

Frequently Asked Questions About the Portable People Meter™

Technology Questions

1. If an AM signal has static, will the encoder pick up the signal?

The general rule of thumb is that the meter will mimic the human ear. So if you can hear the station, the meter can “hear” the codes as well.

2. How many encoders does each station get? What’s the limit?

Each station will receive two encoders—one for its main signal and one for backup—and one encoding monitor. Stations can request additional encoders for their HD Radio® or Internet broadcasts.

3. Do nonsubscribers have to pay for encoders?

All stations licensed as “home” to the DMA® are invited to encode. Arbitron will provide at no cost a main encoder, a backup encoder and an encoding monitor. Nonsubscribing stations that wish to encode HD Radio, Internet or podcast signals can do so for a small lease fee.

4. When can stations obtain their encoders?

The encoding process begins about nine months prior to the start of pre-currency measurement.

5. What’s the battery charge of a meter?

The battery charge of a meter is 36 hours. A meter lasts for about 36 hours before it needs recharging.

6. Is there some kind of notification when your station has stopped encoding?

Arbitron provides each station with an encoding monitor. Arbitron recommends that stations connect the monitor to the station’s existing air fault notification alarm.

7. How would the market be informed that a station was not encoded for a full survey period?

Any disruption in encoding will be reported in the “Special Notifications” section of the Arbitron eBookSM if Arbitron is notified in a timely fashion. All instances of nonencoding should be reported as soon as possible to Arbitron.

Audience estimates will not be adjusted for instances of nonencoding. Please note: It is the station’s responsibility to monitor its encoding status.

8. How will Arbitron capture listening when a panelist uses headphones to listen to radio?

Arbitron provides an adapter “cap” to attach to a portable device in order to capture the listening.

9. Does the age of a radio affect how a PPM captures listening?

No, the audio is encoded when it leaves the station; so, regardless of how a person accesses the material, the code will be there.

10. What is the purpose of the green light on the side of the meter?

It indicates to the panelist any movement of the meter. If the meter does not move for 20 minutes, the light will flash to inform the panelist that it’s not in motion (and, therefore, the panelist is not earning points) although the meter is always capturing listening exposure.

Methodology Questions

11. What if I get a “bad” panel (such as panelists whose listening patterns are clearly not characteristic of my listeners)?

The size of Arbitron’s PPM panel is set to provide a level of statistical consistency equal to or greater than what we get in the Diary service. The panel is also set up to mirror the market on a number of different characteristics, to be sure all groups are represented. Also, keep in mind that ongoing “panel churn” ensures that a number of households transition in and out of the panel every month. Arbitron’s Twin Panel study conducted in Houston-Galveston substantiated that sampling consistency exists using the PPM panel methodology.

12. What percentage of the panel is in-tab (or counted in the panel) at any given time?

Our daily in-tab goal averages 75% of the installed panel.

13. Do men and women carry the meter for the same amount of time each day?

Arbitron has not seen any evidence of differences by gender in the Houston-Galveston or the Philadelphia studies. Men and women have similar in-tab rates, and both wear the meter for an average of 14.5 hours per day.

14. How will women wear the meter? (Men, at least, can wear it on their belts.)

Based upon our exit interviews, we’ve found that the majority of women, like the majority of men, prefer to wear the meter clipped to their clothing—usually on their waistbands or carried in their pockets. However, women are more likely to have used the carry accessories that Arbitron provides (such as a lanyard) at least once.

15. Does the meter stop capturing any listening after the green light goes off?

As long as the battery is charged, the meter is always “listening” for codes. As long as a person meets the criteria indicating that he or she complied for the day, then all of the exposure detected by the meter is counted.

16. How long can a panelist stay in the panel?

A panelist can stay in the panel for up to two years.

17. What’s the average monthly turnover of panelists?

We are experiencing approximately eight percent turnover of panelists per month. Panelists leave for a variety of reasons: They can move; they may not comply and, therefore, Arbitron asks them to leave; they choose to no longer participate; or they are routinely rotated out of the panel after 24 months of participation.

