

Chapter 7

Process of Placing Advertisements on Website Homepage

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ABSTRACT

We cannot find any website without advertisements on it. As the number of websites has increased enormously, marketers are trying every niche to target the consumers. While designing a website, a lot of elements are kept in mind. Type of website, ad layout opted, type of internet ad, duration, and position of the ad on the website will be discussed. As the research is based on Harold Laswell model of communication (i.e., who says what, to whom, which channel, and with what effect), the role of the marketers and the way the message is communicated to the online consumers will be discussed. Earlier researches done under this topic will be discussed so as to understand the scope of the research conducted and model suggested. The chapter will include the model suggested at the end of the research and how the basic model of communication by Harold Laswell has diversified over a period of time.

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INTRODUCTION

India within a span of last 10 years has been the apple eye of the Global market with context to not just the ratio of population but also the relevance of free capital market. Advertising has been the nervous system of today's business and what has added to its addiction is its amalgamation with Information, Communication and Technologies resulting into ecommerce business. Nowadays, we cannot find any website without advertisements on it. As the numbers of websites have increased enormously, marketers are trying every niche to target the Consumers through various social platforms. Therefore, the demand exists to understand the scope of online advertisements on various websites especially the homepages.

Essential Requirements of Posting Online Advertisements on Homepage

Digital media has shrunken the whole world in a form of global village where every minute detail regarding any corner of the world is available on the click of the mouse. Being an audio-visual-textual medium, all the marketers and advertisers try their level best to attain the attention of the netizen towards their websites. He tries to upturn every stone that forms the base of developing an informative and aesthetic website. A successful website is an amalgamation of many elements such as graphics, colors, text, headlines, etc. Therefore the researcher tends to study the following aspects of websites and online advertisements on it:

Different Formats of Website

These days we notice that online market is flooded with number of websites that can be categorised under various formats. Though the whole journey was triggered off with social media as key indicator, the formats have expanded over period of time. From informational web portals to social networking sites, news portals to classified websites, company website to retailer website, every business is available on the internet. Whether it is product promotion, company popularity, social awareness or dissemination of information, websites are designed in the way of their objectivity. Thus the type of website decides the category of the product to be advertised on it.

Formats of Internet Ad

With the change of era from traditional advertising to web advertising, advertisers have gone smarter in reaching out to their customers. While surfing, the advertisers adopts various advertising formats like banner ads, interstitials, pop up, pop under, floating ads and many more to target the netizen and enhance their visibility and usage of the product. It is very essential to choose and adapt right kind of format as all are not successful among the netizens as some ads are completely ignored and treated as irritating element.

Design Layout of Advertisement

A layout refers to rough designing of the advertisement and portrays the placement of the print ad elements in the advertisement. Though designing is a part of creative aspect but there are specific categories of layouts like Big picture layout, Copy Heavy Layout, Multipanel Layout, Mondrain Layout, etc. that designer can opt for designing the advertisement and getting the maximum click is also important criteria for the marketers.

Longevity of the Ad

Being the medium with media convergence where advertisements are designed in different audio, visual and graphical formats, the advertisers uses every method to attract the consumers in which the longevity of the ad on homepage makes a lot of difference.

As we all notice that many times the ads appearing on the webpage are either flickering or appear permanently on the home page. There is also a category when other options or buttons on the homepage are clicked the ad displayed on the homepage gets changed while some ads remain unchanged.

Placement of the Ad

The advertisement should be designed in such an aesthetic way that it creates maximum attraction among netizen. Opportunity to Read (OTR) & Opportunity to See (OTS) are quintessential concepts used in OOH advertising but with context to digital media placement of advertisements on homepages makes an impact on the visibility of the ad among consumers.

Therefore, it becomes crucial to place and position the online advertisements at a place that is easily noticeable and catches the eye of the netizen.

Persuasive Technique

Persuasion is regarded as major function of advertising and words used for persuading the buyer makes a lot of impact. We generally notice the action oriented words like buy now, 50% discount freebies, etc. being used on advertisements to pull netizen towards making a purchase. All the ads uses persuasion words as per their objective to sell, brand recall, creating awareness, etc.

