

Why Put Your Ratings in Question?

Social Media Dos & Don'ts

Ratings data can be among the most valuable tools broadcasters have for programming and sales. It's important to protect the integrity of your station's ratings by following Arbitron's guide to using social media. While these platforms create more personalized communication with listeners, social media can also lead to rating bias or rating distortion if not managed properly. Here are a few guidelines to follow when managing the use of social media.

Protecting the Integrity of Audience Estimates

Adherence to the "Social Media Dos & Don'ts" will:

- Help preserve respondent anonymity
- Help stations avoid rating distortion (prompting false information from respondents) and rating bias (prompting differential participation by a particular station's listeners)

Examples are available on arbitron.com.

The Importance of Anonymity

- Arbitron treats respondents' identities as confidential.
- Respondents are instructed not to discuss their participation with strangers.
- Respondents who disclose their participation become ineligible.

Arbitron Monitors Social Media

- Arbitron monitors social media sites daily:
 - For respondent disclosures
 - For contact between respondents and stations
- Personalities' sites are monitored if the sites are public, e.g., personality uses on-air name or the site promotes a station or a show.
- Arbitron investigates every respondent disclosure it encounters.
- Remember, social media is not only defined as Facebook and Twitter, but also includes texting, emails, etc.
- In-person programming stunts, remotes, and events could also foster rating bias or rating distortion. Any inappropriate interaction with panelists or diarykeepers at those events are also evaluated under this same policy

Questions? Contact Dave Willinski, Senior Principal Policy Analyst, at dave.willinski@arbitron.com or (410) 312-8396.

Do

- Notify Arbitron if a respondent reaches out to the station via social media (or any other means).
- Remind station staff that social media comments are subject to same guidelines as on-air comments.
- Contact Arbitron for a confidential pre-review if you are unsure about comments you wish to post.
- Contact Arbitron if your staff sees posted comments directed to an Arbitron respondent.
- Contact Arbitron if the station learns the identity of an Arbitron respondent (by any means).
- Review the following materials at arbitron.com.
 - Rating Bias & Rating Distortion handbooks for PPM and Diary
 - Panel & Diary Security "Dos & Don'ts"

Don't

- Don't attempt to learn the identity of Arbitron respondents. The station may be delisted, even if the attempt doesn't succeed.
- Don't address comments to panelists or diarykeepers.
- Don't discuss ratings (even ratings success) on social networking sites. Doing so may prompt respondents to disclose their participation.
- Don't post comments encouraging listeners to participate as panelists or diarykeepers.
- Don't offer anything of value to self-identified panelists or diarykeepers.