



90 *years* *of*

**Advancing the Science
of Advertising & Marketing**

1936 — 2026

*Commemorative
Anniversary Edition*



Cheers to 90 years of shaping the future of marketing science!

**Nielsen congratulates the ARF
on nine decades of excellence.
As your media intelligence
partner, we're proud to advance
the science of the audience
together. A partnership that
transforms data into the insights
that drive our industry forward.**

Congratulations to the ARF!



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

As the Advertising Research Foundation marks its 90th anniversary, we are reminded that the history of the ARF closely parallels the evolution of advertising itself.

When the ARF was established in 1936, advertising was already a powerful economic force. What the industry lacked were consistent systems for measurement and evaluation. The ARF emerged to address that need, bringing together advertisers, agencies, media companies and researchers to strengthen the analytical foundations of the field.

Over the decades, each transformation in media and in marketing technology has introduced new challenges and opportunities. The rise of television required new approaches to audience measurement. Scanner data created the ability to link advertising exposure with marketplace behavior. Digital media began as a novelty but quickly became the technical underpinning of nearly all media, advertising and marketing. In the process, we gained many new consumer touchpoints and marketing options, but wholistic measurement became harder. And today's rapidly emerging AI capabilities promise to reshape media, marketing and research practices all over again.

Across these changes, the ARF has served as a neutral forum where new methods can be examined, debated and tested with rigor. From foundational studies on how to measure radio audiences and newspaper readership to contemporary inquiries into the best uses of attention metrics in programmatic marketplaces, the ARF continues to help the industry navigate complexity with discipline and rigor.

As we enter our tenth decade, the need for credible, transparent research has never been greater. The ARF remains committed to advancing the knowledge that enables advertising and marketing to evolve wisely and confidently.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Scott McDonald". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" and last name "McDonald" clearly legible.

Scott McDonald, Ph.D.

President & CEO

Advertising Research Foundation

**PART I:
DEFINING ADVERTISING
RESEARCH SINCE 1936**

“To Further, Through Research, the Scientific Practice of Advertising and Marketing.”

When the Advertising Research Foundation was established in 1936, its founders articulated a mission that has endured for nine decades:

To further, through research, the scientific practice of advertising and marketing.

The statement is notable not just for what it says, but more for what it does not say. It does not promise policy advocacy. It does not promise market dominance. It promises methodological rigor and discipline.

The inclusion of the word “scientific” was deliberate. In 1936, advertising was already a powerful economic engine. National brands were expanding rapidly. Media channels were multiplying. Consumer markets were becoming increasingly national in scale. Yet the systems used to measure audiences and marketing performance lacked consistency and comparability.

Research existed, but it was fragmented and vulnerable to biases of interested parties. Different media relied on different metrics. Methodologies varied widely. Comparative evaluation across channels was limited. Advertisers invested significant budgets without uniform standards for validating results.

The founders of the ARF recognized a structural vulnerability. **Without disciplined research infrastructure, advertising risked undermining its own credibility. The ARF was created to address that vulnerability**—not through promotion, but through independent and objective industry-wide effort to develop best practices and methods for measurement, attribution, forecasting, creative development and market strategy.

Ninety years later, the environment has changed beyond recognition. Print, radio and out-of-home have been joined by television, digital display, social media, gaming and a host of other media

TO NAME AD. TRUSTEES.

Association Research Foundation
Nearly Ready to Function.

With a board of trustees scheduled to be appointed within two weeks, the advertising research foundation of the Association of National Advertisers will start to function after the first of the year, it was made known here yesterday. The foundation will act as a clearing house for technical problems, whether they come from advertisers, agents or media.

Any company in these three fields can become a member of the foundation, the organization being financed entirely by subscriptions from such members. Technical work will not be done by the foundation itself, but will be parceled out to the appropriate agencies. Such questions as copy testing, duplication, distribution, costs, &c., are expected to come up for analysis.

The New York Times

Published: December 9, 1934
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formats. Retailers have become media companies, and visa-versa. Video has migrated from TV sets to desktops to mobile phones and on from there to the internet-of-things. Artificial intelligence now promises to reshape both marketing and the research process itself.

Yet the essential mandate remains unchanged: advertising must justify itself through validated evidence.

The story of the ARF is the story of how the industry built, reinforced and redefined its scientific foundations across successive waves of disruption.

"Lady seeks honest Beauty Advice"

Ivory Soap 99 1/2% pure

INDEPENDENCE AS INSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY

The ARF was born of collaboration between the Association of National Advertisers and the American Association of Advertising Agencies. But almost immediately, its founders made a decision that would define the ARF's authority for decades: the organization would operate independently.

Independence was not symbolic. It was structural.

An institution tasked with evaluating research methodologies cannot credibly serve the narrow commercial interests of any single constituency. If the ARF were to endorse studies, critique methods and define standards, it needed neutrality.

Early member companies included Coca-Cola, Colgate-Palmolive, J. Walter Thompson, McCann

Are you in the know?

When you're a house-guest, should you—

- ☐ Follow your whims
- ☐ Fit into the plans
- ☐ Forget about clock-watching

elder, your hostess instead of your own. If a picnic's planned—go, and have even if you'd rather dress up for dance. And during your visit, keep clock-watching, so you won't delay meals or cars. Whatever the plans, you can be comfortable regardless of your calendar—by choosing the new Kotex. It's the mark made to stay soft while you wear it; give softness that holds its shape. Furthermore you're so at ease with your new Kotex Sanitary Belt. It's elastic; fits smoothly.

If you didn't hear the name clearly—

- ☐ Say so
- ☐ Let it pass
- ☐ Repeat it anyway

See what happens when a friend makes introductions? You didn't get the name. Well, say so, rather than ignore or guess. Even if his moniker's Schmiedelitz, he expects you to remember—and pronounce it right. (You'll be glad you did, next time you meet!) And to meet any situation with assurance, "that" time of the month, choose Kotex. Why? Because those special, pressed ends don't show; don't cause revealing outlines. So your secret's safe. Let Kotex be your pain-preventer!

More women choose KOTEX than all other sanitary napkins

3 ABSORBENCIES: REGULAR, JUNIOR, SUPER

Erickson, Young & Rubicam and Bristol-Myers. These organizations understood that research credibility was not competitive advantage—it was fundamental to growing the advertising market.

Independence gave the ARF freedom to ask uncomfortable questions. It could examine methodologies without deference to vendor claims. It could critique assumptions embedded in prevailing practices. It could demand rigor across stakeholders.

Over time, endorsement from the ARF's Technical Committee became a de facto seal of methodological legitimacy.

The Foundation's authority did not derive from size or marketing reach. It derived from disciplined neutrality.

THE EARLY YEARS: ESTABLISHING MEASUREMENT DISCIPLINE (1936–1950)



In its first fifteen years, the ARF conducted more than two hundred studies. Much of the early research focused on improving measurement for newspapers, magazines and radio—the dominant media outlets of the period. Standardization was the priority.

Circulation data required consistent definitions. Sampling methods and research designs required transparency. Without common standards, comparison across publications and markets was unreliable.

