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11 The Future of Ratings

Our stations get a report card every morning from Nielsen. Those ratings determine the viability of our business.

- **They determine the value of our advertising.**
- **This in turn determines how much money can be invested in new and better programming, and in new digital technology.**
- **And ratings also determine which programs remain on the air, and which ones will be taken off for apparent lack of viewer interest.**

Today, all but one of Tribune's television stations have affiliated with the newer networks, the WB and Fox. We are eager to compete with our fellow broadcasters, and with the ever-increasing number of networks vying for viewers' attention over cable and satellite. But to do this we must have an honest report card. A trustworthy measurement of the size and composition of each competitor's audience. Mr Chairman, I regret to say that the measurement system we have today in the largest television markets is not worthy of public trust. It does not have the trust of our company or that of more than a dozen other responsible broadcasters.

Testimony of Patrick J. Mullen, President Tribune Broadcasting,
before the US Senate Commerce Committee on the FAIR Act,
27 July 2005

The measurement of audiences is so contestable because, as Patrick Mullen's testimony makes clear, it is central to the organization and economic governance of the media. Ratings, as we have seen, fashion the broadcast schedule and a media firm's selling proposition to advertisers. They are a proxy for a media company's profit and loss. Investors and stockbrokers use the ratings as an important guide to stock performance. This makes the ratings agency for a broadcaster a cross between an auditor of its books and a seller of *its information* to third parties such as advertisers. Media proprietors are naturally vitally interested in a ratings convention that presents their *best case*. They are, by and large, not against the convention but want to reform it more in their favour. They typically want more control in setting the terms of the convention.

The Fairness, Accuracy, Inclusivity, and Responsiveness in Ratings (FAIR) Act did not go into legislation. In many ways, it did not need to. As we have shown in

this book, the key parties to the audience-ratings convention in the United States have at some time or another put public pressure on one of the other parties to the convention, and not always the ratings provider. It was the broadcasting networks that put pressure on CAB and the advertisers to make its ratings results public in the 1930s. It was the ratings provider who put pressure on advertisers and the television networks to professionalize and, indeed, to standardize. Today, the audience is putting pressure on all parties to deal with the problems of intrusion or unreasonable expectations in the collection of private data. The convention has been shaped in the United States by this kind of continuing public competition for and posturing over the convention's formal constitution, its research, and its analytical and technological priorities by the different parties to the convention. In FAIR, a coalition of interests was seeking to reorganize the very terms under which the convention operates towards the kind of industry technical committee oversight and control model familiar in the UK and Australia. It argued this would secure greater transparency and accountability. While very few media markets see the different parties to the convention resort so readily and publicly to litigation, legislation and public disputation as in the United States, the very nature of the convention ensures there is the same competition to shape the convention albeit one conducted mostly behind closed doors and in technical committees, occasionally spilling over into wider public controversy.

However, the title of FAIR itself tells us something about audience ratings that is simply not found in other discussions of survey research, particularly in commercial contexts. Mullen's point was that there needed be 'public trust' in audience ratings, and this fits well the ethos of the audience-ratings convention that we have demonstrated in this book. There is no doubt that there is a range of complex sub-politics behind the creation of the FAIR Ratings hearings and its sometimes bitter exchanges. For our purposes here this does not matter as much as what this public controversy shows: the ratings convention unlike just about every other form of auditing and market research is publicly accountable and is routinely subject to robust debate and testing by the different parties to the convention. The audience-ratings convention and its key elements get tested in various ways, public and private, and the reasons for this can range from the good to the bad and the ugly. The overall outcome and target, however, is intended to be public trust. The FAIR hearings are but one instance in a long line of instances in every market in which ratings conventions operate where the ratings system itself is periodically called into question and identified as needing reform to retain its trustworthiness. This means that any public calling into question is always, at base, reformist. Proponents for change in the operation of a convention or in its technological base will always argue that they want the ratings to retain their currency as effective and

appropriately managed research instruments. Defenders of existing arrangements will always point to the evidence of their effective management, transparency and responsiveness to market change.

