

Crank up the signal, turn down the noise

By  Danette Breitenbach

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In the future, media will be traded more and more programmatically and to make that efficient you will need data around audiences and audience behaviour.



Geoff Cohen

“There has been a lot of talk around big data, but data in itself is useless unless commercially useful data points are defined, uncovered and then turned into something that leads to an action. You have to create the marketplace where people can find that information and then target accordingly.”



@gongzstudio via [123RF](#)

This is according to Geoff Cohen, who adds that most big data is largely of low value, with only a small part of it giving you the signal that is valuable “We need to crank up the signal and turn down the noise.”

Cohen has built many market-leading media, classifieds and e-commerce businesses across Africa and was a speaker and panel member at the recent IAB Summit held at The Forum, in Johannesburg.

Until late last year he was the CEO of 24.com, one of Africa's leading digital success stories, where he ran the continent's largest digital media (News24.com) and vertical classifieds operations. He is now investing in new ventures that combine mobile, data and advertising technology on emerging social media platforms.

Having left 24.com in October last year, Cohen has been looking at opportunities to start or build digital start-ups in South Africa. "Now is the right time for this focus," he says. A key focus is Delv Media, a partnership with Ole Media Group, which creates marketplaces for audience data. "Using our proprietary technology we take first party data and enrich it with third party data and so create avenues for brands to use this to acquire new clients. Broadly it is a data management platform that helps both the sell and the buy side in how they connect with audiences."

"In a global first we have secured a partnership agreement with Oracle to deploy their Blue Kai Data Management suite into the local market for advertisers, brands and media owners"

When asked about the local digital market and technological disruption he said that he didn't think there were many local players that truly fit the bill. "The reality is that apart from being a small market in internet terms we also do not have as many engineers coming out of universities that are as super technically literate and keen on changing the numbers as in other markets like China. This substantially reduces our chance as a country of launching a truly disruptive technology that is adopted at scale by the global market.

This said we do have very smart people who are able to look at international models and underlying technology and adopt them to local conditions and needs and in this way are able to service consumers. ShowMax is an example of a disruptor that realised the power of the international player, Netflix, and then disrupted its own brand, DSTv, before it was disrupted by an external force."

Ultimately, he says, we need to play to our strengths. So while the next Uber might not come out of the country, we can use available technology and engineering talent to reduce complexity, increase efficiency and build iterative opportunity in existing businesses.

In essence, how we can leverage the drastically reduced cost of technology and global knowledge base of solutions to build products and services that help our customers.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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