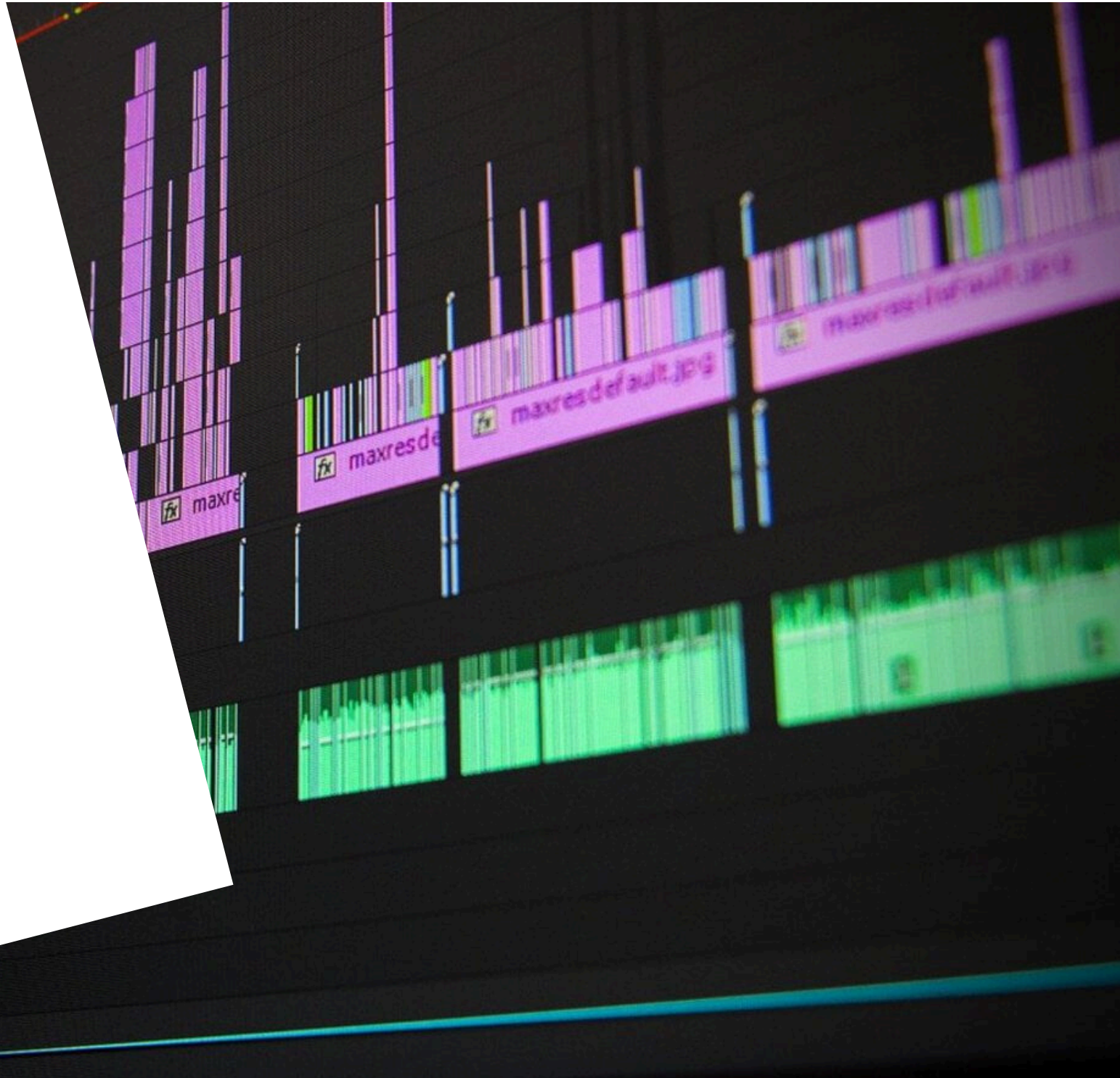
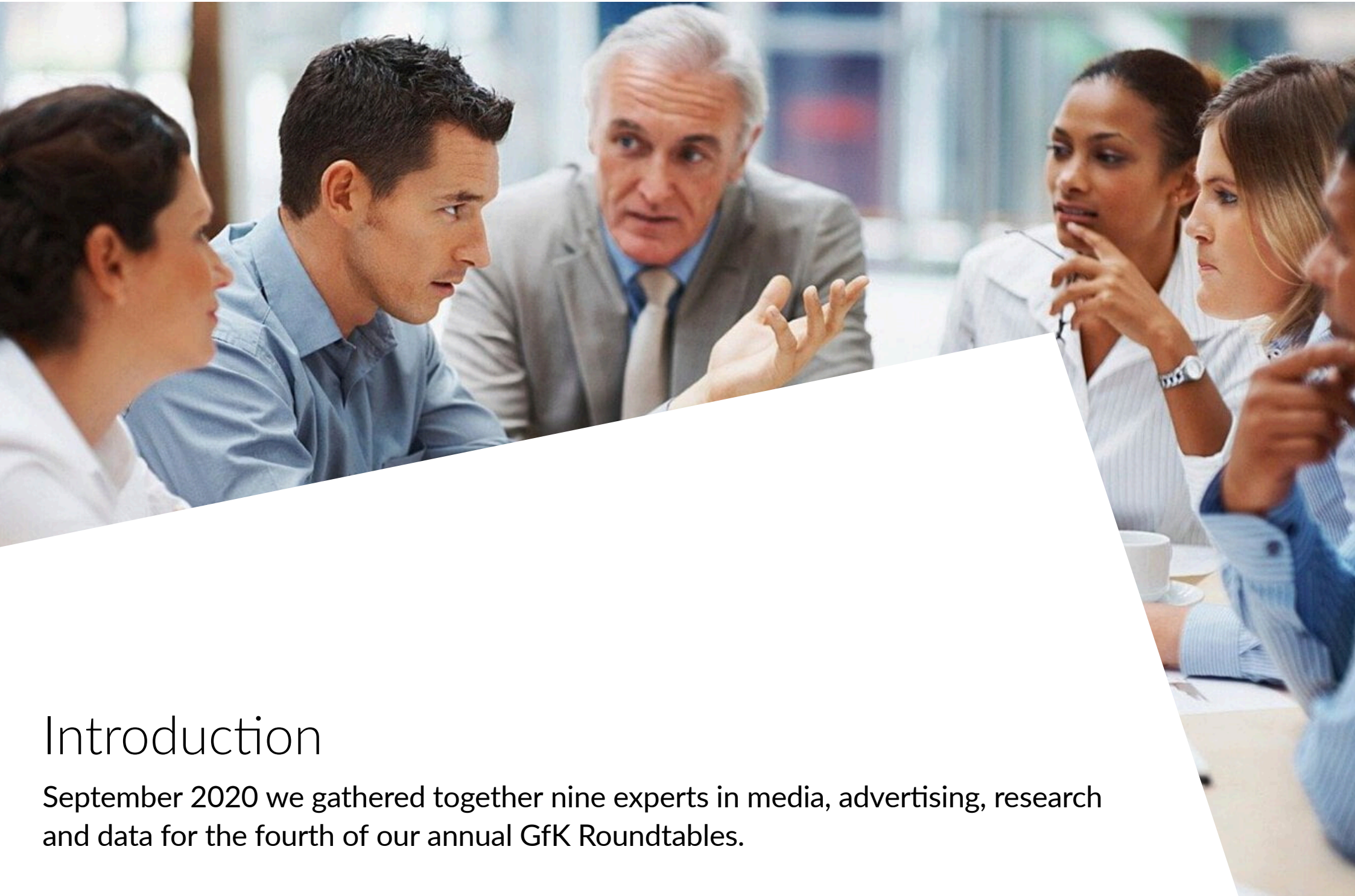
A permanent state of flux

