

The Medium is the Message: A Survey of Likeability Among Internet Advertisements

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Abstract

Differences in attitudes toward four types of Internet advertising were measured to aid in further understanding of the effectiveness of Internet advertising, as well as the perceived effectiveness of specific types of Internet advertising. Social judgment theory provides a theoretical framework to aid in understanding how different types of Internet advertisements are perceived. Q-Methodology sorts of 48 statements concerning Internet advertising were used to probe viewpoints toward four types of Internet advertising: interstitial (pop-up), banner, sponsored-search, and video advertisements. Results indicate that interstitial advertisements and banner advertisements were perceived as intrusive and annoying, while video advertisements were tolerated to facilitate online television viewing.

Keywords: banner ads, interactive ads, interstitial ads, sponsored-search ads, Internet advertising

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Over 251 million, or 74%, of people in North America classify themselves as Internet users; this represents 133% growth since 2000 (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2009). Although this figure represents a significant amount of growth in the past nine years, it also represents the lowest amount of growth among the seven continents. The Internet influences the way individuals absorb information and communicate with others, testifying, along with its momentous growth, of its importance as a topic of study.

The world average for Internet penetration hovers around 26% (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2009). With a world population of approximately 6.5 billion people, it is estimated that 1.7 billion individuals are connected to the Internet. Bezjian-Avery, Calder, & Iacobucci (1998) describe how new interactive media (particularly the Internet) are “no fad, and while they are only in the infancy of development, they are already changing the marketplace (p. 23)”. The research by Bezjian-Avery et al. on interactive media was performed more than a decade ago, however, since that time the Internet has proven to be a growing medium both in terms of the growth of advertising revenue and its ability to attract a wide and varied audience.

The Internet offers unequalled access to information at a speed and rate unmatched by any other media. Previous research by Harrison, Waite, & Hunter (2006) found the Internet acted as a tool of empowerment for consumers. Findings from focus groups performed by the aforementioned researchers indicated that consumers generally feel empowered by the Internet and that as time has progressed, the Internet has provided more information by which consumers feel empowered. It is of note that participants in the focus groups defined empowerment as access to information. As an example of the increasingly empowering nature of the Internet, the study compared available content across time. In 1997 there was one pension Web site in

existence with four informational cues contained on that site. In 2004, there were 18 retirement pension Web sites with 127 information cues—an average of 7.1 cues per site (Harrison et al., 2009).

The Internet is of particular note to advertisers. The Internet Advertising Bureau (2009) reported that for the third quarter of 2009, U.S. Internet advertising revenues were at \$5.5 billion, an increase of 1.7% from the second quarter of 2008. Other media are limited in the types of advertising they can employ (for example, newspapers and magazines are not capable of producing video advertisements) whereas the Internet has the capability to produce print, video, and interactive advertisements in a variety of formats. The unique feature of the capability of the Internet to advertise in these various manners lends justification to the current study, which will survey attitudes toward four types of Internet advertising: pop-up or interstitial advertisements, banner advertisements, sponsored-search advertising, and the latest development in Internet advertising: video and interactive advertising.

In a study of U.S. consumers, Bauer & Greyser (1968) found that poor perception of advertising as an annoyance or irritation led to a general reduction in advertising effectiveness. The current study seeks a better understanding on how Internet advertising is perceived and what its perceived effectiveness is among Internet users. The main research question guiding the study at hand seeks to assess the viewpoints individuals have about each of the four types of Internet advertising.

The very nature of the Internet as an interactive medium is what distinguishes it from other media. While most media are either one-to-one or one-to-many, the Internet can function as a many-to-many, a one-to-one, or a one-to-many model. Communication via the Internet allows one to communicate with a television reporter in real time, or respond to the local newspaper

reporter's narrative through comments posted after their article. Or, the Internet allows one to become a journalist themselves through blogs and the use of social media.

Theoretical Framework

Sherif, Sherif, & Hovland's (1961) social judgment theory is a persuasion theory which will provide the theoretical framework for this study. Social judgment theory provides a scale by which attitudes toward certain objects may be measured against currently held beliefs. Social judgment states that one either accepts or rejects an object (in the current study Internet advertising would serve as that object) based upon involvement in the object and whether or not it falls within one's latitude of acceptance. The latitude of acceptance is a zone on a continuum where individuals place objects that they can agree with.