The dual personality of audience ratings, as public and private at the same time, has been consistent across the history of ratings. In all new markets worldwide the problem of distortion always emerges, as it still does in established markets, and that distortion needs to be addressed. We saw that with China and Saatchi & Saatchi's push for a transparent system. The 'within-industry' discussions also, of course, use the same language. It is not artifice:

There has been an interesting debate in India on the quality of Peoplemeters data. It all began when the identity of TV panel members in Mumbai was disclosed on a website by an unidentified person leading many to challenge the authenticity and quality of TV ratings provided by ORGMARG and TAM Media Research. The two companies however defended their position and attributed the entire episode to the mischief of some quarters whose interests were opposed to the availability of objective and independently measured ratings. *The controversy once again highlighted the strong need for an arm's length distance between TV audience measurement and those who either sell or buy airtime.* (TAM Pakistan 2001)

Because our media system is so saturated with ratings measurements and such measurements have become a gigantic enterprise dependent upon an infrastructure of precision engineering, a premium is necessarily placed upon the integrity of the system including the privacy of its informants and an arm's length distance between the measurement itself and the buyers and sellers of airtime. These are the very desiderata of the ratings. But controversies like the one in India where actors sought to actively compromise the integrity of the survey instrument have typically served to increase, not diminish, support for the ratings with attention and opprobrium typically shifting from the ratings provider towards the media outlets who were compromising the convention. And it is not hard to see why: in an advertiser-supported media system advertisers have an interest in regular and reliable data not subject to media outlet interference.

What audience ratings touch on is the intricacies of modern communicative spaces and how these are constructed, used and protected. Commercial and non-commercial media operate in those spaces. Audience ratings are a complex set of procedures, organizations and systems that deal with representation of the public. If there is perceived to be abuse of open communicative spaces, then we will often see a reaction to the abuse. The internet is perceived to be one such open space. The Net Neutrality debate is an example of the reaction of both

industry and citizens when there is a perception that the communicative spaces will be distorted:

In a Tuesday hearing held by the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet over a proposed bill intended to ensure open access to the Web, 'Hannah Montana' exec producer Steve Peterman, speaking on behalf of the Writers Guild of America West, described the Internet as 'the new TV' and the best of the diminishing opportunities for independent artists to reach a large audience.

Media consolidation over the last 15 years had reduced a once 'rich marketplace of ideas' into a tightly controlled environment ruled by seven conglomerates that determine 'nearly all of the information and content we see,' Peterman said. 'Because this small group now acts as producer, studio and network, there has been an inevitable stifling of creativity and diversity, and because they maintain a chokehold over distribution, there has been nowhere else for the creative community to go,' he declared. (Triplett 2008)

Triplett's article refers to debate on whether the internet requires legislation to protect its openness and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) hearings which were held publicly to discuss the matter. An analogy with the audience-ratings convention is appropriate here because some of the debates about Net Neutrality have their parallel in the audience-ratings convention. One of the most important of these is the dual personality of audience ratings, as public vote and market mechanism at the same time. In the case of Net Neutrality it is argued that having a few big companies commercially restricting people's access to information or communication is unhealthy for democracy and unhealthy for business at the same time. The 'black box' of the internet, and its massive array of complex and often non-transparent algorithms run by companies that might selectively decide to limit a customer's access to traffic, has become part of the discussion about key communicative freedoms.

Audience ratings, likewise, have a complex technical and methodological substructure with political implications. The difference between algorithms in many systems on the internet and the inside of the technologies of audience ratings is in the gilt-edged, gold standard, auditing and overview that each step in the process has been exposed to over time in countries like the United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. This has made audience ratings an unusual phenomenon because they already have a complex set of parties involved in formal and semi-formal agreements over their structure and in their day-to-day operations. This is the ratings strength but it also helps explain how messy and controversial their operations can be.