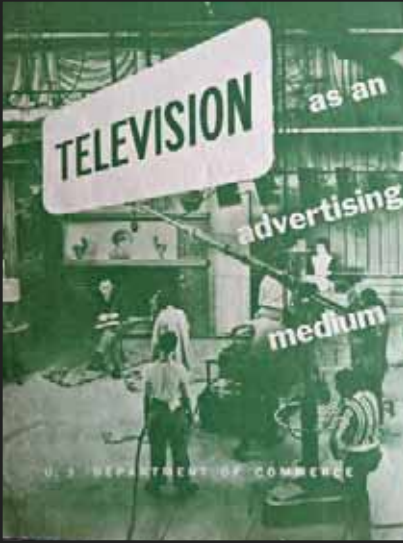
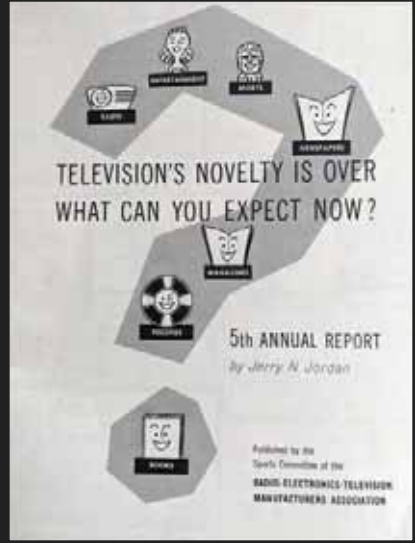
The 1939 Copy Testing Report marked an early milestone in structured creative evaluation. Rather than relying on subjective judgment alone, the report sought measurable indicators of recall and impact. It introduced discipline into a domain often governed by intuition.

Later, the **1949 Canadian Magazine Study** represented a methodological breakthrough. It



was the first known complete probability sample of an entire nation's adult population. The study demonstrated that advertising research could meet statistical standards comparable to academic social science.

These early initiatives reinforced a foundational principle: **credibility depends on methodological rigor and adherence to scientific principles.**



TELEVISION AND THE EXPANSION OF MEASUREMENT COMPLEXITY (1950s)

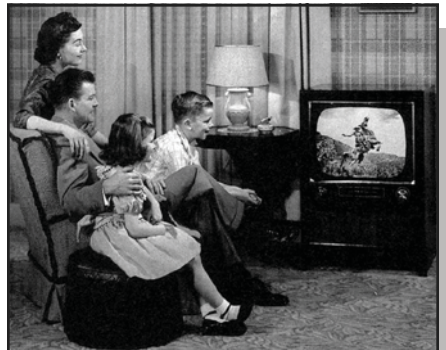
The rise of television in the 1950s transformed advertising.

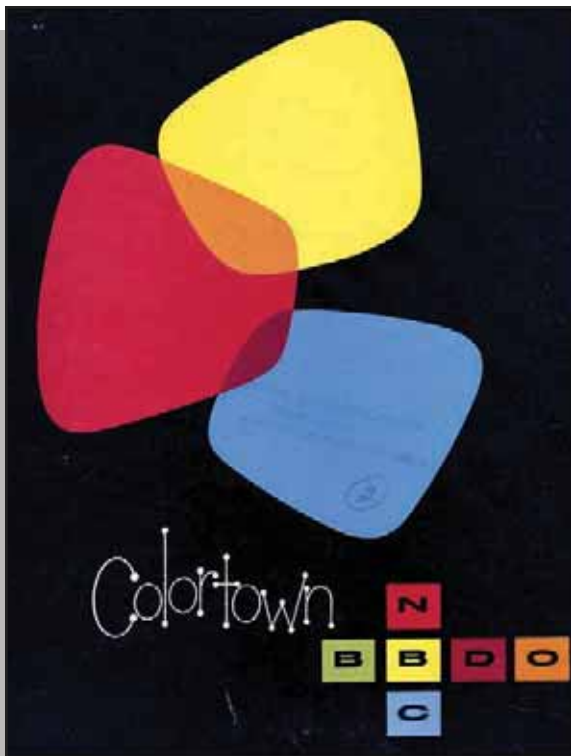
Unlike print, television necessitated continuous audience measurement across programs and time slots. Enumeration became more complex. Household penetration rates for TV sets mattered as did the projectability from sample to population.

In 1954, the ARF supervised the first national survey of radio and television ownership in the United States. Recognizing that baseline population data underpins all audience measurement, the ARF successfully advocated for the annual and national measurement of television ownership by the U.S. Census starting next year (i.e., National Survey of Television Sets in U.S. Households). Starting in 1965, TV ownership became part of the decennial U.S. Census.

This intervention strengthened the statistical foundation upon which the industry relied.

By influencing public data systems, the ARF extended its mission beyond private research into national statistical stewardship. The Foundation's early decades established a consistent pattern: when media change introduces uncertainty, the measurement discipline must advance accordingly.





Color
Set
Owners
As
“Influentials”

THE 1951 RESTRUCTURING AND THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

A pivotal moment in the ARF’s evolution came in 1951, when the organization restructured into a tripartite membership model that included advertisers, agencies and media companies. This restructuring expanded participation while preserving independence.

The creation of the Technical Committee institutionalized methodological oversight. The Committee evaluated research proposals, provided advisory services and ensured that projects met rigorous standards. Over time, its endorsement

carried significant weight. A study reviewed and supported by the ARF signaled credibility across the industry.

Importantly, the ARF made a conscious decision not to compete with commercial research firms. Instead, it would commission independent research providers to conduct studies under its own supervision. The ARF defined standards and evaluated methodology but did not position itself as a vendor. This approach reinforced neutrality.

INSTITUTIONALIZING ADVERTISING SCIENCE: *THE JOURNAL OF ADVERTISING RESEARCH* (1960)

The founding of the *Journal of Advertising Research* in 1960 institutionalized the ARF's intellectual mission. *JAR* became the first publication devoted exclusively to advertising science.

Its significance extends beyond longevity. The journal created continuity in an industry characterized by reinvention. It documented debates, preserved findings and connected academic scholarship with practitioner application.

Over time, *JAR* published foundational research on persuasion theory, emotional response, executional impact, media modeling, digital measurement and emerging methodologies. In doing so, it ensured that advertising science would accumulate rather than dissipate.



*Congratulations to the ARF
on 90 years of advancing
advertising research.*

From supporting The Attention Council to leading the Attention Validation Initiative, your work continues to raise the bar for evidence-based media quality measurement. Industry progress depends on both rigorous research and real-world application, and we're proud to support that effort through our collaboration and AU.

Adelaide



THE MARKETING SCIENCE INSTITUTE (MSI) IS FOUNDED (1961)

The Marketing Science Institute (MSI) was founded in 1961 to advance marketing as a rigorous, evidence-based discipline. Created during a period when advertising research was becoming more formalized and media systems more complex, MSI extended the scientific ambitions that shaped the ARF since its founding, into the broader domain of marketing strategy. Its purpose was clear: to bring academic rigor to real-world business problems and to build **a durable bridge between scholarly research and executive decision-making.**

From its earliest years, MSI convened leading marketing scholars and senior corporate leaders in a neutral forum dedicated to developing unbiased, scientifically grounded knowledge. By fostering academic-industry collaboration, commissioning

research on critical business challenges and later, deepening ties with institutions such as Harvard Business School, MSI helped institutionalize marketing science as a field.

Over time, its work focused on strategy, profitability, brand equity and return on marketing investment, and fostered such techniques as conjoint analysis (decision models for product development), price elasticity tests and later, marketing mix models and brand equity measures and diagnostics. **MSI formally joined the ARF in 2020**, and continues to make a significant impact in the field of marketing science six decades since its founding.



THE ARF MEDIA MODEL: DEFINING MEDIA'S CONTRIBUTION—AND LIMITS (1961)

In 1961 what came to be known as the ARF Media Model was introduced. This was a conceptual framework for understanding how media functions within the broader marketing process. At a time when newspapers, magazines, radio and television were evaluated using different metrics and currencies, it became clear that the industry needed more standardization and structure. The model helped advertisers distinguish between different metrics and also established a deeper understanding for what media could and could not deliver.

