertisements to values, Hall (1980), in his contribution *Encoding/Decoding* discusses the negotiated or oppositional readings that viewers might also adopt. Fiske (1988) emphasised that Hall:

argued that viewers whose social situation, particularly their class, aligned them comfortably with the dominant ideology would produce dominant readings of a text; that is, they would accept its preferred meanings and their close fit with the dominant ideology. Other viewers, whose social situation placed them in opposition to the

dominant ideology, would oppose its meanings in the text and would produce oppositional readings. The majority of viewers, however, are probably situated not in positions of conformity or opposition to the dominant ideology, but in ones that conform to it in some ways, but not others; they accept the dominant ideology in general, but modify or inflect it to meet the needs of their specific situation (p.64).

Advertising and Values

Pollay and Gallagher (1990) explained, “Whatever advertising’s economic contribution, we must also consider the unintended social consequences of the commercialization of culture” (p. 359). These authors elaborated that advertising has psychological, sociological and cultural effects and argued: “Advertising is, therefore, a selective reinforcement of only some behaviours and values. Over time, cultural change is expected in the direction persistently advocated and modelled” (Pollay and Gallagher, 1990, p.360). They argued, “In the aggregate the citizen is exposed to thousands upon thousands of advertising messages and the sheer repetition of common themes can produce a major impact even if each specific advertisement does not” (Pollay and Gallagher, 1990, p. 362).

Pollay’s (1983) framework of forty-two values was set up to look at advertising in the United States (Appendix 1). In 1986, Pollay termed advertising as a ‘distorted mirror,’ and in 1990, Pollay and Gallagher elaborated on the concept:

The mirror is distorted... because advertising reflects only certain attitudes, behaviors and values. It models and reinforces only certain life-styles and philosophies, those that serve seller’s interests. It displays those values that are most readily linked to the available products, that are easily dramatized in advertisements, and that are most reliably responded to by consumers who see the advertisements. Advertising is, therefore, a selective reinforcement of only some behaviours and values (1990, p. 360).

Numerous studies have analysed values in advertising. Previous research has focused on China (Cheng, 1997), India (Srikandath, 1991), Israel (Avraham and First, 2003; Hetsroni, 2000), Japan (Mueller, 1992), and the United States (Belk and Pollay, 1985a; Okigbo, Martin and Amienyi, 2005; Pollay, 1983; Pollay and Gallagher, 1990; Stern and Resnik, 1991). Other studies have found that the values presented in advertising are portrayed differently across cultures (Albers-Miller and Gelb, 1996; Culter, Erden and Javalgi, 1997; Milner and Collins, 2000). Many countries have been compared to the United States: Brazil (Tansley, Hyman and

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Zinkhan, 1990), China (Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996; Lin, 2001), Korea (Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun and Kropp, 1999), Japan (Belk and Pollay, 1985b; Belk and Bryce, 1986; Mueller, 1987), the United Kingdom (Caillat and Mueller, 1996; Frith and Wesson, 1991; Katz and Lee, 1992), and Sweden (Wiles, Wiles and Tjernlund, 1996). The three mediums of advertising studied most in terms of values research are magazine (Gram, 2007; Frith & Sengupta, 1991; Cutler, Erden & Javalgi, 1997), newspapers (Chan, 1999; Marquez, 1975; Tse, Belk & Zhou, 1989) and television (Chan & Chen, 2002; Kalliny & Gentry, 2007; Katz & Lee, 1992).

New Zealand has not yet featured in the literature for studies analysing values within its advertising. As some research supports similarities in values across countries (Kluckohn and Strodtback, 1961; Pollay, 1983), the use of values developed in other countries is primarily drawn upon. However, as studies indicate substantial differences in values in advertisements even within similar cultural environments, specific New Zealand values need to be considered. The following values, identified by King (2003), were linked to New Zealand's creation as a nation: do-it-yourself (home maintenance), egalitarianism (resources spread widely and equitably), environmentalism (preservation of rivers, lakes and beaches), individualism (man alone ideal), informality (social attitudes), practicality, and simplicity (bach culture). King (2003) used Sir Edmund Hillary as an example of a person expounding the values New Zealanders hold dear – dependable, good humoured, humanitarian, modest, responsible, reticent, strong, and unboastful. He mentions the values of “doing good by stealth”, mana, and trust as displayed by other great Kiwis – Colin Mead, Peter Blake and Howard Kippenberger (‘Kip’) respectively (King, 2003). Ritchie (1992, pp.66-84) discusses democratism, egalitarianism (fairness, equal sharing), individualism (effort-optimism), majoritarianism (majority dominance) and secular materialism as dominant Pākehā values. Regarding Māori, Ritchie (1992) identifies the dominant values as being kotahitanga (the “Holy Grail of Māoridom” (p.74), manaakitanga (reciprocal, unqualified caring), rangatiratanga (the order of relationships in status terms), wairuatanga (everything in the Māori world has a spiritual dimension), and whanaungatanga (family, whānau, or body of close kin). Regarding Māori, King (2003) wrote of their admiration for those who are ‘cheeky’ and cunning (Maui-tikitiki-a-Taranga) and the importance of the “I-am-we ethos of tribal culture”(pp.508-509). Non-Māori researchers are cautioned by many authors (Pere, 1997; Pwehairangi, 2001; Rangihau, 2001) that Māori values have multiple layers of meaning and need to be understood within very context-specific settings. Pere (1997) defines aroha, mauri, mana, and wairua. Marsden (2001) defines ihi, mana and tapu. Mason Durie (1998) discusses kaitiakitanga, and Royal (1998) defines kotahitanga. Some of the values found to be important to New Zealanders are being promoted in the New Zealand curriculum. Keown (2005) has defined these into eight value clusters: diversity/rereketanga,

community/porihanga; respect and caring/manaaki and awahi; equity and fairness/tika and pono; integrity/ngakau tapatahi; environmental sustainability; inquiry and curiosity/pokirehau and whakamatemate; and, excellence/hiranga. Coding for certain Māori values would show to what extent indigenous values are permeating New Zealand's commercial culture.

