

SA internet users grow by over 2 million

DMMA research reveals that 39% of South African adults have access to the internet.



Research conducted by the Digital Media and Marketing Association (DMMA) and Echo Consultancy estimates the total internet population in South Africa in 2013 to be almost 14 million users. This represents 39% of the adult population. The figure was derived from the All Media Products Survey (AMPS) and independently validated by Effective Measure (EM), the DMMA's official measurement provider for digital audience data.

This comes as good news for advertisers, as it reflects a larger internet audience than basic AMPS levels. "We needed to provide our members with a more realistic view of the total internet population in South Africa. The validated figure of 14 million users is significant as it indicates that a greater percentage of South Africans are consuming media online than previously reported," says Jarred Cinman, Chair of the DMMA Steerco. "This has direct implications for the media mix that marketers purchase."

Figures derived from tagged sites

Peter Langschmidt is the Managing Director of Echo and sits on the South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF) board. He explains: "EM derives its figures through tagged sites, which count Unique Browsers. Some users access the internet from more than one device -i.e. laptop, mobile phone and home computer. EM will count this as three Unique Browsers, but marketers are interested in reaching people not machines. Therefore, we weighted EM's Unique Browser data against AMPS' multiple device usage and the EM panel to translate the number from browsers to people.

"In the case of internet penetration in South Africa from AMPS, there is most definitely respondent confusion regarding internet usage, with many respondents not equating websites accessed via their mobile phones with internet browsing. Through recoding AMPS to take mobile access into account, we were able to provide a figure that matched the EM online universe," says Langschmidt.

This methodology can be simplified into three steps:

1. The time periods of the AMPS and Effective Measure data sets were matched, going back to June 2012.
2. EM's Unique Browsers accessing the internet at that time was 15 million. This was reduced by 23% using the EM panel and AMPS multiple device calculations, to arrive at a figure of 11.6 million monthly internet users.
3. The AMPS figures were recalibrated to include web browsing via mobile phones as well as computers, which increased the numbers from 8.6 million to 11.3 million monthly internet users.

"In the middle of last year EM reported that there were 15 million Unique Browsers. In the last year this number has grown to 20 million. By applying the derived formula, we can say that that these 20 million Unique Browsers represent just under 14 million adult users," says Langschmidt.

"This is great news for all of our publisher members in particular as it is predicted that ad spend across online channels will grow as a result, as marketers will attribute greater weight to digital media," concludes Cinman.

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