

## ANA & AAAA Meeting This Week To Advance New Ad-ID System

By JACK MYERS  
[jack@jackmyers.com](mailto:jack@jackmyers.com)

**JULY 29, 2003** — The Association of National Advertisers (ANA) and the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) are hosting member meetings this week in New York, Chicago, Dallas and San Francisco to present plans for rolling out a new digital advertising identification standard that has the potential to radically alter the dynamics of television measurement, trafficking, and verification systems. Following two years of development and the deployment of a live website last February ([www.Ad-ID.org](http://www.Ad-ID.org)), the trade associations are confident the media and advertising communities will embrace the new standard that captures advertising data in the same context as a supermarket scanning device.

Initiated, endorsed, and developed through a joint venture of the ANA and 4A's, Ad-ID is intended to replace the outdated ISCI coding system that most industry experts consider flawed and outdated. The new web-based database generates unique identifying codes for all ads in all media, creating a permanent database for sharing and retaining information about every ad and campaign. Barbara Bacci Mirque, SVP of the ANA, believes the industry is just six to nine months from "the tipping point when all marketers and media suppliers will recognize how important a standard digital advertising identification code is for the future of the industry." After months of planning and development, the goal now is outreach, says Mirque. "It's important for advertisers and agencies to begin using Ad-ID and to assure that media implement the identification system." Advertisers can simply go online to [Ad-ID.org](http://Ad-ID.org), register, and receive ID codes for unlimited advertising messages. The cost for unlimited access is only \$10,000.

Mirque points out that Ad-ID will also enable marketers to capture extensive "meta-data" through customized analysis. This includes information for regulatory compliance, sales effectiveness studies, media mix optimization programs, competitive analyses, commercial targeting, and detailed ratings measurement. It

---

*The industry is just six to nine months from "the tipping point when all marketers and media suppliers will recognize how important a standard digital advertising identification code is for the future of the industry."*

---

will provide the foundation for individual commercial ratings to replace the current industry standard of 15-minute rating "sweeps." Marketers currently testing the Ad-ID system include Johnson & Johnson, P&G, Ernst & Young, Pepsi-Cola, and ConAgra.

The ANA and 4A's decided to take action on the development of a digital system at the request of members "to foster accountability and because of the promise of return-on-investment measurement via addressable media. The ability to target commercials to the most valuable and relevant households assures 100% ROI," Mirque suggested. "You first need to identify commercial content with zero defect targeting. The current analog system is fraught with human error."

In the 1980s, Wal-mart deployed UPC scanner technology in every retail operation, a trend that was adopted by virtually every major retailer nationwide and now has expanded even to small retailers. Prior to the availability of the scanner data, retailers controlled all data emanating from consumer purchases. Once national marketers were able to access retail sales data in real time through centralized scanner data, they were able to employ new marketing and sales tactics. Retailers like Wal-mart restructured relationships with marketers, adopting last in/first out warehousing techniques and every-day-low-pricing strategies, which required real time information.

Similarly, the availability of national

computerized web-based data on advertising placements will not only enable improved real-time verification, but has the potential to open the market for detailed data on the impact of specific advertising messages targeted to homogeneous audiences. As all sales data, ratings, and advertising messages are digitized, they can be cross-catalogued to provide a broad array of insights.

Mirque noted in a conversation with [jackmyers.com](http://jackmyers.com), that "it has begun to dawn on people that "current systems do not work with addressable and video-on-demand technologies and emerging forms of advertising will require a zero defect identifier." Mirque points out that Ad-ID provides a common digital identification system that applies across all media and technologies with zero margin for error.

The ISCI analog coding system was originally developed more than 30 years ago by Leo Burnett Agency on behalf of client Procter & Gamble, in order to simplify the tracking of television commercials. The ISCI code became the de facto standard for the TV industry, with codes attached to the analog video signal of every television commercial. However, the technology does not adapt to digital formats and is not applied across all media. The ANA and 4A's are working to expand the use of Ad-ID among media companies, especially television networks, and to identify companies that can manage the Ad-ID business as a for-profit enterprise. Currently, AudioAudit, a verification service (See [jackmyers.com](http://jackmyers.com) archive 7/16/03) uses Ad-ID and Verance has announced plans to employ the Ad-ID system. Unlike the current verification systems that require several weeks between air dates and verification reporting, Ad-ID provides real time verification.

The ANA/4A's group is working with the IAB, MPA, TvB, CAB and other industry trade associations to assure support from all media for the new emerging Ad-ID industry standard. □

**Correction:** The sports rankings listed in last Thursday's newsletter should have noted that the Sportsline Network traffic was a custom roll-up. Sportsline Network includes traffic to Sportsline.com, NFL Internet Network and PGA Tour.