

# Journalism, addressable TV and measurability of audiences: a legislative proposal

## *Periodismo, TV dirigida y mensurabilidad de las audiencias: una propuesta legislativa*

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### Abstract

The television medium, which resists the push of the Internet as an advertising medium and maintains the leadership in audience numbers, is no stranger to the debate on how to measure, in a technically adequate and efficient way, the audiences it achieves. The progressive penetration of the HbbTV (Hybrid Broadband Television) standard as a form of interactive television in homes opens new journalistic perspectives breaks the traditional patterns of audience measurement as much as it supposes the union between the Internet and audiovisual, so that, in interactive contents, the viewer can derive towards online content. In addition, the possibility of directing personalized content to them (Addressable TV) means that the measurement of who, when and where you watch television is complicated and requires new methods to do so. The new global paradigm that opens with these changes provokes allegations, such as the control of the duration of the visit to an announcement, and new debates about the control of audiences, since it can be considered a unique visit, or segment the audiovisual metrics of the from Internet. This quantitative research analyzes the data of a survey on HbbTV (Interactive TV) in Spain, in which professionals of the sector are questioned about the way forward to some of these debates. It is concluded that the data obtained by visit must be measured in an integrated manner, but that the minutes of follow-up through the Internet must be defined according to the rules of minutes per hour of television advertising.

**Keywords:** *HbbTV, journalism, interactive television, addressable television, advertising.*

## **1. Interactive television in the broadcast scenario**

The launch in Spain, at the end of 2018, of LOVEStv, a platform promoted by Atresmedia, Mediaset and RTVE, demonstrates the commitment to HbbTV as an interactive television form in the country, which is expected to consolidate during 2019 and 2020 and which will change de journalistic procedures in audiovisual. It is a process of almost pan-European scope that confers more possibilities of interactivity to the consumer and that will modify, sooner or later, the way to control the audiences. As of the date of preparation of this research, the HbbTV had been introduced in 35 countries, had generated the development of 300 applications and had 44 million terminals connected in the world (HbbTV Association, 2019).

The HbbTV (Hybrid broadcast broadband Television), that is to say, the broadband television of hybrid transmission, is an initiative with global vocation (although born in Europe) directed to harmonize the transmission and the delivery of services of entertainment to the consumers through of connected televisions, decoders and multiscreen devices (Fondevila Gascón, 2012). In addition to most European countries, the standard already works in Saudi Arabia, Australia, the United Arab Emirates, Mauritius, Madagascar, Malaysia, Namibia, New Zealand, Senegal, Singapore and Vietnam, and is currently undergoing testing in Costa. of Ivory, the Gambia, Jordan and South Africa.

The HbbTV specification arises at the initiative of the industry's leading companies to improve the user experience (Quality of Experience) and allow innovative and interactive services through transmission and broadband networks. The specification uses elements of existing specifications from other standards, such as OIPF (Open IPTV Forum), Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) CE-HTML (also called Web4CE, i.e. Web for Consumer Electronics), Digital Video Broadcasting or DVB (ETSI TS 102 809), Dynamic Adaptive Streaming over HTTP (MPEG-DASH) and World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) HTML.

In fact, in June 2014 the activities of the Open IPTV Forum (OIPF) were transferred to the HbbTV Association, which includes defining specifications for service providers and technology providers that speed up and accelerate the deployment of IPTV services. Adaptations of the computer to the television screen, such as sources and small images (not readable from a distance such as those seen on a television or set-top box), navigation based on a mouse or keyboard (exportable to remote control), highlighting in the elements navigable, non-portable browser-specific extensions (DOM level 0 / legacy DOM), the standard implementation of audio and video objects or the use of proprietary extensions (not compatible with Consumer Electronics), such as Adobe Flash, are issues to be facilitate the usability of the audiences to be measured.

The HbbTV offers a set of possibilities for the consumer, usually channeled by a Call to Action that appears in a corner of the screen, in the manner of an image showing a red button, informing the viewer that an application is available to start at press that button. When the button is pressed, the application is displayed, already entered on the television (Dix *et al.*, 2010).