Whether or not one accepts an object will depend upon whether or not it falls within the individual's latitude of acceptance. According to social judgment, positions toward objects are ranked along a continuum of latitudes. Latitudes are ranges of attitudes from an individual's anchor point. Granberg and Sarup (1992) described three latitudes, which comprise the continuum of belief. The latitude of acceptance is a range of positions of which the individual agrees. The latitude of rejection describes issues with which the individual disagrees. Lastly, the latitude of non-commitment expresses points of which the individual is apathetic to, or does not ascribe a specific stance toward or against (Granberg & Sarup, 1992).

Gunther (1992) used social judgment theory to describe attitudes about political party coverage in the media. The study in question found those who classified themselves as Republicans judged press coverage of the Republican Party as not favorable enough. Democrats, however, judged press coverage of the Republican Party as too favorable. Both groups termed the opposing party's political coverage as biased, but in opposite directions (Gunther, 1992).

This study exemplifies how social judgment theory can be applied to explain how liking and disliking of certain media is dependent upon specific anchor points.

Amiel and Sargent (2004) looked at how previous experiences and attitudes shape the way individuals use the Internet. Their study looked at the association between personality type and Internet use, and showed how one's character and attitudes contribute to how they perceive and use the Internet. The study indicated significant differences between personality type and perceptions and use of the Internet. This study exemplifies how motivational and anchoring assumptions described in social judgment theory can influence the perception and favorability toward Internet advertising (Amiel & Sargent, 2004).

Measurability of the Internet

As an advertising medium, the Internet is unparalleled by any other medium in its ability to measure response and number of impressions, or number of times an ad has had the opportunity for exposure. However, scholars such as Bezjian-Avery et al. (1998) have criticized current levels of measurement as being too vague and not detailed enough to warrant the expenditure of funds toward advertising on the Internet. The ease of collecting data on the Internet has resulted in an expanse of measures, each with its own method and own assortment of strengths and weaknesses (Bhat, Bevans, & Sengupta, 2002). Click-through rates are one of the preeminent ways of measurement on the Internet and are specifically used to determine the cost of Internet advertising. However, Dreze & Hussherr (2003) in their study of banner advertisements describe how click-through rates have plummeted, leaving some to conclude that banner ads are therefore ineffective. Studies on perceptions of Internet advertising go beyond measuring specific action and reveal attitude and perceptions of advertising.

Types of Internet Advertising

Interstitial (Pop-Up) Advertising

Interstitial advertising (informally known as pop-up ads) has been defined as a new window which “pops up” when one logs on to a specific Web site or clicks on certain links. Newer forms of interstitial ads act as a barrier between a viewer and the page they wish to view, with the advertisement lingering for ten or twenty seconds before allowing access to the desired page. Edwards, Li, & Lee (2002) found that when pop-up ads are “perceived as intrusive, feelings of irritation are elicited and advertisements are avoided (p. 92)”.

Interstitial ads have sparked enough annoyance that many Web browsers automatically block pop-ups from opening at the point of a click or entrance into a Web page. Although, interstitial advertisements are generally viewed as cumbersome by consumers, Edwards et al. (2002) found that interstitial advertisements perceived as humorous or informative and which did not intrude on a consumer who is cognitively processing information, were more effective than ads which were task-oriented or interrupted central processing of information. The aforementioned researchers also found that there was not a significant difference between a ten-second interstitial advertisement and a twenty-second interstitial advertisement.

The findings of Edwards et al. (2002) indicate interstitial advertisements are still a viable form of advertising on the Internet, lending justification for their inclusion as a variable in the current study. As a variable, interstitial advertisements will be defined as advertisements that block all or part of a page from view upon first access of that page. This variable includes advertisements which either open in a new window upon accessing a Web page or Web site, or a page that opens between or on top of Web pages or sites. The defined variable also includes interstitial advertisements which appear before one's desired page and does not give the option to click away from the advertisement.

