

BARB has been working vigorously with its contractors to deal with the key issues that are inevitable in a new contract of this complexity. In this update we would like to share with you the current state of play and measures that are being taken to manage the process.

QUALITY OF DATA

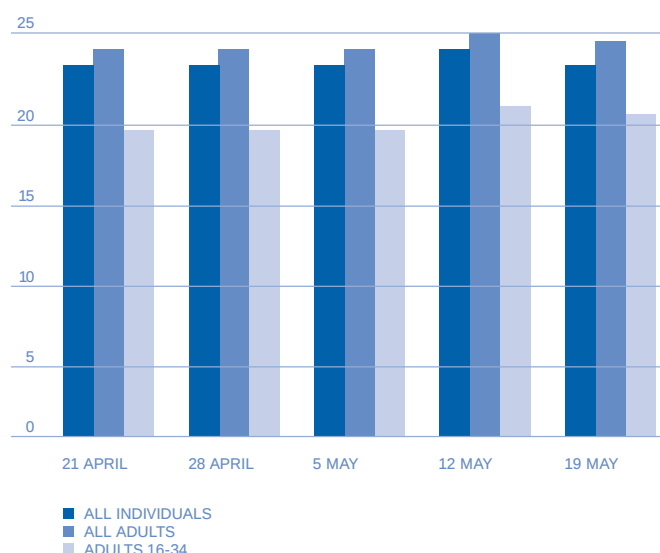
There is consensus that the quality of data is paramount, and in the setting-up phase, which we are still in, we are focussing on the quality control procedures.

What we have done is to review and step up our key quality control procedures that directly impact on quality of data, including total viewing levels and reach.

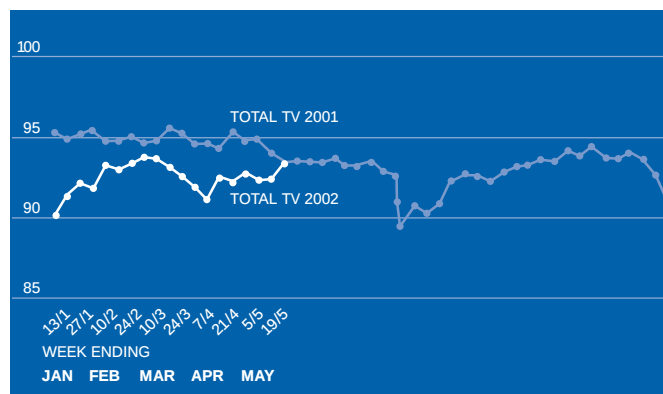
The number of hours spent watching television reflects the recent more stringent controls and has increased to around 24 hours per week for All Individuals. It is now comparable with 2000 and 2001 for the main audience categories – All Adults, 16 - 34 Adults and Children aged 4 –15.

Weekly reach has also achieved the same overall level as last year and is 93.5% for week ending 19th May, and has been steadily increasing since April.

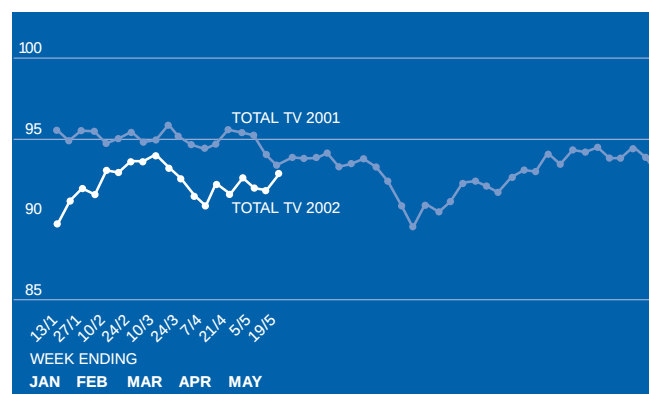
TV VIEWING LEVELS WEEKLY AVERAGE HOURS



WEEKLY REACH % ALL INDIVIDUALS 4+



WEEKLY REACH % ADULTS 16+



QUALITY CONTROL CHECKS STEPPED UP

The main quality checks and procedures that affect viewing levels are the main focus of our increased activities. We have enlisted additional resources to enable BARB to increase the number of daily and weekly quality contact calls to the individual panel members and to increase monitoring of the data.

This assists us in the task of identifying erroneous viewing behaviour and "educating" the panel members in the correct procedures for registering their viewing and that of their guests. It is normal behaviour and to be expected, with a new panel, and we have been careful not to bombard them with too many calls that could result in giving them reason to request to leave the panel. We are reminded, in this task, that the panel comprises real people who are making a valuable contribution to the television industry.

One of BARB's main checks is known as "nil viewing" – that is when a panel member or household has not registered any viewing. This can be a real activity, reflecting genuine behaviour, eg a panel member may be ill or on holiday. Equally it may indicate that they are not bothering to use the handset which registers their viewing, or there could be a technical fault.

As the level of "nil viewing" has been higher than anticipated we have reduced the time for implementing the check, from 3 to 2 weeks, for a more rapid response.

The other main quality check is known as "Uncovered Set Viewing" – when a television set is switched on but the panel member has not registered their viewing. This can be a sign of genuine behaviour, or just sloppy practice.

This behaviour is often more sporadic, and more acute, in homes with younger adults and children, who are less diligent in following BARB procedures.

In both these instances the "offenders" are withheld from the reporting sample until their behaviour improves, or alternatively they are permanently removed from the panel and replaced.

PANEL SIZE

All of the quality control procedures (a continuous process) which are being stepped up as part of a more stringent running-in process, have had the net effect, in the interim period, of reducing the sample size to ensure that quality of data is maintained.

We have an installed panel of around 5400, which we are converting to the reporting sample. To achieve a more expedient plan for conversion and installation, we have taken on additional technical and engineering resource at BARB to assist ATR, and we are currently reviewing and implementing an enhanced recruitment and installation process.

PANEL BALANCE

We have maintained the level of homes by region, which are broadly on par with last year, even though overall the panel is around 80% of the designed 5100 reporting level. Demographically the profile of the network reporting panel is close to target and the weighting scheme – there are over 1500 weighting targets – corrects for any imbalances that may occur.

We will be sending out further newsletters over the coming months to keep you up to date with developments.