

Okay. I think it's time  
that we can just get started and hopefully,  
we'll have some more people join as we go along.  
But we are so excited about today's event.  
We are here with the Innovation Team from Meredith,  
who are responsible with some of  
the biggest brands in the media industry,  
from People to Entertainment Weekly  
to Martha Stewart Living.  
They're doing some really innovative things  
to really keep their brands relevant,  
competitive, and ahead of the pack.  
With that, I would love to introduce your speakers,  
Rachel Reed and Peachy-Jean.  
Rachel, do you want to first tell  
us a little bit about yourself?  
Also, just so everyone knows, as we get started,  
we'll be offering our captions  
and our live transcription.  
Feel free to activate those if you would like to watch  
this with the captions or  
view the transcript as it's being generated.  
No problem. Yeah, I can just speak through this quickly.  
I think we got to this a little bit before,  
but I think a lot of  
the media community that we're  
seeing and the media producers and the content creators,

the different businesses that we're talking to,  
there's new expectations in 2021.

I think there's a greater demand for content.

There is a greater demand for  
content to be personalized and new experiences.

There's definitely some more  
challenging things that are coming up in  
terms of security budgets and  
bringing on advertisers and monetizing.

Really, the answer to a lot of  
these challenges is really just to look to innovation.

There's a lot of really innovative things that brands,  
and Rachel and Peachy-Jean will talk us through this,  
are doing to really lean into  
those different channels to make their brands  
relevant and to really make  
sure that they're reaching out to  
all different channels that they now  
have available to them.

Great. Rachel, we'd love to learn a little bit about you,  
followed by Peachy-Jean, if you could just tell us  
a little bit about your guys' backgrounds.

Sure. Thank you guys so much for hosting us today.

We're excited to be here.

As Danielle mentioned, my name is Rachel Reed.

Peachy and I are the innovation team  
at Meredith Corporation.

We'll go a little bit further into detail about everything that we're working on and some of the mediums and platforms that we're really excited about.

But just generally speaking, we are both based here in New York City.

Meredith has offices all over the country.

Our team is really focused on thinking about what's new and next in the world of media.

Where are consumers shifting their time and attention?

What platforms and technologies are they engaging with?

What kinds of experiences might they be looking to our brands for?

How can we create really compelling, interactive experiences

for them that keep them coming back?

That spans a whole lot of different technologies.

We're going to focus on two today:

Interactive voice and audio.

We'll jump into that. But before we do,

I'll pass it off to Peachy.

Thanks again for having us.

As they mentioned, I'm Peachy-Jean.

I'm based in New York.

Rachel covered everything we do.

The one thing I do point out is we work across all of our brands.

One of the most fun and fascinating parts is understanding how our different audiences within those brands interact on the devices.

It's very different from the FOOD & WINE audience to the people side.

It just gets to expand all the information we are looking into to better our user experience for our readers.

Awesome. We are the Meredith Innovation Team.

I think Meredith is probably not a household name for most of you.

I always like to start with this slide that shows you the breadth of brands that we work across.

Everything from Travel and Leisure, and InStyle to Better Homes & Gardens, Parents, Shape, Real Simple.

Hopefully, most of these names are familiar to you.

Like Peachy said, we work really closely with our editorial teams, helping them think about creating content across new and emerging platforms and technologies.

We also work with our sales and marketing teams, helping our clients and our biggest advertising partners dip their toe into the water across some of these platforms as well.

A couple of things you might not know about us.

Yes, we do print a lot of magazines,  
and that has not slowed throughout this year,  
which is pretty impressive when you think  
about a company entirely working from home,  
still putting out over  
20 publications every single month.

But in addition to that,  
we are the biggest publisher in the US.

We reach about 182 million consumers across all of  
our platforms.

This is a fun fact.

We're actually the 6th largest  
subscription service in America.

We have 36 million subscribers  
across all of those print brands,  
behind, let's see if I can remember;

Amazon Prime, Netflix, Spotify,

Apple Music, and then the last,

I didn't see coming, Sony Play Station Plus.

But aside from those five subscription services,  
we have the most subscribers,  
which is a fun fact.

Then we're also the second largest brand licensor  
in the world behind Disney.

