Title:
Pixel Advertising - What's the Point?

Word Count:
959

Summary:
Pixel Advertising is the newest form of advertising on the internet. Why is it so popular? What's the big deal? Why is everyone flocking to this seemingly ugly / non-targeted form of marketing?

Keywords:
Advertising, Marketing, Internet Marketing, Internet Advertising, Pixel Advertising, Million Dollar Home Page, milliondollarhomepage

Article Body:
Summer of 2005 was nearing its end in England and a young man by the name of Alex Tew was about to enter college. He thought that it was insane that he'd go to university for 4 or 5 years and then come out owing tens of thousands of dollars (or pounds as it were). So, he had this silly little idea ... put up a website with one million pixels of advertising space for $1 a pixel, keep all of the ads up forever (or at least five years), and use that money to pay for his schooling. If he sold all of the pixel advertising spots over the course of the next few years - then he would raise a million dollars.

So, he registered milliondollarhomepage.com, got a friend or two to buy a couple hundred dollar spots, and alerted the press. Somehow - the idea took off like wildfire. Media outlet after media outlet began picking up the story -- next thing you know, he's got thousands of visitors to his site every day ... and a few websites thought "what the heck" and started buying advertising space ... then more visitors, more sales ... and the thing just exploded. He raked in over $400,000 in his first 7 weeks of starting the site. Let me say that again -- four hundred thousand dollars in electronic funds being transferred via paypal, 2checkout, and wire transfers.

Quickly other spin-off sites started popping up such as QuarterMillionDollarHomePage.com, QuarterMillionDollarWebPage.com, MillionPennyHomePage.com, and literally hundreds more pixel advertising sites selling space for anywhere from a dollar a pixel down to a penny a pixel and

even a couple for free. Sites such as RentAPatch.com have even started selling turnkey million pixel advertising web sites -- just buy his code for $90 and you're off and running with your own site. There are directory sites out there - one of the most popular of these is ThePixelWars.com which has most of the 400+ sites listed and allows visitors to rank and comment on each site. And of course, there's PixelList.com which actually takes the time to review many of the better pixel advertising sites, blog about the new "industry" and right nice little articles like the one you're reading right now.

Okay okay -- so, what's the point???

As a founder of PixelList, my co-founder Merlin Holmes and I have been thinking about this quite a bit lately ... What's the point of all these pixel advertising sites? I mean - they're not pretty ... although, there is a bit of excitement around them. They're not targeted ... but there's tons of traffic coming to them. And they're not very expensive to advertise on - so, the ROI for an advertiser can be quite good. But if they don't actually "DO ANYTHING" - then what's the point? Well, here's what we think they might be "doing":

Pixel Advertising Sites introduce people to websites that they never would have heard of before.

For instance, I've run across a site that sells an mp3 player / headset on mp3player.net which is an all-in-one device (they call it 'cordless' - but really you just slip your memory into the headset and viola) ... then there's oldboatpics.com with the pictures of old boats -- I mean, what the heck is the point of that, right? Well, it had me lookin' at pictures for a full five or six minutes. Then there was Pzizz.com -- a website that claims to be the "ultimate powernap solution". We even found a site that sells absinthe - the age-old alcohol that some of the Masters such as Van Gogh, Oscar Wilde, and Toulouse-Lautrec have been known to embibe.

Seemingly a bunch of random stuff, right?

Well, lets think about this for a second ... the pixel advertising sites are attracting "early adopters", right? (People that are into being the first kid on the block to know about something.) So, it stands to reason that some of these same early adopters (dare I say that they are the target market here?) ... some

of the early adopters might stumble across the "next big thing" -- oh oh - that reminds me -- there was a site -- I dont' remember the name -- I remember clicking on "Even Monkeys Fall from Trees" - it was a DVD set being sold called "BookofCool.com" or something like that - and it taught you all sorts of cool things like how to do basketball tricks, skateboard tricks, billiards, etc etc etc ... shows you all the cool tricks, teaches you how to do them .. pick what you want to learn about or just watch the tricks -- whatever you want. .. oh yes, there is it -- right under the Absinthe micro-ad.

Anyway - whew -- I digressed. The point here is -- one segment of what's working with the pixel advertising sites is that it's accidentally targeted to early adopters across a multitude of subcultures - and therefore the requirement as an early adopter is to find cool new stuff. The sites with cool new stuff will find an audience within their respective subcultures ... early adopters and sneezers (as Seth Godin of sethgodin.com likes to call them) will pass the word to others about pzizz or book of cool on to the next wave of people and perhaps the little idea virus will spread.

And that, my dear readers is the point. Hmmm ... maybe PixelList.com should start a review site for the sites we discover through the pixel advertising sites instead of just the pixel advertising sites themselves ...

-- Harris Fellman has been involved in Internet Marketing since the very beginnings of the web (and perhaps a little before that). Harris is the co-founder of PixelList.com, BuzzIM.com, and conducts a weekly internet marketing call for entrepreneurs.