Black boxes are those systems of operation or thought that are so complex most people do not have the time or the competence to work them out, sometimes even those, in fact, whose task it is to do so. At the time of the authors writing

this book, the fallout from the interestingly although appropriately named ‘global financial crisis’ had involved the opening up to public view the operational financial mechanics of areas like ‘collateralized debt obligations’. For example, General Re Securities, a derivatives dealer that Berkshire gained with its purchase of the insurer, General, had 14,384 contracts outstanding, involving 672 counterparties around the world, after winding down after 10 months (Pratley 2008). The ‘mind boggling complexity’ of these types of systems made valuations by auditors, let alone anyone else, difficult and often contradictory. Donald MacKenzie, in his *Material Markets: How Economic Agents are Constructed* (MacKenzie 2008), has teased out for his readers systems of technologies, cognitive frameworks, simplifying concepts and calculative mechanisms that have hidden or unforeseen effects. The difference between the audience-ratings convention and derivatives markets, however, is very instructive. For all intents and purposes the public of industrialized countries found out in financial markets that ‘agreements’ are not in place within the sector and do not lead to a reasonable set of rules for presenting value to the market. By contrast, in the audience-ratings convention, as the authors have shown, the operation of the currency is well understood, and the complex methodologies and technologies have been subject over time to rigorous test and debate at various levels, whether from the ratings intellectual, audit, legislature or audience. Distortions in the currency happen, as they do in other financial contexts, but that distortion is often picked up and corrected, as it was even in the early days of the audience-ratings convention.

The broadcast audience-ratings convention, or compact, on the authors’ historical analysis, has had several important components. At base it:

- 1 has exposure as the key measurement;
- 2 must appeal to the inherent correctness of the measurement;
- 3 uses a probability, statistical, sample;
- 4 delivers a ‘single number’;
- 5 is syndicated to reduce costs to subscribers;
- 6 has generally been third-party;
- 7 is audited in an ongoing fashion by independent parties;
- 8 is expected to work in the public interest (that is, accurately represent the public audience).

We can see immediately the difference between the ratings as we have described them and the ratings-like data increasingly being provided by the internet and subscription TV and based on set-top box data. In these circumstances

typically some, but not all, of these conditions are filled. There is often no structural separation between media provider and ratings provider, with the media provider also being the provider of ratings-like data on their service for use by advertisers and different channels. So, too, auditing is internal rather than the kind of ongoing external auditing familiar from the ratings.

At the heart of the current audience-ratings controversies are ‘technical matters’ of a longstanding character such as: survey issues related to the selection of a sampling frame and the overall sample size; worries over levels of non-response compromising the credibility of the random sampling frame; reservations about the robustness of the data as viewing levels get smaller; concerns over the biases intrinsic to both participation and inherent in the ‘technology’ for measuring the ratings; and concerns about the measurement of audiences with the increasing range of audio-visual devices connected with television viewing and radio listening. What marks out the contemporary period cannot be the nature of the problems encountered as all have been with us since the inception of the ratings: it must rather be that these problems have become more difficult and intractable. But have they? Over the history of the ratings we have encountered similar arguments at different times.

What we are encountering now is an intensification of familiar trends – old problems in new guises rather than new problems. Radio’s increased mobility in cars, workshops and bedrooms led to a broader perspective on who was being covered and where in ratings collection. The proliferation of broadcasting, audio-visual recording and playback instruments in the home started making data collection more difficult and expensive in the early 1980s. First it was the VCR, timeshifting and a proliferation of channels with the advent of subscription TV and additional free-to-air channels; then it was DVD, fetch TV and YouTube, all of which needed to be factored into assessments of television viewing. Factoring in and keeping track of catch-up viewing has certainly become an increasingly complex task but not an insurmountable one.

The technical matters of the ratings range from appropriate sample sizes and mathematical models to new passive meter technologies. These are not mere details that safely can be set aside by communication scholars looking for the big picture. Yes, globalization and media fragmentation matter, but so too does the gamut of phenomena of the kind discussed by the authors, from the intuition of the advertising or media planner to the algorithm that generates data from the set box. What the authors have done in this book is to study the physicality, the corporeality and the technicality of the ratings. The evidence upon which the authors have drawn is predominantly interview and archival based, ideal for understanding the *actual intentions* of people involved in decisions and the organizational constraints within which they worked. The interviews are with those involved directly in the industry of audience ratings and the historical material is directly related to their construction or use.

