

The Canada Media Fund (“CMF”) convened the Digital Media Advisory Committee on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2015 to discuss recent changes and issues in the Digital Media Measurement Framework. The main topics covered were the number of CMF-funded projects reporting, the creation of the Digital Media (“DM”) technical subcommittee, the implementation of tagging, benchmarks, definitional issues surrounding DMMF classifications (in particular, regarding Rich Interactive Media (“RIM”)), and experimental measurement. The CMF would like to note that the purpose of this committee is for long term planning and that no policy decisions are to be derived from it. As such, there will be no changes in the DM investment factor and Performance Envelope (PE) calculations will not be impacted.

As requested, the CMF will provide a summary of briefing notes and reports of meetings of relevance, such as the DM technical subcommittee meeting, on its website so that broadcasters and producers alike are able to access it to their convenience. The main issue discussed at the subcommittee meeting was the implementation of intelligence code tagging and the creation of event based tagging. This will be an ongoing conversation with producers and broadcasters; however the next subcommittee meeting has not been scheduled yet, and will likely not occur before the new year.

#### Event-based tagging

There are many benefits to event based tagging, including targeting specific user actions such as play and stop on a variety of content types (games & video for mobile and web platforms), and filtering out traffic not specifically attributable to CMF-financed elements. comScores’ Digital Analytix tool enables the CMF to capture metrics that are site specific, such as the number of events, page view, and user engagement. Event based tagging is meant to effectively track the elements financed by the CMF. Producers are instructed to request the proper code from the CMF website (Robert Blanchet) as opposed to the previous method of creating and implementing tags themselves. Furthermore, at the 6-month mark, the CMF is looking to be able to tag the project before it goes live. This will hopefully help with compliance as well as verification of content, so that there is not a disparity between the project coming in at the application stage and its final product. Thus, by ensuring that projects are tagged correctly before launch, the CMF is seeking to properly classify projects so that the data retrieved can lend itself to appropriate comparisons between projects of a similar nature.

Event-based tagging is a CMF requirement and it is in immediate effect. The website was launched on September 1<sup>st</sup>, and the CMF encourages all producers to use it or to contact Robert for direction, so that there is a simplified and streamlined procedure. This process is relatively quick, and does not create any significant delays in the implementation of tags. Robert and comScore are able to get the tags tested within 1-2 days, depending on the nature of the project and the various levels of expertise. It is important to note that this initiative is intended to be on a go-forward basis; there will be no retroactive tagging of projects. The CMF is working on documentation with comScore to make the process as easy as possible, and it will look into disseminating this information through, for instance, webinars or organizing training sessions should the need arise.

#### RIM definition and issues

The CMF is interested in measuring CMF-financed content only. Currently, RIM projects are being tagged at the website level, and given the variety of projects that fall into this category (where traffic in non-financed elements may be included), the CMF is mindful that large disparities in the data may become more frequent, such as the anomaly found in the dataset in Appendix A. If DM measurement is folded into PE calculations, the inclusion of non-funded usage data would be difficult to justify. Therefore the CMF is seeking to solely track and evaluate CMF funded components.

The CMF is aware that website-level tagging may be useful to understanding how projects are performing more globally. However, as a general rule, the CMF is looking at actionable content, thus unless it is considered as an ‘immersive’ experience, the focus is on tagging financed elements only rather than the entire website.

Proper categorization of projects is required in order to be able to benchmark and make appropriate comparisons. Certain issues noted during the meeting were:

- The RIM category is problematic under the current application system as the CMF requires separate applications for individual DM components whereas other funds allow for separate DM components to be included within one application. Therefore, it would be important to have producers detail the contents they are requesting funding for at the application stage.
- Some content in RIM websites is directed into different portals or platforms. , For instance, there may be a series of videos that bring a user to a portal, and then to YouTube. There is concern over excluding measurement to content that is important for audience engagement (whether due to categorization issues or due to content that cannot currently be tagged with comScore).
- The issue of pre-rolls and other forms of ‘manipulated’ events skewing statistics must be taken into consideration when assigning a tag (note that pre-rolls and non-user initiated content is not permitted under DMMF rules).
- Micro-segregation must be avoided. Given that there is a certain complexity with event based tagging and validation, if the data and categorization becomes too granular, then it is not good for validation.
- There is concern from a stakeholder over having to ‘slice and dice’ event tagging for each component of a RIM project in terms of having to manually identify every element, which may be time consuming as well producing an additional cost (i.e. having to hire additional personnel). Large broadcasters do consider this to be a substantial investment and entailing significant non-trivial work, also due to the distribution of content on multiple platforms (iOS, Android, Xbox).
  - Certain suggestions indicated were:
    - 1. To experiment tagging with a sample of projects, on a trial basis, rather than asking all producers to tag.
    - 2. To partner with one of the broadcasters (whether big or small) and catalogue the various kinds of projects in order to gain insight on the stumbling blocks. Then produce a white paper to share with the industry as well as with the Department of Canadian Heritage.

- There must be awareness that engagement with digital content is a different thing than calculating or rewarding audience performance for a funded content in a given funding year.<sup>1</sup>

In response to these concerns, it is worthy of note that the CMF did not know how the industry would evolve, and that the challenge of tagging mainly occurs in websites (as opposed to apps which are a priori an all-inclusive experience). Furthermore, smaller producers / broadcasters noted that event based tagging is a relatively speedy process that works well. Nevertheless, in moving forward the CMF would like to emphasize that it does not want measurement to drive content. If the process of measurement gets in the way, then the CMF does not deem it to be a successful endeavor. Thus, it will take into account concerns of all stakeholders and evolve measurement systems accordingly.

### Benchmark Reports

The CMF is currently seeking to understand what the benchmarks for success are in the digital media sphere, similar to that that already exists in TV. The purpose of these benchmarks is to report aggregate data to the CMF board to assess overall success, and make comparisons to other Canadian content categories as well as to international content. The data will not be split by CMF program stream (i.e. separate data collected for CDMI vs. POV), rather, the data is being aggregated by Language and Genre.<sup>2</sup>

No changes in program design and guidelines are being considered at the present time. At the point which metrics can be integrated into PE calculations, the CMF will consult with industry stakeholders prior to implementation. The CMF is aware of the numerous issues that need to be solved prior to such implementation, nevertheless, the CMF requires reliable data reporting for the CMF board and Canadian heritage, and benchmarks are an important tool to convey progress and success.

### Experimental measurement

Compliance levels are higher for convergent relative to experimental projects. The latter tend to be more challenging in part due to the projects taking longer to come into production and in part because of the current limitation of tagging certain projects with comScore. Nevertheless, comScore emphasizes that anything with a server connection has the ability to be tagged. Thereby, any tagging issues will most likely be resolved in the near future and the CMF and comScore will work with developers in order to ensure the viability of their projects being tagged.

Additionally, a lot more projects currently have the potential of being tagged with comScore. For instance, comScore has the ability to tag YouTube APIs, to fire off tags, to tag videos or Facebook 'likes' embedded on an applicants' webpage. Moreover, there are new scripts available that are compatible with Unity 3D and Cordoba and with the introduction of "http request URL solution" to tag CMF-funded content, plug in issues related to the integrations of SDKs have been eliminated and the process has thereby been simplified.

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<sup>1</sup> In the example of a big drama series, moving to event based tagging will require tagging simply the funded videos or webisodes for that particular funding year.

<sup>2</sup> Even in TV, a documentary is reported as a documentary, regardless of whether it was funded by PE or POV.