

THE WAR PROJECT.

A small step up the ARF media research ladder, a giant step forward in magazine planning

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The ARF media research model encourages media owners and researchers to take the step from vehicle reach to advertising reach. Up until now, magazine researchers failed to really answer the needs of advertisers and planners. Vehicle reach is not an estimate of the opportunity to see a page. In addition, AIR does not allow for the calculation of the weekly reach of a magazine plan. These limitations prompted us to look for a solution that would take reach data for magazines a step higher on the ARF 'ladder' and improve the way magazines are planned. The result is the WAR project. WAR stands for "Weekly Average page Reach" and combines "velocity" or "audience accumulation" measures and "page exposure" on an individual, informant level. This paper reports on the commercial and research background of the project, desk research and research design and response rates and concludes with the feasibility of the methodology.

Commercial background

1.1 Lessons from the past

An earlier attempt to introduce velocity data to the Belgian market in 1999 (Peeters S., Debeer V. & Lanckriet T., 1999) incited a great deal of interest from media agencies and advertisers. However, it did not succeed in practice to fundamentally change magazine planning. Important lessons for the current WAR (Weekly Average page Reach) research project may be gleaned from the post-analysis of this initial introduction:

1. As this was a research initiative proposed by Sanoma Magazines, other publishers and sales houses did not trust the results. They also gave us insufficient support;
2. This survey was initially offered to the market as "an innovative survey". The market examined it and found it interesting but it lacked a commercial and marketing framework. As is often the case with innovations, it was prepared away from the public eye and in the greatest of secrecy. For this reason, the market had little preparation and internally hardly any attention was paid to training of the commercial teams;
3. In 1999, a simple time planning tool was developed. For the media planner, this was merely an extra tool in addition to the usual media planning tools and therefore meant extra work. This resulted in limited use of the planning tool (Mag/time);
4. Despite the fact that not only Sanoma titles were examined, the market judged that too few titles had been examined to satisfy all media planning needs;
5. As is the case in most audience accumulation surveys, average curves per title were published and used. In addition, the software only offered a limited choice of pre-defined target groups. These limitations tend to ignore the specific nature of the magazine medium which aims to reach finely segmented target groups. The media planner was not entirely satisfied with the target groups on offer which was an additional obstacle to using the tool.
6. The methodology¹ chosen in 1999 was too cumbersome and too expensive to be repeated on a regular and large-scale basis.

On this basis, the briefing for the WAR² research project is clear:

1. The project must be jointly taken up by the major magazine publishers and sales houses;
2. The project must be given prior approval by the market and must be given a commercial framework;
3. The results must be integrated in existing media planning software;
4. The survey must include all magazine titles covered by the Belgian National Readership Survey; The individual informant must be given a central position so that accurate results can be calculated for every specific target group;
5. The methodology must be feasible and repeatable in practical and budgetary terms.

In addition, it was also essential that the first two points be dealt with before the project got underway.

¹ Face-to-face methodology for the Recent Reading question(s) combined with a Through-the-Book measurement for obtaining velocity data

² Weekly Average page Reach = The project name of the whole research project used on the Belgian market

