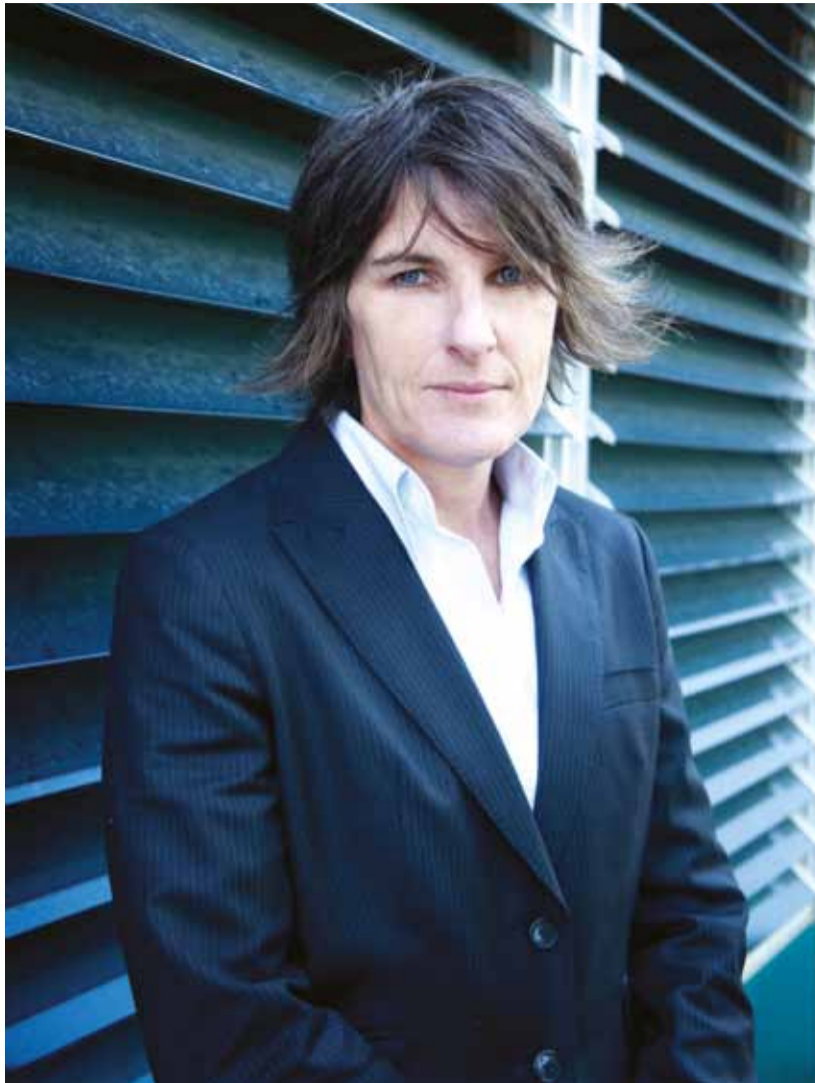


# Has online's holy grail arrived?

NIelsen MEDIA'S MEGAN CLARKEN SAYS THE RESEARCH GIANT IS ON THE CUSP OF A WORLD-FIRST - A NEW AUDIENCE MEASUREMENT METRIC THAT WILL GET UNDER THE SKIN OF PURCHASING DECISIONS. JOHN DAVIDSON REPORTS.



## Is CMV a game-changer?

Australia is the first country in the world to use Consumer and Media View (CMV) and its use here will be closely watched around the world. Nielsen Media MD Clarken can see no reason why this cross platform measurement service won't be a defining moment in the industry's history. "It's a great starting point," she says. "It's going to continue to evolve. It takes time for people to buy into it. Potentially, it could turn things upside down." Another game-changer is the new online audience measurement system on the Australian market. Nielsen has created a methodology that combines tag-based measurement with panel-based measurement, a hybrid model that allows comparison between online and other media. The new system could also be a cause of concern for some of the biggest online publishers as audience numbers may fluctuate or even decline.

**A MONTH AGO** Nielsen Australia quietly unveiled to 100 or so VIP media agencies and advertisers the "black box" which could finally, dramatically, alter the status quo of the Australian advertising industry and garner attention from around the world.

