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Online social network member attitude toward online advertising formats

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ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORK MEMBER ATTITUDE TOWARD ONLINE

ADVERTISING FORMATS

by

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ADVERTISING FORMATS

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Abstract

The predicted growth of advertising in online social networks and the cluttered online
advertising environment dictates that the advertising industry be concerned about how
online social network members view online advertising formats. The question this
research seeks to answer is what are the attitudes of online social network members
toward online advertising formats in their online social networks? The findings indicate
that the leader board, blogs, video, brand page, and brand channel formats are
perceived to have the most positive attributes. Pop-ups, expandable and floating ads
were perceived to have the most negative attributes. The findings also introduce a new
attribute that influences attitude, placement. The research presents several implications
for advertisers and identifies areas for future research.

Key Words: online social networks, Internet advertising, means-end chain analysis,
online advertising formats, attitude toward advertising

ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORK MEMBER ATTITUDE TOWARD ONLINE

ADVERTISING FORMATS

Online social networking has become one of the most popular online activities (Prescott, 2006) and a cultural phenomenon (Mew, 2006), as "tens of millions of young consumers" (Creamer & Klaassen, 2006, para. 1) spend their free time online instead of watching television. Online social networking enables people to create personal profile pages, describe interests, share thoughts and connect with other people (Lenhart & Madden, 2007).

In September 2006, visits to the top 20 social networking websites accounted for 4.9% of total internet visits, up 94% from September 2005 and up 34% from March 2006 (Prescott, 2006). As of the week ending September 30, 2006, visitors to social networking websites remained on the site for an average of 10 minutes 54 seconds a visit, much longer than the average website visit (Prescott, 2006). For the top 20 social networking websites, the average length of visit was 27 minutes 16 seconds, more than twice the average for all social networking websites, indicating high levels of involvement with the website and an opportunity for advertisers to create advertising that is integrated into the online social network user experience (Prescott, 2006).

In August, 2007, Nielsen/NetRating NetView (as cited in Szalai, 2007) reported "in July, MySpace's unique audience stood at 61.3 million, up 33% year-over-year, with

time spent per person up 36% to 2 hours, 51 minutes and 5 seconds. Facebook saw its

unique audience rise 129% to 19.5 million" (para. 5).

Research conducted by Prescott (2006) also found that social network websites

increase the amount of traffic to commercial websites. The increase is driven by

referrals that occur when clicking on advertisements or links within the social network

website and direct visits to commercial websites accessed outside of the social network

website (Prescott, 2006). According to Prescott (2006), the web traffic from MySpace to

websites for telecommunications, shopping, classifieds, banks and financial institutions,

and travel increased substantially between February and September 2006. The increase

in traffic associated with MySpace demonstrates how valuable the social networking

websites are for advertising, not only for the websites identified in the study conducted

by Prescott (2006), but for all commercial websites.

According to the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) (2006), 2004 revenue

received from selling internet advertising was $9.6B, in 2005 the revenue increased to

$12.5B, and the first half of 2006 set a record with online revenue of $7.9B, with the

largest projected growth area for online ad sellers in social network websites.

eMarketer (Williamson, 2007) estimates that in 2006 marketers spent $350 million on

social network advertising and projected that spending in 2007 will rise 147% to $865

million, reaching $2.15 billion in 2010.

The growth in internet ad revenue and spending on internet advertising demonstrates the enthusiasm marketers and advertisers have about the Internet and their willingness to spend billions to use it (Wasserman, 2006). When marketing managers and advertising executives decide to place advertising on the Internet, advertising campaign decisions must be made regarding which online advertising format(s) to use.

Online advertising campaign decisions are complicated by the wide variety of online advertising formats (Reed, 1999; Burns & Lutz, 2006) such as banner ads, pop-ups, sponsorships, in-game advertising, and other emerging formats. Marketing managers must select advertising formats that will produce the best results for their online campaigns (DoubleClick, 2006).

The cluttered online advertising environment, expanding online advertising formats, and the predicted growth of advertising in online social networks suggest that the advertising industry be concerned about the attitudes of online social network members toward online advertising formats. In addition, Holahan (2007) states, "users of social networks are typically less responsive to standard ad formats, such as the poster-like banner ads commonly seen on the Web, than to newer, more interactive or personalized advertisements" (para 8). The current research therefore seeks to answer

the question, what are the attitudes of online social network members toward online

advertising formats in their online social networks?

Importance of Study

As visits to online social networks continue to increase and impact traffic to

commercial websites, advertising in online social networks will soon become a key

marketing strategy (Karpinski, 2007) and a top priority for advertisers.

In the electronic marketplace, consumers are no longer passive receivers of the

advertiser's message; they self-select advertising messages or completely disregard

them (Previte & Forrester, 1988). To capture the active online social network audience, a

general understanding of an individuals' view about online advertising formats and

their reaction to these persuasion attempts is required. An investigation into the attitude

of online social network members toward advertising formats in online social networks

will have practical and theoretical implications.

The current study will have practical implications for the advertising

professional in the selection and use of online advertising formats for online social

networks in media planning and the development of advertising campaigns. It will also

provide advertisers, marketers, and academia with a better understanding of the online

social network consumer and the components that make-up the consumer's attitude

toward online advertising formats, which is important to theories of advertising persuasion.

<center>Online Advertising Formats</center>

Kotler (2003) defines advertising as a "paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor" (p. 590). Rodgers and Thorson (2000) define ad format as "the manner in which an ad appears" (para. 47). For example, online banner advertising can be categorized as horizontal or vertical. Therefore, the current study will use the Kotler (2003) definition of advertising and the definition of ad format from Rodgers and Thorson (2000).

The current study defines attitude toward the ad as a "predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion" (Burns, 2003, p. 21).

Since its introduction in 1994, "online advertising has come a long way since those first ad banners on HotWired" (Bruner, 2005, p. 3). Not since the early days of color television has mainstream marketers been so excited by the many forms of marketing and advertising that enables permission email, keyword search, floating animated advertising, interactive rich media ads, streaming audio and video, and viral marketing, to name a few (Bruner, 2005).

The internet has the ability to support a variety of online advertising formats (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000). According to Wolin, Korgaonkar, & Lund (2002), "web advertising's broad format consists of commercial content paid for by sponsors, designed for audiences, delivered by video, print, audio, graphics or animation. It may be solicited or unsolicited" (p. 88). The internet offers "marketers the widest spectrum of advertising formats" (IAB, 2007b, pg. 3). The online advertising formats included in this research are based on studies conducted by the International Advertising Bureau (IAB) 2006, 2007b; Burns & Lutz, 2006; Buchwalter & Martin, 2003; Rewick, 2001; Wolin, et al., 2002; and Rodgers & Thorson, 2000.

BANNER ADVERTISEMENTS

Banner advertisements (ads) are text and graphical displays hyperlinked to the uniform resource locator (URL) of the advertiser. The purpose of the banner ad is to grab the attention of the web surfer and encourage clicking on the ad (Dreze & Hussherr, 2003).

Banners may be either horizontal or vertical (Burns & Lutz 2006; Rodgers & Thorson 2000). Below are the banner ad sizes included in the current study.

1.   Standard Banner Ad: 468 x 60 Pixels
2.   Leader Board Banner: 768 x 90 Pixels
3.   Banner Ad: 234 x 60 Pixels
4.   Skyscrapers: 120 x 600 Pixels
5.   Vertical Banner Ad 120 x 240 Pixels

POP-UP ADS

Pop-up ads are described as ads that "appear in a separate window on top of content that is already on the user's screen" (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000, pg. 35). Pop-up ads often use moving images, can be entertaining, and are primarily used as a brand-building tool (Rewick, 2001).

FLOATING ADS

The DoubleClick Rich Media (n.d.) report describes floating ads as ads that "break through website clutter and grab attention with motion and impact" (para. 3). Floating ads "appear and move on a layer above web page content and remain for a specific period of time and then disappear" ("DoubleClick Rich Media," n.d., para. 3).

SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorships are a popular form of online advertisement in which advertisers link their brand to the content of a webpage or as part of a list of sponsors (Rewick, 2001; Rodgers, 2000; Rodgers & Thorson, 2000). According to IAB (2007b) "sponsorships may include brand logos, content and section sponsorship where an advertiser exclusively sponsors a section on the site, or sweepstakes and contests ranging from branded sweepstakes on the site to a branded contest with submissions and judging" (p. 13).

EXPANDABLE ADS

Expandable ads spread out or enlarge based "on viewer interaction to provide more information about a product or a special promotional offer" ("DoubleClick Rich Media," n.d., para. 2). Expandable ads contain more information and interactivity than a typical ad.

PODCASTING

Podcasting is the ability to download audio or video (vodcasting) on demand (Bowman, 2006). According to Nielsen/NetRatings (as cited in Bowman, 2006) 9.2 million U.S. adult web users have downloaded a podcast.

BLOGS

Blogs are defined as web logs or web-based diaries that are used to stay in touch with family and friends, network, meet new people, document ideas and events, entertain (Lenhart & Madden, 2005) and now for advertising.   According to Jarvis (2006), "advertisers are anxious to reach customers through influential blogs" (para. 2).

A study conducted by the research firm PQMedia (as cited in Jarvis, 2006) predicts that 2006 spending on blogs and podcasts will grow "at an annual rate of 106% through 2010" (para. 3).

ONLINE GAMES ADVERTISING

According to the IAB (2007a) Game Advertising Platform Status Report, the number of consumers using personal computers to play online games is growing and online gamers "are expected to reach 80 million in 2007 and up to 99 million in 2012" (p. 2). Online games offer extraordinary levels of interactivity, resulting in an upsurge of advertising opportunities for marketers.

Generally, web-based games are either in-game or around-game. Around-games advertising refers to traditional display and digital video units shown in conjunction with the game; the ads are displayed around the game window while the game is being played (IAB, 2007a).

In-Game advertising can be either static or interactive. Static ads may be two-dimensional, including billboards, movie posters or store fronts, or three-dimensional and contain texture, shape, and other physical properties (IAB, 2007a, p. 5).

VIDEO ADS

Bruner & Singh (2007) suggest that "video is the hottest new format for online advertising" (para. 1). Video ads are TV-like advertisements that may appear as in-page video commercials or before, during, and/or after a variety of content in a player environment including but not limited to, streaming video, animation, gaming, and music video content (IAB, 2007b, pg. 13). "The high engagement factor of video,

combined with the Internet's tracking and targeting capabilities, offers a valuable

revenue stream for Web publishers and a highly accountable method for brand

advertisers to sway the hearts and minds of target audiences" (Hallerman, 2007, para.

2).

BRAND CHANNELS

To help marketers connect more effectively with consumers, in 2006 YouTube

announced a new advertising concept for online video entertainment; Brand Channels

("YouTube Unveils New Advertising Concepts," 2006). The YouTube brand channels

provide advertisers a place to showcase video content to help brands connect and

engage with consumers (www.youtube.com/press_room_entry?entry=RZs9p25QDCY).

BRAND PAGE

According to Morrissey (2007),

The shift of younger audiences to social networking is causing some brands to

rethink the need for a microsite altogether. After all, MySpace has 100 million

users and Facebook another 50 million. MySpace has been the official home of

several youth-oriented movies since 20th Century Fox created a page for last

year's [2006] John Tucker Must Die. With a MySpace profile instead of a

microsite, Fox agency Deep Focus was able to turn the John Tucker presence into

more than a place for fans to see trailers and download wallpaper. Instead, it

was the home for the movie's titular character and interacted with MySpace

profiles for other characters in the film and even fans who "friended" him (para

8).

While standard standalone company websites (microsites) require that

consumers seek out the companies (Morrissey, 2007), a brand page allows companies to

link directly into the online social network and interact with consumers in the online

social network site (Morrissey, 2007).   Visitors to the brand page have the ability to

watch videos, listen to music, start discussions and share content with friends

(Morrissey, 2007).

The current research focuses on online social networks as a new advertising

medium for the investigation of attitude toward online advertising formats. The need to

investigate the advertising format variable is based on a study by Burns (2003) which

suggests the potential for consumers to have unique beliefs about each online

advertising format and Ha (2008) suggesting that "researchers need to understand the

variety of online advertising formats available and identify which advertising format is

most effective for different types of users" (p. 43).

Literature Review

In this section, the researcher will discuss existing literature on online social

networks, general attitude toward traditional advertising, and online advertising that is

pertinent to the current study. The researcher begins with a literature review of the

definition, dynamics, and use of online social networks. Next is a review of literature

that examines general attitude toward traditional advertising, followed by a review of

research on attitude toward online advertising. The relevance to and implications of the

literature to the current research is highlighted as the literature is discussed.

Online Social Network Sites

Winder (2007) suggests that the definition of online social networking "depends

on who you are talking to and what they expect to get out of it" (para. 2). However,

there are some basic characteristics required for a website to qualify as a social network

website; the site must contain user profiles, content, a method that allows users to

connect with each other, post comments on each other's pages, and join virtual groups

based on common interests such as work-related (LinkedIn), romance, music (MySpace)

or politics. (Gross & Acquisti, 2005; Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007; Lenhart &

Madden, 2007; Winder, 2007; Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

The research conducted by Winder (2007) suggests that the website

Classmates.com started in 1995 was the first web-based social networking site, followed

in 1997 by SixDegrees.com. "Classmates.com allowed people to affiliate with their high

school or college and surf the network for others who were also affiliated, but users

could not create profiles or list friends until years later" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, para. 16).

SixDegrees.com brought friends together using the friend of a friend principle

combined with the ability to create profiles and list friends (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

SixDegrees.com attracted millions of users, but failed to become a sustainable business

and in 2000 the service closed (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

From 1997 to 2001, a number of community tools arrived supporting a variety of

combinations of profiles and friend connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). According to

Boyd & Ellison (2007), AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and MiGente allowed users to create

personal, professional, and dating profiles, as well as, identify friends on their personal

profile without approval. Launched in 1999, LiveJournal provided "people with the

ability to mark others as friends to follow their journals and manage privacy settings"

(Boyd & Ellison, 2007, para. 18). 2001 was the next wave of social network sites when

Ryze.com was launched to help people leverage their business networks, but it never

acquired mass popularity (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Founded in 2002 and implemented in 2003 "Friendster appeared and changed

everything by giving users (rather than the computer-managed environment) control

over who they connected with" (Winder, 2007, para. 4). However, new users could

only join Friendster if invited by another Friendster user (Mew, 2006).

