



ZEFF

ADVERTISING ON THE INTERNET



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1997



‘This is just what I needed.’ —Andrew Susman,

Marketing Director, Time, Inc., New Media

ADVERTISING

on the internet

**Buy and sell online ads with
strategies that work**

**Identify your online audience
and customize the ads they’ll see**

**Optimize your online ad
campaign with smart pricing
and measurement skills**

ROBBIN ZEFF

BRAD ARONSON

Foreword by Debra Aho Williamson
Advertising Age

Advertising on the Internet



Advertising on the Internet

Robbin Zeff
Brad Aronson

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v

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—Robbin Zeff

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—Brad Aronson

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Foreword

Web advertising is the buzzword of the moment. Everyone wants to know what it is, how to do it, where to find it, and most of all, how to make money from it. Advertising is expected to foot the bill for countless Web sites, ranging from big-name magazines to local entertainment guides, but there are still significant concerns about online advertising.

While nearly all the leading national advertisers (as tabulated by *Advertising Age* and *Competitive Media Reporting*) have Web sites, most have yet to buy online advertising. Of the ad-supported Web publishers, few are profitable. Meanwhile, analyzing traffic to a Web site is a complicated procedure.

Are we holding the Internet to expectations that are far too high? When Internet industry executives gather, they talk about the rate of change in terms of Internet years—like dog years, there are several Internet years in one calendar year. Because technology turns over this quickly, the tendency is to assume that marketing and advertising will change just as quickly, but that's not always the case.

Advertising follows tried-and-true patterns: 30-second commercials, planned campaigns, a studied approach to buying and selling. The Internet, with its millions of linked documents, just doesn't lend itself to that kind of rigor. The tendency among many marketers is to impose boundaries and formats on the Net, when in reality, Internet advertising should be about creativity, open standards, and freedom of form.

If you're considering running an Internet ad campaign, this book is an excellent way to kick off your education process. It will teach you in plain, no-nonsense language, the basics about Internet ads, ad networks, creative, and more. Before you launch your campaign, take a step back. Don't just buy some banners and wait for the results. Think of ways to reach out to the people who see and interact with your ad.

When you feel the tendency to revert to tried-and-true methods of advertising, spend a few minutes surfing the Net. Click links and go where they take you. Don't feel like you have to follow a pattern or return to where you started. That's the beauty of the Net, and to consider it any other way is to erect boundaries where there are none, and fences where there should be open fields.

Read, learn, and understand the basics. Then, get ready to be creative. No other ad medium will offer you so much freedom to create your own path.

Debra Aho Williamson
Editor, Interactive Media & Marketing
Advertising Age

Contents

1	The State of Online Advertising	1
	Chapter by Chapter Overview	4
2	Setting the Stage	7
	Why All the Commotion?	7
	What Is Online Advertising?	9
	The Online Audience	14
	Short History of Online Advertising	16
	Players in the Internet Advertising Industry	20
	Advertising Infrastructure	25
3	Online Ad Models: Banners, Buttons, and Beyond	29
	Web Site as Ad	29
	Ad Models	34
4	Web Measurement	65
	Building Blocks of Web Measurement	66
	The Problems with Web Measurement	81
	The Role of Ratings in Advertising:	
	How Advertisers Compare Audience	86
	Achieving the Promise of Online Advertising through Measurement	88
5	Learning about Your Customers and Delivering Targeted Ads	89
	Ad Management	89
	The Future of Demographic Information	98
	Personalization and Targeting Tools	105
	Are We There Yet?	109

6	Pricing Online Ads	111
	Pricing Models	112
	Flexibility Is the Key	127
7	Identifying and Understanding the Online Audience	129
	Research and Studies	129
	The Findings: What We Know	136
	Speculating on the Future	146
8	Running an Online Advertising Campaign: Buying Online Ads	147
	Establishing Campaign Goals	148
	Buying Ad Space	150
	Locating Ad Space and Rates	156
	Using an Interactive Agency	162
	Measuring Campaign Effectiveness	165
9	Selling Online Ads	167
	Prepare Your Site for Paid Advertising	168
	Know Your Audience	170
	Spread the Word	173
	Selling Ads	174
	Selling Strategies	176
	Conclusion	185
10	The Online Advertising Horizon	187
	Local to Global	188
	Public Service Announcements	189
	Infiltration of Online Advertising	190
	Room for Improvement	191
	Moving Forward	194
	Appendix A A Two-Minute Internet Primer	195
	Appendix B Host Distribution by Top-Level Domain Name	201
	Appendix C Rate Cards	209
	Appendix D Finding a Job in Online Advertising	233
	Appendix E Resource Directory	237
	Appendix F Banner Response Rates	287
	Index	293

Running an Online Advertising Campaign: Buying Online Ads

Too many marketers jump into online advertising without a clear plan of action. An online advertising campaign, like any media campaign, requires strategic planning to ensure that money is well spent and the objectives are accomplished. It's not as simple as calling Yahoo! and placing a few banner ads.