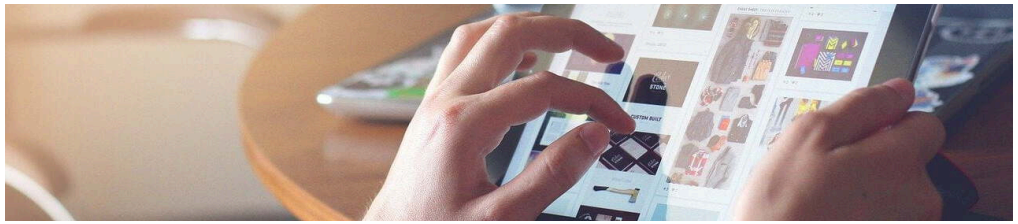
Media, advertising and the global pandemic





Introduction

September 2020 we gathered together nine experts in media, advertising, research and data for the fourth of our annual GfK Roundtables.



In September 2020 we gathered together nine experts in media, advertising, research and data for the fourth of our annual GfK Roundtables.

Appropriately enough, with the global COVID-19 pandemic still restricting travel, working practices and many other aspects of our lives, this year's roundtable was held online.

Our first GfK white paper three years ago examined the future organization of currency media measurement, the second investigated the opportunities for Total Media Measurement, and the third discussed online video advertising.

The **objective of this year's Roundtable** was to evaluate the impact of the ongoing pandemic on media and advertising, both in the short- and long-term.

When we scheduled the roundtable, we had hoped that we would be mostly talking about the crisis in the past tense. While its impact varies from country to country, the pandemic persists. Concerns about a second wave mean that it is hard to talk about what a 'new normal' might look like, given that - at the time of writing this paper – we are in a new 'abnormal', with no idea of how long this will persist. We are in a permanent state of flux. Depending on the development and distribution of an effective vaccine, this period of adaptation and limitations on behavior could last for years as opposed to months.

So our panel faced something of a challenge, but this white paper shows how well they rose to the challenge of attempting to make sense of these unprecedented times for the media and advertising industries.

Contributors to the debate and this white paper are:
Roland Abold – VP Sales & Commercial Excellence, **GfK**
Daniel Bischoff – Chief Marketing & Operations Officer, **RTL AdConnect**
Jenny Bullis – Regional Director Marketing Science, **EMEA, Facebook**
Alfred Heidekum – CTO | Practice Lead Data Sciences **EMEA, Publicis Media**
Daniel Meyer – Director Market Insights, Central Europe & Eastern Emerging Markets, **Google**
Katty Roberfroid – Director General, **egta**
Saskia Schatteman – CEO, **VAR,** Belgium
Phil Smith – Director General, **ISBA**
Timo Thomsen – Vice President Strategy, Product & Innovation **GfK**

The roundtable was **moderated by Richard Marks**, founder of Research The Media and Research Director of **asi.**

Management Summary

Some key takeouts



Some key takeouts

- **Catalyst for change:** The crisis has provided an enforced opportunity for consumers to discover new content and investigate new technology. This has meant greater trial of new services, and exploration of the capabilities of connected devices - often those are devices and services already owned and subscribed to. The crisis has been both a catalyst for changes in lifestyle and media consumption and a stimulus for escalating pre-existing trends.

- **A battle for screen time:** While the early days of the crisis underlined the primacy of television as the go-to medium, now that more consumers have experienced SVOD and other streaming services, the competition that broadcasters face in their battle for screen time has intensified.

- **Creativity in content has flourished:** Although there has been a hiatus in content production in the short-term, the crisis has fostered new, more agile, approaches to producing certain forms of content that may endure. It has enabled advertising to become more authentic and creative, to think on its feet.

- **Sports rights revaluated:** The damage to the appeal of sports, particularly football will force a reassessment of the value of sports rights to brands and broadcasters, even when fans return to stadia.

- **Media owners to reconsider advertising:** While the crisis has stimulated SVOD subscriptions, advertising-funded models for media consumption will remain an essential part of the system. The economic recession will increase many homes' dependency on free (ad-funded) sources of media) as personal budgets are hit. The challenge though is that the impact of the crisis on the advertising industry will reduce media owner revenue from advertising and increase their dependency on other revenue streams, such as subscriptions. Hybrid funding models and the balance between revenue streams will become even more of a hot topic for media owners.

- **Local and regional vs global players:** The crisis has further strengthened the global players at the expense of national and regional media owners. Co-operation and collaboration amongst national and regional media



groups was already underway before the crisis – on content, on marketing and on ad sales. It is even more of an imperative now.