If you go to Walmart,

you'll see a lot of Better

Homes and Gardens branded products.

Or in the grocery store aisle,  
you might see Eating Well frozen foods,  
or All Recipes cookware,  
or Real Simple home goods.

A lot happening in that space as well.

Then finally, in non-COVID times when we are  
not doing everything from  
home and through computer screens,  
we have a ton of consumer-facing events from  
our FOOD & WINE festival in  
Aspen to all sorts of things happening.

People on the red carpet,  
Entertainment Weekly, coverage in Hollywood.

There's just a ton happening across  
our portfolio and lots going  
on, which this year has mostly been  
taking place in forums like this one.

But hopefully, we will be back in person soon.

Last slide on Meredith,  
but just to give you guys some context  
across all these brands,  
we look at the key categories where we have expertise.  
That comes to life mostly in the entertainment space.

Again, with People, Entertainment Weekly,  
in the food space, All Recipes is  
a huge brand, FOOD & WINE.

A lot of our other titles touch on food as well.

Parenting, home, travel and luxury,  
and then health and wellness.

Those are the core areas where, when Peachy and I are working across our portfolio and thinking about what kinds of content experiences to create, we know we have really trusted content in these spaces and consumers come to us for advice, for inspiration, for information, to make decisions, to plan trips, to figure out how to approach their parenting style, what to cook for dinner, how to maximize their closet space, whatever it might be.

All that being said, the Meredith Innovation Team, like I've mentioned, we're really focused on what's next, where audiences are going to be spending their time in the next month, in the next year, in the next five years.

It changes really rapidly.

But I think there's a couple of areas where we're placing some big bets, where we see a lot of traction, and we think it's only going to continue to grow.

Sometimes, it's hard to differentiate what's the shiny new next app or experience that's fleeting, and then where there's really traction.

But our job is to be out there experimenting,

and testing, and learning.

If we spend a lot of time on something and it doesn't pan out, we pivot quickly.

We try and fail fast.

If we do see traction with one experience and one brand, we try and replicate that across our portfolio.

Think about other categories where it might make sense as well.

This is what we like to call our Periodic Table of Innovation, if you will.

This is about as scientific as I get, but we like to say I'm the PowerPoint and Peachy is the Excel.

She gets all of the data and the numbers to back what we're doing and inform our strategy.

I like to package it up, make it pretty, so we work together really well.

But with this table, you can see across the board, all of the different things that we're working on.

From augmented reality to chat bots to virtual reality, voice assistance, things that we're doing in the actual product space, some advertising solutions.

There's just a lot going on here.

But for the purposes of today,



we wanted to focus in,  
as I mentioned, on the audio and voice space.

When we say audio, we're usually talking  
about traditional audio, podcasting,  
something where you hit "Play", you  
listen to the content,  
you move on to the next piece.

With voice, we use that to  
refer to interactive voice experiences.

Those usually come to light across platforms  
like Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant.

But with those, you can almost  
think of the same way you'd create  
an app for an iOS platform or the Android platform.

It's like building a voice app  
for Alexa or for Google Assistant.

You control that UX and  
the functionality and it's really conversational,  
so that allows us to get really personal.

Danielle mentioned that being a big trend for this year.

How do we actually personalize our content?

Recommend something specifically for a user,  
first leaving it up to them to  
sort through everything that we have to offer.

I'm going to kick it off with audio and then pass  
it over to Peachy to jump into voice.

But with audio specifically,

a couple of things I wanted to talk about today.

Ensuring your brand isn't on mute,

so how do you actually bring your brand's voice to life?

How do you develop a sonic identity?

We'll get more into that.

I have a little game for you guys.

Hope to see some participation in the chat later.

Then with voice, like I mentioned,

engaging your audience in conversation and

really developing a presence

on one of these emerging platforms.

Podcasts have been out for quite a long time.

But voice is a little more nascent and growing quickly.

This fact always blows my mind and this might be more

familiar in Danielle and company's world,

but 92 percent of

mobile video is watched with the sound off,

which really means that if you

don't have a presence in the audio space,

your brand may be on mute.

I think there's a couple of

things that make audio unique,

but we're really excited about

it because I think audio is something that

you can consume during

times when other kinds of content aren't feasible.

