

SPR+ IS EVOLVING. WHAT MORE?

For as long as possible, SWA has remained neutral and not issued any recommendations in favor either of the existing SPR+ poster research system or the (for quite some time now) soon-to-be-expected MORE. In the long run, however, the purpose of the association is not to maintain an objective stance, but instead to help its members gain the maximum benefit from their poster advertising spending.

A never-ending story

APG and CCO spent many years jointly developing the Swiss Poster Research (SPR) project, with support from SWA. When CCO withdrew from this endeavor in spring 2005, it all threatened to collapse. Supposedly because of differences of opinion with regard to measuring techniques.

On August 17, 2005, APG's CEO Christian Kauter announced that APG, the staff at SPR and Prof. Dr. Martial Pasquier would carry on and implement the project alone. The competition's poster sites would also be included in the project.

And so it was. SPR+ is now operational and currently undergoing further expansion. CCO continued to develop MORE, its own project, and presented it to the media industry and other interested circles in May 2006. Initial tests are planned for the second half of 2007 in the Zürich area. It might then be possible to determine which system is better with regard to specific details – but that is not the point.

Two systems are nonsense

In the past two years, SWA has used every available opportunity to point out, both verbally and in writing, that running two different systems cancels out the benefits for poster advertising and hurts the poster as a medium.

In this it agrees fully with BSW and the media agencies. Clients and the advertising industry need a single system that delivers data collected in the same way for all poster sites nationwide. Only this approach provides useful data for media planning and performance measurements.

All attempts at conciliation so far have come to nothing

SWA has tried – with enormous patience – to get APG and CCO to the stage of integrating the two systems again. These endeavors have been supported by BSW and the major out-of-home buyers.

In autumn 2006, we invited SPR+ and CCO once more to an open discussion with clear rules of engagement and encouraged a dialogue at the top level.

A meeting between the SPR+ and MORE teams finally took place on February 19, 2007. On February 23, Beat Roeschlin wrote to Christian Kauter on the subject and possible forms of collaboration: "We will submit a detailed proposal concerning this issue shortly". And: "I look forward to discussing this proposal and its associated business policy implications with you in due course."

The early bird catches the worm

The timeline was defined, but in the past four months, CCO has done absolutely nothing with regard to merging the two projects. APG is still waiting for the proposal. In the meantime, the further development of the SPR+ system is progressing and after the next phase of functionality, it will probably be too late to include any further features in the SPR+ planning tool. Nor will there be any reason to do this.

We are thus faced with the fact that SPR+ is a fully operational poster research system which is already being further evolved and whose scope includes all poster sites. It goes without saying that SPR+ is dependent on user involvement to pursue further development. Trials of the MORE system will begin shortly in the Zürich area. It is not clear to what extent it includes the competition's poster sites, if at all.

Consequently, our advice to our members is to rely on SPR+ when planning their poster advertising campaigns and measuring their effectiveness.

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Abbreviations:

SWA: Swiss Association of Advertisers

BSW: Association of Swiss Agencies