- **Rethink outdoor:** The outdoor industry faces significant and long-term restructuring. Greater incidence of homeworking and a shift in balance away from cities will restructure national economies and travel patterns, with greater regional spread of the workforce and less commuting. This presents major opportunities for local economies, but it is a significant concern for city centers reliant on centralized office working and related support industries.

- **Radio making waves:** Changes in the daily working pattern have impacted radio consumption during the crisis and will continue to do so as the classic structure of the listening day, particularly drivetime, is radically altered. Streaming live radio and podcasts are also having significant impact on listener behavior.

- **Cinema takes a hit.** New models for the release of movies have been piloted, with for example, direct-to-home release of major movies. However, issues such as the postponement of the latest Bond film forcing Cineword to temporally close all of its 128 cinemas in the UK and Ireland, indicate that the movie industry has major challenges whilst the pandemic persists. Again, a hybrid approach may be the way forward

- **The challenge of media planning:** Media owners and planners will need to understand and adapt to the implications of post-COVID lifestyle changes. How will media fit into people's lives? The 'typical day' will be even less relevant than it was before.

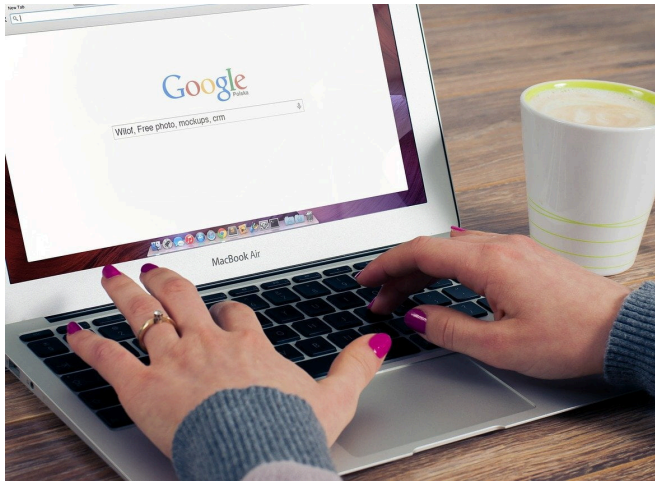
- **Crowd searching:** The future for events and live entertainment is particularly unclear. Will attendance eventually return to pre-COVID levels? Is the desire to gather in crowds hard-wired into us or will we see variations by age and vulnerability? Our experts agreed that current experiments with hybrid events (socially distant audiences and streaming to homes) could actually widen long-term options for revenue, opening up events to new audiences.



Impact on media consumption

An enforced opportunity for discovery





An enforced opportunity for discovery

Our experts broadly agreed that the initial period of lockdown was less a case of people adopting new technology and more about people actually having time and motivation to understand the capabilities of their existing technology: what those apps on their connected TV actually do, the fact that their mobile phone can do video conferencing etc.

> *"COVID was not changing, obviously, the offerings in the market, it was not changing the content that was available in the market in the first place. I think what was interesting to see, was that people had time, and probably, they spent more time with the same things that they used to before, but they also tried new things*
>
> **Daniel Meyer, Google**

Many people were discovering the full potential of devices connected to broadband. The initial phase of lockdown was a period of learning and adaptation for many, working out how to stream content to the TV, how to work Zoom conferencing, how to order groceries online. Whilst broadband penetration has grown greatly in recent years, arguably many homes have not necessarily been making the most of the potential offered by the digital pipe into the home. Lockdown saw people maximizing connected devices, connecting out of necessity.

Data from Google on search queries indicates that, in the first phase of COVID, there was a lot of demand to understand the virus, its symptoms and safety guidelines. The second phase shifted to queries about how to live life at home during lockdown: home schooling, home offices, exercise. This then shifted once again to how we entertain ourselves: our pastimes and media entertainment options.

This is also **reflected in GfK data tracking** online use across Europe and LATAM pre and post COVID. The pandemic has greatly influenced the average duration of time spent across different categories online. All markets are different, but broadly there was an initial increase in use of News, Communication and Public Services (information) sites as people sought to understand the virus. These categories then began to level out as the previously low performing categories of Travel, Sports and Automotive sites showed a huge resurgence. However the level of use on information sites is on the rise again.
Source: GfK cross-media single source panel

In this sense the crisis worked to accelerate technology use and the further integration of online into people's everyday lives, widening usage across demographic groups previously less inclined towards new ways of doing things, now forced out of necessity to learn new behaviors, seek out new experiences. The early evidence is that a lot of these new behaviors will outlast the pandemic.

The enduring strength of TV and the rise of co-viewing

GfK audience data from around the world shows that the initial phase of lockdown saw huge increases in TV viewing as captive audiences sought information and reassurance. This confirmed, if there were any doubt, that TV remains the default trusted medium for many, with people wanting to share the experience of seeing history unfolding with their own eyes.

Meanwhile data from GfK global markets shows a marked rise in co-viewing as families gathered around their TV sets, countering recent trends towards the splintering of audiences across devices in the home. Related to this was a rise in viewing from younger people:

> *"Especially on younger target audiences, they were suddenly sitting in front of a medium they have not had an experience with, a touch point with, in the last couple of years together with their families, in a positive manner."*

Daniel Bischoff, RTL

Prediction: "The move to streaming and viewers' complete mastery of their watching schedule are trends that will stay."
Katty Roberfroid, egta



Accelerating the rise of streaming services

The impact of the crisis in stimulating subscriptions to SVOD services like Netflix is well documented, and Disney+ actually launched during the pandemic to huge success. There was also an uplift in viewing to streaming services from broadcasters, both catch up and VOD with a voracious demand for content.

There is general agreement amongst our experts that whilst initial viewing volumes have not been maintained, increased use of streaming services – SVOD and BVOD – will be sustained over time as many have added it to their viewing options

for the first time. It is important to note how much of this activity is delivered through the TV set itself, so the rise in streaming is not necessarily driven by a migration to other devices. People were discovering the potential of a TV set connected to broadband.