In his book, *Spiral of Values*, Webster (2001) groups values emerging from the NZ Values Survey carried out in 1998 into three sections. In regards to personal values, many New Zealanders agree with the importance of family, friends and leisure. They believe in an ultimate being and have preference for environmental harmony. In reference to social values, inclusiveness, caring, and the acceptance of owner-manager authority are strong. Human decency, gender equality and national pride are strongly held public values in this country. Taruni Falconer, Managing Director of Intercultural Dynamics, says that Kiwis exhibit the following the cultural values: earthy, fairness, informal, ingenuity, modesty and restraint (Rotherham, 2006).

Testing for Values

Thirty-nine of Pollay's (1983) values were the building blocks for this study. Ten of Pollay's (1983) values were merged (convenient/handy with practical/effective, distinctive with unique/rare, humility with modesty, secure with mild safety, and sexuality with sexy/vain) and three of his values were excluded (frail, freedom and succorance) as they have not been tested by other researchers nor were they mentioned in the NZ literature. Seven of Pollay's (1983) values (casual, humility, modesty, morality, plain/simplicity, tamed and untamed) have also not been tested in the international literature. However, these values do appear in New Zealand literature and as such they have been coded for.

Belk and Pollay (1985a) tested for values of beauty and luxury/ pleasure. Charity/benevolence was coded for in studies by Hetsroni (2000), Hetsroni and Asya (2002) and Koeman (2007). Mueller (1987: 1992) was the first to assess the values of collectivism and individualism. These two values have seemingly been the most tested cultural values in research related to advertising. Mueller (1987;1992) also tested for respect for the elderly and competition. Cheng (1994) considered wealth and Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) were the first to look at courtesy depicted in advertisements. Frith and Wesson (1991) measured egalitarianism in commercial content and Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun and Kropp (1999) assessed past and future orientations of advertising messages. Caillat and Mueller (1996) gauged the presence of eccentricity, while Zhang & Harwood (2004) coded for the environment and materialism. These last three values have not been tested by other researchers but have been coded for in

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this study. As a result, this research coded for 34 of Pollay's values, 15 values tested by other international researchers and two values (humour and trust) found in the New Zealand literature which were not included in overseas studies to date. How New Zealand values were matched to the international pool of researched values is demonstrated in Appendix 2.

Research Question

Which values were portrayed during prime-time television advertising in New Zealand?

Methodology

In line with a positivist approach (Guba and Lincoln, 1998), this research follows a deductive logic whereby television advertisements are coded and the content analysed. The purpose of the content analysis is to determine explicit variables that have been used in prime-time television advertisements as well as to ascertain the intensity of the variables depicted. Although content analysis does not give us in-depth knowledge of every element depicted in advertising, it does serve as a good starting point for further analysis (Craig, 1992).

Content analysis has been described as the "systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics" (Neuendorf, 2002, p.1). In advertising, content analysis has been used to examine the presence of cultural values in Israel (Hetsroni, 2000) and comparatively between the U.S. and China (Lin, 2001); gender (Craig, 1992); minority portrayals (Riffe, Goldson, Saxon and Yu (1989); and stereotyping (Mazzella, Durkin, Cerini and Buralli, 1992). Between 1995 and 2006, content analysis was the most widely used research method in the seven marketing journals surveyed by Okazaki and Mueller (2007).

With regards to content analyses, Grossberg, Wartella and Whitney (1998) stated "choosing the sample is often as pivotal as defining the categories of analysis" (p.158). For this study, television advertisements were recorded during prime-time (6:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.) from New Zealand's six national free-to-air television channels - TV1, TV2, TV3, C4, Prime and Māori TV. A random number generator was used to construct a composite week of advertisements aired from 1 January to 31 March.

This yielded a total of 4801 advertisements. Through the use of a systematic sampling method, the constructed week was then broken down to a more manageable data set of 484 advertisements. As there were 210 hours of recorded programmes, every tape coded with a 2 was selected (2, 12, 22 etc.) The number 2 was chosen randomly. All commercials for the

composite week were coded according to a set of pre-determined variables which included: the origin of the advertiser (domestic, international or global); the category of advertisement (education, fast-food, financial, health & beauty, retail, etc.); the television channel; the day of week; and, the week it appeared. These 484 advertisements were then coded for 51 values revealed in the literature. The breakdown of these values, sorted by descending order is found in Appendix 2 and the product categories represented in this sample can be found in Appendix 3. Although values can be embedded at each stage of the marketing process - in the media itself, within the product and in the representation of the advertisement - this paper only focuses on the latter.

Results and Analysis

The 51 values itemised in Appendix 2 were coded according to the descriptions in Appendix 1. The values tested for in international studies that rated highly were almost all matched for values found in the New Zealand literature. Interestingly, many of the values that did not rate highly in this study were values that have not been found to be associated strongly with New Zealanders.

Analysing the top five values found in this study against what international researchers have found gives an interesting picture of the differences in values found in advertisements worldwide. The highest rated value in this study was cheapness, economy or savings. Thirty-four percent of advertisements made reference to a sale, price reductions, deals and bargains. This value also rated highly in Chan's (1999) Hong Kong study at 31.4% of representation. It was highly seen in Hetsroni's (2000) study and rated extremely high in Israeli infomercials (Hetsroni & Asya, 2002). However, other countries relied on this value far less: cheapness was displayed in 11.3% of Chinese ads (Cheng, 1994) and 6% of U.S. ads (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1990). The representation of economy at 10.6% was more than twice as high in Hong Kong ads than in Korean ones (Moon & Chan, 2005). Okigbo, Martin & Amienyi (2005) found this value in 11.4% of their U.S. sample. Cheapness was higher in Pollay & Gallagher's television sample than in their magazine sample. Nevertheless, it rated very low in the Singapore study and was non-existent in the Malay one (Wah, 2005).

The second highest rated value found in this study (33%) was that of a present orientation. The idea of needing products and services immediately has not been tested much in the literature. This value was observed to be very high in the U.S. (99.5%) and Korean samples (80.4%) tested by Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun and Kropp (1999). Lin (2001) found significant differences between her Chinese and American sample and noted that cultural attitudes

toward time orientation could be an explanation for the difference uncovered. However, it is notable that this study found the presence of a present orientation far less than in American and Korean commercial content.

