

John Dioso (00:01):

Hello and welcome to Ad Age's Custom webcast, sponsored by disco. The topic today. How does Cookie deprecation impact premium publishers? I'm John dso, editor of Ad Age Studio 30. We have just a few quick items to review before we begin. We'll hear from today's presenters and then we'll open the floor to your questions. To participate in the q and a portion of the webcast, all you have to do is type your questions into the ask the question text area, and then click the send button. You may submit the questions at any time during the webcast, and we'll address as many as time permits after our presenters prepared remarks.

Now to get started, I'm very pleased to introduce Jennifer Strapp, the Vice President of Audience Impact and Intelligence at Paramount. Sunil Soman, the Vice President of Campaign Effectiveness at Warner Brothers Discovery, and Steven Jepsen, president of Media Effectiveness at Cisco. Jennifer Sunil and Steven, welcome and thanks so much for being here, Steven, take it away.

Stephen Jepsen (00:54):

Thank you, John, appreciate it. So welcome everyone. We're pretty delighted to present a conversation with a few friends and trailblazers from the media measurement space. I'd like to give Sunil and Jen an opportunity to introduce themselves just briefly and yeah, we're looking forward to a lively discussion today. Sunil, you want to start?

Sunil Soman (01:20):

Sure. Hello everybody. My name is, I work with the great team that manages all campaign effectiveness work across all of our touchpoint, regardless of the genre, regardless of platform. And yeah, we do a lot of great work with great companies like this. Go.

Stephen Jepsen (01:38):

Thanks, Sunil. Jen.

Jennifer Strapp (01:40):

Hi, I am Jen. I can pretty much echo everything that Sunil just said except with the Paramount lens on it. So I'm the head of performance and impact on the audience impact and intelligence team, which is fancy words of saying that I also lead ad effectiveness on the paramount side of the business under ad sales research. I've been with Paramount for a really long time from the days of MTV networks and TRL, so dating myself there, but always in an ad sales research role. So I've been kind of around the block as far as that goes. And yeah, right now on my team we measure ad impact from top to bottom of the funnel and cross platforms.

Stephen Jepson (02:15):

Thank you, Jen. Appreciate it. So before we get into questioning, we're to break our webinar up into three sections, which I'll go into here momentarily. For those of you that don't know me or disco, just a quick second on that. Hi everybody, I'm Steve Jefferson. I'm president of our media Effectiveness practice area here at Disco. I've been with the company for about six years, like Jan, I've been doing this for a quarter century. It sounds a little weird when you put it that way, but a long, long time. Spent my career basically in marketing, accountability research, measuring the effectiveness of media from a digital perspective, but also online media and online and offline media including television, which we'll get into quite a bit today during this conversation. Again, for those that don't know disco, we were kind of founded with the premises that we wanted to connect consumers with brands, brands with consumers.

(03:10):

And what we've done is we've masked one of the largest, if not the largest consumer audiences for sharing opinions. And we do about 5 million survey completes a month at this point. However, the thing we decided to do when we launched our media measurement practice was change the value exchange with the consumer. So consumers since post World War II have been sharing their opinions, a k taking surveys. However, because we have a first party identity-based platform, meaning we have the relationship direct with the consumer, and it really afford us some unique measurement capabilities, especially around being able to measure things that are dependent on cookies and identifiers. So we have about 2.3 million consumers now that have opted in to share their data and their brand experiences,

including capturing ad exposure across mobile and desktop as well as their consumer journey like search activity and site visitation and shopping behavior.

[\(04:10\)](#):

So we measure traditional brand KPIs, AK brand Lift like Sunil and Jed said, measuring awareness and favorability and purchase intent, but also a behavioral lift solution or outcomes lift solution that captures that search activity and that shopping behavior. So our brand of outcomes lift solution and really disrupting the ad effectiveness or the media measurement landscape and we're the fastest growing solution on the market. And any questions about that, please feel free to reach out separately. We have an identity based platform that allows us not to be dependent on cookies or IP addresses for that matter. So enough about disco, let's move into our panel discussion here.

We'll start our section with cookies. So that's the elephant in the room here. Cookie deprecation is finally here. I remember Whiteboarding disco solution about six years ago with our founders and here we are today. So Wolf, Jen, we'll start with you, Jen. You're proprietary ecosystem. There are multiple distribution channels and platforms, how important it's for Paramount, and then you at Warner Brothers Discovery, Sunil, that you can understand cross platform advertising impacts both on and off platform.

Jennifer Strapp [\(05:27\)](#):

So it's obviously incredibly important. It's funny to me because obviously when television was historically linear, we had a really easy time measuring that, and now that digital has entered and there are some more passive measures for digital effectiveness, the linear one is the one that we're struggling to measure in the same way unless we're talking about addressable. But at Paramount we're selling and we program across all platforms. So wherever the viewers are and wherever we have content, it's essential to measure them. And so we also like to look at how the platforms collectively driving the overall campaign success and how each platform is complimentary to one another. So we do it for as many campaigns as we have running cross platform, which is most of 'em at this point, and it's really interesting to see how they all play together.

Stephen Jepson (06:12):

Great. And Sunil? Sure.

Sunil Soman (06:13):

I definitely agree with what Jen's saying. First of all, I'm a firm believer that if we're running something, we should understand its impact as it relates to having both linear and digital. Despite all the headlines around declines, linear is still a very sizable and major component of national marketing ments. Ultimately, we want to look at our platforms in a convergent manner and our ability to understand how linear and digital work together will help us optimize performance across all of our platforms.

