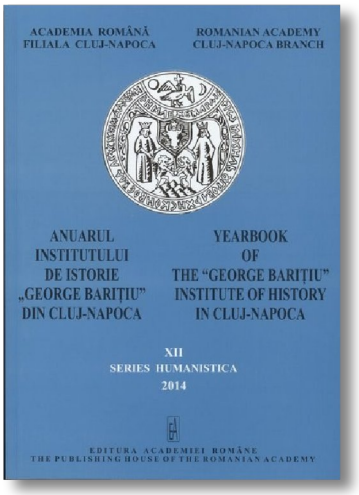

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STUDY UPON THE LEVEL OF ONLINE ADVERTISING

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Abstract. *The purpose of the present paper is to obtain and analyse information that concern the users' behaviour and attitude towards the online advertising. In order to reach this goal we have made a questionnaire-based home inquiry. The main information collected relates to: the places where users access the internet, the average weekly time spent on the internet, the purposes for accessing the internet, knowledge of the methods of making the online advertising, assessment by the users of the efficiency degree of the online advertising, the degree of accessing the advertising banners, the degree of accepting the advertising e-mails, the users' trust in the online advertising and others. The study's results showed the high interest level of those interviewed for the possibilities that the internet provides and the high percentage of users who have a favourable attitude towards the online advertising.*

Key words: *advertising, internet, questionnaire, quota-based sampling method, web page, banner*.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) to serve several billion users worldwide[1].

Undoubtedly, nowadays the internet has a great impact on the business environment. This is due to the obvious advantages it presents both for the business operators and buyers as opposed to the traditional means of carrying out commercial activities: high selectivity, interaction opportunities, relatively low cost[2].

As an excellent communication mean, the internet network can be used by any enterprises with very good results both in advertising and in the other promotional techniques, with an outstanding efficiency.

[1] ***www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet

[2] Ph. Kotler, K. L. Keller, *Managementul marketingului* [Marketing Management], 5th, ed. Bucureşti, Edit. Teora, 2008, p. 852.

The causes that generate the internet success in terms of advertising are multiple. They are mainly the information accessibility, its impressive diversity, the speed of obtaining it and last but not least the addressability.

2. **NECESSARY INFORMATION**

The study regarding the stage of advertising on the internet cannot be made without having certain information as a basis. For such purpose, the information necessary was obtained by a *questionnaire.*

Drafting the questionnaire is a very significant stage within the organization process of a market survey. Indeed, the quantity and especially the quality of the information to be obtained depend on the manner in which questions are formulated, their sequence and the response alternatives.

Broadly, the tasks of a good questionnaire are those of finding out sources of latent information, of taking the information, of filtering the relevant information from the insignificant information and of presenting the useful information in an organized and operational form[3].

The choice of the individuals questioned was made depending on their characteristics: sex, age and occupation, as the quality studies showed these are the features that explain the attitude in respect of online advertising.

The questionnaire starts with an explanatory phrase that shows the context of the inquiry and is formed of a list of questions, under various forms. The questionnaire's dynamics is the following: knowledge, behavioural, attitude, identification questions[4].

Conclusively, we considered the first question as eliminatory. Only the individuals who have the chance of using a computer have been selected to respond to this questionnaire, having at the same time the possibility to identify the place where they use it, namely at work, at home, school, at friends' or in internet cafes.

Questions 2 and 3 provided us data about the places where the respondents access the internet and the average time spent throughout one week.

We have formulated question number 4 to highlight the purposes of using the internet.

To see if the internet is a media channel with a high impact upon the public we used question number 5.

Questions 6 and 7 were used with the intent of seeing if the methods of making online advertising are known among the public and if they are considered effective.

The frequency of online shoppers is highlighted with the help of question number 8.

[3] Şt. Prutianu, B. Anastasiei, T. Jijie, *Cercetarea de marketing. Studiul pieței pur şi simplu* [The Marketing Research: Merely a Study of the Market], Iaşi, Edit. Polirom, Iaşi, 2002, p. 96.

[4] F. Foltean, *Cercetări de marketing* [Marketing Researches], 2nd ed., Timişoara, Edit. Mirton, 2000, p. 70.

By question 9 we attempted to see the most used online marketing tactics. Also, by the following question (10) we could tell how many of those interviewed accessed the advertising banners.