This study complements what is perhaps the central tradition of recent ‘material sociology’. Material and economic sociology, like that of Donald MacKenzie, draws on actor-network theory and argues that inanimate objects-procedures-systems are real *intentional* actors, that they can make decisions and act on them. The authors have not bought into this overarching approach of actor-network theory but they do embrace the idea that complex systems in modern society that are beyond the generalized competence of the citizen need to be brought into their understanding in straightforward and explanatory ways. The authors have to this end investigated actual parties to a real convention and the tangible *agreements* between those parties, formal and informal, that shape what happens next. We have also seen how the relative dispositions of those parties may change over time:

- *The disposition of broadcasters and broadcasting.* The relative power of broadcasting networks has changed over time, not least in the United States when audience share shifted to other channels in a deregulated market. The television networks in the United States, however, helped in their historical trajectory to standardize the whole process of forecasting and planning based on audience ratings.
- *The disposition of advertisers and national, regional and local advertising.* Advertisers have the capacity to shift money away from one medium towards another, or away from media advertising altogether. Their role in the audience-ratings convention has been to force exposure of methods for counting audiences to evaluation for the purposes of deciding on the future of currency. This has taken its most dramatic form in the contemporary push for engagement as the formal metric. Motivational research, of which engagement is a part, has always been an important part of advertising research, but interest in the measurement of attention and involvement has expanded both within the advertising industry and, indeed, among clients themselves who are funding neuroscience or biometrics laboratories.
- *The disposition of knowledge intermediaries.* Ratings providers have had to deal with competing demands and powerful players in the market. In the contemporary moment, companies like Nielsen are trying to incorporate diverse interests into an expanded audience ratings regime. These tensions exist in competitive and joint industry markets.
- *The disposition of the regulation or governance environments.* There have been historical government or regulatory interventions in the operation of audience ratings, not least on issues associated with transparency and accreditation.

As the authors’ analysis proceeded we found that the dispositions of the different players in the audience convention are also influenced by overarching elements of the convention. Table 11.1 provides a summary of those elements.

All of these overarching elements, in one way or another, are under pressure in the current media-saturated environment in advanced industrial countries. If we look at the voracious appetite of modern citizens for media we can again see why these pressures are there. US citizens, for example, are voracious consumers of media services and US companies have a voracious appetite for media ownership. In the September 2004–September 2005 television season, the average household tuned into television for 8 hours, 11 minutes a day, over 12 per cent higher than 10 years previously, and the highest level recorded since television viewing was first measured by Nielsen Media Research in the 1950s.

By June 2005 in the United States there were 109.6 million TV households, compared to 108.4 million in June the previous year; 86 per cent, or 94.2 million, TV households subscribed to a Multichannel Video Programming Distributor (MVPD) service. Cable serves the largest percentage of MVPD subscribers, but its share of the MVPD market continued to decline, with 69.4 per cent of MVPD subscribers receiving video programming from a franchised cable operator, compared to 71.6 per cent in June 2004. Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) subscribers comprise the second largest group of MVPD households, representing 27.7 per cent of total MVPD subscribers as of June 2005, compared to 25.1 per cent in June 2004, an increase of over 10 per cent. As of June 2005, approximately 26.1 million US households subscribed to DBS

Table 11.1 Essential elements of the audience-ratings convention

Element	Description
Dual identity	Audience ratings represent the public, are a public vote and a market measure at the same time
Transparent	Audience ratings methodology must be transparent and the results not distortable by vested interests
Audited	Audience ratings require a formal, independent audit
Syndicated	Audience ratings costs should be borne by all parties to the convention (historically this has not been equal)
Limits on trade-offs	Audience ratings measures and the corresponding methods to be currency should appeal to appropriate trade-offs in Case Rich and Data Rich designs and cost efficiency
Limits on intrusion	Audience ratings requires limited intrusion into the lives of the audience and its privacy
Limits of statistical knowledge	Audience ratings styles of reasoning should not substitute computation for judgement

service. This represents an increase of 12.8 per cent over the approximately 23.2 million DBS subscribers we reported last year. DBS operators continue to add local-into-local broadcast television service. In 167 of 210 television markets (designated market areas, or DMAs), covering 96 per cent of all US TV households, at least one DBS provider offers the signals of local broadcast stations (local-into-local service). As of June 2005, there were 206,358 households authorized to receive High Speed Data (HSD) services, a decrease of 38.5 per cent from the 335,766 reported in 2004.

