



## Measuring the Unmeasured Television Viewer

**Council for Research Excellence  
Nonresponse Bias Study**





# AUDIENCE **ME**ASUREMENT 5.0



**Ceril Shagrin**

**Executive Vice President  
Univision Corporation**



**Peter V. Miller**

**Northwestern University,  
Department of  
Communication Studies**

# Survey Nonresponse: The Biggest Problem

- Declining response rates all over the industrialized world cast doubt on survey estimates.
  - Is there a response bias?
  - Is there a difference in behavior among responders and non responders?
- Audience research is a prime example.
- Do non-cooperators use media differently?

# Council for Research Excellence

- The CRE consists of 35+ senior research professionals who are all Nielsen clients
- Represents advertisers, agencies, networks, cable companies, stations
- Funded by Nielsen but works as an independent think tank
- Conducts research on what CRE judges to be of industry wide importance
- The \$2.1 million CRE research reported here represents the state of the art in nonresponse bias investigation

# Council for Research Excellence Study Design

- Survey TV audience measurement of both former cooperators and non-cooperators
- Ask detailed questions about viewing, lifestyles, household characteristics, equipment.
- Compare former cooperators and non-cooperators on identical, contemporaneous measures.

# CRE Study Execution

- Multi-mode, multi-wave data collection by The Nielsen Company and RTI International.
- Achieve high response rates among cooperators and non-cooperators.
- Independent evaluation of methods and data by University of Michigan team led by Robert Groves.
  - Included Frauke Kreuter and Caroline Casas-Cordero University of Maryland; Ashley Bowers University of Michigan; Peter Miller Northwestern University

# Nielsen Meter and Diary Samples

- Focus on people meter respondents and contemporaneous non-respondents shortly after respondents left panel.
- Focus on diary respondents and non-respondents shortly after diary sweeps period.

# Study Design for Meter Sample

- Study Design - Meter
- Sample -2,300 originally designated households (Basics) (Apr -Sept '07)
  - Questionnaire 100-item questionnaire booklet
  - Target respondent: Head of household
- Data Collection -Mail, web, & face-to-face. June, 2007- April, 2008.
- Response Rate: Cooperators, 95%, Non-cooperators, 62%.



# Study Design for Diary Sample

- Sample -9,000 Mailables and Unmailables (Nov '06, Feb '07 cycles)

## Questionnaire

- 100-item questionnaire booklet
- Target respondent: Head of household
- Data Collection -Mail, web, face-to-face, & telephone June 2007-May 2008
- Response Rate: Cooperators, 90%+. Non-cooperators, 20-85%.
  - Low response rate in unmailable group including sample points not necessarily households

# Findings: Demographic Analysis

- Meter

Household income higher, household size smaller for non-cooperators

- Diary

Non-intabs have larger household size, more children; more likely to be renters

Non-intabs more likely to be Black, younger

# Findings: Viewing Equipment

- Meter

Non-cooperators more likely to have cable, DVR, big screen TV

Non-cooperators have more TVs

- Diary

Non-intabs more likely to have digital cable, satellite TV, DVR, big screen TV

Non-intabs more likely to have computer, high speed Internet

# Findings: Viewing Styles

- Meter

Non-cooperators have more unplanned viewing,  
more visitors

- Diary

Non-intabs have more unplanned viewing,  
more visitors

Non-intabs more likely to watch TV in  
groups

# Findings: Other activities

- Meter

Non-cooperators spend less time listening to radio

- Diary

Non-intabs spend less time at home, more time listening to radio

# Findings: Daypart Analysis

- Meter Household Viewing
  - Non-cooperators higher 8-11 pm
- Meter Person Viewing
  - No differences across dayparts
- Diary Household Viewing
  - Non-intab higher 11pm-2am
- Diary Person Viewing
  - Non-intab lower 4-8 pm; higher 11pm-2am

# Findings: Broadcast Network Analysis

- Meter
  - No differences across networks
- Diary
  - Non-intab lower for CBS and NBC, higher for Univision

# Findings: Cable Network Analysis

- Meter
  - Non-cooperators higher for CNN, HBO
- Diary
  - Non-intab higher for BET, Cartoon, HBO and MTV



# Conclusions

- This study revealed more about unmeasured viewers than any other effort.
- The University of Michigan evaluators refer to the study as “state of the art” in nonresponse bias investigation.
- Nielsen is taking lessons from the study to modify operations.
- Findings from this study will be combined with findings from new CRE research on media related universe estimates to be released later this summer.

# Non Response Research Learning Objectives

- Do lower response rates result in a non response bias in the measurement?
- Can insights from this research be used to improve response rates?
- Can additional weighting controls reduce non response bias?

Doing everything possible to increase response rates remains a crucial goal

# Next Steps in the Research Program

- Need to further explore these notable differences between cooperators and non-cooperators:
  - media equipment
  - viewing styles and attitudes
- Need to measure differences among current meter sample cooperators who agree or disagree to have computer viewing monitored

# Non Response Committee Members

- Ceril Shagrin - Chair
- Henry DeVault
- Jonathan Sims
- Susan Cuccinello
- David Gunzerath
- George Ivie
- Norm Hecht
- Beth Rockwood
- Bill Case
- Richard Zackon
- Michael Link
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