If I'm washing the dishes or I'm on a run,

I can be listening to a podcast,  
whereas I'm probably not going to be on a run  
reading a magazine or watching a video clip.

Podcasts also create  
this really intimate listening environment  
where you have your AirPods in.

It almost feels like you're listening to a friend,  
or a really trusted colleague,  
or a contact, telling you everything you need to know,  
and you develop this relationship with the host.

If there's a certain host who I  
listen to every single day,  
you start to feel like you know that person.

Because of that, from an advertiser perspective,  
if that's part of your brand's world,  
if that same host is delivering ad reads,  
talking about brands, or products,  
or services, it really registers in your mind,  
like an endorsement or a recommendation  
from a friend versus an ad  
that's just dropped into the middle of content that you  
want to skip through and get back to what you came for.

I think in large part because of that host read  
nature of podcast advertising,  
we see 78 percent of listeners saying that they  
don't mind the ad reads.

Especially, if you're a podcast fan,

you know the show,  
where it feels really organic,  
it's the host actually talking about  
their real-life experience with something,  
what Blue Apron meal they cooked,  
or what rooms they have their Sonos speakers,  
and it feels like something,  
"Hey, maybe I should try that out.

It sounds like they really love it."

I think this is interesting.

The BBC Global News program did a study and found that  
94 percent of consumers are  
listening to podcasts while they're doing other things,  
whether it's household chores,  
or driving, or working out.

People used to make the argument that if you're  
not just focused on the media that you're consuming,  
you're distracted, it's not registering with you.

They actually did this study and  
found the opposite is true.

When you're doing something that's a mindless,  
not very engaging activity, like washing the dishes,  
when you're listening to content,  
it actually drives higher levels of engagement,  
emotional intensity, and memory.

Listeners were more likely to be able to  
recall specifics from a podcast that

they listen to while they were doing something else versus just sitting there in the dark only listening to the podcast.

I thought that was pretty interesting, just from a behavioral perspective.

This brings me to Sonic Identity, which I think is a really interesting concept.

It might not be one that you're familiar with or you might not think you're familiar with it, but I'm going to illustrate to you that you indeed probably are.

Just like many brands have a logo, have a color wheel, or a color palette that they stick to, and you know to recognize visual clues, more and more brands now are seeing the value in actually developing an audio logo or a sonic identity, so what are the music cues, or the tone, or the audio clues that really let a listener know, "Hey, this is a certain brand."

If you guys open your chat on the side of your screen, I think you can send me messages directly to the presenter.

I'm going to play for you a couple of audio clips, and when you think you know what brand the soundbite ties to, just put it in the chat,

send it to me, and we'll see who gets it right.

Let's see. Let me know if you guys can hear this.

Do you guys hear that? Let's see.

Let me find out. Oops, playing  
the same one. Here's another for you.

Good. Oops, I clicked it too quickly.

Yes, a lot of people in the chat got that correct  
though, 20th Century Fox.

Elie, you got it. Boris, you got it.

Congratulations.

You guys know that one, you can sing along.

Yeah, there we go.

Danielle's got it.

State Farm, beautiful.

There's something out of order.

All right, guys.

It's playing the same thing over and over.

Give me one second.

Anyone recognize that one?

AT&T. That was pretty quick.

Could you hear it okay? I think

my sound's a little bit funky,

apologies. That one was HBO.

That was short and sweet, but they've really used that  
for quite a long time in different ways.

McDonald's. You got to hear it a couple of times there.

Let's see. We're getting that over and over again.

There finally, is NBC. Recognize that?

That's a company that I would have thought could have capitalized a little more in the past year.

Skype, when you log on.

Finally, anybody?

I feel like I'm about to start watching Cinderella, one of my favorites.

That's Walt Disney. There's a couple of examples.

It looks like a lot of you recognized some of those brands, or maybe once you saw the logo revealed, you're like, "I do think that sounds a little like Skype when I'm logging on."

Those are all examples of sonic identities that brands have developed.

More and more brands are getting into this game.

Mastercard just spent, I think, close to \$20 million developing a three second sound clip, where you'll see Mastercard has an instant pay, Apple Pay.

All really similar little sounds to let you know that your transaction's been completed if you use your phone to do it.