> *"It is, yes, a shift of devices, but it is also a shift of distribution channels. So, it is streaming, but it is also streaming on the main TV set and realizing how easy it can be once you have the right TV."*

Katty Roberfroid, egta

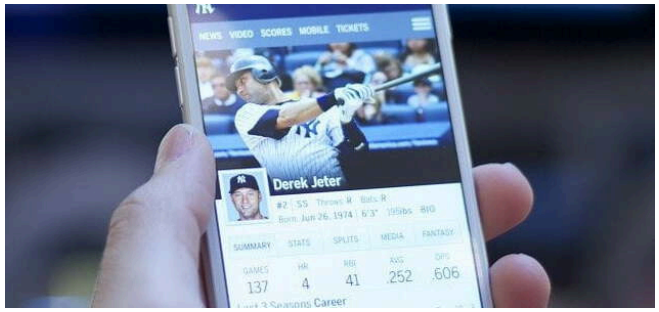
Whilst providing a shot in the arm to SVOD services, the pandemic is also having an unfolding economic effect that may limit the number of services people are willing to pay for. The market is increasingly crowded and household budgets finite. As we discuss later, the ad-funded model will remain a vital part of how media is supported.

A crisis in content production

The crisis drove an explosion in self-produced content and greater usage of newer platforms like TikTok, by newer talent, as well as TV creators and talent getting content out during lockdown. It has been a massive challenge for high-end producers though, who are having to find new ways to produce quality content. The shutdown of production for an extended period will have a delayed effect on next year's TV schedules and SVOD offerings.

We have seen a huge growth in innovative approaches to delivering content. From filmed commercials to individual celebrities. It has created so many innovative touch points with audiences that it has become an opportunity to extend reach.





An impending crisis in sports rights

Sports were largely absent for the early months of the crisis. Many major tournaments, linchpins of the TV schedules like the European Championships, Wimbledon and the Olympics, were cancelled or postponed. Sport gradually returned to television in the summer but behind closed doors and with truncated schedules. There is a question over how sustainable current levels of sports sponsorship and transmission rights can be, the longer it remains a devalued and over-supplied product. How attractive to brands and broadcasters is sport without fans? Will we see a sports rights crisis imminently as brands reassess the value of their involvement, with a knock-on effect on TV rights?

> *"If you look at it, the big sponsorships around live sports events are dominated by non-tangible brands, financial brands, brands that are seeking to connect to consumers through an experience, right? Linking this through sports is, probably for quite some time now in the future, not as possible as it was before. Those brands are looking for 'what is the next experience, where I can connect best with consumers and position myself as an enabler?"*
>
> **Daniel Bischoff, RTL**

Strengthening of global players

There is debate both within the media industry and more widely about the effect the crisis will have long term on the balance of global versus local players. **Global players have been better placed to weather the storm and in many cases the crisis has been an accelerant for them,** in contrast to national and regional media owners who have been badly hit in terms of the ability to produce, distribute and attract advertising.

Our experts acknowledge that potential shift in power, but argue that there is still a strong role for local content: not just news and weather but content which has a direct connection to people's lives.

It is clear that moves towards greater collaboration between national and regional broadcasters, already underway before the crisis, have become even more important. There are already examples of collaboration on technology platforms, content co-production, the marketing of TV as a medium and increasing the ease of advertising on TV. Undoubtedly the crisis will accelerate the move towards alliances and in some cases actual consolidation.

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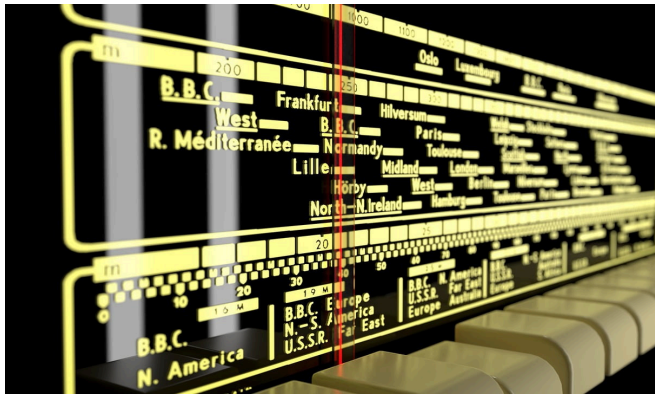
"The general sentiment in egta is definitely: compete on content, collaborate on all else. So, everything that has to do with simplifying the sale of advertising, media measurement, standards, technology, it really is let us collaborate on all that and make ourselves and our media more accessible. Compete on content and do not make your content available everywhere else if you want to keep something of a premium please. So that definitely is the feeling."

Katty Roberfroid, egta



Radio adapting to lifestyle changes

While TV usage – both broadcast and VOD - was initially stimulated by the crisis, the impact on radio has been more mixed. Egta has been tracking audio listening across their markets and it is clear that homeworking has impacted on drive time, with consumption in the car falling drastically during the early stages of the crisis. It is likely that home offices will remain an increased proportion of the workforce after the crisis, which is changing the whole structure of a listening day for many and blurring the differences between weekdays and weekends. We may need to re-evaluate the classic ‘shape’ of radio listening across the day.

The platform profile of audio consumption has also been changing, with a noticeable increase in streaming live radio and other audio, including podcasts. Meanwhile longer-term changes in travel patterns could present further challenges for audio, with driverless cars having implications.

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"Another big change we see is technology in cars, which will have a big impact on media consumption. If you are driving your car you need to pay attention, voice assisted services are ideal if we go to driverless cars, media consumption can change significantly because you are free to watch media versus just listening to media."

Saskia Schatteman, VAR

Hybrid events, created by necessity, may bring future opportunities

There has been a huge impact on the entertainment sector, in terms of concerts, theatre, and live events. We have seen some cautious experimentation with live streaming of events and, with the partial lifting of restrictions, some events have combined socially-distant live audiences with wider streaming: effectively, hybrid events.

There is some **debate amongst our experts about how soon people will be willing to join crowds again**, even after this pandemic is over, given how it has highlighted the ease of transmission of illness. It is likely that this will vary greatly by age. The spread of illegal raves in countries like the UK shows a latent demand from the young to get back to normal, but older age groups may well have learned more cautious behaviors that become ingrained.

It is still unclear how long it will take for public entertainment levels to return to pre-COVID levels, or whether indeed they ever will. It could be generational, or it may be that the instinct to socialize in crowds, which has persisted despite recent terrorist attacks and other scares, is hard-wired.

