

EXPANDING A TV MEASUREMENT MONOPOLY:
NIELSEN'S INCLUSION OF NEW MEDIA SUBFIELDS

Andrew T. Yost

Dr. Harsh Taneja, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Digital media provide multiple measures to quantify television audiences. Newer measures challenge Nielsen Ratings' established status as the market information regime on which audiences are commoditized. Although, such changes have reconstituted the field, few studies on audience measurement have holistically identified factors driving this development. Adopting an institutional lens, I advocate that both endogenous and exogenous "functional pressures" contribute to such changes. For television these are: a) the imperfect but accepted nature of television ratings (endogenous) and b) the shift in user preference to increasingly consume media online (exogenous). Assuming these changes impact Nielsen significantly, I historically analyze The Nielsen Company's response to the rise of newer information regimes between 2006 and 2015. My data source is the media and advertising trade press (*Broadcasting & Cable*, *Advertising Age*, *Gigaom* and *TechCrunch*). I find that Nielsen is able to once again monopolize audience measurement in the redefined field by identifying the developing niches of market information therein and the players occupying these new informational subfields.

Keywords: Nielsen, audience measurement, market information regimes, new media, institutional development, television