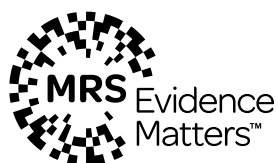


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# THE RESEARCH **LIVE** INDUSTRY REPORT 2017

INCLUDING THE NEW MRS LEAGUE TABLES



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**"THIS REPORT SHOWS THAT THE RESEARCH SECTOR CONTINUES – IN SPITE OF THE CHALLENGES – TO BE A VIBRANT ONE, AND THE NUMBER OF QUALITY ENTRIES TO LAST YEAR'S MRS AWARDS 2016 SUPPORTS THIS."**

**DAME DIANNE THOMPSON, MRS PRESIDENT**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Market Research Society (MRS) would like to thank all contributors to this report: David Barr, David Cahn, Lorna Tilbian, Alison Blair, and the team at TNS Kantar led by Katherine McIsaac and Shehnaz Hansraj. Particular thanks are due to David Barr for compiling the league tables every year and providing analysis, and David Cahn for undertaking the annual MRS Industry Survey.

If you have any queries about this report please contact MRS [info@mrs.org.uk](mailto:info@mrs.org.uk) or call 020 7490 4911.

# INTRODUCTION

*Jane Frost, chief executive, MRS*



## Welcome to the Research Live Industry Report 2017.

This new report aims not just to celebrate success, but to show what success looks like. As well as the headline growth of the industry, there are plenty of positive smaller stories emerging amid the statistics – the increased investment in qualitative research being just one (p.22). There are also some sobering challenges ahead with disruptive forces circling (p.26).

The MRS League Tables are built on 2015 financial data submitted and collected in 2016, enhanced with the most current perspectives, including Lorna Tilbian's view from the markets (p.24) and Research Live Editor Jane Bainbridge's conversation with some of today's fastest growing companies. (p.14)

The MRS League Tables focus solely on UK-based turnover and international work managed and invoiced from the UK; where relevant we have brought an international perspective into the commentary (p.23).

I hope you find this report useful and I wish you and your business every success for the year to come.

Jane Frost, CBE  
Chief Executive, Market Research Society

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS REPORT



**3bn**

**£2.942 BN**  
TURNOVER OF TOP 100  
INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES



**6.7%**

**GROWTH**  
YEAR-ON-YEAR FOR  
TOP 100 INDIVIDUAL  
AGENCIES



**52.1%**

**TOP 10 INDIVIDUAL  
AGENCIES ACCOUNT FOR**  
52.1% OF TOTAL  
TURNOVER



**71%**

**INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES**  
THAT RECORDED  
GROWTH



**£61**

**SPENT PER CAPITA**  
MAKES UK RESEARCH  
INDUSTRY LARGEST  
PER HEAD IN WORLD



**12**

**OF THE TOP 20  
CONSOLIDATED  
BUSINESSES ARE**  
UK-OWNED: 6 USA,  
1 FRANCE, 1 GERMANY

# MRS LEAGUE TABLES ANALYSIS

David Barr, league tables compiler

The MRS League Tables were compiled in November 2016 using the latest data available. They seek to identify and rank the industry's largest businesses according to their UK-based turnover (including international work managed and invoiced from the UK), and by their year-on-year growth (or contraction) of turnover. Growth can be organic or by acquisition, or a combination of both; the tables do not differentiate. The tables also contribute to the MRS estimates of industry size and growth.

The organisations ranked in the tables provide monitoring, measurement, and understanding of markets and societies in support of well-informed and evidence-based decision-making. They deploy a wide and eclectic range of personnel, techniques, technologies, methodologies, skills, experience, knowledge and expertise. Likewise, they deliver their services via many different business models, media and distribution channels.

## INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES: KEY FINDINGS

- The top 100 individual agencies generated in 2015 total turnover of £2.942bn, which represents year-on-year growth within these agencies of nearly 6.7%.
- The top 10 agencies accounted for 52.1% of the total turnover, and the top 20 accounted for 69.2%.
- Growth was not universal, nor evenly distributed, as is highlighted in the Table showing the 20 fastest-growing agencies.
- Overall, 71 agencies recorded growth, while 29 had declining turnover.



## CONSOLIDATED BUSINESSES

The table ranking the top 50 consolidated businesses draws agencies (where appropriate) together under their ownership groups. It further emphasises the concentration of turnover in the largest groups. In relevant cases the notes accompanying the table (see page 13) identify ultimate ownership as well as the named subsidiary agencies which are included in the calculation of group turnover. However, the table ranking the 20 fastest-growing businesses shows no correlation between scale and growth. Ultimate national ownership of the top 20 groups consists of 12 UK, six USA, one France, and one Germany.

## COMPILATION METHODOLOGY

Many information sources are used in the compilation of the tables, several of which are in the public domain. The business and trade press and related websites yield a great deal of information. Annual Reports of public companies range from the informative and transparent to minimal and oblique. Statutory filings at Companies House are the principal source of comparative data in the public domain but reporting dates vary within the year. Most are December but a few are as early as February and March.

Smaller private companies frequently send their turnover data on request directly to the compiler, particularly if they file only abbreviated accounts at Companies House. In some cases, these are round numbers rather than precise figures. For a few companies, turnover has been estimated, based on turnover ranges published in the MRS Research Buyers Guide and many other sources. Estimated numbers are in italics. All rankings are based on the best available data at the time of publication.

## ONES TO WATCH

In previous years, all businesses with a turnover exceeding £3 million were included in the consolidated businesses league table. The approach has changed for 2015 with the individual agencies table extending from 50 to 100 entries, whilst the consolidated businesses table has been limited to the top 50. As a result, a number of £3m businesses which would have had a reasonable expectation of inclusion in this year's league tables have been squeezed out.

There are eight companies we've identified which fall into this 'Ones to watch' category who we believe are moving in the right direction for future inclusion:

	2015	2014	2013
Springboard Research	4.259	2.929	2.373
Tonic Insight	3.918	3.137	3.781
M-M Eye	3.767	5.406	4.458
djs Research	3.618	2.862	2.207
The Nursery Research & Planning	3.477	3.907	3.378
Relish Research	3.357	3.200	2.595
Mesh Planning	3.143	2.625	4.532
Critical Research	3.097	2.291	2.314

# MRS LEAGUE TABLES

## TOP 100 INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES RANKED BY TURNOVER

2015 MRS LEAGUE TABLES, COMPILED NOVEMBER 2016

2015 RANKING NUMBER	CHANGE ON PREVIOUS RANKING	2014 RANKING NUMBER	COMPANY NAME	2015 (£M.)	2014 (£M.)	2013 (£M.)	% CHANGE ON PREVIOUS YEAR	GROWTH RANKING
1	=	1	Wood Mackenzie Research & Consulting	240.000	227.421	212.804	5.531%	43
2	▲	3	Dunnhumby	238.665	191.553	165.220	24.595%	12
3	▼	2	TNS UK	191.623	195.334	194.140	-1.900%	75
4	=	4	IpsosMORI	172.500	165.200	162.400	4.419%	46
5	=	5	Gartner	156.244	138.487	121.036	12.822%	26
6	▲	8	GfK UK	129.151	136.579	162.031	-5.439%	85
7	▼	6	AC Nielsen	122.769	101.534	95.119	20.914%	18
8	▼	7	Millward Brown	102.000	101.101	105.043	0.889%	66
9	--	--	Teradata UK	90.906	72.518	66.290	25.356%	10
10	▼	9	Euromonitor	88.356	88.295	74.228	0.069%	71
11	▼	10	Mintel Group	82.974	74.940	69.628	10.721%	31
12	▼	11	Ebiquity	73.874	68.452	64.046	7.921%	38
13	▲	14	Informa Telecoms & Media	63.122	42.104	18.336	49.919%	4
14	▼	12	Kantar Media	57.079	52.730	48.784	8.248%	37
15	▼	13	Precise Media Monitoring	44.012	50.886	42.270	-13.509%	94
16	▲	17	Lightspeed Research	41.582	35.869	39.335	15.927%	24
17	▼	15	Information Resources	38.000	39.107	42.417	-2.831%	78
18	▼	16	IMS Health	36.217	36.167	39.295	0.138%	70
19	▼	18	Research Now	34.843	34.463	31.522	1.103%	64
20	▼	19	NatCen	32.933	34.154	41.508	-3.575%	83
21	▼	20	Hall & Partners	29.500	27.727	25.025	6.394%	42
22	▼	21	Double Helix	28.000	27.000	26.000	3.704%	52
23	=	23	Flamingo Research	26.148	24.044	19.105	8.751%	36
24	▲	27	MMR Research Worldwide	25.980	20.200	20.056	28.614%	7
25	▲	37	IDC	25.753	22.661	16.108	13.645%	25

