

Bill Fine

President and General Manager

WCVB Advisory on Nielsen's Reissue of the February 2017 Sweep

March 27, 2017

To all valued clients of WCVB,

Numerous questions have been asked about the recent reissue of February sweep data in the Boston market. Here are the facts, as we have been able to discern, following numerous conversations with Nielsen and via diagnostic tools available to every Boston client.

- It has been determined that one sample Household in the market did in fact skew the data and significantly distort initial results. Nielsen identified this home was "out of compliance of inputs around visitor viewing" and immediately removed it from the sample following its investigation. The home's noncompliance resulted in irregular viewer patterns, mainly to the benefit of WFXT, and necessitated the reissue. The revised February sweep restores a more accurate result and matches typical audience levels observed prior to the reissue.
- To the near exclusion of every other local TV station, along with the approximately 600 channels that most pay providers serve to the Boston DMA, virtually only WFXT benefited from this one household. The vast majority of the viewing was to their newscasts and some adjacent programming. With this one household removed from the February results, the impact to WFXT was:
 - **Ratings for WFXT in Adults 25-54 were adjusted downward, in many programs, ranging upwards of 43%.**
 - **There was a reduction of -38% in their M-F and M-Su 11pm late news Adult 25-54 ratings.**
 - **The reissued numbers for WFXT's M-F 10pm news were -21% and -20% for their M-Su 10pm news.**
 - **The reissued data dropped WFXT from 1st down to 4th place in their late newscasts.**
 - **Their 6pm news, also a frequently viewed program for this one household, declined -24%. There was no change in rank.**
- Overall, there was effectively no change for the other Boston news stations. WCVB, WBZ, WHDH and WBTS had minuscule changes as a result of this reissue, and only in a handful of time periods averaging +/- 0.01 ratings at best. One exception was February 26th when this household did watch a bit of the Academy Awards on WCVB and is the only time period, of all the nights reissued, where WCVB sustained a loss of audience.

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- We must also bring to your attention and are requesting Nielsen continue to investigate the even more questionable dates of November 21-23, 2016, where this one household had even greater impact than in February for WFXT. This household alone contributed 37,756 Adults 25-54 to Fox 25's 10pm news on November 21st, 41,571 on the 22nd and 24,243 on the 23rd during the closing days of the November 2016 sweep, thereby skewing its results. In our estimation, these numbers equate to over a dozen "visitors" checking in to the LPM and exclusively watching WFXT. The numbers generated by this household alone on 11/22 exceeds the average viewership of every single Boston news station in Adults 25-54 on this date. In other words, according to Nielsen, this one household generated a larger audience than the other 759 households reporting demographic data on this date.
- Nielsen has informed us its initial investigation into the situation occurring on the November dates differ from the reissued February dates and "nothing in its compliance standards would trigger this as a bad home". We continue to press Nielsen for greater insight into the November dates and other questionable days the household was intab from its entry into the sample on March 14, 2016. To put additional perspective on how unusual this number appears, Nielsen shows the highest viewing zip code for Super Bowl 51 - featuring the World Champion New England Patriots - had 20,273 Adult 25-54 viewers from four households, half of WFXT's audience on November 22nd from the solitary household in question.

In closing, I have never seen this before in my career. Although there are a few similar instances, such as one in Miami in February 2016 where a reissue of the market's data was necessitated by improper visitor meter entry by one sample household, we believe the circumstances in Boston to be more pronounced. We look forward to receiving additional specific information from Nielsen in the days ahead in order to prevent such a reoccurrence in the future. Again, we feel strongly that these are the facts, not opinions, and can supply supporting data.

Hopefully this advisory helps clear up some of the confusion and is an attempt to respond to the many FAQ's we have been receiving.

Thanks, as always, for your consideration and the business you entrust to WCVB.



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