1.2 MAGlab – Magazine Advertising Laboratory

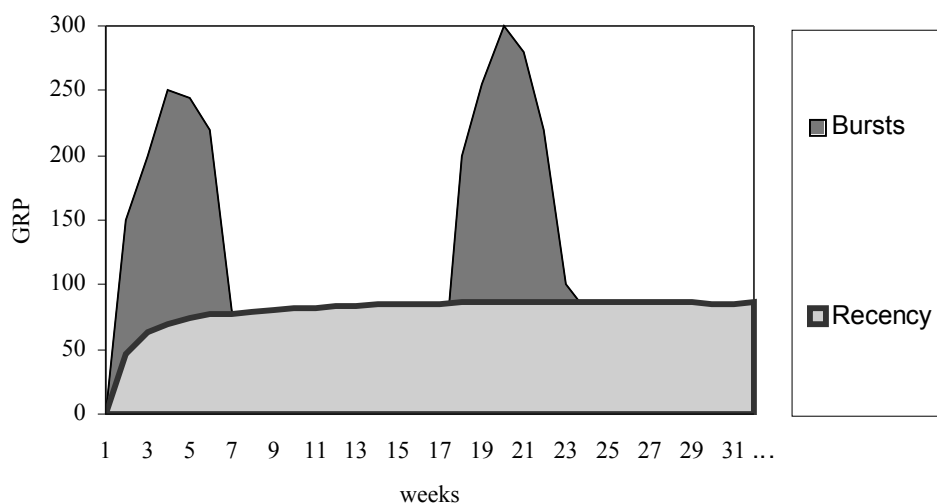
In "The puzzling passivity of print" Erwin Ephron (2003) gave magazine publishers and their advertising sales houses a clear if painful analysis: "While advertisers audition media-mix, Magazines hide in the wings. They've left the larger hunt to Television and fight for scraps they already own. The only competitors they see are fellow publishers." In Belgium, this situation was very prevalent. Until recently, too little attention was paid to promotion of medium magazines as such in the selling procedure of most ad sales houses. Aided by the all-time low in market share of magazines in the overall advertising market (12%) in Belgium, in 2004 the first tentative steps were taken to change the situation. Various possibilities were examined and in the early autumn of 2004, an agreement was reached between the four major magazine publishers to jointly undertake the WAR project under the auspices of Febelma, the Federation of Belgian Magazines. For this purpose, at the end of 2004 the creation of a marketing unit with the name of MAGlab, the Magazine Advertising Laboratory, was announced. This unit is also the basis of dealing with the **first point** in the briefing: **MAGlab was accepted as the driving force of the WAR project by the major magazine publishers and sales houses.**

1.3 Mattress Model of Media Planning

In order to get the magazine medium back on the map, more is needed than the traditional strong points characteristic of magazines. The various qualities of magazines are well known and accepted but they do not offer the market any quantitative or strategic reason why they should be used for advertising purposes. Magazines are therefore seldom used as a primary medium. They should have the courage to focus on their strong sides which are also strategic and quantitative.

A unique characteristic of magazines compared to other traditional media such as television, radio, newspapers and outdoor advertising is that magazines build up their coverage at a slower pace. This is often seen as a disadvantage compared to other media. However, what is often forgotten is that magazines are by nature a **continuity medium** because they have a longer life span than other media. A single insert in a magazine still reaches new contacts after a publication interval. Every insert in a magazine contributes to the building up of continuous advertising pressure. In this way, the slow build-up of coverage becomes a **unique selling proposition** for magazines, especially when it comes to recency planning. Continuity is only one of the pillars of recency planning. A second pillar, **extensive coverage**, is also a great asset for magazines in Belgium. Belgian magazines are able to provide high net reach at a competitive price for nearly all target groups. This unique combination makes magazines the ideal basis for **recency planning**.

With this knowledge in mind, we introduced the "**Mattress Model of Media Planning**". Using this model, a case is made for using magazines as a basic medium to ensure sufficient coverage and continuity (Safety Mattress). Once this "safety mattress" has been laid down, it can be used as a "spring mattress" to support short-term objectives by means of bursts with other short-term media. (graph 1). This is the basis on which the commercial teams of the four initiating ad sales houses have become accustomed to promote magazines.



Graph 1: Theoretical visualisation of the "Mattress Model of Media Planning"

The concept sounds attractive, logical and simple but at the same time it is very daring compared with usual practice. In order to apply this concept, it must be made possible in practice to plan magazines on a week-by-week basis. This positioning of magazines as a base medium, together with the research project, was discussed beforehand with the main experts in the media agencies whose comments were taken into consideration (1.1). Since the spring of 2005, the upcoming WAR research project has been promoted during every ad.sales presentation.. This joint action by magazine sales houses has already ensured that opinion leaders have lent their support and approval. The **second condition** has therefore also been satisfied.

Research background

2.1 Velocity or Audience Accumulation

In order to apply the “Mattress Model” concept in practice, it should also be possible to plan magazines on a **week-by-week basis**. In 1998, Erwin Ephron suggested that change was needed in the way in which magazines were positioned, planned and purchased in order to apply recency planning to magazines. For Ephron, it is clear that we need to change the planning unit from insertion to Target Rating Points. To calculate weekly TRPs, magazines need to develop week-by-week estimates of issue readers.

Apart from the need for recency planning to be applied to magazine planning, there is another reason why measuring the week-by-week audience is important. These days the demand for more precise data and accountability is also driven by the international trend towards **cross media planning**. The major media agencies are all hard at work developing media-mix optimisers, and one can hardly pick up a copy of Advertising Age or other trade publications without encountering a story about the latest attempts in this field (McDonald, C. 2001).

