

An interview with Jella Hoffmann and Tanja Hackenbruch discussing the importance of JICs in media research – June 2025



‘JICs are essential and remain beacons’

The media industry is changing rapidly – fragmented usage, international platforms and new technologies are also challenging monetary organisations. In an interview with Mike Weber, Director of Marketing and Sales at WEMF, Dr Tanja Hackenbruch, CEO of Mediapulse, and Dr Jella Hoffmann, CEO of WEMF, explain how they are responding to these developments, the role alliances play and why valid data is more important than ever.

WEMF and Mediapulse have been working well together for years. Unfortunately, since Mediapulse suspended its online research, there has not been a jointly published study. Will there be other areas in which the two monetary organisations will work together or exploit synergies in the future?

Jella Hoffmann: Until this year, we published the ‘MACH Total Audience’ study together with Mediapulse. We also maintain a constant dialogue – for example through joint communication and training activities as well as our involvement in national and international associations.

Tanja Hackenbruch: Exactly, this close collaboration is also evident beyond research – for example, in media policy coordination, in the sharing of expertise or in topics such as data integration and tool connectivity. Together, we advocate for the relevance of currency data and the visibility of JICs (Joint Industry Committees).

International platforms such as Google and Meta now attract a considerable proportion of advertising revenue. How can the two JICs – WEMF and Mediapulse – counteract this?

Tanja Hackenbruch: Above all, I believe our role is to educate people and actively participate in political initiatives – for example, in dialogue with OFCOM or through our involvement in the AMC (Audience Measurement Coalition). We can only make a difference if all stakeholders – from the media to politicians to consumers – are aware of what is at stake. In addition, as a monetary institute, we are committed to fair competitive conditions, including against international platforms that have so far eluded research. We have been seeking a dialogue here for years – directly and through political channels. The pressure is growing, albeit slowly.

Jella Hoffmann: Although we cannot directly prevent the outflow of advertising revenue, we as JICs can provide Swiss media with valid, comprehensive data that they can use to optimise and further develop their offerings. This creates real added value compared to global platforms. In addition, we also provide the market with neutral data on international providers – even if they cannot be actively measured. And last but not least, we are always mindful of the value of transparency and independent performance measurement – a clear advantage for the local media in the advertising market.

The print industry is under huge cost pressure. How does this affect WEMF's research projects?

Jella Hoffmann: Our customers and market partners know that high-quality research comes at a price. At the same time, we are also feeling the pressure on costs and are constantly optimising – not least because collectively funded research would be more expensive for everyone in the event of media consolidation or discontinuation. Thanks to targeted measures, however, we have been able to keep costs stable and highly efficient for years – with less than one percent of print advertising revenue. A certain amount of pressure also sharpens our focus on the essentials and encourages new ideas. For example, we are constantly testing new data collection methods and checking synergies with other studies and services.

Budgets are also under pressure in the TV and radio industry. What measures is Mediapulse taking to ensure the quality and continuity of media research?

Tanja Hackenbruch: We are responding to budget pressure with innovation, close industry coordination and technological advancement. In radio research, we are working with the industry on future-proof, cost-efficient solutions. Initial options are on the table and decisions on their implementation will soon be taken. One initial result is the product Radio Streaming Data, which was launched in April. In television research, we were able to make important advances in our hybrid measurement system in 2024 – for example, through high-resolution data (Hi-Res) and the integration of additional set-top-box data – at no additional cost to the industry. At the same time, we are politically committed to amending the Federal Act on Radio and Television (RTVA) so that funding can also be used for ongoing operations – a key lever for the long-term protection of media research in Switzerland.

What role do the JICs play in view of an increasingly fragmented media offering and different data sources?

Jella Hoffmann: Especially in an increasingly fragmented media environment, JICs remain a reliable beacon. Their real task is to provide neutral market overviews and data that are as comparable as possible. As a source of data, they are particularly trustworthy – unlike other players, they have no vested financial interest in the direct result, such as a specific advertising service.

