



RESEARCH BRIEF

FROM THE CENTER FOR MEDIA RESEARCH

[HOME](#) [SUBSCRIBE](#) [BRIEF](#) [REPORTS](#)

Tuesday, April 7, 2009

For Better or For Worse; Magazines vs. TV vs. The Web

To find the relative effectiveness of ads on television, in magazines, and on the Internet, McPheters & Company used 30-second TV ads, full-page 4-color magazine ads, and Internet banner ads in standard sizes, and employed eye-tracking software to determine if (and how) Internet ads were actually seen by respondents.

Respondents, in 30 minutes with a single medium in a laboratory setting, either watched a choice of sit-coms, read a magazine they selected, or surfed the Internet at will.

At the end of the period they filled out similar surveys that, among other things, asked whether they recalled seeing 4 ads which appeared in the medium they consumed. To establish "over-claiming" they were also asked whether they recalled seeing 4 ads that had not appeared. The adjusted "net" recall resulted in these major findings:

- Within a half hour, magazines effectively delivered more than twice the number of ad impressions as TV and more than 6 times those delivered online
- Though TV doesn't deliver as many ads per half hour as do magazines, net recall of TV ads was almost twice that of magazine ads
- Magazines had ad recall almost three times that of Internet banner ads
- 85% of Internet ads served appeared on-screen and could be identified by brand
- Among web users, 63% of banner ads were not seen. Respondents' eyes passed over 37% of the Internet ads and stopped on slightly less than a third
- For Internet ads, almost all net recall could be attributed to ads that were seen
- Internet video ads appeared much less frequently than banner ads, and their exposure skewed heavily towards young men. When they did appear they were twice as likely to be seen as banner ads.

Study results, in combination with information on probability of exposure, found that:

- A full-page, 4-color magazine ad, was determined to have 83% of the value of a 30-second television commercial
- A typical Internet banner ad had 16% of the value of a 30-second television commercial

According to Scott McDonald, Senior Vice-President of Research for Condé Nast, "Because different media deliver ad impressions at... different rates... time spent with a medium does not translate into value for advertisers... (and) that magazine advertising is undervalued relative to its effectiveness."

Rebecca McPheters, CEO of McPheters & Company, noted... (though) sample sizes were not significantly robust to release results for individual ad categories... there are real differences in performance that are worthy of further exploration...."