C&binet Forum gives us hints of the future of media and marketing

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Last week?s C&binet Forum was dominated by the debate around file-sharing and copyright. Between bouts of debate between old and new media and government pronouncements on the issue however, there were glimpses to be had of how media and marketing may evolve in the coming years.

It was clear talking to people from indie production companies and traditional broadcasters that many of the challenges they face from the web?s unending waves of disruption were very similar to those faced by marketers:

* **Attention scattering:** Where are the big audiences? If attention is scattered across the web how do we aggregate that attention and express its value?

*** Monetisation & measurement:** The difficulty and complexity of measuring attention and engagement and expressing their value are just as much of a challenge for media producers and broadcasters as for us in marketing. It leads to innovation and risk-taking innovation being stunted.

*** Commissioning mind-sets:** Just as brand-owners are struggling (with increasing success) to throw off the constraints of the campaign model, producers and broadcasters are trying to imaging new approaches beyond the commissioning model, where indies have only the commissions of broadcasters. At the same time,

*** Broadcast-centric:** This mind-set flows into the broadcast. Having a series on TV is hallmark of success - the talk is of 360, transmedia or cross-platform media, but too often these are after-thoughts to getting-something-on-telly. It is reminiscent of how brands still often put the 30-second spot at the centre of their creative and media planning.

Two sessions at C&binet Forum led me to think that just as there are similar challenges for marketing and media there may be common solutions.

Tim Bradshaw of the FT facilitated a panel on ?Making Free Pay?, which had me making detailed notes:

* Lorraine Heggessey, chief executive of Talkback Thames (which makes X-factor), made several interesting points. Here was a former controller of BBC One saying that she could envisage a time soon when a major piece of intellectual property would be created without a broadcaster being involved, but a sponsoring brand could be. For the faprice of an ad campaign, a brand could easily commission a quality drama series?

* Fallon chairman, Laurence Green said that the advertising business had been too high cost for too long and that pressure on costs was forcing a more creative approach. He said there would be a mixed media and marketing economy.

* Venture capialist, Dharmash Mistry of Balderton Capital said that there were big opportunities to be had in areas like virtual goods, and that understanding of the social graphs of consumers would be very important to media and marketing companies.

This was followed by a session on Brands & Content, led by Jack Horner, founder and creative of Frukt Music. Agreement emerged, perhaps too quickly, tahat campaign and measurement models prevented brand managers from taking risks and usingn new models. A couple of interesting points I noted were:

* Nicole Yershon of Ogilvy relating the growing success of the Ogilvy Labs approach, which takes small proportions of client budgets and commits them to trying new models for gaining attention and engagement.

- The distributed nature of attention in networks makes it difficult to convince clients to invest in new approaches to marketing online - the big audience numbers they are sued to in TV aren?t there. Steve Taylor of Aegis saying that he saw a role for media buying agencies in developing approaches for aggregating attention and connecting their clients.

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