The application can provide additional information about a program (for example, electoral data, sports or stock statistics, very interesting for journalism), show a program guide with the option to change channels or provide a menu with access to additional video programming. Other options include real interaction, such as multi-user testing where the user plays against other HbbTV viewers. The user interacts with the screen using a variety of buttons on the remote control: color buttons, cursor buttons and numbered buttons. Version 2 of the specification also supports interaction through a mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet.

The operators intend to confer value to the television offer and improve the user experience when consuming content. The Quality of Experience (QoE) depends enormously on the journalists, who design the contents adapting them to the new ecosystems. The offer allows access to the content of the previous week broadcast on the channels of the three major business groups, return to the beginning of a program that is broadcast at that time, check the television grid or access a content recommendation service.

Of the exposed thing opportunities or dangers arise, according to how it is observed, at the time of controlling the hearings. It is a situation that is repeated cyclically when a new technological option is incorporated into the communicative ecosystem. Thus, when cable offers were introduced and these evolved into triple play or quintuple play (Fondevila Gascón, 2004; 2009a; 2009b), one of the issues to be solved was the control of these audiences, complex given the limited possibilities of Sofres.

The audience measurement factor acquires more transcendence and complexity in an environment of coexistence between conventional television, connected television and the Internet (Fischer, 2017; Fondevila Gascón, 2013), especially for the advertising value that these audiences acquire. Advertisers can deliver to mass audiences, but attending individual choices (Malthouse, Maslowska & Franks, 2018). Now, that technology also allows television advertising content to be personalized through the Addressable Television, discomfort increases from the perspective of companies that have traditionally governed the control of audiences.

As for advertising minutes, law 7/2010 of March 31, General Audiovisual Communication (LGCA) extended the total advertising time to 12 minutes per hour, 5 minutes for self-promotion, 3 minutes maximum for tele promotions and some seconds dedicated to the mentions of sponsorship of the programs. Therefore, just over 20 minutes per clock hour is the maximum allowed. HbbTV's own interactivity can affect consumer protection, not so much in the case of advertisements for harmful products, but for example by limiting the time slot, separating audiovisual and advertising content or limiting certain advertising formats. «Privacy concerns with addressable TV must be considered by the involved parties» (Taylor, CR 2019)

Royal Decree 21/2014 of 17 January modified the Advertising Regulations (LGCA development regulation relating to television commercial communication of December 7, 2011), so that the duration of 3 minutes of tele promotions does not compute within the minutes per hour dedicated to the broadcast of advertising messages and teleshopping.

The 12 minutes of commercial communications, according to article 14/1 LGCA, include conventional advertising spots (between 5 and 30 seconds) and tele sales spots, although they do not include teleshopping programs, whose minimum uninterrupted duration is 15 minutes and do not compute in the limit of 12 minutes. Transparencies, overprints and virtual advertising are also included during the retransmission of sporting events, screens shared in events not susceptible to interruption (ideal for HbbTV), promotions in programs that allow the participation of viewers through text messages and telephone calls (suitable for the interactivity of the HbbTV) and a range of other options such as advertorial, curtains or advertising micro-spaces, which can also host the HbbTV.

A recurring idea is that the integrity or value of the programs should not be compromised, as well as preventing viewers from confusing advertising with editorial content, which, due to the permeability and flexibility of HbbTV, is positive. Programmatic advertising will influence the future direction of media enterprises and distribution models to be fully accessible (Malthouse, Maslowska & Franks, 2018).

The objective of this research is to determine the opinion of professionals in the communication sector on how to measure in an integrated manner the data obtained by the viewer's visit and the minutes of follow-up with reference to the regulation of minutes per hour of television advertising, regardless of the type of broadcast television (streaming or addressable).

Connected television, in fact, is seen as the way to satisfy the demand of the audience and the journalistic and advertising sectors (Bellman, 2009, Dix *et al.*, 2010, Taylor, 2019), which seek more personalization and profitability (Bellman, Schweda and Varan, 2010 and 2012) given the content flow intrinsic to cloud journalism (Fondevila Gascón, 2010). The HbbTV presents several potential applications, especially in the educational field (Wenger, 2000, Cerón and Arciniegas, 2014, Vanegas and Trefftz, 2014, Fondevila Gascón *et al.*, 2015, Robayo, Franco and Nieto, 2016). «For anyone interested in the future of advertising, the capabilities of connected television (CTV) cannot be ignored» (Taylor, C.R. 2019), especially for the ability to increase return advertising spend (ROAS) (Taylor, 2019).

