

Product Placement in Electronic Games

New Advertising Strategies

by
Georges Camy

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Supervisor: Prof. Allan Kimmel

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Prof. Allan Kimmel

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to Life



ABSTRACT

Product Placement in Electronic Games

Author: Georges Camy

Thesis director: Prof. Allan Kimmel

Product placement in electronic games is a relatively common practice. However it is almost never done as a result of a coherent brand strategy. This might be due to the fact that academic research on the subject is very sparse. No convincing results or studies have so far been presented to a larger audience. This thesis sums up the current state of research and adds results from product placement research in other media, especially movie productions. Until now most product placement initiatives involved virtual billboards. This study analyses the acceptance of alternative product placement strategies. For this purpose several interviews have been conducted with representatives of all the actors of a product placement deal. An online study has also been realised which gathered the opinions of 155 players. And to complete the data, forum entries of a massive multiplayer online game that relies essentially on in-game advertising have been analysed. The electronic games market is one of the fastest growing markets in the world and also one of the most innovative. We can expect to see an increase in importance of product placement in electronic games over the coming years.

Keywords

Electronic games, video games, computer games, product placement, tie-in, advertising, in-game advertising, in-game marketing, pervasive gaming, online gaming, MMORPG, MMOG, billboard.



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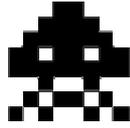
My Grandfather and my little cousin. Their faith in me was unyielding and kept me going.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at ESCP-EAP or other institutions.

Georges Camy

November 17th, 2005



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1

INTRODUCTION

"Video games are bad for you? That's what they said about rock and roll."

- Shigeru Miyamoto¹

Most people are all too familiar with product placement in movies. In fact, product placement has always been used in the mass media, and to be precise, there was never really a time when this was not the case. Since the beginning the media were under control of advertisers and ad agencies. For example, as early as 1929 in the United States, 55% of the non-advertising programs on radio were created and paid for by advertisers and ad agencies (MacDonald 1979). Even if non-commercial productions nowadays are less blatantly financed and controlled by the advertising industry, product placement in movies and television accounts for \$1.5 billion (Galician 2004A) in the United States alone. The main concern of this thesis, however, is not about product placement in traditional media; rather, it focuses on product placement in electronic games. Electronic games have become more attractive to advertisers for two main reasons:

- One of the most sought after customer segments, the 18-34 year old males, tends to spend increasingly more time playing games than other activities, such as going to the movies or watching TV. In fact, 70% of this segment consists of gamers². Furthermore, those people are active and informed customers.³
- The worldwide market for dynamically served advertisements in electronic games is projected to grow to \$2.5 billion in revenues by 2010.⁴

¹ Shigeru Miyamoto is Director and General Manager of Nintendo Entertainment Analysis and Development (EAD) and the creator of the Donkey Kong, Mario, Legend of Zelda, and Pikmin video game series.

² We will define by the term *gamer* a person who plays electronic games on a regular basis

³ Data from Massive Incorporated (<http://www.massiveincorporated.com>)

⁴ idem

Trends are not very surprising considering that electronic games represent one of the most important export articles of the United States in 2004 with \$7.3 billion in sales according to the Entertainment Software Association (ESA 2005).

Unlike movies, electronic games are interactive entertainment. The player participates actively in the game, which offers a broader range of possibilities for product placement. This thesis analyses those possibilities.

2

MANAGERIAL CONTEXT

The word gen means 'illusion' or 'apparition.' In India, a man who uses conjury is called a genjutsushi ['a master of illusion technique']. Everything in this world is but a marionette show. Thus we use the word gen.

- Yamamoto Tsunetomo¹

2.1 PRODUCT PLACEMENT

Scientific research on in-game product placement is very sparse and research has only recently been undertaken (around 2001), notably by the US researcher Michelle R. Nelson (University of Wisconsin-Madison). Most of the studies on in-game advertising have been published in the “Journal of Interactive Advertising”² (Michigan State University). The german researcher Christian Gaca (Fachhochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin) has undertaken the task of compiling the most important research articles so far. Although very scarce, more research has been realised on product placement on a broader scale. Mary-Lou Gallician (Arizona State University) has compiled several of the most important articles on this subject which were published in the “Journal of Promotion Management” (Louisiana State University). The results from general product placement (especially in movies) can, to a certain degree, be applied to in-game advertising. We will therefore begin with a summary of general product placement issues and discuss specificities for in-game advertising in a second time.

¹ Tsunetomo Yamamoto (1659 - 1719) was a samurai of the Saga domain in Hizen Province. His thoughts are at the origin of the famous “Hagakure”.

² <http://jiad.org>

2.1.1 Origins and history of product placement

Product placement in the movies goes back as far as before the First World War. It intensified during the 1930s. Walt Disney Studios did the first tie-in¹ operations by offering plates and glassware along its films. By 1970, diminishing ticket sales and increasing production costs made product placement an unavoidable revenue source. Until then it was the filmmakers who were seeking out marketers to offer placements. This changed in 1982 when the product placement for Reeses Pieces in Steven Spielbergs “E.T. – The Extra-Terrestrial” increased sales by 65% in the 3 months following the release of the film. Marketers realised the potential that product placement could offer and began seeking out actively the film productions (Turner 2004).

The insidious nature of product placement made its opponents ask for regulations. Product placement became regulated in some countries, but as of today, no general, international standards exist. The trend today is that films are becoming over-saturated with placements all presented in a similar fashion. This over-exposure may eventually lead to a negative impact on the effectiveness of product placements (Galician & Bourdeau 2004).

2.1.2 Product Placement defined

Although product placement is a very common practice, its definition is not so clear. Wikipedia says this about product placement: “Very generally, product placement involves placing a product in highly visible situations”². This definition implies that product placement can be found nearly everywhere. Landrevie and De Baynast define product placement as:

“Product placement is the presence of a product in a movie or a television show. This technique concerns all forms of audiovisual productions. It also gets used in literature, at a less important scale.” (De Baynast & Lendrevie 2004, p.261)

Pro.pa.ag.anda, an agency for product placements, defines its role as follows:

“Product placement is not, and will never be an operation of advertisement space acquisition. A product or a brand gets placed in a realistic situation and is integrated into the storyline. This action is justified and legitimate by the sheer fact

¹ See also definition in Glossary

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Product_Placement

that the product is integrated into the movie, and not that the movie is adapted to the product.” (De Baynast & Lendrevie 2004, p.261)

This tells us that product placement is not an intrusive advertisement, as it fits into the action of the film. Even in advertisement placement, a technique where product placers insert advertisements into movies, the advertisements fit into the storyline. The huge video screens in the movie picture Blade Runner (USA, 1982) displaying giant Coca-Cola logos¹ are an example of advertisement placement. Can we define product placement as a form of advertising? Some advertisers make a difference between On-Set placement and Creative Placement. In On-Set placement the brand or product fits seamlessly into the storyline, whereas in Creative Placement the product gets set in the foreground and often has focus on it. Ogilvy says this about advertising:

“I do not regard advertising as entertainment or an art form, but as a medium of information. [...] I want you to find it so interesting that you buy the product.”
(Ogilvy 1983, p.7)

Product placement fits in perfectly into this statement. We can simply consider product placement as just another form of advertising; the difference being that it has a very particular communication channel. Indeed, product placements are per definition embedded into another message, which happens in most cases to be some entertainment. The communication channel therefore is this entertainment.

2.1.3 Product Placement objectives

Product placement mainly has two objectives, first developing, establishing and maintaining a brand image and second to change consumer habits.

Brand Image

McEnally and De Chernatony describe brand engineering as follows:

“Creating, developing, implementing and maintaining successful brands is frequently at the heart of marketing strategy. Successful branding requires a

¹ Electrical advertising throughout the film features sponsors, including TDK, Atari, Coca-Cola, Pan-Am, Budweiser, RCA, Kinney Shoes, Bulova, Cuisinart and Schlitz (<http://www.filmsite.org/blad.html>).

strategic perspective (De Chernatony 1998)¹ whereby strong brand concepts are presented and communicated to well targeted segments resulting in favorable brand images which reflect the brand's identity (Gardner and Levy 1955², Reynolds and Gutman 1984³, Kapferer 1997⁴)." (McEnally & De Chernatony 1999)

This is the essence of product placement. Product placement is all about maintaining and developing a strong brand image by showing the consumer what the brand stands for and what the values of the product are, all this in a realistic situation, with no bad advertisement aftertaste. Furthermore, the nature of a movie, and more generally, of an entertainment product, lets marketers precisely chose and target a specific consumer segment.

Change consumer habits

In most advanced capitalistic cultures, the world is saturated with advertisements; yet, media productions often contain no advertisements at all. Most products taken from a movie are true generic products: coffee is called coffee and beer is just beer, without any indication of brand identification, such as Lavazza or Bud, respectively. Indeed, generally, during a production brands are carefully removed. Then, selected brands are inserted according to product placement deals. We can therefore make the assumption that product placement in movies shows consumers a world with consuming habits according to the vision of the corporations. Most likely the depicted world does not correspond to the real one. Nevertheless the gap between both worlds is beginning to vanish, as “[..] the world we live in is coming to resemble the world of product placement” (Olson 2004).

¹ DE CHERNATONY, Leslie (1998), "Developing on effective brand strategy. in EGAN, C. and THOMAS, M. (Ed), *The Chartered Institute of Marketing Handbook of Strategic Marketing*, Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann

² GARDNER, Burleigh B., LEVY, Sidney J. (1955), "The Product and the Brand", *Harvard Business Review*, 33, (March-April), 33-9.

³ REYNOLDS, Thomas J., GUTMAN, Jonathan (1984), "Advertising as Image Management", *Journal of Advertising Research*, 24, (February-March), 27-38.

⁴ KAPFERER, Jean-Noel (1997), *Strategic Brand Management: Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long Term*, London: Kogan Page

2.1.4 Psychological aspects

2.1.4.1 *Omnipresence and pressure*

Product placement has become subtler and more sophisticated over the years. The trend nowadays is that brands appear more woven into the storyline, to a point where they may appear only in the background¹. But even subtle placements are important as in a movie production most brands are carefully eliminated. In “The Interpreter” (USA, 2005) with Nicole Kidman and Sean Penn the following brands appeared:

Apple, Audi, Belstaff, Black Entertainment Television, British Airways, Carlsberg, Chelsea Hotel, Chevrolet, Coca-Cola, Dasani, Dell, Earthlink, FedEx, Ford, Frito Lay, Glock, Grey Goose, HP, Jack Daniel’s, L3 Communications, Land Rover, Lipton, Maker’s Mark, Mercedes, Motorola, New York Times, Nikon, North Face, NY1, Oren’s Daily Roast, PBS, Pepsi, Pringles, Radioshack, Sony, Sprite, Staples, Starbucks, USPS, V.I.M., Vespa²

Compared to the real world, the consumer gets exposed to only a small amount of advertisements. Nonetheless, research suggests that the average consumer tends to actively remember only a few of the placements to which s/he is exposed. The immersion of the consumer appears to be an important factor as the exposure seems to be lesser for television placement than movie placements (Ong 2004). This is due to the fact that humans do some sort of filtering during the perceptual process; only relevant information is actively remembered. This filtering depends enormously on previous experience. (Natharius 2004, p.217). If we take note of the fact that a person is exposed in average between 300 and 600 advertisements a day (De Baynast & Lendrevie 2004, p.57), movies are nearly “ad-free”³, even if one counts the fake brands as well. This ad-awareness, as Natharius calls it, that humans have developed, makes placed brands stand out, because they have no competitors in the movie. The difference between reality and movie is shown in figure 2.1.

¹ This means that on-set placements or more common than creative placements. Please note that the difference between both types is highly subjective.

² brandchannel.com (<http://www.brandchannel.com>) : 40 brand appearances.

³ brandchannel.com (<http://www.brandchannel.com>) states over 50 brands for “Fahrenheit 9/11” and has the following comment “Many other brands appear too quickly and too briefly to note. As a documentary, it shows just how branded the ’real’ world is. Halliburton’s placement may be the worst of 2004.”

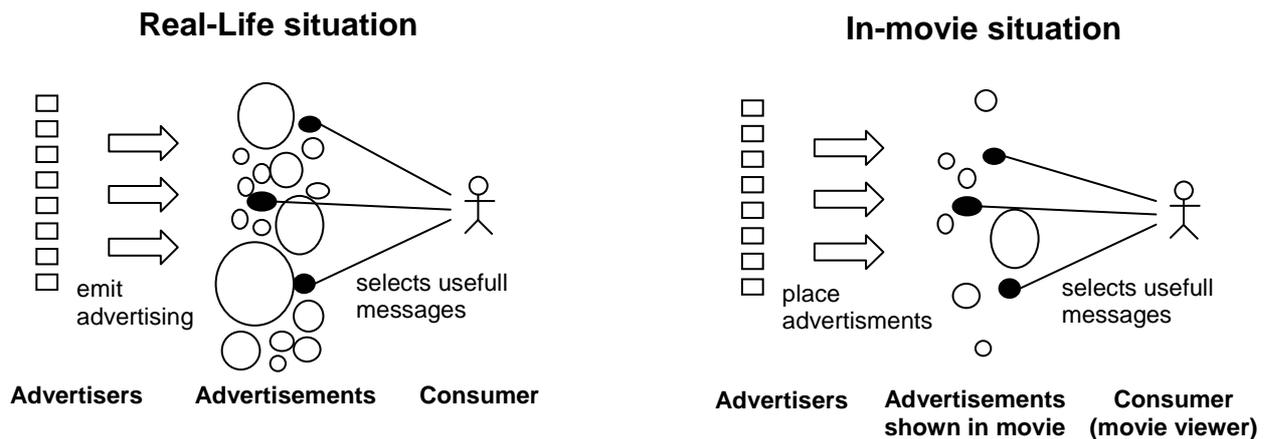


Figure 2.1: Communication stream (adapted from Carcopino 2004, p.9)

Nevertheless, product placements that are too obvious can be counterproductive. Analysts fear that in “an environment in which the viewer is bombarded with a constant stream of rapid-fire ads viewers will become alienated” (Lowrey, Shrum & McCarty 2005). Tie-in sponsorship may also be seen as not natural or too deliberate (Ong & Meri 1994, p.159-175). A recent survey (Ong 2004) which examined the differences in perception of product placement in movies and TV shows, found that the age of the viewer plays an important role. Indeed, splitting the 117 participants of this online study into two groups revealed some interesting findings:

- Respondents did not differ in their attitude towards product placement in TV and in movies;
- The older respondents (36 and above) tended not to watch commercials during program breaks and agrees that product placements are intrusive compared to the 18 to 35 year olds;
- The younger respondents agreed that the brands shown on TV were usually well known brands.

