Foreword to This Proceedings

The abstracts and papers in this online proceedings have each been reviewed by an academic peer, who vetted the papers and determined if they were of sufficient academic merit to be included in such a proceedings.

The idea of this proceedings was approved by the Midwest Popular Culture Association.

We hope that the papers in this proceedings will be of a great deal of value to those who are interested in advertising and public relations issues related to popular culture.

The email address for each author is included along with each paper of abstract.

Sincerely,

Ric Jensen, PhD
Ashland University, rjensen@ashland.edu
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Billboards, Barns, and Burma-Shave: A Review of Historic Promotional Tactics Still Being Used Along Route 66

By Ann Carden, State University of New York at Fredonia, ann.carden@fredonia.edu

Route 66 has become part of the historic and cultural fiber of the United States. In its heyday, businesses relied on many promotional techniques, including roadside signage, to lure customers. This research looks at some of the businesses that are still using the same signage today and concludes that the constructs of self-concept, nostalgic bonding and authenticity play a role in the continued success of these historic techniques. The findings may assist other fading tourist destinations, or new destinations trying to cash in on the rise of heritage tourism, to recapture nostalgia and attract visitors.

Note: The full paper was not submitted to be part of this proceedings because it is being sent to a major journal for their consideration.
Super Bowl Advertising: An Evaluation of Opinions and Context

Sandra L.M. Henry, Drake University, sandy.henry@drake.edu

During Super Bowl XVIII, Apple Computers changed advertising with “1984,” a commercial that arguably fueled more post-game conversation than the game itself. Advertisers and consumers began to view Super Bowl ads as part of the entertainment, rather than a pause for words from the sponsor. As commercials became more entertaining, they became more important to viewers, with half of all 2011 Super Bowl viewers tuning in to see the ads (LeFebre, 2011).

USA Today joined the game in 1989, creating Ad Meter, which employs traditional research techniques to measure opinions of Super Bowl viewers about the commercials. Since then, “metering” of Super Bowl advertising has grown, assisted by the rapid growth of social media. In an attempt to capitalize on Super Bowl buzz, advertisers release their commercials on the web prior to the game. YouTube, the largest and most established video sharing website, is a common destination for web releases (Scott, 2011). With “Like” and “Dislike” functions, the site allows users to join the metering game and rate the ads instantly, prior to the game.

This raises questions: how do self-reported opinions on YouTube differ from USA Today’s research? Does it seem the way in which the ads are viewed has an impact on the viewer’s opinion of the ads?

These questions will be explored by analyzing data collected from YouTube prior to Super Bowl XLV, in addition to USA Today’s Ad Meter, with the expectation being that there is a strong correlation between USA Today’s Ad Meter and YouTube “Likes.”

During the afternoon of Feb. 5, a search was conducted on YouTube to locate postings of television advertisements that would air during the Super Bowl the following day. Data regarding unique views and “likes” was recorded for each advertisement. Wherever possible, only data from official brand channels was recorded to control for the effect of multiple postings and sharing.

USA Today Ad Meter results were published by USA Today on Feb. 7, the day after the Super Bowl.

Data was compiled into three lists: Ad Meter results, YouTube Views, and YouTube “Likes.” The top twenty ads in each list were compared.

It is important to note that several advertisements appearing in the Ad Meter top twenty were not available or not functioning online at the time of data gathering: Bud Light “Dog Sitter,” NFL “TV Show Fans,” Coca-Cola “Border Guards,” Bud Light “Kitchen Remodel,” and Budweiser “Tiny Dancer”. Bridgestone “Karma,” Snickers “Logging,” and Audi “Escape” were available only as teasers. In the case of Audi, two different teasers were posted: “Kenny G” and “Startled Smart.”
Data presented the opportunity to examine two different behaviors: viewing of online ads in comparison to Ad Meter, and “Like” rating of online ads in comparison to Ad Meter.

Ad Meter Top Twenty (Horovitz, 2011):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bud Light “Dog sitter”</td>
<td>8.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Doritos “Pug Attack”—</td>
<td>8.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>8.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Volkswagen “The Force”</td>
<td>7.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Doritos “House Sitting”—</td>
<td>7.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>7.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pepsi Max “Love Hurts”—</td>
<td>7.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>CareerBuilder “Parking Lot”</td>
<td>7.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pepsi Max “First Date”—</td>
<td>7.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>7.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>NFL “TV Show Fans”</td>
<td>7.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bridgestone “Karma”</td>
<td>7.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Coca-Cola “Border Guards”</td>
<td>7.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Bridgestone &quot;Reply All&quot;</td>
<td>7.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Volkswagen “Black Beetle”</td>
<td>7.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Bud Light “Kitchen Remodel”</td>
<td>7.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Doritos &quot;Best Part&quot;—</td>
<td>7.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>7.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>SNickers “Logging” Teaser</td>
<td>7.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Budweiser “Tiny Dancer”</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chevrolet “Tommy”</td>
<td>6.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mercedes-Benz “Welcome”</td>
<td>6.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Audi “Escape”</td>
<td>6.93</td>
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YouTube Top Twenty Views prior to the Super Bowl (YouTube, 2011):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Views (000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Volkswagen “The Force”</td>
<td>10,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>E*Trade “Uncensored Baby”</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Volkswagen “Black Beetle”</td>
<td>1,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Thor - Trailer</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cowboys &amp; Aliens - Trailer</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bridgestone Teaser – “Karma”</td>
<td>351</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bridgestone Teaser – “Reply All”</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Chevrolet &quot;Transformer&quot;</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Doritos “Pug Attack”— Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>CareerBuilder “Parking Lot”</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Doritos &quot;Best Part&quot;—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Audi “Escape” Teaser (Kenny G)</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>HomeAway “Test Baby”</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Go Daddy &quot;The Contract&quot;</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Hyundai “Anachronistic City”</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pepsi Max “Love Hurts”— Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Hyundai “Hypnotized”</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Doritos “Adam &amp; Eve”— Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Snickers “Logging” Teaser</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audi “Escape” Teaser (Startled Smart)</td>
<td>66</td>
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</table>
YouTube Top Twenty Liked Ads as a percentage of total views (YouTube 2011):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>% Like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pirates of the Caribbean:</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On Stranger Tides - Trailer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mercedes-Benz “Welcome”</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kung Fu Panda 2 - Trailer</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Volkswagen “The Force”</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Volkswagen “Black Beetle”</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kia &quot;One Epic Ride&quot;</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Doritos “House Sitting”— Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pepsi Max “First Date”— Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Cowboys &amp; Aliens - Trailer</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pepsi Max “Torpedo Cooler”— Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Doritos “Pug Attack”— Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Thor - Trailer</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Doritos &quot;Best Part”— Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Pepsi Max “Love Hurts”— Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>E*Trade “Uncensored Baby”</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Audi “Escape” Teaser (Kenny G)</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Doritos “Adam &amp; Eve”— Crash the Super Bowl 2011 Finalist</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Cars.com “The Reviews are In”</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Audi “Escape” Teaser (Startled Smart)</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Chevrolet &quot;Transformer&quot;</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In reviewing the data, one sees both similarities and differences. Overall, 75% (15) of the ads appearing in the USA Today Ad Meter Top Twenty were also posted on YouTube, either in their entirety or as teasers. Of those 15 ads, 3 ads (20%), were not on the list of YouTube Top Twenty Viewed Ads …two automotive commercials and one CRASH the Super Bowl spot. Similarly, of those 15 advertisements, 4 (26.6%) were not on the list of YouTube Top Twenty Liked Ads.

Five of the ads appearing on the Ad Meter list are part of the Doritos and Pepsi Max “Crash the Super Bowl Contest.” Participants in the contest create television spots, post them on the web, and online viewers are invited to vote for their favorite spot. The spots receiving the most votes air during the Super Bowl telecast, with three spots airing for each brand. This is a likely indicator of appearance at the top of the Ad Meter ranking. It’s reasonable for Doritos and Pepsi to expect their spots will be received favorably during the telecast since they have been received favorably on the web.
Data supports this to a certain extent. On the YouTube Top Twenty Liked Ads, 7 Crash advertisements appear, including one spot that did not air during the telecast. However, only 4 “Crash” spots appear on the YouTube Top Twenty Viewed Ads, again including one spot that did not air (the same spot appearing on the Top Twenty Liked list but not airing). More people viewed this spot than other Crash spots, but a smaller percentage of viewers were willing to “like” it.

When eliminating the Crash spots from the Ad Meter list, commonality appears with the YouTube Top Twenty Viewed list. Of the 10 remaining advertisements, 6 of the spots are among the top 10 YouTube viewed and 7 are in the top 12 viewed. Only Mercedes-Benz “Welcome”, Chevrolet “Tommy” and Doritos’ Crash “House Sitter” were not in the YouTube Top Twenty Viewed.

Commonalities are less apparent with the YouTube Top Twenty Liked list. After eliminating the Crash spots from the YouTube Like list, 6 of the Ad Meter spots remain, with 2 in the top 10 liked. CareerBuilder “Parking Lot,” Bridgestone “Karma,” Bridgestone “Reply All,” Snickers “Logging,” and Chevrolet “Tommy” were not on the list of the 20 most liked.

Advertisements appearing in the YouTube Top Twenty Views but not present in the Ad Meter Top Twenty include 2 movie trailers, Chevy’s “Transformer,” Go Daddy, Home Away and Hyundai “Hypnotized.” The spots appearing in the YouTube Top Twenty Liked but not present in the Ad Meter list include 4 movie trailers, Chevy’s “Transformer,” Kia Optima “One Epic Ride,” and Cars.com.

Mercedes Benz “Welcome,” appeared in the Ad Meter Top Twenty and the YouTube Top Twenty Liked, but was not on the list of the top 20 viewed.

One spot, Chevy’s “Tommy,” was the only spot to appear in the Ad Meter Top Twenty, but not on either YouTube list.

Doritos “Adam and Eve” appears in the YouTube Top Twenty Liked but was not aired during the Super Bowl. Interestingly, Pepsi Max “Torpedo Cooler” was number 10 on the YouTube Like list, higher than “Love Hurts,” but it did not appear in the top 20 Ad Meter results. Each of the Doritos and Pepsi Crash spots appearing in the Ad Meter top 20 also appear in the YouTube Like top 20.

Note that indicating “Like” requires an extra step in the YouTube process, perhaps providing added weight to this data. The Crash campaigns, which request that viewers rate the advertisements, may give these spots an advantage on the YouTube Top Twenty Liked list. However, the number of viewers taking the time to indicate their preference for all of the advertisements is statistically low.

Summarizing, the following advertisements appear on the Ad Meter Top Twenty list and the YouTube Top Twenty Liked list:
Mercedes-Benz “Welcome”  
Volkswagen “The Force”  
Volkswagen “Black Beetle”  
Doritos “House Sitting”  
Pepsi Max “First Date”  
Doritos “Pug Attack”  
Doritos “Best Part”  
Pepsi Max “Love Hurts”  
E*Trade “Uncensored Baby”  
Audi “Escape”

The following advertisements appear on all three lists:  
Volkswagen “The Force”  
Volkswagen “Black Beetle”  
Doritos “Pug Attack”  
Doritos “Best Part”  
Pepsi Max “Love Hurts”  
E*Trade “Uncensored Baby”  
Audi “Escape”

When research began, two questions were asked: how do self-reported opinions differ from USA Today’s research? And, does it seem the environment in which the ads are viewed has an impact on the viewer’s opinion of the ads?

In this singular instance, YouTube viewer indicated “likes” predicted slightly more than 50% of the advertisements appearing in the Ad Meter Top Twenty. YouTube Top Twenty Viewed was only slightly more accurate. To this end, it suggests that those viewing Super Bowl advertisements on YouTube have different motivations for viewing the ads, and hold them to a different standard than those participating in Ad Meter research.

There are, however, several variables that could impact the results of the comparisons.

It is possible that several spots, especially movie trailers, may have benefited from pre-Super Bowl public relations efforts. However, if this was the case it might be reasonable to expect that the public relations efforts would have an impact on the Ad Meter subjects, as well.

Additionally, there is a lack of control of the participants. USA Today conducts Ad Meter research with solid methodology (Horovitz, 2011). The YouTube sample is not controlled in any way. Generalizations could be made based on the demographics of the average YouTube viewer. But with more than 2 billion views every day from a base age demographic of 18-54 years of age (Scott, 2011), one cannot be confident that such generalizations hold any merit.
When looking at the list of advertisements appearing on all lists, one theme is found: humor and entertainment. This is consistent with existing research showing Super Bowl viewers prefer humor to a sincere message in their advertisements (Kelly & Turley, 2004). Clearly, those viewing Super Bowl ads on the web value the same qualities.

An unexpected realization from this research is the low percentage of users who rated the advertisements. The percent of viewership “liking” a spot was less than 2 percent in the best case. When more than half of the videos on YouTube have been rated or commented on by users (Scott, 2011), it was expected that Super Bowl commercials would generate more engagement.

These results suggest the need for greater exploration into the entire list of 61 commercials appearing on the Ad Meter to look for patterns of predictability not only in ratings, but in views and content. Opportunities exist to incorporate additional self-reporting systems, such as social media.

References
Hitting a Home Run with Social Media: How Sports Organizations Are Using Internet Tools to Reach Out to Fans

By Ric Jensen, Communication Studies Department, Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio. rjensen@ashland.edu

Introduction

Many of the world’s top sports organizations, and the mass media who cover them, now use websites and related social media as a key part of their marketing efforts. In the past, sports organizations would concentrate on working with the mass media to create press coverage, and purchasing advertising in newspapers and radio-TV stations to build and maintain relationships with fans. Today, many sports organizations have begun to develop aggressive marketing programs with websites and social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Foursquare, etc.) to reach out to more fans in new and innovative ways. The way in which a sports organization presents itself to the public is critically important because the website will often be the first source of information that customers will see when they decide whether they will choose to follow the team and buy its products and services (Wakefield, 2007). Knowing how to develop internet-based public relations and marketing programs is now an essential skill set required for anyone seeking a career in sports management (Nichols, Moynahan, Hall, and Taylor, 2002).

The Historical Evolution of Sports Websites

Many of the first websites were static (e.g., the content was not frequently updated and there were few links to multimedia). In 1992, when the first webpages were introduced, designs often consisted only of simple text-based pages with few links (Chapman, 2009). These early first generation websites had limited graphics, a lot of text, and a linear layout. Their function was to deliver information, not to entertain or amaze viewers (Edison, 2010). In contrast, today’s sports websites help sports organizations achieve strategic business goals, including helping enable fans to continuously monitor news about their favorite teams (Mullin, Hardy and Sutton, 2007), to buy tickets and merchandise (Rein, Kotler, and Shields, 2006), to facilitate e-commerce (Schwarz and Hunter, 2008), and to create dialog between fans and teams (Johnson-Morgan and Sassenberg, 2010). Many sports fans view their team’s website as “virtual homes” for their clubs; a place they can regularly visit to learn all the latest details about their heroes and talk with others in this extended virtual global fan community (Shilbury, Quick, and Westbrook, 2003, p. 218). To help sports organizations succeed, today’s sports websites must be dynamic and incorporate a number of features including streaming video of game action (Germann, 2010; Fetto, 2010), game highlights and digital advertisements produced by the organization (Lobring, 2010), links to Facebook pages (Harbison, 2010), access to Twitter posts and YouTube videos (Lowes, 2010), and RSS feeds (Hoye et al., 2009). Dynamic websites must provide fans with the choice of downloading content over the platform of their choice, whether it be through smart phones, mobile apps, enhanced in-stadium experiences, or new generation TVs that incorporate web technology (Fullerton, 2010, pp. 582-586).

The mass media are more focused than ever on meeting the needs of fans and are using emerging internet technologies to communicate with them. Today, there is an ever-
growing number of web-based media outlets including websites developed by traditional newspapers and radio/TV stations and specialized websites and blogs that focus on a specific sport or point-of-view (Fullerton, 2010). There is growing tend towards convergence among mass media content providers in which newspapers are now providing chats and digital audio and video, while radio and TV broadcasters are now offering the kinds of writing that used to be reserved for magazines and newspapers (Schultz, 2005). The Eurosport TV network has created separate channels that focus on broadcasting game matches, sports news and the development of made-for-TV special events. Eurosport makes the content available through the internet to cell phones and other mobile applications, and users can view the content in any of seven languages. As of 2010, Eurosport reached more than 210 million people in 59 countries (Buhler and Nufer, 2010, p. 122). USA-based ESPN which has created TV a family of TV channels that focus on college sports, classic sports, outdoors sports, sports presented in 3-dimensions, content geared to Hispanics, and Facebook applications (Janoff, 2010). The web is making it easier than ever for individual fans to create and publish their own news stories (citizen journalism). For example, fans of the San Francisco Giants used internet-related tools to report how celebrations of their team’s World Series victory turned violent (Corazza, 2010). The challenge is that it is becoming increasing more difficult to discern between which web-based sources of sports news are legitimate and content that is based on rumors and falsehoods (DeVault, 2010).

Dynamic websites are increasing the number of people who play fantasy sports and who follow sports by subscribing to Twitter tweets, YouTube videos, and content posted on Foursquare (Shank, 2009, p. 12; Hibbard, 2010). In 2010, 17 athletes had more than 1 million Twitter followers (Gaines, 2010). Howes (2010) suggests that teams and athletes should regularly broadcast Twitter tweets to engage fans and remind them about upcoming promotions. Major sports leagues around the world are developing YouTube applications. In 2010, the NBA YouTube channel recorded more than 14 million views, while digital videos posted by FC Barcelona had been viewed more than 6 million times. The next evolution of YouTube may be to use this media as a channel for live sports broadcasts; The India Premier Cricket League used YouTube to offer fans live broadcasts from the 2010 world championships and more than 50 million fans tuned in (Timmons, 2010). The growing number of fans who play fantasy sports on the web rely on many web-based technologies to keep updated about the latest news and statistics (Pasbrig, 2010; (Difino, 2010). Really simple syndication feeds (RSS) aggregate news and information developed by a sports organization or league and/or accounts of the club in the mass media. The Dallas Cowboys offer fans free subscriptions to RSS feeds which can then be sent to mobile phones, email accounts, and other internet-related devices (Hoye et al., 2009, p. 252). The Washington Redskins are using the Foursquare social media tool to encourage fans to take part in team rallies and attend home games. Foursquare rewards fans who come to a sponsored event and check in using this platform, which Redskins’ officials say was easier to implement than Facebook (Hibbard, 2010).

Who Is Creating Sports Websites?