In connected television, it is observed that the receiver manifests more sense of control over contents and more creativity (Navarro, Villarreal and Martínez, 2010). Interactivity, together with hypertext and multimedia (Fondevila Gascón, 2014), are the quality factors of digital journalism, with which the dialogue with the final client, spectator or student, is suggestive. This dynamic coincides with the modification of the content creation model (Fondevila Gascón, Sierra Sánchez and Del Olmo Arriaga, 2011, Fondevila Gascón and López García-Navas, 2015). Marketers now have new options for digital-video advertising as an advertising medium of choice (Ford, 2019) and for that, advertising and marketing researchers are centered on the burgeoning number of video choices (Ford, 2019).

## 2. Methodology

The research carried out follows a methodology of a quantitative and qualitative nature. The technique used is from the survey (provided in the 2018-19 academic year), based on a probabilistic sample. The population is constituted by professionals of the communication (university professors, experts of the sector) Spanish, of which a sample was obtained  $n = 350$ .

The questionnaire sent contained closed or multiple-choice questions, and some open ones with a qualitative explanation. At the beginning of the questionnaire, the characteristics of connected television were explained (on-demand content broadcasting platform that combines broadcasting and broadband services), so that, although the prior knowledge of the platform was assumed by the respondents, It contextualized that it is a technological standard that combines TV and Internet in a single screen, in order to encourage interactivity with the viewer, with all that this implies in terms of audience control.

After this previous presentation, respondents were surveyed on how to measure in an integrated way the data obtained by the viewer's visit and the minutes of follow-up with reference to the regulation of minutes per hour of television advertising. A Likert scale was used to assess the metrics to be used. The hypotheses of the investigation are the following:

- H1 Communication professionals consider that the data obtained by the viewer's visit on connected television must be measured in an integrated manner.
- H2. The most common Internet audience metrics are the best considered by communication professionals in connected television.

- H3. The communication professionals consider that in connected television it is necessary to separately measure the minutes of television advertising plus those of the Internet in order to comply with current legislation.

### 3. Results

Communication professionals consider that the data obtained by the viewer's visit must be measured in an integrated manner. Thus, of the sample consulted, a solid 81.71% considered that the Internet and television session should be considered unified, while 17.14% would not agree with it (Table 1). In this way, H1 is validated (communication professionals consider that the data obtained by the viewer's visit in connected television must be measured in an integrated manner).

**Table 1**  
**Integrated measurement of TV & Internet in connected TV**

Integrated measurement of TV & Internet	%
Yes	81,71%
No	17,14%
Don not know /no answer	1,15%
Total	100%

Source: elaborated by the authors.

The metrics that are considered relevant when measuring the activity of the audience in relation to the broadcasts of the connected television are diverse, and most are inspired by the Internet. The Click Through Rate (CTR), the Cost per Click (CPC), the Cost per Lead (CPL, that is, the cost of getting a new entry in the database of the chain), the CPA (Cost per Acquisition, that is, the cost of getting a purchase through the advertisement of connected television) and the CVV (Committed Visitor Volume) are positively rated by respondents on a Likert scale (Table 2).

**Table 2**  
**Valuation of the metrics to be used in connected television**

Metrics	Valuation (1 to 5)
CTR	4,6
CPC	4,4
CPL	3,6
CPA	3,5
CVV	4,2
GRP	2,7

Source: elaborated by the authors.



It is observed that the metrics best considered are the most basic (the CTR) and the deepest qualitatively (the CVV). The first one analyzes the clicks obtained between the impressions of CTA of the television connected on the screen, which, together with the Cost per Thousand Impressions, is situated in the most superficial range of the user's reaction. The consequent metrics grow in depth of the conversion, although perhaps for this reason, and because of the difficulty of glimpsing how they are implemented, the value of the respondents is reduced. «A claim from connected television does not always translate into CPL or CPA,» says one member of the sample; «To introduce connected television at least at the beginning, you do not have to associate it with sales, because if you do not give it a very result-oriented perspective on interactivity,» says another.