Depending on the category of the website, it is also essential to decide whether the site should carry purchase option with the advertisements or not. As in context to e-commerce and classified portal, providing purchasing option to the consumer is mandatory but not for other type of websites such as Rediff that has created a separate ecommerce page titled Rediff shopping. Also, advertising doesn't work on sales building nowadays rather than brand building through interactive marketing is there aim.

Homepage Layout

The type of page layout of the website also decides the online advertisement to be uploaded on the homepage and the placement of the ad as well. Depending upon different type of layouts few advertisements are placed above the mast head, whereas few are placed on the both sides of the webpage.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Online advertising is the new marketing trend that includes persuading the consumer through online display of goods, ideas and services that have flooded the market with brands and has given a lucrative platform to the marketers and retailers. Therefore, this subject has led to a lot of research studies that have been conducted on various aspects of online advertising from websites to particular homepages, types of internet advertisements, factors affecting advertisements, etc. Homepages are the first point of contact among consumers that decide whether to further surf the site or not (Singh & Dalal, 1999). It is also researched that lot of connection exists between website reputation & website content (Shamdasani, Stanaland & Tan, 2001).

On one hand where majority of studies have been conducted on the political, business and library websites, there exist contradiction between usage of internet advertisements because of their popularity and irritating properties. Communication of correct information in context to products and offers on the front page of local websites was found to be top priority (Vihonen, 2013).

Though lot of aspects of online advertising are studied but there are various gaps that need to be filled and further researched on. The reviewed studies show that informational category of websites has not been studied to the extent; therefore a lot of scope prevails for further research in this aspect. Most of the studies are on aesthetics of homepages but its layout aspect is yet to be examined which leads to the proposed study. The creative aspect and creative parameters in context to online advertisements are also the area which has been not studied at a length so the proposed study aims for that angles so that a new dimension may be carved out.

As most of the studies have been conducted in context to customer's preference with the website layout and its content on them. Hence, it is also essential to study the customer's preference with the aesthetics of the homepage and layouts of the advertisements, their placement and information displayed on them.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken to achieve the following objectives:

- To analyse the content of online advertisements appearing on the homepage of the websites on various parameters like layouts of website, types of internet advertisements, product category, placement of websites, etc.
- To understand how consumers respond towards advertisements on those websites.
- To analyse the layout designs used for the advertisements and homepage of the website.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objectives of the research, it is very important to conduct the research in a systematic order by forming a methodology and following it step by step.

Therefore for conducting the research on the selected topic, the researcher adopted two research methodologies for data collection and its analysis i.e.

1. Content Analysis
2. Survey

Content Analysis

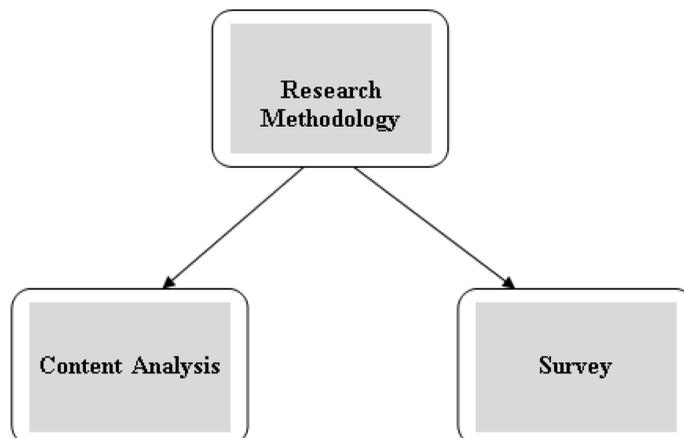
The researcher selected and analysed the homepages of four websites based on their popularity on different parameters selected through literature review.