All these little sound cues, they just want your experiences

associated with their brands  
through these sonic identities.

I'll pause there. Any questions  
on anything I've covered so far?

If not, feel free to put it in the chat,  
or message me after,  
or save questions till the end.

I'm going to pass it over to Peachy  
to touch on voice.

Like we mentioned, the interactive side  
of things and the kinds of experiences that you can  
build to really have a conversation with  
consumers in a way that we haven't  
been able to do before.

Peachy, I'll pass it over to you.

Thanks. I love that game, Rach.

It's fun, right?

Part of me is like maybe I should start doing one with  
like singers, for voice.

Yeah.

The voice world, we've been in about three years.

Amazon released Alexa about around 2014,  
2015 and it was

a slow growth the first couple  
years, and then it finally hit a stride

because what happened was, Google Assistant  
came into the game and



they do these yearly

IQ tests for the smart assistance.

Google Assistant was just leading the way

in accuracy and meeting requests.

The only thing Amazon had on top of them was

the shopping platform clearly because

that's Amazon's bread and butter.

After that study came out, Amazon was like,

"We have to catch up," and so

they increased their workforce by 10,000,

and really put the money into it, and now, they

actually have taken 12 percent market share

from the Google side.

The two leaders and they're both trying to figure out how

best to optimize their platforms and the best use cases.

Usually, a lot of people here will

either, they're loyal to one or the other.

Personally, I am loyal to Amazon Alexa for now.

My sister has both in her home,

which is always really fun when I go to visit her

because I don't know which one I'm

supposed to speak to and I can

never turn on the lights when I need to do anything.

The general landscape is,

you have your voice assistance,

so that's your Siri, that's who you're talking to you.

That's the human behind it.

That's where your natural language processor  
and your AI and your machine  
learning comes into play  
to give you that accurate response.

I know Spotify just recently released  
adding in sentiment behind  
some of their voice features so you  
can kind of understand the feeling  
behind someone's intent.

Then you have your hardware and those are  
your smart speakers that are in the home,  
so those are your Echo devices,  
your home devices, your Facebook  
Portals that carry the capabilities with it.

Then they build out that whole ecosystem that  
is anchored into that AI.

That's where your smart lights come  
in, and your ring light, and everything's  
connected, and anything that you can say out loud  
to control, whether it's  
your lights or something turning on and off.

It's like 20, what,

20-30 years ago when the clap on was  
this big thing and then everyone,

I'm sure, always said,

"It'd be really cool if you could just talk to it,"

and 20 years, here we are.

Rach, you can go to the next one.

Alexa is on top of it.

They want that branding.

This is actually really interesting.

Part of though where Amazon is ahead of the curve compared to Google and

Google Assistant is because when it comes to the voice applications that

Rachel had mentioned beforehand,

the term on the Amazon platform

are "skills" and that's a lot more

widely known versus what we call them on

the Google platform is "actions" on Google.

Skills roll off the tongue a lot easier.

They've started to really dominate the market when talking about any voice app regardless of the platform.

They've really hit the stride as far as being ahead in

the marketing side and people being

able to recognize what

that application and third party experience is like.

I love this quote.

I think if anyone's sipping

the Kool-Aid on Alexa, it's this guy.

His title is literally Alexa Chief Evangelist.

But he's basically talking about how the idea is

that conversation, instead of

texting or typing or swiping,

actually speaking can be  
the interface to interact with  
all the technology in your life.

Like Peachy was saying, to turn on your lights or  
to set your air conditioning, or your oven.

If you can vocalize that,  
speech is really our first learned form  
of communication and  
so it's so much more natural than figuring out  
how to operate a device.

He's saying, this is not just a smart speaker revolution,  
this is not just about that dedicated piece of hardware,  
but really about voice being the new HTML  
and the way that you're interacting with  
everything in the world around you.

We have three ways that brands can bring voice to life.

Outline three examples of the ways that  
we're thinking about it, this is the first.

Peachy, I'll pass it back to you.

Everyone has one in general, a routine in life.

Before, I'd say, pandemic routine is  
usually, you wake up,  
turn off the alarm, reach  
for your phone, check the weather,  
put on a podcast, physically get up, turn on the lights.