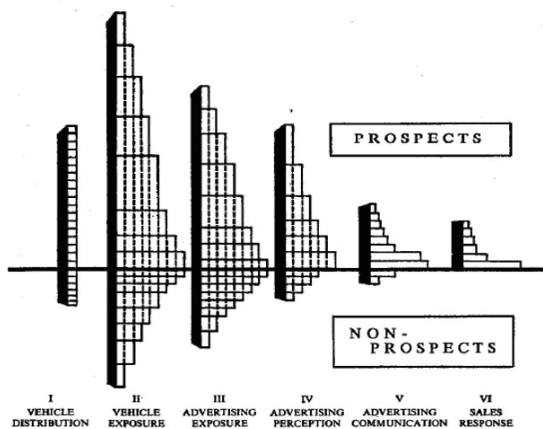
The media model organized advertising performance into a series of distinct stages—from vehicle distribution and vehicle exposure through advertising exposure, attentiveness, communication, persuasion, response and ultimately sales. Crucially, the model clarified where media effects are primary and where other forces—creative execution, product experience, pricing, competition and distribution—begin to

dominate. The first levels reflected largely “pure” media delivery. Higher levels increasingly reflected hybrid effects, where media interact with message and marketplace realities.

The model did not claim that all stages were sequential, nor that media alone determine outcomes. Instead, it distinguished among types of metrics and established a disciplined way to think about what media can realistically be held accountable for. Media can distribute messages. They can create opportunities for exposure. They can influence attentiveness and context. But they cannot independently guarantee persuasion or sales.

By separating stimulus from response and media effects from broader marketing effects, the ARF Media Model gave planners greater clarity. Six decades on, it continues to make an impact. What's more, it is a developing conceptualization. In 2003, the ARF updated the model to reflect digital media and interactive environments.

A Model for Evaluating Media





Happy Anniversary to the ARF!

On behalf of Analytic Partners,
thank you for 90 years of advancing
the science of marketing and
shaping our industry.

**Cheers to 90 years
and counting!**





Celebrating 90 years of leadership and vision

Congratulations to the ARF on 90 years of advancing marketing and advertising research. Bank of America is proud to be part of this legacy and the continued innovation shaping our industry's future.

Here's to the next era of excellence.





CELEBRATING THE ART AND SCIENCE OF ADVERTISING RESEARCH

Congratulations to the ARF on 90 years
at the forefront of marketing, media,
and measurement.

Here's to the next chapter!



Learn more about how Ipsos
gives marketers clarity and
confidence in their creative.



PART II: VALIDATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

THE VALIDATION ERA: COPY TESTING UNDER SCRUTINY (1970s–1990s)

By the 1970s, advertising had matured into a multi-billion-dollar industry, operating across increasingly competitive categories. As budgets expanded, so did scrutiny. Senior executives wanted stronger evidence that advertising expenditures were delivering measurable returns.

Copy testing was now widespread. Agencies and research firms offered proprietary systems promising predictive power. Yet debate intensified over which measures truly mattered. Was recall the appropriate standard? Was persuasion superior? Could laboratory testing replicate real-world exposure conditions? Were emotional reactions meaningful or superficial?

In the early 1980s, the foundation launched the **Copy Research Validation initiative** to help answer these questions. Advertisers contributed pairs of commercials for the same product—one that had succeeded in market performance and one that had been less than successful. Multiple copy testing systems evaluated both ads independently.

The results were instructive. Most methods were directionally predictive, meaning they could generally distinguish stronger from weaker executions. However, no single metric consistently captured total effectiveness. One of the most consequential findings concerned ad likeability. Many practitioners had dismissed likeability as secondary or aesthetic. The data suggested otherwise. Likeability demonstrated meaningful correlation with performance outcomes.

The industry debate that followed was not merely academic. It reshaped copy testing practices. Researchers increasingly incorporated multi-metric frameworks rather than relying on singular measures. **The Copy Validity Project in the 1990s deepened the inquiry.** Instead of testing ads



and waiting for marketplace results, researchers reversed the sequence. They began with known sales outcomes and examined whether copy testing metrics could retrospectively identify winners.

The conclusion reinforced scientific discipline: when multiple validated measures are applied, copy testing provides defensible predictive insight. The ARF's contribution during this era was not to eliminate disagreement. It was to move disagreement onto evidentiary ground.

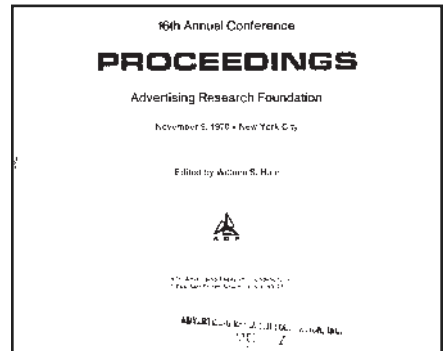
PROJECT PAYOUT AND THE RISE OF SCANNER DATA

While copy validation addressed creative evaluation, the late 1970s introduced another structural shift. We were now able to establish a direct link between advertising exposure and sales through emerging scanner technology.

Project Payout, conducted in 1977, examined supermarket item sales in a controlled retail environment. By tracking thousands of items across categories and linking promotional activity to purchase behavior, the study foreshadowed the future of single-source data analysis.

The implications were profound. Advertising effectiveness could increasingly be connected to observable consumer behavior, rather than survey response alone. More importantly, scanner data allowed empirical linkage between exposure and

transaction. The ARF's involvement in this research reflected its broader mission: as new measurement capabilities emerge, evaluate them rigorously and integrate them thoughtfully into industry practice.



For 90 years, the ARF has stood at the intersection of curiosity and credibility — elevating research, advancing measurement, and supporting the foundations of our industry.

The questions today are more complex. The tools are more powerful. The responsibility is greater. And the ARF remains where leaders gather to navigate what's next.

Here's to the next 90 years of innovation, integrity, and impact.

— Mark Truss, Board Chair, and all the innovative and curious researchers at Galileo Research & Strategy Consultancy



DIGITAL DISRUPTION: FRAGMENTATION AND REDEFINITION (1990s)

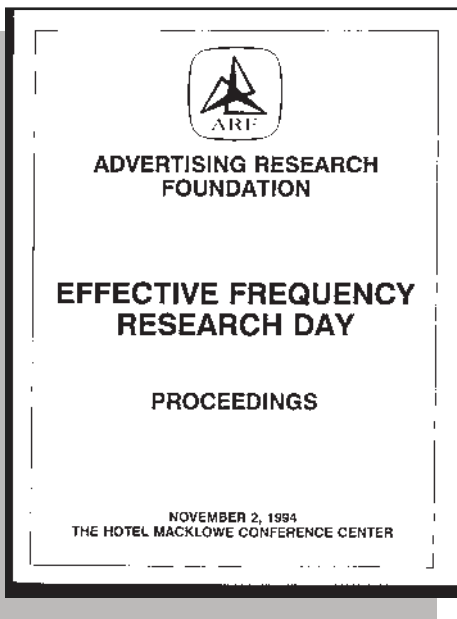
The 1990s introduced a structural inflection point that rivaled television's rise in the 1950s. **The internet transformed distribution, engagement and measurement.**

Digital media did not conform to established broadcast metrics. New terms proliferated—hits, page views, impressions, clicks, sessions, dwell time. Each carried distinct definitions across vendors. Most importantly, ad delivery was no longer embedded in the medium but was inserted separately by ad servers. Advertisers could buy ad impressions, irrespective of the media environment, targeting specific audience segments. As a result, measurement of media audiences increasingly diverged from measurement of ad exposure audiences.