In this context, we can see why regulators come to the fore in terms of ownership of media. When it thought that Section 612(g) of the US Communications Act might have been breached, the FCC called for a review. The Act provides that when cable systems with 36 or more activated channels are available to 70 per cent of households within the US, and when 70 per cent of those households subscribe to them, the FCC can introduce additional rules to increase diversity of media. While this is not an audience-ratings convention issue per se, it does serve to highlight the overwhelming dominance of media in everyday life.

In this book we have investigated some of the major concerns that have emerged in a media-saturated environment:

- 1 From the advertisers' view, there is massive 'clutter' in the modern media environment and there are genuine problems with how to convey an advertising message to an audience in a cost-efficient way, the same problem advertisers have always had. Even if an advertiser/client can afford the Super Bowl advertising costs, for example, there would still be the question of ROI: 'I'm spending \$2.7 million on a 30-second Super Bowl commercial. How do I know I'm getting full ROI? Equally important, am I doing everything necessary across the entire marketing and media mix to increase ROI?' Capturing information on the fate of an advertising message with online and broadcast audiences becomes a major concern. Online debate about a product that was going to be advertised at the Super Bowl or online discussion about an advertising message after the Super Bowl become useful data. The very idea of capturing the conversation of an audience over time also raises for the advertiser the possibility that there are different ways of presenting a message to audiences and indeed different ways of measuring the engagement of audiences with those messages. This is why engagement as a metric has captured the imaginations of advertisers. If an audience is fully engaged and involved with a message, no matter where or when they receive it, or how many times, then the cost efficiencies of delivery are significant. In the advertising-industry discussion there has been continuous flagging of the possibility of the GRP. Brain scans, neuroscience, biometrics, galvanic skin response, heart rate, reptilian brain – there is a long list of suggestions and

actual research that tries to obtain the secret answer to optimal delivery of the advertisement. But the gold standard of the ratings systems – a convention where there is agreement on currency – remains the *overarching aim*.

- 2 From the ratings-provider point of view it is, indeed, possible to cover all the many small audiences, but the cost of increasing the size of the ratings panel would not be economic and the advertiser is not willing to bear the cost of this. Project Apollo is a good example where advertisers, ratings providers and others got together to try to develop a single-source solution but intensified the demands on the audience to provide information. Touchpoints and Touchpoints 2 following Project Apollo and other attempts to provide a buyer-graphics analysis do not solve the problem raised by multiple channels and their measurement for a single currency. However, ratings providers are working with data aggregators like Google and cable and pay-TV media providers to experiment with alternative ways of gathering data that are compatible with the ratings convention.
- 3 From the media providers view, there is a demonstrated hunger to try to set up alternative measurement platforms which often present themselves as competitors to ratings providers, whether in monopoly-provider ratings environments like the United States or joint industry ratings provision like the United Kingdom. This has been done by proclaiming a census-like approach to audience data collection, using set-top box data, for instance, as a signal that detailed and robust audience information can be collected in a way that the traditional audience-ratings convention could not provide. As we have seen, however, such forays are sometimes stalking-horse attempts by companies to get ratings providers to become more responsive to their individual needs or complementary data to assist the companies in their own understanding of their audiences. However, proprietary-based, hidden, audience data in thousands of different media content-provider locations is in many ways like derivatives – not visible and easily inflated. The small channel and small audience needs, though, are real and much like the explosion of radio channels in the 1940s in the United States, the current environment appears to be one of exploration of ways to include the diversity within the audience-ratings convention.
- 4 From the audience point of view, its voice is being missed in the overwhelming push for more information about it. Much of the civic ethos that underpinned early audience research design in obtaining consent has gone with only the ratings holding on to this civil convention of securing the informed consent of participants. The role of audience panels and samples was, ironically, to minimize intrusion. A small sample could yield significant information about a