Stephen Jepson (06:39):

Great. Nate, thank you both. And this goes a proud partner in helping you both with that and we're excited about what the future looks like. What do you guys think? We'll start with you again, Jen, about the cookie list browsing. How do you think it'll impact your ability to measure and basically attribute advertising performance?

Jennifer Strapp (07:01):

So we've been getting ahead of it, luckily by passing our viewer and exposure data to third party vendors like you guys for a bit now to do direct attribution measurement. And we're working with a couple of other partners as well to set up kind always on feeds for this so that we don't have to keep measuring campaign, I mean passing campaign data back and forth. So it will kind of always live on there.

Stephen Jepson (07:21):

Awesome. Thanks Jen. Sunil?

Sunil Soman (07:23):

Yeah, very similar for us. We've had the ability to pass exposure data to partners for as long as I've been working here through tags and S3 buckets initially, but now we're working towards more scaled solutions with improved privacy controls and ultimately providing us with interoperability, with measurement partners, clients and

agencies. I'll also mention it's also important that we work with providers like at disco whose services are built on the back of quality first party data.

Stephen Jepson (07:49):

Awesome. So I know the answer to this next question. We both, all three of us have talked about this ad nauseum all separately, but how are you guys preparing for the phase out of third party cookies? I know we answered some of that, but I'd love to get your perspective on what steps are you having to take? Jen, you want to start?

Jennifer Strapp (08:10):

Yeah, sure. So it almost feels like a cut down answer. I think that we're really lucky in the sense that we've been operating mostly without cookies for a while, so we're continuing to do what we've always done. Our Paramount Plus app, for example, already operates without cookies and 90% of our impressions are still delivered on the TV glass and still served on the TV glass, which operates without cookies. So we're naturally set up to be less impacted than a lot of other people might be.

Sunil Soman (08:35):

My answer is cookies schmookies. The privilege of working in the premium video space. We have great identity that the backs all of our offerings, and so really what we're work focused on is just making sure that we have that full holistic view of our viewers no matter where they are.

Stephen Jepson (08:54):

So in terms of, you guys have an embarrassment of riches from a first party perspective, are there any kind of alternate methods you're exploring for basically audience targeting and personalization? We'll just stick with this Jen first and then we'll do later first and then So go ahead,

Jennifer Strapp (09:14):

Jen. All right, we'll switch it up at some point, I promise. Yeah. Okay. So for us, we're increasing a lot of our direct consumer offerings and connectivity. So we already have consent logins on Paramount Plus for personalization, and then within the

Paramount ID framework, we're licensing third party data to connect to our first party data to understand coverage of the full footprint. We're also working with companies like LiveRamp to connect the third party providers to do our cookie list targeting, and more recently started utilizing the unified ID 2.0 via the trade desk. Danielle, what are you doing over there?

Sunil Soman (09:47):

It's very similar. It's all about having a robust identity framework. I'm not going to take the credit from all my colleagues on the data strategy side of the house who are working tirelessly on this, but ultimately we're building out a single source of truth for individual consumption across all of our touch points. This not only is it going to allow us to do more precise targeting, but also deliver that optimal reach, which is what all of our clients really want, and we'll be able to do that with the least amount of friction.

Stephen Jepson (10:15):

Yep. Yeah, interesting enough. We're seeing more and more of the UID 2.0 conversations coming up, which we are a big fan of because it's based on identity. We're also having and hearing clients like you talk about LiveRamp and Snowflake and data clean room solutions. So to end this section before we move into our next line of questioning here, glass half full perspective, what opportunities do you think there is with cookies going away? We'll go to you again, Jen, and then like you said, we'll switch it up after this.

Jennifer Strapp (10:54):

That's fair. So yeah, I feel like maybe we're taking a more than glass half full perspective on it because again, of the kind of position that we're in, but I think that as publishers, it's really allowing us to see what's important to consumers when it comes to identity and data and how we handle it. Maintaining privacy, compliance obviously will always be important, and as an industry, I think we probably relied on cookies more than we needed to. So I think it's harder for publishers who don't have a great handle on their first party data, but I'm hoping that it shouldn't be as foreboding an issue as it seems. We'll see if it's Y 2K all over again.

Sunil Soman (11:31):

Yeah, I'm going to say a rising tide raises all ships. So once all this gets sorted out, I think the real winner is the consumer. The use of better identifiers throughout the digital ecosystem means better frequency management across the board, better ad relevance and personalization, and ultimately people are going to have a better experience consuming content and that's good for all of us.

Stephen Jepson (11:53):

Awesome, thank you both. Alright, so we're going to move into a section. We're calling TV's new Golden Age. Both of your companies have invested in streaming, TD big time, and consumers are benefiting with more access to content than ever. So can you summarize your strategic fix in shifts in adapting and evolving TV consumption landscape and specifically not just that but around measurement. So Sunil, do you have a perspective here?

Sunil Soman (12:28):

I'll start things off actually coming from a program perspective at WBD, we love streaming. We love linear, sure, consumption patterns are changing, but both are used extensively. To that end, what I've been seeing is a lot of really interesting programming strategies that maximize consumption across all platforms, whether that be carefully curating which platform has a new versus older episodes of a show or taking programming that's been successful on streaming and then bringing it to an entire new audience on linear.

Jennifer Strapp (13:00):

Yeah, I mean to me TV is obviously more than a living room screen at this point. TV is wherever the consumer is and streaming is a huge portion of it. So at Paramount what we're continuing to do, we've always done, which is create premium content with mass appeal and monetizing it across the multiple platforms where it sits, which includes obviously both linear and streaming. So we're programming across genres to serve the entire household really sports, late night news, kids and family like you name it, the list goes on. And our viewership model is the viewing behavior of our audiences at large.