Comparability, long a concern of the ARF, became increasingly complex. The foundation collaborated with industry partners to develop guiding principles for interactive media and audience measurement. The emphasis was not on endorsing specific metrics, but on establishing definitional clarity for media buyers.

Simultaneously, national television ratings systems became more controversial. **The ARF restructured its People Meter Committee into the National TV Measurement Committee, expanding its mandate to serve as a clearinghouse for measurement innovation.**

This era required coordination rather than unilateral standard-setting. Fragmentation without transparency and debate threatened credibility. The ARF sought to prevent such an outcome.



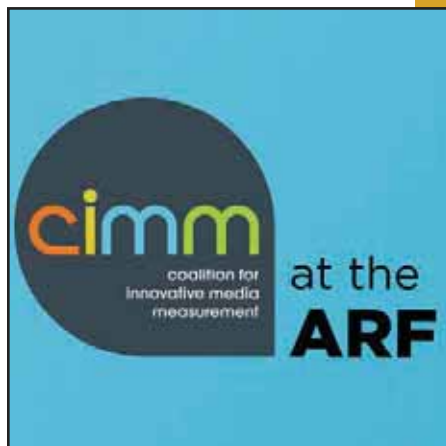
CIMM: THE ARF'S INNOVATION STUDIO FOR TESTING THE FUTURE OF VIDEO MEASUREMENT (2009)

As video consumption expanded across linear television, streaming platforms, connected TVs, mobile devices and programmatic marketplaces, data sources proliferated. Identity systems fragmented. New forms of currency emerged. The complexity was not simply technical, it was structural.

In 2009, the **Coalition for Innovative Media Measurement (CIMM)** was created to address this reality. CIMM was designed as a forum where leading buyers and sellers could rigorously evaluate emerging measurement approaches—from set-top box and return-path data to cross-platform deduplication, identity resolution, attribution models and clean room environments. Rather than building systems, CIMM pressure-tests them: assessing data quality, identifying bias, evaluating methodological assumptions and determining whether new approaches are fit for market use.

Originally, CIMM operated as a coalition of industry stakeholders that intentionally excluded vendors from membership, in order to preserve independence in evaluation. That structure reflected its founding purpose. However, when **CIMM was integrated into the ARF in 2018**, its governance model needed to align with the ARF's nonprofit status and bylaws. As a result, CIMM was formally adopted as the ARF Innovation Studio, doing business as CIMM. Its membership expanded to include measurement innovators, technology providers and startups—**reflecting the reality that innovation and validation must coexist within the same ecosystem.**

This evolution did not dilute CIMM's mission. Instead, it broadened its laboratory. Today, CIMM convenes networks, agencies, advertisers, distributors, research firms and technology companies to collaboratively test new



methodologies before they scale. It evaluates data matching accuracy. It examines deduplication logic. It assesses attribution claims. It studies privacy-compliant data collaboration frameworks. It interrogates AI-driven measurement and planning tools. In short, it brings scientific scrutiny to the infrastructure shaping modern video advertising.

If the ARF historically provided conceptual architecture for advertising science, CIMM brings that discipline into applied experimentation. It does not engineer the pipes of the ecosystem—it examines whether those pipes leak, distort or amplify bias. In an environment where big data can create the illusion of precision, CIMM ensures that confidence is earned, not assumed.

Through CIMM, the ARF extended its mission into the practical testing ground of contemporary media measurement—reinforcing a consistent institutional principle: when systems grow more complex, validation must grow more rigorous.

MODELING, INTEGRATION AND “HOW ADVERTISING WORKS” (2000s–2020s)



As data volume expanded in the 2000s, advertising measurement entered a new phase: modeling. Marketing mix modeling and other econometric methods allowed researchers to integrate diverse data streams—media spend, pricing changes, distribution shifts, competitive activity—into attribution models.

The ARF’s “How Advertising Works” initiative represented one of the most ambitious collaborative research efforts in the industry’s history. Drawing upon 5,000 campaigns across twelve years,

spanning 41 countries and \$375 billion in advertising investment, the study examined how media mix decisions influence long-term performance.

The findings reinforced several key insights: Cross-channel synergy enhances effectiveness, traditional and digital media act as complements, not substitutes, and long-term brand building and short-term activation must be integrated rather than siloed.

The study demonstrated the power of collective data at scale. Yet modeling introduces methodological risk. If this most recent era has emphasized anything, it is that algorithms depend on assumptions and data integration can introduce bias. Overfitting and variable omission can also distort inference. **As a result, the ARF’s role expanded accordingly. It was no longer sufficient to count exposures or validate creative. Scientific practice required interrogation of all elements of the marketing mix and of the modeling logic itself.**

How Advertising Works Today



COLLABORATE
40 Industry Leaders



INVEST
\$1m



DO
3 Experiments



PRIVACY, ETHICS AND THE DATA ECONOMY

Integrity, validation and objectivity have always been key values for the ARF. **Following the Cambridge Analytica scandal, the foundation formalized its Member Code of Conduct and introduced the Chain of Trust program.** These initiatives articulate expectations regarding ethical data usage, participant respect, transparency and professional accountability.

Relatedly, in this era where data became central to advertising strategy, and where public scrutiny has in turn intensified, the ARF soon found itself well positioned to measure public sentiment

surrounding digital privacy. **In 2017, it launched The ARF Annual Privacy Study to track consumer attitudes toward data collection, trust and institutional responsibility.** Conducted each year with a nationally representative sample, the study provides longitudinal insight into how Americans perceive digital data practices.

In a data-driven economy, trust functions as infrastructure. As a result, the findings of the privacy study are closely watched each year, not only by members, but by policymakers and journalists as well.



THANK YOU FOR
90 YEARS OF MAKING
MARKETING SMARTER,
MORE HONEST,
AND MORE HUMAN.

We are honored to be part of
this thriving community.



DATA POEM

DECISION AI FOR
UNIFIED ENTERPRISE GROWTH

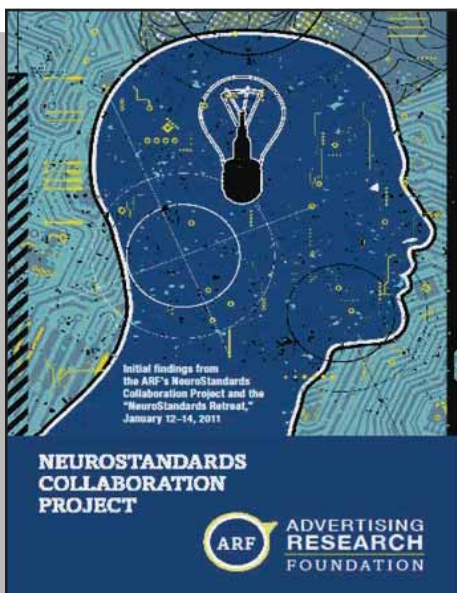


ATTENTION AND NEUROSCIENCE: EVALUATING EMERGING CLAIMS (2010–2011, 2017–PRESENT)

As advertising environments grew more cluttered, human attention became a central focus of media and advertising research. Neuromarketing tools promised deeper insight into cognitive and emotional engagement. **The ARF's NeuroStandards Collaboration Project (2010–2011)** evaluated multiple neuroscience vendors within a structured, transparent framework. The project yielded a user's guide to the capabilities of these new tools in the service of ad testing.

