Switching during commercial breaks
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In 1995, STER and IP took the initiative in setting up the SPOT study of switching behaviour. Both television sales houses deserve praise for commissioning a public study of a then very controversial aspect of television advertising. The role played by Jan Ligthart, the director of SPOT, in this research cannot be underestimated. Thanks to his enthusiasm, persistence and critical involvement, this study of switching behaviour developed into a large scale, thorough and, ultimately, successful project. In this, he was assisted by a supervisory committee that included Jos van Mieghem and Peter Fransen, as well as Paul van Niekerk of The Media Partnership, representing advertising and media agencies, and Harry Steenkamp of the Postbank, representing advertisers. Arie den Boon and Jan van Cuilenburg served as independent members. I am sincerely grateful to all of them for their constructive contributions to this study.

The SPOT research was carried out by Intomart. Not many projects at a market research bureau lead to a doctoral dissertation. However this study of switching behaviour is not exceptional; much of the research carried out by Intomart meets the highest standards of academic research. That, in this instance, Intomart research has led to a doctoral dissertation is due in no small measure to Intomart’s director of media research, Leendert van Meerem. Not only did he allow me the freedom to design, co-ordinate and carry out the research in my own manner, he also provided the opportunity and the indispensable support which enabled me, alongside my normal duties at Intomart, to transform the results of the research on switching into this dissertation.

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