Although media mix planning is growing in importance, it is not easy to put into practice because data that permits cross media campaign evaluation are missing. Today’s media mix decisions are most often not backed up by research findings although advertisers are pressing the need to understand and evaluate mixed media planning and thus evaluate the ROI of their integrated communication (Masson P. and Callius P., 2001). Over the next ten years, the desire to know the ROI is going to increase because advertisers want to understand how to improve it (Baker P., 2004). The ‘time’ factor plays a predominant role in that discussion. Any criterion by which advertising effect is evaluated will be ‘time’-based, for example, sales or awareness measures. The media measure used in the evaluation must then also be time-based for results to be obtained. While TV and radio currencies provide the timing of exposure day by day, and in some countries even second by second, we have no precise measure of when magazine exposures take place at an individual informant level (Masson P. and Elms S., 2004).

2.2 Average Page Reach

Another reason why it is difficult to put cross media planning into practice is because media currencies are different and not strictly commensurable (McDonald, C. 2001). Not only is the head count of opportunity to see (OTS) measured very differently by channel (for example, print measures the number of readers of any part of an ‘average’ issue, while TV measures (claimed) presence in front of the set when the commercial is transmitted), but also the effect or force of the delivery on the head count will be quite different between media channels (Masson, P. and Elms S., 2004).

The demand for more accountability in magazine planning has been voiced for some time. Advertisers are tempted by high coverage figures and low cost/000. When evaluating their campaign, advertisers will compare the so-called advertisement reach (while in reality it is vehicle reach) with the response to the advertisement. As a result, the medium cannot satisfy expectations. Advertisers ultimately judge success by sales response and in their disappointment, turn their backs on magazines (Ephron E., 2001). In other words, magazines ultimately hurt themselves. Graig Gugel (2003) puts it this way: “To sum it all up, it is no longer just the publisher’s responsibility to bring readers to the magazine. He must seriously start planning to bring his magazine’s audience to the advertising”.

Lesson understood. In order to bring media planning data for magazines a step higher up on the ARF ladder, apart from building up coverage of an average edition, we should also be examining the contact opportunity of an average page or its **commercial coverage**, preferably together in one survey so that a genuine new currency for media planning can be introduced.

The various initiatives with regard to Quality of reading surveys are also attempts to introduce more accountability in magazine planning. There is even a tendency to make attention the new benchmark in advertising (Britta C. Ware, 2002) but is this really the ultimate responsibility of the publisher? It is the responsibility of a publisher to measure page exposure, i.e. **open eyes in front of an open page** (Callius P. and Sandstöm M., 2003). Whether or not the advertisement can attract the reader’s attention and keep it is no longer the exclusive task of the medium. It is also our opinion that the next steps of the ARF model (advertising attentiveness, etc.) depend on many factors which have nothing to do with the direct influence of the medium. Extensive knowledge about the response to various types of advertising and creative strategies for various product categories can help the media planner to make correct assumptions about the required advertising pressure based on the objectives to be achieved. In order to make correct media plans based on these assumptions, coverage data that approach as near as possible the delivery of open eyes in front of an open page are needed.

2.3 Weekly Average Page Reach - WAR

For the first time in history (to our knowledge), a Velocity study has been combined with a measure of average page exposure. By assuming our responsibility as magazine publishers, we are offering the market a new concept - Weekly Average page Reach (WAR) where the concept of Opportunities to see will be replaced by the more accurate concept of **Probabilities to see**.

The aim of this survey is not just limited to providing data. It is our intention, supported by Belgian media agencies, to thoroughly update the way in which magazines are planned. As from the end of 2005, WAR data will be available in most media planning packages. This means that our third condition will be met. By 2006, all Belgian media planners will have access to these data in their media planning software.

3 Methodological choices

Of the aforementioned conditions, there are three conditions that are essential for the research design:

4. The survey must contain all magazine titles which are covered by the Belgian National Readership Survey;
5. The individual informant must occupy a central position so that actual results can be calculated for every specific target group;
6. The methodology must be realistic and repeatable in practical and budgetary terms.

3.1 Velocity measurement

Distinct methods coexist within readership accumulation research and each method clearly has its strengths and weaknesses.

