

STREAMING TV: MAKING THE CONNECTION

EXTENDING MEASUREMENT TO EVALUATE OVERALL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

*Bas de Vos
Mariana Irazoqui
Enrico Verhulst
Gerwin Bok*

INTRODUCTION

Last year, in response to recent developments in viewing behaviour, SKO initiated a number of projects designed to improve audience measurement, including the introduction of time shifted viewing in audience reports and the testing of portable people meters. The results from these initiatives were presented in various audience measurement conferences in 2007 (De Vos and Appel, 2007 and De Vos and Kok, 2007). In this paper we describe another of these projects: the measurement of the viewing of television content with non-traditional equipment, such as computers. First results, lessons learned and next steps are presented for the first time in this paper.

In the Netherlands, the viewing of television content via on-demand streaming is rapidly growing. Programme makers are already taking this new viewing behaviour into account in evaluating the overall performance of their programmes. Today, broadcasters produce their own reports, assessing the amount of traffic on their sites and their streaming services. However, by the end of 2006, the TV industry expressed the need for comprehensive, transparent and independent reporting of the new online television audience to SKO, the JIC in charge of the television audience measurement in the Netherlands.

Continuing the consolidation of the reporting of TV content use, SKO has taken the first steps in the measurement of online television audiences by combining numbers of streaming requests with regular television ratings in the same report. The main goals of the project are to provide a single, authoritative source for online TV audience figures and to produce comparable and useful results for broadcasters, media agencies and advertisers. A third goal is the application of the approved standards used in TV audience research to stream measurement, further integrating traditional television and online operations within the broadcaster's organisation.

As yet, stream data is not collected in a TAM or Internet panel; thus it does not contain profile or accumulation data. Nevertheless, the information will allow SKO participants to estimate the added audience levels in relation to the basic reach from TV. Adding this measurement to the audience reports gives us an indication of the proportion of non-traditional distribution of TV content in relation to traditional TV viewing and provides an initial insight into the overall performance of television programmes.

In addition to TV programmes previously broadcast on television, streams may contain additional material that is related to television broadcasts but that is only available online. For this reason, SKO will also report on a 'concept' level. In the new reporting, all streams related

PART 1 / NEW MEDIA, NEW RULES?

to the same TV programme title (e.g. Idols) will be grouped in the reporting to produce an estimated gross performance level.

In the first section of this paper, we discuss the background of the project. In the next section we describe the project, defining and setting the parameters on television content that lead to the measurement of streams. The measurement technique used, Nedstat Streamsense module, is described in the following section. The issues involved in reporting stream requests in combination with TV ratings on a daily basis are then discussed, and the initial results are presented. Finally, based on our experiences this year, we look to the future of streaming TV measurement.

BACKGROUND

The options of when and how to watch television content continue to expand in the Netherlands; last year saw considerable growth in online TV viewing.

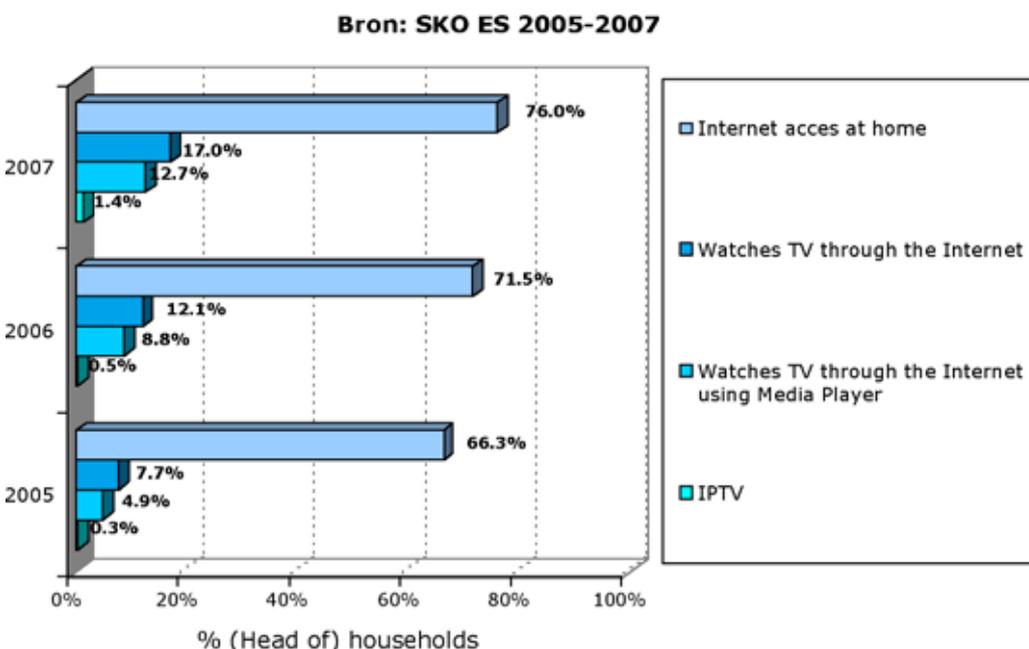
The Netherlands has the second largest broadband penetration rate in Europe. (European Commission, 2007). According to the SKO Establishment Survey,