In contrast, a television metric by antonomasia (the GRP, Gross Rating Point), which measures reach by frequency, is valued more modestly. It is likely that the awareness that television is combined with the Internet in connected television leads analysts to disdain more classical metrics. «The GRP cannot pick up the user's entire route when they access the Internet,» says one of the respondents. A response of this type delves into the idea of continuity and integration embodied in research. The audience will become cross media, more global and holistic.

In any case, the high valuation of the CVV, the main metric in terms of the permanence of the viewer, reflects the trend in digital marketing, which prefers to sacrifice the number of spectators for the benefit of quality (measured in terms of duration of the visit). Interactivity is a step to get engagement. In this sense, the most tangible or more pragmatic metrics give prominence to the most intangible, which determine the permanence of users and a more loyal relationship. Based on these results, H2 can be confirmed (The most common Internet audience metrics are the best considered by communication professionals in connected television).

One of the most controversial issues, as a result of legislation that is usually behind the communicative and technological events, is how to measure the monitoring minutes of a spectator with reference to the regulation of minutes per hour of television advertising. The survey (Table 3) shows a majority position in favor of measuring the possible minutes of television advertising plus those of the Internet in case of accessing a separately connected television ad (50.29%). Although this may seem contradictory with the idea of integration, we interpret that it is a position that tends to allow the creativity of interactive campaigns not to be penalized by the rigors of controlling advertising minutes.

**Table 3**  
**Measurement of TV and Internet advertising minutes**  
**on connected television**

Measurement of TV + Internet advertising minutes	%
You have to measure them separately	50,29%
You have to measure them together	34,57%
You have to adapt the units of time to the hybrid reality	9,43%
Don not know /no answer	5,71%
Total	100%

Source: elaborated by the authors.

Thus, the idea would be to provide global data on the performance of a spectator, but to make them more flexible when complying with current legislation so as not to restrict the large number of options that are opened up in journalistic and advertising languages. However, the number of professionals who consider that advertising time should be measured jointly is not negligible (34.57%).

The number of those who argue that advertising time should be adapted to the reality of connected television reflects that there is a group of analysts who would like a legislative change in advertising. Be that as it may, H3 is validated (Communication professionals consider that in connected television, television advertising minutes plus Internet minutes must be measured separately in order to comply with the legislation in force).

## **4. Conclusions**

This research reflects the interest of communication professionals on how to measure the audience in connected television. Recent campaigns to disseminate this standard make it more necessary to analyze metrics, which will benefit advertisers, media agencies, networks and the audience itself, which will see their interests reflected more adequately.

On the one hand, it is observed that communication professionals consider the need to measure in an integrated way the data obtained by the viewer's visit on the connected television. This affects the global vision of the interactive proposal, fundamental by definition in the digital environment (Fondevila Gascón, 2014).

When it comes to generating metrics, which are of concern in the sector (Navarro, Villarreal and Martínez, 2010), the most common ones on the Internet are the best considered by communication professionals in connected television. This reflects an assimilation of television reality to that of the Internet. The option of interacting with programmers and advertisers provides an added value that is associated more with bidirectional or active technologies (Internet) than traditionally unidirectional or passive ones (television).

When communication professionals maintain that in television connected there is a need to measure separately the minutes of television advertising plus those of the Internet in order to comply with current legislation, it is recognized that the creativity factor of connected television must overcome the possible legal constraints in a flexible and hybrid framework.

As limitations of the investigation, we find the always optimizable degree of knowledge of the respondents about connected television, despite the previous explanation and the popularization campaign of the large Spanish multimedia groups (LOVEStv). The prospective nature implies a logical interpretive margin.

As a result of the obtained results, we suggest to the companies of measurement of hearing to take in consideration the position of the analysts, and to adapt the current advertising legislation in audiovisual and Internet to a very suggestive interactive reality.

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