

Building the basics in digital video and audio

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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The IAB SA's most recent IAB Insights online webinar took place yesterday, 11 June on Zoom, looking at building the basics in digital video and audio and enabling engagement and conversion in the digital economy.

IAB SA Front Row winner and aspiring digital strategist and copywriter Motshidisi Mokoena spoke about the consumption of and use of digital media during Covid-19: a day in the life of a graduate. Kelvin Storie, Principal: Media Strategy & Insights: Business Enablement at DStv Media Sales, spoke about the evolution of digital video. IAB SA Digital Audio Committee member and founder and CEO of Solid Gold Podcast Studios, Gavin Kennedy spoke about storytelling, and Thato Rampedi, content creator and YouTuber, spoke about creating influence and the relationship between the content creator and the subscribers.

Here, Mokoena, Storie, Kennedy and Rampedi share some key insights and takeaways from their presentations...

■ *What was the key theme or message of your talk?*

Mokoena: The consumption of digital media (video and audio) by a novice (a new graduate) and a freelancer who is new to the remote workforce during Covid-19.

Storie: I speak to the evolution of digital video – specifically on the convergence of screens, the fuelling of OTT and the video subscription evolution. It seems that too many of us are caught up in the space of digital video being a 'pure form' digital space, but this is evolving at a massive rate. The adoption of screens and what each is providing, as well as the behavioural space the user is in when consuming and the content that each has available to offer is driving the spread of the OTT offering – SVOD, AVOD, TVOD, BVOD. Each one has a place, its not one for the other. So, a video strategy needs to be adapted as per any other media along the consumer viewing journey (morning through to evening) across any platform, anywhere, anyhow.

Kennedy: Humans are storytellers and story listeners. For millennia we had only oral communication, with stories, myths, legends and history passed from generation to generation by spoken word and as humans, we engage deeply with audio and are adept at listening and walking, driving, cooking, running, etc. So digital audio is here to stay, and with 25% of all podcast content having been created during the last three months, it is rapidly becoming an integrated part of our daily lives and should be included in all corporate communication and advertising plans.

Rampedi: The key element of my talk was creating trust between the creator and the subscriber through consistent relatable content. Enabling trust through consistency introduces purchasing power and the ability to redirect traffic. Once trust is gained true influence is present.

■ *Talk us through some of your key insights.*

Mokoena: The risk of information overload. Too much streaming of information poses a risk if information anxiety, thus we should consume content with intention.

When choosing between creating a video or audio, you need to understand the consumers of your audience and the value



you want your content to add, then you can decide what type of content to share.

Storie: OTT video planning is growing, but also evolving based on the user behaviour and driven by the content it has to offer.

It isn't one for the other, these platforms are complementing each other, and each one plays a crucial role in the video mindset of the viewer. Live content viewing (information need-based) versus BVOD viewing (escapism need-based) are two different viewing moments in a viewer's day.

Subscription threshold management in the HH – the rise of AVOD platforms to offset the overall HH subscription purse.



[Radio & Podcasts] IAB's Digital Audio Committee members on the future of digital audio broadcasting

Juanita Pienaar 30 Apr 2020



Kennedy: Digital audio has entered an exponential growth phase. Although podcasting (originally known as audio blogging) has been around for 16 odd years, approximately 25% of all new podcast channels started in the past year.

Digital audio players are now built into mobile device operating systems, removing much of the earlier friction encountered in getting content onto portable devices.

There has been a significant shift from music-only to mixed listening, particularly long-form, deep-dive (engaging) content. Spotify, in particular, is undertaking a massive drive and investment into spoken-word audio content.

“ People don't accidentally listen to a podcast. There has to be intent. They will seek out content that resonates with them, that answers a question for them, or that engages in a deeper discussion or conversation with them. This is not ephemeral, bubblegum radio. It's something deeper and more connected. ”

We're entering a phase of hyper-focused audiences, rather than the old familiar FM radio mass market, and now should think along these lines “It doesn't matter how many people you reach, but that you reach the people who matter.”

Digital audio audiences “listen while...” (e.g. while cooking, while exercising).

Amazon predicts that audiobook downloads will overtake ebook sales this year.

Rampedi: I would advise brands to focus on creating long term relationships with creators. Creators have spent months and some years growing their platform and gaining trust from their viewers.

Audiences react and engagement is created from acts that are continuously made.

Many campaigns with creators are once of creating once off traffic to the brand as well as sales where possible. If a creator was to continuously represent a brand their subscribers would be more inclined to invest in the new relationship.

■ **What one main call to action would you advise brands to take at this time?**

Mokoena: Create content that resonates with your community, tell a story, don't just push out information.

