

Master Thesis Annotation
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**“Effects on Viewer Experience: Pairing Digital Video Content
with Thematically Relevant In-Stream Advertising”**

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The **relevance** of this research is centered on a paradox: modern digital media companies must advertise to stay in business but digital advertisements are 'intrusive' to users and can have many negative consequences, including causing the user to leave the website altogether. Our research is concerned with how digital media companies should arrange for their advertisements in order to maximize their revenues online while also offering a minimally intrusive experience.

The **purpose** of our study is to identify the principles of effective interaction between user and advertising content in the process of video consumption on the Internet and provide empirical evidence for these principles before developing practical steps for digital media websites to improve user experience on their websites.

In accordance with our research purpose, we have set forth the following **tasks**:

- to determine the theoretical factors effecting perception and acceptance of advertising content in Internet-based visual communications;
- to recover principles from theory which can then be used to optimize user experience during consumption of pre-rolls and main video content online;
- to develop an empirical research method able to confirm these principles and measure user perceptions in different experimental conditions;
- to suggest a practical roadmap for digital media companies to improve user experience while viewing advertising content online

The **object** of our research is the perception of video advertising in the context of user media products

The **instrument** of our research is measuring user reactions to advertising under different experimental conditions. Participants in our research project measured their own experience with different advertising on a research website designed for our project.

The **theoretical** base of our research rests firsthand on works of academic advertising which explore the concept of intrusiveness, and included works by: S. M. Edwards, H. Li, and J. H. Lee; S. McCoy, A. Everard, P. Polak, and D. Galetta; N. Groene, F. v. Wangenheim, and J. H. Schumann; L. F. Alwitt and P. F. Prabhaker; S. S. Krishnan and R. K. Sitaraman; and Y. Truong and G. Simmons. Additional research focusing on additional and supporting topics in advertising, including research on target audiences and

'native' advertising, came from: A. Bakshi; A. M. Barry; T. K. Bhatia; A. Fuxman, A. Kannan, Z. Li, and P. Tsaparas; H. Ghosh and A. Bhatnagar; J. C. Gonzalez and F. Mochon; P. Kapanipathi, P. Jain, C. Venkataramani, and A. Sheth; K. Keller; L. Levi; T. Levitt; M. Lhotakova and A. Klosova; and L. Percy and J. Rossiter. Research on the psychological forces identified in our theoretical review as the underlying factors in intrusiveness, including reactance, reciprocity, and relevance, was obtained from: I. Ajzen; J. W. Brehm; L. Festinger; M. Fishbein and I. Ajzen; A. W. Gouldner; W. James; and D. Sperber and D. Wilson. Media research came from the following authors: A. Chadwick, J. Dennis, and A. P. Smith; C. Ihlstrom and J. Lundberg; M. Ljung; N. Newman, R. Fletcher, D. A. L. Levy, and R. K. Nelson; and C. Rienemann, J. Stanyer, S. Scherr, and G. Legnante. Our research also referenced theoretical and practical work on statistics, including works by: R. M. Groves; S. Lohr; and C. D. Manning and H. Schuetze. Lastly, we used corporate research from Google, Nielsen, and Reuters.

The **empirical base** for our research was gathered via a website designed specifically as our experiment. We gathered a total of 32 videos from 8 different content categories identified in our research as well as a total of 24 advertising 'pre-roll' videos. Our research website, www.videogo.ru, enabled us to separate our participants into four research groups determined by a combination of presence/absence of an advertising notice and relevance/non-relevance of advertising pre-roll to the main video chosen by the participant. Participants in our research were able to choose 3 videos to watch from those which we had selected and then asked to rate their viewing experience with a short questionnaire after each viewing.

The **structure** of our work is composed of an introduction, two chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography of works and sources cited, and an appendix of supporting documents. In our first chapter, we perform a review of academic literature dealing with intrusiveness and identify the theoretical factors behind this phenomenon. Our second chapter describes our research methodology in great depth, detailing each step of the formation of our research website. The potential flaws in our methodology are reviewed before we proceed to the results of our research at the end of the second chapter and propose a practical way for digital media companies to use our findings to improve user experience.

The **practical** and **social applications** of our research will create more stable revenue streams for digital media companies, enabling them to develop new media products and to stay independent of funding from parties with clear interests.

Our **positions** put forth for defense include:

- The fundamental theoretical factors underpinning the concept of intrusiveness include reactance, reciprocity, and relevance
- Digital media companies can minimize intrusiveness and increase effectiveness of advertising by matching advertising to editorial content on the basis of relevance according to category
- Data willingly provided by users during the 'browsing' period can be utilized by digital media companies to achieve relevance
- Users select content to view on the basis of metadata provided by the digital media company. Accurate descriptions of content from metadata also decrease advertising intrusiveness indicators and increase effectiveness