

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF DATA-DRIVEN AUDIO

How Modern Measurement and Identity Systems
Are Making Audio More Observable, Interoperable,
and Accountable

August 2026

When IAB first opened its doors 30 years ago in 1996, one of its organizing principles was a very simple mission that has stood the test of time: to make media work harder for marketers.

Today the challenge is bigger and broader: to give marketers greater confidence in assessing business outcomes as fragmentation across platforms and media types only continues to grow.

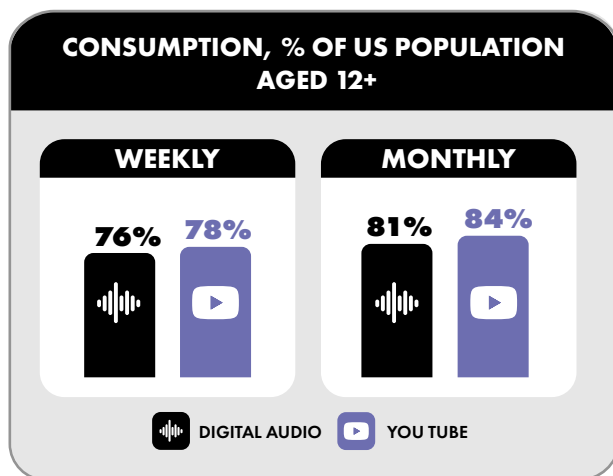
Historically, audio has occupied a different place in the planning and measurement ecosystem than channels such as display, search, social, video, and connected television. Today, however, advances in exposure measurement, attribution, identity resolution, and interoperability are fundamentally changing that reality and bringing audio into the same planning, measurement, optimization, and accountability frameworks marketers expect across the broader media landscape.

This paper explores that evolution, examines how connected audio is becoming more observable and accountable, and explains what those changes mean for audio's role within modern omnichannel media strategies.

Audio's Place in the Ecosystem

Previous IAB Media Center papers have explored many of the reasons audio belongs on today's media plans, but this paper focuses on how audio has become increasingly integrated into the planning, measurement, and optimization systems marketers use across every major media channel.

Audio's increased interoperability is particularly important because of one of the ways that it has held a unique position within the media landscape, which is a longstanding gap between the amount of time consumers spend with audio and the comparatively small share of advertising investment.



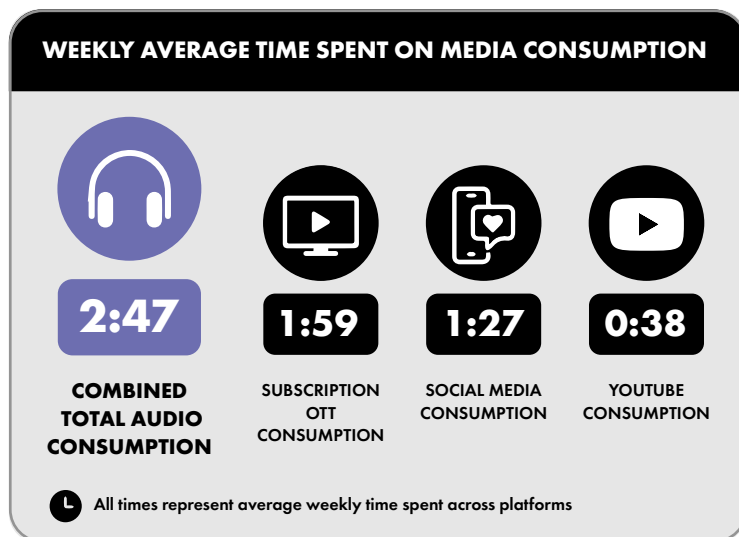
The Infinite Dial 2026, Edison Research, March 2026

Digital audio, for instance, now reaches 220 million Americans every week - 76% of the U.S. population age 12 and older - essentially matching the weekly reach of YouTube¹, and Americans spend 87 minutes each day with digital audio, equaling the amount of time they spend on social media.²

And, just as importantly, digital represents only part of the consumer engagement story when it comes to audio

AM/FM radio, which accounts for roughly two-thirds of all ad-supported audio listening³, continues to reach 87% of U.S. adults each week⁴, meaning that Americans spend nearly three hours each day with audio across radio, streaming audio, and podcasts, making audio one of the largest and most consistent forms of media consumption in consumers' daily lives.