Many diverse sports organizations are creating websites for special events, leagues, clubs, athletes, and businesses. The international football federation (FIFA)
created a website for the 2010 World Cup that let viewers select a version in English, Spanish, German, French, Portuguese, Arabic and International Sign Language. The website featured live streaming video of games and interviews with players and coaches, live statistics, contests for fans, and connections to Facebook and Twitter. It was so popular that 7 percent of the people in England and Brazil visited it regularly (Burmaster, 2010). The website for the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics featured several innovations, including extensive use of digital video, an interactive searchable map, and games that allowed users to compete against the mascots for the event. During the games, NBC, which broadcast the Vancouver Olympics, researched how consumers used internet-based coverage of this event (Boorstin, 2010). Results show that more than 16 million unique visitors watched live digital streams of this event and they consumed more than 4.4 million hours of digital video. In addition, NBC was able to utilize new technology to insert customized commercials into live and delayed digital broadcasts of specific events, thus helping advertisers match their messages with targeted customers (Microsoft Silverlight Blog Team, 2010).

Many global sports leagues are creating a significant website presence. The website of the English Premier League (EPL) links fans to microsites for each club, a fantasy sports contest, and a venue to purchase tickets online. However, as of July 2010 only 2 percent of Britons who responded to a survey said they would be willing to purchase streamed video of live EPL matches to their computer screens (Halliday, 2010). The marketing challenge is that many of these fans indicated they would rather go to a pub and watch these matches with friends rather than view them on their personal computer. The National Hockey League (NHL) website provides users the option to access it in French and English, and it provides links to each team. The NHL worked with a cell phone provider to develop special applications for mobile devices that enable users to listen to live radio broadcasts and view video highlights, and it allows fans to watch full games by subscribing to pay-per-view. According to sports media analyst Laurie Sullivan (2010), NHL.com is attracting and retaining visitors to its website by focusing on providing content that meets the needs of loyal hockey fans.

Some of the most notable sports teams that have created websites include football club Barcelona FC and the New York Yankees of Major League Baseball. The “Barca” website enables fans to experience the feeling of seeing a game in-person at Camp Nou stadium and it provides fans around the world with the opportunity to connect with the club and its supporters. The club’s website had attracted more than 20 million Facebook friends (Knobbs, 2010). The Yankees website allows fans to take part in auctions to bid for team-related merchandise and encourages them to raise funds for charities that fight cancer and support other social causes. The Yankees’ website allows fans to access the site in Japanese and Spanish since many of their players come from countries Latin America and the Far East. The Yankees are one of the first MLB teams to provide access to enhanced websites and digital resources in their stadium while games are played; fans can pay an extra fee to access Yankee Stadium’s wireless network, to view games from several camera angles, and to examine live statistics (Bhattacharyya, Munroe, and Posey, 2010). The Detroit Pistons of the NBA are one of many teams that use web-based technology to make it easier for fans to buy tickets. At the club’s website, fans can view what the game experience will look like based on a 3-dimensional portrayal of how the court will be seen from a specific seat. Once the fans have chosen the seat and ticket price
they want, the Pistons connect the fan to a live chat with a representative from the club’s

Many sports personalities that have created a social media presence. Golfer Tiger
Woods has created a website that allows fans to sign up to receive Twitter feeds, read his
blog posts, and get tips about how to play better golf. Perhaps in part to overcome
negative reaction from fans and the media after he signed with the NBA Miami Heat,
basketball star LeBron James has created a comprehensive website that provides fans
with access to detailed information about his lifestyle, his tastes in fashion, how he trains,
what he eats, and how he helps others. The website offers fans a chance to access and
share information with Twitter and Facebook. Even lesser-known athletes like Formula
One race car driver Chad Hurley (Ryan, 2009) have created personal websites to build
and market their brand. The problem with such personal websites is that athletes in public
relations trouble, like Tiger Woods, may gloss over the truth about their scandals and
paint an unrealistically positive picture of their woes (Deitsch, 2010; Greene, 2010).
Ironically, the expanded ability to easily post comments on Twitter, Facebook, and
Foursquare has created public relations problems for several athletes (Schwartz, 2010). In
fact, Twitter and Facebook have been described as “public relations minefields” that are
creating widespread problems for athletes and the sports organizations they represent
(Travis, 2009).

Many sports business have established a prominent website presence. Nike has
created websites that support such social causes as Lance Armstrong’s Livestrong
Foundation as well as the “Nike+” program which challenges everyday athletes to meet
fitness goals and then provides needed support (Stoldt, Dittmore, and Branvold, 2006, p.
230). The adidas website presents a “MiCoach” section that enables people to get one-on-
one advice from a personal trainer to improve their running time and lose weight; and
custom-design gear with the colors and features that meet their needs.

Summary

It’s apparent that sports organizations are making widespread use new media
technologies, including such wide-ranging internet technologies as websites, blogs,
Facebook pages, Twitter, YouTube, Foursquare, and other new applications. It’s apparent
that we will continue to see more new web-based technologies on a regular basis,
although there is no way of predicting that these developments may offer.

A few lessons seem clear. Sports organizations can use new technologies to
enhance the fan experience in many ways. Websites and social media can constitute a
“virtual home” that allows fans to fully engage and interact with their favorite sport, even
though they might live far away from the team. Because the web overcomes traditional
challenges based on separation by distance and time, new forms of internet-related media
can provide the opportunity to bring fans together from around the world in online
better build and maintain relationships between sports clubs and their traditional
followers wherever they might live. For example, we might see instances where the web
brings together all of fans of Brazil’s national football club who live in distant regions of
the earth in a closer relationship than has previously been possible. Of course, internet-
related technologies create new challenges, but the bottom line to me is the potential
benefits far outweigh the risks.
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Appropriating Queer Female Identities in Mainstream Fashion Advertisements: An Analysis of Vogue

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This paper examines specific examples of how ‘gay-vague’ techniques in advertising and fashion spreads are employed in the mainstream fashion publication, Vogue in the 1990, 2000, and 2010 September issues. Gay-vague pertains to advertisements which contain a covert gay narrative, as well as an overt dominant narrative of heterosexuality. This paper seeks to provide possible rationales for the use of gay-vague ads by advertisers. Articles based primarily on textual analysis, sociological and psychological studies, individual interviews, surveys and focus groups are utilized to deconstruct possible reasons for the increasing use of gay-vague advertisements. An overview of work conducted on the interpretations of gay-vague ads provides useful discussions about the representations of queer female identities inherent in such ads. Theories pertaining to transgressive and subversive gazes contribute to an understanding of the notion of gay-vague. Textual analysis provides a means for discussing messages within several ads, which were retrieved from issues of Vogue in order to exemplify a gay-vague reading. Emphasis is placed upon traditional and dominant standards of beauty, especially when discussing the representation of queer female identities within gay-vague ads. Ultimately, gay-vague techniques allow advertisers to appeal to lesbian, bi and queer female viewers, without fear of negative backlash from heterosexual consumers. As a result, the images of queer female characters within gay-vague ads are more likely to reflect dominant heterosexual standards of beauty.

Introduction

Throughout the past few decades a fad known as gay-vague has emerged within mainstream print advertisements in fashion publications. Within gay-vague ads, characters are coded so that they might pass as gay, yet to the untrained (read: heterosexual) eye these images appear trendy and on the cutting edge of current fashions. ‘Gay-vague,’ images seem to hint at lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB), and queer identities, but refrain from explicitly depicting the characters in the ads as such. In this way, advertisers avoid labeling the advertised brand as ‘gay,’ and in turn negatively associating it with homosexuality. Gay-vague remains a somewhat contested notion, as the viewer ultimately decides whether or not a specific ad qualifies. The term, gay-vague, is used throughout this paper as I argue that these ads put forth extremely limited representations of queer female identities. These ads merely depict heterosexual appropriation of certain aspects of behaviors and adornment labeled as stereotypically or fetishistically ‘gay.’ Ads from the September issues of Vogue from the years 1990, 2000, and 2010, are considered in order to juxtapose various forms of gay-vague, and how they have evolved over the past twenty years in ads of this particular publication. Vague gay

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1 Interesting to note is the existence of differing viewpoints on the use of gay chic or gay-vague within advertising. While some authors such as Michael Bronski and Danae Clark state that gay-vague and gay window ads hide representations of LGB individuals out of sight from heterosexual viewers. Ron Becker discusses the appeal of gay chic, arguing that visible narratives reflecting acceptance of LGB individuals might appear trendy.
and the hypersexualized heterosexy lesbian are born out of the ever shifting ideals and double standards of dominant views of femininity and women’s sexuality. In this way, female characters in ads often follow the prescription for a dominant standard of beauty, that of the young, white, middle class, heterosexual woman. However, these hypersexualized heterosexy characters appear in a variety of settings pertaining to female same-sex desire or touching. Advertisers continually challenge women’s sexuality and ideal notions of femininity through reenactments and appropriations in order to hit on the next big trend and reach untapped niche markets. Ads containing gay-vague messages often further alienate queer women through limited, or arguably inauthentic representations of queer female identities. Gay-vague ads of this nature appeal to trendy heterosexuals as well as queer women vying for a place in the mainstream.

This paper explores the literature on the topics of ‘gay-vague,’ and ‘gay window advertising,’ as they relate to queer women, as well as the image of the ‘hot lesbian’ and ‘lesbian chic.’ Gay-vague, and gay window advertising will not be discussed in terms of queer men, even though similar techniques are often used in such ads targeting men. The focus of this paper pertains to the ways in which queer female identities are appropriated in mainstream advertising. This paper will also consider the methods previous researchers have used to study how individuals of various sexual identities interpret and reflect on messages in gay-vague ads. Ads that contain possible narratives for queer female viewers typically appear in a number of ways, and have been discussed by academics through different parameters. I argue that “gay-vague” ads in the 1990, 2000, and 2010 September issues of Vogue take on several forms: ads with androgynous female characters; ads with a single female who dons typical masculine attire and stance; ads featuring same-sex female groupings; ads with two women who appear to be twins; ads featuring two women coded as a male/female pair; and ads featuring hypersexualized women in sexually suggestive situations. It is precisely this criteria that I use in evaluating ads appearing in the issues of Vogue, I researched for the purposes of this paper. In order to explore possible readings of ads containing vague gay or gay-vague codings, a synthesis of work previously done on the topics of gay-vague, gay window advertising, and the depictions of the hot lesbian and lesbian chic is provided. Then, research questions are posed on gay-vague within the 1990, 2000, and 2010 September issues of Vogue. Next, textual analyses of several ads which appeared in the issues of Vogue chosen for this project are conducted. Lastly, closing thoughts are considered in reference to the implications of gay-vague ads in Vogue, and other popular publications, and how they contribute to the limited representations of queer female identities.

**Conceptualizing Gay-Vague**

While reporting for Advertising Age, Michael Wilkes coined the term, “gay-vague” which refers to images in ads which depict characters in seemingly ambiguous situations that may be narrated as gay, while such a reading lies in the eye of the beholder (Wilkes 1997). I use the term, gay-vague, to describe ads which transmit multiple meanings, or are polysemic (Goffman 1976, 70). In other words, ads that contain codes or

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2 Hetero’sexy was first used by Helen Jefferson Lenskyj in the article, “Sport and the Threat to Gender Boundaries.”

3 I choose to use the term, “queer,” though most literature existing on the subject focuses on lesbian representations and identities, and does not consider queer women who identify in a way other than lesbian.
covert messages of homosexuality, and any readings that may serve as pleasurable to queer female viewers, while not overtly displaying any reference to lesbianism, bisexuality, pansexuality, or a fluid sexuality. Likewise, the phrase “gay window advertising,” first utilized by Bronski (1984, 187), refers to this same phenomenon, whereby individuals who identify as gay may pleasurably view a narrative of homosexuality that is transmitted covertly, while still reading a dominant heterosexual narrative. A specific representation which I argue as reminiscent of gay-vague is what Rosalind Gill (2009) refers to as the “hot lesbian” and what others call “lesbian chic” or highly sexualized woman-woman scenarios (Reichert 2001). Often these ‘lesbian’ characters uphold traditional young, white, middle class, heterosexual standards of feminine beauty. Thus, these characters represent a sort of ‘heterosexist lesbian,’ or a female character representing an image of heterosexiness, while being situated as a woman attracted to other women. Each of these terms aid in legitimizing and strengthening arguments pertaining to the appropriation of queer female identities in advertisements.

**Background**

Since the 1980s, a number of individuals have considered the implications of gay-vague ads, ads containing lesbian chic, and gay window advertising for the LGB community as well as mainstream society (Becker 2006; Bronski 1984; Clark 2000; Walters 2001). Within such culminating pieces, a number of important points emerge. Perhaps one of the most intriguing involves the discussion surrounding the appropriation of ‘gay style’ by heterosexual consumers which has further promoted the use of gay-vague techniques (Becker 2006, 131; Clark 1991, 384). Gay and lesbian style often indicates an individual’s or a brand’s trendiness, daringness and their commitment to cutting edge fashion (Becker 2006, 131; Clark 2000, 377; Walters 2001, 244). Since the increase of gay visibility in the 1990s, tolerance and progressive opinions often equal coolness and hipness. In turn, advertisers may see incentive to hint at gay themes, include out gay celebrities, or use aspects of traditional or stereotypical gay style. Through the process of heterosexual female consumers donning traditional ‘trendy’ lesbian styles and garb, lesbians become invisible and may be forced to pass as straight, which negates the point of lesbian-feminist ‘anti-fashion.’ In this way, heterosexual female consumers exercise a type of choice in style, which acts more independently from their sexual and political identity than it does for many lesbian consumers (Clark, 2000, 381).

Through this process, lesbian style becomes commodified, sanitized and mainstreamed, which dilutes it of lesbian identification. Such a process has lead Danae Clark (2000, 383) to argue that, “Gay window advertising, for example, may commodify lesbian masquerade as legitimate high-style fashion, but lesbians are free to politicize these products or reappropriate them in combination with other products/fashions to act as new signifiers for lesbian identification or ironic commentaries on heterosexual culture.” Therefore, lesbians may further transform and appropriate lesbian style that has been inducted into mainstream fashions, in turn creating more complex meanings within such styles.

Similarly, queer women have long been creating their own meanings within ads and fashion spreads, despite the presence of dominant narratives of heterosexuality. For example, Reina Lewis and Katrina Rolley (1996, 178) discuss their discovery that,
“reading fashion magazines was neither a solitary nor an un-lesbian activity.” They further suggest that all women receive education in consuming images, often sexual, of the female body through viewing fashion publications such as Vogue (Lewis and Rolley 1996, 179). Images of heterosex lesians or lesbian chic hint at a lesbian reading of the images, while maintaining the presumption of heterosexuality. However, the fact that gay-vague ads maintain such dual readings, or polysemy, individuals may develop various storylines within the ads. Indeed, viewers often actively create meanings from images in ads that reflect their identities, as opposed to passively consuming the images presented (Bhat et al. 1998, 12). This type of transgressive reading presents one way that queer women may reappropriate the images and inherent desire in ads and fashion spreads.

A number of individuals discuss various ways in which to gaze at images of women, including gay-vague ads and fashion spreads (Fuss 1992; Lewis and Rolley 1996). Lewis and Rolley (1996) thoroughly discuss the notion of a lesbian gaze in reading fashion spreads and ads. Through a lesbian gaze, queer female viewers then, may not only gaze longingly in a desiring fashion at a female depicted in an ad or fashion spread, but might also identify with her, desire to be like her, or to be desired as she is by other female viewers (Lewis and Rolley 1996, 181). Diana Fuss (1992) however outlines a different type of gaze similar to that of the lesbian gaze. “Vampirism, I would like to suggest, marks a third possible mode of looking, a position that demands both separation and identification, both a having and a becoming - indeed, a having through a becoming (original emphasis) (Fuss 1992, 730).” Each of these types of gaze contribute to transgressive and subversive readings of gay-vague ads for queer female viewers.

In studying heterosexual and queer viewers’ interpretations of ads considered gay- vague, a number of methods have been utilized including textual analysis, sociological and psychological studies, focus groups, individual interviews, and surveys. While textual analysis has often proven most popular in offering definitive statements about messages contained in ads, focus groups have largely been utilized to combat such assumptions (Sender 1999, 175-6). Though ads are coded with dominant messages, and arguably multiple messages, how one interprets these messages is unique to each individual; multi-method approaches offer various ways of interpreting and distinguishing polysemic ads, and offer nuanced responses to gay-vague ads.

Researchers frequently utilize textual analysis as a way to clearly relay what form a reading of a gay-vague ad might take (Fuss 1992; Lewis and Rolley 1996; Walters 2001). Often, these individuals combine textual analysis with another method such as surveys or focus groups in order to strengthen their claims (Mikkonen 2010; Reichert 2001). This is extremely important when considering gay-vague as a contested notion, one that may qualify in different ways for different viewers. Analysis of images serves as a logical entry point in studying gay-vague ads, as well as advertising in general. Images engage viewers as they are often stimulating and pleasurable to look at. Also, images present a medium through which different viewers may develop various meanings based upon their lived experiences. “Employing imagery is subtle and therefore more realistic in the sense that marketers may be less overt or direct when advertising to multiple audiences (Bhat et al. 1998, 10).” In this way, gay-vague ads creatively utilize ambiguity within an image to provide multiple readings for LGB, queer, and heterosexual consumers. Textual analysis gives merely an example of the type of reading one might
expect of an ad the researcher has classified as gay-vague. Perhaps the earliest method used, and ranking among the most popular with focus groups in studies analyzing gay-vague ads, textual analysis remains insightful, as the method used within this paper.

Many individuals studying the effects and various readings of gay-vague ads utilize focus groups, as well as individual and group interviews, in order to provide multiple readings of such ads (Sender 1999; Reichert 2001; Mikkonen 2010). Ilona Mikkonen’s 2010 study in which she interviewed nine Finnish women ranging in ages from 26 to 37 years old, all of whom self-identified as lesbian, provides useful information about ways in which lesbians may interpret gay-vague ads (308). Many of the women who participated in Mikkonen’s (2010, 313) study argued that the models in the six gay-vague or lesbian chic ads analyzed were not representative of the ‘authentic lesbian look’ or ‘lesbian authenticity.’ Yet these women discussed their difficulties with fitting into various lesbian communities due to their appearance. In other words, the female characters in the ads presented as heterosexually lesbian did not fit into notions of an authentic lesbian look for the women interviewed. “The women are beautiful and feminine, wear silken lingerie, and fail to look like any lesbians I have ever encountered, although I recognize that some exist (Inness 1997, 65).” A number of the women who participated in the study stated a preference for ads targeting lesbians to refrain from erotic images, and instead include monogamous lesbian couples, completing monotonous everyday tasks (Mikkonen 2010, 316). Many participants even argued that the ads were in fact attempting to appeal to heterosexual men, and not lesbians, as ‘authentic lesbians’ or lesbians more accurately reflecting their identities lacked representation in such ads.

