Chapter 73

Advergaming – How Does Cognitive Overload Effect Brand Recall?
Differences between In-Game Advertising (IGA) and Advergames

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ABSTRACT

Advergaming serves as a new and valuable form of online advertising, especially for companies that target young consumers. This study examines the impacts of cognitive overload with placement prominence on respondents' brand recall, recognition and brand attitudes. An experiment was conducted on a group of university students with an exposure to an advergame under low and high cognitive load stimulus. Results showed that brands that are placed prominently are better recalled in high cognitive load condition. However, cognitive overload doesn't have any significant effect on the recognition of the main brand in which the advergames is specifically designed. Moreover, there is no difference in recall of subtly placed products in low and high cognitive load conditions. However, there is a significant difference in brand attitude in different cognitive loads. The study both investigated the context of advergames and as well in-game advertising (IGA) situations. The results of the study have both practical and theoretical implications.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional advertising media are being replaced by new ways to communicate with the customers, and many companies are on game now. Consumers are engaged in a media that is focused on entertainment and this new form of advertising strategy is called branded entertainment. As a new form of branded entertainment (Wise, Bolls, Kim, Venkataraman & Meyer, 2008) advergaming can be defined as placing advertising messages, logos, and trade characters within games (Mallinckrodt & Mizerski, 2007). By the use of advergames, the companies can deliver their advertising messages through video games (Hernandez & Chapa, 2010). On the other hand, in game advertising (IGA), which is usually confused with advergames, is defined as inclusion of products within a digital game (Terlutter & Capella, 2013). There is a difference between advergames and IGA (Winkler & Buckner, 2006). In advergames the products or brands are given a prominent role within the online video game and they have an essential role in gaming experience (Hofmeister-Toth & Nagy, 2011). Most of the time advergames are made available to the consumers via websites and they are mostly free of charge (Grossman, 2005). On the other hand, IGA is the application of the product placement in advergames or in any other type of digital games, e.g. video games. They are sponsored paid placements in which the payment is done to the owner of the advergame. The difference between the general advergame environment and IGA can be seen in Figure 1 and 2.

The most challenging issue in the design of advergames is not knowing under which conditions advergames can be effective on consumer perceptions (Redondo, 2012). Therefore, understanding the effects of external stimuli like cognitive load on brand recognition and brand recall will provide important evidence about the issue. As brand placements in games have an interactive nature, playing advergames triggers cognitively involving experiences (Cauberghe & DePelsmacker, 2010). The cognitive resources that are available to the audience during message processing situations are called *cognitive load* (Grigorovici & Constantin, 2004). This study aims to define the possible effects of cognitive load on brand recall for both the main brands and the placed brands in advergames during game play experience.

Figure 1. The advergame environment in Magnum Advergame
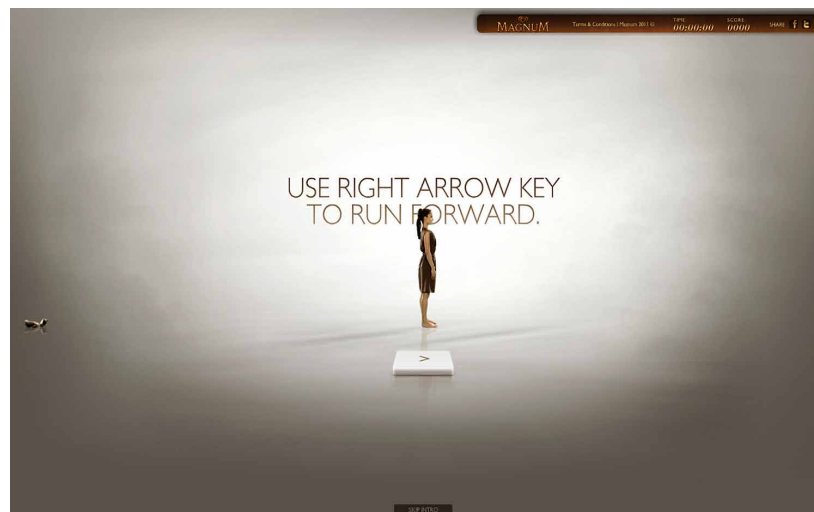
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