45.2% of the households with Internet access in Netherlands have an ADSL line and another 38.9% has access through the cable, while narrow band penetration is only 11.4% (8.2 % is connected through analogue line /modem and 3.2% accesses Internet through ISN).

With an overall Internet penetration of 76%, the percentage of households that watch TV programmes online increased from 12% to almost 17% between 2006 and 2007 (see figure 1). Streaming appears to be the most popular form of online TV viewing, ca. 75% of the households that watch TV programmes online do so using media players.

Compared to other European countries, the Netherlands is a forerunner in streaming of TV programmes. Since 2002, NPO, the Dutch public broadcaster, has offered previously broadcast television programmes as free video-on-demand services at Uitzendinggemist.nl. Live streams have been available since 2005. The number of TV programmes streamed from NPO's online archives has increased steadily; in October 2007 stream requests reached a record figure of more than 10.3 million. In February 2008 they realised 13.4 million requests.

FIGURE 1
INTERNET ACCESS AND TV VIEWING THROUGH THE INTERNET



PART 1 / NEW MEDIA, NEW RULES?

A similar on-demand stream service is available on the websites of diverse regional and commercial broadcasters.

RTL Nederland used to offer free, on-demand streams at rtl.nl. In April 2007, RTLGemist.nl was introduced to facilitate the access to their streaming service. Some content, like foreign fiction, is offered against a small fee (RTL Video). In February 2008 they reached 9.5 million requests.

MTV Overdrive was launched end of August 2006. This is a free, online streaming service with free clips and material that has not been broadcast on television, including complete interviews and backstage reports. The site also offers online streams of programmes previously broadcast, as well as some programmes not as yet broadcast on television. The other MTV Networks stations, TMF and Nickelodeon (TurboNick), also provide on-demand streams at their websites.

Since last January, SBS has offered on-demand service through specific SBS programme sites as well as through the site MyVideo.nl. The new site acts mainly as an extra platform for specific programmes, showing (parts of) their video materials online only (e.g. Dancing Queen), as well as user-generated content. A specific, on-demand streams service site will be online in the autumn 2008.

In April 2007, NPO also started offering short fragments of their video material on YouTube. Even before that, it was possible to request streams from NPO via Google Video. RTL also offers user-generated video.

Almost all broadcasters offer a number of services through their websites, such as news, live events, but among the most visited pages are those offering on demand streaming. On average, 16% of all visits and 9% of all the pages viewed in February 2008 involved a request for streaming video (see table 1).

TABLE 1

Number of visits – visits containing streams NPO, RTL and SBS domains.				
	Visits (*1000)		Visits including streams (*1000)	Percentage of visits including streams (%)
Domain	Feb-07	Feb-08	Feb-08	Feb-08
NPO	53,951	85,214	15,462	18.1%
RTL	10,881	16,066	1,242	7.7%
SBS	2,316	3,042	363	11.9%
Average	22,383	34,774	5,689	16.4%

Number of pages views – streams requests NPO, RTL and SBS domains.				
	Page views (*1000)		Page views including streams (*1000)	Percentage of page views including streams (%)
Domain	Feb-07	Feb-08	Feb-08	Feb-08
NPO	-	480,136	41,446	8.6%
RTL	-	64,717	2,963	4.6%
SBS	-	20,863	4,636	22.2%
Average		188,572	16,348	8.7%

Source: STIR Webmeter™, Stichting Internet Reclame