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Digital Audio + CTV: A Winning Combination for Issue Advertising

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A new Nielsen and [Katz Digital](#) study finds that pairing digital audio with CTV advertising nearly doubles brand recall and drives significant shifts in awareness, sentiment, and intent.

Issue and advocacy advertisers face a familiar challenge: how do you cut through the noise on a complex policy topic and actually move people to care, and to act? To answer that question, Nielsen partnered with Katz Media on a brand-lift study in the Washington, D.C. market, testing how digital audio (podcasts and streaming), CTV, and a combination of the two through retargeting perform as vehicles for issue advertising.

Inside the Study

Nielsen designed a research study among 600 adults (age 35+) in the Washington, D.C. DMA — all digital audio listeners and CTV viewers with an interest in news and politics content. Respondents were placed in a control group (with no advertiser messaging) or one of three exposed groups: Audio only, CTV only, or Audio + CTV combined.

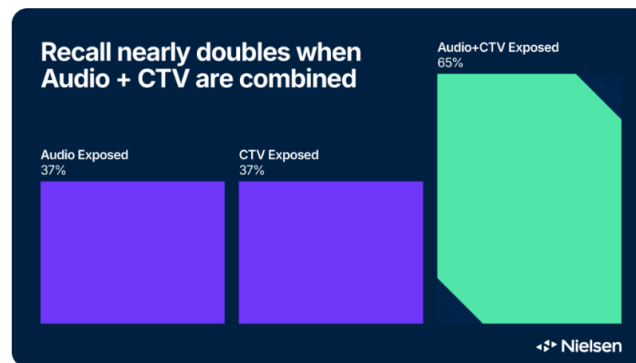
Respondents completed a survey measuring recall, awareness, sentiment, and intent; with all differences tested for statistical significance at a 90% confidence level.

The Results: Combining Channels Pays Off

The topline finding: audiences exposed to *both* the digital audio and CTV creative recalled the advertiser far more often, and shifted more decisively on brand measures, than those who saw or heard just one format.

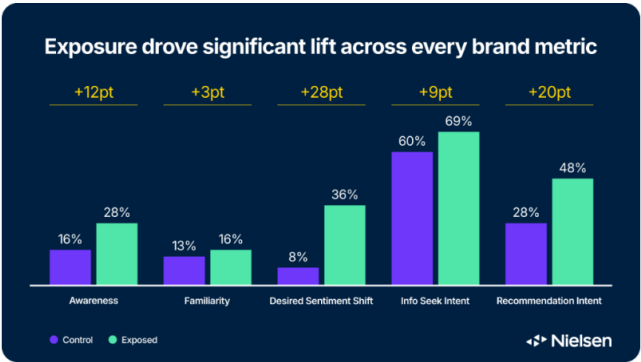
- **Recall nearly doubled with combined exposure.** Unaided brand recall was 37% for audio-only and 37% for CTV-only, but jumped to 65% when respondents experienced both — a nearly 30-point lift from either format alone.

Figure 1: Unaided brand recall nearly doubles when respondents are exposed to both the audio and CTV creative, compared to either format alone.



- **Awareness rose significantly across the board.** Overall awareness increased 12 points versus the control group, with the combined audio + CTV exposure driving the largest gain (32% vs. 16% in control).
- **Sentiment and intent moved meaningfully.** Exposed audiences were 28 points more likely to hold an unfavorable view of the practices being highlighted, 9 points more likely to seek out more information, and 20 points more likely to recommend that a friend or family member take action — all statistically significant shifts from a single exposure.
- **Agreement with core campaign messages jumped 20+ points.** Statements central to the campaign's argument — for example, that clearer rules were needed for how funds were used — saw 20-25 point increases in agreement among exposed audiences, with the strongest agreement among those who experienced audio and CTV together.

Figure 2: Audiences exposed to the campaign showed statistically significant lift across every brand metric tested, versus the control group.



Why It Matters

Issue advertisers are often working against low starting awareness — in this study, two-thirds of respondents weren't familiar with the underlying policy topic at all before encountering the campaign. Katz's strategy of retargeting audiences across digital audio and CTV moved awareness, sentiment, and intent by double digits.

The results point to the power of an audience-first, cross-channel media strategy. By using data to reach the right audiences and connecting digital audio and CTV through retargeting, advertisers can reinforce a message across different environments and create multiple opportunities for it to resonate. Rather than simply adding another channel, the strategy connects the strengths of each medium and drives greater awareness, recall, and action.

Methodology

This study used a controlled experimental design fielded via online panel, with results tested for statistical significance using a two-sided t-test at a 90% confidence level. Findings reflect a single-market (Washington, D.C.) study among adults 35+ interested in news and politics content, and may not generalize to all audiences or markets.

Nielsen partners with media companies like Katz Digital to measure the real-world impact of cross-platform advertising campaigns. To learn more about Nielsen's ad effectiveness and brand lift measurement capabilities, visit [Nielsen Insights](#).

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