Casualness (19%) was the third highest depicted value, as exhibited in the informal manner of dress and speech of the actors in the commercials. This value has not been coded in the literature to date. Therefore no comparisons can be made.

Family depictions were the fourth highest value depicted in this study – covering 18% of television commercials. This value was found in 25.1% of the U.S. ads in Belk, Bryce and Pollay's (1985) research and in 12% of Hetsroni's (2000) Israeli sample. Family depictions were higher in Korean ads (9.1%) than in Hong Kong (4.7%) ones (Moon & Chan, 2005) and they were highly represented in magazine and television ads in Pollay & Gallagher's (1990) study. Family was coded for in 17.5 % of Indian ads as either a dominant or subsidiary value (Srikandath, 1991). This value was the number one value in Zhang & Harwood's (2004) study at 11.7%. However, family scenes were only represented in 2.6% of Hong Kong ads (Chan, 1999), 5% of a Singapore sample (Wah, 2005), 5% of Malay advertisements (Wah, 2005) and 7.2% of a Chinese study (Chen, 1994).

The fifth highest rated value was enjoyment, found in 17% of the commercials viewed. This value, which saw actors having fun and being happy, was also highly rated in Israeli studies (Hetsroni, 2000; Hetsroni & Asya, 2002), a U.S. sample (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996) and in the five multicultural markets examined by Koeman (2007). Enjoyment portrayals were higher in Moon & Chan's (2005) Hong Kong sample (15.8%) than in their Korean one (10.3%), and fun was coded for in 23% of Indian ads (Srikandath, 1991). Wah's (2005) study found 10% of Singaporean ads to display enjoyment while 7.5% of Malay ads exhibited this value. It was however, a value that was low (2.4%) in Chan's (1999) Hong Kong study and equally low (2%) in the Chinese sample of Cheng & Schweitzer's (1996) work.

In other advertising studies, the following values were found to be highly rated (i.e. greater than 15% of sample) but did not feature prominently in this piece of research (i.e. less than 5%): adventure (Koeman, 2007); beauty (Cheng, 1994; Hetsroni & Asya, 2002; Gram, 2008); competition (Hetsroni & Asya, 2002); courtesy (Cheng, 1994, Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996); health (Cheng, 1994; Hetsroni & Asya, 2002; Koeman, 2007); luxury appeal (Belk, Bryce and Pollay (1985); popular (Chan, 1999; Cheng, 1994); sex appeal (Biswas, Olsen & Carlet (1992); tradition (Cheng, 1997; Koeman, 2007); and, youth (Cheng, 1994; Cheng, 1997; Hetsroni, 2000; Hetsroni & Asya, 2002; Koeman, 2007). There is seemingly quite a bit of

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variation in the intensity that certain values have been used in advertising across cultures. These variations may be attributed to a number of factors including, the product categories being promoted at the time, mediums analysed, time of day/year, among others.

Conclusion

This research confirms that values depicted in advertising content are different around the world. These differences in representation are influenced by different socialising factors. Pollay (1983) contends that values are indeed reinforced on a selective basis. Whether the socialiser be religion, education, family or advertising, only those values which help promote purchases will be reinforced. This study found that saving money, needing to buy things now, informality in sales presentation, family depictions and enjoyment were five values highly visible in New Zealand's present television advertising. The first two are certainly values that help sell product and reach sales objectives. The other three support the theory of classical conditioning, whereby positive stimulus is paired with a product, service or idea. This research is an exploratory first step toward a larger study, which aims to ascertain the nature and intensity of the more strongly represented values found across New Zealand's prime-time television advertising. Given that researchers have demonstrated that television does have persuasive powers, are these the values that New Zealanders do wish to reinforce?

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Appendix 1: Values Definitions

Value	Original Definition and Source	Empirical Studies
Achievement / Productivity	References to achievement, accomplishment, ambition, success, careers, self-development Being skilled, accomplished, proficient Pulling your weight, contributing, doing your share Examples: “Develop your potential,” “Get ahead.” (Pollay, 1983)	Caillat and Mueller (1996); Chan (1999); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Hetsroni (2000); Hestroni & Asya (2002) Koeman (2007); Moon & Chan (2005) Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Schwartz (1992); Wah (2005) Zinkhan, Hong & Lawson (1990)
Adventure/ Wildness	Boldness, daring, bravery, courage Seeking adventure, thrill, excitement Example: “Go for the Gusto” Note: code general confidence and psychological security as SECURE	Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002) Pollay & Gallagher (1990)
Beauty	Shows, implies, or discusses enhancement of appearance of person, possession, or home as a result of product or service use. Belk & Pollay (1985)	Belk & Pollay (1985b); Belk & Bryce (1986); Chan (1999); Cheng (1994) Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Hetsroni & Asya (2002) ; Hetsroni (2000); Koeman (2007); Kalliny & Gentry (2007); Moon & Chan (2005); Zhang & Harwood (2004)
Belonging/ Affiliation	To be accepted, liked by peers, colleagues, and community at large, to associate or gather with, to be social To join, unite, or otherwise bond in friendship, fellowship, companionship, cooperation, reciprocity To conform to social customs, have manners, social graces and decorum, tact and finesse Note: Romantic affiliations code as SEXUAL or FAMILY based on context (Pollay, 1983)	Caillat and Mueller (1996); Kalliny & Gentry (2007); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Wah (2005); Zinkhan, Hong & Lawson (1990)
Casual	Unkempt, disheveled, messy, disordered,	