Banner Advertisements

Banner advertisements comprise the bulk of online advertising and are used by almost all advertising agencies involved in Internet advertising (Chandon, Chtourou, & Fortin, 2003). Previous research defines banner advertisements as advertisements shown on Web sites that do not take up the entire space of the Web page. Banner advertisements are typically viewed at the top of a Web page (hence the term “banner”) or at the side; these types of advertisements are known as “skyscrapers.” Banner advertisements can include graphics, text, and/or animation. This method of advertising on the Internet is popular because their effectiveness can be quantitatively measured using a method known as click-through rates. Click-through rates are defined as the “percentage of ads exposed that users click (clicks divided by ad impressions)” (Bhat et al., 2004, p. 98). Ad impressions are the number of times a consumer has been exposed to an advertisement. The precise ability to measure with click-through rates makes it an attractive option for advertisers looking to quantify the results of their advertising efforts.

Cho (2003) reported the effectiveness of banner advertisements depended upon consumers' involvement with the product advertised—the higher the level of product involvement a consumer had, the higher the probability that the consumer would click on the banner advertisement. However, there are other peripheral cues which spark interest for those with low-product involvement. Cho (2003) found that for those with low-product involvement cues such as the size of the ad and whether it used animation played significant roles in determining whether a consumer would click on a banner advertisement. Chandon et al. (2003) found similar results—the size of the advertisement and animation resulted in a more positive, and therefore, more effective response from consumers. However, for those with high-product involvement,

size of ad and animation did not play a significant role in determining whether an ad would be clicked through or not (Cho, 2003).

Previous research on the effectiveness of banner advertisements lends justification of their inclusion as a variable in the current study. Part of the definition for banner advertisements will come from the definition used by Chandon, et al. In their 2003 study, they defined banner advertisements as “a rectangular shaped image located at the top of a Web page (p. 218)”. “Skyscrapers” will also be included in defining banner advertisements, which are rectangular-shaped images located at the side of a Web page.

Sponsored-Search Advertisements

Sponsored-search advertising represented \$5 billion or 47% of the revenue Internet advertising generated in the first half of 2009, a 3% increase over the same time period in 2008. Fain and Pederson (2006) describe how sponsored “[search] has become an essential part of the online experience (p.12)”. Close to 99% of consumers utilize search engines, such as Google, Yahoo!, or Bing, as a free service courtesy of sponsored search. Sponsored search is defined by Fain and Pederson (2006) as the “delivery of relevance-targeted text advertisements (p. 12)”.

Google, the largest Internet advertising company, currently holds approximately 62% of the sponsored-search market. In June, 2009 Microsoft released Bing to replace its former search engine, Live. Jarvis (2009) describes how sponsored-search allows advertisers to know where to spend their ad dollar, as well as the return on investment obtained. Sponsored-search is significant not only for consumers—98.8% of consumers are utilizing search engines—but also for advertisers, who can both target consumers who are looking for their product and obtain more precise measurements as to the number of ad impressions received. Previous research and the proven value sponsored-search advertisements have for businesses, the advertising industry, and

the Internet as a medium lends justification for including sponsored-search as a variable in this study.

Video Advertisements

As the newest type of Internet advertising, video/interactive advertising poses a new development to the other types of Internet advertising and to advertising in general. Video advertisements are emerging as one of the most popular types of interactive Internet advertisements, and are becoming increasingly popular as consumers turn to the Internet as a source for information. Indeed, as current economic conditions are driving down advertising revenues, video advertisements are seeing significant gains. Part of the reason is due to the traffic video ads generate—they achieve a higher cost-per-thousand, defined as the amount paid for a thousand unique clicks on an advertisement. Analysts from the research firm eMarketer estimate a 35% to 45% growth in online video advertisement revenue, topping out at about \$5.2 billion in 2014 (Burns, 2008). Although in comparison to sponsored-search advertisements, video advertisements represent a smaller portion of the money spent on online advertisements, the cost of producing video is still high, disqualifying it as an advertising option for many smaller firms and organizations.

In the past decade, the internet has been the medium toward which other media have converged. For example, most newspapers have Web sites where one can read the same or more articles than available in the paper copy of the newspaper delivered to their front door, and many local television stations also have Web sites where viewers can view stories previously aired, or watch breaking news. The Internet provides a “network” for media to converge as well as an additional outlet to get a message out.

