

# ‘Apples-to-apples approach to measurement absolutely necessary’

A unified currency that can be used across all OOH formats makes it easier to plan and easier to buy, states **Kym Frank, President, Geopath** in an interview to **Rajiv Raghunath** on the subject of audience measurement metrics for place-based media. Edited excerpts:



**I**n May this year Geopath introduced audience measurement metrics for place-based media at locations like airports, bars, stadiums, cinemas and retail environments. How are OOH media buyers, sellers and agencies responding to this offering?

We have had an overwhelmingly positive response across all key out-of-home industry stakeholders to the addition of place-based media to the Geopath ecosystem. A unified currency that can be used across all OOH formats makes it easier to plan and easier to buy. As our channel grows more automated, an independently generated, apples-to-apples approach to measurement is absolutely necessary. It ensures transparency and trust, and maximises the investment that advertisers make in our channel.

**How much has the experience of developing and offering Insights Suite contributed to the development of a common currency for place-based media? Is the offering exclusively for digital OOH?**

The incorporation of state-of-the-art data streams, such as those harnessed from anonymised mobile device data, into our Insights Suite made it possible to launch our place-based media measurement. We measure all types of displays whether they are printed, painted or digital. The solution works on roadsides, pedestrian pathways, parking lots and inside venues large and small.



## Do you see any significant changes in the way advertising and buyers look at OOH audience metrics as markets come out of the Covid-19-induced crisis?

Absolutely. We recently ran a survey among our members and found that 7 out of 10 agreed that their “customers are more focused on the impressions delivered by their campaigns.” 65% of our members said that their customers are more interested in information about travel patterns, and more than half said that their clients want information on their campaigns delivered more frequently.

Data have always been important, but the uncertainty caused by COVID-19 amplified its value.

## What steps are needed for promoting a common currency in any OOH market?

It is worth noting that a necessary step prior to curating OOH currency is to have a clean, detailed and independently audited database of the OOH assets themselves. Geopath does this in-house to ensure that units are where they are supposed to be and that their attributes are accurately represented, including size, angle to oncoming traffic, illumination, etc.

The accuracy of the currency relies upon the accuracy of the inventory attributes. Developing and maintaining the inventory database is no small task. With assets moving, being built, being removed, changing hands and being converted to digital, keeping that database precise and up-to-date is a major focus for Geopath.

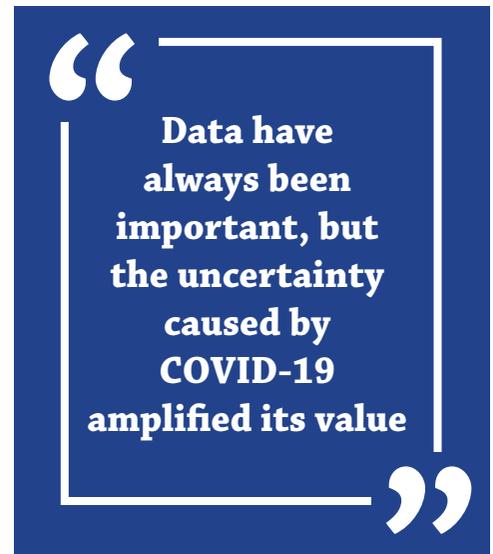
Certainly, having alignment across the buyers and sellers on the measurement before it is developed is key to successful currency adoption. Everything we’ve developed and launched at Geopath was envisioned, designed, vetted, supported, executed and approved by committees representing the agencies, the advertisers and sellers of all formats and scale.

What does the product look like? What functionality does it provide? What is the cadence of data delivery? What does data delivery look like? Who gets access to the data? Who pays for it? We spent a lot of time

in development to help ensure universal alignment on these questions to help maximise adoption. But, of course, even when everyone is on the same page at the beginning of an initiative, there is no guarantee that they will be by the time it is launched.

It is vital that a measurement body like ours be as nimble and future-proofed as possible. The needs of the industry can change in the blink of an eye – such as it did during COVID-19.

We recognise that measurement is never “done.” There will always be new needs, especially as the industry continues to become increasingly automated. We are always building with an eye towards “what is needed next?”



## Do you see the common currency contributing to OOH growth in the US markets? Is there scope for OOH to stake claim to a larger share of the OOH spends in the coming years?

Absolutely. We already see that happening. The addition of incremental information on the types of people being exposed to out-of-home advertising – whether they are in the market for a new car or considering changing their insurance provider – has allowed us to go after incremental dollars and compete with other channels. The combination of audience information and location intelligence now

empowering our channel through Geopath data is enhancing the value of OOH like never before.

We are seeing our data fueling the programmatic platforms as they continue to grow, tapping into dollars across the agency ecosystem and flowing directly into the trading desks themselves.

Our membership has organically grown from 180 members in 2015 to more than 380 in 2020 – with more and more general agencies and advertisers joining the ranks than ever before.

## Are you looking to explore global markets for your audience metrics offerings?

Geopath’s key objective is to develop accurate metrics to fuel the OOH industry in the United States, but we are keenly interested in doing our part to help elevate measurement across the globe. In 2017 I launched a coalition through the World Out of Home Organization called the Global Out-of-Home Research Leads. This group has representation from organisations similar to Geopath across the world. Together, we collaborate, share findings, discuss data sources, methodologies, and support the expansion of trusted, unified currency across the Global OOH ecosystem.

*Kym Frank was elected TAB President at the 2015 OAAA/TAB Conference. In September 2016, Kym led the organisation through a full rebrand under the new name, Geopath. Utilising the power of location data aggregated from hundreds of millions of mobile devices, Geopath provides the industry standard currency for OOH in the US. Kym has 20 years of media research experience, deriving insights from quantitative and qualitative custom research, syndicated resources and big data. Previously, she held leadership research positions at Symphony Advanced Media, ZenithOptimedia, FTI Consulting, and CBS Television Distribution. She is co-chair of the Digital Signage Federation’s Global DOOH Council, Founder of the Global OOH Research Leads, and Vice President of the Market Research Council.*