	untidy, ruffled, rumped, sloppy, Casual, irregular, noncompulsive, imperfect (Pollay, 1983)	
Charity/ Benevolence	Suggesting that helping other people without seeking a reward is an indispensable positive virtue of the product, or showing that helping other people without seeking a reward is a result – clearly desirable – of using the product Hetsroni (2000)	Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Joyce Koeman (2007)
Cheap	Economical, inexpensive, bargain, cut-rate, penny-pinching, discounted, at cost, undervalued, a good value (Pollay, 1983)	Chan (1999); Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996) ; Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002) ; Kalliny & Gentry (2007); Moon & Chan (2005); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Srikandath (1991); Wah (2005)
Collectivism (group consensus)	The emphasis here is on the individual in relation to others, typically in the reference group. Individual is depicted as an integral part of the whole. References may be made to significant others. Pressure is on consensus and conformity to the will of the group. Mueller (1987;1992)	Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996); Chan (1999) ; Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun & Kropp (1999); Zhang & Shavitt (1994); Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002) ; Kalliny & Gentry (2007); Koeman (2007); Lin (2001); Moon & Chan (2005) ; Tse, Belk, & Zhou (1989); Wah (2005); Yau (1988); Zhang & Shavitt (2003)
Competition	Sales orientation is emphasized here, stressing brand name and product recommendations. Explicit mention may be made of competitive products, sometimes by name, and the product advantage depends on performance. This appeal includes such statements as “number one” and “leader”. Mueller (1987;1992)	Chan (1999) ; Cheng & Schweitzer (1996) ; Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002) ; Kalliny & Gentry (2007) Lin, 2001; Moon & Chan (2005) ; Wah (2005)
Convenient/	Handy, time-saving, quick, easy, suitable,	Chan (1999); Cheng (1994); Cheng

handy	accessible, versatile Pollay (1983)	& Schweitzer (1996); Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Moon & Chan (2005); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Srikandath (1991); Wah (2005)
Courtesy	Politeness and friendship toward the consumer are shown through the use of polished and affable language in the commercial (Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996)	Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Koeman (2007)
Distinctive	Rare, unique, unusual, scarce, infrequent, exclusive, tasteful, elegant, subtle, esoteric, hand-crafted Examples: The “only.....,” the “best.....,” “ At leading drug stores.” (Pollay, 1983)	Chan (1999); Cheng 1994; Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Moon & Chan (2005); Koeman (2007); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Wah (2005)
Eccentricity	Characters act in an odd or whimsical manner, often to humorous ends. Eccentricity could also be expressed in the formal elements of the commercial itself, through quirky, unexpected, or nonsensical images or editing. Visuals are juxtaposed in unusual ways, and montage is used to disorient the viewer or disrupt the diegesis. Caillat and Mueller (1996)	
Egalitarianism	Measured egalitarianism via: % persons identifiable by social class (at least 1 person in ad); ads depicting the idealised upperclass consumer (white collar professional); ads depicting the working classes (blue collar, secretary, housewife...) – no definition given Frith & Wesson (1991)	Okigbo, Martin & Amienyi (2005)
Enjoyment/ Happiness	To have fun, laugh, be happy, celebrate, to enjoy games, parties, feats and festivities, to participate Pollay (1983)	Chan (1999); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996) ; Hetsroni (2000) ; Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Kalliny & Gentry (2007); Koeman (2007); Moon & Chan (2005); Srikandath (1991);

		Zhang & Harwood (2004)
Environment	The product is associated with environmental protection – purchasing suggests environmental concern, Zhang & Harwood (2004)	
Family	Nurturance within the family, having a home, being at home, family privacy, companionship of siblings, kinship Getting married Note: References to ancestry code as TRADITIONAL, Pollay (1983)	Chan (1999); Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Koeman (2007); Moon & Chan (2005); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Srikandath (1991); Wah (2005); Zhang & Harwood (2004)
Frail	Delicate, frail, dainty, sensitive, tender, susceptible, vulnerable, soft, genteel Pollay (1983)	
Freedom	Spontaneous, carefree, abandoned, indulgent, at liberty, uninhibited, passionate Example: “X, for the Free Me.” Pollay (1983)	
Future Orientation	Emphasis on the future or being progressive, appeals about the creativity of youth. (use of high-tech to portray the future, use of computer graphics to portray the future) Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun and Kropp (1999)	Okigbo, Martin & Amienyi (2005)
Healthy (fit)/ Strong	Fitness, vim, vigor, vitality, strength, heartiness, to be active, athletic, robust, peppy, free from disease, illness, infection, or addiction Pollay (1983)	Chan (1999); Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Hetsroni (2000); Koeman (2007); Moon & Chan (2005); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Srikandath (1991); Wah (2005); Zhang & Harwood (2004)
Humility	Unaffected, unassuming, unobtrusive, patient, fate-accepting, resigned, meek, plain-folk, down-to-earth Pollay (1983)	
Humour	A joke, funny story, playing a trick Mocking a race, religion, sexual orientation,	

	person	
Individualism / independence	Emphasis is on the individual being distinct and unlike others. Individuals are depicted as standing out in a crowd or having the ability to be self-sufficient. Nonconformity, originality, and uniqueness are key terms. Dependence is down-played. Mueller (1987;1992)	Albers-Miller & Gelb (1996);Caillat & Mueller (1996); Chan (1999); Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun & Kropp (1999); Frith & Wesson (1991); Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002);Kalliny & Gentry (2007); Lin (2001); Moon & Chan (2005); Okigbo, Martin & Amienyi (2005); Wah (2005); Zhang & Shavitt (2003)
Leisure (play) relaxation	Rest, retire, retreat, loaf, contentment, be at ease, be laid-back, vacations, holidays, to observe Pollay (1983)	Chan (1999); Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996) ; Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Koeman (2007); Moon & Chan (2005); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Wah (2005); Zhang & Shavitt (2003)
Luxury/ Pleasure	Explicitly mentions luxury (or related terms such as leisure, pleasure, regal, or pampered) or else depicts such pleasures visually (depictions should be judged to be clearly more comfortable, lavish, or opulent than most middle class homes of the same period.) Belk & Pollay (1985a)	Belk & Pollay (1985b); Belk & Bryce (1986); Belk, Bryce & Pollay (1985)
Magic	Miracles, magic, mysticism, mystery, witchcraft, wizardry, superstition, occult sciences, mythic characters To mesmerize, astonish, bewitch, fill with wonder Example: “Bewitch your man with...,” “Cleans like magic” Pollay (1983)	Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996)
Materialism	The product is associated with financial or material acquisition	