As in so many endeavors, it is best to start with the basics. In the case of an online ad campaign, this means being able to answer the following question in the affirmative: Is the targeted market online, and if so, where online? While there may be discrepancies regarding various statistics on the Internet, no one disputes that there are many millions of online users. However, if none of these surfers fall into the target market, then an online advertising campaign makes no sense; likewise if the target audience's online whereabouts cannot be pinpointed, an online ad campaign is probably doomed to fail. Thus, the advertiser's challenge is to discover, first, whether there is an online audience for the product or service, and, second, where online this audience congregates.

This chapter is a guided tour through the ins and outs of running an online advertising campaign. We begin by discussing how to set goals for a campaign. We'll then survey the type of sites where an advertiser should place advertising, and identify the online tools to use to locate ad space.

Next, we'll examine the pros and cons of placing advertising with or without the help of an agency. Finally, we'll assist you in the all-important evaluation process for determining the success of your online advertising campaign.

Establishing Campaign Goals

The first, and probably most important, step in running a campaign is establishing goals. If an advertiser doesn't know what he or she wants to achieve, there is no way of judging whether or not the advertising is successful. According to advertising folklore, a famous advertising executive once said that he wasted a million dollars a year on advertising; the problem was that he didn't know which million. With shrinking budgets, advertisers no longer have this luxury; they have to evaluate and justify all of their spending. Fortunately, the Web's measurability enables advertisers to chart quantifiable numbers to use in evaluating a campaign's success. But without goals at the outset, advertisers cannot interpret these numbers in any meaningful fashion. For the purposes of this chapter, the online campaign objectives we'll set include driving users to a Web site, building brand awareness, and generating leads and sales.

Generating Traffic

It probably need not be said that both publishers and advertisers alike want to drive traffic to their Web sites; publishers to increase their reach and the number of ad impressions they can sell, and advertisers to entice more users to interact with their brand, fill out a form, or buy something online (although advertisers who have created mini Web sites on publishers' sites and banners in which a user can conduct transactions aren't as concerned with driving traffic to their Web sites; if they accomplish their goals, they're achieved on the publishers' sites). To this end, advertisers can use most models, from banners to buttons to direct e-mail, to drive traffic to their Web sites.

Building Brand Awareness

Traditional advertising's primary objective is to build brand awareness, that is, to distinguish a product from the crowd, to create an identity for a

product, and form a relationship with the consumer. If a product has an identity for a consumer, that consumer is more likely to purchase that product than a competing brand. With so many advertising dollars poured into brand-building campaigns, Web publishers are eager to prove that the Web is an excellent medium for accomplishing this most basic of advertising goals.

Although major brand advertisers like Procter & Gamble are testing Web advertising, many analysts debate the branding value that current advertising models offer, especially in the case of banners, where some advertisers believe that there is only value in the users who click-through. Disputing this stance is the 1996 “HotWired Advertising Effectiveness Study” (discussed in Chapter 7), which determined that online advertising can build brand awareness. Despite the small size of banner ads, HotWired and Millward Brown International concluded that every ad impression contributes to brand awareness.

Advertisers interested in brand building don’t necessarily need users to click on their advertisements or visit their Web sites. They are more interested in users who simply remember their product. Brand building can be achieved through several ad models, from sponsoring portions of Web sites to nesting advertising content within Web sites to interstitials (Chapter 3 covered the different advertising vehicles and their usefulness for branding campaigns). In short, branding focuses on affecting how a user thinks more than where the user clicks. Case in point: In Chapter 6 we discussed Modem Media’s brand-building banner campaign for AT&T in which Modem Media didn’t want users to click on the banners; the goal was for users to remember an 800 number that was listed on the advertisements.

Selling Products

Campaigns with a direct marketing approach are focused on generating leads and sales. High traffic and name recognition aren’t nearly as important to these advertisers as actual purchases of the advertised product. The success of the ad campaign is not measured in impressions or click-throughs, but in revenues generated.

Online advertisers are responding to direct marketers by devising ways to more quickly move the visitor from interacting with an advertisement to purchasing a product. They are placing nested ad content on publishers’

sites, so the user can complete a transaction without jumping to the advertiser's site; and some publishers are allowing advertisers to sell products within related editorial areas. Advertisers are also testing banners from which a user can purchase a product.

The Web gives direct marketers the opportunity to move a prospect from information gathering to sale to fulfillment more quickly and efficiently than any other medium. And this progression will become even smoother as Web advertising continues to develop.

Buying Ad Space

After an advertiser has determined the goals of a campaign—to generate traffic, build brand awareness, or generate direct sales—the next step is to determine the appropriate ad models and the best locations to place the advertisement. To illustrate this step, we'll use a fly fishing equipment company to briefly identify the advantages of different advertising models. First we'll assume the company is a large, national provider of fly fishing equipment, whose goal is to expand brand awareness. In this case, one appropriate move would be to sponsor a section of a fly fishing enthusiast site, where the firm could develop a relationship with the audience by placing its name, logo, and graphics on the sponsored pages.