The latter finding is consistent with research conducted by Galician and Bourdeau which examined the evolution of product placement during 3 decades by analysing the 15 top-grossing Hollywood produced motion-pictures in the years of 1977, 1987 and 1997 (Galician & Bourdeau 2004). The top ten most dominant brands appearing in the 15 top-grossing motion pictures are indeed well known as can be seen in table 2.1. The study showed also that the number of appearances is increasing (see Figure 2.2).

Brand	Number of Appearances	Number of movies
Coke	44	20
Mercedes	18	9
Miller	17	8
Chevy	15	10
Pepsi-Cola	13	5
Schlitz	12	3
BMW	10	7
Jack Daniels	10	4
Cadillac	9	5
CNN	9	4

Table 2.1: Ten most dominant brands appearing in the 15 top-grossing motion pictures of 1977, 1987, and 1997 (Galician & Bourdeau 2004, p.25)

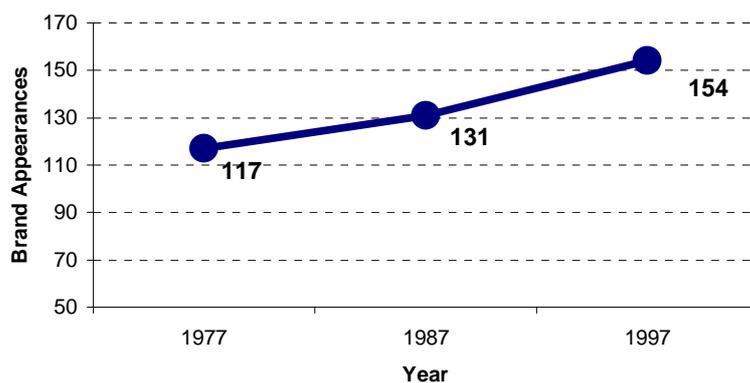


Figure 2.2: Brand appearances in the 15 top-grossing motion pictures of 1977, 1987, 1997. (Galician and Bourdeau 2004, p.24)

Further research is needed to determine if the presence of brands in movies generally reflects the presence of brands in reality. It would be interesting to know, for example, if a different set of prominent brands at the same advertisement pressure level (i.e. amount of advertisement presence) would irritate the consumer. Taken even further, could this be similar to the “culture shock” syndrome, which affects travellers to foreign countries? (Wikipedia defines culture shock as the anxiety and feelings (of surprise, disorientation,

confusion, etc.) felt by an individual caused by coming into contact with an entirely different social environment, such as a different country¹.)

In most advanced countries the threshold level, above which advertisements are simply skipped by the human mind, has been reached². The under-35 year olds have been raised in an ad-saturated environment, whilst the older segments of the population have not. This has interesting implications, the most important being that the younger population will find an environment in which brands are less omnipresent unnatural and unrealistic.

2.1.4.2 Reality vs. Fiction

“Star Wars Episode III – The Revenge of the Sith”³ did not contain any product placement at all. Nor did “Kingdom of Heaven”⁴ or “The Lord of the Rings”⁵. Indeed, it is difficult to insert any real life product in a fantasy production. But what is more significant is that most of these fantasy blockbusters do not have any brands at all! While we can understand that a realistic medieval environment has very underdeveloped potential for marketing practices, it is rather unthinkable of films about the far future. All clothing in Star Wars is unlabeled and technical objects of whatsoever sort (laserpistols, starships, screwdrivers,...) do not contain a single brand logo. Yet, the environment is so spectacular that this lack of labelled products is likely not to be perceived by the viewer. Although most fans of the series are likely to agree that putting a real brand into Star Wars would ruin the movie, one can speculate what effect a fake brand would have had on the movie. (As a side note, the official Star Wars website⁶ has background data on the different corporations that produced the spaceships: the famous X-Wing Fighter for example is produced by Incom Corporation, whereas the Tie-Fighter is manufactured by Sienar Fleet Systems. It is also very intriguing that in all this brand-less space, two logos are predominant: the logo of the Rebel Alliance and that of the Galactic Empire. Those two logos are omnipresent in the corresponding computer games).

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_shock

² Out of 300-600 messages/day the consumer perceives only 30-80. Less than 10 of those have a chance of altering his behaviour (Carcopino 2004, p.9).

³ brandchannel.com (<http://www.brandchannel.com>)

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.* Interestingly, brandchannel.com also says this about the movie: “Given all the attention on the film’s production and its director’s nationalism, it could very easily be argued that the whole trilogy is a huge and very good placement for New Zealand.”

⁶ <http://www.starwars.com>

It is interesting to note however that, in more realistic environments the absence or the presence of fake brands somehow irritates the viewer (Natharius 2004, p.213). Steven Spielberg made an experiment when he gathered for the making of “Minority Report” in 1999 “some of the best minds in technology, environment, crime fighting, medicine, health and social services, transportation, and computer technology”. In this movie picture we are getting shown a great number of futuristic ways of advertising, ranging from animated breakfast cereal boxes, to total relationship marketing in a warehouse (Fitchett 2005). Futuristic movies have the potential of going beyond the current practices of product placement by offering new ways to advertise, often with the side-effect of a more realistic setting.

2.1.4.3 Brand identification

Since the dawn of time, mankind has used different means to rally its members. This has not changed much since then. Humans use symbols, logos and/or names to mark their relationships. With brands becoming more and more omnipresent, it seems that humans are making more and more use of the brands themselves to establish their links. An example of this could be the person who wears a Nike T-Shirt, because s/he believes in the values that Nike promotes and to show her/his membership to a group of similar minded people. The brand gets used to reinforce the image that the person wants to show of herself to her surroundings. Product placement has to take this into account. As an example, given the image of the car manufacturer Mercedes, a brand which stands for achieved success, it is unthinkable that James Bond could drive in one. BMW, the brand for those who are going to be successful (and after that probably switch to Mercedes), is obviously a better choice and more credible to the viewer.¹

However we have to admit that wearing a brand logo is not the only way of showing one’s membership. Simply spoken, clothes by themselves are already a very effective way of establishing one’s image. This can range from a simple design to customized clothing, like the one offered by the french company Hyperobjects², which incorporates programmable electronic displays into clothings. On the other hand, some companies offer now the

¹ According to that line of thought, given the British touch of James Bond, Aston Martin would have been the best choice so far.

² <http://www.hyperobjets.com>

possibility to advertise through temporary tattoos on consumer's bodies¹, thus imposing them a certain image or at least restricting their freedom of choosing the image they would like to give of themselves.

Product placers have to take brand identification into account as it appears that it is a very important aspect of how the placement will fit, and how it will be perceived by the consumer.

2.1.4.4 Visual Awareness Issues

Product placement, especially in films and electronic games has to face a serious challenge: the human perception. Indeed, the "*human eye is not a video camera: there is no "frame rate" or "scan rate" in the eye: instead, the eye/brain system has a combination of motion detectors, detail detectors and pattern detectors, the outputs of all of which are combined to create the visual experience.*"² All kinds of interferences, physiological or psychological have to be taken into account. The channel of product placement is often very noisy, as it happens to be an entertainment. The consumer pays attention to the essential and other facts may escape him. Famous examples³ of this include a video clip where a gorilla walks very visible through a group of basket ball playing people. Yet the gorilla is not perceived by the majority of viewers (Simons & Chabris 1999). This poses a certain threat to product placement as the attention of the consumer is directed to the action and not to the surroundings.

On the other hand, one can only speculate on the effect of the advertisements that the viewer perceives on a subconscious level. However, research findings do not support the conclusion that subliminal suggestions are peculiarly powerful, or even have any effect at all⁴.

¹ <http://www.livingadspace.com>

² Definition from Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persistence_of_vision)

³ Demos of visual blindness can be found at http://viscog.beckman.uiuc.edu/djs_lab/demos.html

⁴ Statement from Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subliminal_advertising)

2.1.5 Successful placements

Certain placements are often cited because of their seamless integration. We will discuss them here.

Reese's Pieces – "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial", USA 1982

The most often cited example¹ of successful product placements. In "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial", a trail of Reese's Pieces that a main character laid down on the ground lured the alien. Reese's Pieces had a huge rise in sales shortly after the film's opening.

Duracell – "The Matrix", USA 1999

Duracell has had a very effective appearance in "The Matrix". In this movie, machines have taken over the world. At some point, Morpheus explains to Neo, the central character, why humans hadn't been eradicated by the machines.

Morpheus: What is the Matrix? Control. The Matrix is a computer-generated dream world built to keep us under control in order to change a human being into this.

[holds up a Duracell battery]

Neo: No, I don't believe it. It's not possible.

Morpheus: I didn't say it would be easy, Neo. I just said it would be the truth.

Pepsi – "AVP: Aliens Vs. Predator", USA 2004

In an opening scene, one of the main characters, the archeologist Sebastian, is at the point of finding a burial chamber in Mexico. On the site, tension builds up as someone screams "He's found it! He's found it!". All the people present on site gather around the discovery as the main character tries to make his way through the crowd. The assistant turns on the camera. Sebastian slowly begins to examine the trench and brings forth an artifact. It's a faded red and blue metal object: a bent cap from a Pepsi bottle. The disappointment in the crowd is palpable. Sebastian is crushed.

Juan Ramirez *[offscreen]*: Nineteen fifties I'd say.

[Sebastian looks over to see Juan Ramirez, an official with the Department of Interior]

Juan Ramirez: According to you, the Teotihuacans' final gift to their dead king

¹ As of November 15th, 2005 Google produces about 3 230 000 hits for "product placement." Of these, about 508 000 also reference the film "E.T. the Extra Terrestrial" and "Reese's Pieces".

was a... Pepsi.

Sebastian: Give me one more month.

Discussion

What have those placements in common? In each, the product itself gets a close up shot. All appear also logically in the storyline, even more, they reinforce the story. And last, all have a product image that is the archetype for the generic product. The Duracell battery immediately is recognized as “the” battery with its black and gold finish. The image associated with it is so strong that the viewer immediately understands that humans are used as “batteries” for the machines. Similarly, the bent cap in *Aliens vs. Predator* would not have had the same impact if it wouldn't have been a Pepsi cap: Pepsi stands for a whole cultural value system, including soda bottles. In the movie the finding of a Pepsi cap symbolises that western culture, as we know it, has reached every corner in the world, even this desert¹. Reese's Pieces takes up another metaphor, that of Haensel and Gretel. The chocolate, which looks like little pills (maybe “astronaut” food in the eyes of the alien) reminds us of the breadcrumbs from the fairy tale, symbolizing the way home for the alien. There is little questioning why an alien would follow a trail of chocolate drops, as this seems very logical to the viewer. In sum, all these placements have been a real added value to the movie as they played an important part in the story. They are used as strong metaphors which drive the story forward. And this is why they were remembered so well. While it is certain that brand image gets affected by the film, corresponding tie-in operations have probably a more important effect.

2.1.6 Economical aspects

2.1.6.1 Practices

As most corporations in Europe do not have the resources to search themselves for good product placement possibilities, they allow media makers to use their products for free, for as long as the products are shown in a favourable light. Air France, for example, has permanently parked a plane at the Orly Airport in Paris so that it can be used by filmmakers (Bree 1996, p.66). In Europe, product placement is mostly done through

¹ The reader might want to consider that the other product placements that Pepsi made in this film were not so well approved by some viewers.

arrangements. Citroën, for example, does not directly contact the filmmakers, but makes extensive use of tie-in operation to promote its brand, and also does a lot of patronage for the French film industry. The famous French commissioner Navarro for example drives a Citroën.

On the other hand, the producers of less prestigious (and costly) products often have to seek out and pay filmmakers to have their products shown. On the other hand movie producers not only use product placements to partially finance the movie production, but also use tie-in promotions to promote the movie. Indeed, there is a limit where more direct promotion simply becomes ineffective, or even counterproductive. The oversized promotion for the movie picture “Jurassic Parc” ended up with less impact as expected as consumers had the feeling of having already seen everything and as a result did not go to the movie theatre. To increase the impact, a part of the promotion effort can therefore be moved to tie-in promotions (Bree 1996) (see Figure 2.3).

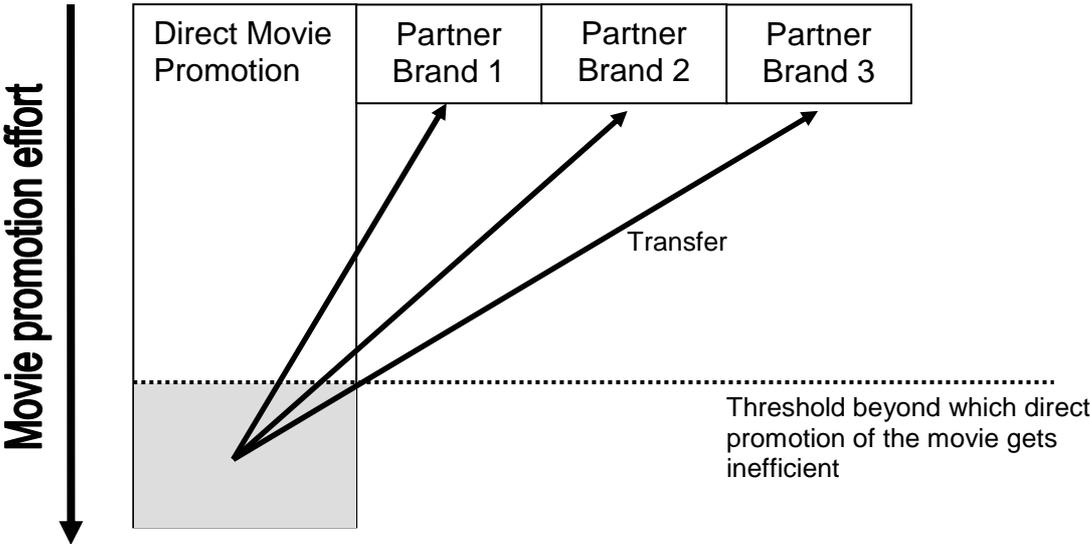


Figure 2.3: Increased promotion through tie-in promotion (adapted from Bree 1996)

2.1.6.2 Regulations

It is very difficult to regulate product placement on an international scale. Depending on the country, there are more or less severe regulations in place. In Germany for example a recent scandal about product placement has brought up the discussion to the wider public.

In 2005 a major german production firm had been accused of having been paid around €1.5 Million for illegal product placement in a famous TV series¹.

2.1.6.3 Metrics

It appears to be rather difficult to measure the effectiveness of a product placement. The only test that is of some relevance is the “Day After Recall” type, where movie goers are questioned the day after they saw the movie to name the product placements. One has to take into account however that it is next to impossible to measure the impact on the image of a brand by evaluating the appearance of the brand in a single movie. Furthermore it appears that the initial brand notoriety is of at least the same importance as the appearance in itself (Bree 1996).