Stephen Jepson (13:31):

Awesome. So I know we don't have a crystal ball and if we did probably all three be retired, what do you guys think? What do you guys think will happen to linear tv? Will it sunset like cookies or would always be there? I'll be maybe word reduced share of consumption as streaming. Streaming TV continues to grow. We'll start with you this time, Jen, what are your thoughts?

Jennifer Strapp (13:54):

Oh me again, yay. So our linear and digital platforms reach everyone everywhere, which is gold standard for advertisers, but linear is still the most valuable marketing vehicle in terms of impact and share viewing, but digital is a real must have for greater total reach. So I think you'll continue to see digital advertising commitments grow as a compliment to linear, but I mean I think we should add that there's always going to be a need for live content news and sports and other live events. I think that's the value of appointment viewing when viewers are really excited about the event and directly participating in driving those cultural moments. So I think linear in some sense will always be an important piece of the viewing model.

Sunil Soman (14:36):

I'm going to try to be a little provocative here. I think we can have a little more specificity in our terms. So when I think of linear, linear to me refers to a carefully curated schedule of program. Now that can be delivered via cable or satellite or it could be delivered digitally through a virtual MDPD or maybe even a fast channel. Yes, I'm going to say I think fast is actually linear. I think the shift will continue towards more digitally delivered consumption, but I don't think I speak for myself when I say the experience of doom scrolling through on-demand menus isn't always the best one and there's always going to be comfort in a linear schedule, whether that be live events like Jen mentioned, like sports and news or just comfort programs, comfort viewing.

Stephen Jepson (15:27):

Great. Awesome. Alright, so let's talk a little bit about measurement here and we may spend a little bit more time on this question. I may add some additional questioning

here for you guys. So how are you integrating media measurement or ad effectiveness measurement of linear and CTV today or streaming or OTT, however, whatever you want to call it. To your point, Sinia, what are you guys doing in terms of media measurement? We'll start with you again Jen.

Jennifer Strapp (15:59):

Okay, sure. So from a brand lift perspective, we're doing a lot of intent to view opportunity to see force exposure. Obviously what's available from a linear perspective, but we can use that for any platform essentially. But if we're measuring attribution cross platform, we're usually aligning our exposure and viewing files with the outcome data to measure consumers wherever they're viewing. So again, it's kind of funny that measuring linear TV is now the challenge because of all the passive ways that we've been able to measure digital, but I think we need to keep being creative in how we capture those audiences holistically. And we're lucky to have partners like you guys at Cisco who help us do exactly that and really capture top to bottom of the funnel as well as cross-platform.

Stephen Jepson (16:38):

Awesome. Awesome. So I'll probably come back to you for a little bit more context on that, Jen, but Sunil, do you want to give your perspective on that

Sunil Soman (16:45):

Just real quick? Sure. Especially when we're talking about cross-platform, we try to use as much passive data as possible that's going to be on the survey component as well as all the outcome components. This allows us to maximize the scale of data that we have together and also maximize the ability that we have to bring all these different data sets together. Particularly when I think about major cross-platform events like Puppy Will Shark Week, we want to make sure that we're really understanding the full funnel performance of all those platforms. And then also when we bring all that together, we want to make sure that it's all weighted appropriately. So we want to make sure that how the data comes together reflects the actual viewership as distributed across those different platforms.

Stephen Jepson (17:29):

Yeah, so I said this before, disco Paramount, Warner Brothers Discovery, we kind of have an embarrassment of Rich given that we have first party data and there happens to be first party data sets available in linear tv. So streaming connected TV a little bit easier to measure. It's very digital asked and I know I've had conversations with both of you about this and to know we've been partnering our two companies trying to take this to the next level. I couldn't thank you more for helping to push the envelope. Any thoughts on the next advancement in deterministic TV data? There are companies like Visio out there and Inscope that have that first party data, the discos now has available for its clients, but also the MVPD ISS out there. They also have first party data and quite a lot of it. Any thoughts about what that future is going to look like? And I think the future is now an opinion, that's our opinion, but I'd love both your thoughts, thoughts on that and sorry for mixing it up a little bit, but yeah, I'd love both your perspective. So Sunil, you want to start?

Sunil Soman (18:49):

You got it. I think where the opportunity exists really is in planning, right? We have clearly seen over the last few years that we can access passive data that reflects essentially every platform that we're on. We have the ability to connect those data sets to the exposure data sets to various outcome data sets. We're able to treat that data so it's all balanced and appropriately weighted. And I think where the opportunity is or now instead of just understanding what happened after the fact, let's take all of that and then bring that into the planning phase. So whether that be understanding targets or understanding media placements, I think there's really opportunity to think about media planning from a more holistic lens.

Jennifer Strapp (19:37):

So as you said that, I was just thinking about how I would love if there was some sort of digital digitized version of the linear data available so that we could measure that more passively. And again, that's kind of always been the challenge. When I first started doing ad effectiveness, their linear only existed, there was no digital content at the time, so it was always, we just kind of took advantage of the fact that we would just push content and measure it very actively. And so now again, that passive

measurement is so prominent and especially from an attribution standpoint, it really would be ideal to be able to get linear data like that. We do do that with our addressable content, so we're lucky that it's delivered through the MVPD and we're able to directly pass that exposure data over and get some attribution data tied to it. But yeah, as far as what's coming, I would love to see something like that, but as we continue to work with people like you guys and utilize the Visio data and whatever everybody else has available and buys into, it's incredibly helpful for us, but we want more of course.

