Trailers in cinemas and on TV: Parents up in arms

For as many years as ACCM can remember, parents have complained about being ambushed by trailers for upcoming TV programs or movies. They have objected strongly when they have chosen age-appropriate viewing only to experience the intrusion of content (ads and trailers) that was not.

The complaints have intensified as TV relaxed its rules and has allowed the promotion of M and MA15+ programs or movies in lower classified TV programs so long as the content of the trailer itself was not higher than the main program.

For many years, a visit to the cinema was seen as a safer environment as the rules did not allow the screening of trailers for films of a higher classification than the feature. This environment was undermined to some extent when it became permissible to screen trailers for films “yet to be classified” (known as CTC) so long as it had been judged that their classification was likely to be the same as the feature.

And more undermining could be under way. For many years the cinemas operators have wanted to give their customers the freedom to choose age-appropriate viewing only to experience the intrusion of content (ads and trailers) that was not.

During the last month, ACCM decided to assess parents’ opinions of such a move. A short survey publicised on at least 4 different parent websites, produced an avalanche of opposition. In just 24 hrs, 2000 responses had been received, with the final count at 2800 after 10 days.回复 2000 responses had been received, with the final count at 2800 after 10 days. The complaints have intensified as TV relaxed its rules and has allowed the promotion of M and MA15+ programs or movies in lower classified TV programs so long as the content of the trailer itself was not higher than the main program.

Parents were most vocal, with 95% strongly agreeing, that they want to be able “to choose a movie outing that will be age-appropriate for my children, and so trailers should only be for films that have the same classification as the feature”. Similar levels (91.5%) strongly agreed that a change would allow the promotion of films they did not want their children to see, and (88%) strongly agreed that such a change would mislead their children into thinking the films would be suitable for them.

Survey comments provided interesting reading revealing high concern about many CTC trailer (not seen to match the feature); the many parents who already book and choose to arrive late to avoid trailers, and the numbers who would choose to do so in the future.

Overall, parents showed more concern about present practices for screening trailers on television (77%) than in cinemas (23%). Parents thought that many TV trailers were unsuitable for the time of day that they were shown (84% strongly or somewhat agreed) and had content more adult than the program (89%). Comments included many complaining about trailers for the MA15+ horror movie “It”, seen in early evening hours in programs such as The Block.


These findings provide a reason why many parents said that cinemas would be losing their present advantage over TV should trailers change, and that they would be more likely to stay home and watch movies on a streaming service.

The Minister with carriage of the decision about trailers in cinemas is Senator The Hon Mitch Fifield, Minister for Communications, Parliament House Canberra.

Note: The tables and background to the survey can be found at: childrenandmedia.org.au/news/news-items/2017/parents-trash-trailers

New Australian campaign against junk food ads

Cancer Council NSW has launched ‘Our Kids, Our Call’ – a new campaign calling on the Federal government to take action and limit junk food advertising to children.

The Nutrition Program Manager at Cancer Council NSW, Wendy Watson, said that Australian children should be free from the manipulative tactics of junk food advertisers. She said that children are being bombarded with unhealthy food ads everywhere and that such advertising influences what foods children like, what they pester their parents to buy and what they want to eat.

The Council recently analysed advertising during popular prime time shows including Channel 9’s Australian Ninja Warrior, which debuted in July 2017. The grand final of this show had over 10 junk food ads per hour and marketing tactics by the show’s major sponsor, fast food giant KFC, were seen throughout the show. These included frequent shots of the audience waving KFC branded foam fingers. Large digital banners of the KFC logo appeared during a competitor’s ninja run and the company slogan was frequently shown on the screen.

Other reality shows analysed included MasterChef Australia and The Voice Australia. MasterChef Australia was ranked the program most watched by children aged 0-14 years by a recent Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) report and the analysis found children were exposed to an average of seven junk food ads per hour during this show. The Voice Australia, which was ranked the second most watched program, had an average of nine junk food ads an hour, compared to only one healthy food ad per hour.

People can find more information and sign up to join the new campaign at ourkidsourcall.com.au

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TRAILERS IN CINEMAS & ON TV: PARENTS UP IN ARMS

EDITORIAL: PARENTS TRASH TRAILERS ON TV: TIME ZONE TROUBLES

NEW AUSTRALIAN CAMPAIGN AGAINST JUNK FOOD ADS
Parents trash trailers on TV: time zone troubles.

