European Publisher study shows a mixed view of User Generated Content (UGC)

Contributed by SKOPOS
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12th Nov 2007 - Advertising.comâ€™s European Publisher Study conducted by researchers SKOPOS digital insight shows publishers aware of risk and opportunity with UGC
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Advertising.comâ€™s first European Publisher Study has found that online publishers have mixed reactions to user generated content (UGC), mirroring debate in the advertiser community. The study, compiled to gain a deeper understanding of the issues that publishers face, found that respondents recognise the potential brand risks associated with UGC, but also acknowledge the benefits that audience interaction can bring.

Conducted amongst Advertising.comâ€™s quality network of European publisher partners, the findings show that UK publishers understand advertisersâ€™ concerns around UGC. They cited negative associations with UGC as a challenge but one which can be overcome by policing content.Â The primary suggestions among respondents were to monitor uploads prior to their exposure, employ dedicated moderators and automated filtering technologies in order to protect advertisers brands.

But concerns around UGC were balanced by positive comment. British respondents have noted that UGC increases the time audiences spend interacting with sites, which according to Nielsen/NetRatings, is the best measurement of audience engagement *.Â Â This extra time devoted to UGC also allows audiences to feel involved and could lead to visitor loyalty.

The number of UK respondents planning to offer user generated content on their sites confirmed this positive outlook and supports wider industry growth. 63 per cent of respondents advised that they already host UGC, with a further 13 per cent stating they will offer it within 18 months.

Commenting on the findings, Brendan Condon, managing director of Advertising.com International, said: â€œAs with any growing medium, the industry is still exploring the potential of user generated content. It lends itself extremely well to some brands, for example consumers on travel websites have benefited from forums and customer review sites where they can share customer experiences and make an informed choice.

â€œAdvertisers should ensure they partner with networks who have strong internal monitoring systems and who work with the wider industry to help set guidelines. These reputable networks, who take care of their customersâ€™ brands as much as their own, will provide quality publishers and ensure that advertisers who are keen to work with UGC sites can tap into their valuable, engaged audiences.â€•

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