To find out the respondents' attitude concerning the advertising e-mails they receive in their accounts, if they read them and if they are disturbed by their presence, we formulated questions 10, 11 & 12.

The next questions (14 & 15) concern the manner of finding the various web pages and the trust of those interviewed in the online advertising.

In the last part the questionnaire includes questions about the respondents' identification concerning age, sex, level of training, present occupation (questions 16, 17, 18 & 19).

3. METHODS AND TECHNIQUES USED TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY INFORMATION

We used quantity studies to collect information necessary for the study of the attitude of internet users concerning the online advertising. The information necessary was obtained directly from the users.

The questionnaire administration method that we used was the home inquiry, which, although took a lot of time (period 25 July–28 August 2012), it had the following advantages:

- spontaneity of response;
- observation of reactions, comments of the interviewed individual;
- allowed collection of a great quantity of information;
- allowed the approach of an interesting and present-day topic.

In order to determine the sample composition we applied an empirical method, namely the *quota-based sampling method*. It is very widely used, being in general cheaper than the aleatory methods and does not require a survey basis. Nevertheless, to apply such method some statistic information upon the surveyed population is required. It concerns the making of a pattern of the surveyed population; this is made starting from the statistic knowledge of the quality characteristics or of the significant quantity variables as opposed the studies variables[5].

According to this method the choice of the individuals interviewed was made based on their characteristics, namely sex, age, occupation. This method's principle consists in making a reduced pattern of the individuals studied based on known characteristics (in our case following the characteristics of the interviewed individuals).

The main advantages in adopting this sample are the low costs and the fact that the existence of a survey basis is not a condition to choose the sample.

For the sample selection the following stages were taken:

- choice of characteristics that served in fixing the quotas;

[5] M. D. Pop, *Cercetări de marketing* [Marketing Researches], Cluj-Napoca, Edit. Alma Mater, 2004, p. 86–87.

- drafting the survey plan: taking into account the structure of the parent population, the size of the sample and the number of researchers. The parent population of the sample is from Cluj-Napoca, and the sample size is 50 individuals.

The sample is formed both of female and male individuals aged between 18 and 49.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA OBTAINED

Following the centralization of data from the questionnaires and their analysis we could study the respondents' behaviour in respect of the online advertising depending on various criteria that will be presented in detail below.

The analysis starts with the first eliminatory question that made a selection among those questioned (*Table 1*).

Table 1

Computer users

Home	Work	Friends	Internet Café	School
68%	30%	6%	8%	6%

Following the survey, 68% of the respondents use the computer from home and those employed use it both at home and at work. The respondents who do not own a personal computer use it from the Internet Cafés (8%) or friends (6%). Only 6% of the respondents use the computer at school, this category is represented by students.

We noticed that more than half of those questioned have the possibility to use their own computers, and consequently there is a quite high percentage of the personal computer users among population. Based on this fact we could infer that nowadays computer is not a puzzle for a great deal of the population. In our country the number of individuals who have personal computers is a factor directly proportional to the living standard.

Following the survey we noticed that the share of those who have internet at home is higher (55%). The internet is used the least in the percentage of 5% from Internet Cafes, 7% accessing it from school and 33% from work (*Table 2*).

Table 2

Internet access

School	Internet Café	Work	Home
7%	5%	33%	55%

The time spent on average on the internet by 66% of the interviewed respondents is over 40 hours per week. 4% of those interviewed spend less than an

hour on the internet, 12% spend between 1 and 20 hours weekly on the internet and 18% spend between 21 and 40 hours surfing the net (*Table 3*).

Table 3

Time spent on average on the internet on a weekly basis

< 1 hour	1–20 hours	21–40 hours	> 40 hours
4%	12%	18%	66%

The internet may be used in various purposes, but the result of the survey confirmed the fact that it is mostly used for communication (30%), followed in downward order by: news and financial information (21%), job hunting (16%), games (15%), research (14%) and online shopping (4%). This result confirms the reality, namely that the internet allows the communication both on national and international level (*Table 4*).

Table 4

Purposes of using the internet

Communication	News	Job	Games	Research	Shopping
30%	21%	16%	15%	14%	4%

The respondents considered the television the media channel with the greatest impact (48%), but on the other hand there is a significant number (38%) of respondents who think the internet is important, as well.

This time also is spotted nearly the same impact of the internet as the TV has upon the public. They say the written media and the radio are the channels with a lower impact upon the public, which is confirmed by other studies as well (*Table 5*).

