

Online Advertising – The Choices In The 21st Century

As the fastest growing form of advertising in the 21st Century, Online Advertising has been a constant area of discussion and debate. So, how can this format really work for advertisers in a fast moving climate?

In the mid nineties, Online Advertising was going through its initial stages of development. At that time people were intrigued by the power of the Internet and its capacity to give them a vast amount of information very quickly. As time and technology moved on, so did the advertising designs and the way they captured our attention.

There are many examples of Online Advertising formats and the decision of which ones to choose depends very much on the type of product you want to promote and the kind of message you want to give out. The most popular Online Advertising services include:

Contextual ads on search engine results pages

Banner adverts as standard leader-board, skyscraper or bespoke sized formats

Advertising networks, which includes banners and pay per click targeting

E-mail marketing, including the targeted use of opt-in lists or part of an in-house distribution

Sponsorships, including logo or message branding on content and PDF pages

Directory listings or tailored micro-site pages

Most of the above forms of Online Advertising rely on a certain amount of programming and designing to make the ads run and display in the correct way. There is also no doubt that recent advances in advertising technology has played a major part in the way we react and respond to online business and consumer advertising. However, it seems that technology is moving so fast that even the Online Advertising industry can barely come up with applications and tools that meet those changing technologies. Whichever way you look at it though, one thing remains - even though consumers have a consistent requirement for quick information, they are still making those clicks and filling out request forms online.

If we go back a few years, we'd see that [Banner Advertising](#) accounted for over 50% of total Online Advertising revenue. But with the reduction in ad clicks from banner adverts and other traditional online formats, advertisers are now looking for the next big online development that will get people clicking again.

This requirement has fuelled an explosion in the creative development of advertising formats in online media – love them or hate them, they'll continue to change, will develop into even more sophisticated designs and will be around for a considerable amount of time yet.

So, now that we've established that [Internet Advertising](#) has evolved way beyond the early days of banner advertising and flashing buttons, how do we get the best value from a media that is constantly changing?

Well, what buyers need to do now is to step back, take a deep breath and make sure that they analyse and research all of the available options before testing different formats. Whatever they do, they must not believe the fly-by-night sites that promise you the earth and tell you that you don't have to put any work into your Online Advertising. Unless you have a never-ending supply of money, you will have to do some work to make anything happen and it is no different with Online Advertising.

If we look at the more recent online products, one of the success stories of Online Advertising has to be pay per click advertising. A number of providers have developed this as a very cost-effective way of getting clicks to your site, for very little money. For the price of a half page advert in a regional newspaper, you can get a few hundred clicks to your website.

There is still a question mark, in terms of the return on investment value to this format, but there is no doubt that it is ticking all the right boxes when it comes to getting people to visit specific landing pages of a website. If this is all you want to do, then PPC is a must.

Of course, [Online Advertising](#) isn't all about advertising on networks and websites. It also covers email and other electronic formats and this is an area that has enjoyed tremendous growth in the last few years. To reach the inboxes of an opt-in subscriber list is a very attractive means of promotion for a lot of advertisers and this method continues to gain popularity. However, as our overall capacity and enthusiasm for flashy graphics dwindles, publishers of HTML email newsletters and online animations are now toning down their designs across many industry sectors.

As far as allocation and media buying is concerned, it is known that almost one third of Online Advertising will come from incremental spending, but the majority will still come from traditional marketing budgets. This is a sure sign that Online Advertising is now becoming less of an ad-hoc test media

and more of an ongoing fundamental requirement.

With the continuing shift from print to online, there is no doubt that this media will continue to grow as the technology and our desire to keep up with new developments grows with it.

About the Author

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