

Quote by Charu Malhotra, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Primus Partners

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Why the I&B Ministry's landing-page clampdown has divided India's TV ecosystem | Report

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"Globally, markets are already adopting hybrid measurement systems that blend panel-based insights with digital first-party data. India's ecosystem is poised for a similar transformation," predicts Meher Patel, founder of Hector.

The Information & Broadcasting Ministry's proposal to exclude landing-page viewership from television rating point (TRP) calculations has the TV broadcast ecosystem split right down the middle. While many advertisers and agency partners treat this as "overdue hygiene", many broadcasters and industry experts warn of technical difficulties that

could potentially disrupt the TV industry, which has seen at least a 10% slump in ad volumes in the first nine months of 2025 versus a year earlier.

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Broadcasters counter that the solution looks simpler on paper than in practice. A senior executive at a leading broadcaster who did not wish to be named likens the landing page to a newspaper jacket ad: A high-visibility tool that players with deep pockets can purchase. The problem, however, is more structural. “Even if the first landing page is neutralised, distributors can engineer “second” or “third” landing behaviours, which means auto-tuning a viewer to another channel after a brief interval,” he says. This blurs the line between marketing placements and measurable viewing. The executive calls the proposal a “misdirection” from deeper problems in linear TV such as multiple intermediaries, layered fees and an increasingly digital consumer who is spending most of her time on OTT platforms.

Here is the subtext: Landing pages remain prized inventory: the first channel that flashes when a set-top box is switched on gets instant recall. Industry estimates suggest broadcasters collectively spend about ₹ 250 crore a year to secure 15-25-second windows, while cable operators treat them as profit centers contributing about 15-20% of revenues. Removing ratings credit from this slot could squeeze a meaningful income stream for distributors, even if the marketing utility endures. If the proposal does work out, a scramble to repackage visibility is expected, through on-screen promos, improved logical channel numbers, or subtle retunes.

Technically, the path is murky. An industry expert with experience working with BARC points out that the move still remains a consultation, not policy, but questions how enforcement would work within the confines of today’s measurement infrastructure. The landing page fires only when a consumer turns on the set-top box, he says, and timing varies by TV, home and operator. “BARC already uses statistical controls to discount probable landing-page bursts but a complete exclusion is an I’ll-believe-it-when-I-see-it proposition without a technology demonstrator,” he adds. His take: the overall impact is small, “less than 1%”, which is more of an irritant than a major shake-up.

Yet even small calibrations can move money at the margins where deals are struck. “Landing-page placements have occasionally skewed TRP readings, impacting ad rates and negotiations,” says Yasin Hamidani, director, Media Care Brand Solutions. “This move will likely normalise pricing dynamics, ensuring genuine content viewership drives value. It will encourage advertisers to reallocate spends based on authentic metrics.”

Charu Malhotra, co-founder & managing director, Primus Partners, argues credibility matters more than reach: “It is disruptive in the short term, but in the long run it helps everyone in the ecosystem... especially broadcasters who win on genuine content strength rather than tactical placement.” Does cleaner TV data slow the drift to digital? Hamidani is measured: “Transparent TV metrics could restore confidence in broadcast advertising by aligning it closer to digital’s measurable ROI standards... Yet, cleaner TV data may slow that shift, creating a more balanced, data-driven ecosystem between traditional and digital media.” Malhotra sees equilibrium rather than reversal: TV retains mass-reach roles for FMCG, auto and durables; digital keeps the edge on targeting and agility. Some go so far as to suggest that the move could kill whatever momentum TV has now.

Advertisers increasingly seem to want cross-screen certainty. They advocate for unified measurement frameworks that bridge the gap between TV, digital, and OTT, say experts. Meanwhile, media strategist Devdatta Potnis argues that the draft prioritises quality over quantity and gives TV “a fighting chance to defend home turf,” while still acknowledging the execution challenge.

“Globally, markets are already adopting hybrid measurement systems that blend panel-based insights with digital first-party data. India’s ecosystem is poised for a similar transformation,” predicts Meher Patel, founder of Hector. So who wins? Malhotra expects channels with stickier, intentional audiences such as news, sports, and regional entertainment to get fairer value, while those more reliant on landing boosts losing some leverage. Aakarsh Gupta, global head of operations, Nas Daily, frames it as “intent over exposure”: the draft aims to align ratings with tune-ins rather than auto-loads, alongside a push to expand the measurement panel. But he cautions that success depends on rigorous enforcement across smart TVs, hybrid boxes and cable operations.