Another study by Katherine Sender (1999) relied on discussions generated through five focus groups, three of which were comprised of a mix of gay men, lesbians, bisexual and heterosexual individuals, one strictly gay, lesbian and bi individuals, and one which was entirely heterosexual men and women. Sender (1999, 188) chose nine advertisements, reflecting a wide range of gay window advertising techniques and ultimately argues that although gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals were more likely to read gay narratives in the ads, these readings were not dependent upon the sexual identities of such individuals. Likely, gay, lesbian and bi individuals are more familiar with codings directed toward a gay target market, have more investment in finding representations of queer individuals within advertising, and may be able to more easily identify covert narratives due to the relevance to their identities. However, many heterosexual participants were also able to identify gay undertones in the ads studied, just as lesbian, gay and bi individuals easily identified the dominant heteronormative narrative in most of the ads (Sender 1999, 188). Often, focus groups succeed in providing a variety of responses and readings to gay-vague ads, as a number of individuals’ ideas are represented.

In his 2001 study, Tom Reichert relies on 12 male and 12 female focus group and survey participants to study how likely an individual may be to pick up on lesbian undertones. However, Reichert fails to consider sexual identity in his study; one is unable to discern if all participants identified as heterosexual at the time of the study, or if they represented a number of sexual identities including heterosexual. Though Reichert points out the fact that sexual identity was not taken into account when conducting his study, this type of omission becomes extremely problematic when making claims about lesbian chic ads such as, “men were more likely to view each homoerotic image as sexual, while
women offered more variety in their responses (2001, 21).” If one cannot decipher if the aforementioned women identified as heterosexual, lesbian, bi, or queer, then how can the study claim that “women” are less likely to read sexual undertones into lesbian chic ads? Because gay-vague ads illustrate the notion of polysemy, interviews providing various interpretations prove quite useful in teasing out the numerous meanings contained within such ads.

A number of psychological and sociological studies measure consumer responses to a specific brand that has produced gay-themed print ads (Bhat et al. 1998; Hooten, et al. 2009). Indeed, scholars studying gay-vague ads and gay window advertising state that many companies refrain from using explicit gay imagery or themes in ads, as they fear these inclusions may result in backlash by their heterosexual consumers, possibly associating their brand negatively with homosexuality (Clark 2000, 373; Walters 2001, 236). Due to the fear of possible boycotts, negative associations and loss of sales, advertisers find themselves in need of creative solutions. Angelini and Bradley (2010) discuss the difficulty many advertisers run into when trying to target a gay and lesbian market, without alienating their heterosexual consumers who make up a much bigger market. Indeed, heterosexual markets such as what Ron Becker (2006, 81) describes as the “slumpy” (socially liberal, urban-minded professionals) demographic make up a larger viable market than queer consumers. “Advertising to gay and lesbian consumers in mainstream media is a tightrope walk that few companies dare to undertake (Angelini and Bradley 2010, 487).” Though gay-themed and gay-vague ads have become more common over the past few decades, this new visibility may represent a risk taken by advertisers.

In order to combat negative associations of a brand with homosexuality, advertisers may use what Clark (2000, 374) calls a dual marketing approach, similar to gay window advertising. By mainstreaming images of lesbians, gay men, and bi women, advertisers situate themselves in a position to advertise to a general heterosexual market while still reaching LGB individuals. Many advertisers may attempt to ‘double dip’ in this way as the lesbian and gay market has largely and inaccurately been considered a golden or ‘Dream Market’ (Becker 2006, 126-7; Bhat et al. 1998, 11; Clark 2000, 373; Gluckman and Reed 1993, 16; Oakenfull and Greenlee 2004, 1276; Walters 1991, 241). Hooten, Noeva and Hammonds (2009) estimate that gay and lesbian individuals make up only 4% to 8% of the United States’ population, roughly 11 to 23 million individuals (Hooten et al. 2009, 1231). This small sector of the U.S. population, no matter how deceptively affluent they have appeared to be, still represent a relatively miniscule minority as compared to their heterosexual counterparts, some 92% of the U.S. population (Hooten et al. 2009, 1231). Depicting the gay and lesbian population as a ‘Dream Market,’ provides advertisers with yet another incentive to utilize gay-vague techniques in ads.

Bhat, Leigh and Wardlow (1998, 10) note, an individual’s response to gay-themed advertising most likely reflects their personal beliefs towards homosexuality; responses from a heterosexual audience viewing ads containing imagery featuring lesbian, gay or bi individuals are not likely to be homogenous. Positive attitudes towards homosexuality in general, however, should reflect varied positive attitudes towards gay-themed advertising. Gay-vague ads then, may function as a way for advertisers to ‘tap’ into this theoretically
fruitful market without receiving negative backlash from heterosexual consumers who may be offended by gay-themed advertising.

In their rather novel study, Bhat et al. (1998) examine how 174 heterosexual undergraduate students feel towards ads featuring gay male couples. Bhat et al. (1998) utilize two different types of ads, one for a brand of jeans and one for shampoo. In each case the researchers create one version of the ad with a heterosexual couple, and one version with a gay male couple. This study proves revolutionary as it became the first study to measure heterosexual viewers’ emotional responses to homosexual (gay male) imagery in ads. “We find strong evidence that homosexual imagery elicits disapproving emotions from heterosexuals corresponding to their attitude toward homosexuality (Bhat et. al 1998, 22).” Thus, in order for a marketer to determine the success of an ad depicting gay-themed imagery among their target market, one need only measure the attitudes of the target market towards homosexuality. Gay-vague advertising arguably avoids the need to test an audience’s sensitivity towards homosexuality, as it provides a covert reading of the ad, often overlooked by heterosexual viewers.

In another study, Hooten et al. (2009, 1235) found that of the 127 predominantly young white heterosexual female undergraduate students they surveyed, most participants stated they were less likely to purchase a product which featured overt gay-themed advertising featuring gay male characters. In fact, ads containing lesbian characters received a “percentage rated homosexual” of under 5% (Saturn and Bridgestone), with intent to purchase between 14% and 16%. However, as Sender (1999, 185) discusses, reading lesbian sexuality may prove more difficult among heterosexual as well as LGB and queer individuals as, “lesbian sexuality has historically been so much more submerged than either heterosexuality or male gayness.” Due to the mainstreaming of such representations as the ‘hot lesbian,’ lesbian themes may have become less detectable; women are more allowed than men to exhibit flirtatious behavior around peers of the same sex, as this type of behavior serves to titillate heterosexual male viewers. In this way, lesbian-themed ads more readily fall into the category of gay-vague advertising, as they, for the most part, do not represent any threat to heteronormativity.

By studying the emotional responses of survey participants to ads with explicit gay or lesbian imagery, Angelini and Bradley (2010, 495-7) argue that such ads receive more viewing time as they take longer for viewers to process and encode due to their ‘novelty,’ and elicit negative emotional responses to the ad and in turn, the brand featured. Ads featuring gay and lesbian imagery often exhibit a certain shock value when viewed within mainstream publications as they differ from the majority of other ads featured in most mainstream magazines. Gay-vague ads featuring queer female identities may at times contain some shock value, but this type of imagery is often more accepted than images of gay men, or queer male identities.

**Research Questions**

In considering gay-vague ads and the ways in which LGB identities are represented within them, a number of research questions arise. Why might *Vogue* and the evolution of the magazine, present a possible entry point for considering the role fashion publications have played in such representations? Has *Vogue* or other mainstream publications engaged the topic of gay-vague or lesbian chic? What criteria has been used in evaluating what qualifies gay-vague ads appearing in *Vogue*? By analyzing the 1990,
2000, and 2010 September issues of *Vogue*, might one see an increase in the frequency and type of gay-vague ads appearing in the publication? Also, what do gay-vague and lesbian chic ads look like? What might a possible decoding of a gay-vague ad look like? What form might positive and negative reactions to gay-vague and lesbian chic ads take?

**Brief History of Vogue**

For the purposes of this paper, I have chosen to analyze ads from several September issues of what has commonly been considered, “the preeminent fashion publication in America,” *Vogue* (Hill, 2004, x). I have selected the 1990, 2000, and 2010 September issues of *Vogue*, as the September issue arguably ‘sets the tone’ for fashion in the coming year. As a result, the September issue is often the largest issue of the year; the issues considered for this paper fell within the range of 600 to 800 pages each. Anna Wintour fulfills the position of editor in chief for all issues researched for this paper, as she maintains this position since her reception in August of 1988 (Angeletti and Oliva 2006, 250). Though Wintour creatively took *Vogue* through the turn of the twentieth century, many before her shaped the publication in revolutionary ways, particularly *Harper's Bazaar*, a fashion journal which predates *Vogue*, Condé Nast, the owner of *Vogue* from 1909 until 1942, and several individuals who have held the position of editor in chief at *Vogue* (Hill 2004, 2); (Angeletti and Oliva 2006, 128).

*Harper’s Bazaar*, which premiered in 1867, paved the way for *Vogue*’s success in its inclusion of three important elements, also contained within *Vogue*. These features include a focus on fashion journalism, “ready-to-wear apparel” often with pattern inserts or separate mail-in forms for patterns, and fashion advertising (Hill 2004, 4). On December 17, 1892, the first edition of *Vogue* was produced, under founder, Arthur B. Turnure. With *Vogue*, Turnure succeeded in launching a social gazette for New York socialites, which reflected high-class society. However, three years after Turnure’s sudden death in 1906, Condé Nast bought *Vogue* in 1909, and proceeded to turn the magazine first and foremost into a fashion publication (Hill 2004, 9-11). Nast maintained *Vogue*’s elite status or what he called its “fixity of purpose,” and labeled the magazine a “class publication,” which catered to upper-middle class America (Angeletti and Oliva 2006, 19-20). Despite these labels, issues of *Vogue* regularly included patterns of popular fashions so that women leading less economically privileged lives could make current fashions themselves. Another innovation introduced by Nast involves *Vogue*’s reliance on advertising dollars as revenue; *Vogue* included more ads and charged advertisers more per ad than any other women’s magazine at the time. While advertisers seeking to print full page ads in *Vogue* paid $10 per thousand readers, “high-circulation magazines such as *McCall’s* were charging $2 or $3 per thousand readers (Angeletti and Oliva 2006, 19).” By strategically using *Vogue*’s reputation as a high-end fashion publication with an extremely wealthy and affluent readership, Nast was able to secure a large annual revenue through selling ad space.

Although *Vogue* maintains a serious and lucrative commitment to fashion advertising, the main appeal within the publication today continues to be fashion spreads and the models within. After Diana Vreeland took the reins as editor in chief of *Vogue* in 1963, an emphasis around youth and beauty took center stage. Vreeland embraced the youth culture of the 1960s, she even coined the term “youthquake,” to describe the movement and trends (Angeletti and Oliva 2006, 182). “From the moment of Vreeland’s
arrival, *Vogue* fashions became more suggestive, the photography bolder and more sensual (Angeletti and Oliva 2006, 188).” In the April 1970 issue, a two-page nude spread featuring Marisa Berenson wearing only a necklace donned the pages of *Vogue*. Indeed, Vreeland’s insistence on sensual photographs of ‘the beautiful people’ wearing beautiful clothes set a precedent for the future of *Vogue*.

Considering such factors as the impact of *Harpar’s Bazaar*, Condé Nast, and Diana Vreeland upon *Vogue*, the inclusion of gay-vague ads seems a somewhat logical maneuver; gay-vague and lesbian chic ads often embody a fashion sensibility, seek to increase profits while keeping advertising costs relatively low through market double dipping, and include a certain sexual appeal. Mainstream publications such as *Vogue* and even *Playboy* have discussed the increase in visibility of lesbian identities throughout the 1990s (Jetter 1993; Baber and Spitznagel 1995). Though *Playboy* discussed the topic primarily through humor, and often mocking lesbian popular icons, Alexis Jetter (1993) intensely considers the ways in which lesbians received airplay throughout the 1990s. Ultimately, in terms of identity, Jetter (1993, 92) argues that the more femme a lesbian appears (read: resembling heterosexiness) the more publicity she is likely to receive. This visibility of lesbians who more closely prescribe to dominant standards of beauty is no doubt reflected in many gay-vague ads. Indeed, through engagement with popular issues affecting women, even queer women, *Vogue* maintains a position as a cutting-edge publication.

*Vogue* arguably sets the tone for cutting edge fashion each year, especially its September issue, which often contains more ads than any other issue throughout the year. In studying the 1990, 2000, and 2010 September issues of *Vogue*, a number of gay-vague ads appeared in each. The following criteria were used in qualifying ads as vague-gay appearing in the 1990, 2000, and 2010 September issues of *Vogue*.

- Ads featuring androgynous female characters
- Ads depicting a single female character who dons typical masculine attire and stance
- Ads containing same-sex female groupings
- Ads with two female characters who appear to be twins
- Ads featuring two female characters coded as a male/female or masculine/feminine pair
- Ads depicting hypersexualized female characters in sexually suggestive situations

In the 1990 September issue of *Vogue*, seven gay-vague ads appeared, however three of the seven ads were part of a Gap fashion spread featuring the same androgynous female character. The 2000 September issue of *Vogue* contained only two gay-vague ads, one of which, by Gucci, qualifies as lesbian chic and will be further considered through textual analysis. A possible rationale for this decrease in gay-vague ads may be due to the criteria used to identify ads as gay-vague, or may be representative of a backlash due to the increased visibility of LGB and queer identities throughout the 1990s. Within the 2010 September issue of *Vogue* roughly twenty-three gay-vague ads appeared, several of which appeared in spreads for the same brand or company. Brands featuring gay-vague ads in this most recent issue of *Vogue* include Burberry, Calvin Klein, DKNY, and True Religion among others. The 2010 issue of *Vogue* contained the most gay-vague ads meeting the criteria used, more than three times the number of ads featured in the issue with the next highest number of gay-vague ads, the 1990 issue. Though the 2000 September issue of *Vogue* contained far fewer gay-vague ads than the other issues, an increase is still apparent from 1990 to 2010.
Examples and Textual Analysis

As discussed previously, gay-vague ads featuring female characters take several forms including a female individual coded as masculine in appearance or stance (Figure 1), same-sex female groupings (Figure 2), and a hypersexualized female pair in a sexually suggestive situation (Figure 3). Brands in ads considered through the method of textual analysis include True Religion, Burberry, and Gucci.

Figure 1, an ad for True Religion jeans, contains a female character, who adheres to a number of prescriptions for femininity, but also dons stereotypical masculine attire and posture. Indeed, the woman pictured appears in “natural” make-up, heavy jewelry, and has shoulder-length unkept hair. The photographed woman however, sits comfortably in an armchair, sprawled out, taking up more space than what is contained in the photograph. This type of relaxed spread-legged seating in addition to her locked in gaze are typical of male characters within ads. Also reminiscent of masculine appearance include her oversized combat boots, large pendants, unbuttoned dress shirt, and leather coat. Her unbuttoned shirt and exposed flat chest call to mind similarities to the appearance of a male figure wearing such attire. The featured woman even has her head thrown back, neck exposed, which falls in line with Diana Fuss’ (1992, 729) theory of vampirism. Decidedly, this woman represents a mixture of feminine and masculine codes, as well as stereotypical lesbian anti-style such as the leather coat and large boots.
Figure 1. An ad for True Religion jeans appearing on p. 209 of the September 2010 issue of *Vogue*.

Within Figure 2, a group of male and female characters comprise the ad, with the two female characters standing out in distinct ways. Though both female characters meet the gaze of the viewer, the woman with short hair stares straight on, while the more stereotypically feminized woman looks from the corner of her eyes, head turned to the
side. In addition to much shorter hair, the first model is coded in other masculine ways including her dress coat which matches those of the male figures surrounding her. Yet, she clutches a purse, as does the other female character. Clearly the viewer is not to mistake the short haired female as inherently masculine, as she appears to display feminine codings as well such as her “natural” make-up or knee high boots matching the other female character’s. However, due to the mixing of feminine and masculine codings unlike other figures in the ad, this woman represents a gay-vague figure, hence a gay-vague ad.

Figure 2 appeared as a two-page spread on p. 38-9 in the September 2010 issue of Vogue.

Lastly, Figure 3 pertains to a type of gay-vague ad, lesbian chic. The appearances of the two women pictured clearly follow prescriptions for dominant ideals of beauty, typically representative of young, middle-class, white, heterosexual women. In this way, these two women may be labeled as heterosexy lesbians, as they more closely resemble two heterosexual women thrust into a lesbian-esque fantasy situation. The first woman appears as dominant as she directly meets the gaze of the viewer out of the corner of her eyes, in a somewhat challenging way. She also has her arms wrapped around the other woman, pulling the second woman towards her. Though both women are stylishly dressed, the first woman’s arms extend out from an oversized leather coat, reminiscent of stereotypical lesbian anti-style. The second woman however, appears touching, somewhat hesitantly the other woman’s shoulder and breast. Her gaze is directed at the first
woman’s breast which she appears to be touching. A secluded beach comes across as the setting of this encounter, which contains elements of romanticism and spontaneity. Though both women appear to conform to traditional feminine standards of beauty, each embodies a role inherent to heteronormativity, dominance and passivity. This ad likely instills a type of shock value among viewers, and functions as titillation for heterosexual men and those utilizing a lesbian gaze through which to read the ad. Although this ad may appear to represent a lesbian couple, not all lesbians and queer women may agree on this type of representation, and may question such an appropriation of a queer female identity (Mikkonen 2010, 315). Likely, a queer woman viewing this ad may reject the image altogether, or go through some sort of negotiating process. The possibility of acceptance of the image among queer women in fact does remain. However, images such as this Gucci ad make room for the acceptance of a specific type of queer female identity at the risk of making other queer female identities obsolete, as they may not depict lesbianism in a way that is as visually appealing to mainstream (read: heterosexual) society. In this way, advertisers hold the power to decide what qualifies as an ‘authentic’ queer female identity, while LGB and queer women continue to reject, accept, negotiate and transgressively read such images.

Figure 3 appeared as part of a two-page spread in the September 2000 issue of *Vogue*.

**Conclusion**

Ads containing messages concerning women’s sexuality within the construction of gay-vague ads hold various meanings for women viewing the ads, and thus, seek to tap into multiple market segments at once. Through consideration of the development of
various subversive gazes, one may decode messages within gay-vague ads. Images within gay-vague ads are not indicative of females who identify as queer, nor do these individuals make up the primary market segment of advertisers employing them. In order to analyze the female identities represented in gay-vague ads, a number of methods have been used by researchers including textual analysis, focus groups, psychological and sociological studies, individual interviews, and surveys. Through considering the results of these studies a pattern has emerged, one which displays incentives for advertisers to refrain from explicit gay imagery or themes in ads. In this way, gay-vague techniques provide an advantage for advertisers, while reducing possible stigma towards the brand. By analyzing ads featured in a mainstream women’s fashion magazine, Vogue, from 1990, 2000, and 2010, one can trace the increase in frequency of ads containing gay-vague codings. Throughout time, these images containing gay-vague representations of queer female identities, have become more explicit and frequent, possibly due to the increased visibility of LGB and queer individuals beginning in the 1990s. However, media representations of LGB and queer individuals largely reflect extremely attractive individuals who conform to dominant heteronormative standards of beauty. In this way, gay-vague ads not only function as a way for advertisers to double dip, but further double standards of femininity and women’s sexuality. Diversity in representations of LGB and queer individuals and identities is needed in order to attempt to reflect more realistic depictions of members of the LGB and queer community. Ads containing gay-vague themes, while trying to have it all by appealing heterosexual as well as queer women, end up furthering problematic messages about women’s sexuality.