Table 5

Importance of media channels for the public

TV	Radio	Written media	Internet
48%	6%	8%	38%

In *Table 6* is presented the impact which the various media channels have upon the respondents depending on their social-professional category.

Table 6

Importance of media channels depending on the social-professional category

Indicators	Internet	Written media	Radio	TV
Unemployed	30%	20%	20%	20%
Employed with higher education studies	33.33%	0%	0%	66.66%
Students	30%	10%	5%	55%
Employed with secondary education	50%	0%	16.66%	33.33%
Employers/managers	66%	0%	0%	33%

The online advertising methods in our country are quite known as a consequence of the fact that they are used by many people. The individuals who do not know such methods are few, only 12% of those interviewed. Those who know them to a low extent represent a small percentage, namely 8%, and the respondents who know them are leaders with an 80% share (*Table 7*).

Table 7

Knowledge degree of the online advertising methods

Inexistent	Very low	Good
12%	8%	80%

Most of those interviewed in respect of the way they assess online advertising considered it to be efficient (*Table 8*). This comes from the fact that the online advertising methods are known by the respondents.

Conclusively, the online advertising is as effective as the advertising made through traditional methods, but its significance tends to grow once with the internet development.

Table 8

Efficiency of online advertising

Extremely efficient	Very efficient	Moderately efficient	Somehow efficient	Inefficient
54%	30%	8%	5%	3%

The fact that 62% of the respondents have made online purchases for more than 15 times shows us this buying method is agreed in Romania (*Table 9*).

The number of online shoppers is small in comparison to that from the developed countries where such type of online shopping is preferred. Thus, from those interviewed only one student purchased between 2–15 times, an employer over 15 times and an employee with higher education studies has only purchased once. Basically, it turns out that people with financial possibilities, like the employers or the employees with higher education studies can afford the purchase of various products from the internet, but not on a permanent basis.

Table 9

Online shopping

Never	> 15 times	2–15 times	Once
10%	62%	18%	10%

The development of electronic trade in Romania is influenced both by the number of computers connected to the internet calculated on one thousand of inhabitants, by the IT evolution and the Romanian legislation.

To promote the business on the internet the companies resort to online marketing techniques. The study confirmed the fact that the techniques best known by the respondents are the interactive sites (30%), the banners (26%) and the e-mail (19%). Very few of the respondents consider as efficient the online contests and the animation (*Table 10*).

Table 10

Online marketing strategies

Animation	Interactive sites	Online contests	Email	Banners
10%	30%	15%	19%	26%

The categories most likely to access the advertising banners are: the employers/managers (100% of their number) and the employees with higher education studies (50%); whereas only 35% of the students, 33.33% of the employees with secondary education and 30% of the unemployed do this frequently (*Table 11*).

Table 11

Accessing advertising banners

Yes	No
44%	56%

From the collected data we notice that the number of advertising messages received in the respondents' accounts is very big (over 100 monthly). 10% of those interviewed do not have an e-mail address. The big number of advertising e-mails is due to the fact that the online advertising has a broad scope, being the tool used by most companies (*Table 12*).

Table 12

Frequency of advertising e-mails in the respondents' accounts

None	< 10	10–50	51–100	>100
10%	2%	13%	10%	65%

The advertising e-mails received in the e-mail account are not read by more than half of the respondents. Nevertheless, 48% of those interviewed read them, taking into account the fact that the number of monthly messages is not that big (*Table 13*).

Table 13

Importance of advertising e-mails

Yes	No
48%	52%

As result of the fact that advertising messages on the e-mail are not read by 52% of those interviewed their presence on the same account is disturbing. We can spot a proportionality relation between the percentage of those who read the e-mail and the percentage of those disturbed by the presence of unrequired e-mails in their account (*Table 14*).

Table 14

Rejection degree for internet advertising messages

Yes	No
36%	64%

The unrequested messages in the e-mail accounts are disturbing most of the times for the internet users. The unrequested e-mails cost the receiver both the activity of reading them and the connecting time, having a negative impact for the sender.

Interviewed about the manner of finding the various web pages we noticed that the search engines take the most important place (70%). The links from other web pages are preferred by 10% of the respondents. Only 10% of the interviewed respondents inform themselves in respect of the web pages existent on the internet from magazines, newspapers and friends (*Table 15*).