Stephen Jepson (20:37):

Great, thank you both. So let's talk a little bit about streaming tv, streaming app audiences. I guess I'd love both your perspective on how important original new content is, exclusive programming. This is all over the place in sports league affiliations and attracting and retaining consumers. How would you guys grade that one to 10? And I'd love your thoughts on it. Sunil, you want to start this time?

Sunil Soman (21:09):

Sure. It's very important particularly, and I'll say this as somebody who very recently started working in the sports arena, the power of sports is undeniable and it's very, very clear that that is a major, major reason why people subscribe to anything. And that frankly is probably also going to be the most lean in passionate viewing that you're going to find across any platform. So without question, I think things like sports and event programming become very, very important anchors for keeping people turning out and maintaining subscriber basis. So yes,

Stephen Jepson (21:51):

Awesome. So I see a lot of data. The three of us spend so much time with data. It's interesting, I won't name the league, but you can look at a particular kind of viewership data and then a day that there happens to be a game or a match or whatever it is, you see such a large spike in that streaming data. It's undeniable how much sports league affiliation drives and actually keeps the audience engaged. So Jen, I apologize for jumping in there, but I'd love your perspective on it. I think we all see that data, we see those spikes.

Jennifer Strapp (22:37):

Yeah, I mean how lucky were we that we are at the Super Bowl this year, which was obviously the biggest Super Bowl ever. Thank Taylor Swift as give her her do. But for us, I mean content's at the heart of everything that we do and we know how to make popular content that reaches and appeals to all demos and dips into all genres. So we're serving everybody in the household. So when it comes to streaming, we're also leveraging our best IP to drive growth across kids' sports news and the mountain of entertainment at Paramount. If you need any other mountain puns, we've got all of them, but that's really why Paramount Plus has grown so quickly since the launch. So at the end of the day, the advertisers want ratings, familiarity, genres in the right media mix, and we have an invested in all of it.

Sunil Soman (23:23):

Content is king,

Stephen Jepson (23:25):

Big time. Well, that's a great segue there. You say the pace of delivery our fresh new content has accelerated. You guys partially answered that already, but Jen, why don't we start with you. You see more and more new fresh content coming online.

Jennifer Strapp (23:42):

Yeah, I mean I think for sure there's definitely value delivering new content obviously, but I think new is whatever the viewer deems as new. So you see a lot of younger audiences are just discovering shows in our library like Beavis and Budha in the real world. They're not necessarily fresh new content to those of us who live through the nineties, but it's a whole new untapped market and whole new generation exploring and discovering all this stuff. So I think that as long as the content is new to somebody, I don't think the race to new new content has to be as fast paced.

Sunil Soman (24:14):

I like that, but I'm going to give a much more boring answer. It's been very, very widely publicized across the entire landscape over the last couple of years that production is expensive and profitability matters. Therefore production has slowed down. Things

definitely have picked up after the strikes have been resolved, but from a output perspective and just from what I'm seeing across the board, it's not the same sort of fire hose as there was a few years ago when there was just thousands and thousands of shows being pumped out. Maybe not thousands, hundreds, but to Joe's point, there is a tremendous opportunity to bring library or required content from either something that ran a while ago, bringing it to a younger audience now, or maybe even taking things that have been successful in foreign markets. But you have the opportunity now to bring that to a new audience. And so to them it is new.

Stephen Jepson (25:10):

Great. Alright, so that brings us to our third and kind of final segment here. So audience will have plenty of time for q and a, so if you do have questions, please enter them per John's instructions. So let's go into what consumers want. I'd be remiss not to mention that disco put some ad supported TV streaming report out into the market. We often have content that we put out into the market, honestly weekly. So hats off to our marketing team for really helping to push the envelope and putting free content out there. I'm going to ask you, we'll start with Jan again, but we'll really go back and forth this time guys. How are you leveraging consumer insights to understand your preferences and behaviors specifically in streaming tv?

Jennifer Strapp (26:04):

Yeah, so I mean understanding our audiences is vital to the work that we do at Paramount has always been very highly valued. So we look at things like the idea of popularity and what's popular. We dive deep into franchises and fandoms. We're tracking category and marketplace trends, and we know that insights are key in helping fueling both our programming and intelligence informed selling.

Sunil Soman (26:28):

Danielle, I'll say that a lot of this work, I'm not going to take credit for it, these are our product teams, but I can tell you that our product teams are great client partners of research and are very, very voraciously use users of that data to inform their decisions about creating products. And what am I talking about? I'm talking about anything from ad pod length to content adjacencies to suitability, but our product

team works with us to really, really, really deep dig deep not only into perceptions, but also in terms of testing actual executions and activations to understand what customers like or consumers like the most and what to them is the most enjoyable

Stephen Jepson (27:15):

Experience. Great. So interesting enough, disco actually put a study in market in Q4 of 2022. So near the end of 2022, just before Netflix and Disney plus launched their ad supported tiers, we surveyed a lot of consumers about the receptivity to streaming TV ads. 36% at the time said they didn't like the idea of ads in streaming. However, fast forward a year, we just ran the same study against thousands of consumers and now only 13% said they weren't likely to subscribe to kind of a discounted streaming service with ads. 55% of them actually said they were likely subscribed to an ad supported tier. So hearts and minds are shifting just over the course of a year. The rest were a little unsure. I think there's a lot of opportunity there. So what do you guys think is driving this change in terms of a less costly access to premium content and access to your guys' content specifically? Let's start with you. There's time Jen, and then we We'll go to Sunil.

