

**Some important changes to
Australia's TV ratings system.**

Digital technology is changing the way people interact and engage with their favourite TV shows. Personal video recorders (PVRs) have made it easier than ever for television viewers to watch more of what they want, when they want. To ensure TV ratings more accurately reflect the viewing habits of all Australians, OzTAM and RegionalTAM have made adjustments to the television ratings panel to incorporate homes with PVRs. Here, we answer some of your questions about the move to Consolidated ratings.

What are the key changes to TV ratings?

OzTAM and RegionalTAM now measure and report viewing in PVR households. In addition to live viewing, any viewing done within seven days of the original broadcast (Playback) is also now measured and reported. The Live and Playback viewing figures are aggregated to provide a Consolidated figure.

Why the changes?

Prior to December 27 2009, TV viewing in PVR homes wasn't measured. Given the increasing penetration of this technology in Australian households it was necessary to upgrade the service to include PVR homes in the measurement panel.

Why the move to Consolidated ratings?

Consolidated ratings - which combine both Live and Playback viewing - are a more accurate measure of a program or channel's viewing audience.

What's the difference between Live, As Live, Overnight, Playback and Consolidated data?

- Live captures viewing of the initial broadcast in real time.
- As Live measures time shift viewing anytime up to 2am the same day of broadcast (research day is 2am to 2am).
- Overnight ratings are preliminary figures which combine Live and As Live viewing.
- Playback refers to content watched within 7 days of initial broadcast (this includes As Live). This is also referred to as Time Shift Viewing (TSV).
- Consolidated ratings combine Live and Playback viewing.

What data will be available for analysis?

Australia's TV ratings system continues to provide advertisers with a level of transparency and accuracy that's second to none. Two datasets are now being delivered each day;

- Morning - Overnights (Live + As Live data) for previous day;
- Afternoon - Consolidated ratings for programs first aired on the same day of the previous week.

All data is available on a minute-by-minute basis.

How many homes have personal video recorders?

According to official universe estimates (as at Q4, 2010), PVRs are currently in 34.7 per cent of metro households. This includes digital video recorders as well as branded boxes, such as TiVo.

Can you compare year-on-year data?

True year-on-year comparisons are not possible because of the panel change on 27 December 2009 and the staggered launch of the digital multi-channels last year.

How does viewing in PVR households differ to viewing in non-PVR households?

Research shows that the vast majority of viewing in PVR households is still done in the live environment, and those programs that are recorded are normally watched (played back) within 72 hours of the original broadcast.

How much fast-forwarding is done in PVR homes?

We know that only around 50 per cent of content is fast-forwarded in playback mode. Recent studies confirm people are highly engaged with programs they have taken the time to record.

Do advertisers pay for content that is fast-forwarded?

OzTAM and RegionalTAM do not report any content that is not watched in normal playback mode. This means that any content that is paused, shuffled or fast-forwarded is not counted.

Why should advertisers suddenly pay for viewers who were already there?

The basic business principle that networks are remunerated for the target audiences they deliver to advertisers has not changed. Prior to Consolidated ratings, these "viewers who were already there" weren't being counted. Consolidated ratings accurately reflect the in-home viewing of a particular program.

What about Live ratings?

As the penetration of digital recording devices continues to grow, Live only measurement will become increasingly less relevant. The media landscape is changing, and the move to Consolidated ratings simply reflects the way people are now consuming and engaging with their favourite TV programming.

What if my campaign is time-sensitive?

Given most programs are viewed within 72 hours of broadcast this should not be a major concern for advertisers. However, networks do encourage advertisers with time-sensitive retail offers to include an "offer ends" date in their communication to inform viewers of when the promotion expires.

When will Consolidated ratings take effect?

Consolidated ratings are already being measured and reported as of 27 December 2009. For access to television ratings data and any software or training requirements, please contact OzTAM on (02) 9929 7210 or RegionalTAM/AGB Nielsen on (02) 9490 6500 .

For more information, visit thinktv.com.au