The significance of these audience trends is not simply that they demonstrate audio's scale. It is that they increase the importance of being able to measure audio across both digital and broadcast through the same rigorous, interoperable measurement frameworks marketers increasingly expect across every other major media channel.



eMarketer, January 2025

DEFINITIONS & SCOPE

With that in mind, this paper will consider the entire audio marketplace - including broadcast radio, streaming audio, podcasts, and other connected audio environments - and examine the audience, exposure, contextual, identity, and performance signals they collectively generate in relation to the full range of business outcomes marketers pursue across their entire media mix.

	AUDIO	AUDIO DATA	OUTCOMES
Definition/Scope	Audio refers collectively to broadcast and streaming radio, other streaming audio, and podcasting.	Audio data includes audience, exposure, contextual, identity, and performance signals generated through audio consumption and advertising.	Outcomes refers to measurable business or marketing results associated with advertising exposure in any form of media.
Examples	- Broadcast radio (AM/FM) - Streaming audio - Podcasts - Online radio - In-game audio - Connected-device audio	- Listener demographics - Audience data - Exposure logs - Identity graph linkages - First-party registration data - CRM data - Contextual signals - Performance signals	- Brand lift - Awareness - Brand lift - Awareness - Site visits - Store visits - Sales - Conversions - ROAS - Incrementality

The Accountability Era

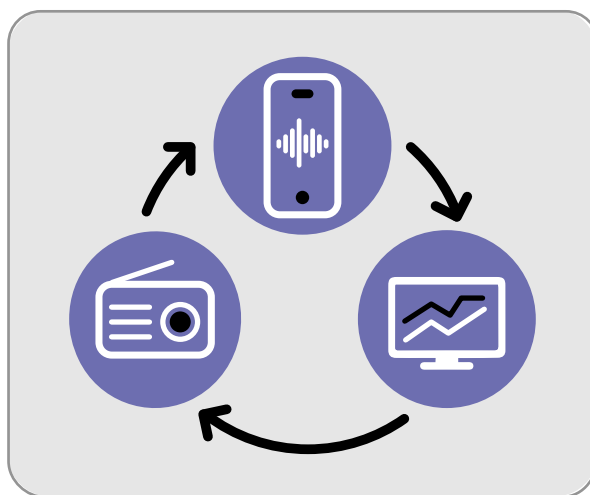
When digital advertising first began to attract brand marketers in the late 1990s and early 2000s, one of its most compelling features was the ability to connect ad exposures to business outcomes with unprecedented speed and granularity.

To be sure, promo codes, coupon redemptions, retail scanner data, market-level sales analysis, and marketing mix models all provided powerful signals about whether media investments were driving results.

But digital media introduced a new level of observability that has brought with it new levels of scrutiny and accountability for all channels of media.

Because pixels, cookies, and other digital signals made it possible to connect ad exposures to downstream actions faster, at greater scale, and with more detail than had previously been possible, marketers naturally expanded their investments in digital channels while applying those same expectations for measurement and accountability across the broader media ecosystem.

In other words, if media owners want to play on today's advertising field of play, they have to do more than just show brands the money - they have to show them the incrementality.



AUDIO ENTERS THE STAGE

The higher standard of proof described above has transformed expectations across the advertising industry, and, for many media channels, the methodologies and the delivery of advertising exposure data needed to meet those expectations matured relatively early.

