

The future of media is connection, the future of connection is virtual

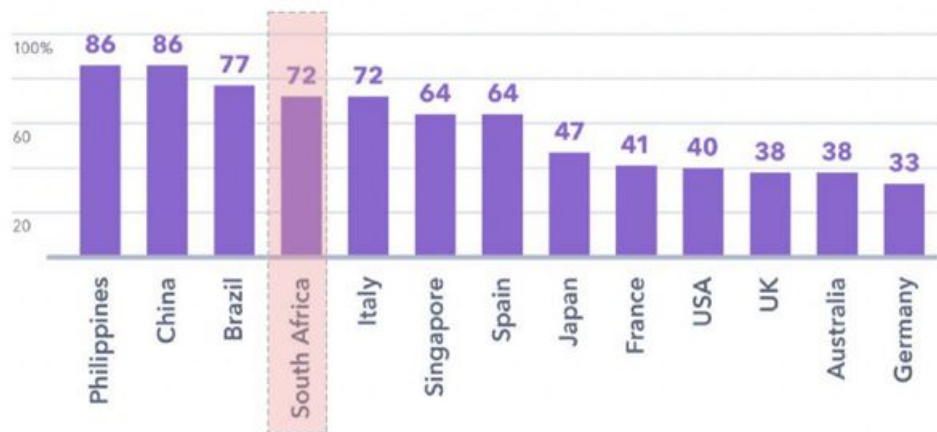
By [Clare Trafankowska](#), issued by [Dentsu](#)

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Disclaimer: The future of media is by no means, 'virtual'.

A recent GWI survey uncovered that over 70% of South Africans are spending more time on their mobile devices. If my average screen time of 6h38m is anything to go by (up 16% from the previous week), and with mobile devices being used to bridge the physical gap created by social distancing, 'more-time' translates into a massive shift in unfragmented attention.

% who say they are spending more time on their smartphones since the start of the coronavirus outbreak



Source: GlobalWebIndex custom recontact survey fielded March 16-20 among 1,004 (Australia), 1,001 (Brazil), 1,003 (China), 1,016 (France), 1,010 (Germany), 1,010 (Italy), 1,079 (Japan), 1,008 (Philippines), 1,008 (Singapore), 573 (South Africa), 1,005 (Spain), 1,040 (UK) and 1,088 (USA) internet users aged 16-64.

It should be no surprise then, that the Top Trending Apple Apps in South Africa (according to SimilarWeb – 22 April 2020) are Zoom, TikTok, Houseparty, Microsoft Teams and Netflix. The commonality of course being the ability to transcend location, bridge time and social divides, allowing us to connect, reconnect and potentially be introduced for the very first time.

As a brand, now is not the time to potentially 'reinvent' yourselves, but an opportunity to 'invent' a more relevant and empathetic persona, reintroducing yourselves to your consumers, with more authentic intent and based on a more valuable exchange.

In a recent podcast with Audrey Naidoo on ['Let's Talk Digital'](#), [Monique Claassen of Kantar](#), says that "you should be reevaluating your communication strategy and using elements of responsible marketing (employees, customers and brands)." Also stating that it's important to: "Be targeted and relevant. Be considered and continue to keep in mind, the role of the brand and the channel in the mix. Now is the opportunity to be more creative and more interesting."

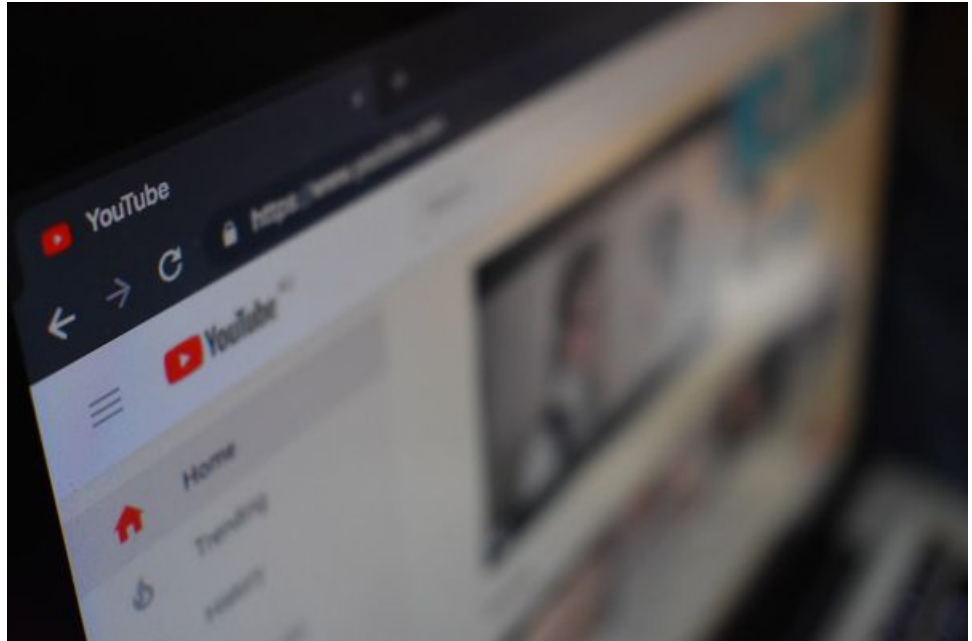
To remain relevant and show up as more interesting - more interesting than the latest number of positive cases and/or fatalities - will indeed be your greatest challenge. But one that consumers will be appreciative of because if we are honest with ourselves, we are likely to be fully absorbed and more obsessive around the reams of updates available, than we should be.

Essentially, now is not the time for inaction; nor is it the time for a knee-jerk reaction as seen across the globe in major



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brands pulling most, if not all, advertising budgets. With the shifts in media and content consumption habits, now is the time to do your absolute best in meeting your customers where they are today. Today, we find ourselves consuming more TV and online content, adopting new platforms where we may have had a lesser reason to have previously interacted with them (such as TikTok, Houseparty and the increased penetration of Netflix). Today we find ourselves 'inside – looking out', searching for meaningful interaction and connection.



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Take the time to listen and to learn; to adapt and create. If you had an annual strategy; adjust it, adapt and be available when consumers seek you. If you find yourselves without a strategic direction and purpose, start today, ready yourselves for market entry and you will be better prepared for the 'tomorrow'.

With this view towards the future, however far along in 2020 that may be, we can expect Covid-19 to have escalated the pace of e-commerce adoption. The necessitation of digital payments will leapfrog the barrier to e-commerce entry that has largely been driven by distrust and unfamiliarity. This opens a plethora of opportunity for swifter resurgence for those brands already e-commercially viable; but also creating new possibilities for previous non-contenders. Where entire stores were wholly available online or not at all, herein lies the opportunity to develop virtual showrooms to further support of social distancing; or, to move departments or individual product lines into what will be a more accessible, economical and socially viable e-market space.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Recently appointed Managing Director of iProspect South Africa, [\[https://za.linkedin.com/in/clare-trafankowska-4712a147 Clare Trafankowska\]](https://za.linkedin.com/in/clare-trafankowska-4712a147) is responsible for developing the next generation of iProspect's vision and elevating digital capabilities within the network. With over a decade of experience within the industry, Clare is passionate about people, media, and the development of the next generation of marketers. She is fascinated by the ever-evolving world of media and takes great pleasure in the constant challenges posed by the impact that tech regularly has on the world around us.

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