

What Tablets Can Do For Marketers

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Opportunity for immersive experiences

Less than a year ago, the tablet category essentially did not exist. Though many companies had experimented with tablet-like devices—and ereaders were already a proven entity—no one had created a gadget that people would actually pay for and use.

Enter Apple's iPad.

eMarketer expects worldwide tablet sales to reach 81.3 million units in 2012, up from 15.7 million in 2010. The iPad, which essentially revitalized the category, will remain the market-share leader through the forecast period, with an expected 69% of the global market in 2012, down from 85% in 2010.

Consumers in the US will be big drivers of tablet sales, accounting for 62% of all tablets sold in 2010.

“Because tablets offer so many ways of engaging with content, they represent a huge opportunity for marketers,” said Paul Verna, eMarketer senior analyst and author of the new report “Tablets: New Screens for Marketers.” “Some brands have experimented with the format by advertising in iPad editions of popular periodicals. Nevertheless, many brands are sitting on the sidelines waiting to see how the tablet market develops.”

A Nielsen survey noted that iPad users were more likely than users of iPhones and other connected devices to click on ads of various types, including video, text, multimedia and interactive.

Marketers who take the plunge into tablet advertising will be rewarded with an audience that is engaged, predisposed to the “wow” factor and primed to purchase.

The demographic profile of a typical tablet user is high-income, 18 to 34 years old, male and more likely than average to respond to an ad by completing a purchase, whether through a tablet app, a website or a phone.

“Just as Apple seized the early-mover advantage by launching a groundbreaking product without the certainty of metrics, brand marketers can edge out the competition by making a bold entrance on the tablet stage,” said Verna. “Some improvisation may be required, but the potential rewards far outweigh the risks.”

The full report, “Tablets: New Screens for Marketers,” also answers these key questions:

- * What is the outlook for tablet sales by platform and operating system?
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- * What effect will tablets have on computer and mobile device categories?
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- * What opportunities do tablets present for marketers?
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- * What are the prospects for paid and ad-supported publishing business models?

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