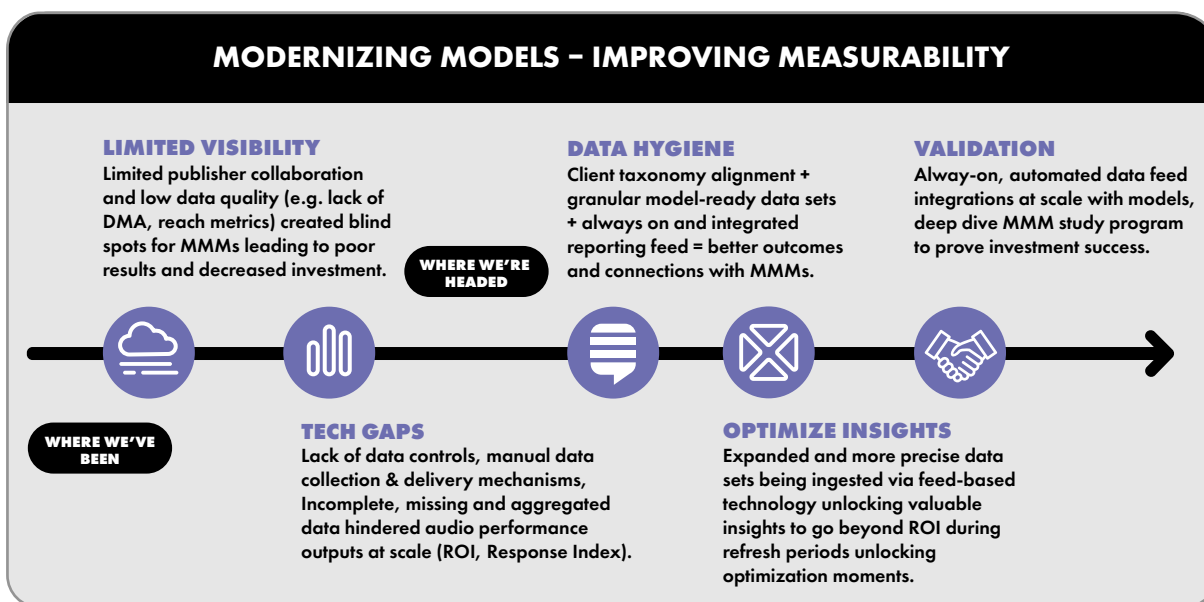
In audio's case, however, the exposure-level measurement and attribution capabilities that became commonplace across other digital media arrived quite a bit later.

Pixel-based attribution became commonplace in digital audio years after it had become standard in most other digital channels, resulting in a period when audio's effectiveness often outpaced the measurement systems marketers relied upon to observe and prove it.

The advent of audio pixels in the early part of this decade, however, combined with innovations in dynamic ad insertion, identity resolution, attribution, and outcomes measurement, has made it far easier for brands to connect audio exposures to business outcomes in ways that more closely resemble the measurement approaches they have long used in other digital channels.⁵

As a result, the ability to assess audio's incrementality within media plans has accelerated dramatically, but this increase in capability has yet to be fully captured and understood by many of the strategists and planners responsible for responding to it.

In many respects, the industry's perception of audio measurement continues to reflect the realities of the previous decade more than the capabilities of the current one, to the detriment of both the advertisers seeking incremental growth and the audio publishers increasingly capable of helping them achieve it.



Proving Audio Works, SiriusXM, 2025

The New Era of Audio Interoperability

Data becomes significantly more valuable when it can move seamlessly into the planning, activation, measurement, and optimization systems marketers already use across the rest of their media investments, and that is precisely what is happening throughout the audio ecosystem today.

One example of this evolution can be found in SiriusXM Media's "Model-Ready Audio" initiative, which was developed to improve the quality, consistency, and accessibility of audio data used within MMM.⁸

By automating the delivery of granular campaign datasets and creating model-ready reporting feeds, SiriusXM and others are working to ensure that audio can be evaluated with the same rigor applied to other media channels.

In a large retailer's MMM analysis conducted by Ipsos, for example, streaming audio and podcasts across SiriusXM were evaluated separately across General Market and Hispanic Market audiences as well as Enterprise and Vendor buying approaches, enabling a level of analytical insight that would have been difficult to achieve when audio was represented through more aggregated inputs.⁹

Did you know that audio platforms can supply comparable granularity of campaign-, audience-, and impression-level data as other forms or media?

Similarly, an Analytic Partners MMM for a leading travel brand separated streaming, satellite, and podcasts into distinct variables, revealing different response curves and optimization opportunities with unprecedented precision for each.¹⁰

Nor is this trend limited to a single publisher.

