Mediapulse Online Measurement

Methodology Factsheet

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AG für Medienforschung
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1 Introduction

The following document describes the Swiss online sampling system for which Mediapulse is responsible, and on the basis of which the consumption data of the participating websites and apps has been collected and made available to the online market since July 2021. This Online Data comprises Online Traffic Data and Online Audience Data. The purpose of this document is to provide an easy-to-understand, transparent explanation of the methodological principles of this system. This will put data users in a position to properly comprehend and evaluate the collection, processing and quality of the data collected through the research system.

2 Object of investigation

With the Traffic Data, Mediapulse records the user-induced technical accessing of websites and apps. The tagging technology used in this process makes it possible to perform a comprehensive survey of the participating offerings.

With the Audience Data, Mediapulse logs the personal consumption of websites and apps across all devices (smartphone, tablet, PC, laptop), regardless of where that consumption takes place (in and out of home). This registers consumption across all online offerings that support Mediapulse's online research or participate in Traffic Data by means of tagging. The results of the Audience Data are representative of all persons aged three and over living in private households in Switzerland.

3 Universe

Traffic

- The universe comprises every instance of technical access to a participating and whitelisted online offering that can be registered.
- Traffic generated by bots is excluded. Only user-induced access is counted as part of the universe.

Audience

– The universe comprises the permanent, linguistically assimilated resident population in Switzerland aged three and over in private households.

– The size of the universe is determined on the basis of the population statistics of the Federal Statistical Office and the results of the Mediapulse Establishment Survey.

– The Mediapulse Establishment Survey is a representative household survey with around 12,000 telephone or written interviews per year.

– The specifications for the size of the universe are recalculated at the beginning of each calendar year.

4 Methodological design

The methodological basis of the Online Data is a hybrid research design involving two different sampling approaches:

– The complete and detailed logging of all instances of access to the brands participating in the research on the basis of a full census;
– The quantification and profiling of the user base of the participating brands on the basis of a measurement panel or sample (Panel).

In implementing this research design, Mediapulse relies on two key technologies:

– The provider-side tagging of the brands to be sampled (online offerings);
– The user-side sampling based on a router meter in the Panel households.

This research design results in two different Online Data products:

– Traffic Data as an aggregation of the logged online access to the brands participating in the research (online offerings) at gross level;
– Audience Data as a quantification of the user base of the brands participating in the research (online offerings) at net level.

Figure 1: Schematic representation of the research design
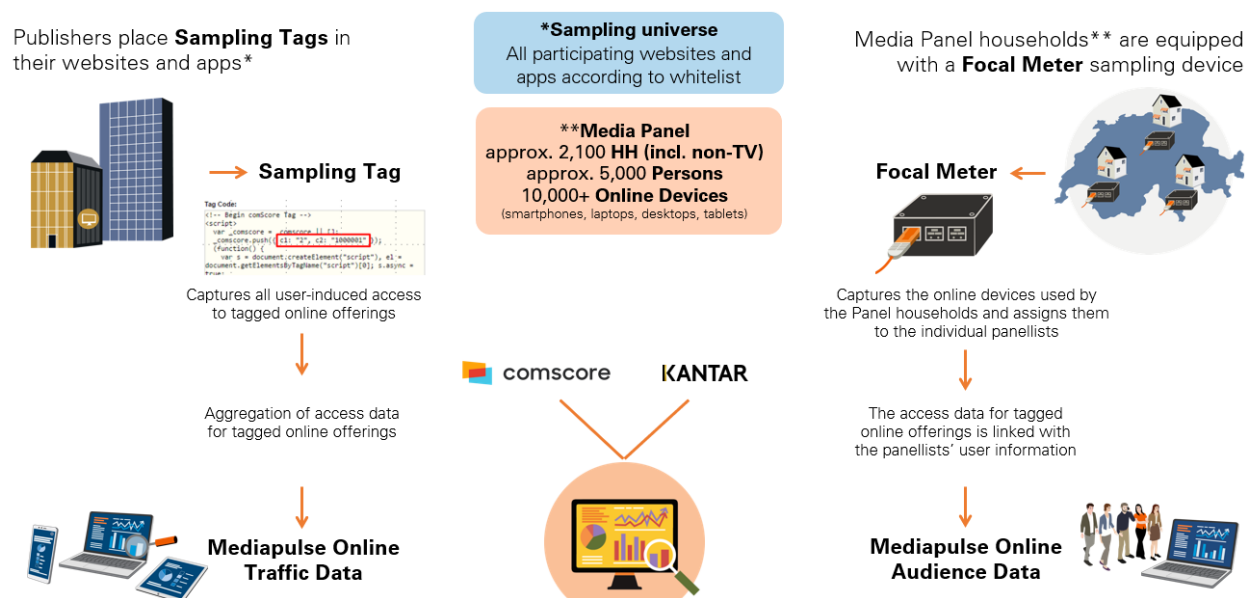
5 Traffic Data

5.1 General framework conditions

Traffic sampling is based on a sampling approach that is crucially dependent on the technical support of the participating parties.

