

A Matter of Fact

**The need for accountable media
audience data and how to get it**

Key questions to ask to understand whether a
data set is fit for purpose



Key questions for all data sets:

1. Who owns, controls or commissions the data?
2. Does the data have industry control or oversight i.e. is it a Joint Industry Currency (JIC), a Media Owner Currency (MOC) or a bespoke private data set?
3. Who gathers the data?
4. How is it gathered?
5. How is it processed?
6. What quality-control processes are used?
7. What universe does it represent?
8. How is media exposure defined?
9. Do those definitions comply with agreed industry standards and guidelines?
10. Has the data been independently audited to ensure that it actually does what it says it does?

Specific questions for 'Big Data' sets:

1. What aspects of a consumer's behaviour are covered and which are not?
2. What aspects of competitor performance are covered and which are not?
3. What quality control steps are in place to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the data? Who has appraised / validated the data set? What standards were used?
4. If the dataset is being projected to a wider universe, what methodology is being used?
5. Is the data a census, derived from a balanced sample or an opt-in sample? If the latter, what was the response rate?
6. Is the data longitudinal – can we examine the same people across time?
7. What demographics does the data include? How are they obtained? Are they at an individual or household level?
8. Is the data compliant with privacy laws? Is its availability likely to be impacted by changes in privacy laws?
9. How much work will be needed to turn it from data to insight?

Specific questions for Survey Data:

1. Is the methodology transparent?
2. How is the sample recruited? What steps are in place to maximise response rates and sample balance?
3. Is the data collected passively or using claimed recall? Both can be appropriate but have implications for granularity.
4. Is the data collected from an ongoing panel or from separate samples?
5. Is the data date-specific or averaged across a time period?
6. How frequently is the data made available?
7. How is audience exposure defined? GRPs, TVRs, daily and weekly reach and frequency need to be clearly understood as they have implications for use and interpretation.
8. At what level of granularity is the data available?
9. What are the analysis limitations imposed by the sample size? At what level of analysis does the data become unreliable? Is this clearly flagged by the analysis package?
10. Is the service subject to audit or Technical Committee oversight?
11. Are there gaps in the measurement – new technology not yet covered? What plans are in place to fill these gaps?