Those in *italics* are estimated or partially estimated figures

Those marked '--' are new entrants

## MRS LEAGUE TABLES

### TOP 100 INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES RANKED BY TURNOVER (CONT.)

2015 MRS LEAGUE TABLES, COMPILED NOVEMBER 2016

2015 RANKING NUMBER	CHANGE ON PREVIOUS RANKING	2014 RANKING NUMBER	COMPANY NAME	2015 (£M.)	2014 (£M.)	2013 (£M.)	% CHANGE ON PREVIOUS YEAR	GROWTH RANKING
26	▲	30	YouGov	22.900	19.400	17.400	18.041%	21
27	▼	25	The Research Partnership	21.814	21.017	17.548	3.792%	51
28	▲	34	Cello Health Insight	21.158	16.228	15.941	30.380%	6
29	▼	26	Toluna	20.591	20.991	21.255	-1.906%	76
30	▼	29	Experian Consumer Insight	19.841	19.645	19.450	0.998%	65
31	▲	33	Confermit	18.351	16.354	14.790	12.211%	28
32	▼	31	Frost & Sullivan	18.280	18.824	18.477	-2.890%	80
33	▼	32	Future Thinking	17.416	16.896	16.515	3.078%	55
34	▲	35	Forrester Research	16.863	16.080	14.735	4.869%	44
35	▲	38	Maritz CX	16.380	13.727	11.711	19.327%	19
36	▼	28	WorldOne Research	15.500	20.164	24.549	-23.130%	97
37	▼	36	Hay Group Insight	15.050	15.000	14.950	0.333%	69
38	▲	45	Populus Group	13.489	12.187	9.240	10.684%	32
39	▲	41	BDRC Continental	13.302	13.155	12.164	1.117%	63
40	--	--	Defaqto	13.190	7.885	7.092	67.280%	2
41	--	--	Promise Communispace	13.100	12.615	11.395	3.845%	50
42	▲	43	Incite Marketing Planning	12.926	12.620	16.837	2.425%	58
43	▼	39	Nielsen Media Research	12.842	13.671	13.037	-6.064%	86
44	▲	46	ORC International	12.621	12.119	13.064	4.142%	49
45	▼	42	Markit Economics	12.445	10.240	8.947	21.533%	16
46	▼	40	comScore	12.300	12.664	12.911	-2.874%	79
47	--	--	Adelphi International Research	12.100	11.887	11.342	1.792%	62
48	▼	22	Datamonitor	11.653	24.848	31.360	-53.103%	100
49	--	--	The Gallup Organisation	11.507	11.117	10.885	3.508%	53
50	=	50	Firefish	11.237	9.538	9.013	17.813%	22

Those in *italics* are estimated or partially estimated figures

Those marked '--' are new entrants



# MRS LEAGUE TABLES

## TOP 100 INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES

### RANKED BY TURNOVER (CONT.)

2015 MRS LEAGUE TABLES, COMPILED NOVEMBER 2016

2015 RANKING NUMBER	CHANGE ON PREVIOUS RANKING	2014 RANKING NUMBER	COMPANY NAME	2015 (£M.)	2014 (£M.)	2013 (£M.)	% CHANGE ON PREVIOUS YEAR	GROWTH RANKING
51	▼	44	Business Research Group	10.974	12.230	11.422	-10.270%	91
52	--	--	Avention UK	10.788	11.100	10.931	-2.811%	77
53	▼	48	Quadrangle	10.678	11.509	11.977	-7.220%	89
54	--	--	Marketing Sciences Unlimited	10.618	11.860	11.271	-10.472%	92
55	--	--	Strategy Analytics	10.387	10.138	8.433	2.456%	57
56	--	--	Added Value	10.356	9.517	11.488	8.816%	35
57	▼	47	Market Force Information	10.250	10.592	11.878	-3.229%	81
58	--	--	ICM Research Unlimited	9.963	9.545	9.104	4.379%	47
59	▼	49	2CV	9.865	11.359	10.103	-13.153%	93
60	--	--	Cello Bright Blue	9.772	9.060	9.139	7.859%	39
61	--	--	Kantar Retail	9.750	9.553	11.029	2.062%	60
62	--	--	The Planning Shop International	9.633	5.987	4.711	60.899%	3
63	--	--	eDigitalResearch	9.126	7.304	6.213	24.945%	11
64	--	--	Perspective Research Services	9.112	8.471	7.129	7.567%	40
65	--	--	Brainjuicer	8.622	8.917	9.224	-3.308%	82
66	--	--	Tti Global Research	8.500	9.082	9.704	-6.408%	87
67	--	--	PwC r2i research to insight	8.300	8.250	8.200	0.606%	67
68	--	--	Netratings UK	8.267	5.681	4.476	45.520%	5
69	--	--	B2B International	8.227	6.696	6.673	22.864%	14
70	--	--	Illuminas	8.199	8.281	9.768	-0.990%	74
71	--	--	Progressive Digital Media	7.973	3.612	3.224	120.736%	1
72	--	--	Join The Dots	7.760	6.111	4.903	26.984%	8
73	--	--	Facts International	7.528	7.557	8.409	-0.384%	73
74	--	--	Harris Interactive	7.502	7.796	7.358	-3.771%	84
75	--	--	Basis Research	7.461	6.824	6.074	9.335%	34

Those in *italics* are estimated or partially estimated figures

Those marked '--' are new entrants

## MRS LEAGUE TABLES

### TOP 100 INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES RANKED BY TURNOVER (CONT.)

2015 MRS LEAGUE TABLES, COMPILED NOVEMBER 2016

2015 RANKING NUMBER	CHANGE ON PREVIOUS RANKING	2014 RANKING NUMBER	COMPANY NAME	2015 (£M.)	2014 (£M.)	2013 (£M.)	% CHANGE ON PREVIOUS YEAR	GROWTH RANKING
76	--	--	ABA Market Research	7.347	6.587	7.298	11.538%	30
77	--	--	R L Polk	7.280	7.083	7.084	2.781%	56
78	--	--	Footfall	7.269	10.630	10.522	-31.618%	98
79	--	--	Concentra Analytics	7.213	5.949	6.432	21.247%	17
80	--	--	Network Research & Marketing	7.159	6.995	6.209	2.345%	59
81	--	--	IFF Research	6.975	5.991	5.574	16.425%	23
82	--	--	BMG Research	6.894	5.543	6.223	24.373%	13
83	--	--	The Leadership Factor	6.500	5.900	5.900	10.169%	33
84	--	--	NPD Group	6.460	6.191	5.713	4.345%	48
85	--	--	Conquest Research & Consulting	6.175	6.150	6.100	0.407%	68
86	--	--	ICM Direct	6.096	5.671	5.841	7.494%	41
87	--	--	Watermelon Research	6.069	5.882	4.528	3.179%	54
88	--	--	Jigsaw Research	6.027	5.400	5.200	11.611%	29
89	--	--	ESA	5.896	5.636	6.179	4.613%	45
90	--	--	Simpson Carpenter	5.877	6.476	6.188	-9.250%	90
91	--	--	Sparkler	5.871	4.801	4.068	22.287%	15
92	--	--	HPI Research	5.860	5.870	5.850	-0.170%	72
93	--	--	Pulsar	5.786	4.868	4.033	18.858%	20
94	--	--	Verve	5.735	4.529	3.213	26.628%	9
95	--	--	KPMG Nunwood Consulting	5.706	8.422	6.253	-32.249%	99
96	--	--	Grass Roots Measurement	5.550	5.450	5.135	1.835%	61
97	--	--	Northstar Research Partners	5.500	6.870	4.551	-19.942%	96
98	--	--	Promar International	5.365	5.746	6.151	-6.631%	88
99	--	--	Truth Consulting	4.618	5.437	7.038	-15.063%	95
100	--	--	Trinity McQueen	4.484	3.983	3.398	12.578%	27
TOTAL				2942.10	2756.490	2633.876		

Those in *italics* are estimated or partially estimated figures

Those marked '--' are new entrants

# MRS LEAGUE TABLES

## TOP 20 FASTEST-GROWING INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES

2015 MRS LEAGUE TABLES, COMPILED NOVEMBER 2016

2015 RANKING	GROWTH RATE	COMPANY NAME	2015 (£M.)	2014 (£M.)
1	120.736%	Progressive Digital Media	7.973	3.612
2	67.280%	Defaqto	13.190	7.885
3	60.899%	The Planning Shop International	9.633	5.987
4	49.919%	Informa Telecoms & Media	63.122	42.104
5	45.520%	Netratings UK	8.267	5.681
6	30.380%	Cello Health Insight	21.158	16.228
7	28.614%	MMR Research Worldwide	25.980	20.200
8	26.984%	Join The Dots	7.760	6.111
9	26.628%	Verve	5.735	4.529
10	25.356%	Teradata UK	90.906	72.518
11	24.945%	eDigitalResearch	9.126	7.304
12	24.595%	Dunnhumby	238.665	191.553
13	24.373%	BMG Research	6.894	5.543
14	22.864%	B2B International	8.227	6.696
15	22.287%	Sparkler	5.871	4.801
16	21.533%	Markit Economics	12.445	10.240
17	21.247%	Concentra Analytics	7.213	5.949
18	20.914%	A C Nielsen	122.769	101.534
19	19.327%	Maritz CX	16.380	13.727
20	18.858%	Pulsar	5.786	4.868