The technical support (tagging) must be carried out in line with uniform market standards that are binding for all market participants.

These standards are codified in various documents and instructions. Compliance with these is monitored by Mediapulse and its service providers.

5.2 Technical sampling

The sampling of online consumption is carried out as a comprehensive survey of all instances of access to the brands participating in the research, using 'sampling tags'.

The 'sampling tags' log the time, duration, technical ID and origin (Switzerland or abroad) of the access.

The census data thus sampled is aggregated at brand and network level. The Traffic Data is then quantified with the following parameters:

- Total Visits
- Average Visits per Day
- Average Duration per Visit
- Average IDs per Day

5.3 Quality control

Compliance with market standards is verified regularly by Mediapulse and its service providers following a defined procedure.

This verification takes place not only within the framework of a validation of the completed tagging, but also through continuous quality monitoring on the basis of statistical indicators.

If the Traffic Data does not meet the requisite market standards, this can lead to a temporary exclusion of a brand – following a defined procedure. These regulations can be viewed on the Mediapulse website (www.mediapulse.ch, Factsheet "Guidelines on the Data Release Process of Mediapulse Online Content").

The flawless processing and timely delivery of the tagged data is the responsibility of Mediapulse and its service providers.

5.4 Data release by Mediapulse

The Census Data or Traffic Data is collected over a calendar month.

If the Traffic Data meets the requisite market standards, it is published during the following month by Mediapulse on its website as a monthly dataset in the form of an interactive dashboard.

6 Audience Data

6.1 Panel technology

The technical equipment provided to the Panel for quantifying the user base of the brands participating in the research, i.e. the reporting of the Audience Data, is as follows:

- All Panel households with internet access via router are equipped with a router meter required for audience sampling, the Focal Meter.
- All Panel households are briefed on its function and the scope of sampling (whitelist), and given instructions on how to operate it correctly.
- All online devices in the Panel household logged by the Focal Meter are assigned to the individual household members by the Panel management.
- For shared devices, a login procedure is used to ensure that the online consumption is unambiguously assigned to the person in the household who is logged in at the time.
- Online use by guests visiting the Panel household is not recorded.
- Online consumption on devices not regularly used in the Panel household is not logged.

6.2 Basic information about the Panel

Panel recruitment

– The basis for the recruitment of the Panel households is the address pool of households surveyed in the Establishment Survey.

– The Panel households are recruited by phone or in writing, the latter using either paper or online questionnaires.

– Panel households are recruited continuously throughout the year, depending on specific recruitment requirements.

– The recruitment of Panel households is organised in such a way that no households are systematically excluded.

Panel size and structure

– The Panel is based on a quota sample at household level with unequal representation of the language regions.

– The net size of the Panel on any one day is over 2,000 households, which corresponds to approximately 5,000 people and 10,000 online devices. These are split between the three language regions (subpanels) as follows (numbers rounded):

  - German-speaking Switzerland: 2,700 people, 6,000 devices
  - French-speaking Switzerland: 1,500 people, 3,400 devices
  - Italian-speaking Switzerland: 700 people, 1,500 devices

– The Panel is recruited in the three language-region subpanels according to the following household characteristics:

  - 25 geographical elementary zones within the language regions;
  - Household size (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more persons);
  - Children aged 0 to 14 in the household (yes, no);
  - Number of TV sets (0, 1, 2, 3 or more);
  - TV reception platforms (IPTV, cable, other).

– The Panel structure specifications are derived from the population statistics of the Federal Statistical Office as well as from the Mediapulse Establishment Survey and are adjusted at the beginning of each calendar year.

6.3 Linking sampling and Panel data

The online access registered by the tagging function is compared daily with the online devices identified by the Focal Meter in the Panel households. This makes it possible to ascertain the individual online consumption of each Panel member in the dimensions Time of Consumption and Duration of Consumption.

The resulting consumption information for each individual panellist is aggregated at brand and network level, quantified with the following key figures and then extrapolated to the defined universe:

– Net reach based on the number of users per day, week and month;
– Intensity of consumption (engagement) based on the duration of consumption per brand (online offering);
– Time of consumption.

The key figures listed above can also be broken down by various household or personal characteristics collected by the survey, and by technically sampled dimensions such as device type, consumption vector or operating system.

6.4 Quality control

The quality of the Audience Data derives from the quality of the census sampling and that of the Panel sampling.

The quality of the census sampling is monitored within the framework of the Traffic Data.

The quality of the Panel sampling is continuously monitored on three levels:

- Technical sampling;
- Panel equipment, Panel structure and Panel compliance;
- Data processing and data delivery.

Mediapulse quantifies the results of these controls with suitable indicators. The release of the data is the responsibility of Mediapulse.

6.5 Data release by Mediapulse

The Panel Data and Audience Data associated with individual persons is collected over a calendar month.

If the Audience Data meets the requisite market standards, it is published in the following month as a monthly dataset within an interactive evaluation software (Mediapulse Audience Analytics). This evaluation software is the reference software for Audience Data.