whole society without having to intrude on all of them each day and every day of the week. It is not surprising, perhaps, that the advertiser, media content provider and, indeed, the ratings provider have been caught up in the desire for more from the audience-as-consumer when their own research is telling them that the audience-as-citizen has reached its limits and its willingness either to participate in research or to accept additional privacy intrusions. It is, in fact, the audience that will, the authors argue, represent the greatest threat to the audience-ratings convention as its consent is, in the end, the most important of all the audience measurement needs. Telemarketing, push-polling and other means of persuading modern audiences have merged in the audience mind with market-research-in-the-general. In addition, as we saw in Chapter 2, audiences also have expensive media technologies they do not want to have intruded upon, by anyone. This is a toxic mix for the future of survey research, let alone the audience-ratings convention. At first glance, you might say that it is the multiplication of media channels, the growth of the internet and the massive amount of information available to the consumer that has eroded the possibility of appealing to civic duty. The rhetoric of the 'the new digital world', 'the new mediascape', argues that the audience is 'in control', compared with the old media world where they were not. This is, of course, not so. Citizens are not going to give up their privacy and their intimate details without a corresponding trade-off. This trade-off is not going to be achieved as it is at the moment by click-through contracts obligating audiences to accept data disclosure to third parties as a condition of accessing services, or by offers of more money or more gifts or subtle coercion to participate in market research, including the ratings. In a world of click-through contracts, the audience-ratings convention's traditional reliance upon direct and ethical dealings with its public, its long experience in organizing and maintaining systems of agreement with a culturally diverse general public, and its hard won public credibility, may prove invaluable in restoring the audience's trust in the integrity of market research and its instruments. The dual personality of the ratings as public and private which seems to so disadvantage it against the 'total universe' offered by web-trawling tools and click-through contracts on set-top boxes has the advantage of respectful audience-assent. It alone provides the kinds of assurance of the independence of market research and its integrity and trust.

The future of the audience-ratings convention, and by extension the measurements themselves, will depend on the same established processes and debates that countries like the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom have been involved in from the beginning of their respective systems. Table 11.2 provides

a selective summary of the evolution of some of the major organizations that were involved in measurement. The authors have not included in Table 11.2 the rise of the internet measurement companies and a range of other organizations dealing with contemporary measurement. This is because the authors argue that the pattern of decision-making and the dynamism of formal and semi-formal agreements within the convention are now so well established and tested that any internet measurements will by necessity have to fulfil the same standards set up under traditional audience-ratings agreements. There are differences internationally in the nature of governance of ratings. The Joint Industry Committee for Television Advertising Research (JICTAR) in the United Kingdom, for example, is a very different type of organization compared with the Media Rating Council (MRC) in the United States. The same elements of the audience-ratings convention, however, would apply to both jurisdictions.

Table 11.2 Selective summary of early evolution audience ratings measurement in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom

	United States	Australia	United Kingdom
1930s	Archibald Crossley, Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting (CAB), owned by advertisers and ratings available to broadcasters in 1936. Same day telephone recall measured national network programmes, changing to telephone coincidental in 1940s 1934 C.E. Hooper and Montgomery Clark began with magazine publisher support and then independent radio ratings. Hooper bought out CAB after the war. Telephone coincidental		Robert Silvey, head of BBC audience research 1936–60. No audience ratings research
1940s		Bill McNair, independent radio ratings. Personal interview	1946 Reopening of BBC TV, TV questions added to 24-hour aided recall to measure radio audiences