On the one hand, we have the first time read yesterday (FRY) methodology combined with a full through the book (TTB) approach. In the early 60's Papazian & Politz and almost twenty years later Douglas (1977-1978) both based their studies on a FRY-TTB measurement that minimises the dependence on the memory of the respondents, and supposedly has a very high degree of reliability. This method does require face-to-face interviews and new samples have to be interviewed each time.

On the other hand, there is the diary method used by Axel Springer Verlag AG (1992). In their study, they collected data using a weekly diary that had to be completed by the respondent for 6 weeks. The diary method does not involve the use of any memory aid and relies on the active recall by respondents. It does provide single source data on different time frames but heavily depends on the motivation and accuracy of respondents.

Although these two distinct methods coexist separately, variations on both of them are very well possible (Pincott G., 1991). At the 1999 Worldwide Readership Research Symposium two very different approaches were presented.

Baim J., Frankel, M.R. & Agresti, J. (1999) opted for a diary-based approach. The diary panel duration was limited to one week in an attempt to lessen the "respondent burden" and to increase the respondent's commitment to record the diary thoroughly. The diary was fairly simple. For every title read, respondents had to fill in the issue date on a daily basis. They also indicated if they had read the issue for the first time. This "real-time recording of readership" allows daily observation of first time reading instances.

Peeters S., Debeer V. & Lanckriet T. (1999) opted for short face-to-face interviews where recent reading and through-the-book methods were combined. Recent reading questions were used to measure total readership and declared magazine reading in the reference period. A through-the-book approach was used to measure the audience at issue level.

Both methods clearly have their strengths and weaknesses. The discussions of these methodological issues led to a methodological experiment based on previous pilot studies that directly confronted the through-the-book and the diary method (Hermie P., Lanckriet T. & Peeters S., 2001). One of the most important limitations of the face-to-face method used in Belgium was the **logistical burden** and sampling biases. In The Netherlands, John Faase and Leendert Van Meerem (2003) solved this problem by using an internet panel. The low penetration level of the (wideband) internet in Belgium is currently the major obstacle. If we really want to integrate all titles (**condition 4**) and keep the methodology realistic and repeatable (**condition 6**), the diary seems to be the only possible option for the moment.

However, from the experiment carried out by Hermie P., Lanckriet T. and Peeters S. (2001) it appears that also the diary has its drawbacks. A major problem for the diary method is the **response rate**. Having an interviewer hand over and collect the diaries, has a positive impact on the response rate but a negative impact on the costs of the fieldwork. We therefore thought it would be worthwhile to have a face-to-face contact procedure. The interviewer could ask for an explicit commitment by the respondent to participate in the survey and explain in detail the way the diary should be kept. Having a second face-to-face contact to collect the diary would have been the "gold standard" but had to be excluded for budgetary reasons. (It should be borne in mind that we are searching for a feasible methodology.)

As it is our intention to replace standard Reach & Frequency planning by "WAR-planning", some standards set by the JIC which controls all media research in Belgium (CIM – Centre for Information on Media) have to be respected. CIM provides very reliable figures on vehicle audience (Average Issue Readership) of magazines. These readership figures are accepted by all parties in the market as the major trading currency. We therefore have to produce equal AIR figures (title reach) in WAR. This need to **calibrate** to CIM standards means that we also have to ask respondents a number of hook questions that are identical to CIM AIR questions before respondents start the diary. Using this face-to-face contact procedure also offers the possibility of

asking the respondent to fill in a short AIR questionnaire.

Another very important issue that came out of the 2001 experiment was the obvious unreliability of **'first time read'** responses. Our episodic memory is not equipped to answer "first time read" questions. It was therefore decided to look for a new solution. Peter Masson and Paul Sumner, who previously developed the Virtual Diary for such media as radio and television, came up with the idea of developing the virtual diary for magazines. The virtual diary is a diary-based model which has the advantage that, based on the observations of a two-week diary, it produces a complete 'n'-week diary for every individual informant. By opting for a model approach, the **fifth condition** can be satisfied - the individual informant takes centre stage so that actual results can be calculated for every specific target group.