Ogilvy simply states that the most pertinent way of measuring the effect of an advertisement is to measure the increase (or decrease) in sales. He therefore recommends to “do your homework”; that is, conduct thorough research at the outset to make sure that the effect on sales will be positive (Ogilvy 1983, p.9-11).

¹ Focus N°27, 4th Juli 2005

2.2 SPECIFICITIES FOR PRODUCT PLACEMENT IN ELECTRONIC GAMES

If customers spend more and more time in front of their computer, they are less exposed to traditional advertisements. Product placement in video games is therefore not only an alternative to traditional advertising; it has to be taken into account for a successful marketing strategy. Traditionally, a distinction is made between In-Game Advertising and In-Game Marketing, the former designing advertisements and brand appearances in a game, and the latter designing all the virtual marketing efforts on a larger scale (see also Gaca 2005, p.4). To be specific we will distinguish between two forms of electronic games, first, video games which are played on a gaming console and second, computer games which get played on a PC.

2.2.1 Origins and history of product placement in electronic games

Due to the relatively young age of electronic games, advertisement and brand appearances have always been in games. In the beginning games could be produced by a single programmer. Brand appearances and advertisements were inserted to enhance realism. Epyx "World Games" for example featured Continental Airlines in 1986 (see Illustration 2.1). Very often, brand appearances were a little gag from the programmer. By playing a game one could often tell which were the favorite food or clothes brands of the programmer.



*Illustration 2.1: Screenshot of Epyx "World Games" (1986)
Continental Airlines*

At some point game producers started to contact companies to get the permission to use their logos or even to obtain a sponsorship. Sometimes, it was the other way round, and

companies asked game producers to produce a so called Advergame, which is mainly a promotional game and is centered on the brand. Strictly speaking, this of course has nothing to do with product placement. Because of their promotion and free availability, advergames can quickly spread. The “Moorhuhn” Game that was developed by Phenomedia AG for Johnnie Walker had such a success that it was at some point regarded as a danger for the business world, as employees played the game at their office. It spawned several follow up games (see Illustration 2.2).



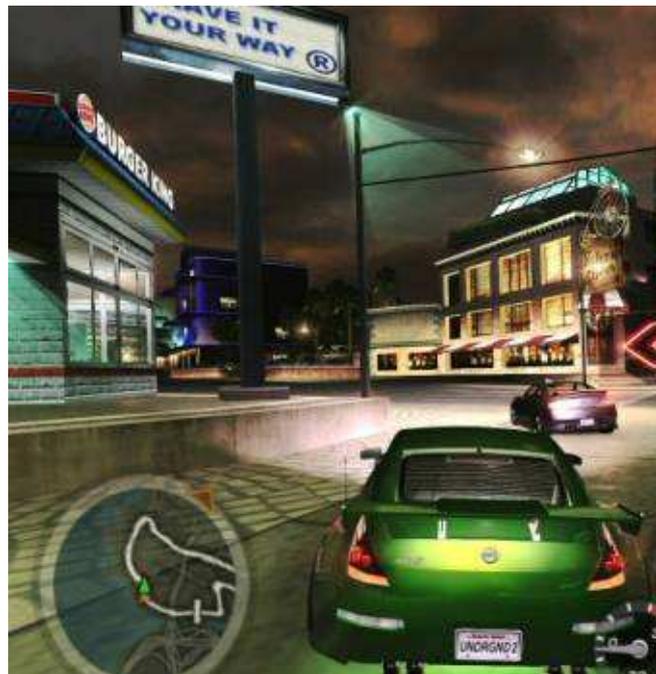
*Illustration 2.2: Screenshot of Phenomedia AG's "Moorhuhn" (2000)
Johnnie Walker*

As the millenium approached, computer games became more and more important as an advertising channel. Some companies were aware of this opportunity and seized the moment. So did McDonald's who made a deal with Maxis. In their game, "The Sim's", the player controls virtual people who are called "The Sims". When the Sims are hungry, the player sends them over to McDonald's. 24 million units had been sold of "The Sims" series of which 8 million units were copies of the original "The Sims"¹. An exception to product placement deals, McDonald's (and Intel) paid millions of dollars for this placement (Deloitte 2004). (see Illustration 2.3)

¹ http://www.gamesindustry.biz/content_page.php?section_name=ret&aid=1230



*Illustration 2.3: Screenshot of
Maxis "The Sims" (2000)
McDonald's*



*Illustration 2.4: Screenshot of
EA's "Need for Speed: Underground 2" (2004)
Burger King (logo and slogan)*

The game developer giant Electronic Arts has its own product placement department. It's "Need for Speed : Underground 2", a racing simulation, features several product placements : Burger King, Edge shaving gel, Cingular mobile phone, Old Spice aftershave and ING Direct Bank. (see Illustration 2.4)

Today, with an audience and production costs equal to movies, electronic games are a non neglectable advertisement channel. Furthermore computer games take up more time and require more attention to be consumed than movies. This situation led to the emergence of several advertisement agencies specialized in in-game advertising. In the coming years we expect to see the importance of in-game advertising to increase. A first step in this direction is Microsoft's new Xbox360 game console which has been specifically designed to not only combine several home devices (DVD player, etc...) in one single appliance but also to offer an easy way to integrate advertisements into its games.

2.2.2 The Player

All data presented here is from an ESA (Entertainment Software Association) study (ESA 2005) which gathered data from 1400 US nationally representative households that have been identified as owning either or both a video game console or a personal computer used to run entertainment software. Due to the enormous differences in European cultures it is very difficult to get a coherent image of the European gamer but we can assume that it approaches that of the US gamer.

75% of heads households play computer and video games.

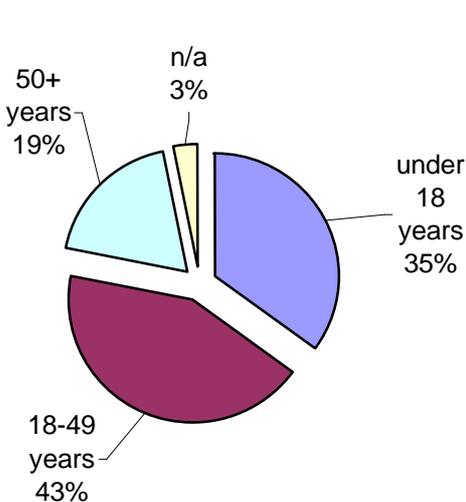


Figure 2.4: Player Age

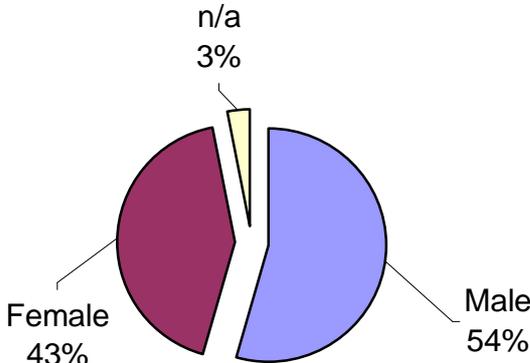


Figure 2.5: Player Gender

Women over the age of 18 represent a greater portion of the game playing population (28%) than boys from ages 6 to 17 (21%).

The average gamer is 30 years old, but the average age of the most frequent game purchaser is 37. 19% of Americans over the age of 50 played electronic games in 2004, an increase of 9% from 1999. Furthermore, 53% of game players expect to be playing as much or more 10 years from now as they do today.

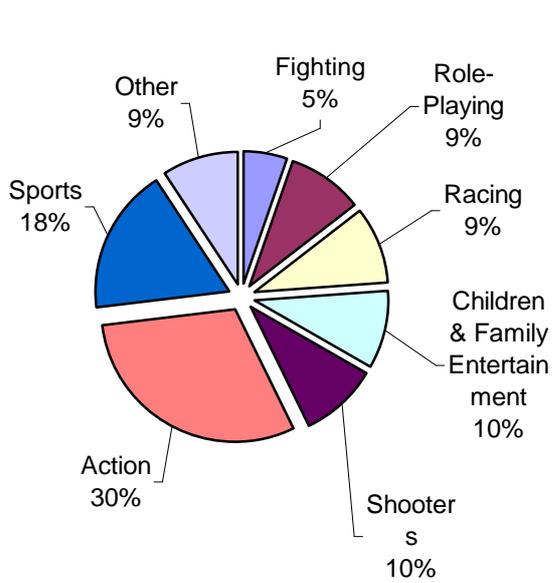


Figure 2.6:
Best selling Video Game genres

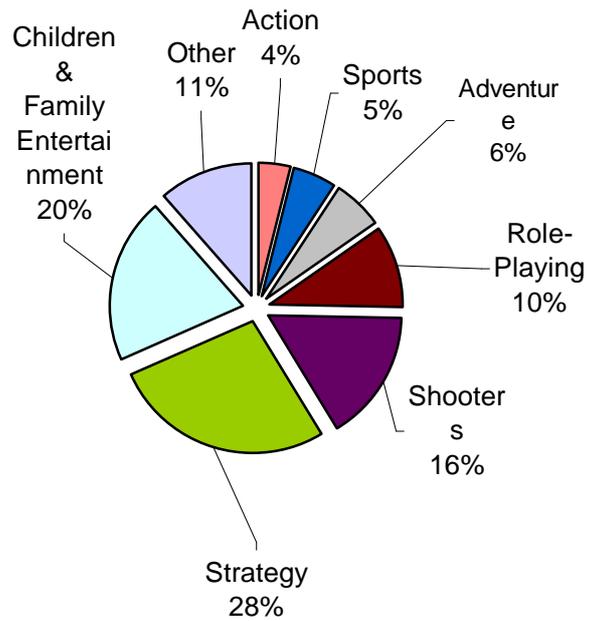


Figure 2.7:
Best selling Computer Game genres

According to Nielsen//NetRatings¹ the Internet has become a truly worldwide medium. The following chart shows the distribution of the global Internet population.

Rank	Region	Number of surfers (in millions)	% of population	% of region among global surfer population	% of region among global population
1	Asia	323 756	8.9 %	34.5 %	56.4 %
2	Europe	269 036	36.8 %	28.7 %	11.4 %
3	North America	223 392	68.0 %	23.8 %	5.1 %
4	South America	68 130	12.5 %	7.3 %	8.5 %
5	Middle East	21 770	8.3 %	2.3 %	4.1 %
6	Australia & Oc	16 448	49.2 %	1.8 %	0.5 %
7	Africa	16 174	1.8 %	1.7 %	14.0 %
	Total	938 710	14.6 %	100 %	100 %

Table 2.2: Distribution of Internet surfers (July 2005)

¹ <http://www.nielsen-netratings.com/news.jsp>

2.2.3 Actors in the market for product placement in electronic games

The difficulty to measure the market for product placement in electronic games comes from the fact that games are very often developed for a worldwide distribution whereas the placed products often have very varying notoriety in the countries where the game gets played. It also is very difficult to foresee if the game does indeed sell to the intended customer segment. To get a clearer vision of the market, effort is being put into regrouping the game developers. The Entertainment Software Association¹ for example regroups the major game developers and some communities regroup game developers worldwide, the most known being the community of the “Game Developer” magazine², issued by the CMP Group, the same group which is behind the GamaSutra website³, one of the major (if not THE major), game developer platforms on the Web.

In-Game Marketing Agencies

Major game developing companies like Electronic Arts have their own product placement department. However, in recent years several agencies have been created to fill up this new business opportunity. Like traditional product placers they communicate between companies and the entertainment producers. Massive Incorporated⁴ (USA), formerly known as Jam International Partners, saw the light in 2004. Massive Incorporated is a sort of “virtual Billboard Company”, which we will discuss more in detail below (see 2.4.2 The Massive Network). They worked together with Michelle Nelson, an US american researcher. This thesis cites some of her research. Besides Massive Incorporated, there are other companies who offer in-game advertising services: IGA Partners⁵ (USA, Germany, UK) was created recently and IGN Entertainment⁶ works together with GameSpy⁷, the company that produces a well-known and widely used middleware for online games. The more important traditional advertising agencies have also created their own in-game advertising subsidiaries. Starcom MediaVest Group has created SMGPlay⁸, Young&Rubicam is present with Bounce Interactive.

¹ <http://www.theesa.com>

² The “GameDeveloper” is generally not available through stores. In order to get a copy one must subscribe to it. As a result nearly the whole customerbase are professional game developers.

³ <http://www.gamasutra.com>

⁴ <http://www.massiveincorporated.com>

⁵ <http://www.ingameadvertising.com>

⁶ <http://corp.ign.com/in-game-solutions.html>

⁷ <http://www.gamespy.com>

⁸ <http://www.smgplay.com>

There exist also conventions specialised on In-Game Advertising, the European Advertising in Games Forum¹ which is held in London and the GFM World in Berlin² (see also Gaca 2005, p.15-16)

2.2.4 Potential for product placement in electronic games

Electronic games promotion has clearly matured in Europe. The amount of promotion for the blockbusters Halo2, Prince of Persia 2 or Halflife 2 in Paris in early 2005 were in every aspect equal to that of a feature length commercial film. The launch of World of Warcraft, even exceeded traditional movie promotion. The promotion for this MMORPG³ (and at this date the most successful with a starting audience of more than 400 000 subscribers, according to MMOG⁴ charts (Woodcock 2005) included a cinematographic trailer which was displayed in movie theatres as well as in nearly every multimedia and computer games store, a billboard campaign and advertisements in print media. It also had a dedicated Internet site, where you could download the video trailer and other goodies.

As of November 2005, World of Warcraft has more than 4.5 million subscribers worldwide, which make up for an annual revenue stream of more than \$700 million. The major part of these subscribers come from China (1.5 million), just before the United States (1 million).⁵

Of course not all electronic games have this audience size. But the trend points in this direction. Electronic games have increasing production costs and are dependent of an ever increasing marketing effort to promote and sell the game. This is even more true for MMOGs, whose economical model is similar to that of entertainment parcs (Adams 2003). MMOGs require the consumer to subscribe to the game on (often) a monthly basis. These games depend on exact knowledge of their customer base and have a higher feedback from players than normal games. These facts make them very good candidates for product placement as the product placer can exactly target and time the in-game advertisement.

¹ <http://www.advertisinggames.com>

² <http://www.gfm-world.de>

³ MMORPG : Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game. See also definition in Glossary.

⁴ MMOG : Massive Multiplayer Online Game. See also definition in Glossary.

⁵ NY Times article. Available online at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/06/arts/design/06worl.html?ex=1283659200&en=7053c2e95380c600&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>

Deloitte Research has a very optimistic view on in-game advertising. According to them a typical game takes at least 10 hours to play (role playing game can even require up to 200+ hours). Taking together, this accounts for at least 50 million hours of viewing time for a hit game, which sells between three to five million copies. Few television events can match that kind of exposure. Nevertheless, the cost of in-game advertising is relatively low compared to TV advertisements. An in-game advertisement costs around \$100 000, whereas a TV advertisement scores for several millions of dollars (Deloitte 2004).

