

F1 Suffering From Low Interest Online

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F1 Branding Search

According to a recent survey, Singaporeans are largely uninterested in the upcoming Formula One event, judging by their internet searches.

Experian Hitwise, an online competitive intelligence service, recently released data showing the search results surrounding the F1, suggesting the need for F1 brands to better drive their online marketing in the run up to the Singapore Grand Prix on 24 September, especially in the local market.

Searches for 'F1' came in only at number 127 among other search terms made by Singapore Internet users in the week ending 11 September.

Key sponsor brands and F1-related brands including the Singapore Tourism Board, Redbull, Johnnie Walker, and Shell were also absent from search terms relating to motorsports.

Also, a comparison of search data between 2009 and 2010 reveals that Singapore Internet users seem to favour using the term F1 over Formula 1 when searching for event-related information online.

In addition, Singaporeans seem to be most preoccupied with F1 about three weeks prior to the event. This is then followed by a dip in searches before a peak during the actual event.

"Marketing for brands associated with niche events like F1 is tough business, as reaching out to the right target audience through the right channels are factors that could make or break any online marketing campaign. We believe that F1 marketers, in order to achieve marketing success and improve advertising effectiveness per dollar spent, need to market forward with predictive insights from existing trends to improve audience engagement in the digital media space," said Graeme Beardsell, managing director for South Asia, Experian.

Global websites were found to be more effective in reaching Singaporean internet users, as they continue to visit global sites over local sites when they search for information around Formula 1, with only two of the top ten popular motorsports websites being from Singapore.

The most popular site was the global F1 site, followed by the official Singapore F1 site, then by ESPN.

Other noted trends were that the interests of Singaporeans around Formula 1 also were heavily influenced by the other F1 races happening around the world, evidenced by a 5% increase in upstream searches on Google between the weeks ending 21 August and 28 August, the latter time-frame being the weekend of the Formula 1 race in Belgium at Spa-Francorchamps, a popular track among F1 fans.

Singapore Internet users also gravitate towards online video platforms like YouTube, with the global online video community being part of the top five downstream websites visited by Singaporeans in the weeks ending 4 September (5%) and 11 September (11%).

By Elizabeth Low, Singapore

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