More recently, the **Attention Validation Project (beginning in 2022)** has sought to clarify definitions of attention, test reproducibility across vendors and establish best practice guidance for application. Phase 1 of the project surveyed the landscape of attention vendors and analyzed the degree to which commercial offerings aligned with academic work on memory, cognition and emotional responses to advertising and media. Phase 2 analyzed attention measurement of multiple vendors assessing the same ad creative; it found only low levels of agreement among vendors and weak correspondence to marketer/brand data on ad effectiveness. Phase 3 (not yet released) analyzes the use of attention metrics as inputs into measures of impression quality in different media contexts.

The ARF's approach remains consistent: when new measurement claims gain prominence, evaluate them rigorously. Scientific practice demands skepticism before endorsement.



PART III: INSTITUTIONAL EXPANSION, INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP AND THE NEXT SCIENTIFIC ERA

KANTAR

CONGRATS ON 90 YEARS

The Advertising Research Foundation has been a force for good in our industry—**elevating standards, inspiring curiosity, and advancing a deeper, human understanding of people.**

As a proud partner, Kantar has long admired your commitment to **truth, creativity, and research.**

Your leadership has shaped generations of marketers and innovators, setting a high standard for all. Here's to your **impact and the important work ahead!**

With admiration and gratitude,
from your partners at Kantar.



Scan the QR code
to explore more.



ARF | RESEARCH INITIATIVES

**UNPACKING AD EFFECTIVENESS:
THE ROLES OF MEDIA, CREATIVITY,
BRANDING, TARGETING AND
PREMIUM VS. UGC CONTENT**

THE RESEARCH LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE: PARTICIPATORY SCIENTIFIC GOVERNANCE (2019)

In 2019, the ARF formalized a new governance structure with the creation of the Research Leadership Committee (RLC). This move reflects an important institutional evolution. Scientific leadership in a complex ecosystem requires structured participation from practitioners operating at the forefront of change.

Comprised of senior research leaders from member organizations, the RLC plays a direct role in shaping research priorities, evaluating emerging issues and guiding project development. RLC members participate in drafting requests for proposals, reviewing interim findings and interpreting final reports. This participatory model strengthens both relevance and accountability.

Rather than setting the research agenda each year in a top-down manner, the ARF embedded practitioner

leadership directly into its research process. The result is a dynamic feedback loop between methodological innovation and operational reality.

The RLC's 401(k)-style funding allocation model further reinforces participatory governance. Member organizations allocate research investment dollars toward initiatives they deem the most strategically important. This mechanism democratizes prioritization while preserving coordinated direction.

The RLC ensures that the foundation's research agenda remains aligned with the most pressing industry challenges—whether those involve cross-platform attribution, identity resolution, privacy regulation, attention metrics or artificial intelligence. In doing so, the ARF reinforces a core scientific principle: knowledge production benefits from diverse perspectives structured through disciplined process.



MSI: INTEGRATING MARKETING SCIENCE INTO ADVERTISING SCIENCE (2020)

The integration of MSI in 2020 represented a complementary expansion of scope. **While CIMM deepened expertise in media measurement engineering, MSI broadened the foundation's intellectual reach into the wider field of marketing science.**

MSI had long served as a bridge between academic marketing research and corporate practice. Its working paper series, academic conferences and research partnerships connect leading scholars with major corporations seeking rigorous insight into pricing strategy, brand equity, consumer behavior, innovation management and long-term value creation. **Incorporating MSI gave the ARF much more depth and heft in these broader fields of marketing outside of the realm of advertising.**

Advertising does not operate in isolation. It is one element within a broader marketing system that includes pricing, distribution, product development and customer relationship management. Measuring advertising effectiveness increasingly requires integration with these adjacent disciplines. MSI brought academic depth to those intersections.

What's more, its network of distinguished scholars enhanced the ARF's capacity to convene interdisciplinary dialogue. Its research traditions emphasized things like long-term brand equity, customer lifetime value and structural modeling of market behavior. The integration strengthened global engagement as well. MSI's academic partnerships spanned institutions worldwide, reinforcing the ARF's ability to operate within an increasingly international marketing landscape.

UNIVERSE SIZING IN A CROSS-PLATFORM WORLD: THE DASH STUDY (2021-PRESENT)

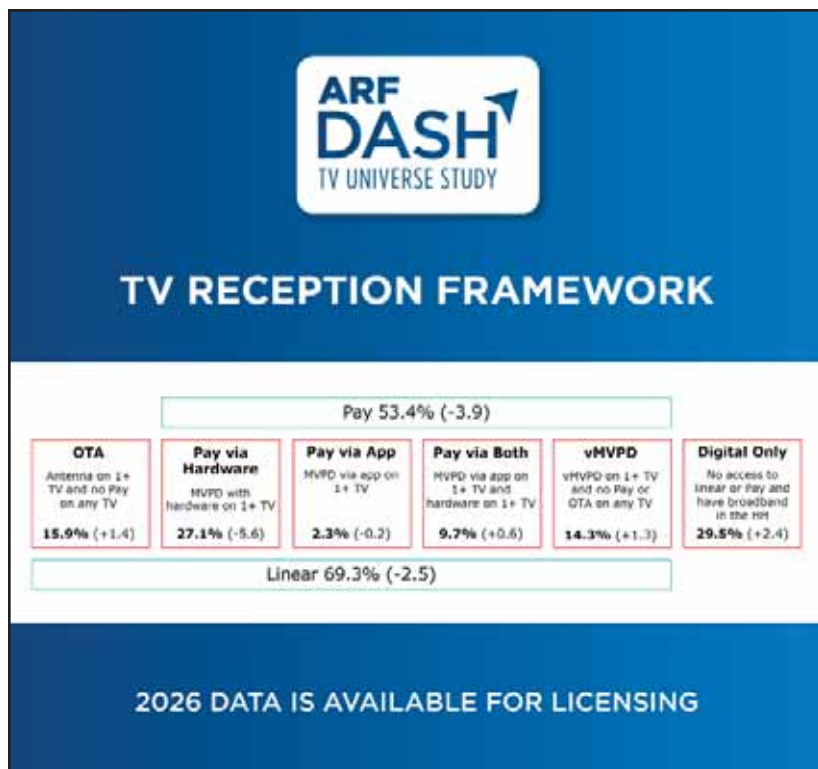
Connected television and the proliferation of streaming services, mobile devices and account sharing have created huge enumeration challenges. Traditional measurement methods have struggled to capture the complexity of modern household media consumption. Streaming viewership data offers granularity and scale, but requires calibration.

In 2021, the ARF launched the DASH TV Universe Study in partnership with NORC at the University of Chicago. DASH provides granular insight into how U.S. households connect to and consume television across platforms, devices and accounts.

DASH serves as essential infrastructure. Major measurement firms use DASH data for universe estimation, personification and modeling. Advertisers use DASH to see their offers and audiences in total market context.

In 2026, DASH was accredited by the Media Rating Council (MRC) — an affirmation of its vital role and methodological rigor. In an increasingly fragmented media ecosystem, DASH offers a reliable, syndicated standard on which the entire industry can depend.

To learn more, contact DASH@theARF.org.





AUDIENCExSCIENCE: THE MISSION IN MOTION

If the ARF's research initiatives represent its intellectual foundation, AUDIENCExSCIENCE represents its living expression. Over time, the conference has evolved into the foundation's **flagship forum for confronting the industry's most complex measurement questions**. It convenes advertisers, agencies, platforms, measurement firms, academics and technologists within a structured environment, in an event dedicated to evidence-based dialogue.

The conference embodies the integration of audience understanding and scientific discipline. In a fragmented media landscape, structured conversation becomes essential. Competing

methodologies, vendor claims, regulatory pressures and technological innovation can generate noise. AUDIENCExSCIENCE provides signal.