Storie: It always starts with the consumer, so the same applies to starting with the viewer. Understand their content viewing behaviour and map that need state throughout the day. This is nothing new to any strategist, but somehow the basics are

not being adhered to. What is that lean back moment (relax, escapism) versus the lean forward moment (info seeking, attention)? And ensure that your creative matches the platform as well as how that platform is viewed (i.e. smart TV versus mobile).

Kennedy: The best time to start your podcast was 10 years ago, the next best time is today.

Digital audio is being used in so many innovative ways to add value to the entire customer experience. From FAQ podcasts (that also reduce the burden on call centres) to deep-dive conversations on focused topics of interest to niche audiences. Case studies, conversations with clients and round table discussions are proving popular, useful and valuable too.

Websites are seeing a shift to [tl;dr](#) (too long; didn't read) as web users pay less attention to the voluminous written word, and instead, listen to the content they're after.

There are approximately 31 million YouTube channels, while podcasts on Apple only recently topped the one million mark, so there is massive potential for growth still.

Rampedi: During this pandemic people are more interested in consuming content. Now is definitely the time to create video content due to the increased traffic on the platforms. Personally in the last 30 days, I have grown over 10,000 new subscribers placing my channel at 37,000 subscribers. People need to be educated on the pandemic but at times distracted. These times call for art and creativity.

■ ***The digital economy is changing at such a rapid rate, especially given the current global crisis. Comment on its impact of content (video | audio) on the digital economy in context of your talk.***

Mokoena: Going digital is now a way to pivot, not just a trend, it is imperative that brands migrate to the digital space and integrate different types of content, especially now that most of us are at home. There is a lot of information going around so we want to consume content as we go, in the most convenient way possible, our attention span is very short so the message needs to be clear.



In the front row: Motshidisi Mokoena

Jessica Tennant 9 Apr 2020



Storie: Content has always been an important part of the quality of the video platform and what it can offer, but this has been even more dramatised and re-enforced. Usage behaviour is driven by the content you keep. Aggregation of content is the new economy as the viewer is confronted by so much choice that it may bring them to a point of not making a choice at all.

Kennedy: Early indications are that digital audio not only survived global lockdowns but in many instances showed accelerated adoption. There was substantial growth of listeners and many companies and brands started their podcasts over this time as they realised just how rapidly, affordably, and effectively they could communicate with their clients.

Fortunately for us, in the week before lockdown in South Africa, we commissioned several more “at home” studios so that our teams were able to continue with our existing clients, and also accommodate the rush of new clients who came on board during the crisis.

Rampedi: One thing I've learned during this time is that communication with your audience is key. Many creators are not able to create their normal video content due to the pandemic. Many have stopped and are waiting for the pandemic to end. Adapting to current situations and communicating why your content might change is key. Explaining to your audience that your content might be shorter/longer or completely different is all that is needed. Consumers are currently lenient on what is presented to them due to the pandemic if explained to.

■ **At this time of crisis – please share one key learning that you have personally (or professionally) taken on board, that you believe will assist others to navigate the future of work as we (are getting to) know it.**

Mokoena: Adapt to the new normal but don't lose your tone and/or identity as a brand, and as individuals, may we learn to see the crisis as an opportunity to step out of our comfort zone.

Storie: Keep calm and stick to the sound basics when it comes to data analysis, segmentation and behavioural analysis. The process and interpretation haven't changed, only the amount of data that you have at your disposal.

Kennedy: When people are scared, they search for information. There is a massive shift towards people listening to conversations that answer those questions, rather than simply reading social media posts.

“ *When recording at home, the room and environment you record in is more important than the microphone you use. Turn off aircons and noisy appliances, close windows to eliminate barking dogs and hadedas and ideally pack cushions and pillows around you. Yes, make a little cushion fort if you can.* ”

While we remain strong advocates of high-quality production values that include professional microphones, studios and editors, we've always maintained that content trumps form. A low-quality recording of compelling content is better value than a high-quality recording of someone talking nonsense.

During lockdown, audiences affirmed this and continued to listen to content that may have been produced on laptop microphones in noisy kitchens at home. However, this is likely to be a temporary reprieve, and within the next months, listeners will expect quality content and recordings.

The IAB SA has taken its Insight Series, in partnership with Everlytic, GetSmarter, a 2U Inc. brand and Bizcommunity, online to provide 60 minutes of insights, featuring fellow and future industry leaders, on subjects selected by IAB members and the industry at large to make better digital decisions. Post-event presentation videos are uploaded to the IAB member portal to access ongoing.

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