References


Proverb-In-Product: Wising Up Through Consumerism

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Introduction

“Happiness is in the heart, not in the circumstances.” Or so I was told by my Dove Chocolate wrapper the other day. It seems that in the past few years, many of the products we purchase have decided to take on roles as gurus or our personal life coaches, offering us cryptic messages and advice, rather like a fortune cookie or horoscope. But why? What purpose can these nuggets of wisdom, for lack of a better word, serve? Perhaps surprisingly, these messages, henceforth referred to as “proverb-in-product,” may be important if we view them as a new type of wisdom literature dependent greatly upon a largely literate consumer culture. Advertisers may initially use proverb-in-product as a marketing device designed to appeal to petite bourgeoisie consumers seeking to acquire intellectual status; however, proverb-in-product also has the potential to make wisdom a democratic, participatory endeavor worthy of our attention.

Two frameworks in particular aid in explaining the emergence of proverb-in-product: first, Walter Ong’s respected (though admittedly controversial) and extensive work on the subject of oral and literate cultures helps to explain the forms wisdom literature has taken in the past and provides clues for understanding why wisdom may have taken on new forms in our highly literate culture. Next, a post-modernist theory of consumer culture as conceived by Michael Featherstone and informed by Jean Baudrillard and Pierre Bourdieu helps to situate proverb-in-product within its consumerist milieu. Together, these theories provide some insight into the emergence and success of proverb-in-product.

Though there are quite a few examples of proverb-in-product worthy of discussion, this paper focuses on four typified occurrences of this phenomenon: Dove Chocolate, Yogi Tea, Starbucks coffee, and a column entitled: “Life is Short: Autobiography as Haiku,” featured for a time in the Washington Post. These four examples can be divided into three categories--non-participatory, semi-participatory, and participatory--based on their ability to democratize wisdom. While non-participatory proverb-in-product may do little to encourage a change in the role wisdom literature plays in our daily lives, fully participatory proverb-in-product has the potential to broaden participants’ horizons and encourage them to learn important life lessons from one another.

Orality vs. Literacy: the Changing Faces of Wisdom Literature

In order to effectively discuss proverb-in-product as it occurs in the United States, it is useful first to understand some of the key differences between orality and literacy. The technology of writing has fundamentally changed almost every culture that has embraced it. Ong’s work explores some of the differences between oral and literate cultures, examining how literacy may have changed the way individuals think and act, and discussing how those changes have affected societies. In *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology*, he contends that in cultures of primary orality, knowledge must be memorable if it is to be transferable, because the mind is the storage and retrieval center for all information. Therefore, in primarily oral cultures, value was assigned to devices
like formulas and rhyme schemes that helped performers remember material, and typified occurrences of wisdom such as proverbs or fables were formulaic in nature and often used mnemonic devices to assist speakers in their endeavors to remember and reproduce what they heard. Thus, it is unsurprising that wisdom, when crafted and shared in an oral culture, often took on forms like proverbs, adages, fables, or riddles.

However, as literacy became more common and people began to have widespread access to the tools needed to use writing daily, things to be remembered and passed along could be written down and referred to at a later time, lessening the need for formula and tradition. As people embraced literacy, old and primarily oral strategies for memory fell out of fashion and even became cliché. Ong explains, “When truths needed no longer to be constantly reiterated orally in order to remain available, virtuosity, that is, superlative skill in manipulating well-worked material, was displaced by ‘creativity’ as an idea” (“Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology” 294). Thus, a new focus on originality and personal style developed. People sought new words and ways to describe old concepts, and they enjoyed new freedoms in form and style. Fresh literary forms like the novel gained popularity, and the value of creativity and imagination—apparent in the more participatory forms of proverb-in-product—was firmly established.

Consuming Creativity: Post-Modern Lifestyles

Individual creativity and imagination are highly valued within many areas of Western culture, including the United States. Most Western societies practice free-market capitalism, which allows for a number of products to compete with one another. Thus, competitors must creatively seek out ways to make their products more appealing than their rivals’ products. As such, advertising and marketing is largely consumer driven, and though some post-modern theories have come under increasing scrutiny, a post-modern theory of consumer culture can still offer us a valuable lens through which to view certain phenomena.

In Consumer Culture and Postmodernism, Featherstone argues that the concept of “lifestyle” has been important to those seeking to explain the reasoning behind consumers’ product choices. He explains that in a culture of mass consumption, consumers are inundated with choices to make about which products best satisfy their needs or desires. Baudrillard has explained that in such a culture, commodities cease to be linked to their purpose (use-value), and instead become symbolic communicators, with meanings that are arbitrary and exist only in reference to the other signs around them. Though these signs may be arbitrary, they are representational; thus, their meanings can be manipulated and read by those within a society, and can be used to communicate certain information. Still, it is not always easy to discern precisely what information is being conveyed through a commodity. Featherstone argues that although the number of different options available to consumers means that they feel able to express themselves through their purchases, in a world with so many products it becomes difficult to associate a particular product with only one social class or lifestyle. Although it has been argued that such a phenomenon might lead to a more egalitarian society that disassociates class from commodities, Featherstone proposes that social class will remain visible through consumerism—just in a different way.

Featherstone remarks, “For Bourdieu, taste in cultural goods functions as a marker of class” (86). However, while Bourdieu was interested in defining elements of
“high” social class versus “low” social class (e.g., “high” social classes’ interest in tennis vs. “low” classes’ interest in football) Featherstone cautions that Bourdieu’s view is perhaps too simplistic. Instead of arguing that particular activities or commodities may identify members of certain classes, Featherstone focuses on the fact that dominant classes display a taste for artificial scarcity. Thus, what is indicative of “high” social class is constantly changing, because what becomes popular with the upper class becomes so because of its exclusivity. However, as the lower classes attempt to emulate the upper, the supply of such products grows larger and is no longer scarce. When that happens, a commodity is no longer as desirable, as it has lost some of its elite status.

So, who determines what initially becomes desirable in the upper class? Featherstone notes that traditionally, those with economic capital (the bourgeoisie) are the dominant portion of the dominant class, while intellectuals with a large degree of cultural capital are the dominated element of the dominant class. Though the groups possess different types of capital, they work towards similar goals--just as the bourgeoisie desire to maintain an artificial scarcity of the material goods they value, intellectuals maintain their status by keeping the cultural field distant from the masses, “resisting moves toward a democratization of culture” (Featherstone 87). Notably, they also resist equating cultural capital with economic capital. By denying that cultural capital can always be equated through economic capital, they assign prestige and define what “good taste” is, which allows them to maintain their class status without a large amount of economic capital. However, to maintain their status they must continually develop cultural capital, for the system that devalues the goods associated with the dominant classes operates in a similar fashion culturally. Thus, intellectuals “work within a situation in which inflation and instability increasingly become the norm” (Featherstone 87) as the need for new culture grows internally and the demands for it increase externally.

Once we understand the actions and interactions of the dominant classes, we can better recognize the processes occurring in the class that Bourdieu refers to as the “new petite bourgeoisie,” who Featherstone argues may be “the perfect consumer[s]” (89). Bourdieu essentially defines the new petite bourgeoisie as the members of the service sector who make their livings offering symbolic products and services. Individuals in this group do not originally possess economic and/or cultural capital, and thus they actively seek it out. Featherstone notes, “The new petite bourgeois is a pretender, aspiring to more than he is, who adopts an investment orientation to life...[he] therefore adopts a learning mode to life; he is consciously educating himself in the field of taste, style, lifestyle” (88). This class desires to ascend, but can hardly hope to reach the level of the truly dominant, economically endowed class. Thus, they aim instead for the status of the intellectual, since intellectual status requires less economic capital. To do so, they attempt to adopt intellectual attitudes and values towards all aspects of life. The mass-consumption marketplace holds for them an enormous selection of products to choose from that promises to signify their status as intellectuals. Consider the green consumerism movement as an example. The purchase of low-energy fluorescent light bulbs or chemical-free kitchen cleaner allows almost anyone, regardless of economic status, to appear environmentally aware and socially conscious. It is specifically this sort of movement, this quest for the intellectual lifestyle through consumer goods, which creates the perfect environment for proverb-in-product to flourish.
Non-Participatory: Dove Chocolate

As mentioned previously, the examples of proverb-in-product examined here can be categorized based on their ability to encourage and incorporate participation in wisdom building from consumers. While some products do an admirable job of democratizing proverb-in-product, others, like Dove chocolate, seem to utilize it simply for its marketing value.

But perhaps the marketing value of proverb-in-product is something that Dove hopes to test. It’s no secret that Americans love chocolate. The 13 billion dollar a year industry is thriving, perhaps because the average American consumes around twelve pounds of chocolate annually ("Chocolate Facts: Did You Know?"). In such a lucrative industry competition is fierce, and brands like Hershey, Dove, Cadbury, Nestle, Lindt, and Godiva all strive to win consumer dollars. Perhaps in an effort to distinguish itself from its competitors, Dove has introduced an interesting new strategy: proverb-in-product.

While Dove makes many chocolate products, their small, bite-sized chocolates, called Dove Promises, feature richly colored foil wrappers that contain printed messages, which Dove calls “promises,” on the inside. Many of these messages are clearly marketing ploys designed to encourage customers to purchase more chocolate. For instance, one reads, “Chocolate loves unconditionally,” while another instructs, “Unwrap, breathe, enjoy,” and yet another suggests, “An exhale moment deserves delicious chocolate.” Since chocolate has a reputation as somewhat of a guilty pleasure, perhaps Dove hopes that these types of messages will encourage consumers to indulge themselves. However, not all of the messages are so obviously related to the purchase and consumption of chocolate. Dove offers other “promises” as well, and some take the form of advice or wisdom. For example, one advises, “Follow your instincts,” while another challenges readers to “Dare to love completely,” and yet another encourages, “Don’t settle for a spark…light a fire instead!”

So why might Dove have turned to proverb-in-product as a marketing strategy? A visit to the Dove website reveals some important clues about the consumers Dove strives to target. At www.dovechocolate.com, visitors are greeted by web pages in rich brown hues designed to mimic the color of chocolate. The links on the page are written in lighter hued italic script, creating a calm, almost upscale feel. Site surfers can click on links to information about products, recipes, and the company itself. A click on the “About Dove” link presents a company history complete with a timeline, which functions as a tool to highlight the company’s status, which it describes as “iconic.” Additionally, visitors can read about “the Dove difference,” which begins when “each DOVE® Chocolate product starts with only the best cacao beans, tested twice by expert Mars technicians for quality and flavor.” Finally, viewers can read about Dove’s sustainable agricultural practices within the cocoa industry. The sophistication Dove seeks to cultivate, coupled with the highlighting of their socially conscious business practices, likely indicates a desire to appeal to petite bourgeoisie consumers who want to position themselves as refined, informed, upper-class consumers. The inclusion of Dove “promises” on candy wrappers may reflect Dove’s wish to bolster their image with intellectual capital as well.

Unfortunately, various Facebook groups, discussion boards, and blog posts demonstrate that the reception of the Dove “promises” is not always positive. One
consumer griped, “I’ve had it with those stupid messages inside. Really, who writes that stuff, while another complained, “I couldn’t agree more, the sayings are very stiff. Not poetic at all. They need to hire someone who writes for a living. Someone with the heart of a poet” (My Biggest Complaint About Dove Dark Chocolates—Any Dove Chocolates for That Matter.”) One blogger on another website enthusiastically unleashed her ire, writing:

My Dove Promise for today was this, "Collect 10 different kinds of tree leaves." Can I get a resounding "GAY."? Or if you're more inclined, "LAME." I HATE Dove Promises. I have a friend whose mom actually wrote to Dove Chocolate to tell them how stupid their "promises" are….I'm thinking of boycotting Dove because of these stupid phrases. They don't make me feel good, they make me irritable. (“Blog Harassment Dipped in Chocolate—And at Only $5 a Bag!”)

So what is it about Dove “promises” that might cause them to be perceived in a negative light? Our culture of primary literacy may offer some explanation. As noted previously, in cultures of primary literacy, creativity and imagination are highly valued, but many of the Dove “promises” feel tired and familiar, like “discover yourself,” “dance like no one is watching,” and “be fearless.” Additionally, the form may not appeal to people, for while the messages are generally short, there is nothing that makes them seem as if they should be said orally, unlike short proverbs that have a device like a rhyme scheme to enhance their orality--“a stitch in time saves nine.” Thus, the “promises” do not feel as if they belong to a culture of literacy or a culture of orality, which may explain the irritation and dissatisfaction among some consumers.

Interestingly enough, consumers are given the option to send a Dove “promise” to someone electronically. Visitors to the website can view many of the messages online either by virtually unwrapping chocolates or simply by reading a list, and they can select a message to send to an email contact. While this encourages some participation on the part of consumers, they are unable to create their own messages and must simply choose from the messages available to them. The inability of consumers to add their own creativity to Dove “promises” makes it difficult to view this instance of proverb-in-product as a movement towards the democratization of wisdom and is, despite any good intentions Dove may have had, what leaves consumers’ voices unheard.

Semi-Participatory: Yogi Tea and Starbucks Coffee

While Dove offers consumers little opportunity to participate in the creation or distribution of wisdom, other companies like Starbucks and Yogi Tea have found ways to engage their customers as active participants in the wisdom building process. For some time in the first decade of the 2000s, Starbucks engaged in a program called “The Way I See It,” (TWISI) which began by featuring thoughts from distinguished personalities printed on coffee cups. On their website, the company explained the program this way:

Sparking conversation. In the tradition of coffee houses everywhere, Starbucks has always supported a good, healthy discussion. To get people talking, “The Way I See It” is a collection of thoughts, opinions and expressions provided by notable figures that now appear on our widely shared cups.
Apparently the program did get people talking, but much of the conversation it encouraged revolved around the program itself rather than the sentiments expressed on the cups. So many people inquired about the text on these coffee cups that the Starbucks website featured a frequently asked questions section about the program. One answer responded to a question about the impetus for the program:

Q: What prompted Starbucks to begin this program?
A: Starbucks has long been dedicated to creating a unique "third place" between home and work. We also draw on the centuries-old tradition of the coffeehouse as a place to gather, share ideas, and enjoy delicious beverages. We see this program as an extension of the coffeehouse culture--a way to promote open, respectful conversation among a wide variety of individuals.

While the above explanation may indeed reflect some aspect of the program’s intent, Starbucks might also have had another reason for beginning this program, one that is tied to its new petite bourgeoisie consumer base. The Starbucks coffee brand has already been recognized for its status as a symbolic marker for its consumers (See Fry, 2000 and Lin and Thompson, among others). While some consumers feel that Starbucks “identifies” them in some way, or makes them “distinctive,” (Lin and Thompson, 98), recent backlash against some of Starbucks’ corporate practices, which many argue have put independently owned and operated coffee shops out of business, complicates the image and lifestyle with which Starbucks would like to be associated. A product from Starbucks may become a conflicting sign, particularly for the members of the new petite bourgeoisie who seek to align themselves with the values of intellectuals. Although it has been condemned for its corporate practices, Starbucks also takes care to promote itself as a company committed to ecological welfare, fair trade, and global community building, all causes that have been championed by the intellectual elite and the socially conscious.

Thus, we might perceive Starbucks as a company caught in between intellectual sentiments. If the pendulum of favor swings too close to the intellectual side that views Starbucks primarily as a hegemonic, cold-blooded, capitalistic brand concerned only with their bottom line, the company risks alienating their new petite bourgeoisie customers. As a defense, the brand can (and does to some extent) emphasize the good it does in the areas it impacts. Still, bringing too much attention to their charitable programs might reinforce the image of Starbucks as a corporate, Western infringement on global affairs. There is a potential solution: one way for Starbucks to mitigate the intellectual debates surrounding its products and practices is to encourage different, unrelated intellectual debates--a perfect reason to begin its TWISI program. While Starbucks cites its commitment to traditional “coffeehouse culture--a way to promote open, respectful conversation among a wide variety of individuals” as its reason for developing the program, it should be noted that Starbucks seems to hope that the “open, respectful conversations” taking place will be about almost anything but their own business practices. In the end, Starbucks uses TWISI to portray itself as a company committed to free speech and open discussion, which in turn helps the company maintain some of its status among would-be intellectuals, without any perceived threat to the brand and its business practices.

Obviously there are other possible readings of this program. While Starbucks firmly states that their mission is to encourage conversation and debate, not everyone
buys into that professed intent. Entering “Starbucks: The Way I See It” into a Google search will quickly show that this program has not gone unnoticed, and journalists, non-profit organizations, social groups, and independent bloggers have responded to the program in a variety of ways. By reading what others have written about the program and the cups, one discovers some interesting information about the public’s perception of this program.

Some groups, such as the Baptist Press and Concerned Women for America, have featured scathing pieces about the program on their websites, and view some of the statements on the cups as political tools pushing a particular political agenda. Commentators on Adhole, an online social network for the advertising industry, have called the program everything from propaganda to an effort to defend free speech. Thus, depending on what website one visits, the program may be reviled or applauded. However, regardless of whether individuals enjoy the program, detest it, or don’t feel strongly about it one way or another, one thing resonates widely: over and over again, people bring the word “wisdom” into their discussions of the cups.

For instance, an online article by David Romero entitled “The Purpose Driven Latte” focuses on the purpose of the program. Romero comments, “…we want wisdom and inspiration about what makes thought leaders successful--the way they really “See It.” A blogger on MaineForestCafe.org who favors the program admits, “Truth be told, I bought the coffee to get another The Way I See It. Ordinary people saying extraordinary wisdom.” Another blogger, “Ok Chick,” once presented the message on her cup on her blog, and introduced it as “Wisdom from Starbucks.” Even those who are critical of the program use the word “wisdom” in their responses, albeit sarcastically. An article called “Lies Well Disguised: We Are All Made of Starbucks” pointedly notes,

Last year, Starbucks began printing "The Way I See It" pearls of wisdom on their cups to, as it says on their site, spark conversation "in the tradition of coffeehouses everywhere." (Though less "everywhere" every year, as they've put hundreds of traditional coffeehouses out of business.)

Finally, some have even recognized the program itself--not just the messages--as wisdom. In a brief post for “Uncommon Descent,” a website serving the intelligent design community, William Dembski titles his post “The Wisdom of Starbucks--allowing all sides a place at the table,” in reference to the fact that two different Starbucks cups present two different perspectives on creation and evolution.