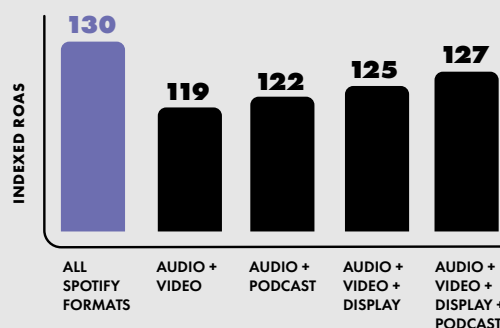
Spotify, for example, recently partnered with TransUnion on a large-scale MMM analysis that also incorporated granular campaign- and format-level inputs to better understand media performance and business outcomes for the Tech and Telecom sectors.

As with the Ipsos and Analytic Partners MMMs, rather than treating Spotify as a single media input, TransUnion evaluated performance across multiple advertising formats, examined interactions between those formats, and assessed both short and long-term effects.

And the benefits of richer media inputs extend beyond measurement of individual channels and formats to also produce greater insights into how audio interacts with other media.

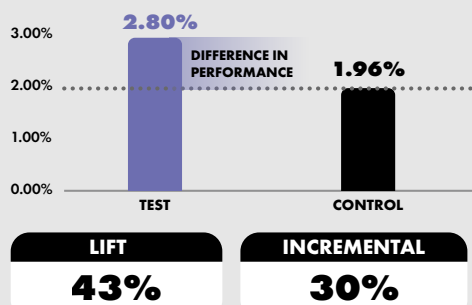
Continuing with the tech and telecom study, for example, it examined not only the performance of individual advertising formats but also the effects of combining formats, providing insight into how audio, podcasts, video, and display work together to influence outcomes.¹¹

IMPACT OF AD FORMAT SYNERGIES ON INDEXED ROAS



Spotify & TransUnion, February 2026

CALCULATING LIFT & INCREMENTALITY



Measuring Audio Incrementality, Podscribe, 2026

WHEN AUDIO EXPOSURE BECOMES OBSERVABLE

The advances in identity, interoperability, and measurement infrastructure described above ultimately matter for one reason: they make individual audio exposures increasingly observable.

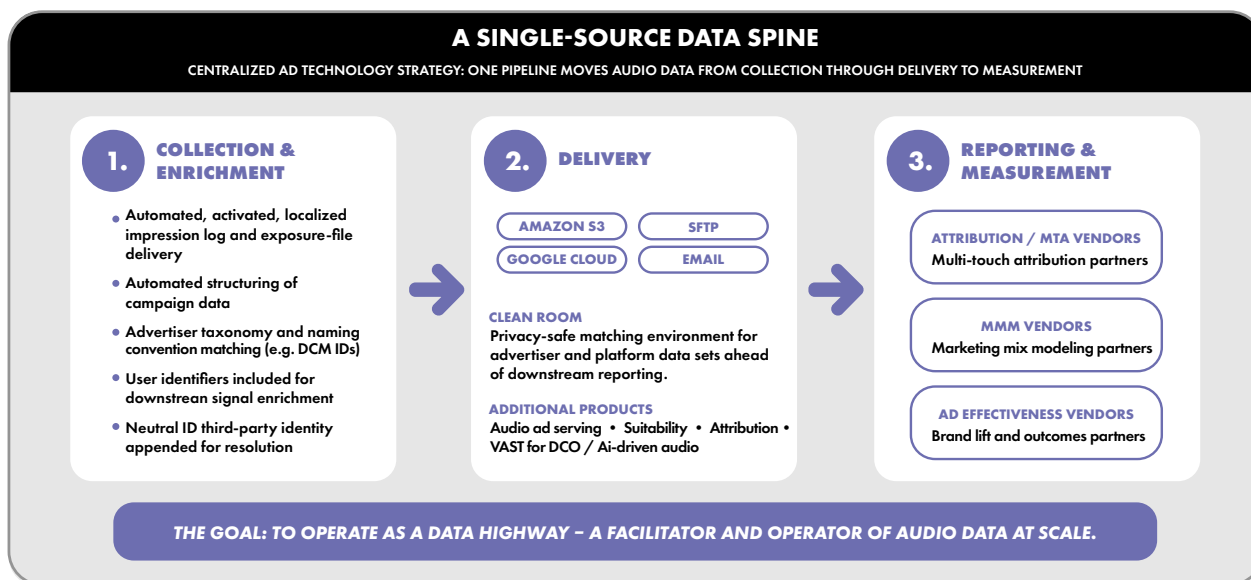
One recent example of this evolution in practice was a study conducted by the audio measurement company Podscribe, which compared households exposed to an audio campaign with carefully matched unexposed households while controlling for factors such as geography and listening behavior.