Since the inception of Classmates.com many social networking websites have

sprung up (Appendix 1: Social Networking Websites) and online social networks are

available for anyone to join. When a new user registers for a social network website

they enter personal information; they have the ability to create a personalized profile on

their "space" in which they can create blogs, "flirt, diarize, post pictures, share videos,

create artwork and meet new people" (Barnes, 2006, para. 8).   As social networks have

become popular, advertisers have begun to explore their commercial uses.

Research conducted by Clemons, Barnett, and Appadurai (2007) had two

objectives; one objective was to explore "the next generation of internet interactions

embodied in Facebook, MySpace, and Linkedin, and YouTube" (p. 268), the other

objective was to prove that advertising in online social networks "will be unsuccessful,

and that at best advertising will be little more than irrelevant to viewers and waste

advertisers' money; at worst advertising will be seen as an unwelcome intrusion, and as

reducing the value of the social website to its participants" (p. 269).

The research by Clemons, et al. (2007) was conducted "from the perspective of an

anthropologist doing ethnographic field research and observation and from the

perspective of a strategist examining resources" (p. 267). To answer the research

questions, Clemons, et al. (2007) relied on the results from unpublished work by MIT

Professor Dan Ariely, data and analysis from previous studies, and an informal survey

of college students on the trustworthiness of online social networks.

Clemons, et al. (2007) propose that three propositions are true regarding online social networks that require further exploration, 1) "MySpace does not appear to be a trusted community on college campuses" (p. 273), 2) advertising on Facebook or MySpace will be unseen or ignored, and it will not be welcome, trusted or credible, and 3) when push-based advertising and paid content is seen by users as intrusive and offensive, it may be sufficient to slow growth and eventually tip the balance towards a new online social network competitor. The current study addresses the second proposition that advertising on MySpace and Facebook is unseen or ignored.

As a new phenomenon, few academic researchers have examined online advertising formats within online social networks; however, as social network providers continue to evolve, and usage continues to grow, the implications of this type of research may be astounding. The current research will help to fill that gap by investigating social network user attitude toward online advertising formats in online social networks.

The internet provides the means for inexpensive and convenient communication with widely dispersed communities of shared interest (Wellman, 2001; Wellman, Quan-Hasase, Boase, Chen, Hampton, de Diaz & Miyata, 2003). On the internet, consumers are more connected and powerfully vocal everyday (Levine, Locke, Searls, & Weinberger, 2001). According to Levine, et al. (2001),

The Net is a real place where people can go to learn, to talk to each other, and do

business together. It is a bazaar where customers look for wares, vendors spread

goods for display, and people gather around topics that interest them. It is a

conversation (para. 37).

Levine, et al. (2001) also state that the only real advertising is word of mouth and

the internet has enabled word of mouth to go global. Marketers now find themselves in

a position where networked consumers are telling one another the truth about their

products based on real experiences, therefore enabling the consumer to get smart fast

(Levine, et al., 2001).

According to Levine, et al., (2001) consumers get smarter and their level of

knowledge increases as the network gets larger, allowing for members to reclaim their

voice in the market with more reach and wider influence than ever (Levine, et al., 2001).

Connections with people are built into the software and tools of online social networks,

enabling these conversations to be easier and happen faster.

As the above literature review reveals, the number of social network websites

and membership to these sites are increasing, therefore providing more opportunity for

conversations. For advertisers looking to capitalize on the size of the online social

networks and increase their presence, an examination of attitudes toward online

advertising formats in social network websites is critical.

General Attitude Toward Traditional Advertising

The identification of which perceptions about advertising account for value and add to the understanding of why consumers develop favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward advertising was the subject of a 1995 study conducted by Robert Ducoffe. Ducoffe (1995) defines advertising value as "a subjective evaluation of the relative worth or utility of advertising to consumers" (p. 1).

Ducoffe (1995) identified four factors; informativeness, deceptiveness, irritation, and entertainment as a starting point for how consumers assess the value of advertising. These factors were selected based on previous research on consumer reaction to advertising conducted by a number of authors: Wells, 1964; Leavitt, 1970; Wells, Leavitt, and McConville, 1971; Schlinger, 1979; Aaker & Norris, 1982; Moldovan, 1985; and Aaker and Stayman, 1990 (Ducoffe, 1995).

To test the proposed constructs, a survey was developed with 32 statements "written for the proposed constructs in the model either through an ad hoc or rational approach (Guilford 1954), or by adapting them from previous studies of consumer attitudes toward marketing and advertising" (Ducoffe, 1995, p. 4). Ducoffe (1995) used an 11-interval scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree to measure the response to each item.

The survey was administered in two suburban shopping malls and a total of 477 surveys were completed. The results of the survey found that "entertainment has a substantial and direct influence on advertising value, it also has an indirect effect through its relationship with informativeness" (Ducoffe, 1995, p. 6).

In addition, Ducoffe (1995) found that consumers who find advertising to be entertaining are more likely to also evaluate it as informative (p. 6). A possible explanation for this type of response may be that consumers ignore advertising unless they find it amply entertaining to engage their attention in the first place (Ducoffe, 1995).

Following the survey results an experimental test was conducted. The purpose of the test was to determine if both informativeness and entertainment contribute significantly to ad value (Ducoffe, 1995, p. 7).

284 students from a large Midwestern university were randomly assigned to one of eight treatment groups. Each group was exposed twice to one pre-selected advertisement that fit into one of four categories: "*high value*-informative and entertaining, *low value*-uninformative and unentertaining; or *moderate value*-informative but unentertaining or uninformative but entertaining" (Ducoffe, 1995, p. 7). Ducoffe (1995) used eight video taped commercials for the experiment (two groups of four). "Two commercials from each of four product categories were selected: *electronics*

(informative and entertaining); *soft drinks* (uninformative but entertaining); *retail stores* (informative but unentertaining); and *feminine hygiene* (uninformative and unentertaining)" (Ducoffe, 1995, p. 9). Subjects were asked "How would you evaluate the usefulness of the advertisement you have just seen?" (Ducoffe, 1995, p. 9).

Results from the experiment "indicated that the subjects considered both the informativeness and entertainment quality of advertisements to be distinct and significant determinants of their value" (Ducoffe, 1995, p. 12). Ducoffe (1995) also put forth that the results suggest that consumers consider entertainment to be an important part of what they get from advertising, which is different from previous views that focused on information as the source of advertising value for consumers.

Ducoffe (1995) presents several additional factors to look at for further research that may provide guidance on how firms may increase the value of advertising to their target audience. Of particular interest to the current research is the factor of media context.

Ducoffe (1995) proposes that "advertising value may be influenced by and influence both media and media vehicle context. Previous studies show, for example, "that consumers think newspapers carry the most informative, reliable, and believable advertising whereas television and radio rate lower on these attributes" (p. 14-15). Within medium individuals may regard advertising that fits closely with the

environment of the media vehicle to be of greater value because it addresses their

particular interests (Aaker & Brown, 1972; Cannon 1982, as cited in Ducoffe, 1995). "For

advertisers, this implies that by carefully selecting media that fit the communication

task at hand and media vehicles that accurately target the most interested potential

customers, they can enhance the value of their advertising" (Ducoffe, 1995, p. 15).

Ducoffe (1995) also indicates that ad value may be the basis of support for including ad

form as a critical key to persuasion.

A study conducted by Shavitt, Lowrey, & Haefner (1998) identified three

primary objectives, 1) use a large-scale, nationally representative sample to assess

personal attitudes toward and confidence in advertising, 2) investigate the role of

demographic segments in the differences in attitudes, and 3) explore the role consumer

evaluations of specific advertising dimensions play in determining their overall liking

or disliking of advertising.

Using a sample of "over 1,000 adult respondents" (Shavitt, et al., 1998, p. 8) a

survey was conducted using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI)

system. Potential subjects were screened for those only between the ages of 18 and 64,

who reported they watch television, look at product catalogs, or have access to and use

the internet.

Respondents were asked "about their advertising-related attitudes, their media

exposure patterns, and their demographic classifications" (Shavitt, et al., 1998, p. 10).

The questions related to attitude were prefaced with a statement which read:

This is a survey of your thoughts and feelings about the advertisements you

encounter everyday. These advertisements might include commercials on TV

and radio, ads in newspapers and magazines, billboards, descriptions of

products in catalogs, classified ads, ads received in the mail, and even ads you

might see on the internet if you use a computer. When we ask you about

"advertising" in this survey, we are referring to ads in all of these different forms

(Shavitt, et al., 1998, p. 10).

The survey used 17 attitudinal questions, the first asked respondents about their

overall evaluation of advertising, the remaining questions asked for their opinion about

enjoyment and indignity they associate with advertising, trustworthiness or usefulness

of advertising content, advertising effects on product prices and product value, and

advertising regulation (Shavitt, et al., 1998). "Most of the attitudinal questions were

worded to emphasize personal experiences and reactions as opposed to societal effects"

(Shavitt, et al., 1998, p. 10).

Respondents were first asked about their overall attitude in a two-part question

asking whether the respondents generally like or dislike advertising and the degree of

liking/disliking (Shavitt, et al., 1998). The respondents were then presented with nine

randomized attitudinal questions using a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree to

strongly disagree (Shavitt, et al., 1998).

According to Shavitt, et al. (1998) the results of the research revealed that the

public holds a more favorable view of advertising than was suggested by researchers,

such as Alwitt and Prabhaker, 1992, 1994; Andrews, 1989; Mittal, 1994; and Reid and

Soley, 1982. Shavitt, et al. found that the American public enjoys the advertisements

they see; find them generally informative and useful for guiding decision making.

Shavitt, et al. also reported that although the public generally does not trust advertising,

they are more confident of advertising claims when focused on their actual purchase

decisions. The research by Shavitt, et al. identifies several possibilities for the shift in

attitude.

One possibility is that previous surveys tended to be based on more limited

samples, including student samples and more highly educated respondents tend to

have a more negative attitude toward advertising (Shavitt, et al., 1998). The other

possibility is the difference in the type of advertising being rated.

Previous studies focused on television and the study by Shavitt, et al. (1998)

included television, print, billboards, classified, and catalogs. Another explanation

provided by Shavitt, et al. (1998) is that the favorable attitudes are reflective of the focus

on respondent's level of personal confidence in advertising, assessing attitudes at a concrete and personalized level.

Shavitt, et al. (1998) recommend that future research use questions that are "phrased to specify perceptions about the role or impact of advertisements in one's own life, for example Polly and Mittal (1993) included such items as "Advertising tells me which brands have the features I am looking for" and "Sometimes I take pleasure in thinking about what I saw or heard or read in advertisements" (p. 20-21).

In the area of demographic segments, Shavitt, et al. (1998) found that "males, younger consumers, persons with less education and income, and nonwhites generally reported more favorable advertising attitudes than others did" (p. 21).

The study conducted by Shavitt, et al. (1998) demonstrates how research on attitude toward advertising used the same or similar dimensions as prior studies. Additionally, all the studies mainly used surveys as the primary research method.

Attitude Toward Online Advertising

The popularity of the internet and the rise of online advertising spending have led to an increase in studies of advertising online. A review of the literature reveals a number of studies that measure attitudes toward online advertising.

In 1996 Ducoffe conducted a study whose main objectives were as follows:

1) determine whether the factors of informativeness, entertainment, and irritation

tested on traditional media advertising, would continue to be significant and

directionally consistent predictors of how consumers assess the value of internet

advertising, 2) examine how advertising value relates to attitude toward internet

advertising (Ducoffe, 1996, p. 26).

In a 1995 study of how consumers assess the value of advertising, Ducoffe

defines advertising value as "a subjective evaluation of the relative worth or utility of

advertising to consumers" (pg. 1). The 1996 study conducted by Ducoffe continues

with this definition of advertising value as it relates to internet advertising.

To answer the research questions, Ducoffe administered a questionnaire to a

nonrandom sample of web users. Trained interviewers were assigned to pre-selected

public places in various Manhattan business districts, in the early fall during the

noontime when numerous office workers congregate outside (Ducoffe, 1996).

The questionnaire asked respondents to review 30 statements, and for each

statement indicate agreement or disagreement using a 7-item semantic differential scale

that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Respondents were also given a

listing of seven different media and asked to rank them in order of the advertising value

they contain. The most valuable media would be ranked "1", "2" would be the next

valuable, etc.

To measure general attitude toward web advertising, the targeted question was "how would you describe your overall attitude toward advertising on the World Wide Web" (Ducoffe, 1996, p. 27). The results of the study confirmed that the factors of informativeness, entertainment, and irritation tested on traditional media advertising are important predictors of the value of web advertising and the model used to assess advertising value in traditional media still holds with the internet.

In looking at the second objective, examining the relationship between advertising value and attitude toward internet advertising, Ducoffe (1996) found a positive and highly significant relationship between advertising value and attitude toward web advertising, people that rated internet advertising high in value also held favorable general attitudes.

Based on the sample used in Ducoffe's research, the respondents were "heavy business" (Ducoffe, 1996, pg. 31) users which may indicate a greater level of involvement when spending time on the internet, a factor that could positively influence advertising value (Ducoffe, 1996). According to Ducoffe, this finding could imply that advertising value depends on the context in which advertising processing occurs (Ducoffe, 1996, pg. 31). Since the current research is directed specifically to online social network websites, it introduces another context for advertising processing to occur.

To determine the general attitude toward online advertising, prior to starting the in-depth interview on online advertising in online social networks, the current study will use the same question posed by Ducoffe (1996) "how would you describe your overall attitude toward advertising on the World Wide Web" (pg. 27).