Those in *italics* are estimated or partially estimated figures

# MRS LEAGUE TABLES

## TOP 50 CONSOLIDATED BUSINESSES RANKED BY TURNOVER

2015 MRS LEAGUE TABLES, COMPILED NOVEMBER 2016

2015 RANKING NUMBER	CHANGE ON PREVIOUS RANKING	2014 RANKING NUMBER	COMPANY NAME	2015 (£M.)	2014 (£M.)	2013 (£M.)	% CHANGE ON PREVIOUS YEAR	GROWTH RANKING
1	=	1	Kantar (WPP)	467.500	464.172	461.931	0.717%	32
2	=	2	Wood Mackenzie Research & Consulting	240.000	227.421	212.804	5.531%	20
3	=	3	Dunnhumby	238.665	191.553	165.220	24.595%	4
4	=	4	IpsosMORI	172.500	165.200	162.400	4.419%	22
5	=	5	Gartner	156.244	138.487	121.036	12.822%	12
6	▲	7	Nielsen	143.878	148.886	112.632	-3.364%	44
7	▼	6	GfK UK	129.151	136.579	162.031	-5.439%	47
8	--	--	Teradata UK	90.906	72.518	66.290	25.356%	2
9	▲	10	Omnicom/DAS	90.481	76.273	66.867	18.628%	8
10	▼	8	Euromonitor	88.356	88.295	74.228	0.069%	36
11	▼	9	Mintel Group	82.974	74.940	69.628	10.721%	15
12	=	12	Informa	74.775	66.932	49.696	11.718%	14
13	▼	11	Ebiquity	73.874	68.452	64.046	7.921%	19
14	=	14	Cello Group	41.366	38.001	36.232	8.855%	18
15	▼	13	Information Resources	38.000	39.107	42.417	-2.831%	39
16	▼	15	IMS Health	36.217	36.167	39.295	0.138%	35
17	▼	16	Research Now	34.843	34.463	31.522	1.103%	30
18	=	18	MMR Group	33.500	28.100	25.346	19.217%	7
19	▼	17	NatCen	32.933	34.154	41.508	-3.575%	45
20	▼	19	Double Helix	28.000	27.000	26.000	3.704%	25
21	▼	20	BDRC Group	26.959	24.564	23.194	9.750%	17
22	▲	33	IDC	25.753	22.661	16.108	13.645%	11
23	▲	26	YouGov	22.900	19.400	17.400	18.041%	9
24	▼	21	Creston	22.162	23.127	22.151	-4.173%	46
25	▼	22	The Research Partnership	21.814	21.017	17.548	3.792%	24

Those in *italics* are estimated or partially estimated figures

Those marked '--' are new entrants

## MRS LEAGUE TABLES

### TOP 50 CONSOLIDATED BUSINESSES RANKED BY TURNOVER (CONT.)

2015 MRS LEAGUE TABLES, COMPILED NOVEMBER 2016

2015 RANKING NUMBER	CHANGE ON PREVIOUS RANKING	2014 RANKING NUMBER	COMPANY NAME	2015 (£M.)	2014 (£M.)	2013 (£M.)	% CHANGE ON PREVIOUS YEAR	GROWTH RANKING
26	▼	23	Toluna	20.591	20.991	21.255	-1.906%	37
27	▼	25	Experian Consumer Insight	19.841	19.645	19.450	0.998%	31
28	▼	27	Chime Communications	19.011	18.897	18.187	0.603%	33
29	▲	30	Confirmit	18.351	16.354	14.790	12.211%	13
30	▼	28	Frost & Sullivan	18.280	18.824	18.477	-2.890%	41
31	▼	29	Future Thinking	17.416	16.896	16.515	3.078%	27
32	▼	31	Forrester Research	16.863	16.080	14.735	4.869%	21
33	▲	34	Maritz CX	16.380	13.727	11.711	19.327%	6
34	▼	24	WorldOne Research	15.500	20.164	24.549	-23.130%	50
35	▼	32	Hay Group Insight	15.050	15.000	14.950	0.333%	34
36	▲	39	Populus Group	13.489	12.187	9.240	10.684%	16
37	--	--	Defaqto	13.190	7.885	7.092	67.280%	1
38	▼	37	Incite Marketing Planning	12.926	12.620	16.837	2.425%	29
39	▲	40	ORC International	12.621	12.119	13.064	4.142%	23
40	▼	36	Markit Economics	12.445	10.240	8.947	21.533%	5
41	▼	35	comScore	12.300	12.664	12.911	-2.874%	40
42	▲	44	The Gallup Organisation	11.507	11.117	10.885	3.508%	26
43	=	43	Firefish	11.237	9.538	9.013	17.813%	10
44	▼	38	Business Research Group	10.974	12.230	11.422	-10.270%	49
45	--	--	Avention UK	10.788	11.100	10.931	-2.811%	38
46	▼	42	Quadrangle	10.678	11.509	11.977	-7.220%	48
47	=	47	Strategy Analytics	10.387	10.138	8.433	2.456%	28
48	▼	41	Market Force Information	10.250	10.592	11.878	-3.229%	42
49	▲	55	eDigitalResearch	9.126	7.304	6.213	24.945%	3
50	▼	49	Brainjuicer	8.622	8.917	9.224	-3.308%	43

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Those marked '--' are new entrants



# MRS LEAGUE TABLES

## TOP 20 FASTEST-GROWING BUSINESSES

2015 MRS LEAGUE TABLES, COMPILED NOVEMBER 2016

2015 RANKING	GROWTH RATE	COMPANY NAME	2015 (£M.)	2014 (£M.)
1	67.280%	Defaqto	13.190	7.885
2	25.356%	Teradata UK	90.906	72.518
3	24.945%	eDigitalResearch	9.126	7.304
4	24.595%	Dunnhumby	238.665	191.553
5	21.533%	Markit Economics	12.445	10.240
6	19.327%	Maritz CX	16.380	13.727
7	19.217%	MMR Group	33.500	28.100
8	18.628%	Omnicom/DAS	90.481	76.273
9	18.041%	YouGov	22.900	19.400
10	17.813%	Firefish	11.237	9.538
11	13.645%	IDC	25.753	22.661
12	12.822%	Gartner	156.244	138.487
13	12.211%	Confermit	18.351	16.354
14	11.718%	Informa	74.775	66.932
15	10.721%	Mintel Group	82.974	74.940
16	10.684%	Populus Group	13.489	12.187
17	9.750%	BDRC Group	26.959	24.564
18	8.855%	Cello Group	41.366	38.001
19	7.921%	Ebiquity	73.874	68.452
20	5.531%	Wood Mackenzie Research & Consulting	240.000	227.421

Those in *italics* are estimated or partially estimated figures

# NOTES ON LEAGUE TABLES

## TOP 100 INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES

**Entry 48:** Datamonitor. This is principally Datamonitor Healthcare, following the disposal of several other Datamonitor divisions to Progressive Digital Media.

**Entry 70:** Illuminas left MSQ Partners Ltd in mid-December 2015 by management buyout.

**Entry 71:** Progressive Digital Media was formed on 1st September 2015 by acquisition of the former Datamonitor Financial, Datamonitor Consumer, Verdict Research, and Marketline services.

**Entry 77:** R L Polk is part of IHS Automotive.

**Entry 78:** Footfall was formerly Experian Footfall prior to acquisition in 2015 by Tyco Inc. Revenue declined because of the formation of a new subsidiary in Germany to handle trade with European clients.

**Entry 95:** KPMG Nunwood Consulting. These results reflect a 9-month period, but also represent a 14% decrease on the previous financial year when adjusted on a like-for-like basis.

**Entry 99:** Truth Consulting is a member of the Instinct Partners Group of companies, a business communications consultancy group.

## TOP 50 CONSOLIDATED BUSINESSES

**Entry 1:** Kantar is the Data Investment Management Division of WPP plc. It includes TNS UK (incorporating TNS-RI, TNS BMRB, Kantar Health, Kantar Media Intelligence, Kantar WorldPanel), Millward Brown, Kantar Media UK, BPRI, Kantar Retail UK, Added Value, Lightspeed Research (incorporating Allglobal from 2015), and Precise Media Monitoring. During 2016 the Kantar corporate brand name was added to many of the individual company names within the group. This change will be reflected in the MRS League Tables 2016.

**Entry 2:** Wood Mackenzie Research & Consulting. Total turnover reflects a UK-based business delivering its services via the internet to a global client base in the energy, mining, and metals industries. Acquired in 2015 by US-based energy sector data firm Verisk Analytics.

**Entry 3:** Dunnhumby is owned by Tesco plc.

**Entry 6:** Nielsen includes AC Nielsen, Nielsen Media Research, and NetRatings.

**Entry 7:** GfK UK. Restructured during 2015, GfK became a unibrand organisation, with all previous companies now trading under GfK UK Ltd, which has two divisions – Consumer Choices and Consumer Experiences.