But what if the company were smaller, and only sold its products through mail order? In this case, the company goal would most likely be met through direct sales. For this company the right approach might be a banner that links to a page on which specific products are described and where direct sales would be facilitated. Perhaps the company could also negotiate to have its products integrated with appropriate editorial. For example, at the end of an article about fishing rods, a button might be placed for users to click if they want to buy this company's rod.

Finally, let's say that the second, smaller fly fishing company also rents fishing lodges. To generate business in this direction, it might consider a campaign that included an interactive tour of available fishing lodges.

The point is, there are an endless number of sites that accept advertising; and after deciding where to place the ads, there are numerous types of ads to choose from. As in traditional advertising it boils down to finding the best way to achieve business goals—and not getting caught up in the “sexiness” of online advertising at the expense of effectiveness.

Search Engines

If an advertiser is planning to purchase a lot of advertising, to reach as many different people as possible, the high-traffic search engines sites are ideal (Figure 8.1). CPMs on search engines are usually around \$20.

Conversely, if the advertiser's target audience isn't everyone who is surfing, or at least a majority of surfers, the high reach and low cost of search engine general rotation is probably not a good buy; a more targeted buy *within* search engines or from advertising on content sites is more in order. More targeted buys within search engines range from \$40 to \$60 CPM. These buys can include static pages, topic/category sections, or keywords. Static pages are dedicated to one niche topic. An example on Yahoo! would be a page that lists dental practices. A topic or category usually results in a greater reach. For example, if an advertiser purchases the

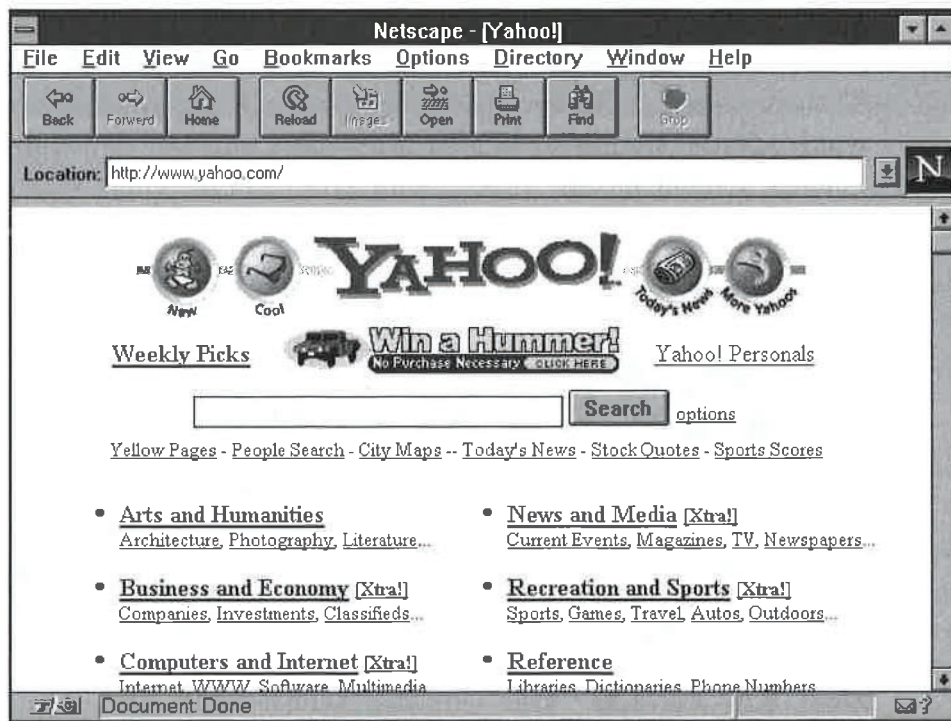


FIGURE 8.1 Yahoo! is one of the top search engines and one of the top sites on the Web.

shopping category on Excite, the banner would rotate throughout the category whether on the specific page covering shopping malls or the page listing shopping directories.

Another targeted search engine buy is keywords, which lets advertisers reach users searching for specific information. This type of targeting, when properly implemented, can yield extremely high click-through rates. For example, Time Warner's DreamShop purchased the keyword "Godiva" on a major search engine two weeks prior to Valentine's Day. When users searched on "Godiva," DreamShop's banner appeared, offering free Godiva chocolates for purchases conducted on the DreamShop site (see Figure 8.2). The targeting and timing delivered one of the best click-through rates DreamShop had ever achieved for a promotion.

