

Sustainability

Going Beyond The Liberal Middle - Strategies To Identify, Understand And Serve Communities That Go Beyond The Mass

Roundtable Summary

- To support ICOM's theme on sustainability, we would like to engage in a conversation around serving communities, beyond the liberal middle, in our marketing and research. How can we better understand polarising society so we can work towards creating more inclusive and equitable communities? As we all know, our society is complex, diverse, and multifaceted. We typically focus on the "average" or "typical" consumer, trying to understand and cater to the needs of the majority. But in doing so, we often overlook the diverse and unique needs of individuals and groups that fall outside of this norm.

In this session we will discuss and share perspectives on the following questions:

- How can digital data help us understand polarising populations?
- How can we create a fair and equitable representation of people with disabilities or those within our LGBTQI+ communities?
- How do we remove cultural bias in large language models to better understand how communities interact?

Introduction

There is evidence to suggest that society is becoming more polarised and can be observed across a variety of issues, including political ideology, economic inequality, social justice, and cultural values.

One factor contributing to this polarisation is the rise of social media and online platforms, which have made it easier for individuals to find and connect with others who share their views, while also making it easier to filter out and ignore opposing perspectives. This has led to the creation of "echo chambers" in which people only consume information that reinforces their existing beliefs, likely further entrenching their views.

There are individuals and groups who hold extreme views and beliefs, which can impact the well-being and safety of others. Understanding these extremes and their impact on communities is essential if we want to create a more just and equitable society. One of the first steps in understanding the extremes in society is to recognize their existence. While extreme beliefs and actions may be uncomfortable or even painful to confront, acknowledging them is necessary if we want to address the underlying issues. This involves researching and analysing the attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs of individuals who hold extreme views.

Underrepresented groups such as people with disabilities or LGBTQI+, have historically faced systemic barriers and discrimination, even exclusion from society, that has limited their access to opportunities and resources. It is vital to understand and recognise the diversity of these communities, to work towards creating a more inclusive society that values and celebrates diversity in all its forms

Roundtable Chair



Alex Owens

Global Head of CMI PDC's, Predictive Analytics & CMI Hive, Unilever AND Executive Sponsor of proUd, Unilever's LGBTQI+ Network
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Rachel Weekes

Global CMI Director, Data Driven Marketing, Unilever, UK

Alex is currently CMI Vice President, Global Head of PDC's, Predictive Analytics & CMI Hive at Unilever, he is also the Exec Sponsor of proUd – Unilever's LGBTQI+ network. He is based in London and has over 25 years' experience in numerous Insight/ Corporate Strategy and Analytics roles. Prior to joining Unilever, he was Head of Insight & Analytics at Sainsbury's, having joint accountability for the Nectar relationship. Before this worked across several other industries - Banking, Media and Alcoholic beverages.

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Further Context

We are looking to become more representative of our society as a whole, as we see fast and dynamic changes in media narratives, social media views, and privately held views within communities. For this discussion topic the focus will be on 2 core areas and how we can solve for getting better insights to represent all areas of society.

1. How do we get a better view of extreme and challenging views? These might be views that make us feel uncomfortable and we may disagree with them, but we need to acknowledge that they are there and they have an impact in the society we serve. How can we better understand this polarisation of attitudes and views? Do we think that the growth of polarisation will continue?
2. How do we best serve and reach communities that are underrepresented within our media and society today? We need to be more inclusive, there are an estimated 1.3 billion people in the world today for example that experience a significant disability. Additionally, how are we able to further our inclusion, diversity and equity? Looking at LGBTQ+ communities, how can we better serve them?

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