The findings were impressive unto themselves - including an estimated 58% incremental purchase rate and a 2.56 incremental ROAS - but even more impressive is what made the analysis possible in the first place: a measurement environment in which audio exposures can be observed, connected to outcomes, compared against matched audiences, and transformed into actionable business intelligence.¹²

IDENTITY AND INTEROPERABILITY

This growing observability of audio exposure data is occurring alongside another important development: the increasing interoperability of audio specifically within the identity and activation systems used throughout the advertising ecosystem.

While audio has sometimes operated within its own workflows, datasets, and reporting environments in the past, new partnerships among audio publishers, identity providers, measurement companies, and technology platforms are helping integrate audio into the same identity frameworks used in display, video, CTV, retail media, and social advertising.



SiriusXM, 2025

The SiriusXM and Spotify MMM reports mentioned above illustrate how identity and audience signals can be used to improve audience development and activation strategies, but it is another recent piece of industry news involving SiriusXM that perfectly sums up the new interoperability of audio with other media.

In June 2025, SiriusXM and Innovid announced a partnership focused on delivering stronger digital audio performance data. The two connected SiriusXM's digital audio exposure data with Innovid's cross-platform measurement and analytics infrastructure so that audio exposure can be normalized and analyzed alongside exposures from other channels.¹³

Partnerships like this mean that advertisers can now understand the full picture of a consumer's journey across all forms of media including video, CTV, display, and audio with far greater insight because the audio data they need to gain that clarity is sitting within the same datasets and systems already being used to evaluate the other channels.

Similar initiatives abound throughout the audio landscape, including in the AM/FM radio sector, where, as mentioned earlier, over-the-air listening continues to represent the largest share of ad-supported audio consumption

In another recent announcement with major implications for audio's interoperability, for instance, iHeartMedia and Triton Digital unveiled earlier this summer a new AudioGraph, which combines first-party listener data, identity resolution, and predictive listening models to bring audience-based planning and measurement capabilities to broadcast radio.

The far more significant point is that “advertisers can plan, target, measure, and attribute audience using privacy-safe, ID-informed insights with digital-like precision.”¹⁴

In other words, while the audience intelligence that AudioGraph enables has produced excellent early results – with 75% higher KPI outcomes reported in early tests against traditional demo-based plans – the parity it helps to create from an omnichannel planning and measurement perspective is where the real value lies.

Integrations like these represent the current state of audio advertising, including additional recent iHeart agreements with Amazon Ads and Magellan AI that make broadcast radio inventory available through Amazon DSP workflows¹⁵ while placing it squarely into the same attribution framework as other media.¹⁶

“Radio now has a chance to see its day, helping drive demand creation and new intent for brands aligned with the measurement architect of the rest of the digital ecosystem. AudioGraph is a great innovation for the industry, bringing the massive scale of radio to help deliver against brand growth models, build on penetration, and reach genuinely new buyers.”

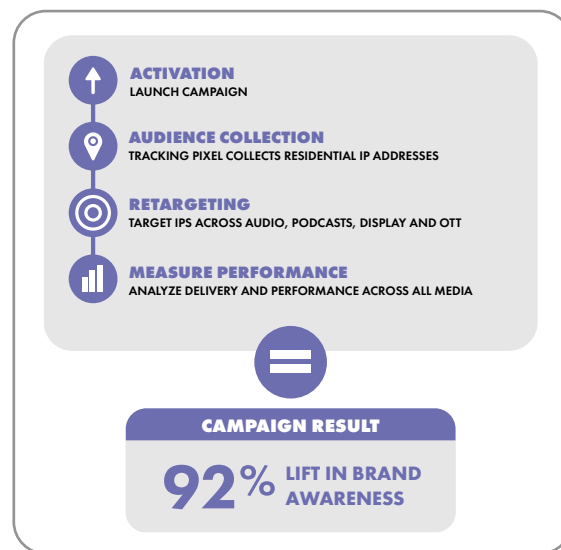
– Vinny Rinaldi, Former Vice President of Consumer Connections for The Hershey Company.¹⁴

FROM MEASUREMENT TO OPTIMIZATION

If improved interoperability means that audio data can be used not just to understand performance but to enhance it, advertisers can begin to inform their omnichannel planning as never before.