The comments offered by parents who responded to ACCM’s recent online survey about trailers on TV and in cinemas, captured some very timely information about a range of issues.

As mentioned in our front page article this issue, parents commented (unprompted) about the screening on free-to-air TV, of trailers for the MA15+ classified horror movie “It”. See the extended Internet trailer at: youtube.com/watch?v=cdg193GvnBA

Parents reported seeing the “for TV” trailers (which could be different from the internet versions) in family-oriented shows such as Nine’s The Block, in Seven’s Little Big Shots, in “an early evening children’s movie”, “at 5pm”, in “daylight hours”, “at 7pm”, “in the pre-8:30pm timeslot and that are typically family shows”.

Now, while it was obviously not OK by these parents to show the trailers at these times, it could be that it was OK by the free-to-air Code of Practice (CoP) to do so.

The CoP rules around trailers are complicated (see Small Screen Feb 2016: childrenandmedia.org.au/assets/files/resources/small-screen/ss-316-Feb.pdf)

They allow trailers for M and MA15+ programs and movies to be shown in most programs (a few exceptions) provided that the content of the trailer is OK for the time zone.

There are no G time zones on TV anymore (just M, PG, and MA15+). Most mid afternoon to early evening time zones are PG; the M time zone starts at 7.30pm, and MA15+ at 8.30pm. The CoP (at 2.4.1) does allow however, that the content of trailers in G or PG programs, that screen between 7.30pm and 8.30pm, should be no more than PG.

Movies for the school holidays

This summary starts with a warning - the film “It” is not a film for children, despite featuring children, and being widely promoted just before the school holidays with images of a red balloon. “It” is rated MA15+ with the guidelines Strong horror themes and violence.

Fortunately there are more family-friendly films on offer.

There are three recently released G rated movies. Of these, Captain Underpants and The Emoji Movie are likely to be enjoyed by primary school-aged viewers, although some scenes make them less suitable for under fives. Rip Tide is aimed more at the tween and young teen age group and may lack interest for children under seven.

The recently released Lego Ninjago Movie is rated PG. Once again, it has some scenes that may be scary for the very young but is otherwise likely to be enjoyed by both children and their parents and carers.

Read ACCM reviews of these films at: childrenandmedia.org.au/movie-reviews/
Debt takes fun out of Toys ‘R’ Us

BLOOMBERG

LILIAN REZZO
ZUANNE KAPNER

Toys ‘R’ Us, the rainbow-colored toy empire that for a decade was the go-to spot for birthday and holiday gifts, filed for bankruptcy protection in the United States on Monday, undone by debt and the rapid shift to online shopping.

As part of the restructuring process, Toys ‘R’ Us plans to close some underperforming stores. Its remaining locations would be reconfigured to be more experience-based, incorporating amenities such as in-store play areas, they said.

The company expects most of its stores will be open for the holidays, but with a larger bankruptcy loan to continue buying merchandise and funding its operations, the people said.

The company, which operates about 1,700 stores around the world, was a classic example of a “category killer,” a large-scale specialty store with low prices that squeezed independent shops.

It held up several models that have themselves filed for bankruptcy protection, including FAO Schwartz and Kaye Breeze, a mall-based chain that liquidated hundreds of stores before it was sold.

"They are the last major freestanding toy retailer in the U.S.," said Jim Silver, the chief executive of The Toy Book, a website that reviews thousands of toys each year. "As a toy testing ground for new products, Toys ‘R’ Us often identifies hits before the competition, as it did with Zhu Zhu Pets in 2009, Mr. Silverman said.

But like many other big-box chains, including Borders, Circuit City and Sports Authority, Toys ‘R’ Us struggled with the rise of discounters like Wal-Mart Stores and Target, and more recently, Amazon. Azarenka, who was late to develop and expand its e-commerce operations and placed big bets on licensed toys for Star Wars and Lego lines that missed expectations.

The filing was triggered by vendors and suppliers tightening terms with the company ahead of the key holiday selling season, which accounted for 40 percent of its $5.5 billion in revenue last year. For the past several years, the company has lost money in each quarter except its holiday quarter. "None of the suppliers want this company to disappear, but they have a fiduciary responsibility to their own shareholders," said an inside source.