What is now becoming  
an easier use is that you can, through your smart device,

say one phrase, and do all of that at once, and not have to wait and go back and forth between screens to figure it out.

Personally for me, it's awesome because if you want to try to limit your screen time in the mornings.

My personal, and this is where I always get a few chuckles, so feel free to chuckle in the chat.

My personal routines when I was getting ready for work is I would wake up and I'd say, "Alexa, tell me everything."

Because I was living by myself at the time, so she's my roommate. I would get the local news, the local weather, the People Flash Briefing, and then it would play the Greatest Hits Michael Bolton Spotify playlist.

I'm telling you, he is very, very zen when you're getting ready for the morning.

But the thing is, that's what I like, and so I did that.

Every day, it's set up, it's automatic, and it's really starting to build momentum as far as I know other people are using it really to just have a custom light setting whenever they get home from work,

or whether they're about to work out,  
they like to dim it, depending where they are.

It's becoming a lot more natural,  
especially as we're home so often.

But you think about a really cool use case  
for this and Amazon starting to invest it.

A new feature they just released is  
being able to share your routine with somebody.

For example, probably the only other person  
that would want my routine is my mom.

I could export a URL, send it to her,  
click it, and then she'd  
experience whatever the routine that I have.

When you think about it from a brand and  
advertising perspective,  
think about it from like say,  
the easiest would be like your celebrity side.

If Madam Vice President Kamala Harris had a routine of  
what she listens to right before she  
goes on stage to do a speech,  
that'd be pretty cool.

How often are we doing presentations?

Think about the use case of little things you like to  
do to prep for something  
else or just mental health break.

There's really a big area  
of opportunity here as far as how

we use it as Amazon keeps

investing into this pretty serious feature.

Routines are also available on Google Assistant.

Again, I just happen to use them more on Alexas.

Rach, do you have anything here, do you have a routine?

I just think so many brands are trying to own that.

Like Apple wants you to wake up and look at

your iPhone and get all of that news and

information update, and they're doing a lot to

create shortcuts and features

through Siri and through Apple News.

Spotify's offering custom playlists with a mix of

podcast and music to try and start your day.

Like Peachy said, Alexa and

Google are both fighting to be

that default platform where all of

that information and all those

important updates are coming from.

This is really where voice,

as we've seen it,

spending like the past three years on it,

is that it's not a silo.

You treat it as it's a one-off,

and it's custom to this,

and it doesn't reach anything else.

It's part of your brand ecosystem.

For example, here is if Neutrogena is promoting

a new product or

a seasonal product and they are giving out samples.

There's an ability to have

someone ask for a sample simply through the device.

So you think about that ease.

So say they're promoting it through email newsletters,

they have paid media behind it.

But here, what they can also do is it's just that ease.

You're not making someone go to a website, sign up here,

click on four links to get there.

You can easily just have a user talk to their device,

sync their account, and be able to receive that.

It doesn't matter what system you're on.

Think about if you're not in digital,

but if you're in TV, your linear TV,

if you have print out of home, all those,

as long as there is space to put

a phrase of what you tell

your device, you can get them there,

and that's really a huge win,

especially for us coming from a publishing company.

It's that gap that bridges all of

that digital brand awareness that

can now exist also via

our brand awareness and through our video platforms.

Another great thing that we can lean

into here with voice here is



the interactive and the personalized nature.

So with this Neutrogena example,  
we could actually build out a whole

quiz, like you walk through

the sunscreen aisle at

CVS and there's a million and one choices.

But if we can actually guide a user through and say,

"Do you usually wear sunscreen under

your makeup every single day or only at the beach?

Do you want something with more minerals or more

natural or something with more moisturizing components?"

We can ask you all these questions

and then actually guide

you to a really personalized product recommendation,

and then on top of that,

access your mailing address and send you

a sample of the product we're recommending.

It capitalizes on all of

these unique and great attributes

about the voice platforms,

where it's a real conversation and

what we're delivering to you is

based on you personally and not just a mass audience.

Then finally.

Part of the voice system is you

have to be mindful of what the user experience is.