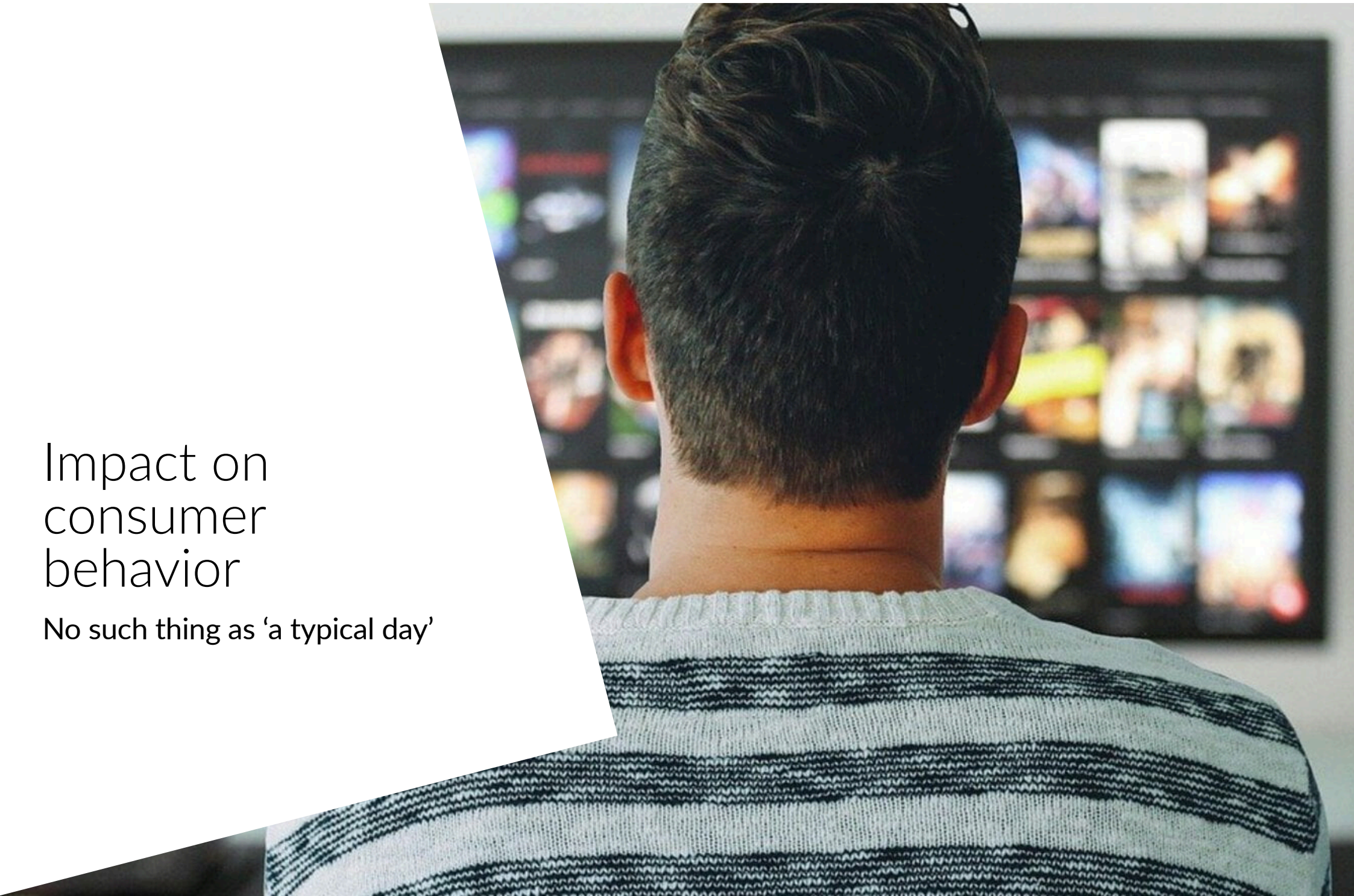
While our panel is concerned about the impact on the entertainment sector, the crisis has fostered innovation and there is some cautious optimism that hybrid events could be a model that actually widens revenue opportunities once life gets back to some semblance of 'normal'. People will be able to 'virtually' attend events that they may not have physically attended even before the crisis.

The cinema industry has also taken a major hit, but again new models for the release of movies have - of necessity - been piloted. The concept of direct-to-home release of major movies has been discussed in the cinema industry for a while. The release of Mulan on Disney+ (which otherwise would have been in movie theatres) proved hugely successful in driving subscription for Disney+ and could prove to be a watershed moment. However, that was a situation where the content owner had its own distribution platform. The disappointing in-theatre performance of Tenet and the repeated postponement of the latest Bond film indicate that the movie industry has major challenges whilst the pandemic persists. Again, a hybrid approach may be the way forward.



Impact on consumer behavior

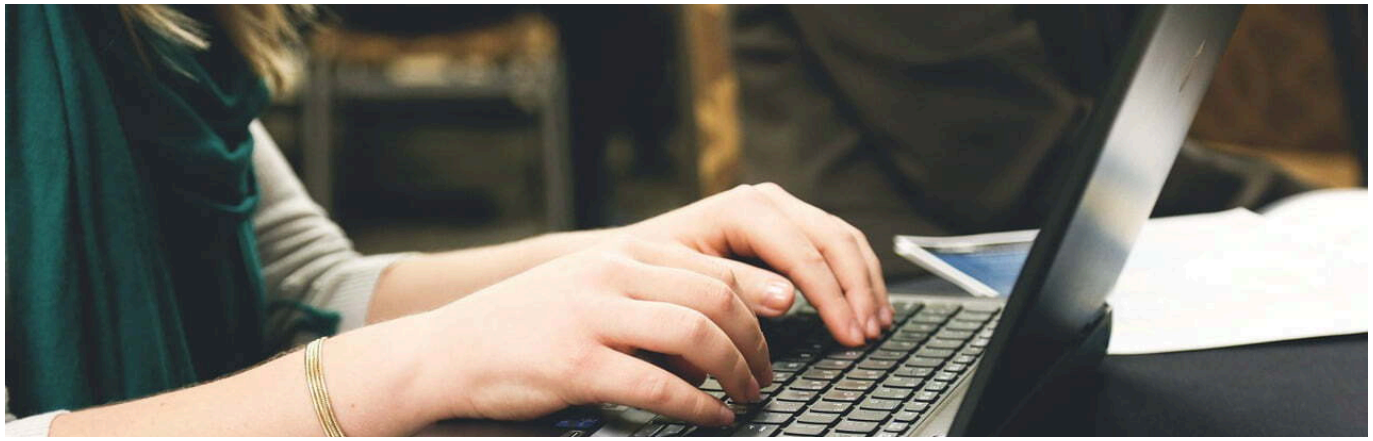
No such thing as ‘a typical day’



