

Latest from the research front

By  Chris Brewer

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SAARF has released the following statement (embargoed till 12 noon the day before a four day weekend so not well-timed chaps).

Anyway, it's business as usual and they're displaying great fortitude in bringing out this report as if there are no other concerns behind the scenes. Good for them.

Now the figures are out, let's see what the media jackals make of them.

South Africa's media have managed to hold their own in a challenging economic environment.



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The latest release of the All Media and Products Survey (AMPS), released today by the South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF), shows overall stability of the media, with no significant audience changes at a macro level, and few at an individual media brand level.

This latest release - AMPS Dec 2014 (2014B) - covers fieldwork done nationally from January to December 2014. The data is off a large national sample of 25,584.

Print

Average-issue readership of print as a whole remained stable over AMPS Dec 14, at 63.4%. This is good news for the medium following the decline in newspaper reading seen in the previous survey (AMPS Jun 14, covering July 2013 to June 2014), which threw print's overall readership onto a downward path.

While overall print numbers remain stable, however, there was a significant decline in print reading in large urban areas; this is true not only for print as a whole, but for both the newspaper and magazine categories.

Newspapers

The significant decline of newspaper readership seen in the previous release was driven almost entirely by the loss of

352,000 readers in the weekly newspaper sector. This decline has now been halted, although the negative trend persists, albeit not significantly; current readership levels of 45.9% are only marginally down on the previous level of 46.3%.

Dailies remained stable, as they have done across the last two AMPS releases. Readership of this print category is 28.6% of the adult population (15+), with no individual publication within the category showing any significant growth or decline.

In the weekly newspaper sector, three publications grew their readership significantly: the *Saturday Citizen*, *Son op Sondag*, and the *Weekend Argus* (Sunday edition). Together, these three titles grew their reader bases by 174,000. This growth was not enough to translate into a similar growth in the weekly sector as a whole, however, with readership of this print category remaining stable on previous, at 30.1%.

Magazines

Magazines maintained their equilibrium, with a total readership of 46.5%. Three titles bucked the trend toward stability - *Grazia*, *Habitat*, and *SA Hunter/Jagter* - and grew their audiences significantly over the previous survey. This growth was not enough to lift the category as a whole, but did offset the effects of *Zigzag's* audience decline.

Television

Despite the growth of two TV platforms, TV viewing remained stable over AMPS Jun 14. Currently, 92.3% of the adult population consumes this medium each week.

DStv in total increased its weekly audience yet again, with the latest increase taking the platform to 37.7% from the previous survey's 35.7%, and from 33.4% in the year previous (AMPS Dec 13, covering January to December 2013).

For the first time since AMPS Jun 12 (July 2011-June 2012), e.tv showed a significant rise in its audience figures. The free-to-air channel upped its weekly viewership from 66.9% in AMPS Jun 14 to 68.6% currently.

Radio

Radio listenership is stable, with no significant shifts in audience level overall. Weekly radio listenership is currently 92.3%, with 89.3% of adults listening to commercial radio each week, and 25.6% listening to community.

While the medium as a whole remained stable, one radio station, newcomer Vuma 103 FM, posted significantly higher past seven day listening levels (0.9%) than in the previous survey (0.4%), while Capricorn FM, North West FM and tru fm saw their audiences decline over AMPS Jun 14 levels.

Listening to radio via cell phones continues to rise, spurred likely by the increasing access to cellphones (see Internet and Cell phones below). Cell phone listening increased to 40.0% from 37.1% in the previous survey.

Internet and cell phone

Results from the first 12-month release of combined and streamlined cell phone and digital measures show that the success story that is the internet continues.

Growth came through across all time filters. Accessing the internet "yesterday" rose from 23.9% to 29.4%, while access over the "past seven days" rose from 32.4% to 38.6%. The medium gained ground across all age groups and LSMs, across all community sizes, and in all provinces, with the notable exception of Mpumalanga.

Cell phone access rose to 88.9%, from 88.0% in the previous survey and 86.6% in the previous year. This growth was driven by significant gains in the LSM 5-7 market, where cell phone access grew to 89.7% from 88.5%. Access in the LSM 1-4 market is 80.8%, while access in the LSM 8-10 market is 94.6%.

Out of home

Two out-of-home media types showed improved weekly exposure levels over the previous AMPS. Trailer ads were up from 29.3% to 30.6% (past 7 days), while 65.4% of adults saw advertising on street poles, compared to 63.2% in the previous survey.

Weekly exposure to bus-related advertising dropped, from 28.9% to 26.9% for bus shelters, and from 36.4% to 32.6% for advertising on the side of busses.

Cinema

There's been little change when it comes to people's attendance of cinema, with average-four-week attendance steady on 4.6%. All time filters were stable over the previous AMPS release, with the exception of "attendance up to eight weeks" which declined from 5.3% to 4.7%, and "Cinema - ever" which dropped from 56.1% to 54.8%.

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