	Zhang & Harwood (2004)	
Maturity (mature)	Being adult, grown-up, middle-aged, senior, elderly Having associated insight, wisdom, mellowness, adjustment References to aging, death, retirement, or age-related disabilities or compensations Example: “You’re getting better with age.” Pollay (1983)	Pollay & Gallagher (1990)
Mild safety	Security (from external threats), carefulness, caution, stability, absence of hazards, potential injury, or other risks Guarantees, warranties are manufacturers’ reassurances Examples: “Be sure with Allstate,” “Contains no harmful ingredients.” Pollay (1983)	Wah (2005); Koeman (2007)
Modern (new)	Contemporary, modern, new, improved, progressive, advanced Introducing, announcing... (Example: “Slightly ahead of our time”) Pollay (1983)	Chan (1999); Caillat & Mueller (1996); Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun and Kropp (1999); Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Moon & Chan (2005); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Wah (2005); Zhang & Shavitt (2003)
Modesty	Being modest, naïve, demure, innocent, inhibited, bashful, reserved, timid, coy, virtuous, pure, shy, virginal Pollay (1983)	
Morality	Humane, just, fair, honest, ethical, reputable, principled, religious, devoted, spiritual Pollay (1983)	
Natural (nature)	References to the elements, animals, vegetables, minerals, farming; Unadulterated, purity (of the product), organic, grown, nutritious Example: “Farm-fresh”	Chan (1999); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun & Kropp (1999); Kalliny & Gentry (2007); Moon & Chan (2005);

	Pollay (1983)	Mueller (1987; 1992); Lin, 2001; Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Wah (2005); Zhang & Shavitt (2003)
Neat	Orderly, neat, precise, tidy Clean, spotless, unsoiled, sweet-smelling, bright Free from dirt, refuse, pests, vermin, stains and smells, sanitary Pollay (1983)	Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996) ; Moon & Chan (2005); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Wah (2005)
Nurturance	To give gifts, especially sympathy, help, love, charity, support, comfort, protection, nursing, consolation, or otherwise care for the weak, disabled, inexperienced, tired, young, elderly, etc. Note: When given within the family code under FAMILY Pollay (1983)	Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Moon & Chan (2005) ; Wah (2005)
Ornamental (pretty)	Beautiful, decorative, ornate, adorned, embellished, detailed, designed, styled Pollay (1983)	Cheng (1994); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Srikandath (1991)
Patriotism/ Community	Relating to community, state, or national publics, public spiritedness, group unity, national identity, society, patriotism, civic and community organizations of other than social purpose Pollay (1983)	Chan (1999); Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Koeman (2007); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Moon & Chan (2005); Wah (2005); Zhang & Harwood (2004)
Plain/ Simplicity	Unaffected, natural, prosaic, homespun, simple, artless, unpretentious Pollay (1983)	
Popular (common)	Commonplace, customary, well-known, conventional, regular, usual, ordinary, normal, standard, typical, universal, general, everyday Examples: "Largest seller," the "ubiquitous comestible" Pollay (1983)	Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Koeman (2007); Pollay & Gallagher (1990)
Practical / Effective	Feasible, workable, useful, pragmatic, appropriate, functional, consistent, efficient,	Belk & Pollay (1985a; 1985b) ; Belk & Bryce (1986); Belk, Bryce &

	helpful, comfortable (clothes), tasty (food) Note: includes strength and longevity of effect Pollay (1983)	Pollay (1985); Cheng (1994); Pollay & Gallagher (1990)
Present Orientation	Emphasis on the contemporary or now, ignoring what happened in the past and what will happen in the future (assoc. of youth with a product, addressing short-run enjoyment and pleasure) Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun & Kropp (1999)	Lin (2001)
Pride (self) / Independence	Self-sufficiency, self-reliance, autonomy, unattached To do-it-yourself, to do your own thing Original, unconventional, singular, nonconformist Pollay (1983)	Pollay & Gallagher (1990)
Quality/ Durable	Long-lasting, permanent, stable, enduring, strong, powerful, hearty, tough Pollay (1983)	Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Srikandath (1991); Zhang & Harwood (2004)
Respect for elderly	Wisdom of the elderly as well as the veneration of that which is traditional, is stressed. Older group members are depicted being asked for advice, opinions, and recommendations. Models in such advertisements tend to be older. Mueller (1987;1992)	Chan (1999); Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Kalliny & Gentry (2007); Lin (2001); Moon & Chan (2005); Wah (2005); Zhang & Harwood (2004)
Safety/ Security	Confident, secure, possessing dignity, self-worth, self-esteem, self-respect, peace of mind / Note: Freedom from external risk code as SAFETY Pollay (1983)	Chan (1999) ; Cheng (1994) ; Cheng & Schweitzer (1996) ; Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Moon & Chan (2005); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Srikandath (1991)
Sexuality (eros)	Erotic relations, holding hands, kissing, embracing between lovers, dating, romance Intense sensuality, feeling sexual, erotic behaviour, lust, earthiness, indecency Attractiveness of clearly sexual nature Pollay (1983)	Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Koeman (2007)
Sexy / Vain	Having a socially desirable appearance, being	Chan (1999); Cheng & Schweitzer