Briggs & Hollis (1997) sought to answer the questions: "Are advertisers throwing away money on byte-sized electronic billboards which go unnoticed and un-noted in an environment unfriendly to advertising? Or do Web banners, even without the benefit of click-through, stimulate brand awareness, brand affinity, and purchase interest as effectively as more traditional advertising does?" (p. 33). To answer these questions, Briggs & Hollis (1997) sought to measure the impact of banner ads on consumer attitudes and its ability to elicit an immediate click-through.

Briggs & Hollis (1997) "adapted Millward Brown's proprietary measure systems to the web environment to assess the awareness of, and reaction to, the ad banner themselves" (p. 34) and Millward Brown's BrandDynamics™ Systems as an online interview tool to determine how the banner ad contributes to brand building.

The experiment population was divided into two groups; one that was exposed to a tested banner on HotWired's homepage and another control group that did not see the banner ad (Briggs & Hollis, 1997). By using the two groups Briggs & Hollis (1997) could assess the impact of an advertised brand on a single banner exposure.

The experiment population consisted of a random sample of HotWire users that accessed the HotWired website between September 9 and September 16, 1996 (Briggs & Hollis, 1997). Respondents first completed a "seven-minute survey covering demographics and webographics" (Briggs & Hollis, 1997, p. 35) or characteristics and profiles of website visitors. The survey avoided identifying the true purpose of the research to ensure that Briggs & Hollis (1997) could execute a bias free and rigorously controlled study.

After completing the survey, respondents were returned to HotWired's homepage and randomly assigned to the control or exposed group (Briggs & Hollis, 1997). The control group was randomly directed to one of the three exposure surveys and the exposed group was served one of three category-specific surveys based on their exposure to the advertisement on the first day (Briggs & Hollis, 1997).

The research found that the banner ads on HotWired have a significant impact on viewers that builds the advertised brand. Banner ads can cause people to change their attitudes toward the brand, therefore increasing the likelihood of consumers making a purchase (Briggs & Hollis, 1997).

Briggs & Hollis (1997) also suggest that while click-through rates have value it is unlikely to be an indication of the overall value of a banner ad. The current study

proposes to fill this gap by determining if there are other indications of consumer value

for not only the banner ad but other online advertising formats.

In 1998, Previte and Forrester conducted research that focused on internet user

attitudes toward internet advertising. Previte and Forrester (1998) define advertising

attitudes "as either macro-level societal beliefs about advertising, or micro-level

personal beliefs about advertising" (p. 2042). The purpose of the research was to

become familiar with internet consumers, and generate ideas and tentative theories

about internet consumer's attitudes towards advertising in an electronic marketplace

(Previte & Forrester, 1998). Previte and Forrester (1998) identified two hypotheses to be

tested: 1) internet users will have a negative attitude toward the institution of

advertising, 2) internet users with more online experience will have a negative attitude

towards internet advertising and users with less online experience will have a more

favorable attitude toward internet advertising.

Previte and Forrester (1998) partially replicated the model of primary structure of

beliefs and attitudes about advertising proposed by Pollay and Mittal in 1993,

modifying questions toward information about the internet. The modified model

resulted in a quantitative social survey and questionnaire distributed electronically and

in paper format to internet users (Previte & Forrester, 1998). Previte and Forrester

(1998) used a convenience sample of 256 respondents generated from 147 electronic

volunteers and 109 student volunteers from university lectures (Previte & Forrester, 1998).

The questionnaire was divided into five sections: "attitudes to commercialization and internet advertising, attitudes to the institution of advertising, attitudes to targeted and untargeted advertising messages, internet usage measures and demographics" (Previte & Forrester, 1998, p. 2045). The questionnaire used a five point Likert scale to measure attitude responses because it offered the advantages of speed, ease of coding for statistical analysis and was used by Pollay and Mittal in the previous study (Previte & Forrester, 1998). The scale ranged from Strongly Agree/Agree to Strongly Disagree/Disagree.

Hypothesis 1 stated that internet users will have a negative attitude toward the institution of advertising; the research supported the hypothesis that respondents displayed negative attitudes toward the institution of advertising and showed a pronounced negative attitude to advertising in general (Previte & Forrester, 1998). According to Previte and Forrester (1998), "respondents believed that, advertising insults the intelligence of the average consumer, does not present a true picture of products and services, and encourages consumers to purchase products they should buy" (p. 2049).

Hypothesis 2 proposed that more experienced internet users have a more

negative attitude toward online adverting. Previte and Forrester (1998) found that

internet users with one year or less experience have a less negative attitude to internet

advertising than users with four or more years of experience, supporting hypothesis 2.

 To measure user attitude toward online advertising, Previte and Forrester used

constructs established in 1993 by Pollay and Mital. The constructs created by Pollay and

Mittal were based on advertising in general, not a specific medium. The research

methodology used for the current research will elicit user-generated constructs instead

of the constructs defined by Polly and Mital in 1993.

Schlosser, Shavitt, and Kanfer (1999) published a study which answered three

questions, "1) What are consumers' attitudes toward internet advertising? 2) How does

attitude toward internet advertising compare to demographically similar samples'

perceptions of advertising in general? and 3) Which dimensions underlie and to what

degree do they contribute to internet advertising attitudes" (p. 38).

According to Schlosser, et al. (1999), at the time of the study, the demographic

profile of an internet "population was predominantly male, young, well-educated and

affluent" (p. 38). This factor was important to the study conducted by Scholsser, et al.,

because previous research conducted by Shavitt, Lowrey, & Haefner (1998) indicated

that better educated, wealthy consumers held less favorable attitudes toward

advertising than less-educated, lower-income consumers, suggesting that the internet

population used in the research by Scholsser, et al. (1999) would judge advertising

unfavorably. Scholsser, et al. (1999) conducted a survey using a computer-assisted

telephone interviewing (CATI) system. The CATI system enables questions to be

randomly ordered and makes use of skip patterns.

Prospective respondents were screened for only those between the ages of 18 and

64 and those that indicated they personally had access to and frequently or regularly

used the internet (Schlosser, et al., 1999). The screening process yielded a total sample

size of 402, whose demographics predominantly consisted of young (25-34), white,

college educated male adults, with incomes exceeding $50,000 (Schlosser, et al., 1999).

The survey asked respondents about their attitudes toward internet advertising,

media exposure patterns, and demographic information. Similar to Shavitt, 1998, the

questions about attitude were prefaced with a statement that defined the types of

advertising referred to in the questions. The statement read:

This is a survey of your thoughts and feelings about the advertisements you

encounter every day. Many of these advertisements include ads you might see

on the Internet or World Wide Web when you use a computer. When we ask

you about 'advertising' in this survey, we are only referring to the internet, and

not to any other forms of advertising (Schlosser, et al., 1999, pg. 39).

The survey consisted of 17 attitudinal questions. The first question sought to determine the respondents overall evaluation of internet advertising. The question asked respondents whether they generally like or dislike internet advertising and the degree of liking/disliking (Schlosser, et al., 1999). The next set of nine questions used a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to disagree. The questions asked respondents about the enjoyment and indignity they associate with internet advertising, trustworthiness or usefulness of internet advertising content, internet advertising effects on product prices and product value, and the regulation of internet advertising (p. 39). Other questions asked respondents how confident they generally feel using internet advertising information to make a purchase decision or how often they felt misled by internet advertising (Schlosser, et al., 1999).

To compare the attitudes toward internet advertising to a demographically similar population's attitudes toward advertising in general, a data set consisting of 1,004 participants nationally who answered questions about general advertising was compared to the internet advertising sample (Schlosser, et al., 1999). The general advertising sample answered the same questions using the same format as the internet advertising sample, except the instructions for the general advertising sample indicated that the "questions referred to ads in all media (television, print, radio, internet, etc.)" (Schlosser, et al., 1999, p. 41).

The study revealed that overall attitudes toward internet advertising were mixed; 38% liked internet advertising, 35% disliked internet advertising, and 28% were neutral. When the responses toward internet advertising were compared to responses toward advertising in general, the comparison found that 46% of participants liked general advertising and only 25% disliked general advertising compared to those who evaluated internet advertising. These results differ from previous assertions that internet advertising would be judged more valuable, therefore more likable than general advertising (Ducoffe, 1998 as cited in Schlosser, et al., 1999).

In the examination of consumers' perceptions and judgments about internet advertising, the results indicated that 62% of respondents found internet advertising informative, but did not have a favorable view of internet advertising's enjoyableness. 24% of the respondents felt they were not insulted by internet advertising and 70% of the internet sample felt confident about using internet advertising for a purchase decision. According to Schlosser, et al. (1999), because consumers are in control of what internet activity they view, they may perceive the self-selected internet advertising to be less insulting, offensive and misleading.

A comparison of the internet advertising sample with the sample that answered the same questions regarding advertising in general yielded significant differences in attitudes and perceptions of internet advertising versus general advertising (Schlosser,

et al., 1999). The results of the second question found that fewer respondents liked

internet advertising than like general advertising. Schlosser, et al. (1999) concluded

"that the unique demographic characteristics of internet users can not account for the

nature of their attitudes toward internet advertising" (p. 50).

To answer question three regarding which dimensions underlie attitudes toward

internet advertising, the research found that the dimensions that primarily underlie

attitudes were "perceptions regarding the information, entertainment, and behavioral

utility of advertising" (p. 50). Entertainment appeared to be the most prominent in

respondent attitudes toward traditional and internet advertising (Schlosser, et al., 1999).

A limitation of the research by Schlosser, et al. (1999) is that it required

respondents to complete an attitudinal survey of internet advertising based on their

ability to recall the advertising they've seen on the internet. The current research will

present actual internet advertising formats for the respondent to review and respond to,

mimicking how online advertising is actually presented. This method will also provide

a more accurate assessment of the advertising format because it doesn't rely on memory

recall.

Research conducted by Brackett & Carr (2001) sought to investigate attitude

toward advertising on the internet and test the findings by Ducoffe (1996) which stated

informativeness, entertainment, and irritation are important predictors of the value of

web advertising and the model used to assess advertising value in traditional media still holds with the internet.

Brackett & Carr (2001) added two additional variables; credibility and relevant demographic variables to Ducoffe's model. According to Brackett & Carr (2001) credibility was added because of its frequent use in other models, such as Eighmey, 1997 and MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989. Relevant demographic variables were added because certain demographic characteristics such as gender have a significant impact on participant perception of advertising value and attitude toward advertising (Brackett & Carr, 2001).

Brackett & Carr (2001) used a self-administered survey based on a questionnaire developed by Ducoffe in 1996 to collect research data. The survey consisted of three major sections, 1) four demographic questions regarding college major, gender, class rank, and age, 2) questions concerning attitude toward advertising, the media in general, attitude toward advertising in each of the five media (catalog/direct, radio, internet, television, and magazine/newspaper), the degree of agreement with the perceptual antecedents of informativeness, entertainment, irritation, and credibility, and the construct advertising value, and 3) questions about web experience and future requirements (Brackett & Carr, 2001). The sample population consisted of 421 undergraduate students at Roger Williams University.

The results of the study conducted by Brackett & Carr (2001) were compared to

the 1996 Ducoffe study. Brackett & Carr (2001) found that the results were similar, but

some differences did exist. Students rated informativeness, entertainment, irritation,

and credibility lower than the subjects in the 1996 Ducoffe study (Brackett & Carr,

2001). The respondents in Ducoffe's study found internet advertising moderately

entertaining, while the students in the study conducted by Brackett & Carr found

internet advertising slightly entertaining (Brackett & Carr, 2001). Ducoffe respondents

did not find internet advertising irritating, annoying, or an insult to people's

intelligence, however, the Brackett & Carr population recorded overall negative scores

(Brackett & Carr, 2001).

According to Brackett & Carr (2001) informativeness has a direct effect on both

advertising value and attitude toward adverting, but relevant demographic variables

do not directly impact advertising value, but have a direct impact on attitude toward

internet advertising.

Brackett & Carr (2001) identify a limitation of their study as "no attempt was

made to distinguish among the various forms of cyberspace advertising (e.g., banner

ads, home pages, e-mail, etc.). Clearly, future research in this area with regard to the

consumer/student target would prove to generate fruitful insights" (p. 31). The current

study proposes to fill this gap as it distinguishes between various online advertising formats.

In 2002, Wolin, Korgaonkar, & Lund conducted research whose "primary objective was to demonstrate how an advertising effectiveness model currently used with traditional media might be tested" with the web (p. 107). Wolin, et al. (2002), identified three hypotheses,

1) Consumer beliefs about Web advertising are related to their attitudes towards Web advertising. The belief factors – product information, hedonic/pleasure, social role and image, and good for the economy will be positively related. The belief factors – materialism, falsity and value corruption – will be negatively related, 2) Consumers' attitudes towards Web advertising are positively related to their reported behavior towards Web advertising, and 3) Consumers' education, age, and income are negatively related to their reported behavior towards Web advertising (p. 95).

Wolin, et al. (2002) used a survey which "included several statements designed to measure the participants' beliefs about and attitude towards Web advertising" (p.97). Respondents were asked questions regarding online banner advertising. "The survey was designed with 44 items intended to capture seven underlying advertising belief dimensions that represent the three personal effects of advertising – product

information, social role and image, hedonic/pleasure – along with the four social

advertising effects – good for the economy, value corruption, falsity/no sense,

materialism" (p. 97). The survey used a 5 -point scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree

to 5-strongly agree.

The sample population consisted of 420 internet users "from a large southeastern

metropolitan area" (Wolin, et al., 2002, p. 99). The surveys were conducted face-to-face

in the respondents' homes and yielded 401 usable surveys.

For hypothesis 1, the results of the model validate the influence of the seven

belief factors as predictors of respondents' attitudes toward internet advertising (Wolin,

et al., 2002). Six of the seven belief factors had a significant positive relationship to

attitudes toward internet advertising, with product information having the most

dominant role (Wolin, et al., 2002).   The results also indicated that the belief factor,

good for economy, was not a significant predictor of internet advertising attitude

(Wolin, et al., 2002).

Hypothesis 2 states that "consumers' attitudes towards Web advertising are

positively related to their reported behavior towards Web advertising" (p. 95). The

survey results indicated that the more positive the internet users' attitude toward

internet advertising, the greater the possibility that they will respond favorably to

internet ads (Wolin, et al., 2002).