Sunil Soman (28:43):

Sure. What are we talking about talking about consumers and streaming? So listen, I think access is definitely key. The fact that there's more availability now content. I think it's very common that we're seeing a lot of households having mixes of both ad support and non ad supported services. Just sort of my own personal hypothesis as to how I think this shakes out. My guess or my feeling rather, is that you have more of the viewership time spent with the, where there's the least ad occurrences. That's not to say there's zero ads, but I would say where you have the least amount of clutter within that ad ecosystem, that's probably where you're going to find the most amount of viewing. And then for that view, that content that somebody places the outmost premium on, they're probably likely to have that content coming in a non platform.

Stephen Jepson (29:50):

Yeah, I really like that disco after dark. I actually have, we call it disco tech and disco tech sitting right out here. I wish I could send 'em over, bud. Jen, any thoughts on this one?

Jennifer Strapp (30:05):

Well, IL just waves his arms around. Yeah, I mean I think that the issue is now with the amount of streaming services that consumers have to pick and choose what they pay for. So I think they're more likely going to be willing to subscribe to a service with an ad tier at a lower price point so that they can keep more streamers in their home. To your point earlier about new content, they do want to be exposed to the new content and have access to it. So in order to see more of that across different publishers, I think that they're going to be more likely to opt-in on an ad tier.

Stephen Jepson (30:37):

Awesome. Awesome. So next question. Do you guys think premium publishers have done a better job explaining the value exchange between ad exposure and content access that was done on the web? Is there still work to do? Sunil, you want to kick us off here?

Sunil Soman (30:55):

Yeah, I will start with this. I am positive that the consumer does not care about the business challenges of media companies and what they care about as a quality experience. So again, I come back to, oh look, the lights are coming back. I come back to a mindset of putting the consumer first, and whether it's ad support or not non ad supported, you want to create the best consumer experience possible. And if it is ad supported, I think things like low clutter, things like not having ads in every single experience as you're going through a binge I viewing experience, things like that make for a better experience that people then respond to by not churning out.

Jennifer Strapp (31:39):

Yeah, I think for us advertising has always been a critical component of streaming. And with more streamers entering that ad space, I think it really validates that our strategy was the right one from the beginning. And for example, Pluto TV pioneered

the fast category. It's the most widely distributed fast service globally. And Paramount plus two is continuing to grow fairly rapidly as well.

Stephen Jepson (32:01):

Yeah. Just for the audience sake, can you help define Fast?

Jennifer Strapp (32:06):

Can I help define fast? Yeah, but not, go ahead. Were you saying something Sunil?

Yeah, go ahead. No, sorry, I'm hearing background noise. Yeah, it's basically free cable. Can we put it that way? It's basically free, free linear cable.

Stephen Jepson (32:25):

Got it. Thank you. And

Sunil Soman (32:26):

Used an interesting word there. Everybody heard it. She called Fast linear,

Jennifer Strapp (32:33):

Not just me. Well, we're on the same page, right?

Sunil Soman (32:38):

Revolutionary.

Stephen Jepson (32:40):

So your companies and other have kind of worked to create new kinds of brand experiences with your viewers in streaming based on ad formats that also work better for your brand clients. What have you both learned so far? In fairness to Jen, we'll go to CIL first

Jennifer Strapp (33:00):

Now that the lights are back on. Yeah,

Sunil Soman (33:05):

I'll say the thing that I've been the most delighted to see in terms of our most successful custom ad products, it's not like pause ads or binge ads or things like that, but rather it's building opportunities around our content, and that's both theatrical and streaming. On the streaming side, we've got the ability to build these very beautiful bumpers that organically integrate a brand in with the program they're watching. And I mean to the specific title, things like Succession, true Detective, house of the Dragon, et cetera. And then also in doing that, they're offering consumers a fewer commercials. It's an experience with fewer commercial lower commercial interruptions. So there's a value exchange in there as well. So it's not putting the brand into the content per se, but it's creating that connection using the media that's associated around it. And then on the theatrical side, it gets even more interesting because you've got multiple opportunities.

(34:07):

And I think one of the greatest examples was Barbie last summer. So when Barbie was everywhere, and this not like in movie theaters, we had the Barbie Dreamhouse challenge, which was on HGTV and Max where we could do both the in program integrations as well as all that stuff in the media space. And then once Barbie came to our platform a few weeks ago, even more opportunity. And I will mention that through a lot of the work that we've done with disco, we've seen that these types of campaigns, particularly these title sponsorships is what we call them do very well in terms of impacting both brand and the outcome KPIs. So really great for search as well as well.

Stephen Jepson (34:49):

That's great. So yeah, I'm very familiar with the work, was excited to see how much activity was driven off platform, which you're getting attribution where attribution is due. So Jen, I love your perspective on it as well. Yeah,

Jennifer Strapp (35:09):

I mean exactly to IL's point, I think people are more receptive to creative advertising approaches and at Paramount internally, we're very fortunate to have Paramount brand studio team, which is our full service branded content agency internally that

delivers really innovative creative services on behalf of our partners. That includes show integrations, ad creative, branded content, influencer integrations, all that exciting stuff. And while I think viewers are used to traditional advertising, if we could do something unique and that stands out and appeals to them, we can create more interest, more conversions, more cultural moments, and those are the things that I love to really dig into and test because they're so exciting from a consumer perspective and then from a really nerdy research perspective too, to see how those things really elevate the brand and the interest and those brands.

Stephen Jepson (35:53):

That is a great segue into the next question. Again, I want to go to you first. What innovations and ad formats are you most excited about?

Jennifer Strapp (36:03):

So I think interactive ads are really interesting and I think innovative ad units that Sunil, I'm sorry, I'm going to say the word that use AI to swap in and out brand creative, so that brand creative exists in our library content where it didn't before. I think that that's really exciting too.