2.2.5 Importance for the game developers

As marketing costs for electronic games increase and are exceeding production costs (Adams 2003), game developers and game producers are in need of supplementary revenue streams.

Besides the pure financial aspect, product placement enhances in several cases the realism of a game and can even increase production time by a small amount as artists do not have to design new brands for gaming purposes.

2.2.6 Dangers

As game developer, Ernest Adams warned in 1999, that product placement in electronic games could soon be a defined part of the budget of a game production (Adams 1999). This will almost certainly have an impact on game design decisions. Indeed, some crucial design issues could be subordinated to placement deals. Until recently, electronic games were relatively independent and authentic artist work, but now as they have reached maturity, their fate could soon be the same as that of movie productions. The future will probably bring a need for regulations.

2.3 PSYCHOLOGY OF THE GAMING ENVIRONMENT

2.3.1 Gameplay elements

Patrick Mount defined in his research the elements of interaction (Mount 2001); those elements which are essential to consider while developing a game. These elements have to be taken into consideration when one designs an advertisement that has to fit seamlessly into a game as these elements build the backbone of the game.

Challenge vs. Frustration

A game is a challenge, but can easily become a frustration. In-game advertisement has to consider that players are not under “normal” life conditions. Their mood can quickly change.

Risk vs. Rewards

A player that is willing to risk is generally rewarded accordingly. This not only leads to a risk friendly attitude but can also lead to addictive behaviour. In-game advertising can be passive, that is simply be in the background, or take an active part in the game. In this case it can “sponsor” a risk element of the game (e.g. The Coca Challenge) or a reward (e.g. The Coca-Cola Trophy)

Reality vs. Abstraction

A game that is too real, is not fun to play anymore. Games are generally not about being too realistic. Advertisements therefore do not especially need to be realistic and can even experiment with new marketing methods. This domain is called virtual marketing. (see also 2.1.4.2 Realty vs. Fiction)

Other elements that may not be as important to in-game advertising include dominance (a player wants to achieve mastery of the game), repeatability (the same strategy always leads to the same result), polymorphism (the same strategy may have a similar result in a different but somehow similar situation) and balance (a game does not have to be too difficult or too easy).

2.3.2 Involvement

Players get involved with their game. They may not only play a game and discuss it on forums, but also contribute to the gamer community in various ways, such as game modifications (mods) or add-ons, fan artwork, fan fiction, comic strip storytelling, song writing and composing, movie creation, etc... Due to the Internet, these contributions spread quickly and may encourage other players to do the same.

Gamers also spend much more time and are more active while playing than they are when consuming other entertainment forms. This increased awareness has positive effects on the recall of in-game advertisements (Chaney, Lin & Chaney 2004).

2.3.2.1 Interaction with the storyline

In games that are situated in a modern or science-fiction world, brands are inherent to the background of a game. Brand appearances and in-game advertisements enhance the realism of a game. Brands can be interwoven into the storyline and therefore enhance it (see also 2.1.5 Successful Placements). This is especially true for sports games, which feature an enormous amount of advertisements and also for more socially orientated games where clothes and food type define the lifestyle. Further research is needed however to see if “in-character” and “out-of-character”¹ behaviour has an effect on the advertisement impact on the player.

2.3.2.2 Brand identification and player organizations

What we have seen for film product placement is also true for in-game placement. Companies sell more than products and an associated image. In fact they have become a part of our culture. Someone who adheres to the “new generation” image, will probably drink Pepsi, and on a wider scale, even be proud to show the Pepsi logo. This already is seen in the example of clothing: Nike is showing its logo prominently on their clothing, so that its customers can easily identify themselves as being part of the community that adheres to Nike’s values. Brands therefore have become one of the main means of defining and distinguishing different groups of people. However this does not yet apply to computer games. *Clans* or *Guilds*, as gamer communities call themselves, are not using brand images to distinguish themselves. Instead they use the same methods and tools as a pre-advertising

¹ These two terms describe if the player is role-playing his character in regard to other players or not. See also definition in Glossary.

society would use: the same names (nickname-suffixes) and the same colors. Very often they have an own webpage and exchange on their own Internet forum.

Brand Awareness

Nonetheless it seems that the product type gets better remembered than the corresponding brand name in in-game advertising (Chaney, Lin & Chaney 2004), which makes it less likely (but not impossible) that player communities would use brands to mark themselves.

2.3.2.3 Word of mouth

Computer players are very active when it comes to word of mouth. As most of the western world is now connected to the Internet on a permanent basis (see Table 2.2), and nearly every game comes shipped with a dedicated website (including a forum), the preferred medium of the gamer has become the Internet. The alternatives are specialized paper magazines or TV shows, which do not offer the same reactivity and interactivity than the Internet. Gamer community websites, fansites, forums, chats and instant messaging allow players to quickly exchange information about games to an extent that cannot be matched by other media. The latter is also true for the eastern world where cyber cafés boom. A study undertaken by KDGI shows that Internet cafés and online games take up 62% of the game market in Korea. 84% of users in Internet cafés play online games, which makes it the lead game genre in a \$4.2 heavy market (KDGI 2004). The Internet is therefore a prosperous place to start hypes (e.g. “The Blair Witch Project”¹). Word of mouth has to be taken into consideration for everything related to the game, and especially for product placement. Research has shown that players are not only aware of product placement attempts in games, but are also discussing them actively on forums. The amount of insight in product placement marketing techniques resulting through this exchange is considerable (Nelson, Keum & Yaros 2004). Furthermore, players do not stick only to the forum that’s related to their game. There is exchange between different game forums. An example of this is the “Leeroy Jenkins”² battle cry, which originated in World of Warcraft and has

¹ “The Blair Witch Project” is one of the most profitable movies in terms of the ratio of production costs to box office proceeds. This is notably due to the marketing strategy which essentially relied on the hype created on the Internet.

² Leeroy refers to an infamous video of a World of Warcraft incident where a single player, going by the handle of “Leeroy”, caused a total party kill by pulling a mass aggro on his team. (Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leeroy>)

since then migrated to numerous other online games. The Internet is also very prone for mimetic phenomena like YTMND¹ or Hampsterdance², on a large scale.

2.4 DYNAMIC ASPECT

The Internet is currently the only major mass media that offers the possibility to deliver tailor-made advertisements. In this section we will discuss this important aspect.

2.4.1 Targeted Advertising

On the Internet it has become a common practice to target advertisements. Most shareware and freeware applications have advertisement zones in them. The advertisements in these zones may simply change according to a predefined list, but they may also be customized to the current user. Indeed, for most applications one has to register, or at least fill out a short survey, which permits the developer to define in which population group the user fits in. Furthermore several applications also monitor the user behaviour in the background. With such demographic data, the advertisements streamed through the application are likely to be viewed by a high-profile target and will have a much higher impact than their traditional print or television counterparts. This might soon also become a reality for movies, as downloaded movies might soon have targeted advertisements as well (Galician 2004B). The first step has already been taken: in the movie “Demolition Man” american viewers saw Sylvester Stallone and Sandra Bullock dine in a Taco Bell Restaurant, whereas european viewers saw them in Pizza Hut instead.

2.4.2 The Massive Network

As more and more people are connected to the Internet, computer games more often make use of this by adding functionalities such as multiplayer gameplay or automatic patching. Massive Multiplayer Online Games essentially rely on a permanent Internet connection.

¹ YTMND, an acronym for “You’re The Man Now, Dog!”, is a general term used to describe a page featuring a juxtaposition of a single image, optionally animated or tiled, along with large zooming text and a looping sound file. (Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YTMND>) (see also The Wall Street Journal article http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB112801537556955862-1MyQjAxMDE1MjA4NzAwMTc1Wj.html)

² The Hampster Dance [*sic*] or Hampsterdance is an Internet humor fad, originally a simple Geocities page featuring rows of animated hamsters dancing in various ways to a sped up sample from the song "Whistle Stop" by Roger Miller (Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamsterdance>)

Massive Incorporated (formerly know as Jam International Partners) has grasped the opportunity and developed the first dynamically served advertisements network. Since July 2002 it offers the possibility for advertisers to stream their advertisements into online games. The advertisements will then show up on billboards, or in other formats that have to be decided by the game developers. In some respects, Massive Incorporated is the first *virtual billboard* company. The economic model is much like that of a traditional billboard company. Advertisers rent a space in a certain amount of games and pay Massive for this¹. The future will show us if dynamically streamed advertisements will change the electronic landscape. Massive Incorporated is working together with major game producers, like Ubisoft, Eidos, Vivendi Universal, Atari and Konami. Further research is needed to see if this system can be applied to all kinds of electronic games or if it is only applicable to MMOGs and blockbuster productions. To this end, Massive Incorporated has made an agreement with Nielsen Media, who may use the Massive Network to gather statistical data. This data will allow marketers to measure the time viewed and the viewing angle for each in-game billboard and will ultimately show how effective the billboard advertisements are.

In 2004, this system was incorporated into Anarchy Online, a well-established science fiction MMORPG, that recently celebrated its 4 years of existence. (Compared to non-MMOGs which have less than a one-year lifetime, this is a very long time). Anarchy Online is free to play, but one has to become a paid subscriber if one wants to play the extensions²).

Although it is absolutely possible to deliver targeted advertisements through such a network (e.g. diet coke billboard for some players, regular coke billboard for others), it is difficult to imagine how such a system would work in multiplayer games, where two interacting players have to actually *see* the same environment (and therefore the *same* advertisements).

2.4.3 Interactivity

Today advertisements become more and more interactive. On the Internet, new technology, like Flash for instance, has made it possible for an advertisement to become interactive and

¹ Data from Massive Incorporated (<http://www.massiveincorporated.com>)

² Press Release from Funcom, February 24th, 2005. Available online at http://www.funcom.com/funcom/news/press_release.2005-02-24

react to the user. A very common advertisement is that of the “Shoot me and get a price” type where the advertisement displays the “Shoot me and get a price” text while a running duck (or something else) runs across the banner. When the user runs his mouse over the the advertisement the cursor transforms into a crosshair. A click will forward the player to the company’s website. The trend is going towards a greater interactivity.

Several real-life¹ advertisements are interactive. In a recent Belgian campaign, Ford for example showed a different number on each of its billboards. Bypassers could send a SMS with their name and the code to a special telephone number and participate in a contest.² In France, Pepsi consumers can find a code on their favorite drink which may win them several prizes on the Internet, including free music downloads.³

This is a first attempt at Pervasive Gaming, a gaming form which combines playing on the computer as well as in reality, often powered by mobile phones.⁴ More innovative marketing alternatives will certainly see the light in the near future. (see also 2.1.4.2. Reality vs. Fiction: Minority Report)

¹ under real-life we mean the non-virtual world

² http://www.smartmobs.com/archive/2004/07/22/ford_fiesta_ad_.html

³ <http://www.pepsimusicplay.com>

⁴ <http://www.heise.de/newsticker/result.xhtml?url=/newsticker/meldung/51475>

3

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

“In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack - the direct and the indirect; yet these two in combination give rise to an endless series of maneuvers.”

- Sun Tzu¹

Electronic games represent a fast growing market. As the adult population spends more and more time playing, electronic games have become an excellent communication channel. They offer manifold possibilities to include interactive advertisements and product placements, yet, in comparison to other media, relatively few attempts have so far been made. Most of these attempts consisted in simple billboards that were placed in more or less strategic spots inside the game. This is very different to the World Wide Web, where advertisements of various kinds are quickly spreading in an almost uncontrollable fashion. Considering that both use the same hardware, namely a computer, we have to ask ourselves if there is not another way to reach this high value audience of gamers, other than through billboards.

1. Are successful “real life” advertising strategies applicable to product placement in electronic games?

Today’s games are very much alternative realities. MMORPGs have redefined the way we think of games. Indeed, MMORPGs not only give the player complete freedom concerning his possible actions, but also allow him to share this experience with other online players. Electronic games have become social happenings; they make the player dive into a fictional universe. And this universe allows uncountable new possibilities to advertise; even more than real life could offer as the only limits are those of one’s own imagination. Over the past, advertisers demonstrated an enormous amount of creativity when it comes to real-life advertising. The advertising agency TBWA², for example promotes a method they

¹ Sun Tzu (ca 6th century BC) is the author of The Art of War, an immensely influential ancient Chinese book on military strategy.

² <http://www.tbwa.com>

call *disruption*, which mainly consists in breaking with established rules. Breaking common advertising conventions is indeed a very successful way of advertising. Could it be possible to apply strategies that have proven to be successful in the real world into the electronic game reality?

2. What advertising strategies would be most effective?

If indeed there is an acceptance for alternative strategies, which of them would be the most effective? How much advertisements are players willing to take? And at what price?

4

STUDY OF PRODUCT PLACEMENT IN ELECTRONIC GAMES

“Marketing research has only one purpose: to provide marketers with information that lead to actions that in turn, lead to making more money.”

- Bob Kaden¹

Note: For what will follow the term “advertisement” will mean also “brand appearance” and refers to in-game advertisements (product placement) unless stated otherwise.

4.1 INTERVIEWS

4.1.1 Methodology

Product placer

To better understand product placement practices, we interviewed a former professional of the product placement business, Valérie Letourneur. She has worked for some time in the product placement department of Citroën², a French car manufacturer. Her task at Citroën was to analyse movie scripts from producers who required cars for their movie productions. She also helped to establish Citroën as a sponsor of the movie industry and to develop Citroën’s image in this business. We expect to learn from her the basic considerations that companies make towards product placements.

Game developer

Radon Labs³ is a small independent company founded by veterans of the game industry, who is at the origin of G.A.M.E¹., an association of German game developers. From their

¹ Robert J. Kaden is the President of The Kaden Company and author of *Guerilla Marketing Research*.

² <http://www.citroen.fr>

³ <http://www.radonlabs.de>

experience, we expect to gather some insights on how product placement is perceived by smaller game developing companies with no specialized Marketing department. Until now, Radon Labs, as most smaller companies, have not made use of product placement.

Players

To be able to create a survey about interactive product placement a better understanding of the typical player is needed. Three persons in the middle of the most sought after segment, the 18 to 34 year olds, have been selected on the following criteria: they not only play computer games on a regular basis, but do also play an MMORPG (Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game). The MMORPG criteria is important for this study as this kind of game offers the greatest freedom for players and therefore has the biggest potential for alternative advertising strategies. Arinyes², a Dutch girl, and Lygea³, a Brazilian girl, play Anarchy Online, a Science-Fiction MMORPG, while Hawk⁴, a Luxembourgian, plays World of Warcraft, the most successful fantasy MMORPG on the market. With each, a one-hour long interview has been conducted to gather customer views on product placement in computer games. Also, this served as a basis to build a survey that could be used on a larger scale. The interview guide can be found in Appendix D.