The toy industry is in turmoil. Lego earlier this month reported its first quarterly sales decline in 11 years and announced plans to cut 7 percent of its staff.

Mettel, the maker of Barbie and Hot Wheels, replaced its CEO earlier this year after weak holiday results. Shares of Mattel and Hasbro fell on Monday after the Wall Street Journal and other reports suggested last week that Toys ‘R’ Us was preparing to seek bankruptcy protection before the holidays.

It’s "probably a little bit of a perfect storm," and Mark Carson, president of Fat Brain Toys, which began selling its educational and learning toys to Toys ‘R’ Us a little over a year ago. "There’s a lot of general pressure on brick and mortar retail. They’re obviously having to account for some of the sins of the past in their structure and financing," Mr. Carson said.

The internet has reshaped the marketing of new toys. Companies once relied on TV commercials to generate excitement for that season’s must-have items. But ratings for networks such as Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network have suffered as young viewers turn to commercial-free streaming services such as Netflix. Children don’t have Facebook accounts, making it difficult for digital marketers to find ways to pick up the slack.

The Wayne, New Jersey, company had hired restructuring advisers at law firm Kirkland & Ellis and was working with Lazard to refine its debt, which stood at about $5 billion as of the end of April. The company had planned to update its investment model.

A Toys ‘R’ Us restructuring would add to a list of more than 20 retailers, including RadioShack and Payless Shoes, that have filed for bankruptcy since the beginning of the year. Another big-box chain, Staples, recently agreed to be taken private in a leveraged buyout.

For more information visit autospares.com.au

SAWEEKEND 23 to 24-9-17

The Australian 20-9-17
POOR VALUES PUT YOUNG AT RISK

An appreciation of respect, empathy and consent helps counter online abuse

JULIE INMAN GRANT

A recent incident involving students from St Peter's College in South Australia has caused us to again question whether the values of respect, empathy and consent are being imparted to our younger generation.

The Adelaide students now face criminal charges after reportedly filming and sharing humiliating, sexually explicit material during a private party. This practice is what we term image-based abuse — the antithesis of consent, empathy and respect.

While we often read about most of the egregious cases, this malicious practice is becoming rampant in our society. Research findings released recently reveal that one in five Australians have experienced image-based abuse. This is up from one in 10 two years ago.

Image-based abuse victims often feel betrayed, violated and powerless

The eSafety Office has been given national responsibility for tackling insidious online abuse. This includes developing a national online portal and reporting tool to help Australians access tangible support when intimate images or videos are shared without their consent. This will be rolled out in the coming months.

The need is urgent and compelling. Already this year my office has received more than 400 reports of image-based abuse through our hotline.

We know from testimonials that image-based abuse victims often feel betrayed, violated and powerless. Their images can spread like wildfire — on popular social media sites, via text or messaging apps and on websites that thrive from hosting this type of material where images of predominantly young women are collected and traded like footy cards.

For victims, it is not only the immediate hurt of this betrayal that is most concerning: it is the feeling of devastation and angst that never goes away. With image-based abuse, the targets don't know how widely their images have been viewed and where and when they will reappear in the future.

The disturbing behaviour we see playing out online reminds us that we are living in a very different time. Young people today have been exposed to far more graphic, sexualised and violent content in advertising, mainstream media and online than earlier generations ever were.

This generation is taking sexualised media to a new level with its perfectly curated revealing selfies on Instagram and through the sharing of their supposedly temporary nudes over Snapchat.

Our challenge is to ensure that our enduring values of consent, respect and empathy are not diminished from modern day human interaction online.

Parents have an important role to play in imparting these core values to their children and staying engaged in both their online and offline lives.

Across genders, this culture of incivility is not only evident in the actions of those taking and spreading this material but also in the passive inaction of onlookers and bystanders. While they may not be taking the images, they are enabling this practice by either on-sharing or not standing up against the abuse. Calling it out, speaking up and letting parents and teachers know when something rude, ugly and harmful is going on goes a long way in dissolving a culture of bullying and harassment.