3.2 Page reach measurement

The choice of methodology to measure velocity will also have implications for the page exposure part of the survey. Politz' Magazine Page Exposure (MPX) experiments broke new ground in the sixties. His pioneering work was a page traffic technique for magazine issues read yesterday. Respondents were taken through these issues and were asked which pages they recognised as having opened yesterday. Including all titles while keeping the survey feasible and repeatable are obviously objectives that make it impossible to apply the most appropriate methodology (a face-to-face through-the-book approach). The methodological choices made so far for velocity measurement make it possible to develop a page reach measurement system that allows for page exposure at individual informant level in the virtual diary. This modelling technique is described in detail by P. Masson and P. Sumner (2005). In practise this means that page exposure questions have to be integrated into the preliminary questionnaire and into the diary.

As it would be the first time that page exposure is actually measured in this way, a through-the-book page exposure survey as a **validity check** for the model used was carried out for a specific number of titles.

3.3 Recruitment procedure

The choices made so far resulted in a rather heavy and complex methodology. We were aware that this methodology was ideal from the researcher's point of view but is rather demanding on the respondent. Low response rate is therefore a serious risk. Our biggest concern was that there should be enough observations per title. It was estimated that 3,000 usable diaries for processing would be needed. For this reason, correct assessment of the response rate is very important.

In order to get as close as possible to the **Belgian NRS** (CIM) standards, it was thought that the recruitment of participants in the diary panel should use a very **similar sampling method**. Without going into any details, the CIM standard requires random sampling of individuals with strict controls on substitutes and face-to-face interviewing. It was generally agreed that this should also be our first choice. As mentioned earlier a face-to-face contact procedure offered the possibility to do a preliminary AIR interview, get the agreement from the respondent to complete the diary and do a TTB experiment to validate the page exposure model.

A major disadvantage of the face-to-face contact procedure is that it is expensive and, although the interviewer demands commitment from the respondent, the risk that people will not return the diary is still high. It is therefore doubtful that the sixth condition with regard to feasibility and repeatability would be satisfied. For this reason, we wanted to test an alternative sampling and contact procedure against the **Random Sampling** method. Our second option was to select and contact respondents through a **Mail Access Panel**. This meant abandoning the strict random sampling method and the face-to-face interview procedure. An Access panel offers some major advantages: it is easier to control the socio-demographic composition of the sample and it is possible to estimate the response rate with more accuracy. Contacting respondents by mail is also much less expensive than sending out interviewers in the field. However, one of the disadvantages is that the AIR questionnaire, which serves to calibrate title reach figures to NRS readership figures, has to be changed into a self-completion format. Another disadvantage is that the TTB experiment has to be abandoned. But the face-to-face contact procedure will provide enough observations for conducting the validity test of the page exposure model. (??)

3.4 Questionnaire & diary

Our methodology is a combination of a questionnaire followed by a two-week diary (see also 3.5). In the random sampling recruitment procedure, the questionnaire is a face-to-face questionnaire using CAPI. In the access panel part it is a self-completion questionnaire. The questions are the same for both recruitment procedures except for the through-the-book validity check which could not be conducted in the self-completion interview situation. The **traditional total** and **recent reading** questions, frequency of reading, source of copy and reading volume serve as the basis to calibrate the WARAIR results to the levels. The question on reading volume is also used for the page reach model. Respondents were also asked how much time they spend reading magazines in general (for weeklies, monthlies and bi-weeklies). In the face to face interviews respondents also answer **traditional TTB page exposure questions** (reading time and multiple pick-ups).

The diary used by MRI (Baim J., Frankel M.R. and Agresti J. 1999) was fairly simple. For every title read, respondents had to fill in the issue date on a daily basis. They also indicated if they had read the issue for the first time and whether or not the magazine was read at home. As respondents were free to fill in the issue number themselves, no maximum time limit was imposed. Even very old issues can be read for the first time. The respondents also had the possibility of filling in several issue numbers for the same title. This kind of diary allows us to measure parallel and replicated reading which is still an important advantage over the Recent Reading methodology.

The diary used in this survey is mainly based on the MRI diary used to measure **velocity**. From the methodological comparison carried out in 2001 (Hermie P., Lanckriet T. and Peeters S., 1999), it appears that first time reading is a very difficult concept for respondents with the result that the margin of error is considerable. This problem has been solved by using virtual diary modelling. To this end, two concepts were added to the diary - time spent reading and reading day part. The modelling technique is described in detail in the paper written by Peter Masson and Paul Sumner and presented at the World Wide Readership Research Symposium in 2005 in Prague. In order to be able to integrate the **page exposure** survey, the diary was extended to include proportion read for each issue of every title read during the day. A copy of the diary can be found in the appendix.

