

TREND: Mergers & Acquisitions

Visual content will dominate the digital and mobile environment in 2015, as rich media and video are expected to increase exponentially. And this in a digital agency environment in South Africa that has been dominated by mergers and acquisitions in the last couple of years.

It is now the time to see how the digital agencies, bought or merged into global agency networks, perform - both in South Africa and further afield on the African continent, which of course is what the 'media and agency land grab' in South Africa is mostly about: gaining a valuable foothold for development and growth on the continent.

"2014 was characterised by the massive acquisition spree, of which we were part of. All acquisitions need to now bed down and become real propositions," says [Adrian Hewlett](#), CEO of Publicis Machine, acquired by the Publicis group last year.

For Hewlett, it is the end of the standalone digital agency and for him, the biggest trend for 2015 is which of the top 10 advertising agencies next year will reveal themselves to be truly integrated, despite all the acquisitions and new alliances.

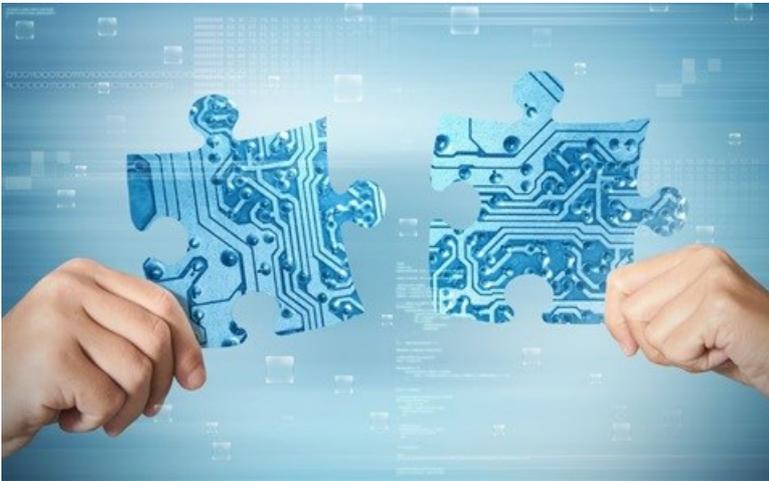


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For [Gil Sperling](#), chief technology officer, Popimedia, the digital marketing environment heralds "explosive disruption" in 2015. He cites the fact that video consumption is on the rise; the surge in mobile phone subscriptions in Sub-Saharan Africa; and multi-screening.

"We must accept the consumer's growing preference for video, the behaviour of multi-screening, and the explosive growth of mobile devices. By combining these with a content strategy that adds value, while effectively targeting the right audience at the right time via algorithmic tools, 2015's trends can be manipulated to your advantage."

[Andrew Kramer](#), VP sales, Mxit SA, says this will be the year, globally, that mobile ad spend overtakes print. "By 2018 it is expected that mobile will claim almost 40% of total paid media spending in the UK, with estimates that mobile will account for nearly 30% of all UK digital ad spending this year, with this figure rising to more than half by 2016. From our vantage point, it's a natural progression that South Africa will follow in the wake of these mobile advertising trends."

And of course, it all comes down to content again - customised content is one of [Gustav Goosen](#), CEO of The SpaceStation's trends for this year. "The need for credible branded content has leapt forward in South Africa. Good, engaging content that builds brands is a win win scenario for all. We have seen this first hand with our 'pop up' websites."

There was a definite trend, Goosen said, for consumers to be more discerning about the content they wished to consume and when and how they wanted to consume it.

Kramer's comprehensive trends focus on how mobile is phenomenally successful in education and the political landscape in SA, and the fact that rich media will remain one of the biggest mobile advertising trends in 2015.

"I anticipate that advertisers will move towards campaigns, content and creative that will assist them in promoting the consumption of relevant, cool and engaging rich content including videos, graphics and music downloads. Ads focussed around rich media achieve increased engagement, higher perceived value and is the driver behind generating top-of-mind awareness in driving sales."

Both Goosen and [Vincent Maher](#), chief innovation officer at Kagiso Media, highlighted programmatic media buying as a big trend for digital media.

Said Goosen: "The IAB says that approximately 20% of all digital advertising is sold by one machine talking to another. This trend is still fairly new in South Africa although I anticipate an interesting uptake in 2015. Its popularity lies in its efficiency because it greatly simplifies media procurement and is designed to be highly targeted."

Maher also highlights the fascinating growth of e-Sports, which in terms of spectators, prize money and growing coverage in mainstream media, is providing an audience for gaming, bigger than any other sport in the world. Marketers need to be aware of the opportunities this trend presents.

**Trends curated by [Louise Marsland](#), specialist editor of Biz Trends 2015.*

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