Young people can also become part of the solution by understanding that seeking help in a time of online crisis is a sign of strength, not weakness. By telling a trusted adult, by reporting online abuse to the eSafety Office or by speaking to a support service such as Kids Helpline, a young person is a step closer to finding relief from the abuse.

Ultimately, young people need to better understand the consequences of their online actions. What might seem like a bit of a laugh or the online boasting of a sexual conquest can have seriously devastating outcomes for not only the target of abuse but across the social fabric of the school or community. Those who perpetrate image-based abuse are also at-risk of criminal sanction.

We all have a responsibility to help shape the future citizens and leaders of tomorrow. Part of this is ensuring that universally shared values like respect are constantly reinforced in every aspect of their lives — online and offline.

For Australians experiencing any form of online abuse, including cyber-bullying, image-based abuse or child online exploitation (if a person under the age of 18 experiences image-based abuse or was under 18 at the time the image was taken), they can report it to the eSafety Office at www.esafety.gov.au.

Julie Inman Grant is the eSafety Commissioner
TV expert slams ACMA research

EXCLUSIVE

STEPHEN BROOK
TELEVISION

Prominent children’s TV expert Patricia Edgar has launched a scathing attack on the media regulator, claiming a key report on the future of children’s television was based on “appalling research.”

The Australian Communications and Media Authority last month submitted the research report to the Department of Communications’ Australian and Children’s Screen Content Review.

Commercial networks hope the review will recommend the scrapping of quotas into the amount of “C” children’s programming and “P” preschool programs they broadcast.

The report — Children’s television viewing and multi-screen behaviour — claims that “broadcast TV viewing remains an important part of the way Australian children and families access children’s programming” and that children “are still watching programs specifically made for them” as a regular part of daily life.

Ms Edgar, who was an architect of the C classification system but now argues the P and C quotas should be scrapped, told The Australian that the ACMA report is “absolutely appalling research”.

The “children’s programs” referred to in the report often fall outside the C and P programs, Ms Edgar said.

“This might be the feature film Frozen rather than a C-classified program. This research is not about those programs — it is about something very much broader, the notion that kids 0-14 would watch children’s programs on any format,” she said.

The ACMA report shows that children up to 14 years old prefer reality TV and light entertainment shows such as MasterChef and The Voice.

It says the top 10 children’s programs viewed by the 0-14 group are younger children’s programs, such as Play School Celebrity Covers and The Wiggles Meet the Orchestra.

“Newspaper does not spell out the fact that quota programs don’t feature highly in children’s viewing, unless they are overseas programs made for the younger audience, usually in the UK. So the main finding of the report is to say the least, misleading,” Ms Edgar says in a discussion paper co-written in conjunction with her husband, Don Edgar.

“This research would not make the grade in an undergraduate class on survey research,” Ms Edgar, founding director of the Australian Children’s Television Foundation, writes in her submission to the review.

“The study does show clearly that kids now spend more time online than they do watching television, but the research is poorly designed and reported that it is misleading.”

But Jonquil Ritter, executive manager, content safeguards branch at ACMA, says the research is deliberately broad-ranging.

“The research looks at children television viewing and multi-screen use generally. If it was going to be confined to C and P classification programs, which ACMA does report on regularly, you wouldn’t be able to see more broadly how children behave.”

Continued from Page 24

“I think in the report it is quite clear when we are talking about programs that children are watching generally and the C and P programs.”

Edgar criticises the ACMA report for combining children into a single 0-14 age group, when children’s viewing patterns change radically as they age.

Preschoolers’ viewing is under the control of their parents, while five to seven-year-olds retain the viewing patterns of preschoolers. Eight to 12-year-olds search for more stimulating fare and when children reach puberty they move to mobile devices.

“The report shows no understanding of this difference and thus it fails to offer any meaningful data on trends away from

Play School in ACMA’s top 10

scheduled free-to-air viewing overall.”

But Ms Ritter said quite a lot of the report was broken down into specific age groups of 0-4, 5-12 and 13-17. “The 0-14 age group is supplied by the OzTAM ratings agency. It is broken down into smaller groups where it is possible and useful to do so, such as on pages 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 21, 25 and in many of the tables and figures in Appendix A of the report. But you have to have sufficient numbers for it to be meaningful data,” Ms Ritter said.