Sunil Soman (36:28):

I'm very intrigued to see how things develop with Shopable ads. Clearly all of us have done a lot to prove that there's a very, very close connection between content and commerce. And I think the more ability a, that we give consumers to that stuff in their experience as well as all of the developments that are happening in terms of the data that's connected on the backend in terms of now providing a really personalized and relevant shoppable experience, I think is going to be very, very interesting. And frankly, it's going to generate a lot of money for a lot of people.

Stephen Jepson (37:08):

Yep. Yeah. Awesome. So going back to disco's receptivity research, talking a little bit about ad loads, we also asked some consumers what would make commercial experiences more, I don't like this world word tolerable, 87% said fewer ads in

streaming TV than on traditional TV or linear tv. 83% said frequency limits. So how are you thinking about ad loads and frequency cap? Sunil, we'll go to you first. Sure.

Sunil Soman (37:41):

This is a core piece of our DNA, and I'll say this going back to the Turner gaze and everything that's carried through since then, our streaming products are built around this concept of a better consumer experience through things like fewer ads, frequency capping and personalization, all that stuff is coming. I'll mention though that all of this stuff is made possible by having that really, really good ID framework that was referenced earlier and having a very, very good handle on first party data and how exposure et cetera is happening across our platforms allow us to deliver this to the consumer.

Jennifer Strapp (38:26):

Yep. So I agree and I think that we want to always continue to find a path to improve from a consumer perspective, which is why constantly innovating for our viewers and ad partners, including testing new ad formats where we can be a little bit more creative in the way that we're serving content that is more than tolerable. Because I think that people are quick to say that advertising is disruptive sometimes, but I think that really people are incredibly receptive and look forward to advertising.

Stephen Jepson (39:00):

Awesome. Thank you both. So let's talk a little bit about brand clients. What are you guys hearing from your clients and how are they communicating kind of priorities for marketing accountability research or proof of efficacy? I'd love your guys' thoughts on what are clients asking you about measurement. Let's start with you again, Sunil.

Sunil Soman (39:24):

Sure. I'd say the biggest shift, and this is a very interesting one, this happens within the last year, is that as opposed to asking us to do the measurement and provide them back with some sort of report that says this did achieve whatever goal, or this was better than that, a lot of the conversations now are about help having us help enable the brands themselves to do a lot of this holistic work. So the conversations

are about how do we get data coming off of our platforms piped into systems that they're working with that allow them to not just look at us, but look at their holistic media activations. And this relates to planning, activation, and measurement.

Jennifer Strapp (40:14):

Yeah, so to go back to the question that you had asked earlier, they're looking for multi-platform measurements, which is obviously hard as we talked about, but to have campaigns measured again everywhere that they live. And the other thing that they're looking for is accountability. I think they're investing in our content, they want proof that their marketing dollars are well spent, and it's beyond the number of viewers, it's the quality of viewers. So they want to know that we're delivering their consumers helping to drive brand impact. And I feel like we're on the hook now more than ever to do that for them.

Stephen Jepson (40:44):

Awesome. So we're down to our last question. So I wanted to thank you both for joining us today and for sharing your thoughts about this. I've done a lot of panel moderation in my career and I have to say this might be the first time we're on time. So thank you. Thank you both. We are going to go right into audience questions after this last one, but yeah, thank you both for joining and thank for being such great advocates and clients of Disco's. We really appreciate you both. So looking ahead, what trends and potential disruptions are you guys thinking about most concerned about? I won't say keep you up at night, but yeah, Jen, let's go to you first.

Jennifer Strapp (41:28):

Sure. So I think broadly the potential influence of emerging technology on the future of our industry is super broad, to say the least, but something we always have our eye on thinking more also about how traditional media plays in the performance marketing space, which we're doing a lot of at Paramount right now. And those are kind of the things that are top of mind for me.

Stephen Jepson (41:48):

Great. And I know you both have stuff in your personal life that keep you up at night, probably a little bit more right now, Sunil, what might keep you up at night in terms of disruptions or trends or what are you thinking about?

Sunil Soman (42:03):

There's two things. One is new entrants, new competition in the market every single day. And I think with all the advancements in technology, the barriers to entry for really pretty good production is much, much lower than it's been in the past. And I think it then is incumbent upon, all of us have traditionally been in the space to continue to evolve and make sure that we're relevant and interesting and can provide something from an entertainment perspective that consumers aren't able to get elsewhere. And then the other thing that I think about a lot is walled gardens and I'll say new potential walled gardens. It's been great over the last couple of years to see the explosion of passive data that's available in the linear television space. And I see all of these great systems and practices been built off of them. I would just get really, really scared if some reason that were to go away or for some reason we weren't allowed to get the same sort of access to data that we have been in the past few years.

Stephen Jepson (43:11):

Great. Alright, thanks again, both Jen and Samil. I think we're going to turn it over to John now to open it up to questions from the audience again, exactly on time. So thank you everybody. Alright,

John Dioso (43:25):

Great job, Steven, Sunil and Jen, great conversation, tating and comprehensive. I think you covered it all, but wait, there's more now ready. Open to the floor to your questions as a reminder to participate in our q and a. Just type your question into the ask a question text area and click the send button. All right, let's hit number one. Let's see. Okay, first question. With so many sources of truth, how do you balance all of the data that you get around campaign effectiveness and distill it down to what you believe are the right insights? Who wants to take this one first?

Sunil Soman (43:58):

I'll start outside the obvious stat sig criteria. We look for triangulation, we want to see multiple pieces of measurement point in the same direction. Ideally, if it's even coming from multiple approaches, we're still seeing that this type of category still delivers this type of outcome. That gives us a lot of confidence. And when we do see that, that's when we can say things in a more sort of uniform and concrete manner as opposed to, well, in this case study we saw this.