**Entry 9:** Omnicom/DAS includes Hall & Partners, Flamingo Research, Promise Communispace, and Adelphi International Research. In addition, The Planning Shop International was acquired in late 2014 by the Adelphi Group.

**Entry 12:** Informa includes Datamonitor and Informa Telecoms & Media (formerly Ovum Europe).

**Entry 13:** Ebiquity (formerly Thomson Intermedia) consists of three divisions – Market Intelligence, Media Value Measurement, and Marketing Performance Optimisation.

**Entry 14:** Cello Group includes 2CV, Cello Health Insight, and Cello Bright Blue (formerly RS Consulting Group).

**Entry 17:** Research Now is owned by private equity firm Court Square Capital.

**Entry 18:** MMR Group includes Healthcare Research Worldwide, MMR Research Worldwide, and PeoplePeople.

**Entry 20:** Double Helix is part of McCann Health within Interpublic.

**Entry 21:** BDRC Group includes BDRC Continental, retail specialist ESA, and operations businesses Perspective Research Services, Viewpoint, and Alligator Research.

**Entry 24:** Creston Insight includes Marketing Sciences, ICM Research, and ICM Direct. During 2015, the group closed Fieldwork UK (a subsidiary of ICM).

**Entry 27:** Experian Consumer Insight includes analytics, location insight, mobile behaviour, competitive intelligence, and segmentation.

**Entry 28:** Chime Communications includes Chime Insight & Engagement Group (incorporating Facts International, Opinion Leader, and Watermelon), plus research turnover generated by various other agencies within the group. In 2015, following acquisition by Providence Equity Partners, Chime Communications plc was taken private.

**Entry 31:** Future Thinking. Formerly known as SPA Future Thinking.

**Entry 36:** Populus Group includes Populus and Populus Data Solutions.

**Entry 37:** Defaqto. This reflects a 16-month reporting period compared with a previous 12-month period.

**Entry 38:** Incite Marketing Planning is a wholly-owned subsidiary of St. Ives plc. and operates as part of the group's Marketing Services segment.

**Entry 40:** Markit Economics. In March 2016, the merger of Markit with IHS was announced. The merged business will be headquartered in the UK.

**Entry 41:** comScore. In January 2016 ComScore acquired Rentrak, and the impact of this will be reflected in the next edition of the League Table.

**Entry 44:** Business Research Group changed its name at the end of 2015 to Prescient Healthcare Group. The company will therefore appear in the next edition of the League Table as Prescient Healthcare Group.

**Entry 49:** eDigitalResearch was acquired in early 2016 by MARU Group, a recently-formed research, insight, and advisory services provider, backed by private equity company Primary Capital Partners. The company will therefore appear in the next edition of the League Table as MARU/edr.

# PERSPECTIVE FROM THE FASTEST GROWERS

*Jane Bainbridge, editor, Research Live*



The business climate over the past few years has not always been comfortable for marketing services suppliers and in some cases conditions have been more challenging than ever before. But as our league tables show, there are numerous agencies and networks that have been very successful, with the fastest growers achieving double – and even triple – digit percentage growth.

So we asked some of them to share their thoughts on the nature of their success and how they see the business environment developing.

### WHAT HAS WORKED WELL IN THE PAST YEAR?

It will come as no surprise to anyone running their own business that hiring the right people was seen as a key contributing factor. Recruitment of “intelligent, passionate and competent market researchers” is what adds value to Cello Health Insight according to its CEO, Jane Shirley.

For dunnhumby, the competitive retail climate has meant it has focused on where it generates the greatest return on investment from its analytics and research. Dave Clements, its retail director, says this has been price and promotions; category management; customer experience and personalisation.

Several pointed to building business overseas. Join the Dots has seen its international client business thrive and MMR Research has placed more emphasis on global relationships with its key clients to build both local and global contacts. “We’ve created more focused client time, especially building an on-site presence with larger organisations. We’ve also increased focus on our heartland areas – being less generalist and more specialist has worked well for us,” says MMR Research’s global CEO, Mat Lintern.

Nothing stands still in business, and market research is no exception. So developing new services and platforms was cited as crucial to several of the fastest growers. At YouGov, its chief strategy officer, Alex McIntosh, says YouGov Cube, its proprietary database, was at the heart of its achievements. “It is the basis of both our syndicated data products (including YouGov BrandIndex and YouGov Profiles) and increasingly our custom research, as well,” he says. “In our last financial year, UK grew revenue by 9% in total with data products and services growing by 11%, and now representing 50% of the total.”

For Omnicom, 2016 was the year that its investment in its data and analytics business, Annalect, came to fruition and led to a number of new business wins across its agencies including AT&T, McDonalds, Volkswagen and P&G. It says that Annalect was the common denominator across those wins.

### ORGANIC GROWTH OR ACQUISITIONS?

In the vast majority of the fastest-growing agencies we spoke to, their growth strategies were focused on organic growth.

It was only the biggest players that were considering acquisitions. Barney Farmer, Nielsen’s marketing effectiveness director in the UK & Ireland, says: “We have focused on both, through developing and enhancing our own solutions, while purchasing best in class companies to complement our existing portfolio; such as programmatic technology company Exelate which has become the Nielsen Marketing Cloud.”

Omnicom has similarly acquired where necessary, including GrupoABC, Wednesday Agency, Rabin Martin, BioPharm Communications and most recently, Prolific Interactive.

At dunnhumby, Clements cites the importance of relationship-building. “We tend to work on long-term partnerships with most of our global clients. So, we constantly evolve how we can grow our value delivery each year, especially as we have introduced a number of new software products into our portfolio, which results in very strong client retention and extensions.”

Organic growth is invariably a balance between sustaining, and hopefully expanding, existing client relationships and acquiring new clients.

MMR's Lintern says: "Our aim is to build deeper, more connected relationships with all our key clients, leveraging global roster wins and deliver our expertise within focus areas across client organisations. We are targeting new and lapsed clients in our heartland areas – food, drink and personal care."

Join the Dots, which began life in Manchester, opened its first overseas office in Singapore in February 2016 and its director, Graeme Lawrence, expects another overseas opening this year. "We sent a senior member of staff from the UK to set up Singapore to service key clients there and we'd take a similar approach for our next office."

For Nick Baker, Verve's new managing director, research & consulting, it's all about focusing on existing clients. "We know that the best way to grow our business is to develop high quality relationships with the people we're working with right now. Creating valuable solutions for them, based on a better understanding of what they need, naturally helps us with the conversations we have with prospective clients," he explains.

### NEW BUSINESS AREAS

McIntosh's insists YouGov's focus is on clients' needs rather than particular new business areas. "To this end we have invested in Crunch, our data analytics and visualisation technology which our employees and clients can use to mine and interrogate our data. Five years ago, we outlined a series of key strategic objectives to help YouGov transition from a market research company that used the internet, to being an internet company that delivers business critical market data. We have been investing in line with these objectives."

And Lintern explains that at MMR, its growth strategy has been to not invest in new business areas but rather to focus on its core competencies. "Expansion/extension comes mainly in the form of innovation within [sensory branding], stretching what we currently do with new technology, new thinking and new analysis techniques – and continually adapting to real client needs."

Customer experience software company MaritzCX has released a raft of new products as a central part of its growth. Its European CEO, Stephan Thun, points to its customer behaviour prediction product, PredictionCX; SocialCX, its online reputation tool; and CXEvolution to help clients measure and manage customer experience outcomes as NPD supporting its new business.

**ALEX MCINTOSH, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, YOUNGOV:**

**"FIVE YEARS AGO, WE OUTLINED A SERIES OF KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES TO HELP YOUNGOV TRANSITION FROM A MARKET RESEARCH COMPANY THAT USED THE INTERNET, TO BEING AN INTERNET COMPANY THAT DELIVERS BUSINESS CRITICAL MARKET DATA."**



NICK BAKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR, RESEARCH & CONSULTING AT VERVE:

**“IF YOU’RE NOT EVOLVING, YOU’RE GOING BACKWARDS. BUT THERE IS ALWAYS GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESSES WHICH HAVE SOMETHING DIFFERENT TO OFFER CLIENTS.”**

### NEW EXPERTISE

With growth comes the need to add personnel and the fastest growing agencies have been recruiting to match their growth performance – and in some cases, they have looked for new joiners with specific skill-sets. Cello Health Insight has recruited ethnographic discourse analysis experts, YouGov has looked for data scientists and Nielsen continues to boost its digital services.

MMR’s Lintern brought in dedicated human resources and recruitment resource to help manage growth. “We also hired a brand/marketing expert to help shape our sensory branding approaches in new areas, as well as lots of researchers and sensory specialists, some with food science backgrounds to help push our expertise through the ranks.”

Meanwhile Join the Dots added to its numbers with graduates and account management. “A key investment was a commitment to our graduate recruitment programme and since 2012 we have recruited 24 graduates across four intakes,” says Lawrence.

