

Data, mobility and content are the key media trends as we enter 2020

By [Cathy Ibal](#)

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At the dawn of the 2010s, the iPad hadn't even been released and Twitter, Facebook and the internet-enabled smartphone as we know it today were all in their infancy. In the decade since, there has been a dramatic change across communications, technology and media which has affected how people go about their daily lives, source and share information, and interact with others.



Cathy Ibal is CNN International Commercial's Senior Vice President of Advertising Sales, EMEA.

Such “disruption” can be overwhelming because it means the breaking of accepted norms. But it can also present opportunity for evolution or even re-invention. We are experiencing this ourselves as part of the recently formed WarnerMedia under new ownership with AT&T.

The 2010s was a decade that required media to transform to being fully multi-platform and 24/7. We have evolved in this

way at CNN; while TV provides the biggest reach, audiences are discovering our content on any one of 35+ platforms – from social media, to wearable tech, to a mobile app. This is reflected in the way that we report from and across Africa, where we know content needs to be created with a social, digital, mobile audience in mind just as much, if not more so, than a TV viewer.

The way that we work with commercial partners has also transformed, and campaigns are now unrecognisable from those at the start of the decade. Our experience is that African brands and advertisers are passionate about innovation and want to be at the forefront in new ways of content creation and distribution – such as immersive digital video experiences and cross-platform campaigns.

Demand for branded content will continue to grow

Looking first at branded content – with abundance of choice and information, brands must tell authentic stories and make an emotional connection with audiences. Branded content enables this by combining the values, needs and/or aspirations of the consumer with the ethos, products and/or services of the advertiser. Advertisers have shifted dramatically towards branded content – particularly in travel and tourism campaigns where sweeping beaches and beautiful sunsets have been replaced or overlaid with a more human touch, often from the perspective of a protagonist or influencer.

New types of creative storytelling have seen branded content boom over the last decade, with well over 60% of client campaigns involving our studio, *Create*.

Multiple platforms will replace a solely linear approach

In tandem, cross-platform campaigns have grown – a trend that also increases scale and complexity. Due to change in consumer behaviour, 75% of campaigns on CNN span different, complementary platforms, using various distribution methods including precision targeting, native placements and social media activation all underpinned by data science and insight.

This has significant impact as brand recall increases by 45%. An important part of the platform mix going into the 2020s is mobile. Smartphones have become central to most content and advertising strategies, particularly somewhere like South Africa where Global Web Index data from 2017-2018 shows that South Africans spend on average 14 hours per day consuming media, including an average of three hours 44 minutes with online content per person per day on mobile.

Content, platforms and data to integrate further in 2020s

As we head into the 2020s, I anticipate the demand for content – both branded and sponsored – to continue along with further changes in content creation, distribution and consumption. With the impending arrival of greater connectivity and 5G, the immersive and two-way experience we have already seen with VR and AR will grow exponentially and consumers will have access to even more media minutes. Just as digital proliferation has provided us with greater data points and acumen, the value exchange between consumers, brands and media will continue to evolve in a way that – as long as consumer rights and privacy are correctly respected – can bring benefits to all involved.

The possibilities that lay ahead are exciting and almost infinite, but the strongest brands, with a willingness to embrace innovation and reflect the ever-evolving needs of consumers, will be the ones that win out.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cathy Ibal is CNN International Commercial's Senior Vice President of Advertising Sales, EMEA. Since joining CNN 17 years ago Cathy has held a number of research and sales roles, and is now responsible for all CNNs advertising and sponsorship activity in Africa, Middle East, Europe (excluding UK and Nordics) and the CIS. Cathy oversees a client portfolio that includes some of CNNs longest-standing client relationships such as Access Bank, Dangote Group, and Dubai Tourism.

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