3.5 Field

Fieldwork started with **random sampling** and face-to-face interviews for 18 waves of the 2 week diary. In the second part of the fieldwork 3 500 questionnaires and diaries were sent to the mail **access panel** spread over five weeks (the distribution of the diary in time is essential to provide a sufficient time span).

With regard to random sampling, recruitment occurs in the first week (week 47) by the face-to-face interview during which the diary is given to the respondent. The latter must complete the diary during the second and third week and return it duly completed by the fourth week. The recruitment of the following wave starts the week after first week of recruitment, with the result that the diaries overlap by one week.

1st week	2nd week	3rd week	4th week	5th week	...
recruitment & questionnaire	diary	diary	diary sent back		
	recruitment & questionnaire	diary	diary	diary sent back	
		...			

The alternative scenario - the access mail panel - was started at the beginning of March. The face-to-face interview (standard readership questions) was replaced by a written self-completion questionnaire and the TTB page exposure experiment was abandoned.

During the month of April, we then proceeded to the first three dispatches of 500 diaries, to finish up with two dispatches of 1,000 diaries. These dispatches were spaced out by one week and in such a way that respondents would receive the diary on Thursday or Friday.

year	2004							2005																
week	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
random sampling																								
access mail panel																								

3.6 Summary of methodology used

- The decision of how to recruit respondents was mainly inspired by the Belgian NRS methodology of random sampling. But we added in a second period the mail access panel recruitment method to make sure we had enough observations for each title we wanted to test.
- Our first methodological choice, to use a diary approach for measuring velocity, is inspired by the need to keep the methodology feasible and repeatable for a large number of titles.
- To be able to combine velocity measurements with a page exposure study we had to include a page reach measurement in the diary.
- And finally we also needed to model the data so we could have sufficient observation for each respondent.
- Because we wanted to meet the Belgian NRS audience measurements, we decided to calibrate our audience figures with those of the Belgian NRS (CIM) by asking the same questions as in the CIM survey. Those questions preceded the diary and were asked using CAPI (random sampling) or a self-completion questionnaire (mail access panel).

4 **Quality of data**

As can be clearly seen from Table 1, the response rate of the access panel is considerably higher than that from random sampling. From the 2 392 persons who agreed to participate (who filled in the face-to-face questionnaire), 46% returned a completed diary from the random sample .

The response rate at the beginning of the fieldwork of the access panel, gave a response rate of 65%. In the last two weeks, we targeted under-represented and hard-to-reach groups so the average response rate dropped to 43% and lowered the overall average response rate to 52%. As a result of the cleaning of the diaries, the response rate dropped by a further 3% because of non-compliance with the defined cleaning rules (an overview of the cleaning rules used can be found in the appendix).

	Interviews questionnaires	Response rate before cleaning		Response rate after cleaning	
random sampling	2392	1110	46%	1051	44%
access mail panel	3500	1813	52%	1698	49%

Table 1: Global average response rates

When examining the sample profile, we first noticed minor differences between respondents recruited via the face-to-face interview and our reference universe (data from the Belgian CIM readership survey). However, these minor biases were adjusted when using the access panel resulting in a sample that is evenly distributed and provides satisfactory results.

As already mentioned, an additional **TTB experiment** was carried out for some respondents in order to calculate average page exposure. People that indicated to have read a title from a predetermined list within the publication interval were asked to look whether the issue read was still available in the home. If this was the case they had to get the issue and page through it with the interviewer. Per spread the interviewer asked whether the respondent could remember having opened the spread or not. The answers were coded in the CAPI system. The total of 896 (37%) TTB page exposure questionnaires, correctly completed, are sufficient to be used for a validation and reliability test.

5 **A successful methodology?**

At the time of writing this paper, data are still being analysed. The final results will be integrated in our presentation at the Worldwide Readership Research Symposium 2005 in Prague .

A number of criteria were determined beforehand, on the basis of which the methodology would be evaluated. The methodology had to make it possible to generate **enough observations** to provide velocity and page exposure data for every individual title or title combination as shown in the Belgian National Readership Study. This has only partly been achieved. The number of observations needed is somewhat more important as it is based on edition and not just on title. This was very successful for titles with a high penetration. For weekly magazines, problems were limited to the very minor titles. However, there were problems in the case of monthly magazines. For these magazines, we opted for velocity and page exposure using aggregate modelling by groups of titles (women's monthlies, interior design magazines, business magazines, men's magazines, travel magazines, membership magazines, etc.).

