

Junk Charts

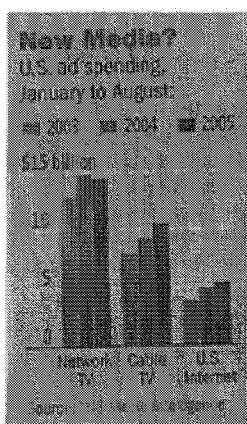
Recycling chartjunk as junk art

Nov 12, 2005

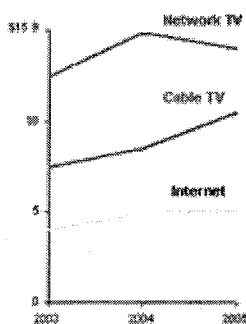
On the popularity of bar charts

I and others have commented, to no apparent avail, on the inadequacy of the bar chart, or its variant, such as the paired/grouped bar chart.

These two examples appeared on the same day in the Wall Street Journal. The junkchart versions, using line charts, are clearly superior in drawing attention to the key messages.



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In the first example, the improved chart facilitates comparison on either the time axis or the type of media.

In the second example (below), all of the key messages came out more potently, including the reversal of growth directions, the cross-over circa 2001-2, the dip in early-stage investments in 1999 and leveling off of early-stage investments in recent years.

ProQuest

Databases selected: Multiple databases...

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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TV On-Demand May Make Ads More Targeted

Brian Steinberg. *Wall Street Journal*. (Eastern edition). New York, N.Y.: Nov 9, 2005. pg. B.1

Abstract (Summary)

Now, CBS's plans call for making "CSI" available via Comcast Corp.'s cable lines, and NBC plans to provide "Law & Order SVU" to customers of News Corp.'s DirecTV. Taken with ABC's release in October of "Desperate Housewives" to Apple video iPod users, television is moving from "a dumb mass reach and frequency vehicle" to an on-demand medium, and one "that is going to be much more targeted and relevant," says Tim Hanlon, who studies emerging media technology for Publicis Groupe SA's Starcom MediaVest, an ad-buying firm.

Full Text (933 words)

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AFTER HALF a century of sharing in the stunningly lucrative partnership between advertisers and broadcast television, two networks appeared to break ranks.

NBC and CBS said on Monday they would make some of their prime-time shows available for viewing on demand at a cost of 99 cents, starting just hours after the shows' regular on-air time slots. The networks' embrace of this world -- where viewers can watch programs whenever they want, skipping commercials at will -- should have left ad people furious.

Instead, advertising executives seemed unruffled by the news. They themselves recognize the same set of forces driving CBS and NBC: Technology is giving rise to a multitude of new ways to target consumers with entertainment and with commercial messages.

Advertising was once a simple mass-market media buy; now it is a dialogue between a seller of soup, sneakers or cellphones and a particular media outlet's narrow audience. That media outlet is just as likely to be a computer screen or a mobile device as a television set, media buyers say. As a result, advertisers are starting to treat TV more and more as just one conversation among many.

"It used to be that almost anybody could create a splash with TV, and today, those splashes are fewer and fewer and usually are the domain of the megabrands," says Richard Notarianni, executive creative director, media, at the New York office of Havas SA's Euro RSCG.

That doesn't mean advertisers are advertising less. Companies are spending more money than ever on media to reach their customers, and advertising agencies are helping them find new ways to do it. The difference is that the slices of the pie are getting thinner -- especially television's slice. During the first six months of 2005, 38% of advertisers' media spending went to cable, local and network TV, down 13 percentage points from 2000, according to TNS Media Intelligence.

"I think everyone has to get ready for a multiplatform strategy," adds Tim Spengler, executive vice president and director of national broadcast for Interpublic Group's Initiative, an ad-placement firm.

The financial model for ads in on-demand programming hasn't yet emerged, Mr. Spengler says. There are a host of issues to be resolved, including finding an acceptable measurement of consumer response and figuring out whether advertisers would negotiate with the network, the on-demand distributor -- or both. "This is still a very nascent area," Mr. Spengler says. CBS says it is looking at ways to determine prices for ads appearing in on-demand programs.

Advertisers might have been slow to embrace the Internet and other new technologies. But the spread of digital-video