Content Sites

Advertisers can also target content sites. Obviously, for example, SportsLine and SportsZone are excellent sites for reaching sports fans (Figure 8.3). The cost for advertising on these types of content sites can range from \$25 to \$50 CPM. These two sports sites are targeted by purchasing the keyword "sports," and, as such, offer many more impressions to advertisers. Popular, content-specific sites usually have more inventory than a search engine can offer in its corresponding category or keywords. However, just

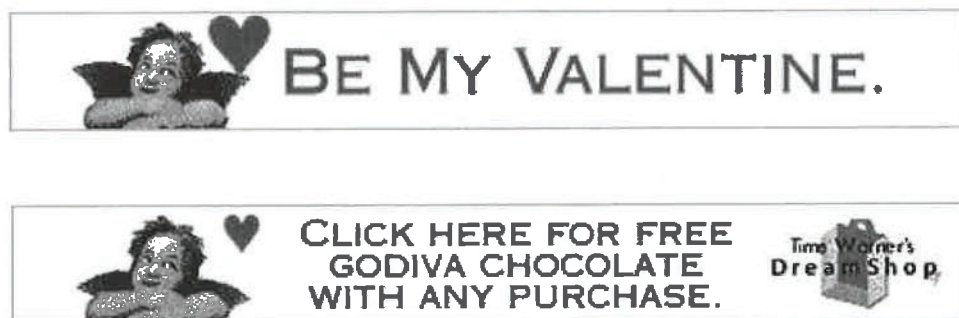


FIGURE 8.2A AND 8.2B This animated banner (both frames are shown) pulled 25 percent better than the same banner without bullet holes.

Banner provided by MediaFinder, <http://www.mediafinder.com>



FIGURE 8.3 ESPN SportsZone has a loyal following of sports fans.

because these content sites have more impressions to sell, doesn't mean that an advertiser will be able to reach more users. Because such content sites provide daily update information, many of the impressions an advertiser purchases reach the same person multiple times.

Niche Content Sites

For advertisers on limited budgets and direct response marketers interested in lowering costs, it is worthwhile to spend time searching for grassroots sites. These sites may not be as well designed or as high trafficked as their larger counterparts, but they can offer a much less expensive CPM. For example, a fanatical sports fan may create a Web site dedicated to providing a comprehensive list of sporting resources on the Web. This site probably won't be as professional looking as SportsZone, which has a staff of artists

working on the design, and there won't be as much traffic, but it still can draw significant traffic. And because of their "maverick" status, these sites often sell advertising at discounted rates. The obvious advantage: Advertisers get low-cost impressions delivered to a very targeted audience. For example, a developer of desktop publishing software would have a captured audience at the Ultimate Electronic Publishing Resource Site (<http://www.desktoppublishing.com>) (Figure 8.4). Of course, some advertisers might not want their brands associated with publisher sites that are not professionally designed. Targeting a niche site is a decision that has to be made based on goals, budget, and image-consciousness.

Advertising on "Sure" Sites. Advertising works best when an advertiser can pinpoint the customers' favorite spots on the Web. One way to gather

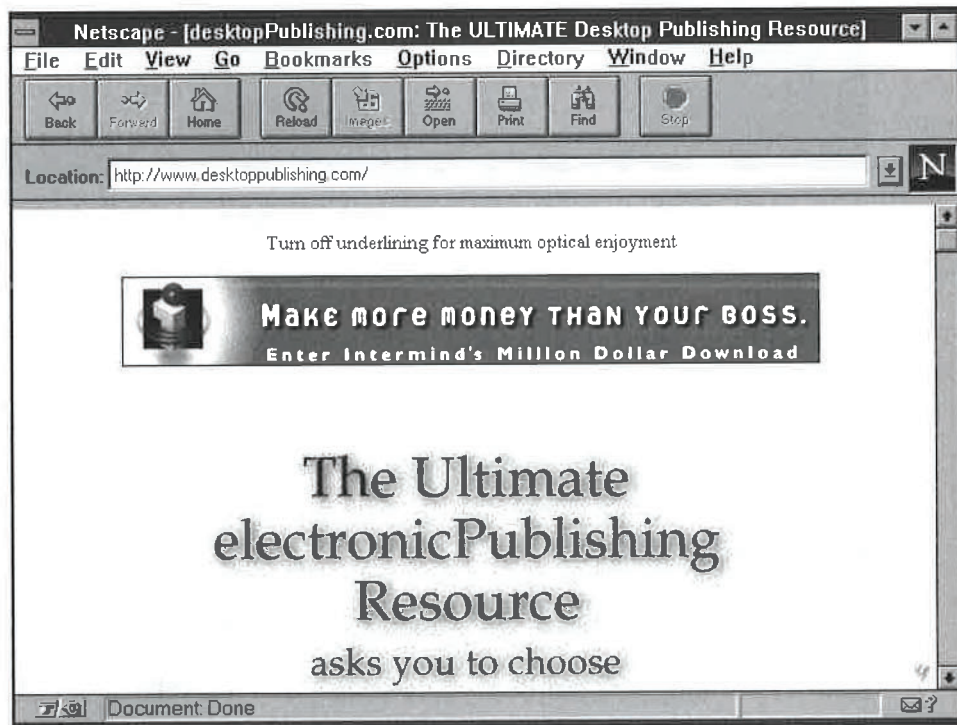


FIGURE 8.4 A niche site like the Ultimate Electronic Publishing Resource would be a good location for advertising products specific to this audience, such as desktop publishing software.