Results for the third hypothesis suggested that income and education had a

significant negative influence on internet advertising behavior. These results were

similar to the results found by Shavitt, Lowrey, & Haefner (1998). Age had no influence

suggesting that as "the internet becomes more user-friendly and mainstream; age will

probably not play a significant role in internet advertising behavior patterns" (Wolin, et

al., 2002, p. 109).

The research conducted by Wolin, et al. (2002) only included one online

advertising format, banner ads. Wolin, et al., (2002) suggest that with the development

of additional online advertising formats, beliefs about and attitudes toward behavior

should be further explored. The current research uses a variety of online advertising

formats in exploring attitudes toward online advertising formats in online social

networks.

As demonstrated in the preceding literature review, research on attitude toward

internet advertising has typically examined only one online advertising format, the

banner ad (Wolin, et al., 2002; Briggs and Hollis, 1997) or made no distinction between

formats (Previte & Forrester, 1998; Schlosser, et al., 1999; Brackett and Carr, 2001) until

2006.

In 2006, Burns and Lutz published research that investigated consumer attitudes

toward online advertising formats extending beyond banners to pop-ups, floating ads,

skyscrapers, large rectangles, and interstitials. The published research was an output of

the 2003 Doctoral Dissertation of Kelli Burns entitled, "Attitude Toward the Online

Advertising Format: A Reexamination of the Attitude Toward the Ad Model in an

Online Advertising Context."

The purpose of the research was to test the "theoretical proposition that ad

format is a significant predictor of attitude toward the ad" (Burns & Lutz, 2006, p. 54).

Burns & Lutz (2006) identified three hypotheses to test, 1) ad format is directly related

to attitude toward the ad, 2) online format perceptions are directly related to attitude

toward that advertising format, and 3) attitude toward an online ad format is directly

related to the internet user's behavior toward that format.

Burns & Lutz (2006) used an online survey to test their hypotheses. The survey

included presenting a visual of online advertising formats. To determine which formats

to use, Burns (2003) conducted interviews regarding online advertising formats with

industry experts and experienced internet users. The purpose of the interviews were

"to identify online advertising formats that were prevalent, important, distinctive, or

emerging- four criteria deemed appropriate for judging the overall significance of an

online ad format" (Burns & Lutz, 2006, p. 55).

The industry experts included academicians in the fields of marketing and

advertising, authors of articles on online advertising published in the past three years in

leading advertising journals, practitioners that had written or been quoted in trade

publications about online advertising, referrals from industry members of the American

Academy of Advertising and a message posted on the Online Advertising Discussion

list (Burns & Lutz, 2006).

Experienced internet users included students from a large southeastern

university and adults from a nearby metropolitan area that exhibited high levels of

familiarity with multiple online advertising formats (Burns & Lutz, 2006). The students

reported spending a minimum of eight hours per week surfing the internet (Burns &

Lutz, 2006). "All participants were familiar with at least three online advertising

formats prior to the interview" (Burns & Lutz, 2006, p. 55).

The banners, pop-ups, floating ads, skyscrapers, large rectangles, and interstitials

formats were selected because they exhibited at least one of the following properties;

prevalent, important, distinctive, or emerging and were mentioned more often by

advertising experts (Burns & Lutz, 2006). Burns & Lutz (2006) used sample ads from

"various collections, galleries and portfolios of online advertising to ensure every time

the site was accessed, the same ad was presented. The products represented in the ads

were considered to be relevant to a student population" (p. 55) and excluded companies

that faced crises or controversies.

Burns & Lutz (2006) implemented two online surveys. One survey measured attitudes toward banner ads, pop-up ads, and skyscrapers, the other survey measured attitudes toward rectangles, floating ads, and interstitials.

Each survey used a four-item semantic differential scale which included "like by me/disliked by me, one of the best formats/one of the worst formats, an excellent ad format/a poor ad format, and I love it/I hate it" (Burns & Lutz, 2006, p. 56). Attitude toward the ad was measured using a three-item semantic differential scale with points of "good/bad, pleasant/unpleasant, and favorable/unfavorable" (p.56).

Respondents were shown an example of each ad format and asked to select whether they strongly agree/agree/neither agree or disagree/disagree/strongly disagree on fifteen items representing online advertising format perceptions (Burns & Lutz, 2006). The fifteen items included; "annoying, intrusive, disruptive, overbearing, entertaining, amusing, eye-catching, informative, useful, beneficial, innovative, different, sophisticated, attractive and elaborate" (Burns & Lutz, 2006, p. 56).

To assess self-reported behavior, three items were used for each format. "Two were simple dichotomous measures: "Have you ever clicked through on a [*format*] ad to get more information?" and "Has a [*format*] ad prompted you to later visit the site?" The third item assessed frequency of click-through on each format during the past month using a five-point ordinal scale" (Burns & Lutz, 2006, p. 56).

The sample population "consisted of undergraduate business students at a large southeastern university" (Burns & Lutz, 2006, p. 55). In return for participating in the study, the students earned extra credit towards their final course grade. The students were sent an email invitation that included a link to one of the surveys. The survey version was assigned to each student using the last digit of the students social security number (Burns & Lutz, 2006).   104 surveys were completed for the first version, 117 for the second version, 69 respondents completed both versions, 83 completed one version for a total of 152 unique respondents (Burns & Lutz, 2006).

In support of hypothesis 1, the research results confirmed that there is a significant positive relationship between ad format and attitude toward the ad (Burns & Lutz, 2006). Hypothesis 2 was supported for all six online advertising formats. The findings demonstrated that online advertising format perceptions are related to the online advertising formats (Burns & Lutz, 2006). It is important to note that perceptions were significantly related to attitude toward each format. For banners, pop-ups and interstitials, information value was directly related to attitude toward ad format, while entertainment and annoyance were significantly related to attitude toward ad format for all formats (Burns & Lutz, 2006). Burns & Lutz (2006) conclude that the "research has not demonstrated conclusively that perceptions of the informational value of on-

line ad format are any less relevant in forming attitude toward ad format than are perceptions of annoyance or entertainment" (p. 60).

The results for the third hypotheses found that attitude towards the ad format was significantly related to past behavior as it relates to using a specific format, suggesting that the ad format is a key factor in determining behavioral response (Burns & Lutz, 2006).

According to Burns & Lutz (2006), a limitation of the study is that it "offers an insufficient basis for making strong recommendations. However, the results are promising enough that an initial implication for practitioners should be to verify that the observed relations hold in the general population of the Web users" (p. 61). Burns & Lutz (2006) recommend future research provide an understanding of the underlying determinants of format attitudes to help advertisers overcome unfavorable attitudes toward the ad. The current research uses the laddering interview technique to uncover the underlying determinants of format attitudes.

Another recommendation for future reach suggested by Burns & Lutz (2006) is to examine consumer behavior in a more natural setting, incorporating a test of the attitude-behavior relationship in an actual online environment. The current research will incorporate viewing the online advertising formats in the online social network environment, where possible.

The literature review provides a historical examination of the development of online social networks, a definition of online social networks and the basic characteristics required for a website to qualify as a social network website. It also touches upon why advertisers have begun to explore the commercial use of online social networks.

To provide an understanding of the general attitude toward advertising, the researcher reviewed several key studies. Research by Ducoffe (1995) concluded that the general attitude toward advertising is directly and substantially influenced by entertainment value. Additionally, Ducoffe (1996) found that advertising which is entertaining is more likely to be evaluated as informative. Research conducted by Shavitt, et al. (1998) found that the public enjoys advertising and views advertising as informative and useful for decision making.

A number of studies were also reviewed on attitude toward online advertising beginning with Ducoffe (1996) which confirmed that the factors of informativeness, entertainment, and irritation are important predictors of online advertising value. In addition, Ducoffe (1996) found a strong relationship between advertising value and attitude toward online advertising.

Research on the banner online advertising format is explored with Briggs & Hollis (1997) which found that banner ads can cause people to change their attitudes

toward the brand, increasing the likelihood of consumers making a purchase. Previte and Forrester (1998) revealed mixed overall attitudes toward internet advertising and although most respondents found internet advertising informative, it was not enjoyable. Schlosser, et al., (1999) found that fewer respondents liked internet advertising than like general advertising and the primary factors that underlie attitudes toward online advertising were information and entertainment, with entertainment as the most prominent, similar to the results found by Ducoffe (1996).

A study conducted by Brackett & Carr (2001) also resulted in similar results found by Ducoffe (1996), however, informativeness, entertainment, irritation, and credibility were rated lower than Ducoffe. Wolin, et al. (2002) found that the seven belief factors are valid as predictors of attitudes toward internet advertising with product information as the most dominant and good for economy as the least significant (Wolin, et al., 2002).   Wolin, et al. (2002) also found that the more positive the internet users' attitude toward internet advertising, the greater the possibility that they will respond favorably to internet ads. Research by Burns & Lutz (2006) demonstrated that online advertising format perceptions and past behavior as it relates to using a specific format are related to the attitude toward each online advertising format.

As shown in the above literature reviews, the research methodology used most frequently is surveys. In a review of internet-related research in advertising, marketing, and communications, Cho & Khang (2006) found that in the leading journals the survey method represented 28.1% of the research methods used, followed by the experiment method at 26.3%, 19.7% content analysis, 10.5% critique or essay and 7% secondary data. "For advertising and marketing, qualitative [e.g., critique/essay, in-depth interview, ethnography, etc.) internet research was significantly exceeded by quantitative research [e.g., survey, experiments], and the gap was higher for advertising (27% versus 73%)" (Cho & Khang, 2006, p. 159). Cho & Khang (2006) recommend that advertising studies about the internet should strive for a better balance between qualitative and quantitative research.   The finding by Cho & Khang is substantiated by Ha (2008) who also found that "most authors use the quantitative approach to conduct empirical studies in online advertising" (p. 40).

In the current study the investigator will employ an in-depth interview method called laddering that encompasses both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Methodology

To answer the research question, what are the attitudes of social network members toward online advertising formats, data was collected between January and

November 2008. The principal investigator used the means end approach as the

research theory and the laddering technique as the research methodology. The means

end approach uses a laddering technique to collect data via in-depth one-on-one

interviews and content analysis procedures to analyze the interview results.

According to Reynolds & Olson (2001), the means-end approach can identify the

choice criteria used by consumers to evaluate and select among alternatives and explain

why the choice criteria are important to consumers. Gutman (1982) states, "means are

objects (products) or activities in which people engage (running, reading). Ends are

valued states of being such as happiness, security, accomplishment. A means-end chain

is a model that seeks to explain how a product or service selection facilitates the

achievement of desired end states" (p. 60).

Reynolds and Olson (2001) identify three levels of consumer related product

knowledge; attributes, consequences, and the values satisfied by using that product.

"The three levels are combined to form a simple, hierarchical chain of associations:

attributes→ consequences → values" (Reynolds & Olson, 2001, p. 13).

"Attributes are what is in the product that produces consequences" (Rapacchi,

1991, p. 30). Gutman (1982) defines consequences as:

 a result (physiological or psychological) accruing directly or indirectly to the

 consumer (sooner or later) from his/her behavior. Direct consequences come

directly from the thing consumed or the act of the consumption. Indirect

consequences can occur when other people react favorably or unfavorably to use

because of our consumption behavior. Consequences can be desirable or

undesirable (p. 61).

Values provide the overall direction and give consequences importance

(Rokeach, 1973 as cited in Gutman, 1982).

 The hierarchical chain of associations "are called a means-end chain because

consumers see the product and its attributes as a means to an end" (Reynolds & Olson,

2002, p. 13). Satisfaction of important consequences and values are the desired end

(Reynolds & Olson, 2001). The chain is made of the connections between the attributes,

consequences, and values (Reynolds & Olson, 2001). The connections are hierarchical in

that they connect concepts at a more substantial level of meaning (attributes) to

concepts at a more abstract level (values) (Reynolds & Olson, 2001). The means-end

approach implies that attributes only have meaning and value for consumers in terms

of the consequences they are thought to produce (Reynolds & Olson, 2001). To uncover

means-end hierarchies a laddering interview technique is employed.

Laddering is "used to develop an understanding of how consumers translate the

attributes of online advertising formats into meaningful associations" (Reynolds &

Gutman, 1988, p. 12). "Laddering is a tailored interviewing format that uses a series of

directed probes, characterized by the "Why is that important to you?" question, whose goal is to determine linkages between key elements across attributes (A), consequences (C), and values (V)" (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988, p. 12). "The association networks or ladders, referred to as perceptual orientations represent combinations of elements that serve as the basis for distinguishing between and among products in a given product class" (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988, p. 12). "The [laddering] interview generally includes at least two separate methods of eliciting distinctions to make sure no key element is overlooked" (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988, p. 14).

The detailing and understanding of these higher level distinctions will provide an insight into how the advertising format is processed from a motivational perspective, because the underlying reason why an attribute or a consequence is important will be uncovered (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988).

"Laddering probes begin with distinctions made by the individual respondent concerning perceived, meaningful differences between brands of products. When the distinction is made, the interviewer makes sure it is bipolar by requiring the respondent to specify each pole. The respondent is then asked which pole of the distinction is preferred. The preferred pole serves as the basis for asking some version of the "Why is that important to you?" question" (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988, p. 14). Reynolds and Gutman (1988) identify three methods for eliciting distinctions.

The first method is triadic sorting. Triadic sorting involves the use of a Repertory Grid to draw out responses. Respondents are presented with five groups of three different products, for each group the respondent is asked to tell how two of the products are the same but different from the third (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). The products are listed on the repertory grid, as well as the responses to the probes.

After obtaining attribute level distinctions, "a laddering procedure is used to generate values-level distinctions" by asking respondents "which pole of their dichotomous distinctions they most prefer" (Gutman, 1982, p. 66). Respondents are then asked why they prefer the most preferred pole (Gutman, 1982). "The answer to the question typically leads to distinctions involving product functions and consequences from use that become the basis for generating still higher level distinctions. This procedure is repeated until respondents can no longer answer the question" (Gutman, 1982, p. 66).

