

How the IAB is reimagining the future of digital

By  Leigh Andrews

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2014 was the Interactive Advertising Bureau South Africa or IAB SA's inaugural year. But that doesn't mean it got off to a slow start - quite the opposite, in fact, with 2015 set to skyrocket...



Josephine Buys

Just last year, the IAB SA council announced several promising achievements, such as re-imagining the Bookmarks Awards by opening them up to the whole African continent, the launch of an IAB-endorsed media marketing course with the AAA school, voting for [re-election of its 2014 board](#) and finally laying a solid foundation for [Telmar](#) digital integration.

That's no small feat for a recently formed organisation. But the building blocks had been around for years, so it's little wonder. IAB SA CEO Josephine Buys tells us more about the IAB's dedication to leading and impacting the digital industry...

Let's go back to basics - when did IAB SA form and what was the impetus behind it?

Buys: The DMMA (Digital Media & Marketing Association) joined the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB), which is an international body dedicated to growing the global digital industry. From February 2014, the DMMA rebranded and is now known as the IAB South Africa. The DMMA was previously around for 11 years.

■ *That explains it! Talk us through the impact of the international IAB on the IAB SA.*

Buys: Interactive Advertising Bureaus or IABs around the world help build markets; bring like-minded members together and ensure that standards and guidelines are set for global best practice. There are some very clear benefits to being part of an established and respected global network. For example, it gives us the ability to be part of IAB global standards; to replicate key international research studies to see how South Africa fares in a global context; as well as giving us a seat at the international IAB table, with access to case studies of successful strategies in other markets. In short, being part of the IAB gives our members access to international knowledge and best practice, while ensuring that South Africa takes part in the global, digital, conversation.



■ *Sounds good. How exactly does IAB SA work - what's its day-to-day functioning like?*

Buys: All IABs function completely autonomously, with the one key requirement that each IAB is committed to the goal of growing the online media and advertising industry. As full-time CEO, I drive the day-to-day managing of the Bureau. There are also nine councils, which contribute to the core mandate and mission of the organisation - these cover agency, measurement, marketing, regulatory, publishing, research, education and transformation, brand, and media innovation. Through this, IAB SA ensures that all sectors of the industry are represented, whether through pushing and lobbying regulation that impacts on the digital space, or assisting with digital curriculum in schools, the IAB is meaningfully impacting on the South African digital space.

■ *How does one become a member of the IAB?*

Buys: To become a member of the IAB, all you need to do is contact us on info@iabsa.net and provide us with your company details. [Click here for further information.](#)

■ ***How does the local advertising industry compare to the rest of the continent?***

Buys: Although South Africa is hampered by broadband costs and penetration, we are seeing world-class creative and thinking coming out of the local players. South Africa competes not only with its continental partners but also with the rest of the global players and is often seen as setting the trends and direction for future work across the continent. We're seeing a lot of investment being made in the digital space in many of the African countries and elevating the whole industry across the continent is what we're doing.

■ ***OK then - how does the local advertising industry compare to the rest of the world?***

Buys: South Africa has a thriving advertising industry, with many traditionally above-the-line agencies taking on an integrated approach to both creative and production work. We've seen a rise in digital over the last few years with digital work taking the front seat for many companies as the medium is becoming better suited to reach more consumers.



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■ ***With that as a basis, how does the IAB plan to shape the digital landscape in 2015?***

Buys: With the newly established Media Innovation Council. There'll also be more visibility around the Education and Transformation Council, so 2015 is going to be a busy year for the IAB. There are plans for greater integration between the traditional and digital media planning and a drive to educate the market players on new media formats. The IAB is also focused on ensuring that new regulation being tabled is ratified by the members, and higher education centres have the adequate tools to educate and bring more skills into the digital space. As always, the IAB will continue to play a strong role to advise on measurement standards and benchmarks not only in the South African space, but also from a global perspective.

■ ***Tell us more about the local Bookmarks Awards as a highlight on the industry calendar...***



Buys: In support of Africa's digital marketing and media industry, IAB South Africa is opening up the Bookmarks Awards, now in its seventh year, to the continent as a whole - inviting agencies, publishers, brands, marketers and students to submit their entries to the industry's most prestigious awards. For the first time, the Bookmarks Awards ceremony will be preceded by the IAB's inaugural Digital Summit. Both events will be held on 19 February 2015 at the Turbine Hall in Newtown Precinct, Johannesburg.

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Elaborate on what we can expect from the IAB's annual summit?

Buys: The first [IAB Digital Summit](#) will feature top local and international speakers, as well as interactive breakaway sessions where delegates can engage, network and connect with some of the most inspiring practitioners in the global digital industry. Industry leaders are set to discuss the latest thinking around digital marketing to stimulate learning and commerce within the digital space. The Digital Summit will be followed by the Bookmarks Awards ceremony, hosted by celebrated comedienne and talk show host, Anne Hirsch.

Taken together, the 2015 IAB Digital Summit and Bookmarks Awards are about advancing the pace of digital marketing and recognising excellence, innovation and measurable impact. Digital is at the forefront of Africa's growth and the Bookmarks will begin this new chapter in Jozi, the heart of gold, the pulse of digital and South Africa's economic hub.

Sounds like we're in for a fast ride - strap yourself in and get ready to reimagine the face of digital! Click here for more on the [IAB Digital Summit](#) and [here to follow the IAB SA on Twitter](#).

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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