It is here that identity frameworks are debated, attention metrics are interrogated and AI applications are evaluated. It is here that privacy considerations intersect with measurement imperatives. **The event reinforces the ARF's neutrality. It is not a vendor showcase. It is a methodological forum.** The scientific practice of advertising is not static. It evolves through disciplined, collective interrogation. AUDIENCExSCIENCE ensures that interrogation continues.



THE ARF DAVID OGILVY AWARDS: CELEBRATING EVIDENCE-BASED CREATIVITY

The **ARF David Ogilvy Awards** is the premier awards competition that honors research- and insights-driven advertising.

Named for advertising legend David Ogilvy—nicknamed “the Father of Advertising” and champion of research-informed creative—the awards honor the transformative power of consumer research in driving brand strategy and delivering ROI.

The program traces its history back to the early 1990s, when Coca-Cola approached the ARF seeking to integrate research more systematically into creative development. The process and results were so successful that even creative agencies embraced it.

From that collaboration grew an awards program dedicated specifically to research-driven creative excellence. Winning campaigns are evaluated by juries of experts from across the industry, who assess them on the full scope of their campaign

development and execution, from research → insight → creative → impact.

Over the years, the awards have generated a growing repository of case studies that serve as educational and strategic resources for members, including an ARF Database that stands as a repository of knowledge enabling extensive research to be performed on the relationship between brand and sales advertising.

In a landscape where awards often reward novelty, the David Ogilvy Awards reinforce accountability. They remind the industry that creativity achieves its highest potential when grounded in validated consumer insights.

“Advertising people who ignore research are as dangerous as generals who ignore decodes of enemy signals.” – David Ogilvy, Ogilvy on Advertising



ARF | RESEARCH INITIATIVES

THE HANDBOOK FOR USING AI IN ADVERTISING RESEARCH



ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS: CAN AI RETHINK ITS OWN REASONING? *Using AI to Challenge Assumptions— An Experiment in Interpretive Research*

As large language models (LLMs) become more embedded in research and marketing workflows, they are often praised for accelerating analysis and enhancing efficiency. But can these tools also **improve the quality of thinking** in fast-paced environments, there's a risk that AI-generated outputs will simply echo users' assumptions, reinforcing cognitive shortcuts like confirmation bias rather than **prompting fresh insight**.

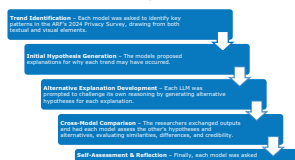
Can LLMs serve as critical thinking partners?

This question is at the heart of the newest research by the ARF team. By treating LLMs as **active participants in theoretical debate** (not just analytic tools) the ARF aims to assess their value in **generating hypotheses** and **alternative explanations** and **evaluating the merit of their outputs**.

METHOD

This research was conducted in parallel by two ARF researchers using their individually trained ChatGPT accounts. They each asked their own account of chat about a timely and sensitive topic: public attitudes toward AI and privacy. While both accounts operated under the same enterprise license, each reflected the unique prompt histories, research interests and interaction patterns of its respective user. This setup allowed for a comparison not just of AI-generated content, but how model "memory" and user influence shape reasoning over time.

The research was conducted in five stages:



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE NEXT SCIENTIFIC FRONTIER

Artificial intelligence introduces the most profound methodological inflection point since the rise of digital media. Large language models can generate surveys, code qualitative responses, synthesize reports and simulate consumer personas. Machine learning systems can optimize media allocation dynamically. The productivity implications are substantial. But so are the risks.

AI systems reflect the data on which they are trained. They can replicate bias, obscure assumptions and produce outputs that appear authoritative without transparent reasoning. For an institution committed to scientific practice, critical adoption is paramount. **The ARF has responded by producing research that helps members understand how to best use generative AI**, what pitfalls to avoid and how to accommodate its limitations. One such work is The ARF's Handbook for Using AI in Advertising Research.

Known as the AI handbook, this tome explores practical applications while emphasizing

validation. It examines translation accuracy, open-ended coding reliability, survey design implications and synthetic research use cases.

Another important series of ongoing experiments is **"The Psychology of Gen AI."** This series **investigates how large language models replicate—or diverge from—human cognitive and emotional processes.**

This research is critical. Advertising ultimately depends on human behavior. If AI-generated outputs diverge systematically from human perception, reliance without validation could distort strategy.

The ARF's approach mirrors its historical posture toward new methodologies. It neither resists innovation nor embraces it. It evaluates it, studies it and discovers its capabilities and shortcomings, and from there, develops methodologies and use cases that are applicable and beneficial.



DECADE BY DECADE: REINFORCING THE SCIENTIFIC VALUES IN INDUSTRY INFRASTRUCTURE

Across ninety years, the ARF's influence can be understood as a series of structural reinforcements aligned with industry transformation.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the foundation established legitimacy through standardized print and radio measurement.

In the 1950s and 1960s, it addressed broadcast expansion and introduced conceptual integration through the Media Model.

In the 1970s and 1980s, it validated copy testing methodologies and strengthened marketplace accountability.

In the 1990s, it navigated digital emergence and emphasized measurement comparability.

In the 2000s, it addressed modeling complexity and cross-channel integration.

In the 2010s, it reinforced privacy accountability and expanded its institutional ecosystem through integrating CIMM and MSI into its ecosystem.

In the 2020s, it confronts attention metrics and artificial intelligence with the same discipline that characterized earlier eras.

Over its almost century-long tenure, the pattern remains consistent: at moments of structural uncertainty, the ARF strengthens the scientific foundation of advertising.

“To Further, Through Research, the Scientific Practice of Advertising and Marketing.”

Ninety years after its founding, the ARF’s mission remains concise and at the same time, expansive.

Advertising continues to evolve. Media channels will once again shift. Technologies will accelerate and metrics will proliferate. Artificial intelligence is the newest dimension, and it is poised to reshape entire aspects of the ecosystem. Yet, in the presence of this awesome technology, the need for disciplined research has only increased.

The ARF was created in 1936 to ensure that advertising remains grounded in validated

evidence. Across nine decades of transformation, it has fulfilled that mandate by strengthening methodological standards, convening diverse stakeholders, validating emerging tools and reinforcing ethical integrity.

The mission that defined its founding continues to define its future:

To further, through research, the scientific practice of advertising and marketing.

The next ninety years begin with that same commitment.



Congratulations

to the **Advertising Research Foundation**
on 90 years of advancing the science
and impact of advertising.

From all of us at Comscore – **here’s to your
enduring leadership and the discoveries
that lay ahead.**



CONGRATULATIONS

**To the Advertising Research
Foundation on 90 Years of
Marketing Excellence.**

OMD is proud to stand alongside
you today & in the future.

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PARAMOUNT
CONGRATULATES
THE ARF ON
90 YEARS!





A Timeline of ARF Impact

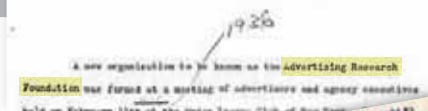
90+ Years of Research that Shaped the Industry

1930s—1940s

Establishing Research Legitimacy

1936

ARF Founded by 4As and ANA



1938

Radio Surpasses Magazines in Advertising Revenue

Marks the shift to electronic mass media and the need for more sophisticated audience measurement systems.

1939

Copy Testing Report

One of the earliest structured efforts to measure advertising effectiveness scientifically, helping legitimize copy testing as a research-based discipline.

1941

First Television Commercial Aired

Signals the beginning of television advertising and the future expansion of broadcast measurement standards.