<p>1950s</p>	<p>1941 Sydney Roslow, The Pulse of New York. Interviews – roster recall measured local radio stations, out of business 1978</p> <p>Arthur C. Nielsen, Audimeter.</p> <p>Launched 'radio index' in 1942. Acquired Hooper's national business in 1950. Ended radio measurement in 1964 to focus on TV</p> <p>1949 James Seiler, American Research Bureau, later Arbitron conducts first survey. Merged with Tele-Que in 1951 and took over Hooper's local business in 1955. Left TV in 1993 to focus on local radio</p> <p>Tom Birch, Birch Radio. Telephone recall, provided competitive service to Arbitron until 1992</p>	<p>George Anderson, independent radio ratings. Diary</p>	<p>1952 BBC begins continuous TV measurement</p> <p>1955 Nielsen operating Nielsen Television Index using Audimeters and audilog diaries. TAM report on panel of 100 homes using Tamimeters and Tamlogs. Pulse using aided recall</p> <p>1957 TV Audience Advisory Committee (TARAC) created</p> <p>1957 National Readership survey began reporting ITV viewing data</p> <p>1958–9 experiments with Instantaneous Ratings (TAM/ Nielsen)</p> <p>1958 London Viewing Surveys 1 and 2 (Pulse)</p> <p>1959 Nielsen Television Index ceased; TAM jointly owned by Nielsen-Attwood companies</p>
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Table 11.2 Continued

	United States	Australia	United Kingdom
1960s			<p>1960 Investigation into TAM technique, Professor M.G. Kendal for TARAC</p> <p>1961 Joint Industry Committee for Television Advertising Research (JICTAR) formed, owned by Independent Television Companies Association (ITCA), the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers (ISBA) and Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA)</p> <p>1964 TAM awarded JICTAR contract for further 3 years</p> <p>1968 JICTAR transfers contract to Audits of Great Britain (AGB). JICTAR replaced TARAC</p> <p>1962–4 JICTAR seven-day aided recall studies used quarter-hour records to produce data on more demographic groups than meter diary</p> <p>1962 ‘Television in a Family Setting’ study</p> <p>1963 ‘A Study of Housewives who are Light ITV Viewers’ by TAM</p> <p>1964 An investigation in Audience Measurement Techniques, ASKE Research for JICTAR</p> <p>October 1966 Tony Twyman appointed technical adviser to JICTAR</p> <p>1967 Ehrenberg & Twyman, ‘Measuring television audiences’, published in <i>Journal of the Royal Statistical Society</i></p> <p>‘Television in Family Setting Attention Research’ (JWT)</p>

1970s– 2000s	Gale Metzger and Gerald Glasser, Statistical Research Inc (SRI) create RADAR in 1969. Telephone recall for network radio listening and meter for SMART for wireless recording of programme viewing	1973 McNair and Anderson merge, becoming McNair Anderson 1980s McNair Anderson sold to AGB to become AGB McNair and later ACNielsen 2001 Nielsen Media Research Australia loses peplemeter contract to OzTAM/ATR	
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The broadcast ratings measurement system is unusual because of the extent of the checks and balances that are intrinsic to its operations. It is also unusual for the diverse purposes to which this measurement is routinely put. The authors have been at pains throughout this book to emphasize the dual character of the ratings as simultaneously public and private, and to demonstrate that there is a particular public politics to the ratings. This political aspect to the operation of the convention, far from compromising the ratings, is intrinsic to it continuing to innovate and change, and to its very trustworthiness. Not only do the ratings actively solicit public trust through the very form of their notably respectful dealings with the public, whereas much contemporary market research is disrespectful, but they also solicit trust through the robust cut-and-thrust of dealing with the diverse interests of those who are party to the ratings convention in shaping its future.

The authors trust that you will come to the conclusion from this book that audience ratings history touches on some of the most important problems facing modern society – how to represent people in their behaviour in ways that are acceptable to the people themselves, those who need audience data for commercial purposes, and the management of contemporary media content in a complex media environment. There are today calls for ‘zero ratings’ and for different measures other than exposure, such as engagement, as ways of understanding modern audiences and for the economics of audience markets. However, as the authors have attempted to demonstrate, any attempt to change the audience ratings apparatus is not just an attempt to change a ‘measure’; it is an attempt to recast the audience-ratings convention. This book has been one step towards theorizing the audience-ratings conventions and their impact.