

● MARKETING + MEDIA

# SHOEBRIDGE

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## Mainstream outshines upstarts

● A study released in the United States in June provided some relief for executives in "old" media companies such as television networks and newspaper publishers fretting about the sick outlook for advertising revenue over the next year and the steady drift of ad dollars from "old" to digital media.

Conducted by the research company Yankelovich, marketing consultancy Sequent Partners and Ball State University's Centre for Media Design, the *When Advertising Works* study looked at the impression that ads in different media have on consumers.

Impression is a vague measure and does not indicate how consumers will behave, but Yankelovich executives argue it is a valid way to determine how people respond to ads.

The study covered advertisements in 16 media, including TV, print, radio, cinemas and outdoor sites. The digital media covered included email messages, social networking websites, internet banner ads, video games and video-sharing sites such as YouTube.

The results were good news for "old" media executives and bad news for internet entrepreneurs. Just under 60 per cent of the people surveyed said ads in mainstream media made a positive impression, compared with just 31 per cent for digital media ads. Only 13 per cent said mainstream media ads made a negative impression versus 21 per cent for digital media ads. Just under 50 per cent said digital media ads made neither a positive nor a negative impression, compared with 32 per cent for mainstream media ads.

The study highlights a difference between old and new media. The internet is a "lean forward" medium: people often use it to find a specific piece of information, product or service and do not want to be distracted by ads. TV, magazines and radio are "lean back" media: people are relaxed when using them, want to be entertained and theoretically more accepting of ad interruptions.

"When I'm tracking down information or looking for an answer or trying to compare things or searching for a link [on the internet], ads are irritating to a degree not true when I'm relaxed and unwinding with TV or a magazine and thus more open to diversion," Yankelovich executive J Walker Smith told *The New York Times*. "Advertising will always have to work harder to make a positive impression in digital media."

Smith says another reason for the relatively weak impression from digital media ads is the fact that people are not as used to seeing ads in digital media as in mainstream media.

The study also found that old media ads were more likely to generate word-of-mouth recommendations by consumers than digital media ads, assuming people like the ads.



**The study found that people are more open to advertising interruptions in old, 'lean-back' media**