1949

Canadian Magazine Study

The first complete probability sample of a nation's adult population demonstrating that advertising research could meet the highest statistical standards.

1949

Chicago Sun-Times Circulation Study

Expanded sample sizes and elevated expectations for rigor in print measurement.



1950s–1960s

Broadcast Growth and Conceptual Architecture

1954

ARF Publishes Measurement Standards for TV and Radio

Established formal standards for broadcast measurement during television's rapid expansion.



1954

National Survey of Radio & TV Ownership

The first national survey of broadcast device ownership in the U.S., strengthening foundational media metrics.

1955

Television Ownership Measured by the U.S. Census

Following ARF advocacy, television ownership began to be measured by the U.S. Census in an annual study, until it was incorporated into the decennial census in 1965—embedding advertising metrics into national statistical infrastructure.

1956

Videotape Enables Pre-Recorded Commercials

Technological innovation reshapes production, scheduling and measurement possibilities.

1960

***Journal of Advertising Research (JAR)* Founded**

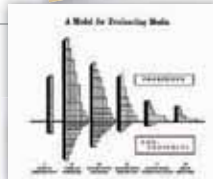
The first academic journal devoted exclusively to advertising and marketing research, institutionalizing scientific dialogue in the field.



1961

The ARF Media Model

Introduced a shared framework for understanding media performance from exposure to persuasion to sales—a conceptual architecture still influential today.



1961

Marketing Science Institute (MSI) Founded

The institute was created to establish marketing as a rigorous scientific discipline.



1963

Media Rating Council (MRC) Established

Created at the request of the U.S. Congress in the wake of the Quiz Show Scandals, the MRC became the industry's self-regulatory auditing body to ensure media measurement services are valid, reliable and ethically conducted.

Late
60s

MSI Advances Scientific Marketing Infrastructure

MSI relocates to Cambridge and begins collaboration with Harvard Business School, strengthening ties between academic research and executive practice.



1970s–1980s

Validation and Accountability

1969

FACT Fieldwork Certification Program

Established audit and certification standards for research quality control.

Early
70s

MSI Launches PIMS (Profit Impact of Marketing Strategy)

A landmark cross-sectional database (with GE) linking marketing strategy to profitability, demonstrating empirical connections between market share, quality and ROI.

1977

Project Payout

Linked advertising and promotion directly to supermarket sales in controlled environments, foreshadowing scanner-based measurement.

1979

ANA Publishes “Effective Frequency: The Relationship Between Frequency & Advertising Effectiveness”

Report based largely on research from the ARF (with some contributions from MSI).

1979

U.S. Advertising Spend Reaches \$27.9B

Reflects the scale and economic importance of advertising entering the modern era.

Late
70s–80s

MSI Shapes Policy & Consumer Research

MSI assembled expert teams influencing FTC and USDA policy discussions and helped introduce qualitative consumer research methods, including foundations of consumer ethnography.

1981

Copy Research Validation Initiative

Tested copy testing systems against real-world outcomes, reinforcing predictive validity.

1982

PACT Principles Established

Codified nine principles for responsible copy testing, shaping creative evaluation standards.

1989

The World Wide Web Is Launched

Signals the coming transformation of media, commerce, and measurement.

1989

BehaviorScan Study Presented at ARF

Advanced single-source measurement linking ad exposure to purchase behavior.



1990s

Digital Emergence and Measurement Reform

Early
90s

MSI Research Advances Brand Equity & Marketing ROI

MSI-sponsored work formalized brand equity measurement and expanded frameworks for marketing accountability and return on marketing investment.



1991

Copy Validity Project

Validated whether copy metrics could identify known marketplace winners, reinforcing multi-metric evaluation.

1991

National Measurement Committee Formed

Repositioned ARF as a central forum for ratings reform and accountability.

1994

Effective Frequency Debate Catalyst

Challenged long-held assumptions about reach and repetition, reshaping media planning dialogue.

1995

Recency Theory Presented at ARF (Erwin Ephron)

Influenced modern media scheduling by reframing the role of timing in advertising effectiveness.



Mid
90s

Guiding Principles for Interactive Media Measurement

Helped define early digital measurement standards amid fragmentation.

2000s

Cross-Platform Complexity

2002

MSI Launches "Relevant Knowledge" Monograph Series

Bridged academic insights and executive decision-making in areas including innovation, social networks and marketing ROI.

2003

Media Model Updated for Digital Integration

Adapted the ARF Media Model to incorporate internet and interactive media.



2004

Majority of U.S. Homes Connected by Broadband

Accelerated the urgency of digital measurement innovation.

2005

Audience Measurement Symposium Launched

Precursor to AUDIENCExSCIENCE, creating a collaborative forum for cross-platform accountability.

2006

Capitol Topic "The Connected Customer" added to MSI Research Priorities

guiding academic research.

2009

JAR Special Issue: "What We Know About Advertising"

Synthesized decades of empirical research into a consolidated evidence base.



2009

Coalition for Innovative Media Measurement (CIMM) Founded

CIMM was established by television networks, agencies and advertisers to improve cross-platform audience measurement.

2010s

Neuro, ROI, Privacy and Ecosystem Expansion

2010

Five Co-Sponsored Conferences Outside the U.S. Expand MSI Global Connection

2010–
2011

CIMM USA TouchPoints & Cross-Platform Pilots

Introduced hub-and-fusion methodologies to understand cross-media consumption, including early three-screen pilot studies.

2011

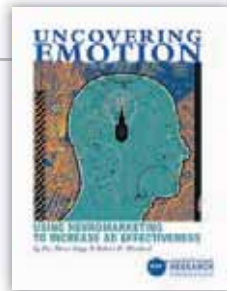
CIMM TAXI Initiative Begins

Laid groundwork for standardized cross-platform asset identification using Ad-ID and EIDR.

2010–
2013

NeuroStandards Collaboration & Neuro Studies Presented

Independent evaluations of neuromarketing vendors brought transparency and comparability to emerging neuroscience methods.



2013

CIMM Data Warehouse RFP & SMPTE Collaboration

Advanced centralized cross-platform video measurement infrastructure and standards.

2014

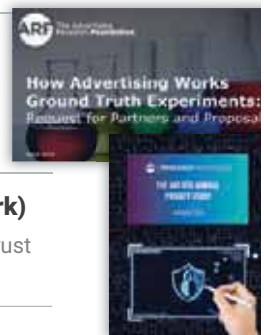
Connected Devices Surpass Global Population

Marked a structural shift toward multi-device consumer behavior.

2016–
2017

How Advertising Works: Ground Truth Experiments

Large-scale analysis of 5,000 campaigns across 12 years and 41 countries demonstrated cross-channel synergy and strengthened ROI modeling frameworks.



2017–
2026

ARF Privacy Study (Annual Longitudinal Benchmark)

Tracks consumer attitudes toward data use, institutional trust and digital advertising transparency over time.

2018

CIMM Joins the ARF

Expanded ARF's cross-platform measurement and data calibration capabilities.

2019

Research Leadership Committee (RLC) Formed

Formalized practitioner governance in research prioritization.



at the
ARF



2020s

Streaming, Attention and Artificial Intelligence

2020

Marketing Science Institute (MSI) Joins the ARF

Strengthened interdisciplinary collaboration between academia and industry.



2021

ARF DASH Study (with NORC) Launched

Produced granular household-level streaming and device data to support cross-platform calibration.



2022

Large Language Models Become Market-Ready

The commercialization of LLMs accelerated AI integration into research, analytics and creative workflows.

2022–
2026

Attention Measurement Validation Initiative

Systematic evaluation of attention metrics for reproducibility, validity and practical application in media buying.