Bezjian-Avery et al. (1998) looked at how traditional advertising compares to new media interactive advertising (the Internet) in terms of message and advertisement processing by consumers. Their study focused on the effects of interactivity. A major shift in the way interactive advertising is processed by a consumer from traditional advertising is that interactive advertising allows information to be processed actively, rather than passively. Bezjian-Avery et al. (1998) found that in interactive systems, users spent less time viewing advertisements—consumers quickly went through interactive advertisements because the nature of the medium of the Internet allowed them to do so. Bezjian-Avery et al. (1998) discovered users were spending less time viewing ads because of the function of control afforded the users. However, Edwards et al. (2002) found perceptions of being forced to view an interactive advertisement online led to a more positive perception of the ad and, therefore, greater effectiveness.

The discrepancies of research lend further justification for the study at hand to understand more fully how video/interactive advertising is perceived. In addition, there are few academic studies which focus on this type of Internet advertising. For the purposes of this study, video/interactive advertising will be defined as video lasting for ten seconds or longer. Other interactive Web sites, such as popular social media sites like Facebook or Twitter will not be taken into account in the current study. Based on its emergence as a new type of Internet advertising and based upon the fact that there is little previous research done on interactive Internet advertising, it is viable to include it as a variable in the current study.

Based upon previous research discussed as well as principles from social judgment theory, the following research questions will guide the current study.

RQ₁: How do perceptions differ toward the four different types of Internet advertising tested in the current study?

RQ₂: What is the overall perceived effectiveness of Internet advertising?

RQ₃: What is the overall viewpoint toward Internet advertising among participants?

RQ₄: Which type of Internet advertising is viewed most favorably and could be interpreted as being most effective?

RQ₅: Which type of Internet advertising is viewed least favorably and could be interpreted as least effective?

Methodology & Sample

Previous research has studied perceived effectiveness and favorability of the various types of Internet advertising as separate entities; however, no research has looked at the four major types of Internet advertising and compared them to each other, in terms of user perception and attitude. The current study uses Q-methodology, personal interviews, and a short questionnaire to access the perceptions of 18–34 year olds toward Internet advertising. This methodology was first introduced by William Stephenson in 1935 and later explained in his book, *The Study of Behaviour* (1953). The focal point of this methodology is a research tool called the Q Sort, which provides a method by which participants can rank items (either statements, or stimuli, such as symbols, pictures, or ads) which represent a particular domain of subjectivity. This domain of subjectivity, which Stephenson called a *concourse*, provides the raw material from which Q Sort items are chosen to represent the various views in the *concourse*. Based on a condition of instruction provided by the investigators, participants ranked a series of statements on a continuum, or normal distribution, ranging from “the best” to “the worst.” Items ranked in the middle of the array by the participants are items for which they have no strong feelings. Once the rankings are collected, the data is subjected to a Q-method computer software

program which factor analyzes the data and provides factors or patterns of perceptions to interpret. With factors determined, researchers return to the participants to seek information about why they chose to rank certain statements higher or lower than others. This additional information provides breadth and depth to the factor interpretations.

Because the purpose of this research was to examine the perceptions of Internet advertising, it was first necessary to gather a representative sample of statements that addressed both positive and negative attitudes toward the four types of Internet advertising. A series of 48 statements were created from a review of the literature on Internet advertising (Goldsmith & Lafferty, 2002; He & Jacobson, 1996; Jugenheimer, 1996; MacHovec, 1994) (see Appendix 1 for a review of statements). Each variable received an equal number of statements (12), half were negative in nature and half were positive. Stephenson (1988) indicates the work of categorizing advertisements based on a set of criteria constitutes a psychological event for each participant—an event, which can be measured systematically.