The next method is preference-consumption differences. The preference-consumption method requires respondents to provide a preference order and tell why they prefer their most preferred brand to their second most preferred brand (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988).

The final method presented by Reynolds and Gutman (1988) is differences by occasion. Reynolds and Gutman (1988) suggest that people do not use or consume

products in general, they do so in particular contexts, therefore, differences by occasion

presents respondents with a "meaningful context within which to make the

distinctions" (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988, p. 15). As respondents' distinctions are

examined in the context of the setting in which they naturally occur more important

distinctions are extracted (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988).

According to Reynolds and Gutman (1988)"typically, respondents can only

mention 10 to 12 different distinctions for a given product category" (p. 15) and

although the time required from distinctions to final ladders varies, 60-75 minutes is

standard. To capture the full range of meaningful distinctions between the online

advertising formats (Reynolds, Dethloff, & Westberg as cited in Reynolds & Olson,

2001), the current research used the triadic sorting and preference-consumption

elicitation methods.

After the interviews were completed, the researcher used content analysis to

examine the elements from the ladders (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). First, the

researcher recorded the set of ladders across respondents and classified all the

responses into A/C/V levels, and then all responses were categorized into summary

codes (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). The goal of the analysis was to "focus on meanings

central to the purpose of the study, remembering that it is the relationship between the

elements that are the focus of interest, not the elements themselves" (Reynolds &

Gutman, 1988, p. 19). Once the summary codes are finalized, each element is assigned a

number and a matrix is produced representing a respondent's ladder with the elements

(Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). The summary matrix is now the basis for determining

dominant connections between key elements (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988), moving the

research methodology from qualitative to quantitative.

The next step was to create a hierarchical value map (HVM) to represent the

combination of respondent ladders and determine the dominant segments represented

in the overall map (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). The mapping of hierarchical

relationships involves connecting all the meaningful chains without crossing lines

(Reynolds & Gutman, 1988).

According to Reynolds & Gutman (1988), the HVM serves as the basis for 1)

segmentation of consumers according to their values orientation; and 2) for developing

advertising strategies (p. 25). Gutman (1982) suggests that using the means-end chain

to establish linkages between distinctions provides advertisers with information to

better position advertising based on the value orientations of the target consumer.

Gutman's view is that "advertising research procedures typically focus on consumer's

low level grouping distinctions without recognizing the hierarchical structure that

forms the basis for connecting these distinctions to higher levels in the hierarchy"

(Gutman, 1982, p. 71).

The means-end theory presents an appealing framework which more broadly represents the consumer meanings underlying product research (Gengler & Reynolds, 1995). It adds a much richer understanding of how consumers derive meaning from products.   Within this framework, the meanings serve to explain the underlying reasons why the consumer considers a given attribute to be significant. The association across attributes, consequences, and values are what provide a unique perspective on personally relevant consumer meaning.

Sample Population

Reynolds, Dethloff, and Westberg (as cited in Reynolds & Olson, 2001) suggests that "because laddering is often used to compare groups of consumers, groups can be defined" (p. 95) with distinct characteristics to determine if gaps exist between the groups. The current research distinguishes between two age groups; ages 18-28 and 35-54 to ensure perceptual differences by age are not buried in the results (as cited in Reynolds & Olson, 2001).

Research conducted by Fox & Madden (2005) found that teens (12 to 17) and Generation Y (18 to 28) have embraced online applications to communicate, be creative and for social uses. According to ComScore (http://www.comscore.com/press/release.asp?press=1019), 34% of visitors to Facebook are 18-24, however the demographic composition of both Facebook and Myspace has

been shifting to an older audience, with the age group 35-54 representing 40.6% and

33.5% of the Facebook and MySpace audience respectively. Based on the research

conducted by Fox & Madden and ComScore, Generation Y (18-28) and users aged 35-54

were selected as the sample population for the current study.

According to Reynolds, et al. (as cited in Reynolds & Olson, 2001) the general

rule of sample size for laddering research is a minimum of 20 respondents. To draw 20

samples from the online social network population, the researcher used known group,

snowball sampling, and the pass-along effect because the population of unique online

social network visitors exceeds 14 million. The sample population was split among the

defined age groups with 10 samples in the 18-28 age group and 10 among the 35-54 age

groups.

Known group is a sampling method that "selects events from groups that are

known to possess a particular characteristic under investigation" (Reinard, 2001, p. 293).

"Snowball sampling selects events based on referrals from initial informants" (Reinard,

2001, p. 294).   When contact occurs with a person in the group, that person is asked for

referrals to other individuals in the population group (Reinard, 2001). Known group

and snowball sampling were useful for the current research because it was not possible

to identify all members of the targeted population.

The pass-along effect is where "petitions via email to complete a survey may be forwarded beyond the intended sample" (Kaye & Johnson, 1999; Witte, Amoroso, & Howard, 2004, as cited in Norman & Russell, 2006, p. 1086). Research conducted by Norman & Russell (2006) demonstrated that the "pass-along effect can increase the total number of individuals who respond to a survey, via a mechanism similar to snowball sampling, which results in a larger sample" (p. 1097). Norman & Russell (2006) also suggest that pass-along respondents are especially suitable to research where snowball sampling is appropriate.

The current research used the pass-long effect only for the qualification survey. Issues of distinguishing original sample respondents and the validity issues associated with the additional respondents compromising data, therefore does not exist.

Participants were also recruited using a web link invitation in the MySpace and Facebook social network websites, word of mouth, and pass-along. The web link invitation asked the participant to first read, agree, and accept the informed consent (see Appendix II for the informed consent). Participants who agreed with informed consent indicated their acceptance by selecting 'agree' and entering their email address. Once the participant agreed with the informed consent, the qualifying survey was presented for completion. Participants that did not agree with the informed consent selected 'does

not agree', the qualifying survey was presented, however the researcher discarded the

results.

If the potential participant was face-to-face, they were given two copies of the

paper version of the informed consent, asked to read, agree, and accept the informed

consent. If the potential participant agreed with the informed consent, both documents

were signed by the potential participant and principal investigator; one copy for the

potential participant and one for the researcher. If the potential participant did not

agree with the informed consent, the process was terminated. After the informed

consent was signed, participants were presented with the qualifying survey to

complete.

Qualification Survey

The purpose of the qualification survey was to ensure that the participant is an

active member of an online social network. An active member of an online social

network is defined as a person who spends at least one hour per month looking at an

online social network (Szalai, 2007).

The qualification survey, found in Appendix III, consist of five questions to

determine if the potential interviewee meets the requirements for the sample

population. The qualification survey was available from January 1, 2008 through

September 30, 2008.

The researcher reviewed the qualification survey results to validate that the

participant qualified for the in-depth interview. After validating qualification for the

in-depth interview, the researcher contacted the potential participant via email or face-

to-face to schedule a time and location for the in-depth interview (see Appendix IV for

qualification notifications). All in-depth interviews were completed in November 2008.

Potential participants that did not qualify for the in-depth interview were also sent an

email or told face-to-face that they did not qualify for the interview and were thanked

for their time.

In-depth Interview Format

The in-depth interview process began by informing the participant of the

purpose of the research; see Appendix V for the interview script. Included in the script

was the instruction, "when you respond to the questions in this research think about

web advertising formats that you have been exposed to in your social network website,

not a single advertisement, or particular product or service." Research by Ducoffe

(1996) suggests that this instruction be provided to prevent participants from focusing

on a single advertisement or advertisement for a single product or service that may stir

up certain perceptions due to the type of advertising for brands in that category.

If an internet connection was available, the investigator presented the online

advertising formats electronically using the following websites for ad examples;

Internet Advertising Bureau, Media Live, DoubleClick, MySpace, Facebook, YouTube,

and NeilHair.com. Presenting the ads online helped to showcase the actual properties

of the ad formats, however for instances where network connectivity was not available,

printed images of the ads were presented to the participants.

To capture the general opinion of online advertising, participants were asked

two questions:

1.   What words first come to mind when I say "online advertising?" (Burns, 2003, p.
      183).

2.   What is your general attitude of online advertising? (Ducoffe, 1996; Burns, 2003).
      Participants were then provided instructions for the triadic sorting process,

"Next you will be presented with five groups of three different online advertising

formats. For each group of three, tell me how two of the advertising formats is the same

but different from the third" (see Appendix VIII for groupings). For example, if the

sample were cars and you were given a group of three cars: Pontiac G6, Mustang, and

Cadillac you might say two are sports cars and one is a luxury car (Reynolds &

Gutman, 1988). Take a moment to think about the online advertising formats, there is

no right or wrong answer.

"If the response for one group of online advertising formats is the same as a

previous group, try to think of another way in which the formats differ.   As you

identify the differences, write them down in the 'Differences' column on the triadic

sorting matrix provided to you. Once you have completed writing down the

differences, write down the opposites of those differences in the 'Differences Opposite'

column on the triadic sorting matrix. Don't worry about remembering everything I've

told you, I'll help you through this process."

The first group of three online advertising formats is displayed and the

respondent writes down the differences on a blank triadic sorting matrix form. If the

respondent provided fewer than three differences, the interviewer probed using

questions such as, "Can you think of any other differences?", or "Does anything else

come to mind?"

After the respondent completed writing down the differences, the interviewer

provided the participant with instructions on the next step, identifying the opposite of

the differences (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). The participant was asked, "You wrote

down a difference of X. What is the opposite of the X? Write down the opposite of X in

the 'Difference Opposite' column".

This process is repeated with each group of online advertising formats. After

presentation of all the online advertising format groups, the respondents were

instructed to place a check mark near the pole they most prefer for each line item.

After the respondent places a check mark for all the items, using the first

preferred pole, the researcher asks the respondent, "You stated x as your preferred pole,

in one sentence, tell me why this is important to you?   Please write your answer in the

last column on the matrix." If the respondent had difficulty thinking of a reason, the

interviewer will probe or ask "What would be some consequences if x did not take

place?"

To complete gathering the information required for triadic sorting, the

respondent rates each online advertising format on how close the ad format is to their

preferred polar using a 7 point scale (1= the ad format is close to the pole I prefer, 4=half

way between each pole, 7=the ad format is close to the pole I least prefer) (Gutman,

1982; Rossiter & Percy as cited in Reynolds & Olson, 2001). When the respondent

completes the ratings, the interviewer begins the final part of the interview process,

Preference Differences.

The interviewer then states, "The online advertising formats you've seen are

identified on these 3x5 cards. Place the 3 x 5 cards in order from the most preferred

online advertising format to the least preferred online advertising format when that

online advertising format is presented to you in your online social network."

Once the preference order was completed, the interviewer wrote down the

preference order identified by the respondent on the preference order matrix, and asked

the respondent: "You said your most preferred format is _____ and your second

most is _____. Why did you give format [#] a higher preference order than

format [#]? Why is that important to you? What happens to you as a result of that?"

(Reynolds, et al., as cited in Reynolds & Olson, 2001). The interviewer wrote down the

respondent replies on the preference order matrix. This process continued down the list

to the last online advertising format. The last part of the interview involved gathering

demographic information for statistical purposes only.

The information collected on the triadic sorting and preference difference

matrices were then analyzed using content analysis.

The content analysis involved labeling the constructs from the triadic sorting and

preference difference matrices as attributes (A), consequences (C) and values (V), to

make the data more manageable (Gutman, 1982).

Reliability and Validity

Prior to the implementation of the research methodology, the qualification

survey instrument and in-depth interview process was pre-tested using two students

and one adult. The pre-test facilitated a test of reliability using the test-retest method.

To test validity, the researcher used an expert jury. Experts in the area of

communication and marketing at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) reviewed

the survey. One expert is a communication professor in the RIT College of Liberal Arts

and the other expert is a marketing professor in the RIT College of Business.

Treatment of data for purposes of analysis.

To analyze the laddering data, below are the steps followed by the researcher.

1. Coding of laddering data.

2. Content analysis.

3. Creating a hierarchical value map to represent the main implications (Gengler &

    Reynolds, 1995; Reynolds & Gutman, 1988).

    Coding of laddering data.

    Coding is a complicated process that gives a lot of latitude to the researcher. The

    raw data used for coding, interviewer notes and laddering schemes already

    involve a loss of information compared to the original interview, the interviewer,

    who has conducted the interview will be the best possible coder because she or

    he will remember part of the context information. A second coder, who does not

    have this background information, may perform the coding in a different way

    due to this lack of implicit context information which is a good reason to have

    the interviewers code the data themselves and to avoid parallel coders (Grunert,

    Beckmann & Sorensen as cited in Reynolds & Olson, 2001, p. 78).

    The conversational data is reviewed and separated into phrases that represent

the concepts expressed by the individuals. Once the laddering data is separated into

phrases, the next step is to categorize the constructs into attributes, consequences or

values to identify common meanings, followed by the development of summary

content codes.

Content analysis.

The primary objective of the content analysis is to create summary code

categories distinctive enough to place all elements.

The categorized data is entered into an implication matrix which displays the

number of times each element leads to each other element (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988).

"Two types of relations may be represented in this matrix: direct and indirect relations"

(Reynolds & Gutman, 1988, p. 20).

Direct relations are those in which one element leads directly to another with no

other elements in between and indirect elements are those in which there is an a

element in-between another element (Baker, 2002). For example:

<div align="center">

Sense of Belonging (27) – value

|

Influence Click-through (20) – consequence

|

Personalization (10) – attribute

</div>
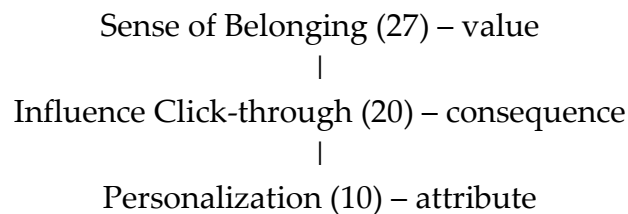
In this example, the relationship (10)-(20) is a direct one, as is (20)-(27). The

indirect relationship is (10)-(27).