### CLIENTS’ BUDGETS UNDER PRESSURE

As marketing budgets come under greater scrutiny, so too does spend on market research. And even the fastest-growing agencies are not immune from this pressure.

Some point to the larger and more costly research approaches being particularly hard hit, as more agile, lower-cost options are favoured.

“Over the past few years, we have noticed a change in the way our clients are having to justify market research in terms of improving business decisions. With the industry cutting costs, samples are smaller and less markets are being analysed. There is a sense now that everything is fit for purpose and we are being asked ‘is this enough?’,” says Cello Health Insight’s Shirley.

MMR’s Lintern adds: “Zero-based budgeting is increasingly common, and clients are clearly being pushed to do more with less. The money is still there, but they are being challenged to spend it more wisely, and this is impacting on agencies who are invariably doing more for less compared to three or four years ago.”

“There’s definitely pressure on budgets and rightly the focus our clients place on commercial value seems more overt than ever,” says Verve’s Baker.

### SO WHERE WILL GROWTH COME IN THE FUTURE?

#### Analytics:

“We expect continued widespread demand from across the retail sectors for advanced customer analytics and research services, as the cost of technologies fall and the returns on investments and results continue to improve,” says dunnhumby’s Clements.

“As businesses are increasingly looking for smarter alternatives to traditional market research, we have evolved from being a market research company to a global data and analytics company as we think this is the best way to meet client demands,” says McIntosh.

“Today, customers expect organisations to instinctively anticipate what they need – without having to ask – and to solve problems before they arise. In this context, something which is going to gain further momentum in the next year, or potentially has to, will be predictive analytics,” says MaritzCX’s Thun.

#### Overseas:

“The US is growing very fast and business conditions seem optimal for a specialist agency in our area. We’re building deeper, more connected relationships with most of our global clients and through global rosters, we’ll attract more work and continued growth across all territories,” says Lintern.

#### Diversification:

“In the past year we have built a suite of research and data products which we’re currently talking to our existing clients about,” says Baker.

Within healthcare, Shirley sees market research going beyond the doctor and instead getting involved with patients, patient advocacy groups and caregivers. “As patients begin to take greater ownership of their disease and treatment, it will be vital for clients to understand their motivations,” she explains.

### LOOKING FORWARD IN 2017

So can – and if so, how will – these fastest growing agencies continue to prosper in the coming year? The uncertainty of Brexit and the new US president is on many minds.

“All that seems to be predictable is that no one has a clue,” says Lintern. “If pushed, I would say I expect general economic conditions in our industry to be similar to this year.”

In terms of where the insight industry will flourish in 2017, both Lintern and Lawrence point to video – “this WILL be the new medium of communication for us and the industry needs to adapt,” says Lintern.

And when it comes to the most important factors for influencing individual business success there are two re-occurring themes: strategy and staff.

We opened with people and so we end it with people. As the Omnicom spokesperson put it: “We believe if you get the people and product right, the profit will follow.”

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### 2016: A GOOD YEAR FOR THE INSIGHT BUSINESS?

**“FILLED WITH UNIQUE DEMANDS AND CHALLENGING CONDITIONS”**

**“WHILE THE WORK IS OUT THERE, YOU NEED TO BE MORE EFFICIENT IN HOW YOU DELIVER IT”**

**“PLENTY OF POTENTIAL”**

**“TOUGH”**

**“CHARACTERISED BY OVER-SUPPLY”**

**“HEALTHY”**

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While this report is very much focused on the business climate for research agencies, their fortunes or failings are intrinsically linked to those of their client businesses.

So we spoke to some insight professionals to see what they were looking for from their agencies and what skills they would focus on in the coming year.

“My adage continues to be that most businesses already have too much information and data but not enough insight (that is, the ability to turn that info and data into action), says Danny Russell, consultant and joint chair, main board of the Market Research Society.

“So, many client research teams are on a treadmill of simply ‘doing research’ with no time to do the ‘thinking and actioning’,” he adds.

At Sky, Claire Rainey, head of research change & continuous improvement, points to how greater collaboration and combining of research techniques has been a priority. “We have stepped back and come up with more creative solutions and piloted new techniques – for example, computational semiotics, analytics on forums to gather language associations for particular topics.”

So what does she look for from research agencies? “Accessible, understandable (no black box) yet technically sound. We expect our agencies to help us with complex problems but in a very timely manner. We ‘buy’ from those we can partner with, who challenge us, bring learnings from previous projects, have their finger on the pulse of future trends and, of course, present outputs concisely and creatively,” says Rainey.

For Time Inc’s group customer strategy director, Amanda Wigginton, her agency requirements are changing. “Our needs are no longer the same as they used to be. Some agencies still assume what we need rather than taking the time to find out. We identify key partners to work with who work like us. And they can come from all backgrounds – tech, digital, traditional agencies – the key thing is these partners don’t bombard us with sales pitches, they ask questions and listen,” she says.

“We’re looking for agencies who can consolidate across pieces of work to make sure we are adding to our knowledge, not just repeating what’s gone before,” says Jessica Salmon, head of research at O2.

And looking forward, Salmon thinks the way agencies can stand out among clients is to “Understand the business problem, tell a story, and be succinct.”

Denise Turner, insight director at Newsworks also cites story-telling as important. “We have so many different options available to us in terms of research and analysis, that we really need research agencies to help us get to the heart of the issue, pulling everything together into a cohesive whole. In some ways, it goes back to the concept of triangulation, using multiple sources to tell a consistent story.”

As the value and importance of insight grows within marketing and business development, and its profile grows, this has a knock-on effect on the agency side of the industry.

“The focus is on the direct value we bring to business. It’s imperative we show our worth and the integration of data and creating data analysis frameworks has really helped us to do this. Combine that with what we know from our

audiences using market research. And it stands up to scrutiny!” says Wigginton.

“I see the role of our team becoming more consultative, using existing insights and pulling together knowledge from previous projects to enable nimble decision making,” says Rainey.

Russell contends that the industry struggles to turn insight into engaging debriefs that stimulate the client to take action. “We still have much to learn from management consultants and ad agencies who do this brilliantly and are handsomely rewarded for it,” he says.

Business conditions in the coming year are going to be challenging but clients remain optimistic. So while Wigginton says she’s really positive, Rainey thinks it will be an exciting year to be a researcher.

“There are lots of new challenges, the global market is volatile and competitive which means we need to be agile and have information readily to hand to support speedy decision-making and be flexible to strategic changes. Planning for the future becomes harder and businesses need to keep their options open and flexible. With the advance of technology it is also about investing in technology and developments a few years ahead, which can be a gamble, but overall does make for lots of interesting questions for the research industry,” says Rainey.

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**“IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD INSIGHT BECOMES AN EVEN GREATER SOURCE OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE. AS INSIGHT PROFESSIONALS ON THE CLIENT SIDE WE NEED TO PROACTIVELY STEP UP AND HELP THE BUSINESS NAVIGATE THROUGH THESE CHOPPY WATERS.”**

JESSICA SALMON, O2

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MRS INDUSTRY SURVEY 2016

*David Cahn, principal of synygis consulting*



The UK research supply industry was a £4billion market in 2015 and had grown steadily over the previous five years by an average 6% per year, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Our industry is the second-largest in the world, topped only by the USA; but in terms of research spend per head of population is pre-eminent - more than £61 per capita in 2015, with the USA trailing at £39, and Germany and France at £24 and £23.



Growth in the UK supply industry has been fuelled mainly by investment in data analytics and in advisory services and market intelligence including syndicated reports, which now account for c.45% of the market. The other c.55%, comprising the ‘bedrock’ core of suppliers of qualitative and quantitative market and social research has held steady, rather than growing significantly over the past few years.

The Market Research Society carries out an Annual Survey among its full-service company partners to monitor some of the underlying business parameters of the UK research supply side with particular reference to the core suppliers’ half of the market, and to help provide internationally comparable top-line information for use by ESOMAR and others in tracking global research trends.

Here are some salient points from the most recent survey, published in June 2016.

**“THE INVESTMENT IN QUALITATIVE WORK HAS BEEN EXPANDING STEADILY, AND HAS BECOME ONE FIFTH BIGGER OVER FIVE YEARS, REFLECTING CLIENTS’ GROWING APPRECIATION OF THE ‘INSIGHT PER BUCK’ THAT QUALITATIVE CAN DELIVER.”**

### BUSINESS EXPECTATIONS

Researchers continued to display cautious optimism – just one in three of the companies surveyed in 2016 anticipated that the UK research industry would grow over the next 12 months: but two thirds expected that their own company’s revenues would be higher year on year. UK companies’ optimism about their own business remained somewhat higher than the European average (collected via the EFAMRO Mood Indicator).

### QUALITATIVE VS. QUANTITATIVE REVENUES

It is to be expected that, as a function of its cost base, quantitative research attracts a much higher share of spend: 83% in 2015 vs. 13% for qualitative. Nonetheless, the investment in qualitative work has been expanding steadily, and has become one fifth bigger over five years, reflecting clients’ growing appreciation of the ‘insight per buck’ that qualitative can deliver.

