

The Commercials ARE Louder Than The Television Shows!

Contributed by Harris Interactive
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Many find louder commercials bothersome

It happens to all of us.

You're watching a program and it heads into the commercial break.

Suddenly you find yourself grabbing for the remote control because the volume seems to have increased.

Well, you are not alone. More than four in five Americans (86%) say that compared to the shows themselves, television commercials seem louder. In fact, over half (57%) say the commercials seem much louder than the shows.

Just over one in ten U.S. adults (12%) say the shows and commercials are at the same level, while only 1% say the volume of the commercials is softer than the shows.

These are some of the findings of a new Adweek Media/Harris Poll, survey of 2,194 U.S. adults surveyed online between February 2 and 4, 2010 by Harris Interactive.

There is an age difference when it comes to how loud the commercials seem compared to the television shows. Over nine in ten of those 45 and older (92%) say the commercials seem louder, while 83% of those 35-44 say this and 79% of 18-34 year olds do.

Seven in ten adults 55 and older (70%) say the volume of the commercials is much louder than the television shows themselves.

Bothersome volume changes

Among those who say the commercials seem louder, the change is something that bothers them. Over nine in ten (93%) of those who say the ads are louder say it bothers them, with over three in five (62%) saying it bothers them a lot.

Three in ten (31%) say the fact that the commercials seem louder bothers them a little, while only 7% say it does not bother them.

There is also a difference in age over how bothersome this volume change is. Seven in ten adults 55 and older (71%) and two-thirds of those 45-54 (66%) say the fact the commercials seem louder bothers them a lot.

Just under half of those 18-34 (49%), however, say this bothers them a lot while 40% say it bothers them a little.

Men and women also feel differently about the change in volume. Women are more likely to say the change bothers them a lot (66% vs. 58%) while men, on the other hand, are more likely to say the changed volume bothers them a little (34% vs. 29%) or does not bother them at all (8% vs. 5%).

So what?

Commercials are designed to grab attention. But when the commercials themselves become something that actually bothers consumers, they will not do the one thing they are supposed to do – sell a product.

Advertisers need to keep this in mind and consider looking to softer, more subtle ways to get their messages across.

However, if advertisers fail to fix this problem themselves, the government may do it for them. Apparently members of Congress are also bothered by the volume of TV commercials, and in December 2009 the House of Representatives voted to pass the CALM (Commercial Advertisement Loudness Mitigation) Act, which will regulate the volume of commercials.

The bill is currently being reviewed by a Senate committee.

Methodology

This Adweek Media/Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States between February 2 and 4, 2010 among

2,194 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

Where appropriate, this data were also weighted to reflect the composition of the adult online population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population.

Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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By Regina A. Corso, Director, The Harris Poll, Harris Interactive

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