

Oracle Airtime Sales in South Africa selects TNS Unique Digital TV Audience Measurement Solution

Contributed by TNS

Friday, 31 August 2007

Last Updated Thursday, 01 January 2009

New contract is first time Return Path Data is used commercially in South Africa August 30th 2007 – London Oracle Airtime Sales, South Africa's pre-eminent pay TV media sales company, has selected TNS to help launch an innovative digital TV audience measurement research service using Return Path Data (RPD). RPD is a data stream that can be extracted from digital set-top boxes to provide extremely accurate tracking of the channels viewers watch and the services they use. TNS is the only organisation worldwide using RPD to operate commercial TV audience measurement services. The new service will also represent the first time RPD has been used in South Africa. Oracle represents more than 40 TV channels on South Africa's Multichoice TV platform, the only non-terrestrial TV company in the country. To provide Oracle with enhanced digital TV measurement, TNS Research Surveys in South Africa is to design, recruit and manage a new viewing panel, which will initially comprise 3,500 households equipped with digital satellite TV. Upgraded digital set-top boxes in these households will allow TNS to capture RPD and report digital viewing activity in great detail. This will offer real value to Oracle Airtime Sales by providing greater insight for both its programming and advertising sales customers.

The system will initially focus on providing robust viewing data for all satellite channels. The service will also be able to measure and provide an understanding of enhanced TV viewing activity such as Electronic Programme Guide usage and viewership of interactive advertising. TNS will analyse viewing data using a bespoke version of InfoSys's, TNS's powerful and flexible TV audience analysis system.

Peter McKenzie, Chief Executive of Oracle Airtime Sales, said: "This collaboration with TNS underlines our determination to deploy the very latest TV audience measurement techniques to the benefit of our customers and to show leadership in our industry. By working with TNS we will gain an enhanced understanding of viewing patterns that will be of immense value to the strategic planning of our programming partners and advertisers. We are excited to be introducing this new capability in digital TV audience measurement."

Nick Burfitt, Global Director of RPD Services at TNS, commented: "We are delighted to be partnering with Oracle Airtime Sales in this service. As the pioneer in using RPD in commercial TV audience measurement, our work with Oracle is another milestone in our audience measurement strategy and consolidates our leadership in this new field. TNS is confident its TV audience data will make a real difference to Oracle Airtime Sales by showing how its subscribers consume digital satellite TV."

The growth of digital TV has significantly increased the number of channels. Digital TV also brings new facilities for the viewer – such as Personal Video Recorders, Video-On-Demand, Electronic Programme Guides, as well as interactive channels and services. While these pose a new challenge when measuring TV audiences, the digital environment provides a ready-made solution for audience measurement in the form of RPD. This allows channel tuning and the usage of other services and facilities to be stored and extracted from the digital set-top boxes. TNS has invested in the development of capabilities that use RPD to provide meaningful and useful TV audience measurement data either to supplement existing techniques or to provide a stand-alone solution.