

ViewPoints

from





Mario Paic

Chief Data &
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About Mario

Mario has 20 years' experience in the market research industry specialising in audience measurement.

In his current role, as the Global Chief Data & Research Officer within Ipsos' Audience Measurement specialism, Mario acts as a 'go to' technical person for the whole audience measurement product portfolio and a guardian of Ipsos' global "gold standard" approaches.

Before moving to London and joining the global AUM team in 2014, Mario was based in Sydney, Australia, where he was the Technical Director responsible for the successful development and launch of emma™ (Enhanced Media Metrics Australia) - the new currency audience metric for the Australian print and digital industry, launched in 2013.

Mario spoke to us about the future of media measurement and the impact COVID-19 has had in 2020.



How did you get into the world of market/media research and what is your current role?

Well, I got into media research 20 years ago in Croatia (where I'm from). I literally started working in audience measurement from day one -- my very first 'real' job was telephone interviewing for TV audience measurement. After one or two months of that, I decided I couldn't do it anymore. It's a tough job! After that, I did various jobs within that company, in operations and then client service. Then, after a short stint at a start-up, I joined a local research company, which Ipsos ended up acquiring.

Since then, for the past 17 years, I've been with Ipsos, all in audience measurement roles. My current role is Chief Data & Research Officer, so I am pretty much the 'go-to' person for all the technical aspects of our product portfolio for Ipsos audience measurement globally.

With more and more advertising dollars moving to digital and the big tech platforms what does that mean for the world of media research?

Close to 100% of the growth in advertising in digital has basically gone to two companies, which is fascinating, but also concerning. So, publishers have had challenges before with their business models in terms of growth, but they still captured a decent sized share of the overall advertising pie. Now of course, they have all been hit by the COVID pandemic.

Having said that, the industry is still investing in new products, and also the measurement side of their business is very important for them. So, we are deploying new and improved online measurement standards for the UK, working with the whole industry. There's a great deal of technology and data science involved. I think that's the biggest trend for the measurement industry right now.



Turning to this past year, which has obviously been an interesting year, how has your business had to react and adapt?

It varies by market, of course. We do audience measurement in roughly 40+ countries. A lot of that is for industry contracts and currencies, and we utilise all different possible methodologies, as you can imagine.

So, in places like the UK, which have been hit by COVID, we have been unable to do face-to-face data collection, which we still use a lot of, across pretty much all of our contracts. So, we have obviously had to adapt quickly in the UK and have successfully tested some new methods with some of the industry currencies. Some of the currencies have invested and quickly adapted using some additional methods to keep track of what's going on, if not integrating fully into the currency.

We are increasingly deploying software-based metering technology to capture people's exposure to media. We can have contactless deployment where we don't need to be face-to-face. Clients are reacting positively as they also think about how the next year looks given there's a lot of uncertainty. So, yes, it's been tough, but it has pushed us even more in the technology direction.



What is Ipsos iris and why it's a step forward as a media measurement currency?

Ipsos iris is our new product and the new standard for online audience measurement in the UK. We are currently at the last stage of the development, with input from the industry feeding into various work streams and various aspects of the methodology, which of course is very important.

Some of the steps forward or advantages of the methodology are first and foremost, a single source panel that we are recruiting, for cross-media measurement. We are fairly strict about how we recruit and how we manage the panel and we think that's the only way to get high quality data. We utilise RealityMine technology heavily to collect panellists' consumption of digital content on mobile and tablet devices and combine that with our own technology so we can capture single source cross-media audience data, spanning TV, radio and online. We are already doing that with the BBC Compass panel, which now also forms part of the Ipsos iris solution.

Apart from that, there's a lot of enthusiasm and positive feedback in terms some of the analytical features. So, for example, we are going to have daily reporting with a 36-hour delay, very similar to how TV audiences are reported. And, because of the way how we're building this data set, there will be full functionality in terms of analysing breakdowns, full demographics, additional options around psychographics, interest-based segmentations, and something we call 'enhanced audience'. So, all of that will be delivered in a brand-new reporting interface, and it's something that I think the industry is very much looking forward to.

There's also a focus on a very localized approach to client service and deployment. We have built a 30-person team that will support Ipsos iris going forward, and we are looking to expand to other markets with the same approach.



What are you most excited about for 2021?

Well, firstly, the launch of Ipsos iris in the UK. It will be a big industry wide moment, and we are hoping that the market will shift pretty much immediately. After that, my role will be looking at an expansion of that approach to other markets, so I am looking forward to that. I'll be busy with talking to our local teams, clients and the industry in other markets, starting with Canada, where we announced already that we're going to launch in next year. And, we are also exploring other markets right now as well.

There are also some initiatives where the print and the digital industry, currencies and communities are looking to merge and govern the measurement that covers print

and digital as one single entity, but also looking for efficiencies in methodologies. So that's something for next year that we will be seeing that in a number of places.

And there are a few other bits and pieces - we are hoping to announce soon some new wins for Ipsos - around cross-media measurement utilising our MediaCell technology.

So all in all optimistic about 2021, it should be a great year for the industry!



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Lastly, if you could be anything, what would your dream job be?

Definitely a D.J. ... If I knew how to do it, and if it was viable financially, I would go play music right away! I have a big passion for music, so I have always admired people who can mix and play music. I actually have had an electric guitar sitting in my living room for the last two years, which I got as a gift, but I don’t know how to play it and haven’t touched it. It’s a beautiful instrument and great decoration in the living room for now. Anything to do with music would be my dream job.



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