Ms Edgar writes: “For the Australian and Children’s Screen Content Review to be informed about the value of P and C classified programs, ACMA really needs to get its research questions and policy issues sorted out better than this. The 2017 research report reads like an exercise in obfuscation.

“The real trends in Australian children’s TV viewing and kids’ interest in quota programs get little clarification from this report. Their very absences from viewing patterns suggest the current regulated Australian programs have little relevance for children’s viewing.”

The Australian 4-9-17
**TV remains most switched-on for sales results**

**EXCLUSIVE**

**DARREN DAVIDSON**

**ADVERTISING**

Facebook, Snapchat and Google’s YouTube might generate all the buzz these days through claims of billions of daily video views but television remains the main game in town when it comes to the performance of marketing campaigns in the $15 billion Australian ad industry.

Despite increased competition from digital channels, streaming services and ad-skipping, television delivers nearly twice the sales uplift of search marketing activity.

That’s the verdict of a $1 million study commissioned by industry group ThinkTV. It found that television is the most efficient media channel for brands across four key advertiser categories: fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), automotive, finance and e-commerce.

Research firm Ebiquity crunched the numbers contained in three years of sales data from 21 advertisers including Unilever, Pfizer and Kimberly-Clark.

In an excerpt of a study that will be officially unveiled this Thursday at the ReThinkTV industry conference, Ebiquity managing director Richard Basil-Jones outlined the main findings, including:

- Media investment across all sectors generated an average sales return on investment of $1.50 for every dollar invested by FMCG brands, $5.80 for automotive, $1.50 for e-commerce and $2 for finance.
- Across the sectors, television generated the greatest return on investment by sales in FMCG, automotive and finance.
- Television has the strongest retention rate of all media at 68 per cent, followed by out-of-home, print, online display, radio, search and online video.
- Finance advertisers have, on average, over-invested in online display formats, which has been a large part of their combined media spend but has generated the lowest return on investment.
- Mr Basil-Jones said: “On aggregate, TV emerges as the clear winner across all of industry, which is a testament to its enduring power for brands.”

The findings come as tech giants such as Facebook and Google step up their efforts to win over a bigger slice of television ad budgets, and advertisers continue to push for cost savings by reducing ad spending.

The free-to-air television ad market is set to shrink at a compound annual rate of 4.7 per cent over the next four years to $2.9bn in 2021, from $3.3bn last year, according to PwC.

In a world of zero-based budgeting, where finance managers plan each year’s budget as if starting their marketing departments from scratch rather than adjusting the previous year’s spending, there is a bigger focus at the corporate level on short-term measures like return on investment.

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**Putting ideas into action**

Families, ABC Kids and true crime podcasts are some ideas that won big at the ABC’s Great Ideas Grant, the $20 million content fund ABC managing director Michelle Guthrie launched in March. “All ABC employees had the opportunity to vote and give feedback on the pitches,” Leisa Bacon, ABC director of audiences, told Diary. ABC executives selected a shortlist and the 11 winning teams pitched the ideas to the audience committee of content directors as well as Guthrie and Bacon. The 11 successful initiatives are multi-platform. A broad journalism project around families won the largest grant, while a true crime podcast series off the back of the Trace podcast, which has had 1 million downloads, gained funding. Another project will see the creation of an audio version of ABC Kids.

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**Movie trailer changes could ‘harm’ children: claim**

Karl Quinn

Children could suffer lasting psychological damage if proposed changes to cinema trailer classifications are approved, a child protection group claims.

The Australian Council on Children and the Media, which runs the Know Before You Go movie review service for parents, has drawn attention to a proposal now before Communications Minister Mitch Fifield that seeks to allow trailers for M-rated movies to be screened before movies rated PG, so long as the trailers themselves are rated, or likely to be rated, PG.

Parenting expert Steve Biddulph, who conducted a survey of 1,000 responses from concerned parents, the group’s last survey received 1,000 responses in two months.

The ACCM’s Barbara Biggs claims the proposed changes could create a misleading idea of what the film is about, and might generate “an extremely scary experience” for a child.

There is also a philosophical issue in the proposed change, she said. “Having chosen my entertainment and paid for it, I don’t want to be mowed down by a trailer, which I hadn’t expected to see,” she said.