Cross-platform media measurement has been talked about and wished-for for years. What Nielsen revealed to that select group of industry influencers recently is measurement's Holy Grail; a new software suite which combines the media measurement currencies Nielsen captures in Australia across online, radio, TV, out-of-home, cinema and print readership, with detailed consumer, segmentation and actual purchasing behaviour.

A month on from the soft launch of the Consumer and Media View service and emboldened by its recent win as the preferred measurement currency for the online industry, Clarken is galloping off into the not-so-distant future.

As managing director of Nielsen Media's client service in Asia Pacific, the Middle East and Africa, Clarken has been sitting in the top job for just six months, but has been tasked with several major initiatives. One of these is Nielsen's Consumer and Media View tool, the relaunched Panorama product, which has the potential to alter the way media is planned and sold in Australia.

The service measures and compares media usage across different platforms and will be a huge boon to marketers and media planners. Nielsen uses the currency data it mines across the online, radio, television, out-of-home and cinema sectors, as well as its own readership data, and then fuses this information and finds hooks to align it together.

By deploying Consumer and Media View, Nielsen aims to arm media planners with a tool to accurately target a very select audience that the advertiser is specifically interested in. "If I want to get to males 25-30 who are after car insurance, [you can find out] where's the best place to run my campaign," Clarken says. "Across what sites, what TV programs, across what radio stations."

Nielsen is already reporting interest from the market and Clarken, not prone to hyperbole, believes it could be very powerful. "It's about providing to the agencies

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and the advertisers a simple set of tools where they can make those decisions, instead of having to go to every silo and making sense of that data themselves," she says. "It's actual data, not recall data. It makes it easy for marketers to invest in the industry."

Clarken says the hybrid system will mean "new and more accurate numbers than there has been before" as it uses both panel data and cookie data, but she understands why there may be some uncertainty for publishers. "They've been living on a certain set of numbers for a long time, they understand the trends, they understand they've probably got a feel for their performance and what it means in the coming months," she says. "So when you introduce a trend break into the market there's a little bit of a level of discomfort, while their historic data becomes a little more meaningless to them, and they're unable to predict what's going to happen in the next couple of months."

Clarken believes that audiences for most websites will actually go up as Nielsen will be measuring online usage from areas it couldn't previously measure, such as from internet cafes and mobile devices.

She says the recording of unique browsers will remain important on a day-to-day basis, but when it comes to monthly

analysis the total people measure is crucial. Clarken isn't fazed by the fact that the likes of ComScore will be offering their own rival online measurement system, and is confident about the power of the IAB's endorsement. "The sole objective of the tender was to select a provider where the marketers could feel a level of comfort in the numbers," she says.

"The marketers and the agencies have a role to play in making sure the publishers are providing the most accurate data to them. I think that's what drives confidence on the marketers side."

Nielsen is ready to roll out the online measurement system now but is taking a cautious approach. The research company is talking with the publishers and the IAB to make sure both are familiar with the system, and Clarken says the cost of the tool is not a barrier to its launch. "The publishers know what the rates are," she says. "It's a volume-based rate card, but it's capped. There's predictability on what they pay on a yearly basis."

Clarken declined to speculate on which publishers or sectors might experience an audience decline when the new system is implemented. "I don't know, there will be an instance [of declines]," she says.

The introduction of tools such as Consumer and Media View and the new online measurement service may help continue the erosion of the walls that exist between media channels. Moving between different media platforms is something Clarken has been an advocate for since her days as a founder of Ninemsn.

Clarken has 25 years of experience in the technology, marketing and product development sectors, including News Interactive and a stint in New York as vice president of web analytics and product management at Nielsen. She believes it's her job to bring confidence for advertisers to invest in the media industry. "That's my number one focus," she says. "If I get that right, the business will do well."

But when all media players are compared as equals, who will leap ahead of the pack? Clarken says for now the field is open to all media sectors. "They all have compelling content," she says. "In that guise, nobody should be challenged. It's open to anybody to win right now. I can't look into that crystal ball and say who's going to." ●