

WARC News

TV will survive change in habits, says report

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NEW YORK: Media consumption habits will continue to change in the next five years, but traditional mediums like TV are still likely to have a key role to play, according to a new report.

ESPN, the sports broadcaster, teamed up with **Mindshare**, the **WPP**-owned network, and **Unilever**, the FMCG giant, to produce *Media 2015: The Future of Media*.

This study sketched four possible futures for the industry, based on potential consumption habits, and the information providers that are likely to prove most important half way through this decade.

One outcome could be that social media portals like **Twitter**, the microblogging service, will be pre-eminent, leading to a highly fragmented market where time is of premium value.

In such a climate, the challenges for agencies will include ensuring that communications are tailored to a number of specific platforms and managing large amounts of data drawn from various sources.

Mark Potts, Mindshare's managing director for consumer insights in North America, argued "in a sense, we're living in the future now, minus the flying cars."

"It's an 'always-on' world, but at the same time, there's a parallel world where consumers don't always want to be plugged in. This is a way for us to flesh out and organise our thinking."

An alternative representation, given the title the "Portal of Me", suggested that media access would be fairly flexible, but people will look to trusted outlets for information.

Under this scenario, consumers will use third-party services which allow them to select the content they want to receive, depending on their individual preferences.

This means that successful brands must demonstrate that they can provide material that is of interest to their audience, meaning they are granted to act as filters on their customers' behalf.

Rob Master, media director of Unilever's North American arm, said "it's less about the platform than how consumer behavior will change, because in four years we'll be talking about a company that doesn't exist today."

"We're setting a new course in terms of how we think about connecting with consumers," he added.

By contrast with these possibilities, the final two outcomes assumed that the media environment is rather more stable, with behaviour being shaped more by factors such as age and education.

According to Potts, "the future will probably look like a combination of each scenario, but TV will stand up in the longer term."

"We're not sounding the death knell of traditional advertising. We're just preparing for every contingency," he added.