this information is through referral logs, a file on the server that hosts the Web site that reveals the URL from which users accessed the site (for more on log files refer back to Chapter 4). Using the referral log, marketers can determine where most of their users are coming from—and those may be excellent places for targeted advertising; in a sense, they are a “sure thing.” If most users are coming from search engines, a look at the log data will reveal which keywords they are using to find the site. This provides clues to the information visitors are seeking, and thus some indication of good keywords to purchase. Advertisers can also find appropriate locations for placing advertising by surfing the Web themselves. It is important to be on the lookout for places that would be ideal for the targeted market.

Advertising Networks. For advertisers whose objective it is to reach a high number of people through a variety of content sites, advertising networks are worth investigating. We’ve touched on these networks in previous chapters. To recap, they usually represent numerous sites, and advertisers buying through them can purchase space on a group of sites in a particular subject area through only one buy. For example, if an advertiser were interested in hitting as many users of business and finance sites as possible, he or she could purchase advertising on over a dozen business and finance sites through the DoubleClick Network.

One caution when going through a network: It is the advertiser’s responsibility to make sure that those sites displaying product or service banners are sites the brand should be associated with. The various advertising networks have different specialties. For example, DoubleClick Network (<http://www.doubleclick.net>) offers a large selection of high-profile Web sites; AdOne Classified Ad Network (<http://www.adone.com>) is a network specializing in classified ads; and the Link Exchange (<http://www.linkexchange.com>) is the largest with tens of thousands of sites in the network. For a full list of advertising networks, refer to the Ad Networks section in Appendix E.

E-mail Discussion Groups and Newsletters

Another consideration is the sponsorship of e-mail discussion groups (users with similar interests who “converse” through e-mail) and newsletters (electronic versions of the common print format produced by an individual, group, organization, or company and e-mailed to subscribers).

Both vehicles usually allow from 3 to 14 lines of copy from sponsors; admittedly, this doesn't make them a great way to generate brand awareness, but if an advertiser wants only a response from a targeted audience, they're worth a look-see. And because e-mail products are sent to all users simultaneously, this is also a good way to blast out a message quickly. Another reason discussion groups are good ad venues is that participants have to take an action to join, thus they are usually passionate about the topic, which makes them a receptive audience.

Prices vary to advertise in discussion groups or newsletters; discussion groups with a large following will charge a \$40 CPM, but smaller groups that have not had sponsors in the past may be eager to earn advertising revenues and so may charge a discount rate. One important word of advice before purchasing advertising on a discussion group or e-mail newsletter: Join the discussion and monitor the newsletter for at least two weeks. Not only will this enable you to determine whether the group or newsletter is a promising location for an ad, it's an excellent way to generate ideas for high-quality sponsorship copy. Sifting through the e-mail discussion groups and newsletters to find those of high quality is well worth the effort for advertisers searching for a targeted advertising buy. The following sites are great starting points for finding e-mail newsletters and discussion groups.

The List of Lists (<http://catalog.com/vivian/interest-group-search.html>)

Reference.com (<http://www.reference.com>)

The Liszt (<http://www.liszt.com>)

Locating Ad Space and Rates

After an advertiser has determined what an ad campaign should accomplish, and which types of sites and buys would be most appropriate, the next step is to determine the specific sites at which to place the ads. A good way to start is to consult indexes of Web sites that sell advertising. These indexes are available online; two of the best are Jupiter's AdSpace Locator (<http://www.jup.com/interact/data/sponsors/sponsors.shtml>) and SI Software's index (<http://www.sisoftware.com/sirate1.htm>). Both provide a categorical list of a number of sites that sell space. Listings include information about the sites, rates, and ad size specification. Figure 8.5 shows Jupiter's AdSpace Locator and how to research advertising locations and rates.

