

What NBCUniversal's declaration of independence means for the future of TV measurement

Article

The news: NBCUniversal announced Monday it is partnering with “a broad network of trusted partners” to create “a full suite of interoperable measurement solutions” in light of what it views as a failure of legacy measurement currencies to measure changing viewing habits.

- **Nielsen’s rocky accreditation status** with the Media Ratings Council is escalating the fragmentation of TV measurement across linear and digital divides.
- As Nielsen’s reign comes to an end, competitors in the space seem to agree: A universal standard isn’t needed, and each of them knows the best way to track their own audiences.

What this means: NBCUniversal is stepping into the limelight with an independent alternative, and its potential partners send a strong message to advertisers that independent metrics are just as trustworthy as their predecessors.

- The announcement blog post, “It’s Time for Our Industry To Declare #MeasurementIndependence,” calls for exactly that: a future where the media industry operates on a number of independent measurement systems, rather than defaulting to a service like Nielsen.
- That independent approach has worked well for connected TV (CTV), where **ad spending has increased by just over \$9 billion since 2018** and **will continue to grow**. CTV ad spending will increase from \$13.41 billion in 2021 to \$27.47 billion in 2025, when it will account for nearly 30% of total TV ad spend.

The opportunity: NBCUniversal’s main edge is its scale and credibility.

- By choosing to partner with multiple measurement firms—NBCUniversal reportedly requested proposals from **Nielsen, Comscore, Conviva, iSpot**, and others, per Nexttv—it can reassure advertisers its data is credible.

CTV manufacturers are also flexing their market share. Companies like **LG, Vizio**, and **Samsung** among others have emerged as additional sources of data for marketers.

- **Time spent with CTV increased 33.8% in 2020**, and the ability to deliver more targeted ads to viewers than on linear TV creates an opportunity advertisers can’t ignore.

The bigger picture: As alternatives crop up, a **centralized standard like Nielsen may never exist again**.

eMarketer principal analyst at Insider Intelligence Paul Verna says:

- “As TV viewing becomes more fragmented, the ad inventory that supports it is also expanding to multiple stakeholders with different business agendas, including TV networks and their affiliated streaming services, cable/satellite operators and their digital counterparts, smart TV manufacturers, and aggregators such as Roku and Amazon. Coming up with a currency everyone can agree on in such a fragmented market is a tall order, but NBCUniversal's efforts are a step in the right direction.”