Participants were given the “condition of instruction” and asked to sort the 48 statements by ranking them on a nine-point scale ranging from “Most Like I Believe” (+4) to “Least Like I Believe” (-4). After the sorts were completed, the investigators conducted personal interviews with each of the subjects to allow them to elaborate more on their selections, to probe further into their decision making process, and to express their thoughts and feelings about Internet advertising. The interviews were structured with the use of a questionnaire that asked the following questions: (1) Why did you select (those) two statements as being most like you believe?, (2) Why did you select (those) two statements as being the least like you believe?, (3) Overall, how do you feel about Internet advertising or advertising on the Internet?, (4) Would any type of Internet advertising keep you from visiting a web site?, (5) Would any type of

Internet advertising keep you from making a purchase from a Web site? The researchers tabulated the frequencies of the most common answers to the interview questions, and those answers considered pertinent to each factor discussion were included in that portion of the resulting discussion. The average time for each person to complete each Q sort and interview was approximately 45 minutes.

Investigators tabulated the results of the Q sorts using the PQMethod computer software program. An analysis was conducted to determine the number of factors which best represented the patterns of subjectivity. To determine the number of factors that represented each group, researchers began by looking for at least two significant participant factor loadings on a factor at the .01 significance level. Factor loadings were considered significant if they exceeded a correlation larger than $\pm .408$. This significant correlation was calculated from a formula for the standard error of a zero-order correlation ($2.58/\text{Square Root of } 40$), which is explained in Brown (1980, p. 284). Although the usual criterion for determining factors is a minimum eigenvalue, Robbins (2005) says that using eigenvalues “may force the analyst to overlook theoretically and substantively important factors” (p. 213).

Once the factors were determined, investigators compared the significant positive and negative z-scores for the ads that accompanied each factor. Ads with a z-score greater than ± 1.0 were considered to be significant ‘most offensive’ and ‘least offensive’ ads for each factor (a complete table of advertising z-scores for each factor is available from the investigators).

To determine which ads were significantly different between advertisements on each factor, the investigators used factor rank scores. A factor rank score is the average of the rank scores that subjects on a particular factor provide for a particular advertisement. Factor rank scores ranged from ± 1 to a ± 4 for each advertisement on each factor. Factor rank scores that

differed by ± 3 for each advertisement on each factor were considered to be significantly different.

Labels and interpretations determined by the investigators for the following factors were predicated on the z-scores calculated, the factor rank scores provided by the participants in the study, and supplemented by the responses recorded from the interviews that were conducted with the participants.

Findings

All of the participants fell within the age range of 18-34, with 23 females and 24 males. Previous market research has indicated most Internet advertising is directed to the 18-34 age group. In a survey of over 13,000 Internet users, Burst Media found 76% of Web users between the ages of 18 and 24 are most likely to believe online content targets their age group, while only 19% of Web users ages 55 or older would believe likewise (Burns, 2008).

Results of the Q sort analysis generated three factors or groups of opinion regarding Internet advertising. Each of these factors represents a specific group ideology that reflects similar opinions and attitudes toward Internet advertising. Although each factor represents a given ideology there can be differing opinion within a group, and commonalities between the three groups.

Factor One ('Skeptics')

The first factor was defined by 29 statements (both positive and negative) that were common amongst individuals in the sample. The researchers named this factor "The Skeptics" because of their distrust of Internet advertising. The Skeptics view Internet advertising as something to be avoided, ignored, and to be on constant guard against. As one respondent stated:

“Banner ads and pop-ups are scams. I wasn’t the one millionth visitor; I won’t win an x-box if I click it.” To most of the Skeptics, Internet advertising gets in the way of what they are doing on the Internet. This is shown by this group’s high agreement with the statement, “Banner ads get in my way while I’m using in the Internet”—which was significantly different than the other two factors. To the Skeptics it is about control, they let advertising in when they want to let advertising in—“Look, on television I can’t control how much advertising I see, but on the Internet I’m in control.”

It is quite difficult to circumnavigate the Skeptic’s suspicious nature, a notion reflected in by a number of respondents’ comments such as “Most people are skeptical and banner ads are not trustworthy.” Trying to lure a Skeptic in with a joke or the promise of a free gift will also likely backfire. One respondent said, “Using humor and giveaways makes me distrust Internet advertising even more.” This does not mean however that Skeptics are a lost cause for the Internet advertiser. Skeptics will respond positively under certain circumstances. Advertisers need to make the Skeptics feel like they’re in control and that they are the ones making the decisions. They will use Internet advertising when they believe it is to their advantage, when it is their choice, and only in situations when they believe it will have specific benefit to them. For example, a Skeptic will look at a banner ad or a pop-up ad that is on a site they are interested in or is for a product they can relate to in some way. Ultimately, The Skeptic will look at an Internet advertisement if they believe the ad will save them time and money.