Once the implication matrix is completed, the hierarchical value map (HVM) is

constructed.

Constructing the hierarchical value map.

To begin constructing the HVM, a relations cutoff level was selected to evaluate

solutions (Reynolds & Olson, 2001). According to Reynolds & Gutman (1988), usually

three to five relations is the cutoff for a sample of 50-60 individuals with the intent to

map all relations above the cutoff level (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988).

Next connected pairs are built up from the chains extracted from the implication

matrix, relations between attributes are not recorded (Reynolds & Olson, 2001).

According to Reynolds and Olson (2001), "considerable ingenuity is needed for this

task, with the only guideline begin that one should try at all costs to avoid crossing

lines" (p. 47). Attributes are located at the bottom of the map. Consequences which the

user perceives as the immediate result from the corresponding attributes are located in

the middle of the map. "Values placed at the top of the map represent personally

relevant goals or objectives achieved by the lower level consequences" (Gengler &

Reynolds, 1995, p. 27).

As stated by Gengler & Reynolds (1995) the connection between the attributes,

consequences and values represent personal meaning.

These links are actually the key to understanding and using an HVM, for two

reasons. First, being able to identify the connections between concepts in the

mind of the consumer is essential to understanding the perceptual basis for

decision-making. This represents the cardinal insights offered by an in-depth

understanding of the consumer. Second, once a positioning strategy is

determined, the creative task essentially involves developing words, images,

and/or symbols that will create the desired connections in the mind of the

consumer. Thus, focusing on the connections between concepts is central to both

understanding and using laddering research (p. 27).

The following section discusses the results of analyzing the laddering data.

Results

To gather online social network user attitude toward online advertising formats,

participant interviews were conducted between January 2008 and November 2008. A

total of 20 interviews were conducted, 10 in each age group, lasting approximately 60-

90 minutes.

Table 1 shows the sample population almost evenly divided between male and

female respondents. College graduates made up 45% of the sample population and

30% had some college education but no degree. 75% of the sample population was

employed full-time, with 50% earning between $25,000 and $49,999, 20% declined to

answer this question. Black/African American ethnic group represented 70% of the

sample population.

Table 1: Respondent Demographics

Characteristic	N	%
Gender		
Male	9	45%
Female	11	55%
Age		
18-28	10	50%
35-54	10	50%
Education		
High School Graduate or Equivalent	2	10%
Some College, no degree	6	30%
College Graduate	9	45%
Completed some graduate school, no degree	2	10%
Graduate degree (e.g., M.S., M.A., J.D., Ph.D.)	1	5%
Employment		
Employed Full-Time	15	75%
Employed Part-Time	1	5%
College Student	3	15%
Not Employed	1	5%
Annual Income Before Taxes		
Less than $15,000	3	15%
$25,000 to $34,999	6	30%
$35,000 to $49,999	4	20%
$50,000 to $74,999	1	5%
$75,000 to $99,999	1	5%
$100,000 to $124,999	1	5%
Decline to answer	4	20%
Ethnic Group		
White	3	15%
Black/African American	14	70%
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	10%
Other	1	5%

The results in Table 2 show that MySpace is the profile the sample population uses or updates the most.

Table 2: Social Network Membership

Online Social Network	N	%
MySpace	12	60%
Facebook	3	15%
LinkedIn	3	15%
BlackPlanet	2	10%

As shown in Tables 3 and 4, 80% of respondents visited their preferred online social network multiple times per day and estimated spending more than 57 minutes per week in the online social network.

Table 3: Frequency of Visits

Frequency of Visits to Online Social Network	N	%
Multiple times per day	16	80%
Once a day	2	10%
Once a week	2	10%

Table 4: Weekly Time Spent in Online Social Network

Frequency of Visits to Online Social Network	N	%
More than 57 minutes	18	90%
47-57 minutes	1	5%
26-46 minutes	1	5%

Although this investigation is regarding attitude toward online advertising formats in online social networks, to establish the general attitude toward online advertising, the researcher asked two questions: what words first come to mind when I say online advertising and what is your general attitude about online advertising?

The response to question one was generally negative. Comments included, "ignore it," "overwhelming," "abundance," and "constant." Some comments were descriptors of advertising, such as "branding," "images," and "interactivity." Responses to the question on general attitude toward online advertising indicated that respondents held unfavorable attitudes toward online advertising, similar to the results found by Previte and Forrester, 1998. Several respondents expressed more aversion to online advertising stating, "I tend to disregard online advertising," "I won't click on the ad to search for more information," and "I tend to not read online advertising because there are too many ads, I may just skim over them."

70% of the respondents selected Black/African American as their ethnic group. The demographics of the current study along with the unfavorable general attitude toward online advertising differ from the results of Shavitt, et al., 1998 which indicated that nonwhites reported more favorable attitudes. However, with 60% of the respondents identified as college graduates, some graduate school, or having a

graduate degree, the results agree with the supposition by Shavitt, et al. (1998) that

highly educated respondents have more negative attitudes toward advertising.

Following are the results of respondent evaluations of online advertising formats

obtained through the laddering process.

Categorization of Constructs

The constructs were examined and listed resulting in a total of 728 constructs for

the 18-28 age group and 665 for the 35-54 age groups. The constructs per age group

were then categorized by attribute, consequence, and value, as shown in Table 5. The

constructs were then grouped based on a common meaning.

Table 5: Categorized Constructs

Age Group	Attributes	Consequences	Values
18-28	209	277	242
35-54	197	245	223

The researcher developed summary content code categories distinctive enough

to place all elements. Table 6 contains the summary content codes and their assigned

number.

Table 6: Master Codes

Attributes	Consequences	Values
1. Amusement	13. Brand Experience	22. Self-Control
2. Animation	14. Choice	23. Curiosity
3. Annoyance	15. Disruptive	24. Entertaining
4. Brand Recognition	16. Pay Attention	25. Focus
5. Control	17. Force Action	26. Knowledge
6. Eye-Catching	18. Human Expression	27. Sense of Belonging
7. Feedback	19. Ignore	28. Unpleasant
8. Informative Content	20. Influence Click-through	
9. Interactivity	21. Influence Purchase Behavior	
10. Personalization		
11. Placement		
12. Size		

Implication Matrix

The next step involved the creation of the implication matrix which shows "the number of times each element leads to each other element" (Baker, 2002, p. 241). The implication matrix uses numbers expressed in fractional form to show direct and indirect relations; direct relations are recorded to the left of the decimal point and indirect relations to the right of the decimal (Baker, 2002). The implication matrices for each age group are included in Appendix IX.

The HVM

To begin creating the HVM, the researcher selected a cutoff level of three relations to evaluate solutions from the implications matrix. Starting with the first row of the implication matrix, where there is a value at the cutoff level of three, the first

significant value for the 18-28 age group is "amusement-pay attention" (1, 16) with a

value of 8.00 indicating 8 direct relations and 0 indirect relations between these two

elements. The researcher continues across the row to the next significant relation

"influence purchase behavior" (21) yielding a 1-16-21 chain. The process starts over

again with the second row and continues until each row has been reviewed.

The relations plotted on the HVM are divided into three parts, attributes,

consequences and values along the vertical axis, along with "verbatim examples under

each code" as suggested by Gengler and Reynolds (1995, p. 27).

Once the HVM is constructed, any pathway which leads from attribute to the

value level is considered a potential chain representing a "perceptual orientation or

"ways of thinking" (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988, p. 13). According to Reynolds and

Gutman (1988), "it is the relationships between the elements that are the focus of

interest, not the elements themselves" (p. 19).

18-28 age group.

The HVM for the 18-28 age group is presented in Figure 1. As seen in the HVM,

there are a number of pathways for moving from attribute to consequence, then to the

values level. In some instances there is no path to the values level, e.g., animation (2)

→disruptive (15) path, demonstrating that perceptions do not always tie to higher

values (Reynolds & Gutman, 1984). Since the values-consequence linkage is a critical

linkage to the means-end chain (Rokeach, 1973 as cited by Gutman, 1982), to examine

the HVM, the researcher traced the paths with attribute to values linkages (Reynolds &

Gutman, 1984) and reviewed the number of relations going to and from each element to

determine the dominant chains.

The attributes with an attribute to values path are "feedback (7)," "annoyance

(3)," "animation (2),"   "personalization (10)," "brand recognition (4)," "control (5),"

"eye-catching (6)," "informative content (8)," interactivity (9)," and "amusement (1)."

As shown by number of paths leading to and from "pay attention (16)" and

"influence click-through (20)" these two elements are seen as key consequences.

"Entertaining (24)," "knowledge (26)," and "unpleasant (28)" are viewed as key values

and key attributes are "eye-catching (6)", and "informative content (8)."

Based on the above key attributes, consequences, and values, the researcher

traced the attributes to values path and two dominant chains emerged:

Eye-catching (6) →pay attention (16) →focus (25) →unpleasant (28)

Informative content (8) →influence click-through (20) →knowledge (26)

The first dominant orientation, eye-catching (6) →pay attention (16) →focus (25)

→unpleasant (28) reveals a strong direct link to the consequence "pay attention." The

consequence "pay attention" has a direct link to the value "focus" and a direct link to

the "unpleasant" value. This chains indicates respondent preferences for online

advertising that is eye-catching, capturing their attention, but if the advertising requires

too much focus that takes them away from social network activities it becomes

"unpleasant."

In the next dominant orientation, "informative content" leads to the much

desired consequence of "influences click-through," which is directly linked to the

"knowledge" value.

Figure 1: 18-28 HVM
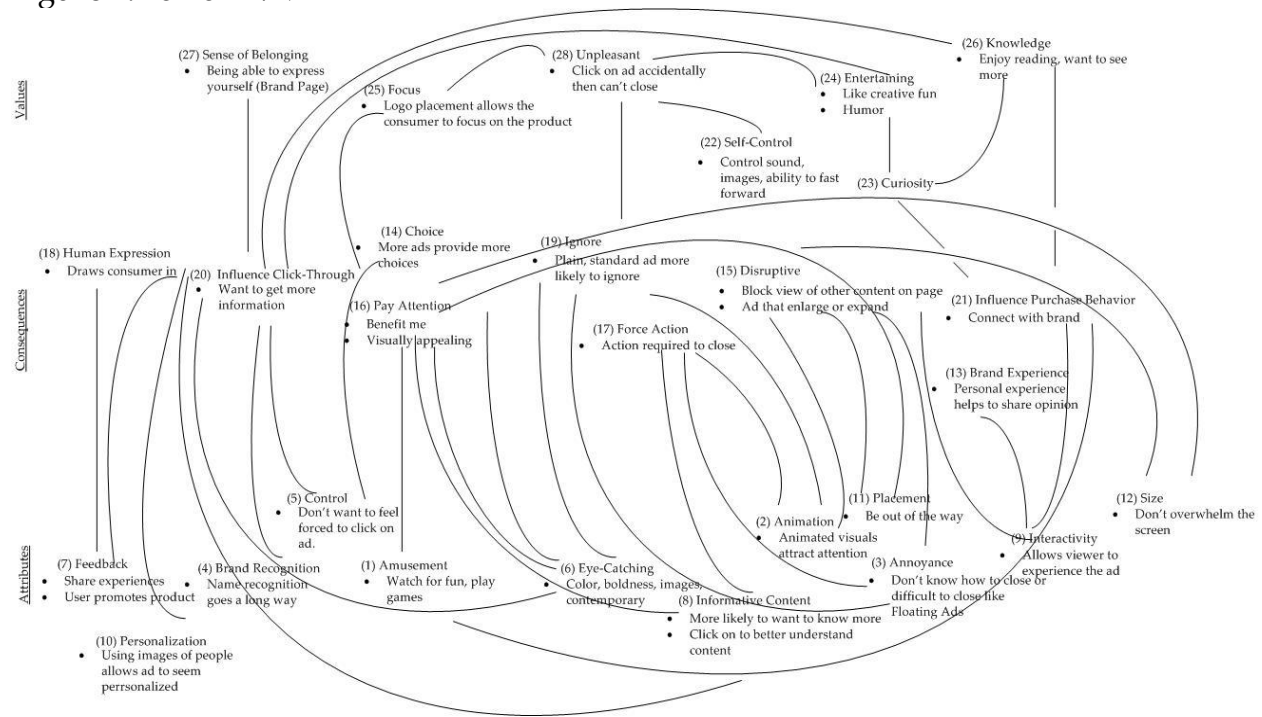
For the 18-28 age group, online advertisers would benefit from incorporating the

key attributes "eye-catching" and "informative content" in online advertising formats

to build a strong link to the positive values and consequences, especially the much

coveted "influence click-through."

35-54 age group.

The 35-54 age group HVM is shown in Figure 2. All the attributes for the 35-54

age group have at least one attribute to values path. Based on the number of relations

going to and from "disruptive (15)" and "pay attention (16)," they may be seen as key

consequences and "unpleasant (28)" and "knowledge (26)" as key values. Key

attributes are "placement (11)" and "informative content (8)." Two dominant chains

emerge:

Placement (11) →disruptive (15) →unpleasant (28)

Informative content (8) →pay attention (16) →knowledge (26)

The first dominant chain, placement (11) →disruptive (15) →unpleasant (28)

shows that the placement of online advertising plays a key role in whether or not an

advertising format is considered "disruptive" to the online social network user and

therefore moves the consumer towards an "unpleasant" end state of mind.   The chain

shows that the online social network users do not like online advertising formats that

interrupt social network activities. A comment by Participant #5 demonstrates this

perceptual orientation, "Ads should be placed where they don't interfere with other

activities, like off to the side, when ads are placed in the middle of a page or somewhere

where they're in the way, I don't like it, it's not good."

In the second dominant chain, "informative content" causes the online social network user to "pay attention" to the advertising and is perceived to fulfill the user's "knowledge" value.

For the 35-54 age group, advertisers would benefit from considering where ads are placed in the online social network environment and focus on strengthening the perception of "informative content" to increase the online social network user's "knowledge."