Jennifer Strapp (44:32):

I think that's fair. So at Paramount, I think we pride ourselves in a lot of the creative marketing work that we do as I talked about earlier. And that type of execution I think has very clear KPIs for us. But when it comes to proving our value as a premium publisher for our client's creative, I think we're taking into account that the fact that the ad has been viewed countless other times on countless other platforms. And so we have to distill it down to the power of paramount rather because we don't have control over any of those other outside factors. So to me, the right insights are the ones that show that an advertiser has invested the resources most effectively and efficiently through our platforms.

John Dioso (45:08):

Alright, we've got a bunch of questions to get through before the end, so I'm going to hop right to the next one, which is how have you seen the importance of research and analytics within your organizations evolve over time? Jen, you want to take that one first?

Jennifer Strapp (45:21):

Sure. I think it's significantly evolved. When I started again 1 million years ago, research felt like it was much more of a back office job. And I think over time it's absolutely evolved from a data request drive through to having very prominent seat at the table. So our team this year played a really key role in the upfront messaging conversations that took place internally. And we're very active in making sure that our insights are included in sales conversations and if nothing else, it's certainly

evident in the literally thousands of requests that our team gets on a regular basis as to how valuable research is.

Sunil Soman (45:57):

Yeah, I'll start with this and I've been working for a couple of decades this point, I'll just say this, it used to be a lot easier, everything was a lot simpler, and I think it's very hard to have a conversation with a buyer today without having to talk about some form of data, some sort of activation. And what's been fascinating is that the research role has evolved so much over the last couple of years to encompass so many of these more technical aspects that, like Jen said, research has to be on the frontline because frankly you just can't have a conversation without being able to speak to, alright, well what going to be involved? What insights do you have to tell me that actually this type of a campaign is good for me? And that's just table stakes these days.

John Dioso (46:50):

All right. Next question. This is a good one and Steven May be going away on this as well, but what has surprised you the most in terms of consumer's adoption of streaming tv? I think that study that you guys did I thought was really illuminating. The fact that it came down in the space of just one year just shows how quickly people are accepting of advertising and streaming when it seemed like, I remember right before we were talking about before, times before the webcast even started, and I remember going to an adage event and the conventional wisdom in the room was, there's no way in hell that Netflix will ever take ads. And here we are in 2024 and that the world has shifted once again. So who wants to take this question first?

Sunil Soman (47:38):

Churn. Again, coming from a traditional media perspective and linear television, we didn't really have to worry about churn even I spent some time in cinema advertising really it's like if you're a moviegoer, you're a moviegoer. You don't have to worry about people cycling in and out. The fact that across the board there is so much sampling and sort of popping in and popping out across all the services because like we said, there are so many services now and then there are ad supported versus not ad

supported versions of all of them. There's so much choice and I was just really surprised at the amount of churn and how big of a task it is from the acquisition side of the house to make sure that that doesn't happen.

Jennifer Strapp (48:30):

I kind of touched on it earlier. For me it's been surprising how much library content people are accessing and how many opportunities that's given to streamers. It's right now the power of syndication, but in digital form and the shows that are being dragged from the archives by Gen Z, I feel like always on my Instagram. I see people just digging back into shows from so many years ago and reviving them and giving them new life and it's exciting.

John Dioso (48:57):

What's the biggest one in Paramount that you've seen that really surprised you? Oh

Jennifer Strapp (49:01):

Goodness. That really surprised me. I don't know if any of them really surprised me. I mean, I think that we see people revisiting Jersey Shore and the classics and like I said, Beavis and Butthead and

John Dioso (49:12):

Now you made me feel a little Jersey shore. The classics.

Jennifer Strapp (49:15):

The classics. I know. Yeah. Yeah, it's been a while since we launched that show, but yeah, people are going back now and seeing early Snooky before she had three kids and yeah, it's all the ones that you would expect.

Stephen Jepson (49:34):

One of the things, yeah, from the data that no, I guess we shouldn't be surprised given the crackdown in password sharing, it's kind of really, really a forcing function for the ad supported tier to scale beyond what even our research originally contemplated. So I think that's a very large driver. You can't have six different

households on one account anymore and people are having to pony up the dollars to get access to the content that they want and need and want to talk about. So I think that's also helped kind of drive adoption, I think. And it is scaling rapidly as our two kind of panelists know very well. It's quite a conundrum that it's scaling as fast as it is.

John Dioso (50:25):

And I can just tell you internally within my family as a focus group, the grumbling from the younger ones about having to get their own accounts, people pay for quality, they pay for the things that they want, so it really is a proof. Alright, next question. Are there misconceptions about the opportunity for brands in streaming tv? What would you like brands and their agencies to know? Maybe Jen, you could take this one first. You talked a little bit about this before.

Jennifer Strapp (50:57):

Yeah, I mean I think that streaming TV is tv. I think viewers' expectations are a little bit different because the initiation of streaming TV was a little more aligned with web video, but I don't think that that means that the viewing behaviors of one and namely the ad viewing behaviors has to be dramatically different from the viewing behaviors of the other. So I think that they both have really significant value, digital and linear that doesn't have to be so siloed. And I think we're given more creative ad options when it comes to streaming like personalization and innovative ad structures. ai, that's really exciting.

