

Personalized advertising attracts more attention, makes the contents of ads easier to remember

December 21 2014

Personalized advertisements on the Internet not only attract more attention, they also remain in our memory longer than impersonal ads. This is the result of a study conducted by Professor Kai Kaspar from the Psychology Department of the University of Cologne in collaboration with his colleagues Moritz Köster, Marco RÜth and Dr. Kai-Christoph Hamborg in Osnabrück. Specifically, they investigated the gaze behavior of female students on websites.

People who surf the internet and shop online leave many traces of their behavior behind. These data are increasingly being used by companies to present ads on their websites that are intended to meet people's individual interests and preferences. However, so far it has been unclear if this form of personalized advertising actually attracts people's attention to a greater degree than impersonal ads.

In their study, which was published in the journal *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, the four researchers asked female students to read the current events presented on a news portal. The advertisements of various companies were also displayed, but the test persons tended not to look at these ads very much – an effect also known as "banner blindness".

Personalized advertisements, however, attracted much more attention than impersonal ones. Moreover, there was a significant effect on the memories of the test persons: in a later test, the female students

recognized the images and slogans that were previously integrated into personalized [ads](#) much more often than those in impersonal ones. But the personalization of advertising had no effect on the test persons' memories of company logos or the contents of the news they were viewing.

These combined effects are highly relevant for advertisers and website operators. However, web users should also be more aware of the uses to which the traces they leave behind of their online activities can be put.

Provided by University of Cologne

Citation: Personalized advertising attracts more attention, makes the contents of ads easier to remember (2014, December 21) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-12-personalized-advertising-attention-contents-ads.html>

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