

Can 30-second ads save newspapers?

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(Phys.org) —A researcher from Murdoch University's Audience Labs suggests economically pinched news outlets should take advantage of positive attitudes to online TV ads as a better way to balance the books.

Dr Steve Bellman said his research into attitudes to advertisements inside [video content](#) such as that on YouTube and Yahoo!7 indicated a level of acceptance for TV ads in the cyber realm.

"For years, we've heard the argument that people won't tolerate ads in online content and will jump sites to ad-free content or will download illegally, but our research on web-based video viewing shows that people will accept a certain number of ads," Dr Bellman said.

"Online [TV viewers](#) only rated ad [interruption](#) as significantly intrusive if there were ten 30-second ads per hour or more, but they were fine with slightly fewer.

Dr Bellman said his study found the ideal number of ads for viewers and advertisers to be six 30-second ads per hour, totalling three minutes, which while significantly less than the 18 minutes per hour currently showing on TV, offered enhanced opportunities for companies.

"TV viewers have a fairly high tolerance for what we call 'clutter' – that is, non-program and ad content – but online is different in that people are more sensitive to ads," Dr Bellman said.

"However, online is a high-quality, uncluttered environment for

advertisers. Three ad-minutes per hour online results in high product recall, especially if there is only one ad per break."

Dr Bellman said the findings could potentially be adapted as a lifeline for struggling news outlets.

"Clearly the old newspaper funding model is dead, but we haven't seen anything come along to replace it, which has resulted in [layoffs](#) of journalists and constriction of coverage," he said.

"Some Australian outlets have turned to paywalls – and others are rumoured to be ready to follow – but the paywall experiment has been tried in the industry before, here and abroad, and hasn't worked.

"Unless you're the *Wall Street Journal*, which has exclusive content valued by business, you're better off looking at a new approach.

"With broadband, newspaper content online is looking more and more like TV, perhaps it's time for outlets to test the waters of showing [TV ads](#) that interrupt online content. If it works for [YouTube](#), there's no reason to think newspapers would be different."

The study 'Getting the Balance Right' involved Murdoch University, RMIT University and The Disney Media & Advertising Lab in Austin, Texas.

More information: [www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10 ... 744001#](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1744001#).[UbWYR](#).[llnux](#)

Provided by Murdoch University

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