The JICs define market standards. Are these standards still sufficient today to reflect the complex digital media realities?

Tanja Hackenbruch: Absolutely – the existing standards are a key foundation, but they need to be continuously developed. The digital media world is changing rapidly, with new platforms, formats and forms of use. JICs must remain flexible and define new standards together with the market in order to remain relevant. It is important that we do not fall behind international suppliers – lower standards would jeopardise the quality and transparency of our measurement system.

How do you view the impact of artificial intelligence and automated analysis tools on the future of media research?

Tanja Hackenbruch: AI and automated analysis tools will have a lasting impact on media research – they open up new perspectives and enable new and, above all, faster analyses. But even the best AI needs high-quality, independently collected basic data – and that's exactly where our strength lies. The future lies in combining technological innovation with reliable data. Together with the University of St.Gallen, we are currently researching the use of synthetic respondents – an interesting research project that also highlights the limits of AI.

Jella Hoffmann: Exactly – and AI and automated processes have long been part of media research, for example in the form of advanced statistics or analysis algorithms. However, I do not currently see any fully AI-generated research without primary data collection. This is because all AI is only as good as its training data – and this has to be generated outside the systems. Their validity ultimately determines the quality of all AI-based evaluations.

How does WEMF integrate new media channels into its research studies and audit programmes in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of media usage in Switzerland?

Jella Hoffmann: We are constantly expanding our studies – particularly the MACH Strategy intermedia dataset – always in line with the needs of our customers and current usage trends. For example, we are increasingly integrating new genres such as social media, podcasts, streaming and gaming. We also maintain contact with international colleagues in order to learn from each other and pick up new ideas.

What steps is Mediapulse taking to address developments in the increasingly fragmented use of TV, such as replay ads or the use of TV and video on mobile devices?

Tanja Hackenbruch: We are responding to the increasing fragmentation of TV use with a consistently hybrid research approach. This enables the overall use of moving images to be mapped across platforms – including replay ads and mobile TV and video usage. Our systems are constantly being developed in order to realistically reflect changing consumer habits. This means that our customers receive data on moving image usage that is accurate to the second – across all platforms, content and delivery formats.

What role does advertising media research play in the transformation of traditional media offerings to digital platforms and hybrid business models?

Jella Hoffmann: Our data provides important foundations for strategy and product development – for example, about who uses which forms of distribution, how digital and analogue users differ, and where there is duplication. We not only demonstrate reach and contacts to the market, but also digital users of existing analogue media, thus charting the digital transformation in the industry and providing insights into which new user groups are being reached by the digital offerings.

Tanja Hackenbruch: Exactly, media research creates the necessary transparency to make this change measurable and manageable in the first place. Media companies, regulators and

advertisers can only make well-founded, forward-looking decisions if reach and usage behaviour are recorded in a comparable way across platforms.

Do we need new alliances between media companies, agencies and JICs to overcome the dominance of international platforms? If so, what exactly might these collaborations look like?

Tanja Hackenbruch: These kinds of alliances are not only desirable, they are essential if Swiss media is to survive against global competition. In addition to the many good initiatives that are already in place in the Swiss market and of which everyone is aware, I would like to mention the involvement of Mediapulse and WEMF in the AMC. The AMC positions itself as the central voice for independent, fair media measurement vis-à-vis European regulators. Initial successes have already been achieved within the framework of the European Media Freedom Act. At the same time, we are committed to fair conditions at national level – in line with EU regulations and to benefit the competitiveness of domestic media.

Jella Hoffmann: I can only agree with that. Today, alliances are more important than ever – ideally nationwide and across genres, and also internationally between media companies. In Switzerland, there are already a number of joint initiatives between media and advertising industry associations and media companies. It is now crucial that as many market players as possible participate in order to further strengthen the Swiss market. It is particularly encouraging, for example, that some publishers are jointly pursuing online research (ODS) despite a difficult environment. If other providers join in here, it would send a strong signal to the market.