

# Adcheck: 50 and flourishing

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Advertising monitoring and insights business, Adcheck, celebrates its 50th birthday this year. Considered one of the country's leading advertising monitoring services, in 2020 the company detected more than 38 billion impressions on digital display and video advertising, across Facebook, YouTube and more than 500 IAB publishers.

The company was founded in 1971 as Adcheck to provide a vouching service for print media bookings and tear sheets for advertising agencies. After various owners the business was sold by entrepreneur Trevor Ahier to Primedia where it formed part of the marketing division. Adcheck was then sold back to Ahier who established a new division called Retail Monitor, which tracked broadsheet promotional activity. In 2008, the Retail Monitor division merged with BMi Foodpack, which later became known as BMi Research. Adcheck is currently co-owned by BMi Research and Adcheck director, Angela Adamson who has been with the business since 2009.

Over the last five decades, the company has built its monitoring experience and developed significant expertise around monitoring and analysing advertising of its clients' competitors. In the process, it has kept abreast of advancements in the industry including utilising state-of-the-art technology.



*Angela Adamson*

In 2014, Adcheck broke new ground when it introduced an innovative web-based delivery portal for marketers and brand owners who wanted the inside track on competitor advertising. The online portal boasted user-friendly search functionality that allowed clients to browse through all the latest advertising material being published or broadcast by their competitors. At the time, the new portal revolutionised delivery given that marketers had previously received the tracked advertising material via disc – or had to wait for it to be uploaded to an FTP site before they could access it.

The biggest game-changer was Adcheck's introduction of AdClarity in 2019, currently the only cross-channel digital advertising intelligence solution in South Africa. Adcheck's AdClarity provides insights from over 500 South African IAB publishers, Facebook and YouTube through multiple searches per day.

Specialising in providing insights on brands' strategy and programmatic media buying and selling for desktop display, mobile web and video, AdClarity is able to drill down – all the way to the creative level – and reveal the entire creative deployment chain. The benefit of the solution is that it allows advertisers, publishers and advertising agencies to make strategic decisions based on competitive insights by revealing competitors' number of impressions and share of voice in real-time; competitors' creative executions, media plans and the online publishers they are using to execute them; share of voice by publisher; and competitors' digital media mixes.

In 2020, additional features were added to AdClarity including adspend and monitoring of Facebook paid for media.

AdClarity and the opportunity to measure digital impression is the biggest change to the business in the last decade, says Adamson, adding that this has enabled the business to offer a significantly more competitive offering. And although print has seen a decline, Adcheck continues to provide ad checking and verification of print placements on behalf of advertising agencies.

What has not changed is the business's core business of vouching, supported by a number of long-standing employees including Suraya Omar, one of the original Adcheck staff members, who celebrates 45 years of service this year.

Conceding that 2020 was a challenging year for the business as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, Adamson reports that despite this, Adcheck was able to maintain its overall revenue and has seen a steady uptake on the digital side of the business in the last year. Growth, she concludes, is looking positive for the year ahead with a number of new digital accounts.

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