Another major criterion is being able to provide data **at informant level**. The Virtual Diary (Masson P. and Summer P., 2005) offered a new and powerful tool to achieve this. The market can therefore be provided with WAR data for any target group and integrate these data in the usual **media planning software tools**. Mission accomplished.

Last but not least, the methodology has to be **repeatable** and **feasible** in practical and budgetary terms with the ultimate goal of **integrating the WAR approach in the Belgian NRS in the future**. Of the two sampling methods that were used, Random Sampling comes closest to the present CIM standards while the Mail Access Panel offers other advantages of which cost efficiency is far from being the least important.

Another indication in favour of the **Access Panel** is the response rate (see 4.). An additional advantage is that **response control** is feasible. The **quality** of the completed **diaries** is the same for both methods (drop out after cleaning between 5% and 6%). It is of course no longer possible to carry out a TTB page exposure via the access panel. However, as the model used to measure average page exposure could be validated in this survey, there is no need to repeat this test in every future edition of the study.

Before making the data available to the market, it will have to be proven that the virtual diary method is suitable for generating velocity and page exposure data and can be used as a guide to interpret magazine planning by media agencies and advertisers.

To test the validity of the chosen methodology, some of the hypotheses (H) tested by Peeters S., Debeer V. & Lanckriet T. (1999) will be re-tested on the available data. The wealth of data integrated in the diary and face-to-face survey enables us to test more hypotheses than this.

- **H1: Velocity is higher if publication interval is shorter**
Clearly, this aspect has been proven several times. The advantage of our survey is that this hypothesis cannot only be confirmed for weeklies and monthlies but also for bi-weekly magazines.
- **H2: Velocity is higher for TV weeklies**
In this case, we hope to reconfirm this hypothesis but this time on the basis of a larger number of titles.
- **H3: Velocity is higher for (a) regular and (b) primary readers**
- **H4: Velocity is not significantly influenced by socio-demographic factors**
We will be able to conduct more detailed research on this subject given the detail obtained on target groups. Peeters S., Debeer V. & Lanckriet T. (1999) found that influence is based on the core target of the magazine and not on socio-demographic considerations as such. This is also the reason why it is essential to enable detailed target groups to be run on Weekly Average page Reach data in magazine planning tools.

With regard to the page reach data, there are no page exposure studies available in Belgium. Therefore a dual approach is chosen. Firstly, a few hypotheses from international research about page exposure will be tested and secondly, the data obtained from the model will be evaluated against the TTB experiment.

- **H5: On average, 80% of pages of a magazine are opened by readers.**
In the TTB experiment, there was 80% page reach (open eyes in front of an open page). However, home reading is mainly measured (as TTB measurement of magazines present in a house is tested) and can therefore vary depending on reading frequency and source of copy. This result led us to the following hypothesis:
- **H6: Regular readers read more than occasional readers**
Already in 1991 Rolf Speetzen wrote an article on replacing Average Issue Readership with Average Page Exposure. He stated that the larger the share of regular readers, the narrower the difference between average issue readership and average page exposure. Which means that regular readers proportionally read (open eyes in front of the page) more pages. Off course this effect is linked to the 'closeness' of the reader with the magazine.
- **H7: Differences in page exposure depending on type of magazine**
In the study of Hilary Birt, Guy Consterdine and Lynne Robinson (1999) they found that for all types of magazines the overall proportion of pages opened was high, but there was a variation between 86% and 64%.
- **H8: No differences between monthlies, bi-weeklies and weeklies**
We did not note any significant differences in our TTB experiment according to issue period even though a difference may be expected. Moreover, this could result from a larger number of pages in monthlies which would be proportionally less read.

6 Conclusion

A number of objectives were laid down at the beginning of this project and it became clear that the support of the project (the first two conditions) had already been reached by establishing **MAGlab** (1.2) and by involving experts from media agencies right from the start. **MAGlab** is a joint marketing platform used by the leading advertising sales houses which will continue to develop projects to promote magazines as an efficient advertising medium.

