

Unwanted Digital Ads Turn Off US, UK Customers

Contributed by eMarketer
Monday, 23 April 2012

Two-thirds say digital advertising is excessive

Digital has provided new channels for marketers to reach their audiences. But smart devices have also exposed customers to a dramatically increased number of ads and promotions. A January 2012 study by Upstream and YouGov of internet users in the US and UK found that the proliferation of advertising has the potential to annoy consumers, and even turn them away from brands.

The research found that two-thirds of consumers in both countries felt that they received too much advertising through digital channels such as apps, websites, email and SMS.

Among those who thought advertising messages were too frequent, 66% of US respondents and 65% of those in the UK would unsubscribe from, ignore or delete promotional messages. Additionally, about three in 10 web users in both the US and UK were unlikely to ever respond positively to new messages from brands they thought were advertising too much.

Consumers were particularly wary about the way advertisers used mobile devices. A staggering 67% of US consumers said mobile phones were their least favorite medium for receiving unwanted advertising. The finding was closely paralleled in the UK, at 64%. Consumers found receiving unwanted ads on other device types considerably less unacceptable.

When it comes to ads, consumers prefer quality over quantity. Advertisers should respond by sending well-targeted materials in lieu of an unfocused promotional blitz. Upstream found that customers preferred text-based ads, whether they arrived via email, SMS or on mobile apps. And a plurality of consumers in both the US and the UK said they preferred to receive targeted digital ads only once a month.

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19 April 2012