Lustre-Asia Bj, a lecturer in child development at the University of South Australia, argues the proposed changes “place children at risk of being exposed to adult content” that “can have a huge impact on their psyche.”

She cites the example of the own daughter, aged five, who was watching Sesame Street when the signal was interrupted to bring footage of the 111 attacks.

“Trailers are available across the internet-cinema is one of the last places they are regulated. During school holidays it really restricts the ability to trailer films that are coming up after the holidays, which are primarily M-rated,” she said.

Mr Fifield cited the example of Iron Man, a PG-rated film whose audience was primarily adult, and the inability of the distributor of Jasper Jones, which was rated M, to target that same audience by screening its trailer before it.

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The Australian 11-9-17

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VIOLENCE
Effects of exposure to gun violence in movies on children’s interest in real guns.

EVENTS
The Office of the eSafety Commissioner and Netsafe NZ are co-hosting:

Online Safety on the Edge
1 – 3 November 2017
Hilton, Sydney.

esafety.gov.au/on-the-edge-17

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Live Wires Forum
24-25 November 2017
Moonee Valley Racing Club, Melbourne
A two-day professional development event connecting the latest thinking in early childhood theory, practice and pedagogy in digital technologies, with hands-on practical sessions. An opportunity to connect with other educators and experts. The forum will cover areas of challenges and concerns, current and future directions.

earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/events/live-wires-forum/

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Children’s Media Symposium:
From Print to Screen
24–26 November, 2017
University of the Sunshine Coast,
Queensland, Australia

earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/events/live-wires-forum/

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Children’s Media Symposium:
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24–26 November, 2017
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Queensland, Australia

childrensmediasymposium.net
The effects of guns in movies

Every day in the United States, nearly 40 children are shot and more than 1.7 million children live in a home with unsecured guns.

Given these figures, a new US study by researchers from Ohio State University set out to find the immediate effects of exposure to movie characters with guns on children’s unsupervised play with guns.

The randomized study included 104 children aged 8 to 12 years who were tested in pairs. They were randomly assigned to watch a movie clip containing guns or a movie clip not containing guns. They were then provided with a selection of toys to play with which included a real, but disabled gun.

Children who viewed a PG-rated movie containing guns played with the real gun longer and pulled the trigger more times than did children who viewed the same movie not containing guns.

The researchers say that despite the limitations of such a study, the connection shown in this experiment is a compelling start to a broader conversation on the various factors that can increase a child’s interest in guns and violence, including gun violence in movies.


http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2654597

The New Normal: Parents, teens and digital devices

This report from the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism is based on an April 2017 national online survey of the media habits and attitudes of Japanese parents and teens age 13 to 18. The sample included 600 children and their parents. In the survey, parents and teens were asked about their own media habits, and those of their family members. A key question was the degree to which Japanese teens and parents feel distracted by — and even addicted to — their mobile devices and the amount of conflict this caused in families.

Once collected, the data was compared to the results of research briefs conducted by the US based organization, Common Sense Media - *The Common Sense Census: Plugged-In Parents of Tweens and Teens and Technology Addiction*.

In addition to tracking addiction, distraction and conflict, the study also explored questions related to the potential benefits of device use, as well as ubiquity and usage.

Results from the two countries were very similar in most areas, but US parents seemed to have a much more positive view of technology. Compared to 25% of Japanese parents, most American parents (88%) had an optimistic view of the benefits of technology, including mobile devices, in terms of helping their children acquire new skills.


Children’s knowledge and judgment of new advertising formats

Contemporary advertising is decreasingly about influencing children through persuasive messages and increasingly about influencing them through a number of new advertising tactics.

A new Belgian study set out to find out how children might cope with advertising by understanding and evaluating the new advertising tactics.

Working with 12 focus groups involving 60 European children aged between 9 and 11, the study investigated children’s advertising literacy by exploring their knowledge of, and reasoning about, new advertising formats.

In particular, insight is provided into children’s critical reflection on the tactics of brand integration, interactivity and personalization in the advertising strategies, brand placement, advergames and targeted pre-roll video ads on social media.

The study showed that while children do not necessarily spontaneously do so, they appeared to have the ability to understand the tactics used by advertisers and formed judgments about their appropriateness.


https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/8526668