A good specific example of this can be found in the work that Katz Digital is doing to support marketers’ need for brand building across channels by retargeting digital audio consumers in CTV.

By connecting audience signals originating from digital audio environments with connected television consumption, Katz Digital is showing how audio exposure has become not only a measurable event in its own right but also a signal that can inform subsequent media activation and optimization decisions, including a 92% lift in brand awareness when retargeting audio listeners in CTV for a recent medical center advertising campaign.¹⁷



Katz Digital Case Study, 2026

**Did you know
that modern
audio measurement
allows for real time
optimization of
campaigns in flight?**

Similarly, campaign analyses from across the audio publisher universe have also shown how exposure and conversion data can be used to refine audience strategies, optimize market allocation, and improve media mix decisions while campaigns are still in flight.

In a recent campaign that included iHeartMedia podcast and streaming ads, for example, an online travel company identified higher-performing markets, audiences, and podcast environments in real time, leading to budget shifts and targeting adjustments that improved purchase volume and revenue generation over the course of the campaign.¹⁸

This ability of modern audio measurement to actively improve performance while campaigns are underway rather than to simply evaluate performance after a campaign ends is the essence of where the channel stands today.

In addition to reallocating budget toward higher-performing markets, the same campaign also featured a shift from broad audience targeting toward psychographic and content-based podcast targeting strategies because of the psychographic signals that iHeart collects from its listeners.

The resulting improvement in performance from both the market level analysis and the granular audience insights contained with iHeart's psychographic data illustrates how audio exposure and conversion data is increasingly being used to refine not only where campaigns run but also which audience and content environments are most effective at driving outcomes.

REAL TIME CAMPAIGN OPTIMIZATION

- **SHIFTED BUDGET MID-CAMPAIGN TO INCLUDE PAID PODCAST PLACEMENTS BASED ON STRONG PERFORMANCE & ROAS IN FLIGHT.**
- **SWITCHED FROM AUDIENCE TARGETING TO PSYCHOGRAPHIC & CATEGORY TARGETING IN THE PAID PODCAST FLIGHT.**



STREAMING

1,338,439

REACH

9.1

AVG FREQUENCY



PODCAST

1,127,016

REACH

6.8

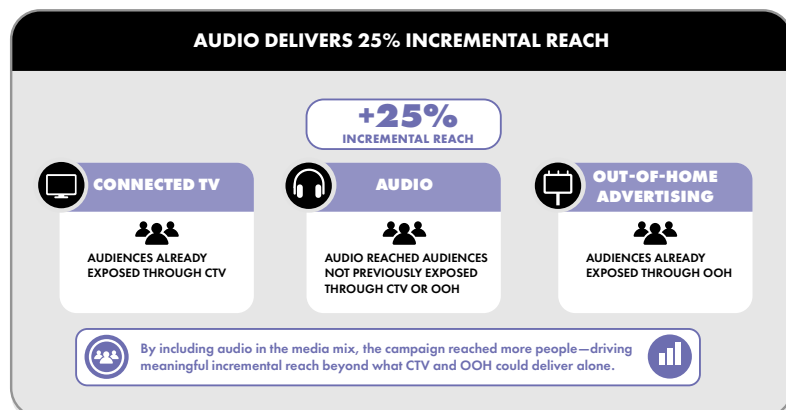
AVG FREQUENCY

iHeartMedia, June 2025

The Connected Audio Opportunity

As audio has become more observable, interoperable, and actionable in this manner, IAB believes that marketers have a special opportunity to improve their marketing outcomes by getting a better understanding of the role audio plays within omnichannel campaigns.

One example comes from a recent healthcare product launch that employed an omnichannel strategy targeting parents across multiple media channels using The Trade Desk.