The third objective is crucial for this kind of survey to be continued. WAR must become a must have tool. It is our ambition to change media planning practice. For this reason, data must be integrated in the software used by media planners. **Software integration** has already been achieved. In November 2005, all magazine planning software used in Belgium will (or should) be able to integrate these data and offer a timed magazine evaluation solution to their clients. It is our intention to evaluate the use of these solutions and their usage by media planners by the end of 2006.

With regard to the last three conditions, to a great extent we have been successful in fulfilling our assignment. We have **informant data** and this **survey can be repeated** as the practical and budgetary obstacles can be overcome. The basis has therefore certainly been laid to enable **integration in the Belgian NRS**. However, a **warning note** should be given. For monthlies, we are obliged to work via aggregated data to model the Virtual Diary. To achieve a sufficient number of observations for each monthly to allow individual processing would need a very large sample size. WAR data cannot be given for a small number of titles due to their low penetration on the Belgian market. This will certainly be a challenge for the future.

The basis has now been laid. We believe we can safely say that we have been successful in providing market data enabling more accurate **magazine planning**. As weekly velocity data and average page audience have been made available to the market, audience measurement for magazines has become somewhat more complex but at the same time, more accurate. Furthermore, weekly data and a more accurate measurement of advertising contact means that magazines can be more easily compared to other media. Based on these survey data, media agencies are given the opportunity to optimise their media optimisers and

channel planning tools and to add the information that was missing up till now.

Belgian magazine sales houses hope in this way to put magazines as the basic medium back on the map by offering data to enable **recency planning** and, just as important, to improve the measurement of the effect of magazines. **Media evaluation** via tracking studies which in the past gave an advantage to instant media, enables magazine contacts and magazine advertising contacts to be linked to weekly sales figures. As Lawrence J.K. Goldstein (2003) put it: "Econometric modelling and other methods of analysis of advertising effectiveness would be greatly strengthened with more accurate measurement of media delivery over time."

Now it is up to the Belgian magazine sales houses to offer continuous commercial support to the WAR project so that magazines as a basic medium for recency planning can finally be given their rightful place.

Integration of this study method in the **Belgian NRS** is essential so that we can continue to deliver regular updates of these data to the Belgian market in the future. **Guidelines** should be developed for this purpose within the Belgian JIC so that the cleaning of diary data, the assumptions about the composition of coverage of some titles, etc. can be harmonised.

We hope that this experience and approach proves to be a success in Belgium and that it can set an example for other countries to move in the same direction. It can no longer be denied that time is the crucial element for all media. We are convinced that more sophisticated planning tools and more accurate reach data will only achieve in fundamentally changing the commercial position of magazines if used on a large scale in a majority of markets. An increasing number of advertisers make strategic media decisions globally and therefore demand tools and research that are internationally comparable. Magazines are considerably behind in this respect compared to other media. In order to help to narrow the gap, we should be prepared to share our knowledge and experience.

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Appendix 1 – cleaning rules

- **No or wrong date of registration**
Correction of the first day and setting right for the following 14 days
- **No media code**
- ⇒ And no cover date:
 - DROP unless the field of the magazine before has been filled in with media code and cover date (we assume a 2nd reading of the same issue)
- ⇒ Cover date indicated:
 - If no other magazine has been read this day: DROP
 - If another magazine has been read this day: take over the media code of that specific magazine (2nd reading)
 - If more other magazines have been read the same day: take over the magazine with the identical cover date otherwise DROP (and if more magazines with same cover date: take the one filled in the field before)
- **Cover date**
- ⇒ No cover date:
- ⇒ If no other cover date indicated the same day for the same magazine: leave blank
- ⇒ Back & forward searching to find the same media code:
 - No identical media code: leave blank
 - Identical media code but never with the cover date: leave blank
 - Identical media code, only 1 cover date: take over (if day of reading > issue date, otherwise leave blank)
 - Identical media code, more cover dates: check issue date
- ⇒ Wrong or invalid cover date:
- ⇒ If cover date = systematically the day of reading: leave blank
- ⇒ If cover date = first day of TV program: adapt cover date
- ⇒ If day of reading < issue date: correct according to last issue
- ⇒ Other cases: correct according to most recent valid cover date
- Finally, reducing and compressing reading moments, reading duration and volume if a same person filled in the same magazine several times during the same day.
- Blank fields were modeled in order not to waste useful information.

Appendix 2 (on next page) – the diary
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