	<p>beautiful, pretty, handsome, being fashionable, well-groomed, tailored, graceful, glamorous</p> <p>Note: Generalized “conceit” may code as STATUS</p> <p>Code beauty of obviously sexual nature or purpose as SEXUAL</p> <p>Pollay (1983)</p>	<p>(1996); Cheng (1994) ; Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Moon & Chan, 2005;</p> <p>Wah (2005)</p>
Succorance	<p>To receive expressions of love (all expressions except sexuality), gratitude, pats on the back /</p> <p>To feel deserving</p> <p>Note: The desire to be married code under FAMILY and self-respect code under SECURE</p> <p>- Example: “You deserve a break today.”</p>	
Status	<p>Envy, social status or competitiveness, conceit, boasting, prestige, power, dominance, exhibitionism, pride of ownership, wealth (including the sudden wealth of prizes), trend-setting, to seek compliments</p> <p>Example: “Keep up with (or ahead of) the Joneses.” Pollay (1983)</p>	<p>Belk, Bryce & Pollay (1985); Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Koeman (2007); Lin (2001); Mueller (1987;1992); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Zhang & Harwood (2004)</p>
Tamed	<p>Docile, civilized, restrained, obedient, compliant, faithful, reliable, responsible, domesticated, sacrificing, self-denying</p> <p>Pollay (1983)</p>	
Technological/ Modern	<p>Engineered, fabricated, manufactured, constructed, processed</p> <p>Resulting from science, invention, discovery, research</p> <p>Containing secret ingredients</p> <p>Examples: “Factory-Fresh,” “includes XK-17”</p> <p>Pollay (1983)</p>	<p>Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Mueller (1987;1992); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Srikanth (1991); Zhang & Shavitt (2003)</p>
Traditional (old)	<p>Classic, historical, antique, old, legendary, time-honored, long-standing, venerable, nostalgic</p> <p>Example: “80 years of experience”</p> <p>(Pollay, 1983)</p>	<p>Caillat and Mueller (1996); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Cho, Kwon, Gentry, Jun & Kropp (1999); Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002) ; Kalliny & Gentry (2007);</p>

		Koeman (2007); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Zhang & Harwood (2004); Zhang & Shavitt (2003)
Trust	Honesty, reliability, confident expectation, A seal of approval	
Unique/ Dear	Expensive, rich, valuable, highly regarded, costly, extravagant, exorbitant, luxurious, priceless, Pollay (1983)	
Untamed	Primitive, untamed, fierce, coarse, rowdy, ribald, obscene, voracious, gluttonous, frenzied, uncontrolled, unreliable, corrupt, obscene, deceitful, savage, (Pollay, 1983)	
Wealth	This value conveys the idea that being affluent, prosperous and rich should be encouraged and suggests that a certain product or service will make the user well-off. Cheng (1994)	Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Chan (1999); Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Koeman (2007); Moon & Chan (2005); Wah (2005)
Wisdom/ Education	Knowledge, education, awareness, intelligence, curiosity, satisfaction, comprehension, sagacity, expertise, judgment, experience Example: “Experts agree...” Note: Detailed information, instructions, or recipes imply “wisdom” at least subsidiary theme Pollay (1983)	Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Koeman (2007); Moon & Chan (2005); Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Wah (2005); Zhang & Harwood (2004)
Youth	Being young, rejuvenated, children, kids Immature, undeveloped, junior, adolescent Example: “Feel young again” Pollay (1983)	Chan (1999); Cheng (1994); Cheng & Schweitzer (1996); Hetsroni (2000); Hetsroni & Asya (2002); Koeman (2007); Moon & Chan (2005); Mueller (1987;1992); Lin, 2001; Pollay & Gallagher (1990); Wah (2005)

Appendix 2: Results of Values Found in Pre-Test

Value	Value found in NZ Lit	Totals found in Pre-Test	Percentage
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1	Cheap/ Economical/ Savings		164	34%
2	Present Orientation / Now		161	33%
3	Casualness	Informal	94	19%
4	Family	Family Whanaungatanga	88	18%
5	Enjoyment/ Happiness		82	17%
6	Individualism / independence	Individualism	75	15%
7	Patriotism	National pride	72	15%
8	Humour	Good-humour Maui-tikitiki-a-Taranga	66	14%
9	Achievement / Productivity	Excellence / Hiranga Tino pai	55	11%
10	Collectivism/ Community	Community, inclusive Humanitarianism Porihanga “I-am-we tribal ethos”	44	9%
11	Practical/ Effective Convenient/ handy	Practical	44	9%
12	Materialism	Secular Materialism	41	8%
13	Belonging/ Affiliation	Inclusive Kotahitanga	40	8%
14	Leisure (play)/ Relaxation	Leisure	38	8%
15	Quality/ Durable	Dependable	37	8%
16	Wisdom/ Education	Inquiry/Curiosity Pokirehau/Whakamatemate Matauranga – patapatai - inquisitive	37	8%
17	Environment	Environmental Harmony	36	7%

		Kaitiakitanga – guardianship		
		Tiaki te Tai Ao – Caring about the world		
18	Modern (new)		34	7%
19	Nurturance	Caring Aroha, Manaakitanga Manaaki/Awhi Nurturing relationships (Pacific)	34	7%
20	Distinctive (rare) Unique/Dear		25	5%
21	Safety / Secure Mild Security		25	5%
22	Status	Mana	25	5%
23	Technological	Ingenuity	24	5%
24	Pride (self) / Independence	DIY (Do-it-yourself)	22	5%
25	Healthy (fit)/ Strong	Strong Ihi – energy Hauora - healthy	21	4%
26	Natural (nature)	Earthy	20	4%
27	Future Orientation		20	4%
28	Beauty		19	4%
29	Competition		19	4%
30	Sexuality (eros) Sexy/Vain		19	4%
31	Morality	Wairua - spirit Tapu – sacred Kotahitanga – oneness Iratangata - mortality	17	4%
32	Youth		17	4%
33	Luxury/ Pleasure		14	3%
34	Neat		13	3%

35	Traditional (old)		12	2%
36	Maturity (mature)		11	2%
37	Wealth		11	2%
38	Adventure		10	2%
39	Trust	Trust	10	2%
40	Respect for elderly/ authority	Rangatiratanga - chieftainship Respect for authority Whai koha ki nga kaumatua - correct	9	2%
41	Tamed	Tamed, responsible, restrained	8	2%
42	Courtesy		6	1%
43	Charity/ Benevolence		4	1%
44	Popular		4	1%
45	Modesty Humility	Modesty, unboastful Reticent	2	0%
46	Ornamental/ pretty		2	0%
47	Eccentricity		1	0%
48	Egalitarianism	Egalitarian, fairness Tika – correct /Pono – belief Tika, pono = egalitarianism	1	0%
49	Plain/ Simplicity	Simplicity	1	0%
50	Magic		0	0%
51	Untamed	Untamed	0	0

Appendix 3 – Percentage Distribution of Advertisements by Product Category

Product Category	Percent
	Pre-Test
	Sample
Foodstuffs	14.0

Household appliances, furniture & electronics	10.1
Home building, renovation & decoration	9.3
Other services – education, travel etc.	8.3
Government social campaigns	8.5
Financial & investment	7.2
Leisure & entertainment	7.0
Beauty & personal care	5.2
Household cleaning	5.2
CDs, DVDs, movies & concerts	4.8
Clothing, fashion & accessories	4.1
Restaurants & fast food	3.9
Automotive & related	3.9
Government for-profit	3.1
Other products	2.9
Pharmaceuticals & health	2.5

Total advertisements for pre-test sample – 484.

