The theme of “Unification” took center stage for RhythmOne at CES, with a spotlight on the publishers, marketers, and partners who power and use our unified platform, helping to ensure the delivery of measurable business outcomes across our client campaigns.

CES organizers have christened 2019 the *Data Age*, and the ripple effect of what this means for the tech and media industry was felt throughout the show. The industry is now shifting its focus to how to use the mass volumes of data that the prior *Age of Connectivity* brought, via connected devices in our homes, cars, and on the go.

Data activation is core to RhythmOne’s success, powering our clients’ high performing campaigns in a brand safe environment.
Smart TVs Get Bigger and Brighter
The evolution of TVs once again took center stage. Major players like LG, Sony, and Samsung touted improved picture quality with advancements in OLED technology. 4K is quickly becoming the de facto standard for living room TVs, and 8K TVs are officially making their debut. And of course, the size of TVs keeps getting bigger. LG announced its rollable TV will be available for purchase in 2019. Samsung also went big with a 219-inch The Wall TV on display.

Mobile: Foldable Screens
Big changes are coming to smaller screens too! Major manufacturers are busy developing prototypes of foldable screen phones. But the one creating all the buzz at CES was the first-to-market Royale FlexPai, currently available in China. Huawei, LG, and Samsung are also rumored to be working on their own foldable phones. Stay tuned to see how mobile screens evolve this year.

Connected Home and Voice Integrations
Another big theme this year is voice activation and the integration of voice functionality into various smart home devices. Hisense’s next generation Smart TV platform features Amazon Alexa functionality built into the TV, giving viewers the ability to control it by voice, even without an Echo device. LG’s ThinQ Portfolio of products features mobile phones, smart speakers, and TVs, and will include various home appliances in the near future. ThinQ products are connected on an open platform and are compatible with virtual assistants like Alexa and Google Home, making everyday living a breeze, at home or away.
RhythmOne Hosts Expert Panel on the Future of Advanced TV

RhythmOne hosted advanced TV roundtables with executives from Comscore, LG Electronics, Pixalate, Samba TV, and Newsy. The sessions highlighted strategies and new solutions to help ensure a strong future for the advanced TV market for both media buyers and sellers.
The roundtables opened with a question on advanced TV’s readiness for prime time, which was quickly answered by LG Electronics’ director of Smart TV content innovation, Matthew Durgin: “The good news is that it’s already prime time. In terms of consumer viewing behavior, the shift toward streaming has already happened. Half of the clicks on our platform go to streaming.” He continued that while the support tools for content are robust, the industry must collectively work harder to support advertiser growth. “We need to keep working to provide tools and innovation that make advertisers successful. We’ve made progress in ACR and addressable audiences but those tools have to continue to improve.”

According to Ken Ripley, vice president of ad sales at Newsy, the question isn’t about making up for a deficit in TV viewing, it’s about capturing viewership across all platforms. “On a macro level, if you read the headlines, you would think less people are watching TV, when in reality, people are watching as much if not more. In a CTV and OTT environment, you’re getting the same linear, big screen experience — it just isn’t Nielsen rated. We need to think about recapturing points and replacing them with impressions. Ultimately, where we need to get is a cross platform measurement currency we can all agree on.”

New models and technologies — from private marketplaces to cross-screen measurement — were discussed, as well as current challenges and campaign successes, with emphasis on what tools will best position the category for optimal success. As the panelists discussed the technologies that will ultimately help deliver a unified cross-screen experience, programmatic inevitably took center stage in the discussion.
Amy King, vice president of product marketing at Pixalate shared, “The great promise of programmatic is reaching individuals at scale, which is hard to do when cobbling together a series of direct buys. By adding OTT to the programmatic ecosystem, your ability to accurately reach your target audience increases ... we haven’t seen the best of what’s to come in programmatic — but the volumes are increasing and delivery on the promise is getting stronger.”

Ryan King, managing director of research at Samba TV reiterated the unique value of CTV inventory. “With platforms like RhythmOne, you can monetize content for its lifespan, as long as it exists on the internet.” Jeff Boehme, senior vice president of television and cross-platform research at Comscore added, “We consistently hear from our customers the challenge and need to measure all consumer activity across devices, even as devices keep changing ... it’s a perfect storm because we, as marketers, need to capture the value from media companies to make sure we are all evaluated properly. The hard part is making sure you get the right value in the right way consistently.”

One of the biggest takeaways from the conversation was that linear and advanced TV are not an either/or consideration; successful marketing campaigns must thread holistically across both. “The Holy Grail is the TV,” said Ripley. “It’s the ad tech community’s job to come up with standards and definitions that make media easy to plan for and purchase. From a planning and buying perspective transparency is critical in terms of defining who you’re reaching and what you’re buying ... OTT and CTV systems are the best of both worlds. People watching the screen have the same experience as linear. Let’s make sure we can measure it effectively. Let’s make it easier for media planners to plan for. If we come up with a whole new set of measurement rules we’re getting in our own way. Let’s be simple and straightforward about what we’re selling and make it simple for agencies and brand managers to understand what they’re getting.”

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— Ken Ripley, Vice President of Ad Sales, Newsy