Although it is important to note that TWISI statements were received as wisdom, it is equally necessary to note that the statements on the cups are primarily literary products. This requires us to acknowledge that wisdom has taken on new forms in a society of primary literacy. Whereas in oral cultures wisdom literature was generally formulaic and brief in nature, a culture of literacy allows wisdom to be conveyed through different means, including narrative. Though not all of the quotes from TWISI take a narrative form, many exist within the body of quotes. For instance, one by writer Augusten Burroughs reads:

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4 This is also a particularly interesting demonstration of how proverb-in-product is being used in ways much like wisdom in primarily orality. In Literacy and Orality Ong notes that proverbs and riddles were used to “engage others in verbal and intellectual combat” (44), and by showcasing two different points of view, Starbucks’ TWISI allows contributors to engage in the same sort of activity.

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I used to feel so alone in the city. All those gazillions of people and then me, on the outside. Because how do you meet a new person? I was very stumped by this for many years. And then I realized, you just say, "Hi." They may ignore you. Or you may marry them. And that possibility is worth that one word.

Interestingly, this narrative, with its informal sentence structure and use of implied you, seems to ask to be read aloud as if spoken for the first time. Another piece--not a narrative--that accomplishes a similar effect is by journalist Keith Olbermann. It states:

The world bursts at the seams with people ready to tell you you're not good enough. On occasion, some may be correct. But do not do their work for them. ... Seek any job; ask anyone out; pursue any goal. Don't take it personally when they say "no"--they may not be smart enough to say "yes."

Because many others take a similar tone, we must question why writers are attempting to give their texts an oral, colloquial feel. Though these pieces are originally produced in a literary form (note too that some are quite long, there is no general formula to speak of, and there are no mnemonic devices for memorization), some seem to try to be as "oral" as possible. Ong’s observations of the differences between literate and oral cultures provide a clue to why this might be. In *Literacy and Orality* he discusses the fact that “written words are isolated from the fuller context in which spoken words come into being” (100). Not only are authors of texts isolated from their audiences, but also when a text is read, it is independent from its author and the context in which it was produced. Conversely, Ong notes that “spoken words are always modifications of a total situation which is more than verbal” (100). Thus, by hearkening back to an oral tradition of wisdom literature, not only do many contributions to TWISI imbue themselves with the character of proverbs, adages, and the like; additionally, by shunning the sense of isolation that printed text can produce, they produce the illusion that they are somehow connected to a situation that affects the people who are reading them.

Though TWISI offers an interesting example of proverb-in-product taking a form more suited to a culture of primary literacy, it also must be noted that TWISI was able to engage customers in a way that Dove “promises” do not. Once the popularity of the Starbucks program had been firmly established, customers began sending in their own pieces that they hoped would be included on the cups. Eventually, Starbucks decided to solicit, select, and print some customers’ ideas on their products, but instead of quotes being attributed to people like “Madeleine Albright, former Secretary of State,” the messages were credited to people like “Jeffrey Kuehl, customer from Wilmette, Illinois.” While this was likely a shrewd decision from a marketing perspective, since customers’ interest in the company and its products may have been piqued when they discovered that they could be featured in TWISI, it also gave customers a chance to express themselves and share their experiences and insights. The words of average people were suddenly placed among the words of great leaders, politicians, thinkers, artists, and musicians. Thus, if only for a brief time, consumers featured on the cups and even those who were not could feel that their opinions and perspectives had the potential to be just as valid and perceptive as the views of the intellectual elite.
As previously noted, Starbucks coffee is not the only beverage company to incorporate semi-participatory proverb-in-product. Another beverage company, Yogi Tea, prominently features proverb-in-product as part of their marketing. Although Yogi Tea is a brand that I have purchased in a grocery aisle at my local supermarket, this product is probably not sold in every grocery store. One would have better luck finding it in health food stores, or stores with an organic or natural foods section. Indeed, even in my local grocery store, this tea is not shelved next to brands such as Lipton, Bigelow, or Celestial Seasonings. Rather, it enjoys more upscale real estate near the organic cereal bars and all-natural canned soups by gourmet chef Wolfgang Puck. Thus, simply by observing the physical location of this tea, one can begin to locate it in the context of the organic and natural foods movements.

Although these movements initially began in the counter-culture, they are currently so connected with intellectualism that the term “agri-intellectual” has emerged as a way to describe intellectuals who focus their attentions on issues like sustainable farming practices, the banning of pesticides, and livestock welfare. Not only have entire sections of supermarkets been dedicated to the organic foods movement, but now entire stores committed to delivering natural and organic produce exist. As the new petite bourgeoisie seek to align their interests with those of intellectuals, the demand for organic goods increases. And as consumerism and intellectualism meet, a promising environment for proverb-in-product emerges yet again.

An examination of the Yogi Tea box provides a wealth of information about the image this brand wishes to convey. The box itself is different shades of creams, yellows, warm browns, and pinks, which all fade into one another, suggesting a sunset over fresh earth. The effect is aesthetically pleasing and calming, giving consumers the sense that purchasing this tea will produce a sense of peace. The brand name “Yogi Tea” is written in a stylized script in the middle of the box, nestled within an intricate pattern reminiscent of henna designs Indian women wear on their hands covers portions of the box. The brand assumes that its consumers will be familiar with both Yogis and henna and likely hopes to evoke Westernized, imagined, and romanticized versions of Indian culture. In an interestingly global turn, the flavor of the tea, written near the bottom of the box within a burst of rosy pink, is “Mexican Sweet Chili.” But, it is clear that a particular taste is not the sole intended benefit of this tea, for above the flavor are the words “REVIVE” and “for your spirit.”

On one side of the box, supplement facts and the brand’s “promise of excellence” are displayed, as is the tea’s organic certification. Another side panel shows the face, name, and signature of Yogi Bhajan. Next to him is a block of text, titled “The teacher and his tea.” It reads,

Simple words of wisdom conveyed over a cup of tea. This was part of the tradition Yogi Bhajan began in 1969 when he brought from India his distinctive blend of yoga, healing herbs, and spiritual philosophy. And, it continues today with Yogi Tea. With every handcrafted blend, we embrace this unique healing approach to create teas that serve your body, mind, and spirit.

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5 This term generally seems to carry negative connotations and seems to be used primarily by those who feel the agri-intellectuals do not fully understand issues because of their lack of practical farming experience.
A look at the top of the box fulfills the promise of words of wisdom. Between henna designs one reads, “Let the spirit, let the soul, let the self shine like the sunshine.” Yogi Bhajan is credited with this sentiment in small, unassuming letters underneath.

From this box, we can assume that the target audience is likely to have some sort of intellectual status, having the economic capital necessary to buy organic foods and the leisure time to practice yoga, while maintaining the view that wisdom and a sound body and mind are worth more than any monetary sum. In fact, this example of proverb-in-product is particularly interesting since it is the only example where the word “wisdom” is actually used. In this case, we need not draw explicit connections between wisdom and the marketing of a product—they have already been drawn for us.

A visit to Yogi Tea’s website further underscores the connection between product and wisdom. The website states, “Yogi inspirations are life’s simple truths, created to awaken a sense of goodness in you. We invite you to discover our Yogi inspirations, then share and create your own.” In a way, the Yogi Tea website is very much like the Dove website, since consumers are able to select certain “inspirations” to read online. However, consumers can also write and submit their own “inspirations,” which can then be viewed by others. In a way, this consumer participation is even more democratic than Starbucks’ TWISI, because no gate-keeping mechanisms are in place to select and privilege certain voices over others. Yogi Tea only allows customers to participate in wisdom building online, however, rather than validating customers’ views by including them in the products themselves. Regardless, Yogi Tea and Starbucks both demonstrate that consumers are interested in reading wisdom from others, but are also often equally as interested in joining the conversations themselves.

Participatory: Wisdom Makes the News With “Life is Short: Autobiography as Haiku”

Although thus far the examples of proverb-in-product discussed have all appeared tied to edible commodities, proverb-in-product can appear in other goods as well. An excellent example of this is the newspaper feature “Life is Short: Autobiography as Haiku” (referred to from this point on as LISAAH) which appeared on the front page of the Washington Post’s Sunday Style Section from 2000-2007. Tom Shroder, then-editor of the Washington Post Magazine, developed the column and introduced it this way on November 12, 2000:

There are a million stories in the Federal City--or 4,673,902, to be statistically inclusive of all those who revolve around it. One story for each man, woman and child who makes a life here. Each is unique, infinitely complex, bottomlessly fascinating. And, unfortunately, hopelessly lost in the crowd. So many people, so little time. That's where Sunday Style may be able to help. Today we introduce a new feature called Life Is Short. The idea is to provide an opportunity for us to explain ourselves to each other--very succinctly, with the power and concision of poetry. Think of it as autobiographical haiku. Find a way--in 100 words or less--to give our readers a vivid insight into what your life is all about, and we'll print your story in Life Is Short (and pay you $100). As you can see from the examples here, there's no form to follow, and many more than one way to succeed. The important thing is to say a lot by saying very little.

1.) I am retired. When a boy, my father encouraged me to do creative projects. My mother used to say: "When the outlook is dark, try the uplook." As an undergraduate at
MIT, I was asked how slavery affected me. My great-grandfather, George F. Cole, served with the 38th U.S. Colored Infantry. He was wounded at Deep Bottom, Va., and marched through Richmond when it fell. I honor him. He fought to help save the world's last great hope for democracy. May a bright future surmount the dark past.

Michael J. Smith, Silver Spring

2.) I was once madly in love with a guy from a different continent, a different nationality, a different race, a different religion, a different gender, and who spoke a different language. We talked about getting married. "It would never work," he said, "because we're way too much alike." I chuckled, because I couldn't think of any two humans who could be more different. He scowled. "I'm not talking about all that surface stuff. I'm talking about the other 98 percent." This world would be beautiful if everybody thought like that.

Nancy J. Hartwell, Silver Spring

Peace Corps, Mali, 1978

3.) As I poured the third round of mint tea, my friend Ousmane gazed out at the lunar landscape that served as my backyard: 3,000 miles of the Sahara. "In America," he mused, "time is money." I nodded and rewound Ousmane's cassette by twirling it with a pen. I retrieved the sad little batteries recharging in the sun. Soon we heard the grainy beat of the new hit "Saturday Night Fever." "And in Africa--" Ousmane smiled as we watched a string of camels undulate to the tune of the Bee Gees--"time is time."

Kitty Thuermer, Washington

To learn more about the origination and administration of this feature, I corresponded with Shroder, who told me that it had been originally inspired by a special feature that journalist Gene Weingarten developed for the new millennium, which included one hundred one-hundred-word biographies. Shroder had read some of the biographies and discovered that he preferred those that focused on a particular moment in time instead of an entire life. He explained,

The ones I really liked best were Gene's discards--100-word entries that didn't try to tell a complete life story, but rather gave a glimpse of a moment in a life that characterized the person in some way. That always stayed with me, so some time later, the phrase "Life is Short" just came to me, and I decided I should do a weekly feature where we solicited these characterizing moments, and it also hit me that the way to convey this to readers was to say it was "autobiography as haiku."

Thus, the idea for LISAAH was born, and it went on to become a successful, popular feature for many years.

It may seem strange at first to think of a newspaper as a product, but there are a number of reasons it can be viewed in such a way. The Washington Post is a daily newspaper of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, and enjoys a large readership in comparison to other papers in metropolitan areas. On its website, the paper boasts to would-be advertisers, "Daily readership of The Washington Post exceeds that of any other newspaper in the top ten DMAs. In fact, it takes the combined readership of several papers in other markets to surpass that of the Post--35% for all adults and 40% for
upscale adults.” (This equals approximately 1.6 million adults, and the website explains that the term “upscale adults” refers to those adults whose household income is at least $75,000 a year.) Although this description of the readership was indeed originally intended for advertisers, the newspaper’s focus on adults who likely have disposable income allows us to understand that the paper views itself as a potential site of consumer activity, and wishes to market itself to companies as a tool that reaches the new petite bourgeoisie--those not at the top of the economic ladder, but reasonably well-off, and ready and willing to ascend through the purchase of goods.

Additionally, it makes sense to consider the new petite bourgeoisie’s desire for intellectual status and their relationship to the newspaper in general. In many ways, reading the newspaper can be a symbolic marker of intellectualism. To give the impression of being an intellectual, it is important to be informed and conversant with regard to current events. Thus, although the newspaper can certainly still be connected to its use-value (knowing what is going on in the world is obviously more than simply a symbolic marker of intellectualism), it also functions as a sign indicating that one has chosen a particular lifestyle committed to sophistication and awareness.

In fact, a combination of intellectualism and sophistication is likely to be marketed particularly strongly in the Sunday paper and the Style section. The Style section is especially oriented towards consumers, particularly those seeking to increase their intellectual capital. In it, one may find photos and commentary on couture fashion on the runways of Paris and Milan, lists and ratings of newly released books and DVDs available for purchase, reviews of en vogue restaurants, and recommendations for “must-see” exhibits or performances (only a handful of which are free). Still, that is not all that the Style section provides. It is also the section of the agony aunts, Hints from Heloise, and horoscope horrors. In light of these features, one could reasonably argue that wisdom in some way already has staked a claim within this milieu. However, structurally and linguistically, LISAAH is different from advice columns and star readings.

In order to prove so, let us return to the original introduction Shroder provided on the day the feature debuted. There are at least two particularly important things to note about this introduction. First is the emphasis on creativity, which Ong has identified as a characterizing aspect of literate, typographic culture (“Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology” 294). Indeed, Shroder specifically notes, “There’s no form to follow, and many more than one way to succeed,” signaling that originality is encouraged and embraced. However, interestingly enough, all three examples do follow a particular form, at least from a linguistic and structural standpoint--they are all examples of narrative. (See Labov’s “The Transformation of Experience in Narrative” for details about the components of narrative.) While creating narrative is certainly an old and popular way of making sense of the human experience, it isn’t one traditionally found in wisdom literature, with the exception perhaps of fables. Of course, one could argue that adages and sayings are abbreviated versions of narratives, but the narratives behind the sayings did not survive. Because one mentally had to remember the most important part to make a point, other details became unnecessary and were lost.

The narratives in LISAAH are different. As I will show, they do have a particular philosophical point, but the attention paid to orienting the reader, adding personal details, and making the narrative function as a complete whole signals a purely literary endeavor. For instance, if one were to try and retell example number three, it would not be
important to remember that the author “nodded and rewound Ousmane's cassette by
twirling it with a pen. [She] retrieved the sad little batteries recharging in the sun.” In
fact, it would be difficult to remember such minute details, if one was to attempt to
memorize many of these. Thus, a literary form allows us for the exploration of a new side
of wisdom literature, one that is perhaps more personal and vivid.

Literary narratives may also sometimes have pitfalls, however, as they may be
lengthy and complex, with difficult-to-follow time shifts. LISAAH is able to avoid these
issues due to its brevity. The features walk a line drawn somewhere between the
succinctness of adages and proverbs, and the detail and complexity of literary narrative.
Their concision also makes them an ideal means of conveying a sentiment in a culture of
primary literacy and little free time. They possess an aesthetic quality society values, but
they are short enough to be digested quickly and easily, as part of an everyday
occurrence.

Beyond the narrative structure demonstrated in the example, the other important
thing to notice is the explanation of the feature’s purpose. As Shroder explains it, the
point of this feature is the promotion of understanding and empathy among individuals,
but the examples included seem to suggest that the point of the column goes far beyond
helping people simply understand one another’s lives. While the entries may indeed help
us to understand the people who wrote them, they also function as recommendations and
thoughts for the general public to take into account in order to live their lives more
successfully. In other words, the entries become not only a means of understanding one
another--rather, they begin to constitute a body of shared wisdom.

The three final sentences from the examples show that they can be read as
statements of wisdom that are being passed along from the authors to others. Consider the
last lines of each example, within the context of the entire pieces. In the first example,
“May a bright future surmount the dark past” can be read as a call for optimism and
excellence despite adversity and past wrongs. In the second passage, the final sentence,
“This world would be beautiful if everybody thought like that,” suggests society would
benefit if less difference was associated with elements like race, nationality, and religion.
In the final example, the closing, “And in Africa’--Ousmane smiled as we watched a
string of camels undulate to the tune of the BeeGees--‘time is time,’” presents as fact a
profound difference in the ways Americans and Africans view their lives, suggesting that
alternate value systems exist and should be considered.

The general significance of this feature is that it allows the sharing of wisdom to
become a part of one’s everyday life. It takes only a minute to read, and it may encourage
readers to consider the broader messages that they might be able to convey from
transformative or transcendent moments in their own lives. LISAAH is a site where
multiple and diverse voices can engage in creation and connection. To have access to it,
however, unless one happens to borrow a paper or pick up a left-over on the subway, one
must buy the Washington Post, which has been identified as a potential commodity for
the new petite bourgeoisie. In fact, both reading and participating in LISAAH may be a
symbolically intellectual pursuit. To have one’s name and photograph attributed to a
piece of wisdom identifies one as worldly and knowledgeable, which has the potential to
increase one’s cultural capital. And whether one finds the sentiments expressed in
LISAAH wise or not, it seems that society has found a way to respond to the need for
wisdom in everyday life in a very modern way.
Conclusion

This essay has argued that the emergence of proverb-in-product can be at least partially understood by giving consideration to its place within a highly literate, consumer culture. By purchasing goods featuring proverb-in-product, petite bourgeoisie consumers may be striving to secure intellectual standing in order to increase their class status. However, companies utilizing proverb-in-product must be careful to note that successful proverb-in-product is somewhat dependent upon a regard for its status as a literary endeavor. If proverb-in-product respects the culture of primary literacy to which it is tied, interesting and valuable new forms of wisdom literature may emerge; alternatively, while some examples of proverb-in-product may attempt to call to mind old, oral forms of wisdom, a complete disregard for the values of literacy may cause it to fall flat and seem trite or pedestrian, which could make consumers feel negatively about a product. On the whole, proverb-in-product presents the potential for a striking revival of the creation and transference of wisdom, but it must fully relate to the society in which it is produced.

One way that proverb-in-product can relate is by encouraging diverse voices to participate in the wisdom building process. While Yogi Bhajan of Yogi Tea contends that “wisdom becomes knowledge when it is personal experience,” proverb-in-product presents us with a somewhat different angle. In fact, artifacts like the Washington Post’s “Life Is Short: Autobiography as Haiku” and Starbucks’ “The Way I See It” show us that it is first-hand knowledge, or personal experience, that can in turn become wisdom. As creativity and individuality continue to be valued in the culture of primary literacy in the United States, daily re-integrations of wisdom may become more closely tied to the particular stories and people out of which new wisdom is born. In turn, this may lead us to an accessible body of collected experiences that may help us understand our own lives. Although some of Dove’s “wisdom” is dubious--for instance, “Calories only exist if you count them”--perhaps the company gets one thing right: “The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is to celebrate.” Participatory proverb-in-product can certainly function as a positive validation of personal experience, and if it can build connections and understanding among a variety of people, then that indeed is something to celebrate.