1. **Survey:** An online survey was conducted among netizens as it was study on online ads.
 - a. **Sample Size:** The study was conducted through an online survey among 500 respondents as sample size.
 - b. **Sampling Technique:** The questionnaire used for collecting data was designed through Google form and later Chi-square was applied through SPSS was applied on data collected for further calculations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Harold Lasswell's model of communication also known as action model is the best model for studying the basic communication process and components used in it. He is accredited for providing invaluable inputs to study propaganda in context to media context which was later used and applied by other media fields. Therefore in order to study the communication process being used by advertisers for online media, this theory was selected to be apt.

Figure 1. Components of Harold Laswell Model (Sneha, 2017)



In his model, he explained the questions asked during the process of communication that is made up of statement like who is saying? What is being said? Who is being affected?, where content i.e. ‘What is being said’ is analysed as content (Macnamara, 2003).

So, lets study the components of Laswell model that forms the basic model of communication. The communication process kick starts with the communicator ‘Who’ is the sender or source of the message and has full control over the message. He could be an advertiser or marketer who designs the message i.e. ‘Says What’. The messages refer to the content posted on homepages of the website in form of online advertisement. Then these messages are carried through a medium i.e ‘Channel’ which is internet in context to this study. Later this channel carries the message to the receiver i.e. netizen in this study and stands for component ‘To Whom’ and the last component studies the effect of the message in form of feedback given by the consumers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The researcher declared that people engage 90 percent more with modern looking sites than the traditional looking sites. Consumers are able to engage and recall more than 50% content of the news sites that are image heavy and modular looking in design as compared to sites with more staid, newspaper-inspired designs (Lichterman, 2015). Another researcher found that webpages displaying clean structure, easy

Table 1. Components of Harold Lasswell model with analysis

Question	Element	Analysis
Who	Communicator	Control Analysis
Says What?	Message	Content Analysis
In which channel?	Medium	Media Analysis
To whom?	Audience	Audience Analysis
With What effect?	Effect	Effects Analysis

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usability and wide options are the strength of webpage and local pages were found to be boring by customers. Hence, the potential of local store web pages still remains unexplored. It was found that only 10% of the visitors leave the page after entering the front page (Vihonen, 2013).

Creativity was found to be the most influential variable considered by the advertising agencies whereas the other core variables affecting the activities of advertising agencies includes internal variables like relationship management, account manager, creativity, uncluttered homepage and external variables like direct email and sponsored ads (Behboudi, 2012). Another research concluded that clean webpages have high preference for advertisers and consumers. Consumers prefer sites that less cluttered with ads as they have recall value and empower brands. It was also found that consumers spend twice the time on clean webpages that carry one or two ads of particular brand Mitchel (2012).

CONCLUSION

After conducting the research, it was found that most internet ads appearing on the homepage of the websites fall under the category of banner advertisements and appear in formats of Skyscraper, Rectangular and Square formats followed by Pop-up ads. 970*250 and 300*250 pixels are the standardised banner sizes used by advertisements displayed on the homepage of the website. It was also found that most of the homepages were designed in different layouts out of which *Headline & Gallery*, *Power Grid* and *Fixed Sidebar* are the most commonly applied *website layouts* used by the web designers. The researcher also concluded that the advertisements related to products like ecommerce, clothing, etc. were designed in big picture layout whereas advertisements of service oriented products like banks were designed in copy heavy layouts. With context to the usage of persuasive words, *services ads* contain persuasive words like apply now; know more while following the copy heavy advertisement layout whereas *product advertisements* contain words like discount offers, and shop now, schemes and prices. Additional information like address panel, offers and images of the product is also carried in some of the online advertisements.

The result concluded that most of the online advertisements appearing on homepage where that of banking and insurance i.e. service oriented products whereas advertisements of product categories like E-commerce and mobile phone dominated in terms of number of advertisements on homepages. It was found that rich ads i.e.

visual or movable advertisements are more liked by the netizens especially the ones displaying the functionality of the product. It was found that advertisements placed above the mast head and on the right side of the homepage is the most preferred areas for the placement and also attracts the consumer and is more visible. It is concluded that though consumers get attracted to motion or visual ads but bright colors also appeal them. It was also found that persuasive information is equally important for them such as discount or promotional offers.