4.1.2 Results

Product Placer

Citroën does not actively seek out movie productions in order to do product placements. Valérie Letourneur describes their practice much like a supplementary operational marketing tool to establish their brand image. Citroën mainly lends cars to movie productions at their demand. To this end they have a fleet of their latest car models. The acceptance of a placement depends very much on the common sense of the responsible at Citroën. A formal process does not exist. Furthermore, the placement deals are mostly made through networking and a transparent market for placements does not exist. Nonetheless, Citroën is proud to be closely related to the cinema, and has a long history of cameo appearances in movies (see also Appendix B).

¹ <http://www.game-bundesverband.de>

² Arbitrary nickname, to preserve anonymity

³ ibid

⁴ ibid

Discussion

One has to consider however, that the information from Citroën is a few years old and may not reflect their current position. Nevertheless, the situation depicted here is very similar to the picture of in-game marketing realised by a German researcher (Gaca 2005). Only, big companies who have a budget for experimental strategies tend to do in-game advertising. This may also be related to the fact that larger companies have in general very well working networks and are therefore in a better position to start placement deals. The placements themselves are always adapted to the movie picture as the request comes from the movie production and not from the producer.

⇒ *Product placement deals are made through interpersonal relationship*

⇒ *Product placements are customized to each movie*

Game developer

Astonishingly, although that Radon Labs does think that brand appearances enhance the realism of a game, they have not actively sought out to integrate them into their games. They share the opinion that advertisements are part of western culture and as such can be integrated into the game to enhance the gaming experience. Advertisement insertion into computer games is seen as something very delicate; a too intrusive advertisement might have a negative impact on the game. Advertisements only make sense if they are deeply integrated into the setting. A system that dynamically streams advertisements, like the one proposed by Massive Incorporated, would therefore be very difficult to integrate. It is also feared that this system might get out of control and that the advertisements would irritate the gamer. Advertisement insertion requires careful work and will have to be customised to the game. This also means that “fake” brands have to be avoided or be very carefully designed in order not to look like a parody of a “real” brand. Nevertheless, game developers are willing to insert brands into their games. They only do not have the specialized personal to seek out sponsors.

⇒ *Brand appearances enhance the realism of a game*

⇒ *“Fake” brands are seen as parodistic*

⇒ *To ensure the quality of a placement, game developers have to seek out corresponding brands themselves*

⇒ *Product placements have to be customized for each game*

Players

General attitude towards advertisements

All three interviewed persons enjoy fantasy or science fiction. They are also very fond of advertisements, as they consider that advertisements are some sort of entertainment after all. Especially if the advertisements are witty. In general however, they share the opinion that the amount of advertisements in our surroundings is too high. They feel that, due to the interactive nature of electronic games, they were probably more attentive to advertisements, than they were in movies or television shows.

Type of advertisements

They agreed that brand appearances increase the realism of a game, if they fit into the game. This includes both the setting of the game (ie. the universe in which the game is settled) and, as stated by Arinyes, the gaming context. This means that advertisements from “real” computer games magazine would not be irritating in a science fiction setting, as they, although not related to the context of the game, belong to the electronic game universe. This statement however has not been repeated by the other interviewed persons. It also seems to be related to how far a player “plunges” into the game or not. Obviously “plungers” who take role play seriously would not like to see any reference to the “outside” world.

Advertisement integration

There was a general opinion that “fake” advertisements were irritating. Sound-alike and look-alike advertisements are generally mistaken for the real product, or felt like a parody, that, in most cases, is felt out of place. One player remarked that advertisements were reference points for the navigation inside the game. As advertisements like billboards are often strategically positioned, they become landmarks which can be used as waypoints. A common meeting spot in the online game Anarchy Online is known as BB, meaning the billboard on the hill in Old Athens. This point has also been risen by a participant of a study of the effects of billboards within the gaming environment done by Chaney, Lin and Chaney (Chaney, Lin & Chaney 2004), where one player suggested that it would be easier to designate the different buildings in a 3rd person shooter by giving them names (i.e. The “Red Bull” Tower). Taken even further, players suggested that brands could drive the story onward, as different products could play a key role. One player quoted a situation where a

soda can played a central role. Why not make it a coca cola can? There is however a thin line between a good advertisement integration and a bad one. As another player remarked, branded products should reflect reality. The Audi car that has been built for the movie “I, Robot” left him puzzled. Does Audi create good cars, because they built a fictional wonder car? This goes along with the wish of all three participants not to be manipulated, wether through imposed behaviour patterns or subliminal messages. A fantasy game where a druid called “Beyer” sells a magic healing potion, for example, would definitely be too intrusive, remarked another player. A similar example can be found in Anarchy Online, where AlienWare, a software company, powers “the Grid”, which is an ingame transportation system. Both Anarchy Online players rejected this kind of insertion.

Use of the advertisement system

If there are advertisements in a game than it should be logical that there were also advertisements for in-game elements. Players suggested that the advertisement system should be used to promote in-game events and in-game products. However, as the game is developed by one single company there seems to be little sense in having competition between different in-game brands. For example, having one or several different clothing brands to dress up your avatar would hardly be realised by a player. This obviously is not true for games where brands play a preponderous role, like in racing simulations for instance.

Result of this study:

- ⇒ *Players feel that they are more aware of advertisements due to the interactivity aspect*
- ⇒ *Brand appearances enhance the realism of a game*
- ⇒ *Advertisements have to fit into the context of the game*
- ⇒ *“Fake” brands are felt like a parody*
- ⇒ *The advertisements are reference points*
- ⇒ *Advertisements have to reflect reality*
- ⇒ *Players do not want to get manipulated*
- ⇒ *The in-game advertising system has to be adapted to the simulated world and get used for in-game relevant information as well*

4.2 SURVEY

4.2.1 Methodology

We conducted an online survey to analyse the acceptance of current and alternative in-game advertising strategies. The survey contained 15 questions, concerning playing customs as well as the attitude towards in-game advertising and product placement. The survey was hosted on an Internet site. The link to the survey site was posted on selected gamer forums, to ensure that only the required population, e.g. people of whatever origin who play computer games on a regularly basis, filled out the survey. The detailed list of the forums can be found in Appendix F. The complete set of questions can be found in Appendix G.

4.2.3 Results

For all charts see Appendix H.

Demographics

155 people responded to the survey, which ran for one week. 55% of them were students, and female players were largely underrepresented with only 12 representatives. The bulk of the players were aged between 15 and 25, and were students for the larger part (55%)¹. The profile of the participants can be seen in Table 4.1.

¹ This sample is very similar to the sample from the billboard survey done by Chaney, Lin and Chaney in 2004 (Chaney, Lin & Chaney 2004), cf. 4.2.3

% (n=155)

Gender	
Male	88.3
Female	11.7
Occupation	
upper/middle management	7.3
general administration / supervisor / clerical	4.7
professional (doctor / lawyer / specialist)	8.0
sales / service	8.7
self-employees / owner	4.0
blue collar / trades	2.0
homemaker	0.0
retired	0.0
student	54.7
unemployed / between jobs	5.3
other	5.3

Table 4.1: Survey demographics

Gaming habits

The predominant played games were First Person Shooters (13.5 %), Strategy games (11.2 %), Role Playing Games (10.0 %) and Massive Multiplayer Online Games (8.9 %). Most were equipped with a PC (45.0%) directly followed by Consoles and Handheld consoles (54.3 %). 44 % of them did not buy any game during the last 3 months, while the other half bought less than 3 games. Great differences could be seen in in the amount of leisure time spend on playing. The amount of time that was accorded to electronic games was nearly equally spread out between 0 % and 100 %. This may be due to the difficulty for a player to estimate the actual time spent in front of his computer. According to the Entertainment Software Association the average US american player spends 23.4 hours per week playing.

Environment is saturated with advertisements

Most players agree that we live in an advertisement saturated environment. Either they feel that there are too many advertisements (52.3 %) or that the amount is just right (39.2 %). Very few (8.5 %) feel that there is still potential.

Advertisements are a revenue source

Advertisements are seen as a revenue source. While most players agree that advertisements enhance the realism of a game (53.3 %) they do also think that this should lower the cost of a game (65.5 %). They also agree that there should be a possibility to turn advertisements off (45.4 %) or at least turn only the commercial ones off (36.8 %). Such an option should however only be made available for players who pay for the game (65.2 %). Participants who found that paying players should be given an option to turn advertisements off, also found that advertisements should lower the cost of the game. (see Figure 4.1)

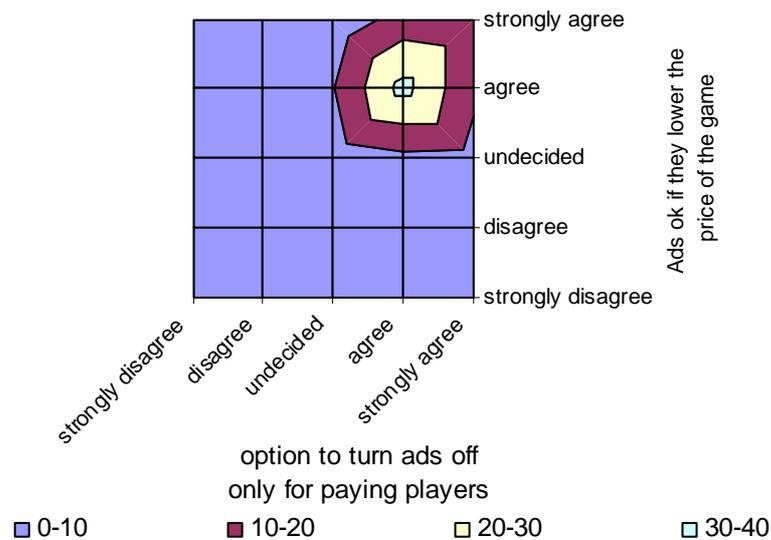


Figure 4.1: Relation between "option to turn ads off" and lower cost
 χ^2 : significant at the 1% level

Advertisements are supposed to reflect the real world

Generally speaking, players want to find the same advertisement patterns, which they are used seeing in real life. The simulated environment plays therefore an important role. Indeed, players expect to see advertisements in games which simulate real-life events where the amount of advertisements is important, like for example Racing Games and Sports games. The table 4.2 shows that the most common advertisement techniques like billboards or branded clothing are linked to the games where they typically appear, such as

Racing and Sports games, First Person Shooters, Management simulations and Multiplayer Online Games. However, players expect more advertisements to show up, as those kinds of games do not make use of all the advertisement techniques that their real-life counterparts use. One player for example, wanted to see advertisements on the football stadium ground, which is very common on live football TV shows, but not yet in electronic games.

	Billboards	Billboards on a zeppelin	Brand sponsored Non Player Characters	Brand sponsored quests	Brand sponsored dungeons / levels	Brand sponsored monsters	Flyers, panels and other papers	Sponsored events	Branded clothing	Branded food	Brand logos on armour and other gear	Brand logos on weapons	Free in-game services if sponsored by a brand
FPS	38	30	12	9	7	5	30	25	28	27	10	10	22
Jump and Run	11	11	4	4	3	2	12	9	11	9	4	4	8
Fight	21	17	5	4	3	2	21	15	20	19	4	4	13
Role Playing Games	23	18	6	7	5	4	19	15	19	16	7	7	12
Sports games	59	41	15	11	9	7	46	32	53	44	13	14	34
Racing	56	42	12	9	7	5	41	31	43	36	8	11	31
Management	26	20	8	6	3	2	23	20	25	22	5	6	21
Strategy	5	4	3	3	3	1	3	5	4	2	4	3	6
Adventure games	19	17	3	4	3	2	16	13	20	18	6	5	12
3D Action	23	18	7	6	4	3	25	16	23	18	8	7	16
Massive Multiplayer Online Games	38	25	11	7	6	4	29	19	30	24	10	9	25
Puzzle	5	3	2	1	1	1	7	4	7	4	4	4	4
Oldies	5	4	2	2	2	1	5	3	5	4	3	2	4
Vehicle simulations	24	18	8	5	6	4	24	14	21	18	8	9	18
Shoot'em up	10	10	3	4	3	2	9	7	10	7	4	3	6
Games requiring accessories	9	9	3	5	3	2	8	5	8	8	3	2	7

Relevance of Ad type in game	higher than	
low		
medium	10	
high	25	
strong	40	

Table 4.2: Relevance of advertisement type in game genre

Relationship between attitude towards advertisements and in-game advertisements

As expected, the players divide into two groups, those who agree that the brand appearances enhance the realism of a game and those who disagree with that statement. Those who agree have a more positive attitude towards advertisements in general (see Figure 4.2) and are also more inclined to accept permanent brand appearances in a game, which cannot be turned off (see Figure 4.3). However the general tendency is that there are too many advertisements and that players should be given a possibility to “shelter” from them.