Sunil Soman (51:32):

What I am very excited about is the merging of TV and digital and CTV has really opened up advertisers mind about the fact that, as Jen said, CTV is TV and that has both upper and lower funnel value. So things that traditionally may have only been thought of as performance marketing are now being looked at a brand lens and then things like linear TV that used to be traditionally only thought of for big branding opportunities are now looked at from a performance perspective. So I think it's great and I think it started, and I think what we're going to continue to see over time is that basically all media will be looked at from a full funnel perspective.

John Dioso (52:18):

Also, there was a side question before, I just wanted you guys to clarify this. When you both refer to Fast as being basically linear cable, is that really what you're saying is that it's just the streaming version of what we're all traditionally used to seeing when we turn on our cable TV and are flicking through the different channels and things are going on in real, they're being broadcast or streaming in real time as opposed to on demand? Is that what you mean when you say that it's basically linear cable?

Sunil Soman (52:47):

That's how I always think. Again, I think about of linear in terms of the schedule and the programming, the fact that it is set for you and you are not going and just picking what you want, but that linear experience can be delivered digitally or non digitally.

John Dioso (53:02):

And then Jen, what about the ad experience though and the reach of the ads if you're advertising on Fast, how is that different from traditional linear cable?

Jennifer Strapp (53:15):

Yeah, so I think it's a bit of a hybrid of streaming and linear to that point. Obviously the ad model is a lot different, but it allows us so many more creative opportunities to deliver the content differently and be more innovative in the way that we do it. So I think that it's a true hybrid of a linear end streaming model.

John Dioso (53:34):

Alright, great. Well thank you for clarifying that. I think we have time for one more, at least one more question, maybe we'll get to two, but the one I want to get to is how do you address tension on streaming ads in a world where people have multiple screens going at once? We can know the audience but not know if they truly saw the ads. So how do you deduplication is an issue or is a solve for that and how do you go about it? Who wants to take this one first?

Jennifer Strapp (54:02):

So if you don't mind, I would love to give a bit of an answer that is not a full answer, which is that we are just at the tail end of completing a very, very large scale attention study that we're very excited about and uses a lot of metrics and passive measures at attention. And we are looking at different platforms, different genres, frequency of viewing, co-viewing and the impact of attention or rather the impact of distractions on attention, whether it is multiple screens or other people in the room, the impact on both attention and inattention. So we are releasing something very soon that we will be able to share with you, but we're digging really deep into that because we're interested in learning a lot more about what that means as obviously there's more fragmentation of platforms and more natural distractions in the viewing space.

Sunil Soman (55:01):

I'll first want to acknowledge that Jen said a very interesting word there, inattention, which I think inattention is probably something that's much easier to measure than actual attention. I'd say we've definitely looked at attention here in there, but not to the extent of what Jen was just describing, particularly around streaming. However, my personal take on it, particularly considering where attention measurement is right now, attention is a means to an end. It'll hopefully help you optimize, but what I'm focused on right now is going straight to the outcomes. And so if I can say definitively that campaigns running on my stream platforms can get more people to site, get more people to the store, get more dollars registered at the cash machine, then I think that's what we need to focus on rather than the proof. That's what you awfully want to get to. That's what the intention gets you

Jennifer Strapp (55:58):

And that's ultimately what we're digging into as well. Yeah,

John Dioso (56:01):

Excellent. Like I said, I think we have time for one more question. I'm going to throw this one to Steven actually you guys and Sunil and Jenny can jump in as well. But going back to that study that you referenced before Steven, talking about that people are a lot more receptive to ads, especially on streaming platforms, but I love

what Sue Neil said earlier during the webcast, the least amount of clutter regarding their ads. So I was wondering, did you guys measure for that in your studies? So people are accepting of ads, but what does that actually mean? Does that mean, I think we also referenced before you actually asked the question, how do you at Paramount and at Warner Brothers discovery, how do you guys interpret those findings to be? So Steven first you can answer that and then you guys can kind of dive in that a little bit deeper.

Stephen Jepson (56:49):

Yeah, I mean there's no perfect answer to that question unfortunately, because sometimes the creative matters as well, not just placement. So I've measured probably a hundred thousand advertising effectiveness campaigns in my tenure, maybe even more. You see sometimes channel matters in terms of what that creative looks like. Creative messaging matters is a creative, well branded is the placement correct within show as an example. So we see different effectiveness across the board regardless of ad load. So ad load is a thing, however we see ads breakthrough if they're placed right, and you have a really good message. So the creative is really powerful and we see that both from brand metrics as well as outcomes. You can be surprised that some creative isn't designed to drive awareness or favorability or intent, it's more drive, it's more designed to drive lower funnel activities and even to IL's point, ring the cash register a little bit. And I'm fortunate to be able to measure all of that full funnel. So there is no perfect answer. Placement matters, creative matters, channel matters. There's a lot of factors that go into it beyond just ad mode.

John Dioso (58:17):

Alright, I think I am going to be like Steven and say, Hey, I've done a million of these and I very rarely get them in on time. And we are right on time. Sunil and Jen, do you have any parting words?

Sunil Soman (58:29):

I'll just add one comment on this last discussion. I think acceptance isn't what we're looking for, it's likability, right? And what we've seen very clearly through a lot of this

work is by having that less clutter. All the ads, regardless of how they're individually created, are enjoyed more in a less cluttered environment.

John Dioso ([59:02](#)):

Thank you so much and I'm going to thank everybody else for attending. Thanks for attending Adages. Custom webcast sponsored by disco. A couple of reminders before we break. You can view and listen to this presentation on demand using the same link that you used to attend today. You'll see an email as soon as our archive is ready. On behalf of our guest, Jennifer Strap, Sunil Soman and Steven Jepson. Thank you so much. Have a great day. Thank you. Bye everybody.