

# 10.1 How are we doing? The symposium as continuum

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At New Orleans the session corresponding to this was called 'The Way Ahead', with an implied interrogation mark. Insofar as this can be viewed as the question 'where do we go from here?' the answer, as it turned out, was 'to Montreal', but in the question we are asking today, 'how are we doing?' it is possible to detect a slightly lower level of accentuation of the positive, a trace of uneasiness, a hint of doubt about whether we are doing the right things in our deliberations.

Yet such doubts seem unjustified. The number of references in the papers presented here to what was presented at New Orleans, and the fact that there have been almost as many references to what may be said at the next symposium, suggest that the phenomenon in which we have been participating is quite different in kind from an annual conference of the Market Research Society, or the Advertising Research Foundation, or ESOMAR — and not simply in being biennial rather than annual. There is good reason to regard it as a continuing

dialogue in which the first phase, New Orleans, leads into the second, Montreal, and thereafter into the third — wherever that may take place.

In the light of this the question as to how we are doing is not merely a cry for reassurance: it sets the parameters for a diagnosis of the extent to which this continuous symposium is meeting the needs of the various groups for whom readership research is a major tool of business decision. The answer to that, so far as concerns those who are with us, will emerge from the results of the questionnaire that has been circulated, but we also have to take account of the position of those who are not present here in Montreal. Thus to answer the question in the broadest sense, if only in outline, we begin this final session with three speakers who have been conscripted to put the points of view of, respectively, an advertiser, an advertising agency, and a publisher, and we shall be able to go on from there.