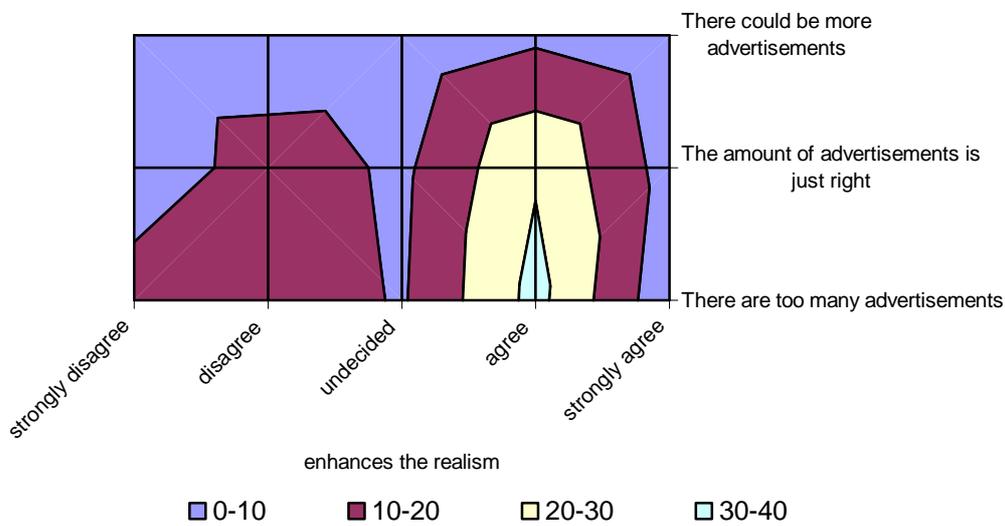


Figure 4.2: Relation between “ads enhance realism” and general ad attitude
 χ^2 : significant at the 5% level

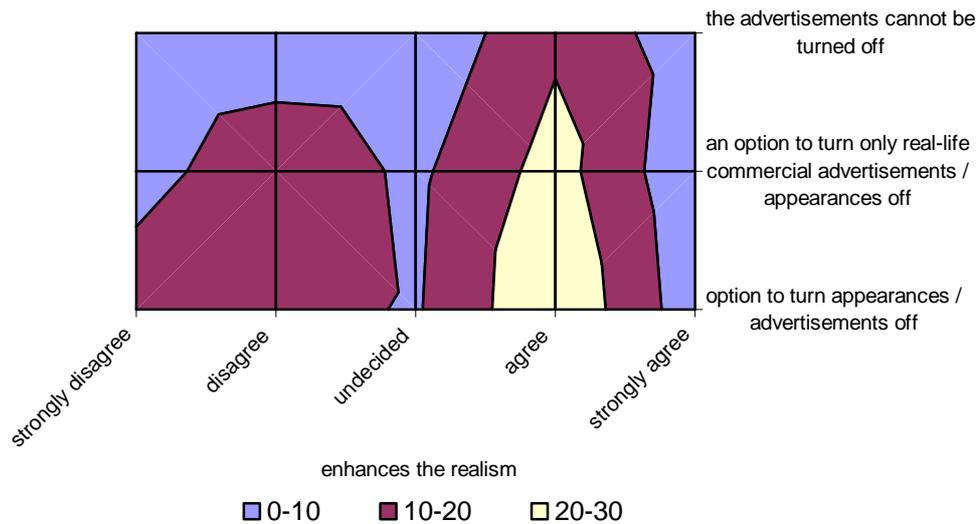


Figure 4.3: Relation between “ads enhance realism” and option to turn ads off
 χ^2 : significant at the 5% level

Advertising for in-game products wanted. Players make a difference between real-life ads and “fake” ads.

Advertisements for products that are available in-game are wanted by 55.7 % of the participants. Several comments have been given that advertisements have to fit into the scenery. There should be no advertisement on a medieval helmet for instance. As someone remarked “context is key in in-game advertising”. Players who found that advertisements for in-game products were an enhancement for the game, did also agree that paying players should have an option to turn commercial “real”-life advertisements off (see Figure 4.4). This suggests that players are fully able to distinguish between real life advertisements and “fake” advertisements. We can assume that players do not want to lose that ability. They certainly do not want to get confused by look-alike virtual advertisements, who cannot be clearly identified as such. Surprisingly, the same players that found that there were too many advertisements in our surroundings, did find that advertisements for in-game products were an enhancement to the game.

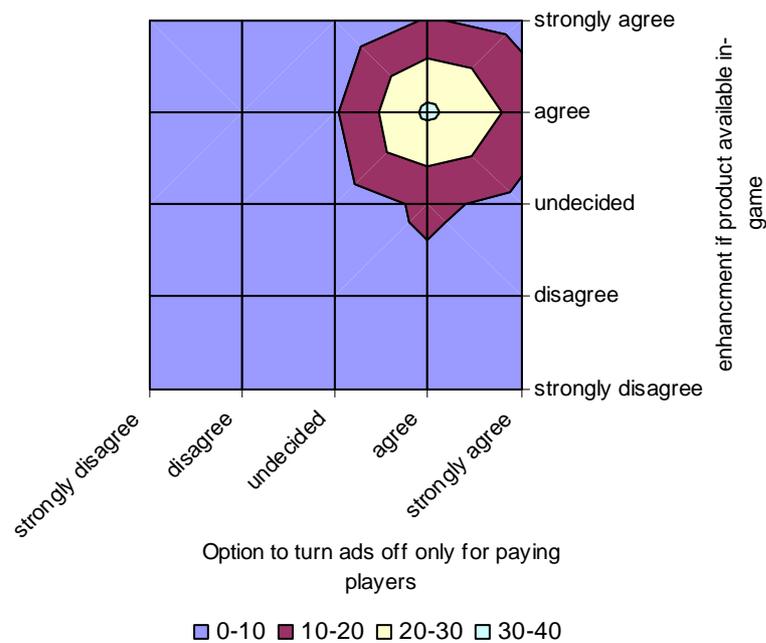


Figure 4.4: Relation between “option to turn ads off only for paying players” and “enhancement if product is in-game”

χ^2 : significant at the 1% level

Result of this study:

- ⇒ We live in an advertisement saturated world
- ⇒ Advertisements are correlated to lower costs for the consumer
- ⇒ Paying players should have the possibility to get fewer advertisements than non-paying players
- ⇒ Advertisements are supposed to reflect the real world, more are wanted in the right places
- ⇒ Players with a negative attitude towards advertisements in general do not feel that advertisements enhance the realism of a game
- ⇒ Products and services that are available in-game should be advertised in-game
- ⇒ Players are able to distinguish between “real” and “fake” advertisements
- ⇒ Advertisements that promote virtual products that are not in-game are not wanted

4.3 CASE STUDY: ANARCHY ONLINE

4.3.1 Methodology

Anarchy Online is a Science-Fiction MMORPG developed by Funcom. It was launched in 2001 as an MMORPG with a monthly subscription offer, and after a peak of 60 000 online subscribers in August 2001, it began rapidly losing customers. As a consequence, Funcom hired a consulting firm, The Themis Group, and subscription rates began to recover, however never reaching the 60 000 bar again. By the end of 2003 it had again 40 000 subscribers. After that, the subscription rates fell again. By September 2004 it had only 33 000 subscribers and the tendency was pointing downwards (see Figure 4.1).

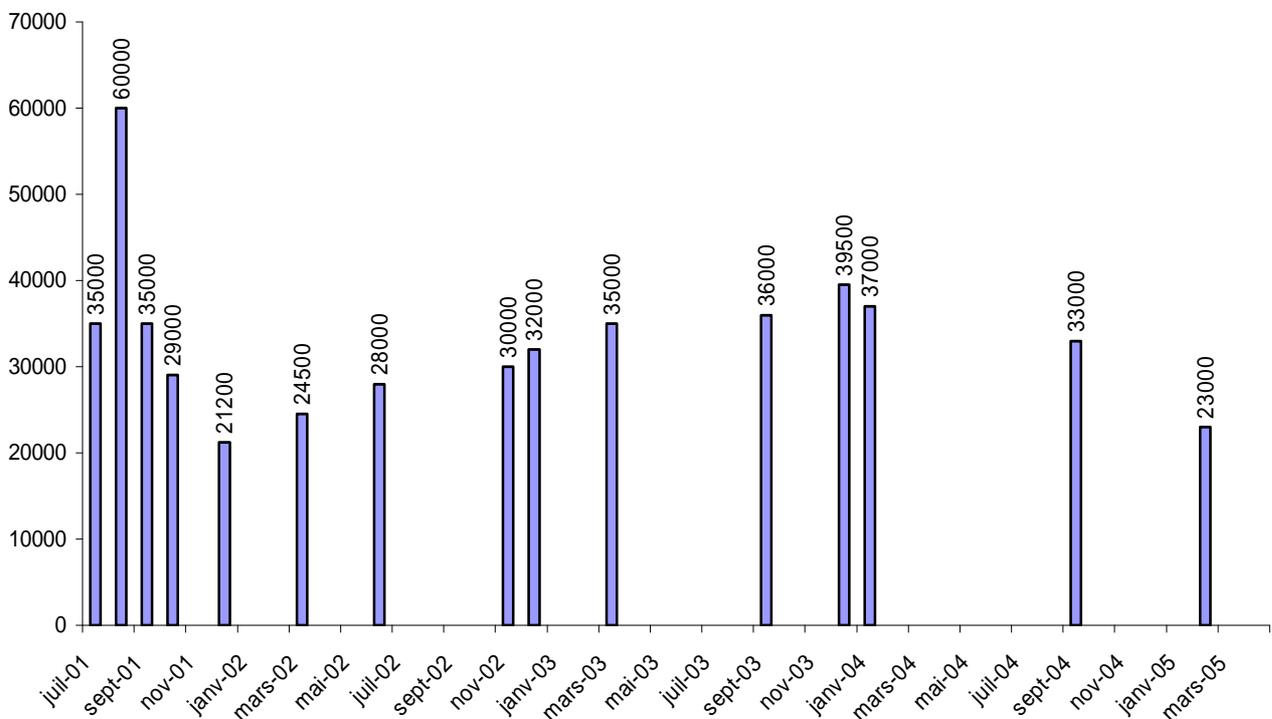


Figure 4.5: Anarchy Online Subscribers (Woodcock 2005)¹

At this point Funcom decided to make a free-access offer for the basic version of the game (i.e. without access to add-ons²), but on the other hand inserted in-game advertising for “real” world products. The network which streams these advertisements into the game was delivered by Massive Incorporated, a company specialized in electronic game product

¹ Funcom does not give information about its subscriber base.

² An add-on is a non-mandatory extension for a given game that can be purchased separately.

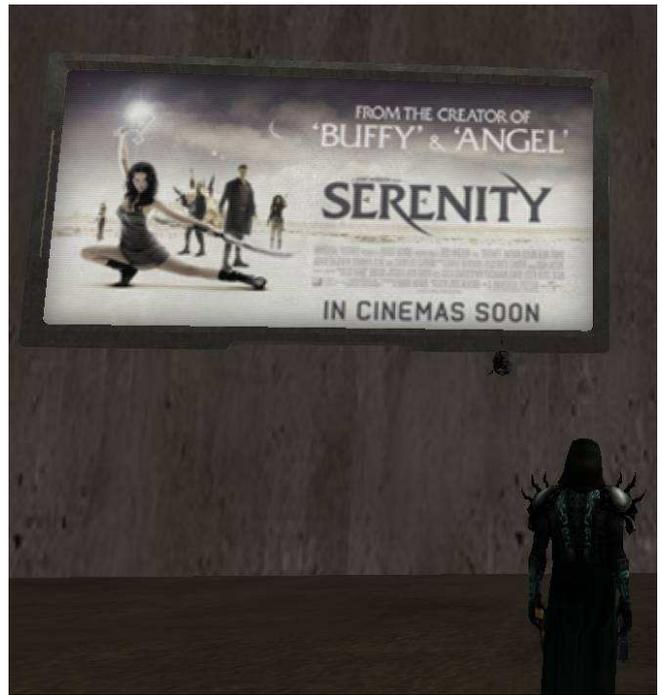
placement. Funcom further promoted the game by offering all add-ons at very low prices as online download. Nevertheless by February 2005, the subscription numbers were as low as 23 000 (Woodcock 2005)¹.

To this date the game is in a “test” phase, which means that there are lots of billboards in the game, who display a mixture of (relatively few) real-life and fake² advertisements. The billboards underwent a lot of changes and thus one could see static billboards, billboards displaying video with or without sound and revolving billboards. At the moment, the billboards are giant video screens which display video and static advertisements with sound. The advertisements cover a wide range (see Illustrations 4.1–4.9):

- **Real-life ads.** (Mötley Crüe, Xfire, PC Magazine,...)
- **Fake real-life ads.** (Alienware, a real-life computer manufacturer, powering the Grid, which is an in-game high-tech transportation system)
- **Promotions from Funcom.** (special offers around Anarchy-Online, trial offers, ...)
- **In-game events.** (The *Rubi-Ka Rumble*, a competition between players was announced through billboards. At some moment there was a competition for which players submitted their own advertisement displays and the best one was displayed on the billboards)
- **Advertisements for in-game products.** (*Miiir Fashion* for example is a widely spread in-game clothing company and you can find lots of stores all over the gaming environment. Also the two rivalling factions of the game *The Clans* and *Omni-Tek* have advertisements.)
- **Advertisements for “fake” in-game products.** (*Dreadloch Weapons & Gear* does not exist for example)

¹ Funcom does not give information about its subscriber base.

² We define a *fake advertisement* as an advertisement for a product that does not exist.



*Illustration 4.1: Screenshots of Funcom's "Anarchy Online" (2001)
Dynamic Billboards: Real-life advertisements (Nokia is geolocalized)*



*Illustration 4.2: Screenshot of Funcom's "Anarchy Online" (2001)
Dynamic Billboards: Video advertisement*



*Illustration 4.3: Screenshot of Funcom's "Anarchy Online" (2001)
Dynamic Billboards: "fake" real-life advertisement*



*Illustration 4.4: Screenshots of Funcom's "Anarchy Online" (2001)
Dynamic Billboards: Promotion for Anarchy Online expansion pack "Shadowlands"*



*Illustration 4.5: Screenshots of Funcom's "Anarchy Online" (2001)
Dynamic Billboards: Propaganda of opposing player factions*



*Illustration 4.6: Screenshots of Funcom's "Anarchy Online" (2001)
Static promotion of in-game product "Miiir fashion"*



*Illustration 4.7: Screenshot of Funcom's "Anarchy Online" (2001)
"Miiir Fashion" store*



*Illustration 4.8: Screenshots of Funcom's "Anarchy Online" (2001)
Dynamic Billboards: Promotion of in-game product 'Yalmaha' and corresponding in-game product*



*Illustration 4.9: Screenshots of Funcom's "Anarchy Online" (2001)
Dynamic Billboards: Promotion of "fake" in-game product*

The real-life advertisements can be turned off for paying subscribers, but are mandatory for free-access players.

According to Funcom, the free-access system is working fine, and the subscriptions are increasing.

“Over the last year, there has been a fair number of new MMO games released, some more successful than others. This has spiked the community's curiosity in regards to how this has affected the subscription numbers for AO. Thankfully, I can say that they have had very little impact on our subscribers; rather than being negatively affected, we are seeing more players than ever before interested in and starting to play Anarchy Online.”

- Game Director Morten Byom¹

The game has a great potential as there are currently over 360 000 active in-game characters², which is a huge contrast to the 23 000 really active players (Woodcock 2005)³. Funcom does however not officially state the subscription numbers.

For this study more than hundred posts on the official Anarchy Online forums were analyzed and the player opinions have been categorized.

4.3.2 Results

Several themes can be distilled from the user opinions, which we will discuss here. Appendix I holds those forum entries that were typical for each of these themes.

Attitude towards product placement

The billboards in Anarchy Online were received differently by users depending on their attitude towards advertisements in general. This opinion seems to confirm a study, which analysed 805 postings from players on Slashdot between 2002 and 2004: “Consumers who abhor advertising also detest product placements” (Nelson, Keum & Yaros 2004). This division could also be seen among the Anarchy Online players. Most of the forum posters found that the billboards were a good addition to Anarchy Online as the game is placed in the distant future where advertisements will certainly play a more important role.

¹ Interview from October 28, 2005 on RPG Vault (<http://rpgvault.ign.com/articles/661/661522p1.html>)

² With a maximum of 8 characters per player account (<http://www.auno.org>)

³ Funcom does not give information about its subscriber base.