No such thing as ‘a typical day’

It’s important to note that not everyone was suddenly at home in 2020 with time on their hands. For frontline workers the situation has been incredibly stressful, whilst many have struggled to continue to work and juggle other responsibilities. However, with a sizable proportion of the population forced to work from home or on different forms of furlough or government salary assistance, it is clear that many people’s mobility was severely restricted. Lifestyles will remain constrained to varying degrees until the virus is defeated, constrained either by safety guidelines or people’s own caution. This means people are less likely to be traveling and commuting, out in the evenings and inevitably have more time at home to fill.

So the question is how consumer behavior will be impacted in the long term, in particular with regard to working practices. A significant and permanent increase in home working would have major implications for society and the economy. It would be beneficial in terms of the environmental impact of commuting, with the workforce balanced more between rural and urban areas and less extreme reliance on city centers. Homeworking also fosters diversity and inclusivity, opening up flexible work opportunities for the disabled, for parents, for those in rural areas.



There are nonetheless concerns about the societal and economic implications of a move to homeworking, with a structural shift in the leisure retail and entertainment and a slowdown of urban economies.

A higher proportion of homeworking does seem inevitable. This has implications for ad planning. Even before the pandemic it was already hard to talk about the typical shape of someone's day. Ironically while lockdowns enforce an unusual degree of conformity, the resulting longer-term increase in homeworking will make it even harder for researchers and advertisers in particular to generalize about the shape of someone's day: when they are available, what they see and when they see it. Will there be a ‘typical’ day anymore? Not just from person to person depending on lifestyle, but across a person’s week juggling office and home days. This complexity and diversity in behaviors could strengthen the need for precise micro-targeting, as opposed to reliance on broad demographics and dayparts.

"I think the ability to cluster, the ability to describe what is going on, like on a social level, but also on an individual level, is getting more and more complex. That means that on a macro- and micro-level it is going to be much harder to cluster and to define what is the typical day of my consumer, or even what is my consumer, who is my consumer, right?"

Daniel Bischoff, RTL

Impact on transport, travel and out of home advertising likely to be long-lasting

The pandemic is likely to have a lasting impact on commuting and transport in three main ways: an increase in homeworking reducing the numbers of commuters, more variation in travel patterns across the week away from the 9-5 office job, and also a shift from public to private transport (cars, bicycles, walking).

A long-term impact of the crisis will be a



reduction in what people judge to be an acceptable degree of crowding on trains and buses during rush hour, even when things eventually do get back to a new normal. All of these factors have implications for media exposure, be it to mobile media accompanying travel or to ambient advertising. The effect on outdoor media is likely to be profound and enduring.

"The Belgian public transport sector is not expecting to be back to normal in the next five years, even if there is a vaccine next year. They have studies and they have talked to people, and it is going to take a long time because people are so worried. I think outdoor media need to think about that. Anyone connected to commuting and mobility media will need to reinvent themselves: how is this going to go and how will we successfully reach audiences?"

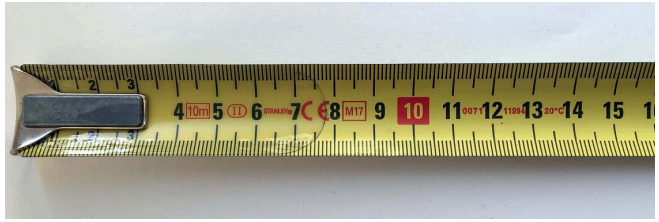
Saskia Schatteman, VAR

Prediction: "The office environment will change permanently, and it will change city centers and our use of media around them forever."
Phil Smith, ISBA



Changing patterns of consumption and purchasing

An increased demand for quality



An increased demand for quality

In some countries the early stages of the pandemic saw panic purchasing, a desire to stockpile and scarcity of some products as a result. However, supply chains remained largely in place and, according to GfK's Consumer Panel, FMCG sales for Jan-May 2020 vs 2019 grew across Europe. FMCG sales in markets such as Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, Germany and Denmark grew by 15% or more. We also saw an increase of spend per shopping trip for the same period.

In many cases quality, health and indulgence has been winning out as a buying motivator over price. On average across Europe:

- **36% agree** to "actively trying to eat a healthier diet to stay fit and healthy/boost immune system"
- **27% agree** to "allowing ourselves treats/ gratifications more than before (eg chocolates, candy, ice cream, chips, alcoholic drinks)"
- **23% agree** to "more often preferring products where a brand name guarantees quality"

Source: GfK Consumer Panel Adaptation Report

Following a period of adaptation, people have sought to make themselves more comfortable with the situation of being stuck at home. This has had – initially at least – three implications.

The first is that people initially have more disposable income as they could no longer eat out, take holidays and attend entertainment and leisure venues. Even with a relaxation of restrictions, opportunities for entertainment and hospitality expenditure remain curtailed in many countries.



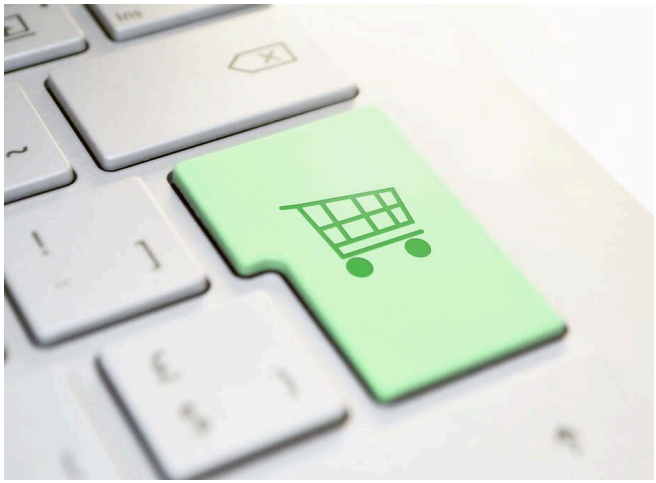
Secondly, in worrying times people sought the reassurance of comforting brands and favorite experiences – an urge to self-indulge. Finally, if people are spending more time at home they want their homes to be as perfect as possible. This leads to a rise in home and garden improvement and other home-based projects.