2024–
2026

Handbook for Using AI in Advertising Research

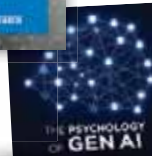
Published guidance on responsible AI implementation across survey design, translation, coding and reporting.



2025–
2026

Psychology of Gen AI Research Series

Experimental work examining how generative AI systems replicate—and diverge from—human cognition, defining boundaries for AI-assisted research.



The ARF's Throughline

Across nine decades, the pattern is consistent:

- When new media emerge, **the ARF strengthens measurement.**
- When methodologies proliferate, **the ARF validates them.**
- When systems fragment, **the ARF calibrates them.**
- When trust is challenged, **the ARF reinforces standards.**
- When new technologies appear, **the ARF tests them.**

*To further, through research,
the scientific practice
of advertising and marketing.*

The Expanded Throughline

Across nine decades:

- ARF** institutionalized advertising research.
- MSI** advanced the scientific foundations of marketing strategy and ROI.
- CIMM** engineered cross-platform and return-path innovation.

*Together, these organizations
shaped the architecture
of modern marketing science
and media measurement.*

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Celebrating 90 Years of Advancing Advertising Science

Circana is proud to stand alongside the Advertising Research Foundation to help marketers turn data into meaningful business outcomes and shape a more intelligent, accountable, and connected future for media.



**Congratulations on
90 remarkable years and
here's to what's next.**

Lindsay Franke

Group President, Deputy CEO NA, Ipsos

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Head of Insights & Thought Leadership,
Samsung Ads

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SVP, Data Strategy and Insights, People Inc.

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Director of Digital and Performance Marketing,
Jaguar Land Rover



Congratulations to the ARF on 90 Years of Advancing Advertising Research

Ninety years ago the question was whether advertising could be measured at all. Today it is quality: which impressions are worth having, and why. Through both, the ARF has kept the industry honest. As an ARF member, **Mediaprobe** does its part, researching how emotional engagement connects media quality to the outcomes advertisers are paying for.

Here's to the next ninety.





Lead with Science

ARF Membership

As an Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) member, all employees have unlimited access to ARF Member Benefits—including events, communities and research resources.

The ARF provides a wide array of learning, networking and leadership opportunities.

Mission: To further, through research, the scientific practice of advertising and marketing.

ARF Communities

Member-led and ARF-facilitated peer groups formed around key topics, career goals and purposes.

COUNCILS

**WOMEN IN
ANALYTICS**

**YOUNG
PROS**

ARF Councils

Addressing today's biggest issues facing our members... by our members.

ANALYTICS

B2B

COGNITION

CREATIVE

CROSS-PLATFORM MEASUREMENT

CULTURAL EFFECTIVENESS

LA MEDIA RESEARCH

ORGANIZATIONAL INSIGHTS

PHARMA

SHOPPER INSIGHTS

SOCIAL

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TO GET
INVOLVED**



Knowledge Center

Your source for vetted, unbiased, trusted information and industry insights—ARF research, publications and exclusive access to ARF research leaders.



POWERSEARCH

The industry's most trusted source of information, case studies, news and research



KNOWLEDGE EXPERTS

Personalized research assistance from our team of professionals



PAST EVENT RESOURCES

Videos, presentations and key takeaways from past ARF events



JOURNAL OF ADVERTISING RESEARCH

Quarterly findings, methodologies and applications changing the science of our industry

KNOWLEDGE AT HAND

Quick, easy-to-read references on the industry's most pressing topics

CMO BRIEFS

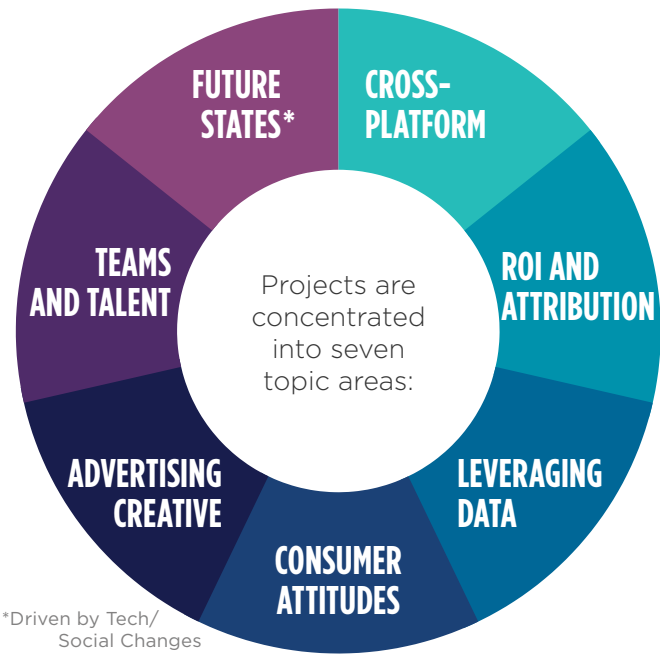
One-page summaries of ARF research, white papers and leading-edge perspectives

NEWS YOU CAN USE Highlights of must-read, current industry news



ARF Research

Original, critical research answering today's toughest questions.



RESEARCH INITIATIVES

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| AI in Advertising | Influencers |
| Attention and Media | News Playbook |
| Audio Congruence and Effectiveness | Privacy |
| Benchmarking | Retail Media Measurement |
| Dimensions of Media Quality | Synthetic Data |
| Data Quality Initiative | The Future of Media Planning |

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INVOLVED



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Virtual learning taught by industry leaders. Enhance your knowledge base with practical insights, strategies and enhance your on-the-job effectiveness.

ARF Charitable Foundation



ARF WIDE

Enabling talented students with the access, support and resources they need to be day-one ready

ARF Subsidiaries



The **Marketing Science Institute** brings together renowned scholars and leading marketers to create an unbiased platform for scientific research, purposeful collaborations and peer-to-peer networking.



The **Coalition for Innovative Media Measurement (CIMM)** is a non-partisan, pan-industry coalition that embraces the entire media and advertising ecosystem”



2025 Top Member Questions

Marketer Member Questions:

- What are consumer sentiments and reactions to the use of CGI/ AI in advertising?
- What are best practices in sports sponsorship marketing?
- What types of ad testing methodologies should we consider doing for understanding brand metrics and creative effectiveness?

Media Member Questions:

- What are the current trends in influencer marketing, including budgeting and management?
- What is the market sizing for TV commerce and shoppable ads?
- What research shows the effectiveness of TV branded content relative to standard TV advertising?

Research Member Questions:

- Are there any benchmarks available that show the typical levels needed in TV/CTV campaigns to achieve specific brand metrics?
- What research justifies the use of a 48-hour lookback window for digital exposure in brand lift studies?
- What is the relationship between building familiarity and mid-lower funnel metrics like unaided awareness and consideration?

ARF-MSI Member Questions:

- How is AI impacting consumers' search and shopping behavior?
- Among digital media KPIs, which metrics are leading indicators of conversion/purchase/ad lift/ROIs?
- What tactic(s) are most impactful to nudge customers to make in-store purchases for omnichannel retailers?

SCAN HERE
for more
questions
and answer



CHEERS TO 90 YEARS

Happy anniversary
to the **ARF!**

We are thrilled to
celebrate
90 years of
**innovation &
collaboration.**

Here's to the next
chapter of **discovery.**

 **TikTok**





Congratulations

to our partners at the
Advertising Research
Foundation on 90 years!

For nine decades, the ARF has demonstrated outstanding industry leadership and Google is proud to support ARF's mission.





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