Virtual billboards work the same way as they do in real life

There is no real difference between real life billboards and those in Anarchy Online when it comes to static advertisements (i.e. no animated billboards). The billboards are just part of the scenery, and as players get acquainted with the game they will no longer actively look at them. This will become even more true as the graphic capabilities will become more powerful in the near future and as a result the simulated environment become more realistic with more features to look at, thus distracting from the billboards.

Billboards are an annoyance

As expected, the players who had a negative attitude towards advertisements in general had a negative attitude towards the in-game billboards. They criticized the omni-presence of the billboards, as well as their strategic positioning. Strategic means here: anywhere you will have to look at should you intend to play the game seriously.

*“Not only are they all over Athens, but inside shops, and in missions *cry*
Its a bit too much”*

There were some remarks however on the technical side: billboards, especially video billboards, could be a reason for lag, that is, a slow down of the game. Furthermore the video billboards which featured sound, provided an sonor annoyance.

Also the role playing aspect played a role. The society of Anarchy Online, would be, according to some player opinions, very advanced, and as such would have evolved and left the present gratuitous advertisement system behind. It seems that Funcom has not delivered enough details to form a clear and identical picture to all players of the social behaviours of humankind in the far future. A similar obstacle to role playing is the fact that there are working billboards in abandoned facilities (i.e. displaying the same advertisements as elsewhere in the game).

Too many billboards and not enough variation

The predominant opinion is that Anarchy Online features too many billboards, however it is also said that more variation would bring the advertisement pressure level down.

“Agree, this is way excessive, not only breaks the RP ambient, its plain unrealistic (at least Borealis is).I cant find that massification of billboards even in my city.

I wonder why we pay.”

Many players share the opinion that the advertisements “burn themselves into their minds”.

Virtual advertisements for in-game products are wanted

Players seem to like the fact that the game communicates through the billboards. The fact that the mega-corporation “Omni-Tek” (one of the two rivaling sides players have to ally with) has their own messages which they display on the billboards adds to the “big brother” feeling and is an enhancement to the role playing aspect of the game. Unfortunately, the other rivaling faction “The Clans”, which are described as rebels, use the same technique, which might reveal itself as unrealistic in role playing terms: why wouldn’t they be using more guerilla tactics and use graffiti tags for instance?

There is confusion about the existing advertisements for virtual products. The cloth brand *Miir* is widely available whereas *Dreadloch Weapons & Gear* does not exist in the game at all.

“where do i find this "dreadloch arms & gear" anyway? maybe she sell some phat stuff“

“Where I can find Deadloch“

Players are also unsure if the virtual advertisements would not be placeholders for real-life advertisements that are about to come. This is defensible as the billboard system is still in a “test” state, according to the official statement of Funcom.

Advertisements enhance the realism if done rightly

While most players agree that advertisements have no reason to be in fantasy themed games, they are requested to enhance the realism for science-fiction games, like *Anarchy Online*.

“A place like Rubi-Ka is just BEGGING for advertisement, especially from gun companies that want to sell their wares to the new arrivals on the planet. Not to mention you may see advertisements and propaganda from Omni-Tek, the Clans, or even an occasional billboard hijacked to display an alien threat, or something the Dustbrigade have to say. The billboards add life to a dull area, and let you know that there are "forces" in the game world other than the players themselves.”

Nonetheless advertisement insertion has to be carefully planned if it is to support role play.

“Hard to pretend you are an enforcer in 290th century fighting for Omni-Tek under a logo of the next street t-shirt trading company or whatever those will be. If you don't have the environment you cannot play a role and the game loses or may be changes its purpose.”

There are not enough advertisements

The only advertisement channel in Anarchy Online is the billboard system, with the exception of the Miiir Clothing logo, that can be found on billboards, flyers and the garments of course. Players claim that advertisement channel variety would actually enhance the realism of the game.

“Come on guys, this is a Sci-Fi game not your troll and elves fairy tale. If anything, there should be more ad's, flying ad's, fictional ad's, ad's for our own player cities (but minus the lag) - you name it. All this fits into the capitalistic world that AO is.”

Billboards could be used as an information tool

There have been attempts made to use the billboards as an information tool. For example the player vs player event, *Rubi-Ka Rumble*, had been announced on the billboards. Most players think that, as billboards are omnipresent in the game, a message displayed on them would definitely be registered by the majority of them.

Discussion

The results are quite similar to a study conducted by Chaney, Lin and Chaney in 2004 (Chaney, Lin & Chaney 2004). This study had 42 participants which played a FPS¹ for 15 minutes and were exposed to in-game billboards for several types of basic products and respective brands (pizza, soda and camera). One of the results of that study was that the recall rate was higher than real-life billboards in a similar exciting and stimulant environment such as a sports event for example. However, we have to consider that the number of players in Anarchy Online is significantly higher and that the exposure time is also longer, due to the slower paced game-style. Further research is needed to analyze the difference in recall rate of different virtual environments and a real, stimulant environment.

¹ First Person Shooter, i.e. a game in first person view.

Nelson, Keum and Yaros found out that “fake” brands had a negative effect on players (Nelson, Keum & Yaros 2004). Players were confused when a car that was clearly identified as being a Ferrari was called Cheeta (GTA)¹, however they would have enjoyed seeing more parodistic references, like they had been done in Max Payne². An example of such a parody could be Kentucky Fried Sushi as a player remarked.

A similar result was that advertisements were also connected to lower costs. Players assumed that by inserting advertisements in a game, the costs of the game (purchase or subscription costs) could be decreased.

Another identical result was that players did not actively remember advertisements, in a similar fashion as they remembered real-life advertisements. The participants of the Nelson, Keum and Yaros study found that the advertisements were influencing them on a subliminal level. Anarchy Online players clearly stated that such a practice would lead to immediate boycott behaviour, should they find out that they had been manipulated.

There were no posts however that confirmed that blatant placements were ineffective (a statement from the Nelson, Keum & Yaros study). One has to say however that Anarchy Online does not feature any important advertisement channels other than the billboards. Also, there was no indication of consumer learning, a phenomenon where consumer behaviour is first shaped in the game, before it applies to real-life. An example of this was the appearance of Red Bull advertisements in WipeOut³, a product which was not available in Canada at the introduction of the game. Players however related Red Bull to energy and were inclined to buy the product when it hit the market.

Result of this study:

⇒ “Consumers who abhor advertising also detest product placements”.

⇒ *Virtual billboards work the same way as they do in real life*

¹ Series of games called Grand Theft Auto (1997-now). Distributed by Rockstar Games. The player incarnates a criminal in this game.

² Max Payne (2001), developed by Remedy Entertainment, produced by 3D Realms and published by Gathering of Developers. Acclaimed for its Film Noir atmosphere.

³ Series of anti-gravity racing games called WipeOut (1995-2005), produced by Psygnosis (Sony).

- ⇒ *Billboards are an annoyance if they repeat the same advertisement too often, diminish game experience due to technical slowdowns or are the only advertising channel*
- ⇒ *Advertisements for existing in-game products and services are wanted*
- ⇒ *Advertisements have to fit into the game context*
- ⇒ *The advertisement channel should be used as an information tool*

4.4 SYNTHESIS

By merging the results of the three studies the following themes can be obtained.

Awareness

Players have the feeling that they are more aware of advertisements due to the interactivity of the game. As players are more implicated and their senses more alert, this statement may well be valid¹. Furthermore players do not want to get manipulated. Any attempt to do so will result in a reject, or even boycott, of the advertisement². More specifically to billboard advertising is the fact that billboards seem to work in exact the same fashion and have similar impact as their real-life counterparts.

Enhanced Realism

The majority of the players advocate that advertisements enhance the realism of a game, if they fit into the gaming context. This would mean that fantasy themed games could have none or very few advertisements, whereas science-fiction themed games could have an abundance of them. Most players share the opinion that we live in an advertisement saturated world. Playing a game in which the simulated world does not have any advertisements feels strange to most of the players. We have seen that there is still potential for advertisements in most games, under the condition that the advertiser uses multiple channels, billboards being only one of them.

“Fake” brands who promote products or services which are neither available in the “real”-world nor in-game are only viable if they are a parody of a real-life advertisement.

Otherwise they only irritate the player. We have seen that players are very well capable of distinguishing “fake” advertisements from “real” ones.

¹ As discussed above, a similar result can be found in Chaney, Lin & Chaney 2004.

² As discussed above, a similar result can be found in Nelson, Keum & Yaros 2004.

Advertisements play an important in-game role

Advertisements are reference points to players; they are “landmarks” in the simulated world. As players are accustomed to an advertisement saturated world, they take advertisements into account for their navigation purposes. Also, in real-life, players are used to get information through channels that are heavily used for advertisement purposes: television, journals, newsletters, radio.... Currently, there is a lack in most games to use their own advertisement in-game channels for information purposes. Also, many games which do advertisements do not promote in-game products and services.

Advertisements are related to lower cost

Advertisements are correlated to lower costs. Players expect that advertisements result in a lower purchase price, respectively lower subscription rate, or any other benefit that can be connected to the advertisement presence. Games that have two types of players, namely, paying players and non-paying players, have to take this into account. It is expected that paying players should have the possibility to get fewer advertisements than non-paying players.

Dangers

Players with a negative attitude towards advertisements in general do not feel that advertisements enhance the realism of a game¹. Advertisements can also be an annoyance if they are too repetitive, or worse, diminish the game experience due to technical slowdowns.

¹ As discussed above, a similar result can be found in Nelson, Keum & Yaros 2004.

5

MANAGERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

“To know how to recognize an opportunity in war, and take it, benefits you more than anything else.”

- Niccolò Machiavelli¹

1. Multiply advertisement channels

Visual awareness issues and consumer learning make the player mentally switch off advertisements. The advertising methods have to be diverse to counter this effect. There are many alternatives to in-game billboards: branded products, branded messages (“this info has been brought to you by...”), radio messages, NPCs working for branded companies, sponsored tracks, etc...

2. Make interactive advertisements

Make the player interact with the advertisements. The virtual world allows for unconventional methods. Refer to science-fiction movies like *Minority Report* to get new ideas. The player should see targeted advertisements that are customized and tailor-made for him. He should be able to interact with said advertisements. Obviously science-fiction themed games offer more possibilities. In-game billboards could, in such a game, be holographic and display a personal message for the bypasser. Branded clothing could adapt to the players mood².

3. Use in-game advertising channels for relevant in-game information

To avoid that players simply skip advertisements, the same channels that are used for advertisements (e.g. billboards) should be used for relevant in-game information. This is a common practice in the real world because advertisers first seek out the information channels (TV, printed press, movies,...) before putting advertisements in. In the gaming

¹ Niccolò Machiavelli (May 3, 1469 – June 21, 1527) was a Florentine statesman, political philosopher, historian, musician, poet, and comedic playwright.

² For a similar example please refer to the movie “*Back to the Future 2*”, where the Nike’s costume adapts to Marty McFly body (played by Michael J. Fox)

environment such channels do not exist beforehand in most cases. By informing players of relevant in-game facts by in-game means, as complement to the traditional Internet site, players will grow more aware of these in-game channels. It will also have the pleasant side-effect that they will pay more attention to in-game advertisements.

4. Embed advertisements into the gaming context

A common request from players is that advertisements should fit into the gaming environment. Players play games to relax and escape the real world; the last thing that they want is to be confronted with intrusive advertisements. In-game advertisements have to be subtle and help the realism of a game. They should be a pleasant addition to it, and not a nuisance.

5. Promote in-game products

If the game features advertisements, then products that are available in-game should be promoted. Nothing is more unrealistic than having advertisements for all sorts of real world products whereas available in-game products do not get any promotion at all.

6. Do not promote fake brands

Brands which do not appear in the game and do not exist in reality should not be promoted, unless they are a real addition to the game. Most often such advertisements only irritate the player. Brands which are unknown to the player at the time he plays the game, but are an addition to the game, should be inserted. Red Bull in WipeOut, for example, was a real addition to the game as it represented a powerful energy drink, which fitted into the fast-paced game.

7. Correlate advertisement presence to cost reduction or added value

Advertisements are culturally related to lower prices. Besides taxes, television is financed by advertisements. Games with an important amount of real-life advertisements have to offer some “tradeoff” to the player. This could be a lower game price, but could also be an added value feature. As players usually pay for the game, they are less likely positive about advertisements if they have a reason to believe that the advertisements lowered the production cost. Either offer paying players an option to turn commercial real-life advertisements off, or offer a superior game.

8. Use player communities for viral marketing campaigns

Player organizations are an excellent opportunity for marketers. They could agree to promote a brand on their website or even in-game in exchange for free webspace, forums, or in-game products. If an agreement exists with a game developer, certain game parts, like housings, bars or clothing could be sponsored by brands. The danger here lies of course in choosing the right offer and the right group of players who “fit” to the brand image. This is a very delicate decision; just imagine the bad promotion a company gets, if players refer to another player guild as “the gruesome barbarians from the <insert brand here> village”.

6

CONCLUSION

“Advertising will contain more information and less hot air.”

- David Ogilvy¹

6.1 CONCLUSION

In-Game Advertising is still in its infancy and has a severe delay when it comes to academic research. This study presented an overview of what has been done so far. It has shown that in-game advertisements are generally seen as an addition to a game as their appearance makes the simulated world more familiar (at least to the western player). It is therefore very important for a placement to “fit” into the game. We have seen that players who do not like advertisements at all are a minority. Instead, many players actually want to see more advertisements, but under different forms, and only as long as they fit into the game. We have also seen that advertisements are related to cost reduction. Players expect something in return for watching an ad.

6.2 LIMITS OF THIS STUDY

This study did not take into account cultural differences. Different cultures have different attitudes towards advertisements and game play in general. Games are distributed worldwide but the brands which appear in them most often are not equally present around the globe. It may well be that a global study of product placement in electronic games will never be really accurate due to that fact.

¹ David MacKenzie Ogilvy (June 23, 1911–July 21, 1999) started several advertising agencies and is the author of “Confessions of an Advertising Man”.

Only a single game developer has been interviewed. It is necessary to include other opinions from different sized companies to see how far interactive in-game advertisement is feasible from a developer's perspective.

6.3 FURTHER RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Further research is needed in several domains:

- How far gets brand image affected by in-game advertisements?
- A more detailed analysis of the effect of fake in-game brands is needed.
- Determine if the presence of brands in games reflects the presence of brands in reality. What is the effect of a discrepancy on the player? Does his cultural origin play a role?
- Do the diverse player demographics for a given game play a significant role in the perception of an in-game advertisement? Can a brand be introduced successfully in another country through in-game advertising like it has been done once (RedBull in WipeOut)?
- A more detailed analysis of the relationship between game price and amount of in-game advertisements is needed.