References


Rats, Lice, and Mosquitoes--Advertising DDT in World War II

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Abstract

DDT was considered a miracle pesticide shortly after its discovery and used heavily throughout World War II by both military and civilian populations. Its properties were touted by scientists and it was so effective that it earned the nickname "the atomic bomb." This paper examines the background leading to the development of the pesticide, the motivations of government and corporate groups in selling DDT products to homefront consumers, and the effectiveness of the DDT-based pesticide advertising campaigns for products such as FLIT. Prior to the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and other popular as well as scientific indictments of DDT and other pesticides, DDT was sold internationally to control the spread of malaria and typhus. Since then, an international ban has prohibited its use.
Influence of Popular Television Programming on Students’ Perception about Course Selection, Major, and Career

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Introduction
The goal of this study was to understand how undergraduate students perceive the advertising industry and its careers based upon portrayals in the two most recognized television programs featuring an advertising agency – *Mad Men* (2007) and *Trust Me* (2009). The proposed research question was:

- How is the advertising industry portrayed and what are the implications of these portrayals for students’ course selection, major, and career.

This qualitative study used the theoretical framework of Cultivation Theory, the research perspective of symbolic interactionism, and the research method of focus group interviewing. Cultivation Theory was used because it examines the effect of television messages and how one’s reality is defined; symbolic interactionism was used to discover what meanings are found in the data; and focus group interviewing was used to understand the attitudes and experiences of the undergraduate participants. The method of focus group interviewing was used because it encourages participants to speak freely, creates a “synergistic group effect,” and promotes interaction. Based upon the television portrayals, the research participants perceived the advertising industry and its careers as concerned with personal issues at home and with a spouse, partner, or ex; agency relationships that displayed conflict, stress, frustration, and anger; and agency relationships in conflict with the boss. Portrayals of agency offices were also analyzed. However, personal issues seemed to take precedence over work. Furthermore, and critically, even though both *Mad Men* (2007) and *Trust Me* (2009) shared similar portrayals, *Mad Men* (2007) ranked less favorable by the research participants as a result of the time period *Mad Men* (2007) was set – the 1960s.

Practitioners of advertising education, if they do not already, need to care about what television communicates about their profession because television often “…reflects societal views…and it has the potential to influence societal perceptions” (Duncan, Nolan, and Wood, 2002, p. 38). In addition, practitioners of advertising education need to care about television’s portrayals of the advertising industry, because television communicates to college students. Television programs feature a main character with a specific career, which offers an “insider” look at a specific career and industry. Two, television’s portrayal of advertising may not be consistent with the “real” industry. Laker (2002) contended that “Many students know very little concerning careers or positions they are interested in and subsequently many of them make academic and career-related decisions that are not based on reality” (p. 63). Three, students searching for courses and ultimately a major, which will result in a career after graduation may use the media for explanation as the media has the ability to sway interpretation of various careers (Laker, 2002). Furthermore, practitioners of advertising education need to understand the media’s portrayal, as the industry may look attractive to career seekers because it is growing at an exponential rate as a result of the rapidly changing media landscape.
Finally, as advertising practitioners and educators, one of our responsibilities is to inform students about the industry and the careers. Therefore, this will be “...beneficial to both the students and society if we can ensure new entrants are making informed choices about life-influencing career and degree decisions” (Crampton, Walstrom, and Schmabach, 2006, p. 226).

To date, no article has been published that addresses the advertising industry in television programs and its pervasiveness; only the role of film has been examined. The article, *Films – A Look Into What Students are Seeing About Advertising* (Tucciarone, 2009) revealed how films portray the advertising industry and its careers based upon six Hollywood films (*Crazy People*, *Boomerang*, *Picture Perfect*, *What Woman Want*, *How to Loose a Guy in 10 Days*, and *In Good Company*). Using the qualitative research method of focus group interviewing, the following themes emerged: competitive and cut throat, stealing other’s ideas, think tank, creative, researching target audience and product, synergy, selling, fun and exciting, hierarchy, lots of money to be made, somewhat metal (crazy), perfection, paid to party, luxurious and glamorous, lying and deceitful, sleazy and slimy, flexibility and freedom, and client rules. This study and the previous study (Tucciarone, 2009) are related because they seek to examine how pop culture may influence viewers’ perception of the advertising industry and its careers.

Portrayals of the advertising industry and its careers in mass media (e.g., television) is an area that lacks research. It is important to note that the television programs *Mad Men* (2007) and *Trust Me* (2009) were selected based on the plot, the setting, and significant recognition by the undergraduate participants [refer to Appendix A for the plot of *Mad Men* (2007) and *Trust Me* (2009)].

*Influence on Course Selection*

There are several influencers on course selection. Previous research suggested that parents, friends, faculty advisor, faculty members, course catalog description, and “others” are major influencers on course selection (Kerin, Harvey, and Crandall, 1975). In addition Seiler, Weybright, and Stang (1977) concluded that course/instructor evaluations influenced course selection as well as instructor reputation (Leventhal, Abrami, Perry, and Breen, 1975). Furthermore, additional influencers on course selection are personal interest, course content, and compatibility with major (Babad, 2001).

The medium of television, an unexamined social force for the portrayal of the advertising industry, may also affect students’ course selection. Michael Novak who is cited in *The Media of Mass Communication*, said this about television’s pervasiveness: “Television is a molder of the soul’s geography. It builds up incrementally a psychic structure of expectations. It does so in much the same way that school lessons slowly, over the years, tutor the unformed mind and teach it how to think” (Vivian, 2003, p. 183). Comstock (1980), author of *Television in America* wrote, “Television has become an unavoidable and unremitting factor in shaping what we are and what we will become” (p. 123). Furthermore, Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes (2004) concluded that one’s attitudes can be “…influenced through exposure to mass mediated messages, particularly via television” (p. 459).

Previous research suggested that young adults do not seek or access reliable information which can assist them in selecting courses (Warton and Cooney, 1997). In
addition, although institutions offer orientation sessions that acquaint students with the institution and student services, provide an informal conversation with faculty members, assist students with an academic program and course selection, help them plan a career, and in general, tutor them in skills to survive college, the downfall is that the sessions are optional (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991) and students may not benefit from this new knowledge. Furthermore, and critically, when students enter institutions of higher learning they are “…given considerably more control and responsibility in selecting their courses than they previously had in high school” (DellaGioia, 2008). Hagedorn, Maxwell, Cypers, Moon, and Lester (2007) whose research analyzed students’ dropping and adding of courses, contended that students lack a better understanding of the courses they wish to enroll in and thus, are not making “…more rational choices” (p. 481). As a result, students may turn to alternative sources of information when selecting courses; the television being one alternative source and a reliable source of information if perceived by the viewer as an information-gathering tool.

Given the images displayed on the tube, is watchers’ reality influenced by what they view? Mae Jemison, the first black female astronaut, studied science in college after watching Lieutenant Uhura in *Star Trek*. Similarly, Nelson Andrews earned a criminal justice degree after being influenced by the case-solving detectives in *Scooby-Doo* (Arenofsky, 2002). *I Love Lucy* episodes inspired Shari Cohen, senior partner and managing director of the advertising agency Mindshare. Cohen, who is cited in the article, Kooky, Yes, But ‘Lucy’ Stars as a Role Model, said, “That show made me realize I wanted to work in television” (Linnett, 2001, ps2-s2). Tim Taylor used a more factual program, NOVA by Public Broadcasting System, which influenced his course selection and major. Taylor said, “It presented programs on physics and physical science” (Arenofsky, 2002, p. 6). Taylor is a chemist for Dial Corporation and invents cleaning products (Arenofsky, 2002). Undergraduate public relations students shared that mass media influenced their course and career expectations, because the career was portrayed in the media as glamorous (Bowen, 2003). Similarly, undergraduate business students rated television or movie portrayal of the occupation as the most important information source when selecting their major (Crampton, Walstrom, and Schambach, 2006). More recently, forensic science television programs (i.e., CSI or Crime Scene Investigation) have had an effect on campus. “Enrollment in forensic science educational programs across the U.S. is exploding” (Houck, 2006). At Honolulu’s Chaminade University, enrollment in the forensic science program grew from 15 students to 100 students over four years. West Virginia University echoed similar spikes in its forensic science program. The program “…has grown from four graduates in 2000 to currently being the third largest major on campus, with more than 500 students in the program” (Houck, 2006).

**Literature Review**

**Theoretical Framework**

The contemporary media effects theories most recognized for understanding the effects of television are Cultivation Theory, Gratification and Uses Theory, and Social Learning Theory. (Campbell, Martin, and Fabos, 2010). Uses and Gratification Theory examines what audiences will do with the media messages as opposed to the effects of the message. The theory also attempts to understand what gratification viewers receive
from the media message (Anderson and Ross, 2002). Bandura’s Social Learning Theory contends that people learn from one another by observation, imitation, and modeling. Cultivation Effect does not attempt to understand what audiences do with the media messages or what audiences learn rather, it is concerned with the effect of the media messages and how one’s reality is defined. Thus, the theory most applicable to this study is Cultivation Effect, because the study seeks to understand how students define a reality about the advertising industry and its careers based upon portrayals in the popular television programs *Mad Men* (2009) and *Trust Me* (2009) as well as understand how that reality influences course selection, major, and career.

Cultivation Theory suggests that watching television over a period of time will “cultivate” the audience’s perception of reality. The theory applies to both light and heavy television viewing, because “…even light viewers live in the same cultural environment as most others who do watch television” (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli, 1986). In addition, even the smallest effects of television viewing can have an effect on one’s reality. Shanahan and Morgan (1999) defined cultivation further, “The process within which interaction through messages shapes and sustains the terms on which the messages are premised” (p. 12). In addition, Gerbner (1990) added, “Cultivation is what a culture does,” because “culture is the basic medium in which humans live and learn” (p. 249). Television communicates to viewing audiences through the images and the actor’s dialogue. A communicative interaction occurs when viewers respond to the televised message. Hence, watching a television program is considered interacting, while the entertainment industry has control over the mass reception of the cultural stories (i.e., television) (Shanahan and Morgan, 1999). Gerbner, Gross, and Melody (1973) contended that television “…not only [satisfies] but shape a range of attitudes, tastes, and preferences. It provides the boundary conditions and overall patterns within which the processes of personal and group-mediated selection, interpretation, and image-foundation go on” (p. 567).

**Research Perspective**

The interpretivist process provided the perspective for this research project. Interpretation enables the researcher to untangle webs of meaning that develop when participants are exposed to and interact with different people, places, and ideas. Interpretation answers the question, “What are the meanings in the data?” (Gay and Airasian, 2000). Geertz (1973) contended that interpretation “…illuminates the meanings and conceptual structures that organize a subject’s experience” (p. 27). More precisely, interpretive interactionism was applied to this research study, because it combined symbolic interactionism and interpretive inquiry (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 2001). The combination highlighted a thorough understanding of interpretive thought and the presence of symbolic undertones.

Interpretive interactionism is critical to the construction of reality as humans do not have direct access to reality (Denzin, 2001; Mills, 1963). Without direct access to reality, humans must interpret experiences that they encounter. According to Denzin (2001), “Reality…is mediated by symbolic representations, by narrative texts, and by televisual and cinematic structures that stand between the person and the so-called real world” (p. x).
Methodology

For this study of the portrayals of the advertising industry and its careers in the two most recognized television programs featuring an advertising agency called *Mad Men* (2007) and *Trust Me* (2009), the research question is:

- How is the advertising industry portrayed and what are the implications of these portrayals for students’ course selection, major, and career.

The qualitative research method used to understand the proposed research question was focus groups interviewing. Focus group interviewing was selected for several reasons. One, this method encourages subjects to speak freely, completely, and without criticism about their “…behaviors, attitudes, and opinions they possess” (Berg, 2001, p. 111). Two, focus group interviewing creates a “synergistic group effect,” which lends to greater ideas, analysis, and discussion about the given topic (Berg, 2001, p. 112). Three, and most important, this method is based upon interaction. “Meaning and answers arising during focus group interviews are socially constructed rather than individually created” (Berg, 2001, p. 115). It is imperative to use focus group interviewing in this study, because the process of selecting a course, a major, and a career, like the focus group process, occurs socially (i.e., symbolic interactionism).

The researcher, serving as the focus group moderator, explained the research project to the undergraduate participants as well as how the focus groups would operate. In addition, the undergraduate participants were told their responses would be recorded for analysis purposes by the researcher. First, the researcher asked the undergraduate participants to write down television programs they recalled that portrayed the advertising industry and its careers. In addition, the research participants were asked to recall television programs they previously viewed multiple episodes or an entire season. In total, the research participants recalled seven television programs, which, in some aspect portrayed the advertising industry and careers. The undergraduate participants recalled *Bewitched* (1964-1972, ABC), *Bosom Buddies* (1980-1982, ABC), *thirtysomething* (1987-1991, ABC), *Melrose Place* (1992-1999, FOX), *Two and a Half Men* (2003-present, CBS), *Mad Men* (2007-present, AMC) and *Trust Me* (2009-2010, TNT). Out of these television programs, the most popular and recognized programs among all the undergraduate participants were *Mad Men* (2007) and *Trust Me* (2009). As a result, because *Mad Men* (2007) and *Trust Me* (2009) had an advertising plot, the setting occurred in an advertising environment, and the television programs had significant recognition by the research participants, these programs were the only ones discussed and analyzed to uncover patterns of meaning (e.g., portrayals). To elicit the most discussion about television programs’ portrayal of the advertising industry and influence on course selection, major, and career choice, the researcher crafted a series of discussion questions (see questions labeled 1-4); a common focus group practice because focus groups “…provide a means for assessing intentionally created conversations about research topics…” (Berg, 2001, p. 115).

1) How is the advertising industry/careers portrayed in these programs?
2) Explain if you are more likely to enroll in advertising courses after viewing portrayals of the industry in television programs?
3) Explain if advertising portrayals in television programs affect choice of major, which would influence your career outlook.
After watching programs that showcase aspects of the advertising industry/careers, what are you learning?

To effectively engage in focus group interviewing and to elicit the most discussion possible to probe for patterns of meaning, the number of research participants allowed per focus group was eight to ten (Moriarty, Mitchell, and Wells, 2009). Thus, there were total of seven focus groups. The final data set was 70 undergraduate students.

Participants

Undergraduate participants enrolled in the Introduction to Advertising course spring 2009 and fall 2010 were selected for this study, because they were interested in the subject of advertising. Age and nationality were not considered in this study due to the population of students at this public, 4-year university in Missouri. The university is a robust institution with a rich population of students, which offers more generalizability of the study findings.

Analysis and Results

The data was analyzed by the researcher using the recorded discussions of the research participants. The researcher used systematic analysis by “…analyzing the content of the statements made by the subjects during the focus groups” (Berg, 2001, p. 124). More specifically, the researcher bracketed the data from the research participants. The portrayals of the advertising industry (the phenomenon) were held up close for inspection (Berg, 2001). According to Berg (2001), bracketing “…unmasks, defines, and determines the phenomenon’s basic elements and essential structure” (p. 124).

The salient findings are discussed to reveal how the two most recognized advertising programs aired on television portray the advertising industry and its careers. Both Mad Men (2007) and Trust Me (2009) shared similar portrayals. However, Mad Men (2007) ranked less favorable by the research participants as a result of the time period Mad Men (2007) was set – the 1960s – which reflected portrayals of drinking, smoking, sex outside the marriage, and male dominance in the workplace. To elicit rich descriptions from the research participants, a series of discussion questions were asked by the researcher. Following is the analysis based upon the undergraduate participant responses to the discussion questions (labeled 1-4 previously):

How is the advertising industry/careers portrayed in these programs?

The research participants analyzed portrayals of the advertising industry and its careers in Mad Men (2007) and Trust Me (2009) as concerned with personal issues at home and with a spouse, partner, or ex; agency relationships that displayed conflict, stress, frustration, and anger; and agency relationships in conflict with the boss. Portrayals of agency offices were also analyzed. However, personal issues seemed to take precedence over work. Furthermore, and critically, even though both Mad Men (2007) and Trust Me (2009) shared similar portrayals, Mad Men (2007) ranked less favorable by the research participants as a result of the time period Mad Men (2007) was set – the 1960s. According to the research participants, the 1960s reflected portrayals of drinking, smoking, sex outside the marriage, and male dominance in the workplace. One participant explained: “Consider the fact that Mad Men happened in the 1960s may explain why advertising was underplayed compared to other aspects such as smoking and drinking. However, I was able to see some aspects of advertising aside from smoking...
and drinking such as the interaction between agency and clients, how research is conducted, and branding.” Another female participant commented about male dominance at the advertising agency in *Mad Men* (2007): “I did not like how advertising was portrayed in Mad Men and especially the women. Women were not properly treated back then. Women had little or no voice and their ideas were not taken seriously for the most part.” A male participant shared a similar thought, “There are some portrayals of *Mad Men* that I question would happen today, such as drinking in the office and the womanizing.” Another participant echoed positive comments about *Mad Men* (2007), and he said, “Although the characters had many personal issues, their creativity and work ethic was exciting and influenced me.” According to a research participant, *Trust Me* (2009) showed a more realistic side of an advertising agency and that hard work is involved. “I think it showed a good balance of hard work, fun, and how personal lives can interfere with business (e.g., Sarah’s relationship with husband and inter-office relationship between Tony and Denise).” “Personally, I found *Trust Me* to portray the advertising industry as stressful – working with others, inter-office conflicts, fighting for accounts (heck, fighting for an office with a window), meeting the needs of the client, and creating an attention-getting campaign,” shared a participant.

*Explain if you are more likely to enroll in advertising courses after viewing portrayals of the industry in television programs.*

“Honestly, viewing the portrayals of the industry on television did not inspire me to want to enroll in more advertising courses, because it simply did not give me full details about advertising. The employees in the show were usually playing around or not giving their all to projects (e.g. males’ attitude toward the lipstick account). The only employee who inspired me to take an advertising course was Peggy, because she was one of the first women in the agency to land a promotion to junior copywriter – very empowering,” shared a female participant about *Mad Men* (2007). *Mad Men* (2007) also had an influential effect on a male participant: “The show persuaded me into exploring more about the advertising industry through my course work. I would be lying if I said that watching *Mad Men* didn’t get me excited about the industry.” *Trust Me* (2009) further reinforced one female participant’s belief about the industry: “The program is entertaining, but also seems to present the real atmosphere of an advertising agency – hard work along with frustration. *Trust Me* also depicts creative people, and I consider myself to be such a person, so yes, I would enroll in more courses with a copywriting emphasis.” “After watching the seventh episode of *Trust Me*, I couldn’t wait to take more advertising courses. Before watching the show, I really had no clue about the different ad jobs and the hierarchy of an agency. I never have considered which position I would like, because I didn’t understand the job descriptions. Now, I have a much better sense of the different ad jobs, and I hope to work my way up to creative director and beyond,” shared an enthused female participant.