Table 1 Normalized factor scores for factor one

		z-score
30	The best pop-up ads are for products and/or services related to the Web page I am viewing	1.77
12	Banner ads get in my way while I’m using the Internet	1.54*

36	I change my browser settings to disallow pop-ups	1.34
46	I like viewing TV online as the advertising is shorter and not as frequent as on TV	1.33*
4	Banner ads with animation or video do better at getting attention	1.21*
6	I believe banner ads are an effective way to share a message	1.2*
28	By clicking on pop-up ads I find useful information	1.19
20	I don't like the idea that the first few sources appearing in Internet search are there because those spots are paid for	1.19
18	Search engine ads help me save time and money	1.14
44	I usually ignore online video ads	1.06
32	Pop-ups are distracting when on the Internet	1.05
10	I prefer ads on TV and in print over banner ads	1.04
5	I trust info I read in banner ads to be the truth	-1.06
25	Pop-up ads always get my attention	-1.29
7	I never click on banner ads	-1.38*
11	I have never seen a banner ad that peaked my interest	-1.40
1	I find banner ads to be persuasive	-1.42*
27	I always read pop-up ads	-1.5
31	I believe it is unethical for Web pages to have pop-up ads	-1.54
47	I have never seen a video ad that peaked my interest	-1.54*
29	I like pop-up ads that use graphics, animation or video to get my attention	-1.56
9	I consider a Web site with banner ads to be less reputable than a Web site without banner ads	-1.59*

Asterisk (*) indicates significantly different from other two factors.

Factor Two ("The Planners")

Labeled "The Planners" by the researchers, the factor two group were defined by 15 statements that describe people who tend to use and spend time on the Internet with a specific purpose or goal. Planners generally do not mind seeing Internet advertising and they seem to have more trust in Internet advertising, but, like The Skeptics, they want the advertising to be about the product or information they are researching. The significance of this is seen in the Planners strong agreement with these two statements "The best pop-up ads are for products and/or

services related to the Web page I am viewing” and “I have purchased products through online video ads.” Planners are busy and do not want to be bothered with most of the advertising that appears on the Internet. If the advertising is not relevant to these people they will completely ignore the message.

The best example of the Planners not wanting to be bothered with Internet advertising is in their attitudes toward video advertising. Watching television and videos online is an activity that these people plan into their schedules and do it only when they have time to watch. One respondent said, “I’m watching the shows for free and the commercials are shorter. I can watch an hour-long show in 45 minutes.” The Planners like watching television and videos on the Internet and they are more accepting to this type of advertising—“Who wouldn’t want to watch one commercial instead of 12?” This is an area where Internet advertisers have the greatest opportunity to reach the Planners. If the Planners believe they are getting something in return for the time they spend watching (i.e., a television program or interesting video) then they do not mind watching an advertisement.

Table 2 Normalized factor scores for factor two

		z-score
30	The best pop-up ads are for products and/or services related to the Web page I am viewing	2.04
41	I have purchased products through online video ads	2.01
39	I find video ads helpful as they relate to the Web site or video I am viewing	1.99
36	I use software or change my Internet browser settings to disallow pop-up ads	1.42
28	By reading and clicking on pop-up ads, I find information that is useful to me	1.31
19	It is unethical to advertise to me when I go to a search engine to research a topic or to search for a product or service	1.18*
13	I like the ads which come up in search engines	1.15*

	because they are about the topics I am researching	
9	I consider a Web site with banner ads to be less reputable than a Web site without banner ads	-1.07
25	Pop-up ads always get my attention	-1.09
14	Search engine ads are interesting because they provide information	-1.19
11	I have never seen a banner ad that peaked my interest	-1.44
31	I believe it's unethical for Web pages to have pop-up ads	-1.46
33	Pop-up ads are annoying and bothersome	-1.59*
27	I always read pop-up ads	-1.60
29	I like pop-up ads that use graphics, animation or video to get my attention	-1.87

Asterisk (*) indicates significantly different from other two factors.