Figure 2: 35-54 HVM
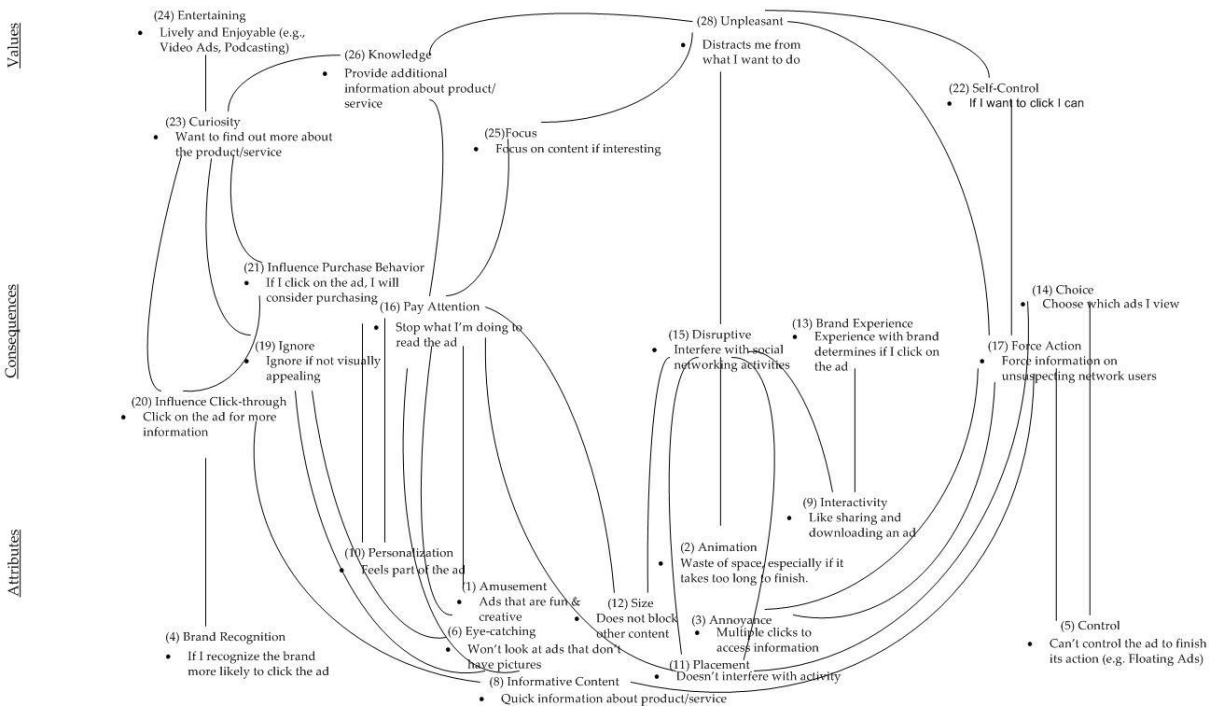
The results of the HVM for both age groups only represent general perceptual orientations, it does not provide guidance for specific online advertising formats (Reynolds, Dethloff, & Westberg as cited in Reynolds & Olson, 2001). For the various

online advertising formats the user may respond differently to elements of the

dominant chains, therefore a frequency data matrix was created for additional

laddering analysis. The frequency matrix highlights the preferences and reactions to

the specific online advertising formats.

Frequency Data Matrix

Given that the ladder distinctions were elicited from comparisons, they are

format specific and can be negative or positive for an online advertising format,

"depending on whether the elements are desired or undesired" (Reynolds, Dethloff, &

Westber as cited in Reynolds & Olson, 2001, p. 113).

The frequency data matrix is created with key attributes along one axis and the

online advertising formats with positive and negative poles along the other (Reynolds,

Dethloff, & Westberg as cited in Reynolds & Olson, 2001).

According to Reynolds, Dethloff, and Westberg (as cited in Reynolds & Olson,

2001), to analyze the frequency data matrix, the elements mentioned most often are

considered more important, elements mentioned most often as positive are considered a

strength and weaknesses are those elements that are mentioned most often as negative.

Only the attributes with an attributes to values path are included in the frequency

tables.

The frequency data matrix for the 18-28 age group shown in Table 7 identifies the top three elements mentioned most often by the online social network user are; "eye-catching," "amusement," and "informative content." These elements are consistent with the dominant HVM chain with the addition of the "amusement" attribute.

Online social network users perceived "eye-catching" as the most important strength based on the frequency. When looking at the specific online advertising formats, the research shows that the formats where the attribute "eye-catching" was mentioned most frequently (>=4) and positively were vertical banner, podcast, video, and brand page. Also noteworthy, is that although floating ads are considered eye-catching, it is not perceived as a strength but a weakness of the format.

"Informative content" is another attribute perceived as an important strength. The online advertising formats perceived to embody a strong "informative content" attribute are leader board, and sponsorships.

The third important attribute was identified as "amusement."   The online advertising formats where the "amusement" attribute was mentioned most frequently were blogs and video.

Overall, for the 18-28 age group the online advertising formats perceived most positively, with a frequency equal to or greater than 10, were blogs, video, brand page,

and brand channel. The online advertising formats with the most negative attributes

were the expandable and floating formats.

Table 7: 18-28 Age Group Frequency

Attribute Theme	Standard Banner Ad 468 x 60 Pixels		Leader Board Banner 768 x 90 Pixels		Banner Ad 234 x 60 Pixels		Skyscrapers 120 x 600 Pixels		Vertical Banner Ad 120 x 240 Pixels		Pop-up		Floating		Sponsorships	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
1 Amusement	3															
2 Animation		2		2							2			5		
3 Annoyance																
4 Brand Recognition					1				2						2	
5 Control													2	3		
6 Eye-Catching			1	1	1		3		4					4		
7 Feedback																
8 Informative Content			4		3	1			1					2	5	
9 Interactivity													4	5		
10 Personalization	4				3				2							
Total	7	2	5	3	8	1	3		9		2		6	19	7	

Attribute Theme	Blogs		Online games		Expandable		Podcast		Video		Brand Channel		Brand Page		Total
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	
1 Amusement	4						2		8						17
2 Animation						5									16
3 Annoyance						9									9
4 Brand Recognition									2				3		10
5 Control						4					3				12
6 Eye-Catching							4		4		3		5		30
7 Feedback	5										4		2		11
8 Informative Content	3					3			3						25
9 Interactivity			4			3									16
10 Personalization															9
Total	12		4		24		6		17		10		10		

Table 8 displays the segmentation frequency data for the 35-54 age group. Based

on the HVM, all the attributes have an attribute to values path, therefore all are

included in the frequency table.

Table 8: 35-54 Age Group Frequency

Attribute Theme	Standard Banner Ad 468 x 60 Pixels		Leader Board Banner 768 x 90 Pixels		Banner Ad 234 x 60 Pixels		Skyscrapers 120 x 600 Pixels		Vertical Banner Ad 120 x 240 Pixels		Pop-up		Floating	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
1 Amusement			1						1					
2 Animation					2							3		5
3 Annoyance												6		10
4 Brand Recognition					1									
5 Control												4		4
6 Eye-Catching	2	1	3	1	1		1		1	3				
7 Feedback														
8 Informative Content			1				2		2					3
10 Personalization	2		3		3		3		3					
11 Placement	1							2				10		9
12 Size			2		2		1					4		4
Total	5	1	10	1	9	0	7	2	7	3		27	0	35

Attribute Theme	Sponsorships		Blogs		Online games		Expandable		Podcast		Video		Brand Channel		Brand Page		Total
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	
1 Amusement									2		3		2				9
2 Animation							5										15
3 Annoyance							12										28
4 Brand Recognition	3												2			1	7
5 Control	2						7										17
6 Eye-Catching									1		8		1			2	25
7 Feedback			1										1			4	6
8 Informative Content	2		2				2		1				3			2	20
10 Personalization										3	1						18
11 Placement					2		8						2				34
12 Size													1			1	15
Total	7	0	3	0	2		34		4	3	12		12		10		

Based on the total frequency, "annoyance," "eye-catching," "informative content," and "placement" were perceived as important attributes. "Informative content" and "placement" as key attributes are consistent with the HVM.

"Annoyance" was perceived as a strong negative but important attribute. The online advertising formats perceived to have a strong "annoyance" attribute were pop-up, floating, and expandable.

The attribute "eye-catching" is perceived as an important strength and the video online advertising format is the only format perceived as exhibiting a strong eye-catching attribute.

The next important attribute is "informative content." "Informative content" was perceived as a positive attribute for most of the online advertising formats, but negative for floating and expandable ads.

The final and most important attribute in the matrix is "placement" with a total frequency of 34. The "placement" attribute is perceived primarily as a negative weakness. The online advertising formats most frequently viewed as having the negative "placement" attribute were pop-up, floating, and expandable ads.

Based on a total frequency equal to or greater than 10, the 35-54 age group perceived pop-up, floating and expandable online advertising formats as having the most negative attributes, which is the similar to the 18-28 age group, with the addition of pop-ups. The online advertising formats perceived as containing the most positive attributes were the leader board, video and brand channel with a frequency equal to or greater than 10.

Discussion

Previous research on attitude toward online advertising conducted by Ducoffe 1996; Briggs & Hollis, 1997; 1996 Previte & Forrester, 1998; Scholsser, et al., 1999;

Brackett & Carr, 2001; Wolin, et al., 2002; and Burns & Lutz, 2006 used surveys as their primary research method. In the research where constructs were used, the constructs were based on prior research (Previte & Forrester, 1998, Scholsser, et al., 1999).

To answer the question "what are the attitudes of social network members toward online advertising formats," the current research used the laddering process to uncover and evaluate respondent perceptions of online advertising. The laddering process is a not only a departure from the use of surveys, it fills the recommendation by Shavitt, et al., 1998 that future research use questions that are phrased to identify perceptions about the impact of advertisements and recommendations by Brackett & Carr, 2001; Wolin, et al., 2002; Burns & Lutz , 2006; and Ha, 2008 to understand the underlying determinants of attitudes toward a variety of online advertising formats.

This chapter summarizes key findings, relevance to the study's research questions, and the research presented in the literature review.

Summary of Key Findings

Online social network user attitude toward online advertising formats differed slightly across age group. For the 18-28 age group, the online advertising formats perceived to have strong positive attributes were blogs, video, brand channel and brand page. The 35-54 age group perceived the leader board, video and brand channel to have the strongest positive attributes. Based on the number of online advertising

formats that were perceived positively for both age groups, the current study finds that contrary to the findings of Brackett & Carr, 2001, not all internet advertising formats were found to be irritating or annoying.

The attributes that were considered key for the 18-28 year old online social network user based on the dominant HVM chain and the frequency data matrix were "eye-catching," "informative content," and "amusement." For the 35-54 age group the key attributes were "eye-catching," "annoyance," "informative content," and "placement."

The informative content, annoyance, and amusement attributes are similar to those found by Ducoffe, 1996; Scholsser, et al., 1999; and Burns & Lutz, 2006. Informative content as a key attribute to values element in the HMV confirms the findings by Brackett & Carr, 2001 that informativeness directly impacts attitude toward online advertising.

The current research introduces a new attribute, for the 35-54 age group, that influences the attitude toward online advertising formats, placement. The placement attribute was not identified as a key attribute for the 18-28 age group. Future research should test the placement factor with online advertising outside of online social networks to determine if this factor is only significant in online social networks.

The online advertising formats with positive perceptions were leader board, blogs, video, brand page, and brand channel. The online advertising formats with the most negative attributes were the pop-ups, expandable and floating formats. The online advertising formats that were perceived positively were not a surprise to the researcher, with the exception of the leader board.   These results provide evidence for the statement made by Holahan, 2007, that social network users are less responsive to standard ad formats than to newer formats.

A potential explanation for the positive perception of the blogs, video, brand page, and brand channel may be that these formats are perceived to be better integrated into the online social network environment and activities. Future research should further explore this explanation.

The current study also demonstrates that the proposition by Clemons, et al. (2007) that advertising on Facebook or MySpace will be unseen or ignored, and it will not be welcome, trusted or credible is not entirely true. The study confirms that attitude varies per format and format is a key driver of the online social network user attitude towards online advertising formats, similar to the results of Burns & Lutz (2006).

 Online advertising formats with positive attributes are welcomed; however the online social network users do not like intrusive advertising or advertising that

interferes with online social networking activities, such as expandable and floating

formats.

The online advertising formats perceived negatively, pop-ups, expandable and

floating formats were also not a surprise to the researcher. An explanation may be

found in some of the participant comments such as, not being able to easily close these

format types, amount of screen space used by these formats and their overall

interference with social network activities. A benefit of the expandable and floating ads

is that they contain a lot of information about a product or service, but with a perceived

high annoyance factor the useful information gets lost.

The current research conclusively demonstrates that online social network users

favorable and unfavorable attitudes toward online advertising differ based on the

advertising formats. To create a favorable experience for the online social network user,

advertisers should use the online advertising formats that exhibit the attributes that are

perceived positively and refrain from using formats with attributes that are perceived

negatively or activate undesirable consequences or values.

Implications for Advertisers and Academia

As online social networks become more integrated into marketing plans, a major

benefit of the current study is the insight it provides for advertising strategy. The

current research provides marketers with attributes in the HVM that will elicit

consequences and values that may encourage online social network users to look at or

click-through an advertisement. Most importantly, the current research identifies the

key positive and negative attributes of each online advertising format.

The frequency data matrix can be used in media planning as it shows which

online advertising formats should be given more attention than others based on the

positive perceptions. For example, brand page and brand channel are perceived

positively by both age groups, therefore advertisers should create a brand page or

brand channel to expand advertising opportunities, increase their brand presence and

engage online social network users.

The results of the current study may be used as a tool to create marketing

strategies that enhance the perception of online advertising formats and assist in

overcoming unfavorable attitudes toward online advertising in online social networks.

Limitations and Future Research

A major benefit of using the means-end approach is the ability to construct an

attribute→value connection. The current research was an opportunity to apply the

laddering process for evaluating advertising format instead of a product or service. The

output from laddering process provides researchers with a better understanding of how

online social network users make distinctions between the online advertising formats

that are thrust upon them in their online social network sites.