Testing Advertising via New Media: An Exploratory Study of Advertising Practitioner attitudes

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Sonia is a member of Australian Marketing Institute (AMI), Advertising Federation Australia (AFA), as well as the International Advertising Association (IAA), the Academy of Marketing (AM), and the Academy of Marketing Science (AMS). She is also a committee member of the inaugural Australia New Zealand Advertising Academy of Advertising (ANZAA). Her committee memberships specific to Curtin University include the Office of Research and Development, Teaching and Learning and Human Research Ethics Committee as well as the School of Marketing Area or Research Excellence in Advertising and Social Marketing research.

Dr David Waller

David Waller has worked in the banking and film industries, and has taught at a number of universities, including University of Newcastle, University of New South Wales and Charles Sturt University-Riverina. He has published over 40 refereed journal articles, including *Journal of Advertising*; *Journal*

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Dr Kathy Mortimer

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Dr Kathleen Mortimer is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Northampton, UK. Her research area is in Advertising and Consumer Behaviour. More specifically, she has published in the area of Services Advertising, Advertising Ethics and Advertising Effectiveness. Her work has been presented in numerous scholarly journals including Journal of Services Marketing, Journal of Marketing Communications, Journal of Customer Behaviour and the Services Industries Journal. The latter paper was incorporated into an edited book entitled *New Horizons in Services Marketing*.

Kathleen's undergraduate work was undertaken at the University of Coventry, UK. This was followed by a successful career in the London advertising industry spanning a ten year period. She then joined the UK University sector where she completed her PhD in Services Advertising. She then moved out to New Zealand for four years and was a Senior Researcher at Auckland University of Technology, where she is now a Visiting Research Fellow. Kathleen has been awarded Chartered Marketer Status from the Chartered Institute of Marketing, She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK and a Committee member of the Australian and New Zealand Advertising Academics Association.

Abstract

New media, as a free and universal communication tool, has had an impact on the power of the general public to comment on a variety of issues. As the public can comment favourably or unfavourably on advertisements, such as on Youtube, the advertising industry must start using weblogs to research reaction to their advertising campaigns. This exploratory study examines the responses of some advertising industry practitioners, both advertisers and agencies, on the impact of new media, specifically weblogs, and the use of new media as a source of research on advertising campaigns.

Introduction

New media is referred to as communication that is non traditional, technology driven, whereby communication messages can be disseminated from text messaging through to viral emails or weblogs. This allows the general public to respond through computer-mediated communication (CMC), which exponentially grows the impact of response. Platforms that the general public use as a response mechanism can include web communities, viral email, MySpace, bebo, flickr, Slashdot, Youtube, Facebook, and Weblogs. These new media are exponentially powerful due to the proliferation of information technology, enabling

continuous electronic updates and rapid communication with multiple individuals simultaneously. While advertisers have used the web to provide information to potential customers and distribute advertisements, the general public has also been able to discuss and comment on advertising campaigns, particularly if they are the subject of public controversy. The objective of this exploratory paper is to discover the industry's views on the use of weblogs and how they have reacted to weblogs as a form of research on advertising campaigns.

Background

New Media and the General Public

Marketing theory suggests that consumers have always had power over manufacturers in terms of their demand for goods or services (Kotler et al. 2006). They can ignore, resist, adapt and control their own choices and that this choice alone is a form of empowerment (Denegri-Knott, Zwick and Shroeder 2006). This power has increased with the introduction of new media. New media allows the general public to respond through computer-mediated communication (CMC), which exponentially grows the impact of response. Platforms that the general public use as a response mechanism can include web communities, viral email, MySpace, bebo, flickr, Slashdot, Youtube, Facebook, and Weblogs. These new media are exponentially powerful due to the proliferation of information technology, enabling continuous electronic updates and rapid communication with multiple individuals simultaneously (Harrison et al 2006).

In applying consumer power in the online environment, Denegri-Knott (2006) proposes four strategies: control over the relationship, information, aggregation and participation. It is possible to apply these four strategies in terms of controversial advertising. The first, control over the relationship, allows consumers to control whether they engage with advertisers in terms of their advertising material. If they find an advertiser's campaign offensive they can block communication from that company through spam filters or firewalls, unsubscribe from email lists and choose not to visit a particular website. Alternatively, if they enjoyed a particular controversial advertising campaign they can download it for personal consumption, send it to friends via email and talk about it on their blogs. Using the second strategy, the availability of information results in consumers being much better informed about advertisers' activities that include advertising campaigns and the view of others' on these campaigns. Some consumers may seek interaction, or aggregation, rather than information. New media enables them to join other like-minded consumers online to discuss specific advertising

campaigns either in a positive or negative manner. In other aggregation, anti-brand communities seek to expose product faults or unethical advertiser activity. The final consumer power strategy is participation, where consumers actually create content. They may suggest product development ideas or edit other member's posts.

New Media and Advertisers' Responses

Advertisers also appear empowered by new media, which offers alternative response platforms and opportunities for dialogue with the general public. The positive flow-on effects from controversial advertising and the buzz that surrounds an advertising ban can be leveraged by the advertiser (Waller 2005). While a regulatory body may uphold a complaint from the general public, the target audience is unlikely to feel the same way and as such a core of people who enjoy the controversial advertising and wish to consume it further, talk about it and send it to colleagues. The advertiser facilitates this process by providing material on the internet for distribution by interested parties via viral email and links to the website from blogs.

