



ARF Launches Attention Validation Project

As attention metrics gain industry traction, the ARF seeks to provide understanding around the validity, reliability and predictive power of these measures

New York, NY, September 12, 2022 — The ARF (Advertising Research Foundation) today announced the launch of a new initiative, the ARF Attention Validation Project. The announcement was made during its [Attention 2022](#) event in Brooklyn, NY, focused on moving attention metrics from the laboratory into field applications. Through the initiative, the ARF will seek to inform the market about the underpinnings of different attention measurement solutions and the degree of replicability and convergent validity associated with those approaches.

To accomplish this, numerous attention and emotion measurement vendors will be asked to analyze a common set of ad or program content and the ARF will see how these analyses compare against classic lab-based neurometric measures and the degree of convergence/divergence in the results.

Specifically, the initiative aims to address three distinct areas:

1. Differing definitions of attention and emotion, their relationship to direct measures of neurometric response, and their validity as tools for creative evaluation and as predictors of market performance of ads or content
2. Validity, reliability and replicability of synthetic measures of attention, based on AI and machine learning approaches
3. Validity of attention measures (conventional or AI-based) for comparative evaluation of media as vehicles for ad placements

“Recent years have seen increasing interest in direct measures of cognitive and emotional response to advertising,” said Scott McDonald, CEO and President at ARF. “As a result, a number of new services have entered the marketplace with different approaches to the measurement of attention and/or emotional responses to ads. This excitement has caused some to push for incorporating these measures into next-generation currencies for media buying. But, we still don’t know enough about the reliability and validity of these measures and their rightful application to advertising and media evaluation. It is the ARF’s view that these discussions of attention-based currencies are premature in the absence of better information on the validity, reliability and predictive power of these measures. That’s what this study seeks to address.”

The ARF has already begun the project by recruiting an Advisory Committee composed of buy-side users of attention/emotion measurement solutions and of independent experts in media measurement, cognitive psychology (i.e., attention), and machine learning/AI methodologies. This advisory group will provide input into the design and scope of the project and the questions to be posed to participating vendors.

The output will include a final report with best practice recommendations to the industry, proposed standards for adoption by auditing organizations such as the MRC, and key questions that buyers of these services should ask when evaluating prospective vendors.

To learn more about the ARF Attention Validation Project, email Paul Donato, ARF CRO, at pdonato@thearf.org

About The ARF

Founded more than 80 years ago, the ARF is dedicated to creating, curating and sharing objective, industry-level advertising research to enable members to make a true impact on their advertising and build marketing leadership within their organizations. It has more than 400 members from leading brand advertisers, agencies, research firms and media-tech companies. For more information, visit www.thearf.org.

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