*Explain if advertising portrayals in television programs affect your choice of major, which would influence your career outlook.*

After watching season one of *Trust Me* (2007), a participant explained that advertising portrayals in television programs do affect major and career outlook: “More and more students are getting their ideas and beliefs of the workplace from TV shows.
TV shows offer an easy avenue for students to see examples of specific industries. Many students follow a certain career path because of how well it is portrayed on TV. TV shows commonly show the good qualities of a character’s life such as money, sex, and leisure as a result of his/her occupation. As a result, viewers want the same life. I think for many kids (I’m talking about myself), TV shows offer a look into working environments that they would never get to see.” One female participant concurred about advertising portrayals in television as influential: “Who wouldn’t want the lifestyle of Don Draper – he has everything. He has a cool job, good pay, head of his department, he gets along with most of co-workers (except Peter), and he is friends with his boss.”

One participant shared that television programs have been influential on her career outlook since she was a young girl: “I think people (kids included) go into certain fields because of what they see in movies and on television. When I was younger I wanted to be a marine biologist because of the movie Free Willy.” Another male participant echoed similar sentiments about mass media’s influence, “Consumers of the mass media are swayed by such representations; some may think that all colleges are like Animal House and every ghost is Patrick Swayze.”

For some research participants television programs are not influential when choosing a major and career outlook, but the programs do invite an interest. “No, TV shows do not affect my major selection. I love shows such as Law and Order, Grey’s Anatomy, and House but seeing those shows do not make me want to be a detective or a doctor. I think TV shows are a good way to have a look into things that you’re not doing for the sake of curiosity. The only thing TV portrayals would do for me is spark an interest to find out more,” expressed one participant. Another participant shared a similar thought: “No, watching television shows spikes my interest to take a course or two in the subject. But, just to pick my major because of a TV show…I wouldn’t do that.”

After watching programs that showcase aspects of the advertising industry/careers, what are you learning?

“Although I find the industry interesting, I am learning that advertising is for young people with little responsibilities – it’s too fast paced,” declared a non-traditional student after viewing season one of Mad Men (2007). Another female student commented about her learning experiences from Mad Men (2007), “By becoming an executive in advertising, I will get to work in big cities like New York, Los Angeles, or Chicago.” Regarding Trust Me (2009): “I was learning through the entire show, as I was putting myself in the scenarios and envisioned what I would have done differently and possibly more effective. Of course, I understand that the show is a drama but being that it is a drama than a comedy allowed the show to offer a variety of conflicts that prepared me for the ones in real life one day,” explained a participant. “Here is coolest part about Mad Men and Trust Me, interwoven in the personal issues, stress, and conflict I was able to see real ad work like recording a radio commercial for a lipstick account, understanding the impact of the law on cigarette sales for Lucky Strikes, re-branding Menken’s department store, researching Right Guard, developing a campaign for a steel company, tailoring a savings account toward a man’s private life, creating a campaign for American Airlines after a plane crashes, writing a tagline for a cruise line, squeezing out a presidential nominee, writing taglines for Arc Mobile, researching and developing the
Big Idea for Dove, designing the theme for the Olympics, pitching the Rolling Rock account – man, this is exactly what I want to do,” shared an excited male participant.

Discussion

Cultivation Theory is concerned with the effects of the media messages and how one’s reality is defined. The theory suggested that watching television, light or heavy viewing, over a period of time will “cultivate” the audience’s perception of reality, because “…the images portrayed on television have been regarded as an important source of socialization and everyday information” (Cohen and Weiman, 2000). Cultivation Theory applies to both light and heavy television viewing, because “…even light viewers live in the same cultural environment as most others who watch television” (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli, 1986).

This study sought to understand how undergraduate students define a reality about the advertising industry and its careers based upon portrayals in the popular television programs Mad Men (2007) and Trust Me (2009) as well as understand how that reality influences course selection, major, and career. The research participants analyzed portrayals of the advertising industry and its careers in these programs as concerned with personal issues at home and with a spouse, partner, or ex; agency relationships that displayed conflict, stress, frustration, and anger; and agency relationships in conflict with the boss. Portrayals of agency offices were also analyzed. However, personal issues seemed to take precedence over work.

Given the analyzed portrayals, the majority of the research participants said these programs would prompt them to enroll in advertising courses. One research participant explained: “I think any type of portrayal, even if exaggerated a bit, is better than being completely blind about what goes on in an advertising agency. By watching various depictions of the industry and the careers, I am able to decide if I would even want to take ad courses and be involved with such an industry.” Even the students who said that viewing portrayals of advertising and its careers would not prompt them to enroll in advertising courses did admit that Mad Men and (2007) Trust Me (2009) did pique their curiosity to the point that they would seek more information about advertising. One student shared, “For me, watching episodes of Trust Me intrigues me and makes me more curious.” Students were a little more cautious when selecting a major because of these programs, especially Mad Men (2007), because of the 1960s time period. The students could relate to the work, but not the drinking, smoking, sex outside the marriage, and male dominance in the workplace. One student expressed his thoughts about popular television programs’ effect on his major: “I would never make a major decision based on a television program. That is not to say that television is not a springboard for ideologies and interests. In all fairness to television, it does make me want to investigate further into the field as I am now more inclined to look at the creative side of the industry,” said a research participant. Only one student said these programs would not affect her choice of major. As a non-traditional student, she perceived the industry as one for “young” people.

Television, just like advertising, has durable staying power. Television reached nearly 90 percent of people 18-plus every day, according to the Media Comparisons
Study of 2010. Television has the power to provide insights about subjects, people, and places that may have been relatively obscure or unexplored by the viewing audience. The television provides the lens for exploration. As young adults seek options about college courses that will ultimately determine their major and career choice, it is advantageous for advertising practitioners and educators to understand the messages communicated on the “tube” about the industry and its careers. As practitioners and educators, we can capitalize on television’s reality by challenging students to think critically and investigate situations.

References


**Appendix A**

**Mad Men Plot**

Set in 1960s New York, the sexy, stylized and provocative AMC drama *Mad Men* follows the lives of the ruthlessly competitive men and women of Madison Avenue advertising, an ego-driven world where key players make an art of the sell.

AMC’s *Mad Men*, winner of three consecutive Golden Globes and back-to-back Emmys for Outstanding Drama Series, returns for a new season rife with possibilities. Last season stunned audiences with its cliffhanger finale, as Don Draper’s professional and personal lives unexpectedly imploded. This year, Jon Hamm and the rest of the breakout ensemble continue to captivate us as they grapple with an uncertain new reality. Welcome to a Mad New World.

**The Premise:** The series revolves around the conflicted world of Don Draper (Hamm), the biggest ad man (and ladies man) in the business, and his colleagues at the Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce Advertising Agency. As Don makes the plays in the boardroom and the bedroom, he struggles to stay a step ahead of the rapidly changing times and the young executives nipping at his heels. The series also depicts authentically the roles of men and women in this era while exploring the true human nature beneath the guise of 1960s traditional family values.

*Source: www.amctv.com*

**Trust Me Plot**

Set against the backdrop of the high-pressure world of advertising, TRUST ME focuses on Mason (McCormack) and Conner (Cavanagh), a pair of ad men whose strong creative partnership has served the firm of Rothman Greene & Mohr extremely well over the years. Mason, an art director, is a responsible, workaholic family man with a beautiful wife, Erin (Clarke), two children and an undying loyalty to the brands he helps sell. By contrast, his writing partner, Conner (Cavanagh), is a single, impulsive copywriter with the attention span of a teenager. Their yin-yang relationship is put to the test when Mason is named a creative director of the agency, making him Conner's boss. The series follows the changing dynamics between the two friends, who are better together than they are apart.

Also working in the same creative group is new hire Sarah Krajicek-Hunter (Potter), an award-winning copywriter whose forceful personality has a tendency to rub people the wrong way. Hector (Arend) and Tom (Damus) are a junior creative team with untraditional ideas that don't always sit well with their new boss. The entire team is
supervised by Tony Mink (Dunne), a man who lives and dies by the advertising business but has a growing sense his days in this young person's business may be numbered.

TRUST ME follows these memorable characters as they try to navigate the waters of inter-office politics, personality conflicts, easily bruised egos, professional jealousies and unreasonable client demands.

TRUST ME was created by Hunt Baldwin and John Coveny, who have a combined total of over 20 years of experience in the advertising world having worked for J. Walter Thompson and Leo Burnett Advertising in Chicago.

*Source: www.tnt.tv*
Where There's Tobacco Smoke There May be Fire: A Preliminary Analysis of What 1943 Tobacco Ads Tell Us about American Attitudes in 1943

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Introduction and Literature Search

In many ways, 1943 provides us with one of the most interesting years to examine the role of advertising in popular culture. First, America was in the midst of World War II and many corporations began running ads with patriotic themes (Tsai, 2010). At the same time corporations were running large numbers of patriotic ads, concerns arose about the extent to which these companies might be bragging about their accomplishments in a self-serving way (Jensen and Thomas, 2009). Secondly, the role of women was dramatically changing as more young women switched from staying at home to work in factories or to take on other wartime roles (Honey, 1984, p. 109). Third, the tobacco companies promoted the merits of their products including cigarettes, cigars, and pipe tobacco (Haddock et al., 20007; Smith and Malone, 2009).

In the same way that advertising can provide us with a perspective of the culture of 1943, it can also give us a lens through which conditions have changed since that time. The intent of this study was to examine World War II tobacco ads from five popular magazines and then compare the messages that were being told at that time to what we know today. We focused on a small set of issues: messages about the health effects of tobacco, messages in these ads about the role of women, and instances in which corporations may have tried to link their products to being linked to or endorsed by the military.

Jones (2009, p. 164) describes how many Camel ads claimed that smoking made many soldiers less jittery and thus better equipped to deal with the stress of war. Braverman (1996, p. 241) notes that other Camel ads claimed that smoking their cigarettes made parachute jumpers less apprehensive and made the hands of battlefield surgeons more steady.

We cannot know for sure about the extent to which the tobacco industry knew about the health threat posed by their products in 1943, but we can declare that from what we know today these ads were deceptive and untruthful. Craig and Moellinger (2001, p. 59) describe how as early as the 1920s cigarette company magazine ads pitched tobacco as clean, refreshing, and healthy products that would help; you lose weight or calm your nerves. As early as 1952, TV ads by tobacco companies like Old Gold began to acknowledge that the tars in cigarettes might pose a health risk (Craig and Moellinger, 2001, p. 60). It’s remarkable that the tobacco ads during World War II promoted the use of tobacco as an aid to overcome the effects of common colds and throat irritation. As a postscript, the overall effect of 1940s tobacco advertising on public health cannot be overstated; Tye, Warner and Glantz (1987, p. 497) write, “Without [World War II-era] advertising, cigarette use would probably have grown, but with advertising the increase has been amazing.” World War II also provides some interesting insights into how women were portrayed in advertising and thus sheds some light on their role in society. Henthorn (2006, p. 62) describes how many World War II ads depicted women in “ideal femininity” even while attempting to accomplish such serious work as getting the public to conserve rubber. An ad by Real-Form Girdles shows a gorgeous young woman clad only in her underwear looking seductively at the reader while she licks a War Bond stamp; the message is that women need to patient and may have to wait a bit longer for their girdles because rubber is needed to fight the war. Even though the “Rosie the Riveter” ads became famous icons to describe how women could work and succeed in physically-demanding wartime factory jobs that used to be done exclusively by men,
Henthorn (2006, p. 15) suggests that these ads were not in the mainstream; instead, she suggest that most images of women in World War II ads were still being portrayed as ideal feminine homemakers who knew their place in society.

Finally, it needs to be noted that American corporations of all kinds were running large numbers of image ads during World War II, this type of advertising was in line with the work of the War Advertising Council which encouraged tobacco companies (and virtually all other kinds of corporations) to develop advertising messages to rally support to get the public behind the war; the corporations were motivated in part by government tax breaks that rewarded this type of public service advertising (Kimble, 2006, p. 41).

Methodology
This paper presents results of an exploratory study of the rhetoric of tobacco advertisements presented in 1943 in five American magazines (Time, Life, The Saturday Evening Post, The Ladies’ Home Journal, and Business Week). I chose Business Week to get a perspective from business magazines and Ladies’ Home Journal to see if there were differences in ads aimed at women. I chose Time, Life, and The Saturday Evening Post because they were large general-circulation magazines of the period. An attempt was made to examine every ad from every 1943 issue of each of these magazines, but not all issues were available. The ads were copied from bound volumes at the University of South Dakota and Ashland University. A total of 393 tobacco ads were identified (25 in The Ladies’ Home Journal, 127 in Life, 7 in Business Week, 190 in The Saturday Evening Post, and 44 in Time). I examined each ad and then tried to see how well the ads provided insights about the following research questions:

- RQ1--Did the ads tout the health benefits of smoking?
- RQ2--Did the ads acknowledge that using tobacco ads might be hazardous to people’s health?
- RQ3--Did the ads imply that their products were helping the USA win World War II?
- RQ4--Did the ads claim that their products were popular among the troops or endorsed by the military?
- RQ5--How were women in military-related roles depicted in the ads?
- RQ6—What did the ads suggest about the motivations for women to smoke cigarettes?
- RQ 7—Were any of the ads be blatantly sexist and derogatory towards women?
- RQ 8—Were there any unusual advertisements?
- RQ 9—Were there noticeable differences in which tobacco companies advertised in different magazines?

At one level, the data analysis is very quantitative. Camel placed the most ads in this data set (90), followed by Lucky Strike (40), Phillip Morris (30), Prince Albert (25), and Kools (22). As it relates to the size of the ads, 153 ads used a full-page and 187 ads covered a half-page. Many other ads were smaller in size. The results can be used to describe the number of times different tobacco companies advertised in each magazine, the dates on which advertising campaigns seemed to have started and ended, and the size of the ads.

At the same time, much of the data analysis for this paper is subjective and qualitative. During the coding, I noticed elements of the ads that seemed to stand out, often in terms of the headlines, the kinds of graphics that were used, and even the persuasive and rhetorical messages that were presented in each ad. For the purpose of this paper, the most data-rich information stems from the qualitative examination of what we found.

Results
From this preliminary data analysis, the following observations can be made:

- RQ1--Many tobacco companies suggested that smoking would alleviate the effects of common colds and the throat irritation that resulted from smoking. Kools repeatedly stated that smoking their cigarettes would make you feel better if you suffered from a cold (Figure 1), while Spuds cigarettes suggested you should smoke them when you...
have a sore throat or when you have had a cold. Camel ads often displayed a diagram of “the T-zone” which stretches from your taste buds to your throat; the idea was that smoking Camels would make your T-zone feel the best (Figure 2). Other tobacco companies that claimed that smoking tobacco may have helped you feel better, including Country Doctor Tobacco, Chesterfield, Fleetwood cigarettes, Old Gold cigarettes, Prince Albert pipe tobacco, Webster cigars, and Sir Walter Raleigh. Philip Morris was very bold and outspoken in stating the medical authorities had proven that their products caused less throat “irritation” than other brands. Some of the Philip Morris statements are so bold they deserve special attention, such as the following:

- Medical authorities recognize that Philip Morris proved far less irritating to the smoker’s nose and throat” (Figure 3).
- “You’re safer smoking Philip Morris!” (Figure 4).
- “Eminent doctors report in medical journals that every case of irritation of nose or throat due to smoking cleared up completely or definitely improved when smokers changed to Philip Morris!” (Figure 5).

- “Doctors report on Philip Morris: Proved far less irritating to the nose and throat” (Figure 6).
• RQ2—No advertisements suggested that smoking could cause long-term adverse health effects. The closest comment about this subject was a brief statement by Phillip Morris that their cigarettes do not have curative powers. Paradoxically, these statements were only included in ads with headlines that screamed that medical doctors proved that PM cigarettes were good for your health (Figure 6).

• RQ3—Only a few of the ads seemed to claim that their tobacco product was helping the US win World War II. The only exceptions are Prince Albert tobacco, which featured a headline saying “We’re Lighting the Way to Victory!” (Figure 7). One could argue that this ad was not actually implying that Prince Albert helped win the war; rather this was done in a light-hearted tongue-in-cheek fashion.
RQ4—Many tobacco companies developed advertising to suggest that their products were used by military personnel. Companies that pictured troops using their products included Philip Morris, Camel, Prince Albert pipe tobacco, Marvels cigarettes, Chelsea cigarettes (Figure 8), Sir Walter Raleigh tobacco, Dr. Grabow pipes, Old Gold cigarettes (Figure 9), Edgeworth pipe tobacco, Country Doctor tobacco (Figure 10), Chelsea cigarettes, and Chesterfields (Figure 11). Camel went out of its way to suggest that their product was affiliated with the military. Camels repeatedly claimed that its cigarettes were top-sellers among American troops (Figure 12). Chesterfield showed patriotic images of soldiers in smoking their products.
RQ-5—It is interesting that only a few companies developed ads that actually depicted women in military roles. Camel showed a coed working as a civilian to help land planes by using signal flags on landing strips as well as women who flew for the Civil Air Patrol (Figure 14). Chesterfield depicted a woman naval officer smiling while she smoked (Figure 15). An unusual Camel ad promoted the idea that its cigarettes were “first in fashion” for women in uniform. Chelsea depicted WAVES who smiled when they smelled a pack of cigarettes and discovered Chelsea was fresher tasting, while Marvels cigarettes showed a woman military service women smoking one of their cigarettes while she walked down the street arm in arm with two servicemen (Figure 16). In contrast, many tobacco companies portrayed women in civilian roles that supported the armed forces. Chesterfields and Camel ran a series of ads saluting women working in war-time industries such as welding, assembly-line work, the building of naval ships (Figure 17). In a remarkable Chesterfield ad, the American-born Duchess of Windsor is shown handing out cigarettes to soldiers in the Bahamas (Figure 18). A Camel ad depicted an Army mom who solemnly stated she would walk many a mile to hand her son a carton of Camels (Figure 19).
RQ 6—Many of the ads seemed to imply that women might want to smoke cigarettes to become more attractive to soldiers and men outside the military. The theme in many of the ads is that smoking makes it more likely women will get dates and sex and/or that tolerating or providing a soldier with their favorite smoke will do the same. Camel reminded women to remember the little things that count most to

a soldier like his favorite brand of cigarette and showed a graphic of a couple in love smoking together (Figure 20); Old Gold showed a young woman following and holding hands with a soldier because of the pleasant aroma associated with smoking their cigarettes. Prince Albert pipe tobacco ran a series of ads that connoted smoking its brand with “pipe appeal” where a good-looking woman was romantically drawn to a smoker (Figure 21). A Sir Walter Raleigh ad shows an older gentleman counseling a young female military officer about how to woo a soldier; he suggests “Put a pipe in his mouth; he smokes Raleighs!” (Figure 22) while another Raleigh ad showed two young women on a park bench ogling two navy soldiers; one of the women points to the other and says, “I want the one smoking the Raleighs!”
RQ 7—I consider some of the ads to be downright sexist. Sir Walter Raleigh was especially consistent in this regard. In one of their ads, a young woman was lying suggestively in a man’s lap; her mom tells her to stop so the soldier can enjoy his Raleighs (Figure 23). A Briggs tobacco ad shows a man interrupting a romantic moment when he smells the wonderful aroma of their pipe tobacco (Figure 24). Another Raleigh’s ad shows a man being rescued from his burning apartment and he tells the firefighters to save his Raleighs first and then his wife (Figure 25). A Zippo Lighters ad described how a soldier married a young woman because she gave him one of their lighters (Figure 26).
RQ 8—Some of the tobacco ads can best be described as odd. Prince Albert pipe tobacco ran a series of ads that looked like comic strips; the basic premise was that the experience of smoking Prince Albert could be compared to military action like flying a jet fighter or attacking enemy ships with a submarine squadron (Figure 27). Bond Street pipe tobacco sponsored a series of ads in which humans with animal heads smoked; the basic premise was that you were smart as a fox when you smoked their products and silly as a goose when you didn’t (Figure 28). Although more of the mainstream, Kools cigarettes displayed its iconic penguins (not humans) smoking its products (Figure 29). Regent cigarettes campaign consisted solely of showing celebrities smoking its products (Figure 30). Lucky Strike ads were unique in that they didn’t urge people to buy their cigarettes outright; instead they consistently featured a full-page portrait of men and women working with and sorting tobacco (Figure 31).
RQ 9--It's interesting to look at the trends in different magazines. *Business Week* only featured a few tobacco ads. In the *Ladies Home Journal*, Philip Morris emphasized that 1 million women smoked their product, while Camel showed a coed who was working in a military-related career even though she was a civilian. Also in *The Journal*, Chesterfield depicted a woman welder while Chesterfield and Camel both had ads showing women pilots. **NOTE--** Check for trends in other magazines.