### ONLINE DATA COLLECTION

Web-based data collection accounted for at least half of quantitative research spend in 2015, growing from just one third of spend over five years. Online qualitative work is also a growing trend – 16% of qualitative spend in 2015. The main drivers of this expansion have been the ever-growing cost-efficiency, accessibility, reliability and participant-friendliness of internet-based research, compared with the greater costs and operational challenges of the traditional alternatives. The main casualty has been face-to-face fieldwork, down from 20% to 13% of quantitative spend over five years, but telephone fieldwork has also suffered, declining from 15% to 11% of quantitative spend over the same period.

There is undoubtedly scope for considerable further growth in the UK’s use of the internet for data collection.

### CLIENT SECTORS

The division of spend between client sectors has been notably stable over the past few years, the main sectors being:

Consumer: (FMCG including food and beverages, plus other consumer goods and services)	c. 30%
Government/public sector/not for profit:	c. 15%
IT/consumer tech:	c. 10%
Media:	c. 10%

Other leading research countries such as the US, Germany and France also attract at least one third of revenues from the consumer sub-sector; but are much less active in government or public sector work.

### INTERNATIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Projects with data collection in one or more overseas countries but controlled and invoiced from the UK have long been a particular strength of UK suppliers, and represented 36% of UK research revenues in 2015. (The corresponding proportion for Germany, with its export-led economy was 35%, but for France, just 12%.)

### HR INVESTMENT

Companies maintained the office staff resource level in 2015 – indeed, numbers actually went up by 3% over five years. The trend has been to progressively disinvest in fixed term/hourly paid staff in favour of those with full- or part-time contracts.

Interviewer numbers have declined as the move to online data collection gathers momentum. Telephone interviewing teams shrank by 40% over five years. Face-to-face interviewers are a much sought-after resource among those companies that provide this type of fieldwork, and often work for more than one company; so the head-count was more resistant to the decline in fieldwork volumes, dropping by just 13% over five years.

### MRS ANNUAL SURVEY 2017

Invitations to take part in this year's Annual Survey will be sent out in February 2017. Please make every effort to respond in full so that we can provide an accurate reflection of the sector.

**“THERE IS UNDOUBTEDLY SCOPE FOR  
CONSIDERABLE FURTHER GROWTH  
IN THE UK'S USE OF THE INTERNET  
FOR DATA COLLECTION.”**

## VIEW FROM THE MARKETS

*Lorna Tilbian is executive director and head of media at Numis Securities and Impact magazine columnist.*



The media stocks within Numis Securities' coverage underperformed the market by an average of -8% in 2016, though this masked sharply contrasting fortunes with large cap or FTSE 350 (-3%) outperforming small cap (-12%); and global groups (+7%) were far stronger than domestic (-25%).

Looking at 2017, Numis Securities favours geographical exposure to the US, UK and Europe, while in faster-growing markets we are positive on India and Russia but cautious on Brazil and China. We expect long-established structural themes to continue unabated, but with balance sheets strong and private equity well-funded, we see considerable scope for further M&A activity. It is interesting to note that performance varied widely across the four media sub-sectors of agencies, B2B, B2C and broadcasting.

### AGENCIES

The sub-sector had a mixed performance in 2016, with marked divergence across the stocks we watch. The strongest performance was from YouGov, as the company's strategy of developing data products and services started to come through. Both M&C Saatchi and WPP delivered solid results, with the former aided by well-executed M&A to build a presence in the US; while the latter benefited from its foreign exchange profile and continued new business success.

Meanwhile, BeHeard and Huntsworth slightly underperformed the market, though we remain convinced of the long-term positioning of the former's buy & build strategy and the turnaround potential under a well-regarded management team at the latter. The underperformance in 2016 of Ebiquity, St Ives (which owns Response One and Incite among others) and sports marketing group TLA reflected an investment programme for Ebiquity – Growth Acceleration Plan – and negative trading updates from St Ives and TLA.

It is worth noting that the two best performing agencies in 2016, WPP (+3% against FTSE All-Share) and YouGov (+46%) are also high in these MRS League Tables, which are based on financial data from 2015. Kantar, the data investment management arm of WPP, which includes brands such as TNS, BMRB, Millward Brown, Lightspeed and Precise Media, is ranked No 1 with revenues of £467.5m (£464.2m) while YouGov is ranked among the 10 fastest growing players with growth of +18% (£22.9m vs £19.4m).

### B2B

Last year (2016) was a mixed year for the B2B sub-sector with exhibition players performing strongly, but some company-specific under-performance elsewhere. We remain positive on Ascential and DMGT at the larger end and ITE at the smaller end which has announced a business and strategy review. Both UBM and Informa have a year of bedding-in recent acquisitions while Euromoney is in a year of transition with stable and improving end markets boding well combined self-help.

### B2C

Our coverage incorporates a broad mix of business models and performance varied dramatically in 2016. It is likely to be another volatile year for the B2C sub-sector, with UK macro sentiment a key driver of performance. We remain very confident in the future prospects for Auto Trader and Rightmove while we expect 'more of the same' at Zoopla. We believe it could be an exciting year for MoneySuperMarket as the price comparison website sub-sector expands with the addition of Go Compare (Q4 16) and Compare the Market (Q1 17) to sit alongside Confused.com and USwitch (Zoopla).

### BROADCASTING

Last year was a challenging year due to negative sentiment around Brexit. At the start of 2016, net advertising revenue was forecast to grow +4% aided by Euro 2016, but adspend faded through the year to finish at -3%.

Looking into 2017, GroupM forecasts adspend (including video-on-demand) will grow +1% and we forecast an acceleration in 2018 helped by the World Cup. We expect continued demand for high-quality content, which will benefit eOne and ITV, though this impacts near-term cash generation. We expect full regulatory scrutiny of the Fox/Sky transaction, but see no reason to block the deal.

# THE RESEARCH INDUSTRY IS DISRUPTING ITSELF

*Alison Blair, director, PwC Research to Insight*



When PwC's Research to Insight (r2i) team undertook the original Business of Evidence research in 2012, we used extensive interviews and desk research to estimate the size of the industry. Back then the £3bn annual UK market was already experimenting with technology and the early opportunities provided by data analytics. There was good evidence that this was a rapidly changing market, but even our confidence that the market would experience a dramatic technology-driven expansion, could not have foreseen the impact of data analytics on the industry.



Back in 2012, IBM estimated that 90% of the world's data had been created in the previous two years and since then, the volume of data we create is growing exponentially. Today, our best estimates suggest that at least 2.5 quintillion bytes of data (that's 2.5 followed by 18 zeros) is produced every day. From global weather data and international stock market performance to your personal internet searches and supermarket purchases, the data we generate is captured somewhere and enterprises are evaluating and merging it on a global scale.

Roll forward four years and our 2016 Business of Evidence update suggests that the UK's research market has exploded by more than 60% to almost £5bn today, driven by data analytics, insight generation and social media and web-traffic monitoring.

Our best estimate is that the UK's £4.8bn 'business of evidence' market now employs around 73,000 FTEs, with close to 10% engaged in data analytics - a segment where the market has grown by 350% since 2012 and shows every sign of accelerating. And looking to the near future, the industry is harnessing technology to drive a new generation of customer insight where data from wearables, behavioural economics and social media listening will further expand a market already fertile with data flowing from more traditional research methodologies.

Our assessment is that the future will be data-rich and data-driven. As the volume of collected data tends to grow exponentially, event predictions will become more accurate with time. Behavioural advertising will be driven by companies hoarding and trading data about every action of millions of people, worldwide. Blending mobile phone data, geo-locational and satnav data will predict traffic jams... that will, in turn, be sold to governments to inform traffic management and infrastructure investment.

**"CEOS TOLD R2I THEY WERE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE THREAT POSED BY NEW MARKET ENTRANTS THAN BY COMPETITION FROM ESTABLISHED PROVIDERS ALREADY IN THEIR SECTORS."**

The Internet of Things and its data miners will strive to anticipate your needs and wants. Data from household and personal devices will define your eating, sleeping and domestic habits and that data too, will inform personally-tailored advertising and promotions.

But the research sector will not be singularly focused on the mining and analysis of big data. Strong evidence points to the re-emergence and projected growth of qualitative research. Initially this may seem counter-intuitive but it actually makes perfect sense. With such a strong focus on non-survey data, organisations still need a way to add the human touch, to understand people's behaviour, and qualitative research is the perfect way to do that. Whether it be ethnography, one to one depth interviews, online or traditional focus groups, there will always be a place for qualitative research to act as a counterbalance to the cold hard data from loyalty cards or smart textiles. In line with the growth of qual, we are seeing the emergence of neuroscience and other biometric techniques as ways of tapping into the unconscious mind to a level of depth that asking questions can never achieve.

And, if the research industry is disrupting itself, then the data it generates is disrupting the rest of the world.