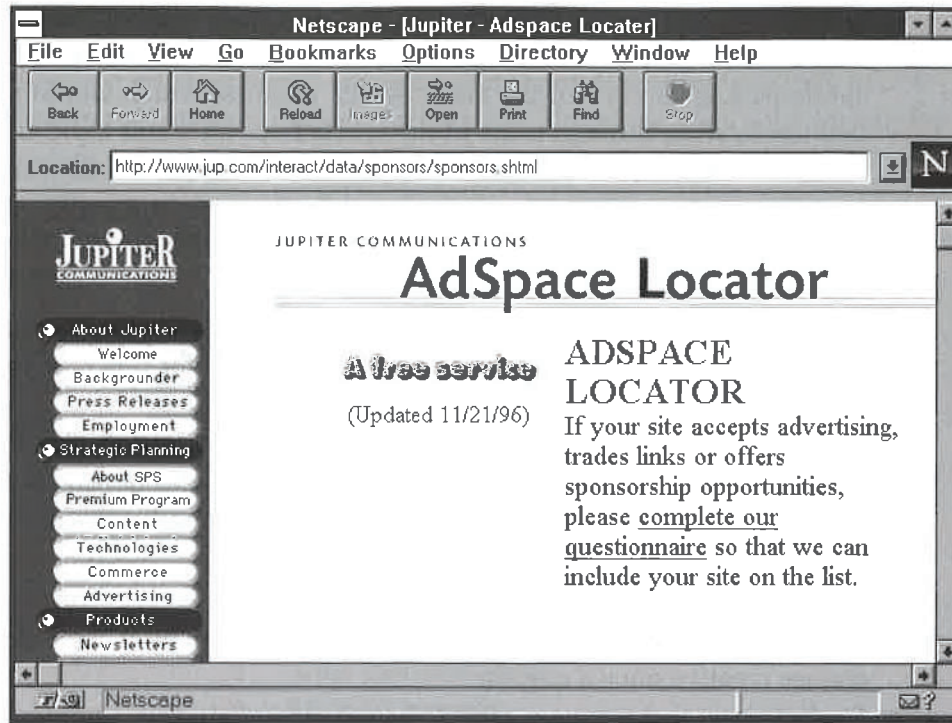


FIGURE 8.5 Jupiter's AdSpace Locator is a database of advertising space and rates.

Unfortunately, these indexes are not available in print, they are not comprehensive, and they are often out of date because publishers change their pricing structures as well as the types of advertising they offer so frequently that a print directory would quickly become outdated; keeping an online directory current is nearly impossible. Consequently, the sites must be contacted directly to obtain the latest rates and specifications. Nevertheless, as stated the online indexes are a good starting point. Sample rate cards are presented in Appendix C, and for more sites that compile rate cards, refer to the Ad Placement Tools section of the Resources Directory in Appendix E.

Negotiating the Ad Buy

After an advertiser has chosen the sites on which to place advertising, it is time to negotiate the buy. This entails calling the various sites to discuss

the advertising rates and placements. Occasionally, sites will offer package deals for specific targeting. For example, an advertiser might be offered a sports package on one of the major search engines, which would probably include rotation through some of the sports keywords and topic areas. The inventory would be much less expensive than if the advertiser were to buy each keyword and topic rotation individually. Most sites also offer discounts to advertisers that purchase large amounts of inventory (1,000,000 impressions or more).

After investigating the options, an advertiser must decide on which sites to place ads. The following are some considerations for this process:

- ▶ Advertisers must ascertain the type of reporting they will receive for the campaign. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, frequent reporting is the most valuable because it allows advertisers to continually tweak campaigns for maximum results.
- ▶ Advertisers must be told how much time the publisher requires for creative changes. Daily reporting will be for naught if an advertiser can only change creative once a month.
- ▶ Studies show that response rates to banner advertising are significantly higher when advertisers use more than one piece of creative, so those sites that allow the use of multiple creatives are going to improve response rates.
- ▶ Advertisers should ask whether impressions are guaranteed; this is certainly preferable, since if the publisher doesn't deliver, the advertiser usually gets a "make good," an impression credit for use at a later date.
- ▶ Advertisers also need to know where their banners will be rotating. The top of the page usually pulls better than the bottom. And placement on both the top and bottom of specific pages pulls the best.
- ▶ Advertisers must know when payments are due. If the site is small, an advertiser may not want to pay in advance, because there's not much an advertiser can do if the publisher doesn't deliver. Advertisers should try to negotiate for payment after the ad runs, or to pay 50 percent before and 50 percent after the ad appears.
- ▶ Advertisers should submit an insertion order that spells out the expectations for the media buy. The insertion order lists the advertiser, the type of ad placement (which site and which category on the site), the flight dates (the days the ad will appear), the number of impressions purchased, and

the rates. The insertion order also states the person responsible for payment. A sample insertion order is presented in Figure 8.6.

- A banner ad campaign is made up of myriad details that are easy to overlook in the hustle to deliver the creative. Therefore, it's a good idea to formulate a checklist as a way to verify coverage of all steps. Figure 8.7 shows the delivery checklist i-frontier uses to ensure that it doesn't forget any details when trafficking a client's creative.

BANNER AD DELIVERY CHECKLIST	
☐	Get banner from client.
☐	Confirm that URL is running & proper promotional info is up.
☐	Deliver Banner to site. Be sure to include this info:
☐	which client creative is for
☐	URL to link banner to
☐	alt text
☐	dates banner should run
☐	# impressions it should receive
☐	specify campaign name
☐	request reports, specify who should receive them and specify that they should clearly state client & campaign
☐	ask for confirmation & date banner goes live
☐	Confirmation received from site.
☐	Confirm banner is up by actually checking site.
☐	Confirm that the link works.
☐	Call site if not receiving reports or if there are problems.