**Summary**

The main lesson to be learned from this exploratory analysis is that tobacco companies failed to caution the public about the possible adverse health risks of smoking in the ads they produced in these five magazines during World War II; this runs in stark contrast to the knowledge we have today about how deadly the use of tobacco products can be. Throughout this analysis, we have seen where tobacco ads rhetorically claimed that their cigarettes were provided fewer short-term health threats than other brands and/or that smoking would somehow offset irritating coughs caused by smoking; that trend of making one cigarette look healthier by comparing it to competitors is not limited to World War II but was continued throughout at least the 1970s (Tye, Warner and Glantz, 1987, p. 501).

The way in which these 1943 ads depict women is intriguing. In every one of its ads where Camel showed a man in the service smoking a cigarette, they usually featured an inset of a woman factory worker who was also smoking (Jones, 2009, p. 163).

There is little evidence to suggest that tobacco companies claimed that their products helped win the war (the only exception being the Prince Alert ads
that proclaim smoking their brand is “Lighting the Way to Victory!” Still, many of these companies tried to show that troops were smoking their brand and felt good doing so. Camel was most bold in its ads, repeatedly claiming they were top-selling among all servicemen (Jones, 2009, p. 10). Many of the tobacco ads tried to lift the morale of the public to support the war;

Limitations
The major limitation in this study is that only one person has coded the data. We hope to revisit the study to involve more people coding the data so that we can establish intercoder reliability. The second major limitation in this study is that we have not yet been able to examine every 1943 tobacco ad; we are working on this. The third major limitation of this study is that we need to reexamine the data set to make sure that every ad is included in the data set. Finally, this paper needs a more thorough rhetorical analysis.

References
Factors That Drive News Consumers to Become Facebook Fans of a Local TV Newsroom

By Mary Cox & John Kerans, Webster University, St. Louis, Missouri

Direct correspondence to Mary Cox at coxmary@webster.edu

Introduction

Local television stations are in the fight of their lives to win and maintain the loyalty of news consumers.

Viewership of newscasts on local television stations has been declining for years. It was first the influence of cable—and the many choices it offered—that began the process of attrition. Then came the Internet, which gave news consumers the ability to track stories on their own, at a time of their choosing. Now, it is social media that diverts interest, a watercooler-on-the-web where news consumers can talk about what they want, when they want to, and do so with like-minded others.

Local television news viewership declined in 2010 for the fourth year in a row at network affiliates, with attrition evident for news in the morning, early evening and late evening time slots. Potter, Matsa, and Mitchell—in their State of the News Media: 2011—report that, while the decline slowed in 2010 and revenue rose because of economic recovery and advertising revenue from off-year elections, “the long-term prognosis may depend on how aggressively and successfully local stations pursue digital options.” (Potter, Matsa, and Mitchell)

If this observation is correct, it would seem that the local stations which thrive will be those that can prove their future value to news consumers across all platforms, ranging from broadcast to digital. In support of that observation, a Pew Research Center survey in 2010 found that one-third of Americans report they go online for news. That number rose to 44% when the Pew survey included cell phones, email, social networks like Facebook, and podcasts as additional sources of news. (“Americans Spending More Time Following the News.”)

It’s clear that a local broadcast news operation must become a “go to” brand—not just in the broadcast realm, but across all platforms—to remain successful. And in a world where—as Erik Qualman suggests—we want to know what others are doing, despite the fragmentation caused by the web, Facebook may be the mechanism that offers local television stations the ability to win and maintain the loyalty of news consumers by building a strong, two-way relationship with the audience in both the online and mobile worlds. (Qualman vii)

Might Facebook also increase newscast ratings? If so, it would be important to discover the types of content and practices that attract users to become “fans” of a local television newsroom. And that discovery process is the basis for this inquiry.

Background

Facebook reported it had 750-million active users as of August, 2011. It counts an “active user” as one who has returned to the site within the last thirty days. Facebook statistics show the average user creates 90 pieces of content a month, has 130 friends, and is connected with 80 community pages, groups and events. The Facebook corporate
website notes that the 250-million active users who access Facebook on their phones and other mobile devices are twice as active on Facebook than those who don’t. Collectively, Facebook users spend 700-billion minutes per month on Facebook. ("Facebook")

KTVI News operates its Facebook page in St. Louis, the nation’s 21st largest media market with 1.25-million TV households. ("Nielsen") KTVI had nearly 23-thousand Facebook fans on December 30, 2010 when this study began. It had more than 66-thousand fans at the end of the study period, a 190% increase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KTVI–St. Louis Facebook fans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec, 30, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 30, 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cultural shift

For many years, local TV newsrooms such as KTVI dictated content and delivered it on their timetable, not the audience’s. The only direct contact newsroom had with viewers was when viewers called the newsroom.

The Internet and social media tools such as Facebook change that. Facebook demands conversation with formerly anonymous fans, or, as Dan Gillmor, director of the Knight Center for Digital Media Entrepreneurship at Arizona State University, describes them, “the former audience.” Gillmor says that for the first time ever, the user is now in charge as both a consumer and as a producer, adding that the ‘former audience’ has more impact by being part of “the larger conversation.” (Gillmor)

Many TV news executives still think of Facebook as a one-way transmission. Graeme Newell, president of 602 Communications, a broadcast consulting group, believes that many newsroom staff members still see themselves as the source of the message, rather than a participant in conversations with viewers. Newell suggests that this approach is “outdated and ineffective.”

In contrast, some local television newsrooms have aptly recognized Facebook for what it is, an example of what Tapscott and Williams in Wikinomics would describe as a “platform for participation.” It is here, to paraphrase their idea, that all the world’s a stage, and the news consumer is the star. (Tapscott, and Williams 182)

Two TV stations gather hundreds of thousands of Facebook fans

Recognizing Facebook as a platform for participation, two local television news operations in the United States stand out for the astounding growth in their Facebook fan bases: WJW in Cleveland and KUTV in Salt Lake City. (Bergman)

WJW is the Fox affiliate in Cleveland, the country’s 18th largest media market with about a million-and-a-half TV households. ("Nielsen") About 35,000 consumers had clicked “Like” on the station Facebook page when the social media marketing company Wildfire began tracking it in April, 2010. By the end of August 2011, the station’s Facebook page listed a fan base of more than 291,000 fans. ("Comparison of Fox 8 News and KUTV 2 News on Facebook")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WJW – Cleveland Facebook fans</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 31, 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KUTV in Salt Lake City operates another successful Facebook effort. (Bergman) Salt Lake City is the country’s 32nd largest media market with about 954-thousand TV
households. ("Nielsen") As of August, 2011, 152,685 users had clicked “Like” on its main Facebook page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KUTV–SLC Facebook fans</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 31, 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KUTV also keeps track of the total number of consumers who click on all the station’s Facebook pages, including those of anchors and reporters. As of August 31, 2011, the site listed a total of more than 297,000 fans.

News executives at KUTV believe the station’s Facebook effort has improved newscast ratings. News director Jennifer Dahl compared Facebook activity with newscast ratings and is convinced there is a correlation. (Dahl)

She offers these statistics, which compare the market share of the station’s audience year-to-year with Facebook fans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience share</th>
<th>Facebook fans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 2010</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2011</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience share</th>
<th>Facebook fans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 2010</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2011</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dahl says the station’s active Facebook community has helped change the composition of the KUTV audience. Broadcast advertisers typically pay more for commercials in time slots and on stations with younger viewers, especially in the 18-49 year old demographic. Dahl says that newscast demographics have gotten younger as the station focused more consistently on Facebook.

Dahl believes it is because KUTV’s Facebook users tend to be younger than typical newscast viewers, with 67% of the station’s Facebook users under age 44. There are likely other factors involved as well, but Dahl gives Facebook much credit for this improved demographic picture. (Dahl)

Dahl is convinced that creating a large, engaged fan base is a key ingredient in her station’s integrated marketing plan, but the question remains: what works best in driving new users to become a fan of a station’s Facebook page?

Methods and Data

KTVI in St. Louis gave the authors access to its Facebook database, including a day-to-day breakdown of “New Likes” on the station’s main Facebook page. As noted earlier, a user clicks on “Like” to enroll as a fan of the station’s Facebook page. The station’s posts then show up in the user’s daily Facebook feed.

KTVI also made news personnel available to answer questions, as researchers attempted to assess the elements that drove users to the station page. Researchers then studied the station’s daily Facebook activity for seven months, from December 30, 2010 to July 30, 2011 to assess what was happening on the station’s Facebook page on those days when the station experienced the most new fans.
The authors determined what users were talking about on the page on any given day, then looked at multiple individual posts, and reviewed the content posted by TV station personnel that elicited multiple “Likes” and “Comments.” Then the authors cross-referenced the content on the Facebook page with the days where the station’s Facebook fan base grew the most.

**Analysis and Results**

An analysis of KTVI’s Facebook data makes it clear that severe weather was a strong driver of new fans to the television station’s Facebook page. The analysis also reveals that contests were an effective—and predictable—method to enlist new fans.

Researchers analyzed the top 35 days with the biggest day-to-day increase in the fan base, and learned the following:

- Weather was the draw on 22 of the 35 most active days.
- Contests prompted new “Likes” on six of the 35 most active days.
- News stories attracted new fans on four days. These included a 3.9 magnitude earthquake centered about fifty miles from St. Louis, the fatal shooting of a U.S. Marshal, and the beginning-and-end for the trial of Christopher Coleman who was convicted of killing his wife and children.
- There were three days marked “Other,” including two when weather—combined with news of the day—made it hard to determine the main draw for new fans. These days included June 27th when thunderstorms prompted Facebook activity, as did the conviction of Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich on charges of corruption. On July 7th, it was hard to tell whether it was thunderstorms or the Casey Anthony sentencing in Florida that drew the most new fans to the KTVI site. One “Other” day involved a station promotion that simply asked users to “Like” the page in an effort by KTVI to reach 40,000 fans.

The single most successful effort by KTVI during the survey period occurred on July 29th, 2011 when the station gained 3,321 new fans in a single day, bringing the total number of fans to 65,817. Facebook posts revealed the TV station ran a contest that day to give away an iPad. The giveaway was mentioned during the TV station’s newscasts and advertised during other programs. Information about the contest was also emailed to 100-thousand KTVI viewers within a station newsletter. This marketing effort not only prompted new fans, but also led 24,050 users to enter the contest on July 29th. (Millitzer)

The contest, run by a service called Woobox, required users to “Like” the station’s Facebook page to enter the contest. Once users entered the contest, they were prompted to share the contest with their friends. Those who enlisted others got a bonus entry for every friend they persuaded to “Like” the page.

KTVI ran six contests during the survey period, giving away prizes that included an iPad, a sapphire bracelet, a Blu-Ray player and other incentives. Five of those contest days appeared on the list of *top ten* most successful days. The sixth contest day came in at #12.

But while contests provided a significant, predictable stream of new fans, bad weather also attracted new fans during the survey period. For example, the second most active day occurred on February 1st when the KTVI site recorded 3,131 new fans after its
meteorologists predicted that a snowstorm of historic proportion would hammer St. Louis.

As it turned out, snowfall was so heavy west of Saint Louis that the interstate highway to Kansas City had to be closed, the first time ever. And while some parts of the KTVI viewing area did get significant snow, the storm spared many parts of St. Louis proper and headed north. The posts this day included hundreds of users posting pictures of ice and snow, but also included many posts that called attention to the fact that the storm did not live up to the hype. ("STL Today.com")

The day before the snowstorm, January 31st, came in fifth on the most active list. The day of the tornado described above came it at #11. The day after the tornado came in at #10.

What Drove Fans to Join the KTVI Facebook Page?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>New “Likes”</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 7/29/11</td>
<td>3321</td>
<td>Contest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 2/1/11</td>
<td>3131</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Weather: Winter storm/Ice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 7/27/11</td>
<td>2353</td>
<td>Contest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 7/26/11</td>
<td>2203</td>
<td>Contest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 1/31/11</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Winter storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 7/28/11</td>
<td>1534</td>
<td>Contest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 7/25/11</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>Contest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 12/31/10</td>
<td>1084</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Sunset Hills tornado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 5/25/11</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Tornadoes, wind, rain, hail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 4/23/11</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Tornado aftermath. Airport closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 4/22/11</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Tornado rips roof off airport. Damages 2500 buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 7/30/11</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>Contest</td>
<td>Contest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 2/2/11</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Winter storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 4/19/11</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Hail storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 3/8/11</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>US Marshal killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 1/20/11</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Winter storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 2/3/11</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Winter storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 1/19/11</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Winter storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 7/7/11</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Storms/ Casey Anthony sentencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 5/24/11</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Joplin tornado aftermath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 6/7/11</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>Sullivan, MO earthquake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 4/25/11</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>Coleman murder trial begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 6/27/11</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Thunderstorms/ Gov. Blagojevich guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 2/5/11</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Snowstorm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 3/16/11</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Push for station’s 40,000 fan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 5/23/11</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Severe thunderstorm/power outages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 2/27/11</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Tornado warning/wind/hail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 4/24/11</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Tornado aftermath/Airport reopens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 1/30/11</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Winter storm warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 5/26/11</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Thunderstorms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

75
Discussion and Conclusion

Henry Jenkins, director of Comparative Media Studies at MIT, says “convergence thinking is reshaping American popular culture” by altering the relationships among audiences, media outlets and content. (Jenkins 12)

In Convergence Culture, Jenkins writes:

“Convergence requires media companies to rethink old assumptions about what it means to consume media, assumptions that shape both programming and marketing decisions. If old consumers were assumed to be passive, the new consumers are active. If old consumers were predictable and stayed where you told them to stay, new consumers are migratory, showing a declining loyalty to networks and media. If old consumers were isolated individuals, new consumers are more socially connected. If the work of media consumers was once silent and invisible, the new consumer is noisy and public.” (Jenkins 18)

But Jenkins does not suggest that the “old media’ will die. Instead, he believes, consumers will continue to access old media in new ways, with new delivery technologies. Recorded music is a good example. First captured on wax cylinders by Edison, recorded music still entertains, though now it is delivered as an MP3 file, or perhaps on a CD.

If the daily news is old media, then Facebook is the new delivery technology. It is immediate, interactive, personal, relevant. But—as Ken Auletta suggests in a recent New Yorker article—if Google organizes news with algorithms to distill “the wisdom of crowds,” Facebook organizes news by suggesting one rely on the wisdom of friends to interpret what is happening. (Auletta)

Nowhere is this clearer than in the review above which shows that severe weather was a significant driver of new users to the Facebook page at KTVI in St. Louis during the seven months studied. Joining the KTVI Facebook page gives users in the social network a large, powerful platform for participation.. They become reporters of important content in a place that is larger than anything they could create by themselves. Thousands can see their posts, comments and photos.

Michael Zeisser, director of digital operations at Liberty Media and a former consultant at McKinsey & Company, says that marketers must strive to be “genuinely useful” to those whom they pursue in the virtual world. And what could be more useful than real-time updates when the weather turns dangerous? A local TV station Facebook page is a natural, convenient place to turn for life-saving information, especially when one considers that one-third of all Facebook users gain access via mobile devices—all the more useful when there is no TV, radio or computer available.
Zeisser also suggests that marketers cannot be successful unless they confer social importance on users in a setting like Facebook. “Recognition by peers is a powerful motivator,” he writes. “As web sites evolve to become increasingly dynamic experiences that let people interact in real time, the value to core users of being recognized for their prominence in a community will only increase.” (Zeisser 2)

As core users benefit from recognition, the newsroom benefits when it gains eyes-and-ears in hundreds of neighborhoods far beyond the geographic reach of its news staff. Here, the value flows back to the TV station, since—to borrow a phrase from Tapscott and Williams—it can now “harvest external knowledge” on a vast scale, using the information and photographs on station newscasts, offering its viewers richer, more layered content. (Wikinomics 269)

This give-and-take on Facebook between the local television newsroom and the news consumer exemplifies what Tapscott and Williams have dubbed “mass collaboration.” It can be seen as an online marketplace with what economist Tobias Madden describes as a two-fold purpose. Those with answers go there to find people with questions, and those with questions go there to find people with answers. (Madden 34)

About the authors
Mary Cox is an assistant professor of digital journalism at Webster University in St. Louis. She earned her undergraduate degree at Lindenwood University, and her MS in journalism and mass communication at Iowa State University. Cox is a former television news director who visits several TV newsrooms each month to conduct training workshops in storytelling, social media and marketing.

John Kerans is a former television news director who now works as an advertising and public relations consultant. He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Minnesota, and his MA in advertising at Lindenwood University. Kerans has been a member of the adjunct journalism faculty at the University of Kansas and Arizona State University.

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