The power of publicity as a new media response is highlighted with statements made by advertisers including alcohol brand, Chivas who publicly stated that the 'outcry' about their advertisements boosted advertising publicity (Moon 2000). Windsor Smith made similar remarks, indicating that they were 'pleased' with the publicity generated from complaints about their advertising, claiming that the free publicity was valued at around \$4 million. Marketing experts say those who complain are simply playing into the hands of marketers. Controversial advertisements are designed to generate complaints with advertisers reaping the rewards via free publicity and consumer-initiated demand. However, the question to be asked is to what extent do advertisers and agencies listen to the public via the new media. To help answer this, a survey was undertaken to get industry people's views on testing advertising on new media.

Methodology

To explore this issue, an interview was undertaken with ten Australian advertising practitioners (including client, creative, media and account service staff). Each of the interviews lasted for thirty minutes where informants were also asked to; describe their monitoring of complaints and feedback regarding their advertising campaigns; discuss the impact of new media on their campaigns; discuss their use of new media as part of their campaigns, and comment on the impact that the general public feedback has on their

campaigns. Interviews were conducted at the informant' place of business and all interviews were taped and subsequently transcribed. In the first step of the analysis, one author and their research assistant read each transcript individually and recorded the key categories of information.

Results

Do advertising agencies use new media to elicit feedback on their advertising campaigns?

Advertising practitioners agreed that advertisers do monitor general public complaints, comments and feedback from advertising campaigns, albeit this is typically a reactive rather than proactive process. All said it takes too long to search through looking for comments or complaints on the net, but agreed it would be good if there was something that could track any informal complaints and gauge feedback on their campaigns. Many obtained their information via the client who is likely to have an electronic feedback component on their website, through the regulatory body or trade media.

“Every page of (our website) has a feedback link which allows the public to contact us with feedback on a range of subjects including occasional comments from the general public on our advertising campaigns. Our corporate website also provides the general public with contact details for providing feedback, suggestions etc. Through its global network we pick up on some feedback / commentaries that appear in new media (viral email, Myspace, Youtube, Facebook, Blogs and Moblogs).”

“A lot of companies say they are not going to use new media because they are not ready or able to harness the conversations or control the feedback they might get about their campaign. The biggest thing to realise here is that like it or not, your consumers are talking about your products regardless of whether you are in new media” [Media 2].

Other advertisers were proactive in their monitoring of general public complaints used electronic monitoring of advertising websites such as Adrant, and Ads of the World, as well as broader new media sites such as You Tube. Some even sought to initiate comment by loading agency creative executions onto Myspace and Youtube.

“We have just started loading our ads onto Facebook and YouTube and our website so we will start monitoring any comments that way.”[Creative 3]

What are perceived to be the benefits of testing advertising campaigns online?

More direct, more honest and more timely feedback were perceived as the main benefits of testing advertising online. Informants observed a closer relationship between the general public and advertisers as a result of new media. They suggest that interaction with the general public is heightened when the campaign uses some form of new media in the media mix, for example a website, or a blog or even posting adverts onto Youtube, then this ameliorates the closeness.

“When you use new media it brings the consumer [and general public] much closer. Through this new media you can often contact the advertiser directly and it is having a huge impact on the industry.” [Creative 2].

Furthermore, sometimes this feedback is not only between marketer and client, but between friends. It is a chance for advertisers to eavesdrop, to listen to conversations between audience members and to be privy to what audiences are saying about brands and advertisements. This suggests that it may be more honest, more independent feedback, as it is between friends, rather than between interviewer and participant.

“I find that it is more down to earth” [Creative 2].

“... target specific blogs have been a great source of feedback. Websites [that we set up] have been able to give us great credibility and increased exposure. New media provides independent feedback lets us know if we are on the right track” [Media Manager 1].

“...new media certainly allows greater feedback and citizen journalism” [Account Service1].

Another benefit of new media is that it enables advertisers to have a quick turnaround in terms of feedback, allows them to test the waters, and to can see the impact of their creative immediately through hits on websites or even if the execution ends up in their own email inbox. For example:

“Online media is a fantastic way of measuring your audience responses to a new piece of creative because we can immediately see if anything comes up in blogs, how

many hits it gets on Youtube or if it somehow gets sent around the world as a piece of viral content and then ends back in your inbox!” [Media 2].

How valuable do advertising agencies perceive the online feedback to be?

Weighed against the benefits of online testing is the value of the feedback. Responses here related to who (and how many) were providing the feedback, whether it was positive or negative and also the potential for damage.

“You need to start looking at where the complaints are coming from and whether they actually matter. If they are not offending the target audience then who cares? For example, if parents are complaining, then you can bet that their kids are liking it!” [Media 2].

“... we’d take it on board if it was from lots of people, but if it’s just a few we know we are making good ads, because they are getting noticed. Then we laugh at the complaint” [Creative 2].

“It also depends on what emotions you are trying to provoke. Often if you are aiming for a positive response and all feedback is negative, you have to go back to the drawing board. But the general public’s response is more important than the clients or the ad executive’s. That’s who is buying it [the advertised product or service]!” [Creative 3]

“If the success of our campaign was reduced due to an increasing level of animosity towards our adverts, then a new plan would be developed, but then again, all publicity is good publicity right?” [Creative 1].

“If there is no risk of damage to the brand, the most complaints won’t be actioned. There needs to be a potential for damage” [Account Service 2]

Conclusion

These results would suggest that advertising agencies are using new media to test their advertising ideas and to elicit feedback on campaigns currently on air. Advertising practitioners considered this form of feedback to be more direct, more honest and more timely than traditional advertising research, and its usefulness depended on who was responding, whether it was positive or negative and the potential damage to the campaign. While this is an exploratory study, which has a number of inherent limitations, such as the small number of respondents and it has focused on the internet and not all new media, the results do provide an indication of some industry attitudes. Further research could begin by interviewing more

practitioners, widening the frame of reference of this study, testing specific cases, and even other new media such as mobile phones. It appears that advertising practitioners are using new media to assist in tracking advertising campaigns. However, whether they are sufficiently skilled to discriminate between valid and reliable research and research that just happens to support their own position is a matter for further research.

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