Suggestive Model for the Process Posting Advertisements on the Homepage of the Website

Taking Harold Lasswell model as the base for the study, five basic elements of communication process have been studied i.e. who, says what, through which channel, to whom and with what effects in context to the online advertising. In it, the content and consumer's perception regarding online advertisements appearing on the homepage of the website were studied and the researcher has proposed the above model that demonstrates the process whose explanation is mentioned below:

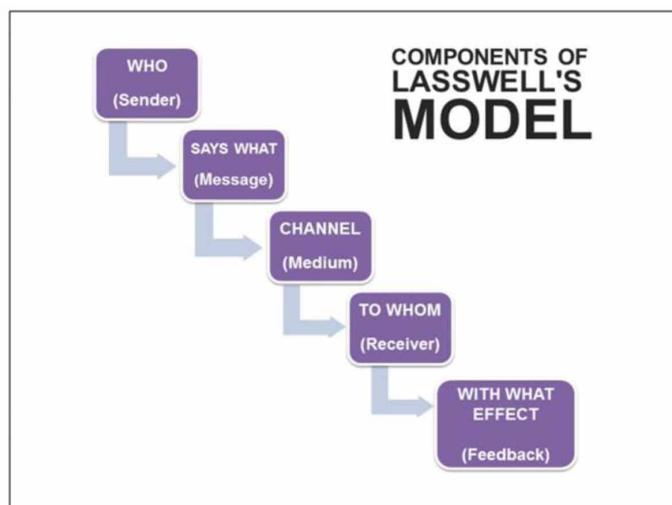
- **Who:** In this model 'who' i.e. sender refers to the online marketing strategist or the advertiser who selects the particular website for their product, idea or service campaign and design the content to be inserted in the advertisement. As the controller of the message they can design to what extend the message needs to be effectively communicated to the consumers.
- **Says What:** In the next step i.e. 'says what' the content present on the website is analysed. The research finds that the website content should be in relation to the content of the online advertisement uploaded on the website. There are few factors which should be kept in mind while designing the website and designing the online advertisement that attracts the viewers and increases its visibility and clicks.
- **Part I:** While selecting the website for campaign, the advertiser should check the website layout, website reputation and also the elements of uncluttered website are important for effective display.
- **Part II:** Whereas while designing the online advertisements, the advertisers should make it sure that advertisement is designed as per the suitable layout as per product, idea or service oriented ad. Also other factors like color, placement, functionality, information displayed are aptly highlighted.

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- **Which channel:** Channel here stands for the medium which is used to carry the messages from one place to another i.e. internet through which the internet advertising runs.
- **Whom:** The next element of who stands for the consumers who can also be referred as viewers and netizens for whom the online advertisement are designed.
- **What Effect:** Last but the most essential element of this process is the feedback i.e. what is the effect of the whole process of displaying the online advertisements on the homepage of the website.

In this model, feedback is attained by the sender at two levels. First is the *immediate feedback* where the viewer rejects (close) or clicks the advertisements and other another is *an indirect feedback* to the sender where he needs to understand the consumer perception about the website and online advertisement preference and strategise his online campaign as per their needs.

Figure 2. Process of posting advertisements on the homepage of the website (Kalia, 2018)



ACADEMIC AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

As the maximum time is spent on the digital platform these days, researches are in continuous process of understanding the consumer psychology that makes him understand his behavioural patterns with context to online purchase. Therefore, this chapter will give researchers new dimensions for their academic research, as management and digital marketing course being structured in many universities across world.

As a netizen of the digital world, this research could be of great help to professionals of advertising industries, marketers, designers, online strategist and brand owners who are trying very hard to reach to the niche consumers when one is flooded with number of brands in the online market. The research will give then an insight as to how website should be selected for posting the advertisements so as to get the maximum clicks and what format should be used for designing those ads. This chapter will also propel them to understand which ad formats should be used and where the ads should be placed on the homepages, so that it has maximum visibility as per the consumers preference.

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