PwC's Global CEO Survey revealed that one in three global CEOs believed that a potential competitor to their business is emerging or could emerge from the technology industry. A further 62% of global CEOs believed that changes in technology will disrupt the core provision of their products or services. And with some of the world's biggest brands looking for the next generation of growth, the natural response is to look at millions of loyal (and free) spending customers and all the demographic, financial and likes-and-dislike data they are willing to hand over – what's not to like?

Little wonder then that CEOs told r2i they were significantly more concerned about the threat posed by new market entrants than by competition from established providers already in their sectors. And those fears are probably justified for, just as the data changes and established brands move out of their core markets so too will the researcher of the future need to adapt and change. The research sector is as vulnerable to external disruption as any other, possibly more so being increasingly dependent on technology solutions to analyse big data sets.

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### **THE TENSION BETWEEN RELIABLE PREDICTIONS AND POST TRUTH COMMENTARY IS PERHAPS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AHEAD.**

The future looks bright for the research sector, but will not be without its challenges. The emergence of the post-truth era, characterised by widespread mistrust of those in power, mis-information undermining the facts and wholesale misuse of data, will pose both threats and opportunities for researchers.

## **“THE RESEARCH INDUSTRY NEEDS TO QUICKLY MOVE ON FROM THE TRIBULATIONS OF 2016 AND FOCUS ITS EFFORTS ON PROMOTING THE VALUE THAT GOOD RESEARCH CAN BRING.”**

Last year was a challenging year for the market research industry exemplified by the difficulties pollsters encountered through their apparent failure to predict the result of the EU referendum and US Presidential election, which sent shock waves through the global polling industry. Although the results were largely within the margin of error, unfortunately the Brexit and Trump polling shocks have done little to enhance the reputation of the wider research industry. Google searches on ‘did the polls get it wrong in 2016’ reveal no shortage of comments as to why and how the entire ‘research industry’ apparently failed to do its research. Whether deserved or not, it is clear that the research industry has work to do to recover from this tarnished image.

Now, more than ever, politicians, policymakers and businesses need reliable, accurate data on which to base their decisions, and the public needs access to information that they can trust. The research industry needs to quickly move on from the tribulations of 2016 and focus its efforts on promoting the value that good research can bring. We need to be clear on our messaging and that we are communicating what the data says, not just producing the data. Trusted research delivering real insight will provide the perfect antidote to post-truth posturing, and we as researchers are perfectly placed to make this happen.

We in the industry are certainly at an inflexion point. A point that demands fresh thinking and courageous leadership along with a sense of optimism and hope. CEOs in the ‘business of evidence’ market must not be passive in 2017. It’s a time for them to shape the future of their companies and create the conditions for innovation and growth. The events of 2016 should act as a catalyst for rebirth, not the path to extinction for the industry.

# REAL TIME, OVER TIME

*Blending traditional and social media research to win hearts, minds, and everything in between.*

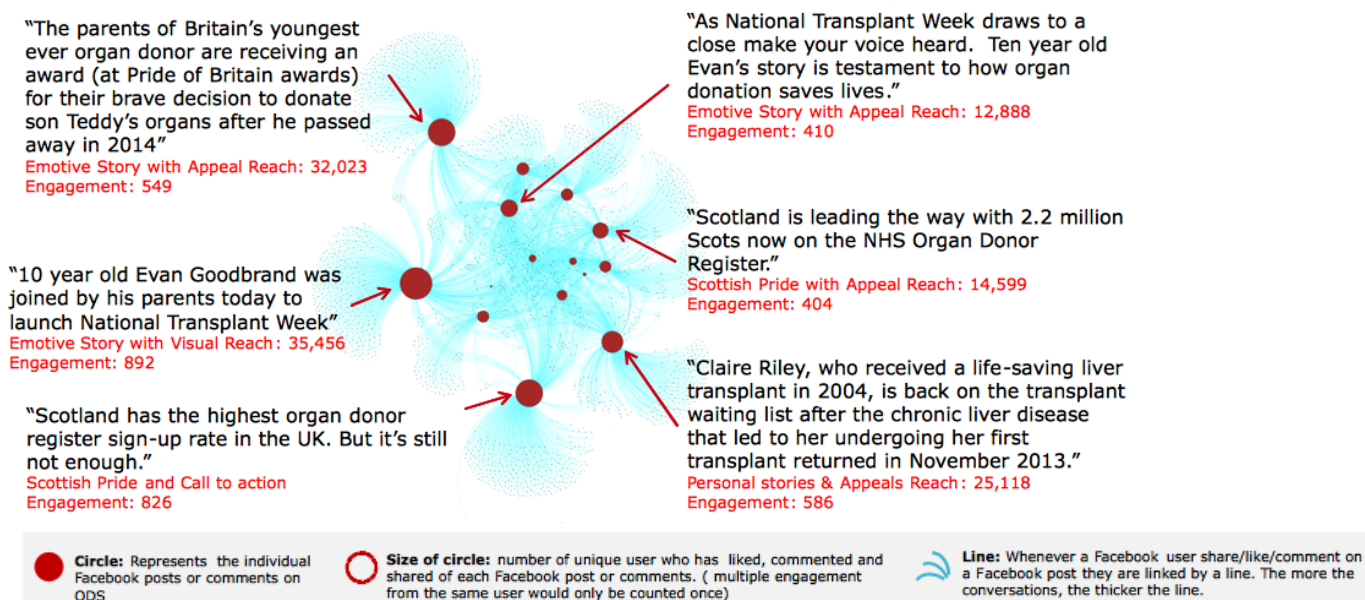
One of several MRS awards won by Kantar TNS last December focused on a campaign evaluation project for the Scottish Government, which won both the MRS Award for New Consumer Insights and the prestigious MRS Grand Prix for Greatest Impact. Research Live talked to Katherine McIsaac and Shehnaz Hansraj about how they provided their client with the insight they needed to optimise their social media campaigns.

Kantar TNS has a long-term relationship with the Scottish Government, forged over many years working together on marketing and communications initiatives. But this was the first time the agency had introduced social media research into the mix which, although a more established offering within Kantar TNS, was a new approach for the Scottish Government.

“We’ve done a lot of work on multimedia campaigns so we’ve given them insights and recommendations to tailor and optimise their campaigns over the years,” says Katherine McIsaac, director, Kantar TNS. “Also, we often hold events for a range of public and private sector clients – we had one quite recently which looked at the role of social media analytics – and that, I think, made them quite open to the concept.”

Working with Organ Donation Scotland (ODS), the marketing challenge was to maintain or even improve levels of registrations to the Organ Donation Register over a series of ‘mini’ campaigns. These would run during the downtime while a new multimedia campaign was being developed. Budget limitations meant that social media and PR were identified instead of broadcast media as a cost effective way of keeping organ donation top of mind.

**Figure 1:** Conversation map for National Transplant Week activity on ODS Facebook page



McIsaac again: "They spent significantly less on this campaign than for the usual multi-media campaigns. They were between TV campaigns so this kept the profile and momentum up." Fast access and the broadest possible reach was imperative, particularly as the target audience was the entire population of Scotland.

## THE EVALUATION RESEARCH HAD THREE KEY AIMS:

1. How are people responding to the campaign, joining the conversation and sharing campaign content?
2. How can the current digital campaign be optimised over the overall campaign?
3. What has the impact been vs the previous campaign; has it delivered in terms of maintenance?

"We know that consumer lives have become busier and their expectations are increasing all the time. Their needs are becoming more specific and this requires organisations to understand what people want and expect at certain moments so that they can meet these needs better," says McIsaac.

The process of using social media analytics alongside more traditional tracking across three mini-campaigns helped the Scottish Government to really engage the population in the moments that mattered most for this topic. Insights derived from each burst of evaluation would be fed into the next campaign. Using artificial intelligence modelling and human decoding, Kantar TNS analysed Facebook and Twitter data, including anonymised private Facebook (PYLON) topic data, to understand how campaigns spread across the wider population.



Linda McIntyre, practice director at Consolidated PR says: “The blending of both traditional quantitative tracking and social media analytics provided us with unparalleled insight into how our content was performing and the level of campaign engagement among different demographic groups.”

The results were impressive: 19,000 online registrations to the Organ Donation Register between September 2015 and March 2016; four times as many compared to the same period in the previous year. The analysis helped ODS understand not just how to better engage audiences online, but also resulted in recommendations for targeting certain harder to reach groups using offline media.