18. Do you have control over panel demographics?

There are several ways in which we exercise control over panel demographics in order to have a representative sample. We stratify our sample by geography (including High-Density Black and Hispanic areas) to ensure a representative starting sample. In Philadelphia, these stratifications are geography, race/ethnicity and the presence of 18- to 24-year-olds. We monitor each person’s compliance on a daily basis, and noncompliance triggers phone contact from an Arbitron panel relations specialist and other coaching.

19. If a panelist works third (overnight) shift, will the PPM record his or her listening?

Of course; however, if the meter isn’t docked at the time of scheduled download (which normally occurs during the overnight hours), the system will make another attempt to download the data once the meter is back in the dock. Also, when the meter is docked, it downloads and stores the data so that they are ready to be sent back to Arbitron during the next phone call. The meter does not actually have to be docked at the time of that phone call.

20. What constitutes motion?

The motion detector is sensitive enough that normal breathing will register as motion with the PPM.

21. What’s the “six out of seven” rule?

In order for a panelist’s media exposure to be included in the weekly audience estimates, he or she must be included as “in-tab” for at least six out of the seven days of the survey week. In order to be in-tab for a day, the age 18+ panelist must have carried the meter for at least eight hours (the minimum requirement for kids age 6-17 is five hours). So, it is possible for a panelist to contribute media exposure for a day but not be included in the weekly estimate.

22. If a panelist listens only five out of seven days, will he or she be in the weekly data?

Crediting rules will report listeners in weekly estimates if they listen six out of seven days in a week. However, daily listening will still be credited for each of the days of the week that the station was listened to (see question 21 for additional details about this rule).

23. How do you reward your panelists for carrying the meter?

Panelists may earn points by simply doing what we ask them to do: undock the meter when they wake up, wear their meter all day and dock the meter at night. The more they comply, the more points they are rewarded. There are also incentives for panelists to remain in the panel for longer time periods.

24. How much do panelists get paid to carry the PPM?

The amount of our incentives is considered proprietary information; however, it’s a much higher figure compared to the diary. Keep in mind that money is not the primary incentive in getting the panelist to cooperate; panelists cooperate because they feel they have a “voice” in the way radio stations are programmed.

25. What if a panelist goes on vacation?

Currently, a panel relations specialist will coach the panelist to leave the PPM in the dock. Arbitron is also testing travel chargers, which are similar to portable cell phone chargers, that will allow panelists to take their PPM devices with them.

26. Does Arbitron tell people to “wear” the PPM?

Yes. When a person agrees to be in the panel we explain to him or her that he or she must wear or carry the PPM in order to keep it in motion. Our printed user guides as well as Arbitron’s panel relations specialists coach panelists on the three things they need to do to be in the panel:

- Undock the meter when they wake up.
- Keep it with them during the entire day.
- Dock it when they go to bed.

The phrase “rise to retire” is frequently used.

27. What happens if someone wears the PPM under a heavy coat or in a purse?

The PPM is intended to mimic the human ear. It will pick up listening as long as it can “hear” the station. Wearing the PPM under a coat or on a purse also lowers the background noise, so the meter can still detect the code.

28. How many seconds does it take the PPM to register listening?

It takes the PPM about 15 seconds to register listening.

29. Does the PPM ever stop listening for codes?

Only if it runs out of battery life.

30. Will there be any diaries in a market once PPM measurement begins?

Once a market converts to PPM as currency, diaries will no longer be placed in the market (National services will be based off meter/diary-combined estimates.)

31. What if there is a friend not in the selected household who wants to wear the meter?

Arbitron requires that only the original panelists carry the meter. Panel relations specialists will also be monitoring compliance activity, and they have “edit rules” that look for listening irregularities.

32. What time does the meter send the data up to Arbitron each night?

It sends the data between 4AM and 6AM.

33. How does the panelist get counted for an AQH estimate?

Panelists must be exposed to a particular outlet for at least five minutes during a clock quarter-hour.

34. Are you weighting the data?

Yes, weighting occurs on a daily and weekly basis.