Perhaps surprisingly the demand for quality higher priced products actually went up. It was a chance for advertisers to re-connect with customers in different ways. People had more time and they were interacting with a lot more content that they were are interested in.

Initially this focus on quality may be reassuring to quality brands. There is arguably a shift in budgeting, a replacement of the cost they do not have for entertainment. Nonetheless, the pandemic will inevitably bring economic consequences which will see many homes operating on restricted budgets, so it can be argued that this focus on quality may not be sustainable during a protracted economic crisis.

Prediction: We see consumers adapting to new situations – they make the shift to a new way of living to find new ways to fulfil their needs. This need to be flexible and adapt to the situation, I believe, will stay. The only way for business to survive will be to adapt to the changing consumer habits. The need for flexibility going forward, will remain essential also after the Covid crisis.
Saskia Schatteman, VAR

A permanent shift to online shopping?



The pandemic significantly increased people's reliance on online shopping and home delivery, with many experiencing new delivery categories like grocery for the first time. Again, this may be a case of people adapting behavior initially out of necessity, but seeing long-term benefits. So where do our experts think this leaves the high street and the shopping mall? Is the balance between online shopping and physical browsing and shopping permanently changed?

There was general agreement that businesses will need to adapt to this new reality and reassess the balance between online and offline activity.

Lockdown has sped up the digital transformation process and a lot of businesses were forced to adapt quicker than they were planning. Business that return to being pure bricks and mortar will not be responding to the way digital consumer behaviors are trending



Our experts did not accept that this means the death of the high street and shopping mall. The retail experience will still be valued, but within the context of omnichannel retail.

Meanwhile, the need for retailers to adapt their shop spaces to comply with social distancing requirements may actually be a benefit, dovetailing with a pre-existing desire to streamline and declutter the retail experience.

So the crisis may have accelerated a move to more omnichannel retailing, kick-starting online trading for those lagging behind and could also lead to a permanent re-evaluation of physical retail environments.

We will remember this crisis as the biggest accelerator of digitalization across the media and advertising industry

An impetus to local sourcing

Decreased traffic into, and reliance upon, city centers may also benefit local high streets, local retailers and local produce, either shopped or delivered locally. Before COVID, GfK was already picking up increased search for regional products, for environmentally-friendly produce sourced locally, and that trend has been accelerated by the crisis.

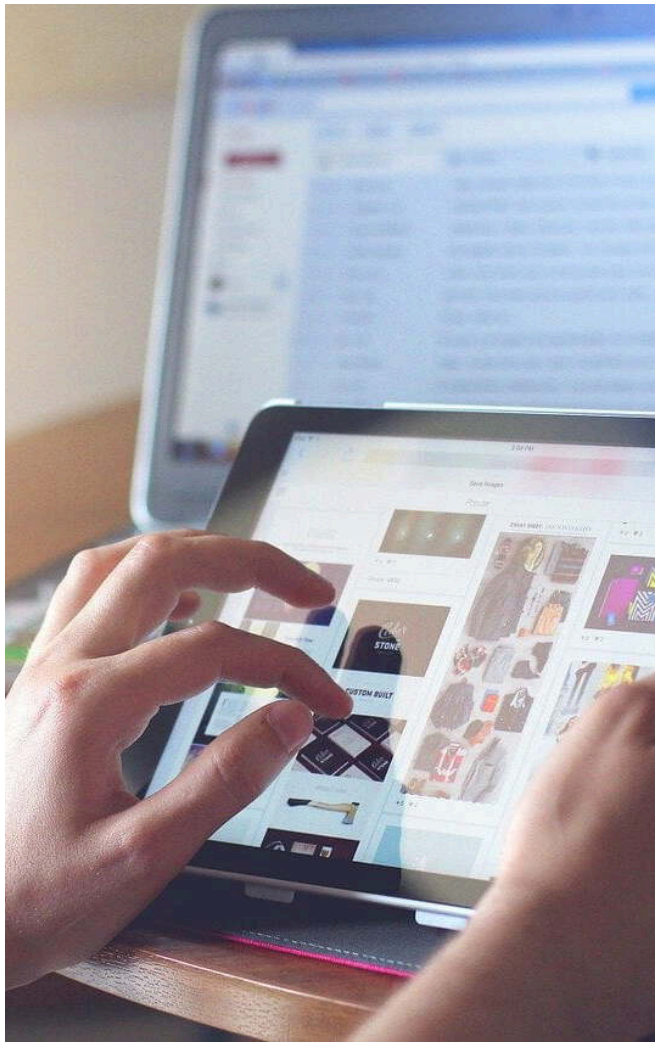
> *"If there is a store around the corner who is actually selling special local products of a very good quality, that will be sticky anyway to consumers"*
>
> **Roland Abold**

Digital transformation has accelerated for the very small shop owner, in many cases borne of necessity to survive the crisis. Arguably the technology and the entry into online selling has become increasingly easy for an independent local business like a baker or greengrocer. That means that on the local high street, the small retailer can access new audiences, sell online and be an even more active part of their

community, which will give them long-term sustainability. Meanwhile major distribution platforms provide a route for local businesses to reach global markets.

On the one hand the online revolution has created global behemoths like Amazon and Alibaba, on the other it has removed the barriers to entry for local businesses to maximize customer bases. If the COVID crisis marks a move towards more de-centralized, more dispersed workforces and related expenditure as people spend more time in their local areas, that has fascinating implications for the future shape of economies.

Prediction: "Digitalization will accelerate and it will also be reinforced by companies understanding that they have to be more digital, and also the governments understanding that the digital infrastructure is not good enough in many places. Digitalization will also be accelerated or reinforced by some of the learnings from the crisis."
Daniel Meyer, Google





What does the crisis mean for advertising?