Factor Three ('Acceptors')

Factor three represents the group of people most willing to embrace Internet advertising and was accordingly named “The Acceptors” by investigators. Acceptors are people who are not only more willing to view Internet advertising, but they are also more likely to respond to an ad and follow through by making a purchase. They see Internet advertising as a potential tool that can be used to their benefit—“Advertising is part of life and good for business. It plays the same role for the net as it does for traditional media.”

However, Acceptors are not open to all form of advertising equally. They are wary of banner ads and pop-up ads and generally prefer video advertising to other forms of Internet advertising. One respondent said, “[Internet advertising] is necessary. I have no problem with Internet advertising but I do not like all the methods.” While they accept the fact that advertising is part of their Internet experience, they also believe that “Advertising on the net is more effective than traditional media.” A recurring phrase offered to investigators by Acceptors was that Internet advertising was a “necessary evil.” Advertisers will have their greatest success with

the Acceptor group. While it was the smallest factor in the study, they believe that advertising is a normal part of the Internet, they expect it, are not offended by it, and they use it in their lives.

Table 3 Distinguishing statements for factor three

		z-score
39	I find video ads helpful as they relate to the Web site or video I am viewing	2.02
18	Search engine ads help me save time and money	1.7
36	I use software or change my Internet browser settings to disallow pop-up ads	1.68
20	I don't like the idea that the first few sources appearing in Internet search are there because those spots are paid for	1.57
3	Banner ads are effective at getting my attention	1.52*
30	The best pop-up ads are for products and/or services related to the Web page I am viewing	1.52
41	I have purchased products through online video ads	1.47
37	I find online video ads more effective and appealing than other forms of Internet advertising	1.31
35	Companies that advertise with pop-up ads will not get my business	1.31*
23	Search engine ads bother me because I want information from keyword searches, not advertising	-1.20
11	I have never seen a banner ad that peaked my interest	-1.21
21	I skip past ad listings to get to real sources of my search	-1.29
8	I consider banner ads to be clutter the Internet can do without	-1.31*
2	Banner ads inform me of Web sites I believe are useful or helpful	-1.54
26	I think pop-up ads are an effective way to advertise	-1.58*
42	I have clicked through a video ad to visit the Web site of the product or service being advertised	-1.59
34	Using tactics like free give-a-ways or humor does not increase my interest in a pop-up ad	-1.59*
29	I like pop-up ads that use graphics, animation or video to get my attention	-1.64

Asterisk (*) indicates significantly different from other two factors.

Discussion

Internet advertising brought in \$23.8 billion in revenue in 2009, an increase of 147% from five years previous. The hottest trends in advertising are on the Internet, particularly so the Millennial generation (age 18-32) uses the Internet more than any other age group. However, the current study shows that Internet advertising may not be holding up to the current belief that Internet advertising is the way to target an appealing, lucrative market. This is because of the perceptions of online advertising, which means advertisers should pay particular note to how their messages are being received online.

Some consumers are distrustful of Internet advertising, believing them to be a scam or lacking veracity. One of the top responses among all survey respondents indicated they had never seen a banner ad that had peaked their interest. Similarly all factors indicated a highly negative attitude toward pop-up ads and that they use blocking software to prevent their appearance. Overall, the intrusive nature of Internet advertising may be what is causing such high dislike and distrust toward Internet advertising. Consumers are learning how to tune Internet advertising out, and are utilizing specialized software to do so.

However, this is not to imply that Internet advertising does not have its merits or place in targeting a message. Survey respondents indicated that if an ad was relevant to what they were doing or searching for online, it would catch their attention. Respondents also found search engine ads helpful when they related to what they were searching for, and even found pop-up ads useful when they were relevant. Respondents liked advertising that they were used to. Many respondents indicated that video ads online, while considered a “necessary evil”, allowed them to watch TV shows free of charge in less time due to fewer commercials. Since these ads may be viewed as more favorable due to the fact that they are in a familiar format, they may therefore be

more inclined toward these types of ads because they are accustomed to them and because they are richer (i.e. have both motion and sound) than other ads.

