

Consumers and commercials studied

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U.S. scientists say the more consumers are absorbed in the narrative flow of a story, called transportation, the less likely they'll respond well to ads.

That finding might have interesting implications for advertisers, many of whom pay more for "premium" ad placement that may actually deter consumers.

"Media create the audience for most advertising. Consumers come to a medium for its content," said Jing Wang of University of Iowa and Bobby Calder of Northwestern University. "If the ad interrupts the transportation experience, this in itself creates a negative experience associated with the ad."

And when the story is personally relevant to the reader or viewer, the effects are increased, say the scientists. Conversely, ads relevant to the reader's personal goals are deemed the most intrusive. But the researchers also found absorption in a story can enhance the effect of advertisements -- if they ads appear after the story has ended.

The study is detailed in the September issue of the Journal of Consumer Research.

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