

Title:

The Changing Pace of Advertising

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993

Summary:

Today, the use of traditional media outlets, such as radio, television, and print, is eroding as alternative advertising options increase. Rather than reading the newspaper first thing in the morning and watching broadcast television news every night, people can find out what's happening in the world, almost in real time, via the web. Newspaper subscriptions are at an all-time low, and consumers TiVo the news so they can watch it without viewing the commercials. So where does that leave marketers that want to maximize their return on their advertising investment?

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Article Body:

Rapid advances in technology have changed everything from health care to communication. Now, as the latest technology becomes more accessible to a broader market, the advertising field is changing, too. Years ago, you could plan your advertising campaign around a few television commercials and print advertisements. And most companies would never have considered spending a sizeable portion of their advertising budget on the Internet. But in 2006, online ad expenditures are expected to reach over \$16 billion.

Advertisers who want to reach their target audience and remain competitive in this high-tech world have to change with the times. You need to keep up with emerging technologies, what media types are most popular, and how consumers use what's available to them.

If you want to stay current and advertise your products and services in ways that reach your target audience on their turf, consider the following forms of emerging media.

1. Blogs

Blog is short for "web log," online journals that people without any HTML knowledge can create easily from any computer. They are frequently updated and

usually include the owner's thoughts or musings on topics ranging from what's happening in the news to what they wear to work.

Companies or individuals can keep blogs. Company blogs usually promote products in what is known as an "adverblog." However, those blogs started by individuals without a commercial affiliation usually have more credibility.

About fifty million people keep blogs. And many different categories exist, including travel, health, and business. Blogs are popular because they provide a concise summary of news and information and give users power by providing information all in one place and on a timely basis. A blog dedicated to heart health, for example, will likely pull information from sources all over the Internet, so someone surfing for heart health information doesn't have to search several sites for the most up-to-date research about the topic; they can find everything they need on a heart health blog.

As far as advertising on blogs, ads are generally related to the blog topic. That heart health blog could be an excellent place to advertise a health food or exercise product. If you're interested in advertising on blogs, first look for help from marketing companies that measure hot blog topics and provide market research based on blog content.

2. Podcasts

Podcasts deliver digital audio and video files to a user via the Internet. The name comes from the iPod, but they aren't just for iPod users. A pod cast is an audio file in MP3 format that a consumer can download to their iPod, MP3 player, or computer. Then the person can listen to it over and over again, share it with friends, and save it on a computer's hard drive.

Six million people have downloaded podcasts, according to the Pew Internet and American Life Project. And of the twenty-two-million iPod owners, twenty-nine percent have downloaded podcasts.

Podcasts are an emerging media form that will continue to grow, and as this media outlet increases in popularity, the advertising possibilities will grow as well. Viacom, Disney, and Clear Channel all have radio-type podcasts, and even print media outlets use podcasts to broadcast interviews and other audio supplements to their print stories. For example, you can read an issue of a magazine and listen to an interview in its entirety on the magazine's website.

3. Gaming

Sixty-eight out of 108 million households currently play video and computer

games, according to the "Digital Gaming in America" Ziff Davis report of August 2005. Advertisers can reach this market, which is mostly comprised of young males, in two ways.

First, advertisers can use gaming technology to insert their ads in popular games. For example, say you are playing a football video game on your XBOX 360. You'll see ads placed on the sidelines and on the scoreboard just like you would if you were in a real football stadium or watching a real game on television. Video games are also played online, allowing gamers to compete with opponents in other parts of the world. These games offer many opportunities to place logos and products that a huge audience will see.

Another way to advertise using games is literally to create your own game that the consumer can play online. This is commonly referred to as Advergaming. Many companies, such as Lipton and Mountain Dew, have used this advertising technique. The greatest benefit of these games is that they get people involved in the brand. Game designers create these games to interest a particular target audience, such as young children. Be aware, though, if you're marketing to kids, to closely monitor the game's content.

4. Mobile Advertising

Nearly 199 million people in the United States subscribe to mobile phone services. And every phone produced in the last year is capable of accessing the Internet. What does this mean for advertisers? It's another method for reaching the target audience. People now use mobile phones to search the Internet, play games, and instant message as well as to access sports scores, learn breaking news, and even check out horoscopes.

Mobile advertising presents a great means to reach the high school and college student markets with banner and video ads. Currently, mobile ads are simple and usually text banners. But down the road, as this technology continues to advance, cell phones may be capable of displaying television ads. However, this media outlet is not without limitations. Everything in your ad has to be cleared by the phone company, so you must consider the logistical aspects of placing mobile ads.

The High-Tech Future of Advertising

If you want to remain competitive in the future, technology will be key to your success. You should consider these four, and other new types, of digital media when putting together any advertising strategy, because traditional media outlets just aren't as effective as they once were. While it's difficult to

predict exactly where the trends are headed, when you keep an eye on new technology, you and your service won't be left behind.