**“THE BLENDING OF BOTH TRADITIONAL QUANTITATIVE TRACKING AND SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS PROVIDED US WITH UNPARALLELED INSIGHT INTO HOW OUR CONTENT WAS PERFORMING AND THE LEVEL OF CAMPAIGN ENGAGEMENT AMONG DIFFERENT DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS.”**

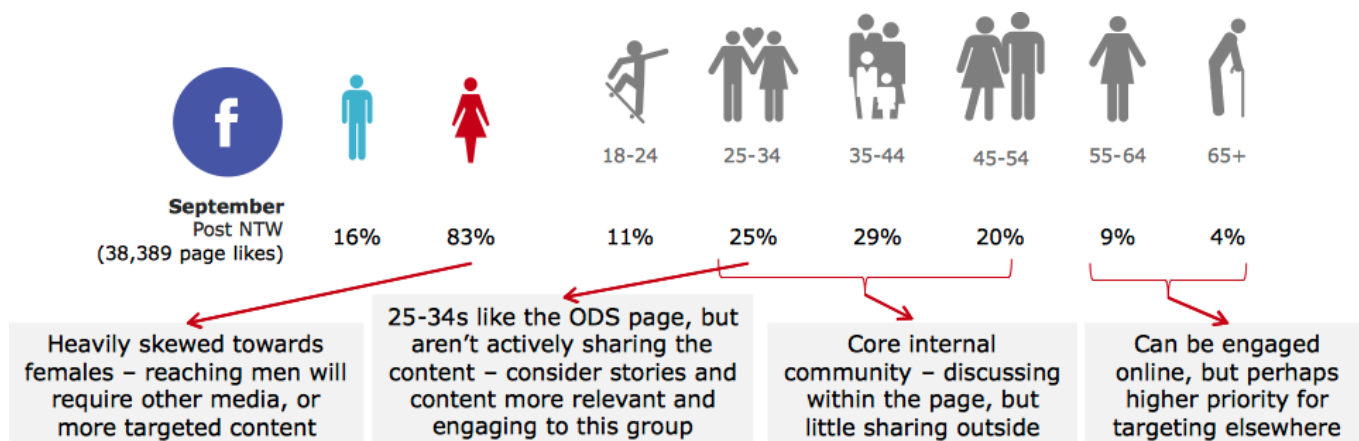
LINDA MCINTYRE, PRACTICE DIRECTOR, CONSOLIDATED PR

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### INSIGHTS FROM THE SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS:

1. *Personal success stories, especially stories of personal bravery against the odds provided the best opportunity to inspire, captivate and motivate people to sign up to the register.*
  2. *Although people engaged with the content published during the initial ‘Organ Donation Week’, without continued posts the momentum gained would be lost.*
  3. *Substantially fewer men than women had engaged with the campaign and younger people (25- to 34-years-old) appeared to have a greater likelihood of sharing content – both of which had implications for the tone, messaging and content used in future, and for partnerships.*
  4. *The ODS Facebook page followers are an active and engaged community, and it was recommended that there would be benefits in taking them along on this journey, allowing them to be part of the narrative and encouraging them to amplify the key messages.*
  5. *Mapping campaign conversations allowed Kantar TNS to highlight the role of influencers, including partner organisations. They played an active role in spreading awareness of the campaign on Twitter, and helped amplify ODS’s content among their followers.*
  6. *Kantar TNS encouraged ODS to share updates on how it was meeting and exceeding its sign-up targets as a conversation starter on social media.*
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**Figure 2:** Profile of ODS Facebook page likers



Shehnaz Hansraj, senior associate director, specialist services at Kantar TNS says: “We’d really advocate this combined survey and social media analytics approach which can identify in granular detail which type and tone of messaging is motivating the different demographic groups, and can provide strategic direction on how best to optimise the campaign and drive engagement among specific groups of the public who are not as receptive.”

The ‘beauty’ of this approach, says Hansraj, is the ability to provide qualitative richness on a quantitative scale, focusing on getting under the skin of how and why the public were responding to the different campaigns, and what action Scottish Government and its stakeholders could take between campaigns to maximise impact.

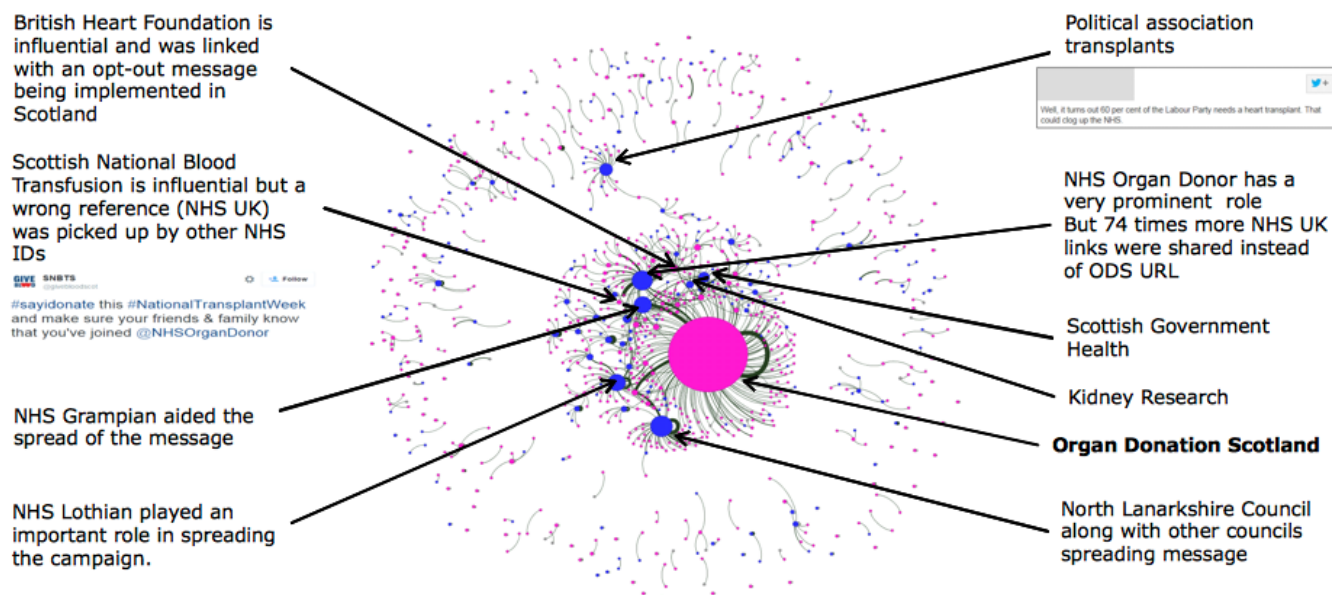
“As the ‘guardians’ of the Organ Donation Scotland Facebook and Twitter pages, this insight effectively made us reassess our social media strategy,” says McIntyre. “Yes, we had a strong following and were effective at talking to our engaged audience, but with the percentage of the population on the NHS Organ Donor Register remaining static at around 43%, the challenge for us is to continually reach and engage new audiences in the call to action.”

Social media analytics is increasingly of interest to a wide range of stakeholders within an organisation, beyond the marketing department.

“So often our relationship is with the insight teams,” says Hansraj, “But I’ve found more and more that the PR team, the agencies and marketing are all keen to attend the insights debrief. So we have a really important role in tying in the groups and providing the ‘what next?’ from social media analytics – getting through the communication silos that can exist within client organisations.”



**Figure 3:** Twitter network map for Organ Donation Week



The Kantar TNS team has a mantra ‘real time, over time’ which encapsulates its approach to balancing the need for accuracy and robust methodology with the speed that clients now demand.

“A lot of agencies use off-the-shelf platforms and while you might get results quickly, our bespoke offer focuses on relevance and actionability,” says Hansraj. “We advocate a man and machine approach, which along with an in-depth understanding of our client’s marketing strategy, in the context of ODS enabled us to unlock a deeper understanding of how their social media activity could positively impact registrations.”

But the pressure when analysing social media to be ‘too reactionary’ needs to be resisted says McIsaac. Instead one should focus on delivering the insights that will have maximum effect. “Would you react and take a massive decision on the basis of one focus group? No.”, she says.

With the marketplace for social media research ever more competitive, it has been said that the research industry should be less fixated on accuracy, and more on action. So are ‘directional’ insights good enough?

Hansraj: “There’s a time and a place for both – if the results will be used to drive legislation or strategic decisions, accuracy is incredibly important. We’re believers in a combined approach; you’ll never get all your answers from social media. We see it working hand-in-hand with traditional survey research. There are a lot of benefits – not just the richness of the data – but cost benefits. And in terms of declining response rates, it helps with that too.”

The advantage that the research sector has over the specialist social media agencies says McIsaac is in the robustness of the method, and the relationships that researchers build with their clients. This is why the research industry is better placed than others to find actionable insight amid the chaos of big data.

“We have the background; we understand the client’s strategy, their aspirations, and what keeps them awake at night,” says McIsaac. “Using both social media analytics and more traditional approaches hand-in-hand, we can really understand how consumers are responding both in terms of immediate reactions to the social media campaigns and in terms of longer term attitudes towards the topic – regardless of whether it’s in an FMCG context, or triggering the behavioural change needed to join the organ donation register.”

**“WE HAVE THE BACKGROUND; WE UNDERSTAND THE CLIENT’S STRATEGY, THEIR ASPIRATIONS, AND WHAT KEEPS THEM AWAKE AT NIGHT.”**

**SHEHNAZ HANSRAJ, SENIOR ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, KANTAR TNS**

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MRS is the world's leading research association for market and social research. MRS accredits companies to the Code of Conduct and has successfully regulated the market and social research sector for over 70 years.

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