

Users avoid focusing on over-stimulating animated advertising, study finds

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Eye-tracking technology has been used to investigate how well users engage with animated advertisements in a mobile application. The results published in the *International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising*, reveal that users tend to avoid focusing on complex advertisements that are over-stimulating. The finding reinforces earlier evidence of a cognitive workload.

Federico Cassioli and Michela Balconi of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, Italy, wanted to understand how users respond to animated advertisements. Earlier evidence had suggested that many users become less engaged with such distracting and over-stimulating content. This, of course, has important implications for marketing and those designing advertisements for display within applications.

Animated advertisements have become commonplace as in-app marketing tools. They assume that users will be more engaged with such content than with a static advertisement and so will be more likely to make a purchase. However, there is a huge degree of saturation with this kind of advertising that must vie with engaging creative content and the applications themselves for user attention. Nevertheless, the team writes, "Ubiquitous connectivity is the fundamental key for the exponential growth of customer daily touchpoints with companies."

The always-connected user, or moreover, consumer, can be reached with much greater efficiency and efficacy than ever before. In addition, the nature of smartphone applications, web 2.0, and [social media](#) also means that those very companies have access to personal and even [private information](#) about putative consumers—habits, previous purchases and preferences, work, hobbies, day-to-day lives, of which their forebears could only have dreamed. It is, however, up to the marketing executives and advertising people to utilize this wealth of information and accessibility to consumers to their advantage to sell their products and services.

If the advertisers' current approach is conspiring against them from the start then they will inevitably fail and new approaches guided by research such as that by Cassioli and Balconi must be taken as a nudge away from the conventional towards those new marketing methods. The eye-tracking study revealed that over-stimulating animated advertisements are not the way forward, the marketing executives

perhaps need to find a compromise that engages putative customers without deterring interaction.

The team suggests that interstitial advertisements might become increasingly useful to companies. In addition, advertisements that fall into the "reward" category, whereby consumers benefit directly from greater interaction with a brand and its products through an advertisement, could become more commonplace. Such an approach rewards users in some way for interacting with the advertisement thus enticing them towards the marketing offer in a subtle manner and thence a purchase.

More information: Federico Cassioli et al, Advertising in app: a neuroscientific approach, *International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising* (2022). [DOI: 10.1504/IJIMA.2022.122243](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJIMA.2022.122243)

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