Table 15

Methods of finding various pages

Friends	Magazines, newspapers	Search engines	Links
10%	10%	70%	10%

Most of respondents trust the advertising made on the internet (74%) and only 26% have other opinion. To the question if they trust the online advertising the following responded affirmatively: 70% of the students, 100% of the employees with secondary education, 66.66% of the employees with higher education studies, 100% of the employers/managers and only 60% of the unemployed (*Table 16*).

Table 16

Confidence in the online advertising

Yes	No
74%	26%

Following the results obtained we noticed that the interest for the online advertising is growing, at the same time materialized in the fact that more than half of respondents read the advertising messages from their accounts, but also due to the fact that they somehow consider it efficient.

Because of the impact that the online advertising has upon users, becoming more and more effective, both the companies and the users will have advantages from this.

As respondents' age was between 18–29 (72%) and 30–49 (28%), we could see a higher percentage of the youth among those interviewed. They are those who use more often the internet in comparison to the other age category (*Table 17*).

Table 17

Structure of the ample on age groups

No.	Age	Sample size	Relative share
1.	18–29	36	72%
2.	30–49	14	28%
3.	Total	50	100%

In respect of the sex of the individuals interviewed we can say that the male respondents (56%) are more in terms of numbers as opposed to the female respondents (44%). This is generated because of the fact that men are offered most of the times more chances to make a professional career (*Table 18*).

Table 18

Structure of the sample per sexes

No	Sex	Sample size	Relative share
1.	Female	22	44%
2.	Male	28	56%
3.	Total	50	100%

Most of those interviewed have higher education studies and high school, and to a lower degree of 2% and namely, 6% those who attended secondary or vocational school as last institution graduated. This is explained by the predominance of the youth among those interviewed (*Table 19*).

Table 19

Educational level

Secondary school	Vocational school	High-school	Higher education
2%	6%	18%	74%

The people interviewed with the help of the questionnaire are students 38%, 24% employees with higher education studies, 12% employees with secondary education, 6% employers and 20% unemployed. The structure of the sample depending on the social-professional category is presented in *Table 20*.

Table 20

Structure of sample depending on the social-professional category

No	Occupation	Sample size	Relative share
1.	Student	19	38%
2.	Employed with secondary education	6	12%
3.	Employed with higher education studies	12	24%
4.	Manager/ Director	3	6%
5.	Unemployed	10	20%
6.	Total	50	100%

5. **CONCLUSIONS**

The marketing on the internet, as well as all the other marketing activities operate in a quite unsafe environment because consumers' nature and behaviour is hesitant.

Some companies intend to increase their market share using for such purpose various forms of online advertising. A few companies are conservative in their approach method, waiting for a proof on each step in their way before going to another stage. Nevertheless others are satisfied with their mere "presence there". Some companies, realistic about their limits will find a way to be more present on the internet than the initial one, depending on the funds and resources they can afford.

Following the study, the idea we could depict was that the internet has become a communication environment as common and accessible as the written media or the television. The local communities use the internet network to become known throughout the world and to attract as many tourists as possible. The educational institutions use the internet as a wide electronic library with limitless possibilities. The scientists or the doctors use the internet to seek advice from colleagues at the other end of the world. The users can take advantage of the products and services of the companies throughout the world by a simple connection to the internet. Communication between people found at thousand kilometers away has become a simple, fast and cheap action.

Therefore, creation of an advertising site based on value is an important condition to make successful advertising on the internet, thus being able to generate traffic on the site. Being present on the internet the companies must improve and update constantly the site they advertise on. The company's products and services characteristics must fit the terms of its market.

Even if creation of a value – based advertising is the most important condition for the success on the internet, the advertising people should also invest in the site's traffic. This thing is not easy taking into account the number of sources that compete for attention on the internet.

The interest for the possibilities provided by the internet was seen in most of those questioned, they showing no objection to it.

Therefore, the users have a favourable attitude towards the online advertising and the manner it is accepted in the future to the same level as traditional advertising will depend to a great extent on the living standard, on the degree to which the companies resort to it, and it will also depend on the national economy.

In Romania there is certain reluctance in respect of online advertising because many users do not know the basic principles of this advertising form, believing that they will pay a certain amount of money to make a site that might not bring them the profit expected.

At present on world level the financial crisis has laid its print on this activity so the communication strategies include the online advertising more and more because of the low costs in comparison to the traditional form.