For example, here on this slide is,

health can take you through  
directions and all the details behind it,  
but when you're sitting there or standing,  
depending what are you doing here,  
you need it to be a lot more  
digestible because it's a conversation,  
and it has to be somewhat quicker.

Here, it's counted out and then I can follow along.

There can't be too many  
filler sentences, words, descriptives,  
because you only have about within  
15 seconds to keep the user engaged  
because if you're not returning  
what they want quick enough,  
they're going to fall off and they won't come back.

So it's a really big  
thing to be mindful of when it comes to the VUX,  
the voice user experience.

Rach, do you have anything for this one?

Yeah, well, with this, I just think it's  
such a good example because would I rather,  
if I'm working out from home,  
which I strictly am these days,  
have my device walking me  
through, counting out 15-second increments.

I can say, "Pause," if I need a water break.

If I'm trying to do this Pilates 100 exercise

and I'm reading instructions on  
my phone, holding it above me,  
my phone's like dropping on my face  
as I'm trying to do my workout.

So it makes way more sense in a voice platform,  
and there's ways that we can take  
content that we've maybe  
created for digital or even for our print magazines,  
and bring it to this platform, and actually  
make it a lot more valuable for the user.

Like if, again, Alexa can  
talk you through the steps and coach you,  
that interactivity is just really  
awesome and brings the experience to life in  
a lot more engaging of a way than  
reading a flat article about a workout.

Those are three examples of the ways  
that we're approaching voice,  
becoming part of a user's daily habit and routine,  
really thinking about ways  
to bring and experience life through  
voice and really building content just for this platform.

I think that's what we have for you guys today,  
a quick look at how we're approaching audio and voice.

We're happy to answer questions.

Again, throw them in the chat  
or go off mute and shout them out,

and otherwise, we'll pass it back off to Danielle.

Right before we go,

I do want to say that with the audio and voice world,

because it almost brings us back

to basics, as far as using

your voice and being able to listen

if you're able to, of course,

it really, for the brands,

it expands your audience back

out because the learning curve is a lot

less than when you were

adopting mobile apps and trying to use your phone.

For example, I don't know anyone here,

but I could teach my parents how to use

their smart speaker a lot faster than when I had to walk,

it took me about two hours to walk my mom through

with getting Zoom on her Chromebook two weeks ago.

Because that learning curve is a lot less now,

your reach has now expanded that

much more into generations.

Absolutely. Yeah, Rachel and Peachy,

this was so helpful.

I think also, for us and Verbit as a company,

accessibility and also creating a lot

of different elements of choice,

it's something that we work a lot

with universities about.

So universities see that there are so many different ways that students, for example, want to learn.

So they're proactively offering them lots of different ways they can consume content, whether it's video or audio or with captions on or captions off.

A lot of these technologies that I think were designed for specific subsets of individuals are now being used by everyone who's maybe watching their video with captions because they're on a subway commuting, maybe not in corona times, but before that.

So I think it's something we're seeing.

We're definitely trying to invest a lot more in tools like audio description, for example, that's helping viewers that are blind or low vision, and more technologies to obviously help a lot of individuals that need them.

But I think Zoom fatigue is very much a real thing, and video fatigue is very much continuing, and so I think creating different ways for people and for brands and media companies that are creating video to really engage with people in different ways, I think is incredibly important, and I think you guys really

addressed those elements of  
choice and leaning on different technologies.  
So very in line with  
what we're seeing and what we're hearing from  
the different enterprises and  
brands that we're working with  
and different kinds of content and media producers.  
So I just want to thank you guys so much for your time.  
We will be making this available on-demand afterwards.  
So I definitely welcome you to  
share this with any colleagues  
that you think might benefit,  
to hear from the great work that Meredith is doing.  
I hope everyone has an amazing rest of the day.  
If you have any questions, concerns,  
or you want to connect more with Verbit,  
we definitely encourage you to reach out to us.  
You can email us at [marketing@verbit.ai](mailto:marketing@verbit.ai),  
and we'd be happy to take  
any questions and continue the conversation with you.  
But Peachy and Rachel,  
thank you so much for joining us today.  
We really do appreciate it,  
and we hope everyone has a great rest of  
your day and continues to stay safe.  
Yeah. Thanks.

Thanks, Danielle.

Thank you guys, bye.