The current study focused on the 18-25 market, as this age group uses the Internet heavily and has *potential* buying power appealing to advertisers. However, most tested were college students with limited income—future research could focus on demographics with higher incomes or on different age groups to see how they might differ from the current sample. Often, advertisers will use the same medium but target different demographics in various ways, a method that is currently not being utilized as much as it could be on the Internet. The current study grouped all video ads together in one category, however, a pop-up ad could include a video, which is different from a video ad shown during a television show being viewed online. Future research should break out this variable to test for differences between those types of ads.

Another limitation was the sample, which was comprised of mostly students at Brigham Young University where students have free wireless Internet access while on campus, which may differentiate them from other Internet users. Future research should survey an individual's Internet use to determine where, how often, and for what purpose they use the Internet. The current study could be easily repeated to other demographics to unveil attitudes about Internet advertising and how they might compare to one another.

This study provides important insights into the little-studied area of Internet advertising. It has particular weight as Internet advertising is on the rise and many companies feel compelled to advertise on the Internet yet fail to understanding what impact it may (or may not) have on consumers. Understanding opinions and attitudes about the four major types of Internet advertising is a step in the right direction toward being able to target consumers and tailor messages more effectively.

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APPENDIX I

1. I find banner ads to be persuasive.
2. Banner ads inform me of Web sites I believe are useful or helpful
3. Banner ads are effective at getting my attention
4. Banner ads with animation or video do a better job of getting my attention than banner ads without animation or video
5. I trust the information I read in banner ads to be the truth
6. I believe banner ads are an effective way to share a message
7. I never click on banner ads
8. I consider banner ads to be clutter the Internet could do without
9. I consider a Web site with banner ads to be less reputable than a Web site without banner ads
10. I prefer ads on TV and in print over banner ads
11. I have never seen a banner ad that peaked my interest
12. Banner ads get in my way while I'm using the Internet
13. I like the ads which come up in search engines because they are about the topics I am researching
14. Search engine ads are interesting to me because they provide me with information I need to make a decision about purchasing a product or service
15. I like that companies advertise in search engines
16. Search engine ads help me find information about topics, products or services I am interested in
17. I often click on search engine ads because they provide me with information in an efficient way
18. Search engine ads help me save time and money
19. It is unethical to advertise to me when I go to a search engine to research a topic or to search for a product or service
20. I don't like the idea that the first few sources appearing in Internet search are there because those spots are paid for
21. I usually skip past the advertised listings to get to the real sources of my search
22. I ignore the advertising on search engine Web pages
23. Search engine ads bother me because I want information from keyword searches, not advertising
24. Search engine ads add more clutter to the Internet already full of advertising
25. Pop-up ads always get my attention
26. I think pop-up ads are an effective way to advertise
27. I always read pop-up ads
28. By reading and clicking on pop-up ads, I find information that is useful to me
29. I like pop-up ads that use graphics, animation or video to get my attention
30. The best pop-up ads are for products and/or services related to the Web page I am viewing
31. I believe it is unethical for Web pages to have pop-up ads
32. Pop-up ads are distracting to me when I am on the Internet
33. I find pop-up ads to be annoying and bothersome
34. Using tactics like free give-a-ways or humor does not increase my interest in a pop-up ad
35. Companies that advertise with a pop-up ad will never earn my business

36. I use software or change my Internet browser settings to disallow pop-up ads
37. I find online video ads more effective and appealing than other forms of Internet advertising
38. I do not mind ads that appear before a television show or video I watch online because they allow me to view online for free
39. I find video ads helpful as they relate to the Web site or video I am viewing
40. Online video ads help me understand more about a product or service
41. I have purchased products and/or services that I have learned about through online video ads
42. I have clicked through a video ad to visit the Web site of the product or service being advertised
43. Video ads before, during or after a TV show watched on the Internet are annoying
44. I usually ignore online video ads
45. Online video ads are not long enough to tell about a particular product or service
46. I like viewing TV online as the advertising is shorter and not as frequent as on TV
47. I have never seen a video ad that peaked my interest
48. Video ads get in the way of what I'm trying to view on the Internet