

Mobile Advertising in Distracted Environments: Exploring the Impact of Distractions on Dual-Task Interference

How can popup –ads capture the attention of distracted consumers?

Advertisements are having to compete with an increasing number of stimuli for consumers' attention. Advertisers attempt to be more effective by customizing ads to consumers' activity, location, or environment. According to traditional psychology, customized online ads are another distraction for consumers to ignore. However, Dr. Venkatraman and colleagues show that distracted consumers are ideal for certain types of ads.

In this research, participants were asked to play an anagram game on a mobile device during which pop-up ads are constantly delivered, while also watching a sports game on TV. Participants were informed they would be evaluated based on the number of anagrams correctly solved, but they were also secretly tested on their recollection of ads they were shown as well as and the amount of information retained about the sports game.

Results showed that the more participants engaged with the sports game, the better they recalled the ads presented on their mobile device. Therefore, distractions from engaging in multiple tasks may also offer unique opportunities that advertisers can leverage.

Researchers then tested different metrics to optimize participants' ad recall. Participants were better able to recall ads that matched the sports game's theme, appeared during less intense moments, were shown repeatedly, and were placed physically closer to the device playing the sports game.

Dr. Venkatraman and colleagues develop a framework to help brands optimize their mobile messaging in distracted environments. This approach allows companies to deliver effective pop-up ads.

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- Distractions can build niches that advertisers can leverage.
- Attention isn't just divided among tasks but can be strengthened when tasks are contextually aligned.
- For some ad types, distracted consumers can be an ideal audience.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW:

- Advertisers
- Policy Makers
- Researchers

CONTACT US:

- Vinod Venkatraman, Associate Professor, Marketing
vinod.venkatraman@temple.edu
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