FIGURE 8.6 The i-frontier banner ad delivery checklist.

i-frontier Internet Marketing Web Site Design 2043A Arch Street Philadelphia, PA 19103 (215) 568-4179 Fax: (215)-568-4254 http://i-frontier.com	Insertion Order Date: January 5, 1997 Advertiser: Company XYZ Placement on: Rotation through Excite Keyword "computers" Flight dates: One week beginning February 18, 1997 Impressions: 1,000,000 Rates: \$XXXX Net Person responsible for invoice payment: Brad Aronson i-frontier 2043A Arch Street Philadelphia, PA 19103 Authorization: _____ Brad Aronson Impressions are guaranteed, and Company XYZ will receive a make good, if 1,000,000 impressions are not delivered within specified time period. Banner advertisement will appear at top of the page. Advertisement will be delivered five days before start date. Usage reports should be e-mailed to Jeremy Lockhorn, jrome@i-frontier.com. If you have questions about this insertion order, please call Brad Aronson at (215) 568-4179.
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FIGURE 8.7 Sample insertion order from i-frontier to Excite.

Finally, when all is said and done, the advertiser must go to the site and confirm that the banners are “waving.” Horror stories abound of ads that never went live. Activity reports will tell an advertiser after the fact, but then it’s too late.

Additional Costs. There are always costs in addition to buying the actual impressions, and these must be factored in when planning a campaign:

- ▶ **Creative costs:** Simple banners will run from \$500 to \$1,000 each. This fee will usually include a few different sizes of the same banner—a necessity given the wide variety of sizes that are required for campaigns that run on numerous sites. If the banners link to special Web pages that are related to the campaign, an advertiser may need to pay for the development of those pages. If an advertiser is using models other than banners, those creative costs must be tallied as well.
- ▶ **Technological costs:** If an advertiser is running a campaign to generate sales or leads, back-end technology will be necessary to support the campaign. For example, say an advertiser runs a banner that offers a free trial issue of a magazine. Interested users click on the banner and arrive at a form they need to fill out to receive the free issue. To follow through on such a promotion, the advertiser needs a method for importing into a database all of the information resulting from requests for a free issue. In this example, a program to input all forms directly into the database would probably be in order, and would cost around \$4,000.
- ▶ **Staff time:** After advertisers deliver creative, they must follow up to make sure the promotion runs where and when it is scheduled. This is important; mistakes are common. Advertisers also need to track the campaign’s progress. The sites on which advertisements are placed will deliver reports in a variety of formats, which should be collated for interpretation. These reports differ widely, so this time factor should not be underestimated.
- ▶ **Adjustments:** Some advertising dollars should be reserved for new creative. If an advertiser determines midway through a campaign that some of the creative is performing poorly, the budget should allow for a redesign of the artwork.

Negotiating for Rates

When advertisers negotiate with sites for rates, they must remain very focused on their objectives. For example, one site may offer a great deal that would require an advertiser's entire budget, which is fine if the advertiser's plan consists of focusing on one site. However, if the advertiser's goal is to reach as many users as possible, or he or she is just testing to see how Web advertising works, it would be foolish to accept such a deal.

Using an Interactive Agency

Even though an advertiser is looking to spend money, finding site owners or sales reps to accept advertising dollars can sometimes be as difficult as pulling teeth. In one instance, an interactive agency wanted to purchase a significant number of impressions on HotBot (one of the top 10 search engines) for a Fortune 500 company. The agency sent several e-mails to the address HotBot listed for advertising information, but did not hear back from HotBot for a month. Ironically, considering we're talking about online advertising, it is sometimes more efficient to find a publisher's phone number and navigate through the phone menu system to talk to a real human being in the advertising department.

The difficulty in getting through to publishers, especially if an advertiser is not purchasing over \$10,000 in advertising, is one good reason to use an interactive agency. Interactive agencies purchase advertising for a multitude of clients, and know who to call to discuss advertising rates; they are also more likely to be called back because they buy a lot of advertising from the publishers.

Interactive agencies have a lot to offer to Web advertising campaigns, and generally perform two major services: coordinating the campaign and designing the creative.

Campaign Coordination

Agencies will negotiate with publishers on the advertiser's behalf for good positioning of the creative as well as for lower prices, when appropriate. An

agency will also be able to suggest sites that match the advertiser's campaign goals and recommend campaign strategies. Agencies traditionally get a 15 percent discount from the publisher on the advertising they purchase, which is what they take as payment. Since advertisers can't usually get the 15 percent discount (there's a reason it's called an agency discount), many advertisers can save time and get the benefit of an agency's expertise while the publisher foots the bill. The bad news? Because the agencies are paid 15 percent of the bill, there is not always an incentive for them to negotiate the best price.

