

# The value of data for media analysis

 By Jaco Pienaar

29 Aug 2016

Data has become a critical element for the growth of the digital society. And while its importance transcends industries, it is especially in media analysis where it has enabled brands, agencies, and journalists to become more effective.

As a result of the globalised environment, consumers of information are not limited to a few sources of news. Unlike in the past, where it was very much a case of local first with some international content mixed in, content today is all about the world and its impact on people at a hyper-local level. Livestreaming has certainly contributed to a more immediate environment for dissemination with some even arguing that media (at least in the traditional sense) is dead.



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However, the influx of [content] sources make it exceedingly difficult to manage data and find its relevancy for a particular business. Added to this is the explosion of other data streams particularly social media engagement across a number of platforms. So not only do decision-makers need to be cognisant of print, broadcast, and online media, but also social media in South Africa as well as the rest of the world.

Having the correct data set in place to answer all the required strategic questions for the organisation is a business imperative. Real-time data analytics will empower the company (or agency partner) to understand the success of a marketing campaign in the context of the competitive environment. It could also show the return on investment that an online AdWords tactical roll-out has had on the bottom-line.

Fortunately, there are a number of free tools available to help the business take the vital first step. However, these just touch the surface of telling the data story to the organisation. To really extract the best possible value from media and other sources, an organisation needs to partner with a service provider that is able to cut through the clutter and provide business-relevant insights.

And while the temptation is there to find the cheapest solution available, the value is to be had with someone who can scale effectively while still being able to access extensive global (and local) data sets. Another element in the decision-making process is the value on human-driven analysis. While automation serves its purpose, having access to an expert analyst that understand the vagaries of industry, media, and other influencing factors is immensely valuable.

Media analysis has become a fundamental part of the success of any organisation. The insights derived from understanding perception, the issues at hand, and the impact that external factors have on the brand reputation mean business can become nimbler and respond more cost-effectively than before. That value on its own is worth investigating the correct service provider to partner with instead of simply picking one of a generic search.

## ABOUT JACO PIENAAR

Jaco is an MA Information Science graduate who specialises in research, analytical framework development, and content analysis. His thesis was on Intellectual Capital measurement and he applies this to his framework developments as well as knowledge strategies. Professionally, Jaco has worked in the journalism field, academic environment, multi-national research environment, and media analysis environment. He is currently the Chief Knowledge Officer at Professional Evaluation and Research.

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