Innovation and authenticity

Innovation and authenticity

A constant theme through the roundtable was that a period of crisis often acts as a stimulant for innovation and change. The pandemic has forced nimble advertisers to innovate and build authentic relationships with their audiences, handled thoughtfully and with empathy. The crisis has seen a shift towards fast turn-around, accessible production and authentic messaging. If this approach continues to prove effective, then it may lead to a sustainable change.

From broadcast idents and TV ads, to online content, there had been a huge amount of innovation done with a high degree of authenticity



Ad toleration/avoidance

There was a healthy debate between our experts about the likely impact of the crisis on consumers' tolerance of advertising and their propensity to avoid it. This was a significant concern before the crisis, but has the greater uptake of ad-free SVOD services reduced opportunities for advertisers to reach consumers? Is the rise of VOD and the proliferation of quality content better news for the consumer than it is for the advertiser? There is some speculation that a shift to subscription funded and ad free media may make consumers even less tolerant of advertising when they do encounter it and even harder to target as a result.

Again though, we have to factor in that the initial changes in consumer behavior driven by the crisis may be tempered not just by a (slow) return to 'normality', but also the monetary restrictions of the economic recession that accompanies it. That has two implications: advertisers reducing their expenditure which hits ad-funded media who will need to emphasise non-advertising revenue streams, looking to monetize content directly (i.e. subscriptions). On the other hand, a recession will limit the ability of consumers to afford paid-for media and may make them more reliant on free, ad-funded media.

Whilst COVID had an immediate and damaging impact on overall ad revenues, this has varied from sector to sector, with online businesses – already big spenders on TV advertising - actually accelerating spend during the crisis.

Ultimately it is likely that the issues that existed

before the crisis will be the most important to resolve, namely consumer frustration at poor targeting and excessive frequency. These are issues driving the WFA's on-going cross-media initiative: poor targeting and excessive frequency irritate customers and waste advertisers' budgets which are likely to be under even more pressure as a result of the pandemic.

"There is a bit of a paradox here: What people say and what they do are sometimes two different things. We know that when people are given the choice of advertising-funded entertainment they will vote for it in very large numbers. Those channels and media that really focus on making sure that the advertising is relevant or entertaining and not delivering it with excessive frequency, will be the ones that win out."

Phil Smith, ISBA



Our experts agree that there will always be a space for advertising, or ad-funded content. Economic recession may limit peoples willingness to pay too much for media content directly. The explosion of SVOD subscriptions may reflect an inflation in available home time during lockdown, but with easing and less time at home, subscription fatigue may set in as people re-evaluate their budgets. Millions of people are facing a huge cut in their disposable income as government furloughs and support schemes end. Advertising will still be needed to fund free content. The priority for media owners is to establish the right mix, the right model for revenue.

Prediction:"Resilience and the consumer knowing that even the strangest circumstances that before were just depicted in movies can be overcome and can be adapted to. Wearing masks all the time if somebody would have asked me two years ago, I would have said, it is an "end of days" movie but we get adapted to it. And when it comes to media, I think also the power of choice and the power of consumers in terms of how they trade in their attention."our content here attention."

Daniel Bischoff, RTL



Here to stay?

The COVID crisis is fostering long term changes

The COVID crisis is fostering long term changes

In the middle of unprecedented global changes, it is hard to raise our heads above the short-term challenges we face to try and see where we are heading, to assess what will endure as a structural change and what was a short-term lockdown-imposed passing phenomenon. It is too early - and probably foolhardy - to attempt to make concrete predictions. What our roundtable does provide is assistance in trying to make sense of what is going on around us, to start to consider which behavior changes that relate directly to media usage, advertising and consumption are likely to stick in the long term.

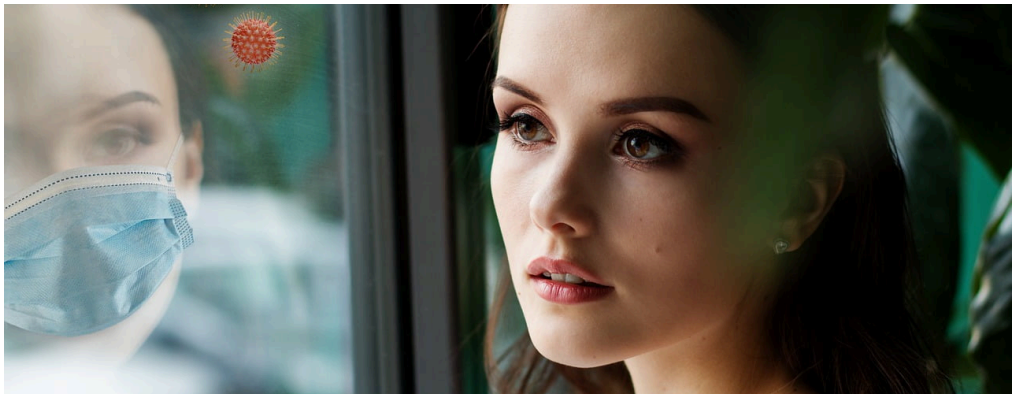
Above all, though, the key question is this: should we wait for a 'new normal' or are we actually likely to be in a permanent state of flux, a state of perpetual adaptation for a number of years to come?

We may well have reached a point where the media and advertising industries have to stop planning for a return to normal, stop delaying decisions in the hope of a vaccine and instead work out how to cope with an extended period of uncertainty that could last many years.

The longer this period lasts, the more permanent will be the changes in behavior and media consumption, but the priority for our industry has to be to adapt and change, to take action now to ensure we do all survive and reach that 'new normal', however far away it may be.

In the foreseeable future there is likely to be less advertising expenditure and therefore less money to fund measurement currencies. And these currencies will need to reflect the behaviour of a more privacy-conscious yet more digital-savvy society. There will be demand for more measurement innovation on smaller budgets.

At GfK we recognize that need and have built a connected consumer community. Through data partnerships and fusions, we capture sales of smaller consumer goods and brands, and all purchase occasions including out-of-home. We connect all touchpoints to the actual purchase via our long-established passive cross-media measurement capabilities. Coupled with hybrid media measurement methodologies, we will continue to provide flexible and trusted measurement of media and consumer behaviour as we navigate our way to the '**new normal**'.





Thank you for reading

Round*Table* Whitepaper

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