The means-end approach carries a few limitations in its application, the first being that the laddering process is manually intensive and requires a considerable amount of time to complete. The second limitation is the conversion of laddering data into an HVM. The ability to create an HVM without crossing lines was very difficult. The final limitation was creating an HVM which represented each online advertising format instead of a frequency data matrix.

The study recommends a couple of areas for future research. The first area would be to validate the dominant chains and key attributes with a larger sample population. Another area for future research mentioned earlier, is to explore the potential explanation that blogs, video, brand page, and brand channels are better integrated into the online social network environment and activities.

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Appendix 1: Top Social Networking Websites (Prescott, 2006)

1. MySpace
2. Facebook
3. Xange
4. Yahoo!360
5. BlackPlanet
6. Bebo
7. Classmates
8. LiveJournal
9. hi5
10. Tagged
11. Gaia Online
12. Sconex
13. Friendster
14. Bolt
15. Windows Live Spaces
16. Orkut
17. myYearbook
18. CrushSpot
19. MiGente
20. Pizco

Appendix II: Informed Consent

TITLE OF RESEARCH

The title of this research project is: Online Social Network Member Attitude toward Online Advertising Formats in Online Social Networks. This is marketing research being conducted by Shirley A. Cox, graduate student at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and supervised by Dr. Susan Barnes, professor at RIT.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Due to the predicted growth of advertising in online social networks, a cluttered online advertising environment, and expanding online advertising media, the advertising industry must be concerned about how online social network members view online advertising formats. Therefore, the purpose of the marketing research is to learn how online social network members feel about the various online advertising formats presented in online social networks.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

If you agree to participate in this study you will first complete an online survey to determine if you meet the requirements for the in-depth interview. The qualification survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete online. If you meet the qualifications, the next step is to schedule a time and location for an in-depth interview that focuses on determining how you feel about the online advertising formats found in

social networks.   The in-depth interview will include illustrations of the various advertising formats and will take 1-1.5 hours to complete in a face-to-face setting.   The interview will be recorded on a tape recorder to ensure responses are captured accurately.

No compensation will be provided to you for participating in the qualification survey, however once the in-depth interview is complete you will be given $25 to thank you for your participation.

This study involves no anticipated risks or potential benefits to you. Your name will only be used for the informed consent, it will not be included as part of the in-depth interview. Participation in this study is purely voluntary; there is no penalty for not participating. You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Shirley A. Cox, graduate student, Rochester Institute of Technology, College of Liberal Arts at (585) 261-5356 or Dr. Susan Barnes, Rochester Institute of Technology, College of Liberal Arts at (585) 475-4695.

Agreement:

I have read the above procedures. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure described above and have received a copy of this description.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix III: Qualification Survey

Thank you for participating in this marketing research. Before we set up an interview,

we need to ask a few questions to make sure you qualify to participate in the study.

1.   Do you ever use an online social networking website like MySpace or Facebook?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No [Terminate Interview Not Qualified]

2.   Have you ever created your own profile online in an online social networking website like MySpace or Facebook?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No [Terminate Interview Not Qualified]

3.   Where is the profile you use or update most often?
- ☐ MySpace
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Xanga
- ☐ BeBo
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Other:_____
- ☐ Don't Know [Terminate not qualified]

4.   How often do you visit online social network websites?
- ☐ Multiple times during the day
- ☐ Once a day
- ☐ Once a Week
- ☐ Twice a Month
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ Don't know [Terminate not qualified]

5.   How much time per week do you spend in social networking websites?
- ☐ > 57 Minutes
- ☐ 47-57 Minutes
- ☐ 26-46 Minutes
- ☐ 25-15 Minutes
- ☐ Less than or equal to 14 minutes [Terminate not qualified]

☐ Don't know [Terminate not qualified]

6.   Age

☐ 18-20		☐ 35-39
☐ 21-23		☐ 40-44
☐ 24-26		☐ 45-49
☐ 26-28		☐ 50-54

Appendix IV: Qualification Notification

If Qualified:

You have qualified to participate in this marketing research. The next step is set up a time and location to meet for the in-depth interview. The in-depth interview will last approximately 1-1.5 hours; in return you will be paid $25.

If interview terminated at any point or the interviewee does not qualify:

Thank you for time and we appreciate your willingness to participate in this marketing research, however, we're looking for more active online social network users.

Appendix V: In-Depth Interview Discussion Guide and Script

Each 1-1.5 hour depth interview will cover online advertising formats.

Explain purpose of interview:

Interviewer: "The purpose of this interview is to learn what you think about online advertising in your online social network. We'll start the interview with questions about your general attitude about online advertising. When responding to the questions in this research think about web advertising formats that you have been exposed to in your online social network website, not a single advertisement, or particular product or service" Let's begin.

1.   What words first come to mind when I say "online advertising?" (Burns, 2003, p. 183)

2.   What is your general attitude about online advertising? (Ducoffe, 1996; Burns, 2003).

Interviewer: Next you will be presented with five groups of three different online advertising formats. For each group of three, tell me how two of the advertising formats is the same but different than the third. For example, if the sample were cars and you were given a group of three cars: Pontiac G6, Mustang, and Cadillac you might say two are sports cars and one is a luxury car (Reynolds & Gutman, 2001).

As I present each group take a moment to think about the three online advertising formats, there is no right or wrong answer. If the response for one group of online advertising formats is the same as a previous group, try to think of another way in which the formats differ.   As you identify the differences, write them down in the 'Differences' column on the triadic sorting matrix provided to you. Once you have completed writing down the differences, write down the opposites of those differences in the 'Differences Opposite' column on the implications matrix. Don't worry about remembering everything I've told you, I'll help you through this process.

Here's the first group of online advertising formats. *[Interviewer displays the first group of advertising formats on the interviewer's laptop.]* What are some important way in which two of the three online advertising formats are the same and yet different from the third?

Interviewer Instructions:

If the respondent provides fewer than three differences, the interviewer will probe using questions such as, "Can you think of any other differences?", or "Does anything else come to mind?" *Once the respondent has completed identifying differences, next the respondent will need to identify the opposites of those differences.*

Interviewer: You wrote down a difference of x. What is the opposite of the x? Write down the opposite of x in the 'Difference Opposite' column.

The interviewer will then present the next group of online advertising formats and repeat the process steps through the explanation of answers and reasons on the triadic sorting matrix.

Interviewer: Now that we've identified the ad polarities, let's take a look at the next group of ads. *The process is repeated for the remaining online advertising groups through the completion of the explanation on the triadic sorting matrix.*

Upon presentation of all the online advertising format groups, the interviewer will ask "For each line item, please place a check mark near either the difference or its opposite that you most prefer."

After the respondent records the polar opposite, the next step is to identify the preferred pole. *Interviewer*: "You stated x as your preferred pole, in one sentence, tell me why this is important to you?" Please write your answer in the last column of the matrix." *[Interview Instruction]* If the respondent has difficulty thinking of a reason, the interviewer will ask "What would be some consequences if x did not take place?

After the respondent places a check mark for all the line items, the interviewer will instruct the respondent on the final action required to complete the triadic sorting matrix.

Interviewer: For the last part of the matrix, please rate each online advertising format on

a scale 7-point scale based how close the online advertising format is to each of the

poles that you prefer, 1= the ad format is close to the pole I prefer, 4=half way between

each pole, 7=the ad format is closer to the pole I least prefer (Gutman, 1982; Rossiter &

Percy as cited in Reynolds & Olson, 2001).

When the respondent completes the ratings, the interviewer will introduce to the final part of the

in-depth interview process.

Interviewer: The advertising formats you've seen online are identified on these 3x5

cards. Place the 3 x 5 cards in order from the most preferred online advertising format

to the least preferred online advertising format when that online advertising format is

presented to you in your online social network.

Interviewer Instruction:

Once the preference order is completed, the interviewer will write down the preference order

identified by the respondent on the preference order matrix, and ask the respondent the following:

"You said your most preferred format is _____ and your second most is

_____. Why did you give format [#] a higher preference order than format

[#]? Why is that important to you? What happens to you as a result of that?"

(Reynolds, et al., as cited in Reynolds & Olson, 2001). *The interviewer will write down the*

respondent replies on the preference order matrix. This process will continue down the list to the

last online advertising format.

We're almost done with the interview; the last part of the interview will be demographic questions that will be used for statistical purposes only.

Demographic Information

1.   Sex
        ☐ Male
        ☐ Female

2.   Age
        ☐ 18-20   ☐ 35-39
        ☐ 21-23   ☐ 40-44
        ☐ 24-26   ☐ 45-49
        ☐ 26-28   ☐ 50-54

3.   What is the highest education you have completed or the highest degree you
        have received?
            ☐ Less than High School
            ☐ Some High School
            ☐ High School Graduate or Equivalent (i.e., GED)
            ☐ Some Trade School, no degree or certification
            ☐ Trade School Graduate
            ☐ Some College, no degree
            ☐ College Graduate
            ☐ Completed some graduate school, no degree
            ☐ Graduate degree (e.g. M.S., M.A., J.D., Ph.D.)
            ☐ Other

4.   What is your employment status?
            ☐ Employed Full-Time

☐ Employed Part-Time
☐ Self-Employed
☐ Homemaker
☐ College Student
☐ Retired
☐ Not Employed but looking for work
☐ Not Employed but not looking for work
☐ Other: _____

5.   Which of the following represents your current annual income before taxes?
☐ Less than $15,000
☐ $15,000 to $24,999
☐ $25,000 to $34,999
☐ $35,000 to $49,999
☐ $50,000 to $74,999
☐ $75,000 to $99,999
☐ $100,000 to $124,999
☐ $125,000 to $149,999
☐ $150,000 to $199,999
☐ $200,000 to $249,000
☐ $250,000 or more
☐ Decline to answer

6.   In which state do you currently reside?

7.   Which of the following ethnic groups do you most closely identify?
☐ White
☐ Black/African American
☐ Hispanic (non-white)
☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
☐ Native American or Alaskan Native
☐ Other: Please specify: _____
☐ Decline to answer

Congratulations, you've reached the end of the interview. Your time and participation

are greatly appreciated and in return for your time you will be paid $25. If you have

any questions after the interview please feel free to contact me at sam5632@rit.edu.

Appendix VI: Triadic Sorting Matrix

	Interview Date:																				
	Interview #:																				
			AD FORMATS																		
			1. Standard Banner Ad: 468 x 60 Pixels	2. Leader Board Banner: 768 x 90 Pixels	3. Banner Ad: 234 x 60 Pixels	4. Skyscrapers: 120 x 600 Pixels	5. Vertical Banner Ad 120 x 240 Pixels	6. Pop-up Ads	7. Floating Ads	8. Sponsorships	9. Blogs	10. Online Games	11. Expandable Ad	12. Podcasting	13. Video Ads	14. Brand Channels	15. Brand Page				Please provide additional information that explains your answer, include examples and tell us why this is important to you.
	Differences	Difference Preferred ⚜																		Difference Opposite Preferred ⚜	Difference Opposite	
1																						

2

Appendix VII: Preference Order Matrix

	Interview Date:	
	Interview #:	
	Preference Order	Why did you give format [#] a higher preference order than format [#]? Why is that important to you? What happens to you as a result of that?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		

	Interview Date:	
	Interview #:	
	Preference Order	Why did you give format [#] a higher preference order than format [#]? Why is that important to you? What happens to you as a result of that?
12		
13		
14		
15		

Appendix VIII: Ad Samples and Groupings

Group 1

1.   Standard Banner Ad: 468 x 60 Pixels

2.   Leader Board Banner: 768 x 90 Pixels

3.   Banner: 234 x 60 Pixels

 Group 2

4.   Skyscrapers: 120 x 600 Pixels

5.   Vertical Banner Ad 120 x 240 Pixels

6.   Pop-up Ads

Group 3

7.   Floating Ads

8.   Sponsorships Links

9.   Blogs

Group 4

10.   Online Games

11.   Expandable Ads

12.   Podcasting

Group 5

13.   Video Ads

15.   Brand Channel –Casio YouTube Brand Channel, www.youtube.com/CasioUSA

16.   Brand Page, www.facebook.com/coca-cola

Appendix IX: Implication Matrices

Age Group 18-28

	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
1. Amusement	2.00			8.00					3.02		0.01			0.02		
2. Animation		4.00		4.00			3.00			0.02						0.07
3. Annoyance			5.00		7.00		4.00			0.05						0.08
4. Brand Recognition								4.00	5.00					0.04		
5. Control		6.00						7.00				0.03				0.03
6. Eye-Catching	2.00	4.00		10.00			4.00	5.00	3.00	0.01	0.04	0.09	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01
7. Feedback						4.00		6.00				0.02		0.03		
8. Informative Content				4.00	3.00			2.00	4.00	4.00	0.01	0.05		0.04		0.02
9. Interactivity	7.00		5.00								0.02		0.02			0.02
10. Personalization	2.00			2.01				3.00	2.00		0.01			2.01	0.05	
11. Placement		2.00	8.00	3.00			2.00			0.02		0.02	0.04			0.05
12. Size		2.00	9.00	4.00							2.00	0.02	0.02			0.02

Age Group 35-54

	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
1. Amusement	1.00			4.00					2.00		0.01	0.02		0.03		
2. Animation			3.00		6.00		1.00			0.01						0.05
3. Annoyance			6.00		10.00	2.00	2.00			0.03						0.07
4. Brand Recognition								7.00	5.00					0.02		
5. Control		7.00			4.00							0.01				0.06
6. Eye-Catching	1.00	1.00		6.00			5.00	2.00	1.00		0.04	0.03	0.02	0.02		0.02
7. Feedback						2.00		2.00				0.01		0.01		
8. Informative Content				3.00	4.00		3.00	6.00			0.03			0.05		0.04
9. Interactivity	4.00		9.00										0.02			0.03
10. Personalization	1.00			9.00					4.00		0.04			0.08	0.01	
11. Placement		4.00	7.00	5.00			2.00			0.02		0.02	0.03			0.09
12. Size			7.00	4.00							0.01	0.01	0.02			0.02