

Content is king as old channel definitions crumble

Everything will become AV

The dominance of audiovisual formats is already reshaping the media landscape, with platforms like YouTube and TikTok expanding beyond mobile to redefine TV viewing. As broadcasters, streaming platforms and publishers leverage new technology and AI tools, more advertisers will have greater access to high-quality video environments. Video display accounted for 14% of the growth in advertising spend in 2024 and this is predicted to grow, with video expected to account for 34% of all digital ad spend in 2030, according to [IAB UK's Futurescape Barometer](#). For more from the IAB UK Futurescape Barometer, log in to download the graphs.

Meanwhile, the evolution of audio will continue - podcasts now account for 40% of time spent with media for Gen Z and the format is undergoing a transformation, with 31% also in video in 2024 according to WARC's GWI audience consumption (November 2024). Over the next five years, we will see key players expand their audio ad offering to environments like gaming.

Navigating a redefined landscape

Advertisers and agencies will need to navigate a redefined landscape that is shaped by the evolution of and interaction between content producers and distributors. In this context, building media plans will require going back to the fundamentals of media - focusing on ad formats, quality of content and audience fit - rather than channels or platforms. All media players within this landscape will seek to attract and retain audiences by either utilising subscription models, ad funded content or a mix of both.

Content has always been king, but the dissolution of boundaries between media will consolidate this in the next five years. From broadcasting to audio to news brands, the trend is the same: media owners are diversifying to engage audiences in new ways and the old definitions of media and channel are crumbling. In a digital-native landscape in which everything is online, content itself will be the dominant force, redefining how media owners operate and how advertisers engage with audiences.

How to future-proof for 2030

- 1 Prioritise quality and the consumer. To succeed in a competitive landscape, media brands must double down on delivering high-quality content and experiences for consumers, whether via ad-funded or subscription models
- 2 Publishers should focus on defining their unique brands and audiences. This includes understanding the moments they occupy where they can provide unique value, as well as the audiences they aim to engage to build a strong proposition for advertisers
- 3 Provide measurable outcomes. Broadcasters, publishers and all media brands offering multi-platform advertising solutions must adopt new tech to ensure accountability and measurable outcomes for advertisers
- 4 Align content, context and partners. Media plans should focus on aligning the right context, content and partners that match an advertiser's target audience, incorporating diverse partners to deliver both scale and meaningful impact
- 5 Measurement matters. A new measurement approach will be necessary that moves beyond traditional channel definitions to assess the value of advertising across various content types



Agencies will win here if they're able to adapt their models by client. Building a client team of channel experts for the brands wanting channel-centric planning, or a team of broad planning specialists for the brands more centred on overall media outcome. It's all about adaptability and the agency partners who have this built into their model will be better equipped to serve their clients.

Lisa Boyles, Head of Go To Market and Media, giffgaff