Some agencies will also traffic your creative, tracking campaign results daily in case there is an opportunity to boost response by adjusting the campaign, and delivering a traffic report that details all of your campaign results.

Creative Development

For additional fees, agencies will develop the creative for an advertiser's campaign. If an advertiser doesn't have an in-house staff, an agency will produce the creative using what they have seen work for their other clients.

A number of interactive agencies are listed in Appendix E. Most of these agencies have a minimum that clients must spend on advertising before they will take an account. If you're not spending over \$100,000, the top 10 interactive agencies may not accept your business, but it's worth giving some of the smaller agencies a try.

Creative Testing

It is important to test every campaign before committing to a large advertising buy. Testing ensures that when an advertiser does commit to a large buy, he or she receives maximum value for the money. Advertisers should test everything from the offer to the creative to the sites on which the advertising appears.

Creative should be tested before and during campaigns. There are a few ways to test creative before launching a large campaign. During the buy negotiations, an advertiser can ask the publisher to create a break between the first week of the campaign and the rest of the campaign. After determining how well the creative pulled the first week, the advertiser will have time to adjust the creative and choose the banners that work best for the rest of the campaign.

An advantage of placing an ad buy on an ad network is ease of testing. For example, advertisers can use the DoubleClick Network's Test It! service. An advertiser can run 25,000 impression tests on any number of banners and get results within 48 hours. If the advertiser is not planning to place the larger buy on the DoubleClick Network, this test may not be as accurate as one on the sites on which he or she is planning to buy; however, the DoubleClick Network covers enough sites that an advertiser should get a good general idea of which creatives work best—and in two days. The minimum test is two banners, which costs \$38 CPM. If the advertiser places an order with DoubleClick of \$20,000 or more within seven days of the test, he or she receives a 50 percent credit on the test.

An advertiser should also monitor performance throughout the campaign. Most publishers will change creative 48 hours after they receive new artwork and instructions, so unlike other advertising vehicles, advertisers have the opportunity to change the course of a campaign midway through it. Advertisers can monitor a campaign through publisher-provided reports as well as through their own log files. When publishers don't deliver daily reports, there are other options for closely tracking an advertising campaign:

- ▶ When the creative is displayed on the publisher's site, an advertiser can request that the site pull the graphic from his or her server. This means that every time the advertisement is displayed, the advertiser's log files will record an impression. If anyone clicks on the banner and arrives at the site, the log file records that action. If each banner points to a slightly different Web page—for example, www.i-frontier.com/index.html and www.i-frontier.com/index1.html—the advertiser will be able to measure each banner's success. The number of times a specific page was accessed, divided by the number of times the banner that led to that page was requested, will provide the response rate. This requires extra effort on the advertiser's part—running log files through software to make them readable and creating extra Web pages—so finding sites that provide reports can save time.
- ▶ Some publishers don't generate enough traffic to warrant delivering daily reports, in which case you should request weekly reports that you can use to improve your campaign.

It goes without saying that testing an advertisement's effectiveness is essential, as design and copy can have an impact on response rate. In some

cases, changing a single word or a color can increase the number of users who click on a banner. Appendix F presents multiple banner advertisements and their click-through rates to illustrate this point. It is almost always impossible to predict what those differences will be unless creative is tested.

Testing Site Selection

Creatives will only pull as well as the sites on which they are placed. An advertiser might think advertising on a Web site that provides up-to-the-minute stock quotes would be a good way to reach wealthy business executives, but a test of this site might reveal that response is poor. Perhaps the same users are accessing the site several times a day to quickly check their stocks and then are returning to their other activities, thus limiting the advertiser's reach and the audience's interest. Again, an advertiser needs to test the sites he or she is planning to invest in to discover how well they perform *before* spending a large portion of the ad budget.

Publishers will usually let an advertiser test their sites if the advertiser is serious about Web advertising and willing to commit if the test proves successful. If an advertiser is not planning to spend upwards of \$10,000 on a particular site or to spend more than that amount in the long term, it will be difficult to find sites willing to allow a test. Usually, publishers charge premiums for advertisers that buy very small quantities of impressions—as low as or less than rate-card minimums—but they will usually sell those small quantities of impressions at a lower rate to advertisers buying them as a test.

Measuring Campaign Effectiveness

Clearly defining your yardstick for success will save you time by providing much needed direction in choosing sites and negotiating agreements with those of interest. Without a well-defined plan it's easy to get lost in the many pages of data that are produced from your log files and provided by publishers after a campaign. And every good plan is also a flexible plan—it is important to be able to adjust your campaign based on the knowledge that results from every advertising endeavor.

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- Sell advertising space on your own Web site
- Negotiate contracts, set prices, and work with ad networks
- Budget, plan, produce, and implement a successful Internet advertising strategy
- Design great online ads

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