



PPM - The Portable People Meter

Multi-media measurement in the digital world

The research tool for the 21st Century

Consumers today can choose from an array of radio, television, satellite, cable and internet services to meet their own individual tastes. Increasingly, media suppliers, in the form of broadcasters, agencies and advertisers are asking for richer, more "joined up" information in order to inform and aid their business decisions.

In selecting the Arbitron Portable People Meter (PPM) to complement the measurement data already supplied by our own 5000 Series PeopleMeter, TNS can provide our clients with a complete picture of how consumers use electronic media.

The PPM is a pager sized device that respondents wear or carry throughout the day. It works by detecting unique codes embedded in the audio portion of any transmission to which the respondent is exposed. Data are collected each night, using domestic phone lines, so that results can be available next day.

Research panels, comprising specially selected panel members, can be set up quickly and easily. Each panel member's task couldn't be simpler - just carry the meter. But the information obtained provides a wealth of data:

- Viewing & listening can be related to discrete demographic data
- Near passive metering ensures complete, consistent records of exposure to media without having to rely on recall or other activities
- Media measurement occurs both in and out of the home
- A single source of media data across multiple platforms - radio, TV and streamed audio/video can be measured using a single mechanism
- The ability to measure both analogue and digital broadcasts



Forging an Alliance since 2000

TNS and Arbitron are actively working together to demonstrate the benefits that the PPM and audio encoding delivers for radio and out of-home measurement services, and the measurement of single source radio and television measurement. Our collaboration goes back to 2000, when TNS installed a new television audience panel in Singapore. The broadcasting environment was complex and demanding. The research brief was met using 5000 Series meters equipped with both audio coding and PictureMatching capabilities.

Since then, TNS Media in Belgium has used PPM technology to establish a 450 person panel to measure both radio and television exposure.

This has enabled VRT/VAR to conduct innovative, detailed cross media analysis and to examine the synergies between radio and television in public service broadcasting.

In 2003, the BBM Bureau of Measurement in Canada selected the PPM to measure TV audiences to French language stations in Montreal and Quebec. Panel management and processing is performed using TNS's Comtel system, which BBM already uses to manage other television audience panels throughout Canada.



Only PPM provides multi-media measurement



Continuous Development -Keeping the PPM on the Cutting Edge of Technology

Reducing Size and Weight for Consumers and Broadcasters

From the beginning, the PPM system has consisted of an encoder, which inserts the inaudible codes at the programming source; a portable decoder (the PPM itself), which detects and collects the codes a consumer is exposed to; a base station that recharges the portable decoder and extracts its data; and a hub that collects the codes from all the base stations in the survey household and then finally transmits the data to the research centre.

A primary challenge in the development of the PPM system has been to design components small enough so that both studio engineers, who oversee the encoding process, and PPM panelists, who wear or carry the decoders, would find the equipment acceptable to use on a continuous basis.

With studios often cramped, today's encoder occupies just one industry standard-size slot in these crowded racks and is one-quarter the size of the first prototype created in the early 1990s. The PPM which has also been reduced in size in subsequent years, is now less than four cubic inches and weighing only 2.6 ounces.

(Continued overleaf)



Creating a Smarter, More Capable Portable Meter

Over time, the PPM has been improved so that it could operate in more diverse and demanding environments, discerning more details about panelists' listening and viewing habits.

A headphone adapter enables the PPM to detect the listening of panelists using headphones. The adapter fits over the PPM so that it is in the path between the radio and the headphone.

The latest generation of PPMs will be able to identify whether media exposure has taken place in the home or away from home. Radio stations and their advertisers have long been able to know when their audience is listening outside the home, but for the TV industry, this new ability to measure out-of-home viewing is a tremendous information breakthrough.

Allowing Panelists Greater Mobility

The battery life of the PPM has increased to more than 30 hours. While the extended battery life is a significant development, also a portable recharger has been created,



allowing panelists to recharge their PPM if, for example, they spend a night or weekend away from home. The portable recharger also opens the door to more research opportunities, for example in the form of 'sweeps'.

Turning the Hub Loose

The original hub was designed to plug into a standard household telephone jack. With a growing number of homes, particularly younger households, disconnecting their traditional phone lines and using only cellular phones, the new wireless hub will enable data in such households to be transmitted each night.

Enhancing the Encoding System

Arbitron has recently added an important time-stamp capability to encoders. Information about when a panelist records programming and plays it back is captured. Advertisers have been eager to find out when TV programs recorded on PVR systems and videocassette recorders are actually seen, and now they are able to know.

In 2003, Arbitron began exploring a new, non-ratings application for the PPM: the creation of a consumer marketing panel based on the PPM that helps advertisers understand the direct relationship between consumers' full range of media exposure and their advertising response. This PPM marketing panel collects media audience, retail store traffic and product purchase data from a single group of people. Panelists' retail store visits are part of the single-source data collected when retailers use encoders to insert an inaudible code in their closed audio or video systems, and then shopping panelists pick up the codes with the PPMs they are carrying.

TNS and Arbitron will continue to explore and expand the exciting capabilities of the PPM.



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