The Trade Desk, June 2026

Analysis of that campaign found that audio contributed an impressive 25% incremental reach beyond audiences already exposed through connected television and out-of-home advertising, allowing the brand to strategically incorporate audio into their media mix and expand the campaign's ability to reach consumers who had not been exposed through other channels.¹⁹

Another example comes from a consumer-packaged goods campaign that incorporated SiriusXM Media streaming audio into a broader omnichannel media strategy spanning Prime Video, streaming TV, online video, and display advertising via Amazon DSP.²⁰

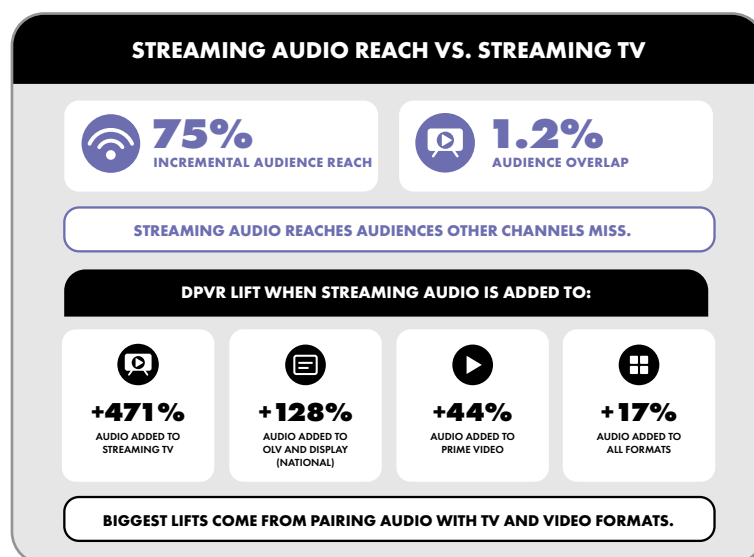
In that campaign, audio was shown to contribute value in two distinct ways. First, it significantly expanded audience reach, with streaming audio and streaming TV exhibiting remarkably little audience overlap of only 1.2%, enabling audio to deliver 75% incremental reach beyond streaming TV alone. This again illustrates not only how audio can extend the reach and impact of an omnichannel campaign but also how modern identity and measurement frameworks are making those contributions increasingly observable.

Second, it showed how streaming audio strengthened downstream engagement, with media combinations that included streaming audio consistently generating substantially higher Detail Page View Rates than those without, thus reinforcing audio's ability to reach new consumers and also showing its ability to increase purchase consideration.

And perhaps most notably, the analysis found that the vast majority of attributed sales occurred outside Amazon, illustrating how modern commerce measurement frameworks can capture audio's influence on purchases beyond the platform on which the advertising was delivered.

The ability to measure these interactions and understand audio's contributions in the interoperable manner discussed in this paper is the reality of the contemporary audio marketplace.

As that transformation continues, IAB will support the development of standards, best practices, and educational resources that help marketers take full advantage of audio's expanding capabilities. Organizations interested in learning more or helping shape the next chapter of audio's evolution are encouraged to join these efforts by emailing media-center@iab.com.



Amazon Ads, OMD, & SiriusXM, January 2026

End Notes

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About Us

IAB MEDIA CENTER

The IAB Media Center is focused on accelerating the seamless transition from traditional analog media channels to dynamic digital platforms. Led by Jamie Finstein, VP, Media Center, and Jason Adamski, Director, Media Center, it aims to empower innovative business models while fostering a captivating and consumer-centric media and advertising experience. If your organization is interested in shaping the next chapter of audio's evolution, please reach out to media-center@iab.com.

IAB

The Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) empowers the media and marketing industries to thrive in the digital economy. Its membership comprises more than 700 leading media companies, brands, agencies, and the technology firms responsible for selling, delivering, and optimizing digital ad marketing campaigns. The trade group fields critical research on interactive advertising, while also educating brands, agencies, and the wider business community on the importance of digital marketing. In affiliation with the IAB Tech Lab, IAB develops technical standards and solutions. IAB is committed to professional development and elevating the knowledge, skills, expertise, and collaboration of the workforce across the industry. Through the work of its public policy office in Washington, D.C., the trade association advocates for its members and promotes the value of the interactive advertising industry to legislators and policymakers. Founded in 1996, IAB is headquartered in New York City.