

Is Content King of Effective Online Advertising?

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Tacoda Systems and iVillage conducted a study earlier this year regarding online audience management targeting and found that simply placing relevant ads in a content group on iVillage was not as effective as placing the same ads throughout the site according to visitor behavior.

Based on research conducted by Dynamic Logic between January and March 2004 among 305 iVillage users, Tacoda created an audience profile of visitors who had gone on the "Diet & Fitness" channel within a 45-day period. The company then measured the success of placing ads for Snapple-a-Day, a meal replacement plan from Snapple Beverages, within the "Diet & Fitness" channel versus other areas of the site that the study group frequented.

The results indicate that those visitors targeted outside the "Diet & Fitness" channel displayed more positive reactions than those targeted within the channel as follows:

- Aided brand awareness: 76% outside the channel, 66% within
- Online ad awareness: 51% outside the channel, 33% within
- Brand favorability: 36% outside the channel, 21% within
- Purchase intent: 37% outside the channel, 29% within.

Though the release about the study does not go into details regarding exactly how "brand favorability" was measured, the overall idea is interesting and frequently debated in the industry. Does it serve advertisers better to have their ads featured in specific content groups, or to track visitors according to their online activity? This study suggests following visitor paths is highly effective, but many companies continue to play it safe by only going as far as relating their creative to specific content.