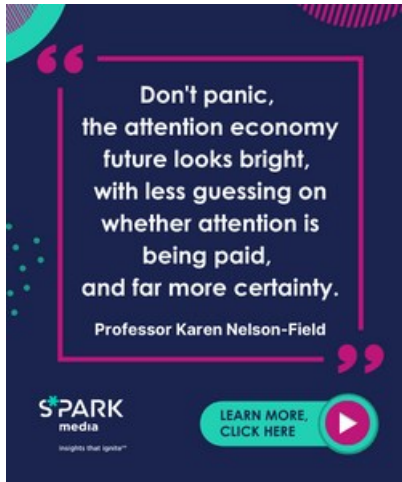


Don't panic! The attention economy future looks bright

Issued by [Spark Media](#)

13 Oct 2021

As a global thought-leader in the field of attention as a currency and the founder of Amplified Intelligence, Nelson-Field explains the causes, consequences and course correction for the media industry.



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Spark Media hosted Professor Karen Nelson-Field on their latest webinar, "No Attention! No Impact!", on Wednesday, 6 October 2021. As a global thought-leader in the field of attention as a currency and the founder of Amplified Intelligence, Nelson-Field explains the causes, consequences and course correction for the media industry.

Professor Karen Nelson-Field was a natural choice as a speaker for the Spark Media audience due to her history with the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, her work with both the Attention Council (as a co-founder) and the eye-tracking technology company, Lumen research.

"I'm often asked the question, "Does attention matter?", and I'm quite frustrated by that question because it's fairly common sense. So, I talk about the fact that if no attention is gained, no impact can be gained either and sometimes that negative point of view, becomes more apparent and people resonate with that more," explains Nelson-Field.

The cause of inattention is simple, apart from life's general distractions, there is the fact that people don't care too much about advertising and this is causing significant disruption to advertising. There is an economic impact because consumer distraction is costing our advertisers billions of dollars.

In many cases, much of an ad has no active attention and attention decay is rapid, meaning an ad is lucky to get two or three seconds of attention. Across various studies of numerous platforms in multiple markets, the average ad receives about 30% active attention and the consequences are pretty obvious. "This means that on average, between 70-80% of an advertisement has no active attention paid at all," says Nelson-Field.

Another finding shows that people switch in and out of different types of attention. Amplified Intelligence collects active attention, which is looking directly at the ad; passive attention, which is looking at the screen but not the ad; and non-attention, which is completely looking away.

To course correct, we need to learn to value human attention and to understand the currency problem and how it affects models and systems that rely on equitable impressions, particularly budgeting. Take share of voice for example: you could spend the same amount of dollars as your competitors, but if your ads are getting fewer attentive seconds, your share of voice is technically lower, but you wouldn't even know.

Robyn Bishop, head of marketing at Spark Media, says, "We are seeing the 'Attention as a currency' theme taking the main stage on all the major media circuits and were pleased to bring Professor Karen Nelson-Field to the South African media audience" says Bishop.

Spark Media has Lumen data from previous eye-tracking studies that show how Caxton local newspapers perform incredibly well in their attention scores. The context of the content is still a unique selling point for local news and as attention scores become integrated in media planning metrics, Spark Media is sure print will be getting more of the attention it deserves!

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