Panel Relations Questions

35. Can meters get mixed up, such as if a child and parent were to swap meters?

To prevent accidental swapping, meters are labeled with the panelists’ names; if they are docked in the wrong rechargers, this is immediately flagged and the household is contacted. The affected panelists will be taken “out of tab” for the period of time the meters were switched. To prevent situations where persons may wear multiple meters, an automated report tracks household docking, undocking and meter patterns for similarity. If this report is triggered, the panel relations specialist calls the household to investigate. Incidents of meter “cheating” will result in immediate removal from the panel.

36. What are the parameters for keeping a panelist in the study?

When a panelist is consistently “noncompliant” (not meeting the required daily movement time of five or eight hours), he or she will be removed from the panel. When new panelists are activated, the lowest-performing panelists are removed.

37. How often do Arbitron’s panel relations specialists contact the panelists?

Any household member who is noncompliant will be contacted for coaching concerning wearing his or her

meter. A household that is compliant will still receive a quarterly call to verify panelist characteristics.

Data Questions

38. Which day of the week do the data release?

It will vary, but data will generally release on Wednesdays.

39. Will HD Radio[®], multicasts and Internet stream show up in the data?

Arbitron expects to begin reporting eligible HD Radio and Internet streams in the PPM Analysis Tool[™] in the third quarter of 2008. Just like in the Diary service, any 100% simulcast (including commercials) will be reflected in the AM/FM audience estimates. Non-100%-simulcast HD Radio and Internet signals will be reported in the data if radio stations encode those signals and meet the applicable Minimum Reporting Standard (0.495 Average Weekly Cume Rating).

40. Are the satellite radio companies encoding their signals?

Although satellite radio can be encoded, satellite radio signals are not currently being encoded.

41. Is Arbitron providing anything like diary comments?

Not at this time.

42. When will Scarborough incorporate PPM data?

About six to nine months after the launch of currency in a market.

43. Does day-by-day listening go up by the end of the week?

Yes, Thursdays and Fridays have the highest radio listening during the week.

44. What was a market’s change in ratings after adoption by the PPM?

This will vary from market to market. For this reason, Arbitron has committed to providing two months of “pre-currency” data for initial markets being rolled out as currency. These “pre-currency” data will allow buyers and sellers an opportunity to see how the PPM will impact radio ratings and to prepare for currency.

45. Will buyers average PPM months?

Arbitron does not determine how the ratings will be used at a buy/sell level. Yet, it appears many agencies and stations do plan to average a few months of data to get a number, while others have felt they may just use the most recent report. This will vary depending on the schedule and the media group.

46. Is Zip Code level data available?

Yes, if you subscribe to PPM RLD. It is available in the PPM Analysis Tool software.

47. Can I get access to P1 data?

Yes, if you subscribe to PPM RLD. It is available in the PPM Analysis Tool software.

48. Will you report listening location?

At this time, the PPM is only capable of identifying whether listening is occurring in-home or out-of-home. Arbitron is actively researching a means to go beyond out-of-home listening—specifically, to learn if listening is “in-car listening.”

49. Can the PPM capture and report time-shifted listening?

The PPM can detect time-shifted listening, and if time-shifted programming is played back within seven days it is included in the estimate for the original broadcast. While the PPM does have the capability to detect time-shifted listening, those data are not accessible separately through the software.

50. Will agencies use one month or three months of PPM data?

We are finding that different agencies will use different survey periods to meet the needs of their advertising clients.

51. Can we customize demos (such as Persons 12-15)?

The PPM Analysis Tool software that provides Respondent-Level Data will allow you to customize demos.

52. Is P1% ratio to the station the same percent for PPMs as it was in the diary?

The definition of a “P1” is the same with PPM methodology—the station a listener tunes in to the most.

Training Questions

53. How will our national reps get trained?

There are several training options available online, self-paced, WebEx and in person. If you feel that your national rep isn't updated on the latest with PPM, please have him or her contact his or her Arbitron account manager.

54. How can my staff get trained on PPM?

The easiest and quickest way to get trained is to sign up for courses on <http://www.ArbitronTraining.com>. Live courses are free and offered every week for less than one hour each session. There is also self-paced training at the same site. Lastly, we have a number of trainers who can visit your staff in person. Talk to your local Arbitron account manager to discuss this.

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