7

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8

GLOSSARY

Advertisement Placement A variant of product placement is advertisement placement. In this case an advertisement for the product (rather than the product itself) is seen in the movie or television series. Examples include a Lucky Strike cigarette advertisement on a billboard, a truck with a milk advertisement on its trailer, and this sentence.¹

Clan A group of players that regroup under the same banner and play the same game(s). They mark themselves by adding a clan-specific suffix to their nickname and/or by following a clan-specific code of conduct. Applicants often have to get approval from high-ranking members first before being accepted as newcomers. Many clans have their own homepage and a forum.

In-Character *cf. Out-of-Character*

MMOG Massive Multiplayer Online Game. An online game that allows thousands of players to participate in the same game through the Internet.

MMORPG Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game. The role-playing subgenre of an MMOG.

Out-of-Character Also abbreviated as ooc. Term used by RPG players to distinguish between them and their incarnated character. Ooc designates the player's opinion in contrast to *in-character*, which designates the character's opinion.

Persistent Universe A persistent universe in the MMORPG context is a game world, that evolves even when the player is not in it. In fact, as all players share the same game universe, the universe is in constant change for as long as there is at least one player online, due to their interaction with it.

¹ Definition from Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Product_Placement, July 16, 2005

Player Guild *cf. clan*

Player Organization *cf. clan*

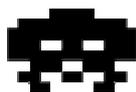
Product Placement Product placement is a promotional tactic used by marketers in which characters in a fictional play, movie, television series, or book use a real commercial product. Typically either the product and logo is shown or favourable qualities of the product are mentioned. The product price is not mentioned nor are any negative features or comparisons to similar products. Very generally, product placement involves placing a product in highly visible situations. The most common form is movie and television placements.¹

RPG Role Playing Game. An RPG is a game where the player incarnates a fictional character, which evolves in the course of the game. He has a great level of freedom in the decision-making of his character's actions.

Tie-in This practice is very much spread in the United States. It consists in using images from the movie in the brand's advertisements. Indeed, from the moment on that a picture of the movie is used in the communication policy of a brand, all sorts of combinations are possible.²

¹ Definition from Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Product_Placement, July 16, 2005

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Citroën Product Placement

Interview with Valérie Letourneur Product Placement Citroën

Peux-tu nous situer dans quel contexte tu as travaillé dans le domaine du placement de produit?

C'était un stage de deuxième année d'école de commerce qui durait quatre mois. C'était chez Citroën, constructeur automobile français, à la direction de la communication. J'étais l'assistante du responsable des relations extérieures, Catherine De Ploeg. Elle s'occupait d'un certain nombre de choses, donc notamment de gérer le parc de véhicules de presse de Citroën, mais également, de la présence de Citroën dans un certain nombre de festivals.

Ma mission consistait en deux choses: l'assister concernant la gestion du parc de véhicules de presse et analyser les scénarios des films. Citroën était beaucoup sollicité pour des tournages de films.

Si je comprends bien, on vous demandait de prêter des voitures pour les utiliser dans le film?

Exactement. C'était pour avoir des véhicules. Dans un tournage de films on a souvent besoin de véhicules. Donc le but du jeu... je ne sais plus comment s'appelle cette partie dans la création d'un film...ben, pas le prévisionneur...comment ça s'appelle... faudra que je retrouve le terme... mais le but du jeu du superviseur sur un tournage de film ... ah...c'est un nom particulier... bref, le but du jeu pour lui c'est de se faire financer un maximum de choses. Et notamment les véhicules. Pour lui, ça consiste à faire la tournée des constructeurs. Ou bien pour certains, s'ils ont vraiment un modèle en tête pour qu'on leur prête ce véhicule-là. Voilà, donc nous à Citroën, on avait un parc qui était dédié à ça. Quelle est l'intérêt de la marque? C'est mettre en avant les véhicules, bien évidemment, pour qu'ils apparaissent dans les films.

C'était quel type de véhicules en général?

Il y avait toutes types de véhicules. Tout type de véhicules de la marque Citroën.

Usés aussi? Ou que des véhicules neufs?

Ben, en fait c'était des véhicules qui pouvaient être d'occasion... ben, disons, qui avaient déjà un certain nombre de kilomètres.

Egalement des vieux modèles?

Non, que des véhicules actuels. On avait pas de vieux véhicules de prêt. On avait pas des DS, des 2CV par exemple. C'étaient des véhicules actuels, donc il y avait des XM, il y avait ... ben le problème c'est que maintenant je ne me souviens plus des noms,... je me souviens que des nouveaux noms, des nouveaux modèles des véhicules, mais des XM et l'autre c'était quoi? Je ne sais plus. En tout cas, il y avait des AX...

Et est-ce que les voitures pouvaient avoir un air utilisé?

Ah non!

Notre condition, c'était que, comme en location longue durée, on prête les véhicules, qui sont dans un très bon état, aussi bien la carrosserie que l'extérieur. On les prête, et ce qu'on demande, c'est que quand on

récupère les véhicules, que les véhicules ne soient pas abimés. Parce que dans ce cas là, on facture. On facture à la production à la production du film.

Est-ce qu'il y avait d'autres conditions ?

Le plus important c'était que la marque Citroën était sollicitée pour qu'on prête des véhicules pour mettre dans les films. L'intérêt de la marque c'était effectivement de sélectionner des films dans lesquels le prêt pouvait avoir un intérêt, donc par exemple sur des films où le véhicule se retrouvait souvent dans les scènes. Là où il était mis en avant de manière plutôt positive. Par exemple, il y a un film qui est passé, hier à la télévision. Il s'appelle "Profile bas" avec Briel.

Profile... ?

Profile bas. Je me souviens que c'était un scénario que j'avais lu. Avec Patrick Briel. Moi, je lisais les scénarios, et je disais : "Voilà le synopsis, voilà quel est l'histoire, voilà comment le véhicule est mis en scène et voilà ce que je préconise. Oui ce sera intéressant de prêter un véhicule ou non ça n'a aucun intérêt. Voilà, ça peut avoir un intérêt parce que, ça peut être..." Il y avait tout type de scénarios qui arrivaient. Aussi bien des scénarios avec des metteurs en scène qui étaient connus que l'inverse.

Peux-tu nous expliquer plus en détail ce processus?

Chaque production envoyait des scénarios. Ben chaque production, c'est-à-dire ceux qui connaissaient le système, donc en général, c'étaient quand même les grands metteurs en scène ou les films avec des budgets assez importants qui envoyaient un courrier avec un scénario demandant à ce qu'on puisse leur prêter un véhicule de telle à telle date, pour telle utilisation, etc...

Donc par contre, quand il y avait des scènes dans le film où ils souhaitaient qu'on leur prête un véhicule mais que par contre... par exemple, que le véhicule devait ...euh... devait être brulé ou abimé on le prêtait pas. Néanmoins, il y a un film très intéressant qui est passé il y a pas très longtemps à la télévision. Faudra que je retrouve le nom... en tout cas ça c'était du placement de produit. C'était avec Jean Reno, c'est passé il y a quinze jours à la télé et la bagnole était complètement abimée. Mais là Citroën a dit: "Ok, on vous prête la voiture. Ok, on assume. C'est vrai qu'on voyait la voiture, c'était une nouvelle BX. Voilà c'est la BX, de ...euh... je ne me souviens plus de l'acteur..., bref il était tout content d'avoir sa nouvelle voiture, toute neuve et tout avec toutes options et Jean Reno lui scratche complètement sa voiture dans le film. *[Remarque : il s'agit de "Opération Corned Beef" (1991) avec Christian Clavier et Jean Reno]*

Est-ce que tu te rappelles du nom du film?

Ben, je vais retrouver le nom du film. Là, je ne me souviens plus. En tout cas, c'était un bon exemple de placement de produit. La voiture était le fil conducteur dans le film, on la voyait tout le temps. Et elle était bien mise à son avantage. C'était donc très intéressant pour Citroën. Donc voilà ce que'est le placement de produit : on a les productions, ils nous envoient un courrier, ils nous relancent, on dit oui on dit non, si on dit oui il faut regarder dans le planning, parce qu'on avait un planning.

Vous aviez un planning pour les voitures ?

Ben, il y en avait pleins de véhicules. Je sais plus, je dirais qu'il y avait une cinquantaine, hmmm... ouais, environ cinquante et il fallait gérer le planning des véhicules. "C'est ok, elle rentre à telle date, je peux vous la prêter de tant à tant". Donc il y avait un planning important. Ce n'était pas moi qui le gèrait. Mais j'étais dans les service où c'était géré. Il y avait des étapes comme dans la location longue durée : la livraison du véhicule, la restitution du véhicule, l'assurance du véhicule... parce que je crois que l'assurance... on ne payait pas l'assurance. On prêtait le véhicule, mais je crois qu'il fallait que la production assure le véhicule. Je ne l'affirmerais pas à 100%, mais je crois qu'ils devaient assurer le véhicule pendant la période du tournage.

Si je résume: tu recevais les scénarios, tu devais les regarder et juger si c'était bon ou non. Je suppose que si par exemple la voiture tombait tout le temps en panne dans le film tu disais non.

Voilà. Exactement. "Est-ce que ça mettait en valeur le véhicule?"

Est-ce que tu avais une charte ou est-ce que c'était au pif?

Ben c'était en fonction de ces différents critères. Comment le véhicule était-il utilisé au sein du scénario, est-ce qu'il était présent souvent... Ben, il y avait... qui était le metteur en scène? qui étaient les acteurs? Comment allait être vendu le film? Comment le film allait être distribué. Parce qu'il y a des différences entre une super production américaine qui tourne en France et un petit metteur en scène pas connu. Donc le choix est vite trouvé. Tu préfères mettre ton véhicule parce que tu connais le nom et parce qu'il y a plus de chance d'être vu par un public français que dans des films qui vont passer dans très peu de salles. Donc il y avait ce critère là. Il y avait comment allait mis être en scène le véhicule et puis effectivement comment l'image de Citroën allait être véhiculée. Est-ce que le nom de la voiture allait être citée? Ca aussi c'était important... par exemple dans le film dont je viens de te parler, dont je ne me souviens plus du nom, avec Jean Reno, le nom de la voiture est cité, la voiture est citée. Elle est vraiment bien mis en avant.

Quant est-il de la concurrence?

Citroën, contrairement à Peugeot, avait pris le parti pris de valoriser son image dans le cinéma, voire, dans le domaine du cinéma. Elle associe son image avec le cinéma, parce que le cinéma est quand même assez porteur, ça touche une cible assez jeune, futur acheteur de véhicule, etc... donc c'est déjà cet environnement là qui jouait. Ca se traduisait par quoi? Ca se traduisait par effectivement avoir un parc de véhicules, dédiés à être prêtés pour des films, mais également pour des téléfilms. On recevait également des scénarios pour des téléfilms. Et d'ailleurs, le plus emblématique c'était que Citroën prêtait une XM à Navarro, qui est un téléfilm policier français. Navarro c'était l'acteur Roger Alain. Donc c'est une figure emblématique, ça passait en prime time toutes les semaines. Et c'était plutôt une cible. Il avait toujours sa XM.

Donc on véhicule l'image de Citroën dans les films, les téléfilms, donc le cinéma et la télé. Et puis il y avait un troisième,... ben, il y avait d'autres pistes. Par exemple, d'être présent sur des festivals de cinéma, dédiés au cinéma ou au nom de la communication. Renault était présent sur le festival de Cannes, c'est-à-dire fournissait les voitures officielles du festival de Cannes, ce qui permettait d'occuper un certain territoire de communication, près du festival. C'est quand même l'occasion de toucher un certain nombre de gens sur place, d'avoir une certaine présence sur place, mais également relié dans les médias quand on parlait du festival de Cannes. Citroën avait donc décidé, quand moi j'y étais, de fournir les voitures officielles du festival du film américain de Deauville. Et donc Citroën occupait ce terrain-là, et on prêtait toute sorte de XM, de grosses voitures, pour le festival avec des chauffeurs et était ainsi présent médiatiquement pendant tout le festival du film américain. On véhiculait des stars.

Cela incluait des bannières?

Oui. On était présent à Deauville avec des drapeaux Citroën, en même temps que les drapeaux d'autres sponsors du festival du film américain. Maintenant je crois que c'est fini. Citroën n'est plus partenaire.

Donc vous ne demandiez pas à de grandes productions. C'est eux qui s'adressaient à Citroën. C'est comme une sorte de service. Vous ne demandiez rien en échange?

Ben, on pouvait demander que le nom du véhicule soit cité, ou si on estimait dans le scénario qu'il y avait peut-être la possibilité à un moment donné que le véhicule soit un peu mieux mis en avant, on pouvait demander.

Y avait-il des négociations sur certains aspects ? Du style "si vous voulez qu'on met le véhicule tellement en avant, alors, dans ce cas là..."

Si, parce qu'il y avait un contrat de toute façon rédigé que devait signer la production donc heu... ben en fait ça passait surtout à travers le relationnel parce qu'après tout ma responsable connaissait certain nombre de gens de la production. Des personnes qui en fait travaillaient sur plusieurs films en même temps. Qui donc après venaient la solliciter elle plutôt que quelqu'un d'autre. Tout cela était beaucoup basé sur du relationnel.

Y avait-il un contrôle? Durant le tournage ou après dans le film?

Non. Mais c'était stipulé dans le contrat. "Oui, respectez les engagements du scénario qu'on avait lu."

Est-ce que tu faisais attention s'il y avait des placements de produits de concurrents dans le film?

Non. Pas du tout. En fait l'objectif de mon stage c'était de rédiger un mémo sur comment améliorer l'image de Citroën dans le cinéma. J'avais étudié différentes pistes sur comment développer le placement de produit, comment effectivement être plus présent sur les festivals. Une de mes pistes était de toucher les jeunes via notamment la fête du cinéma de Paris. Que Citroën soit bien plus présent lors de cette manifestation et mieux associé à la fête du cinéma, d'être sponsor. Donc c'étaient des pistes, mais ce n'a pas été fait je ne crois. Une autre piste était de créer une série spéciale associée au cinéma. Puisque en fait la vocation c'était de toucher une cible quand même assez jeune, de 18 à 25 ans, futurs acheteurs de véhicules.

Donc ça c'était des pistes. En voilà deux : toucher les jeunes au festival de Paris et créer une série spéciale, c'est-à-dire un véhicule série spéciale. Je sais qu'il y en a qui l'ont fait juste après afin de l'associer au cinéma.

Qu'est-ce que c'est une série spéciale au niveau des véhicules ? Prenons par exemple une Golf. On va lui mettre de série la clim et l'airbag et puis la fermeture centralisée admettons. Et puis on va l'appeler, on va faire une opération spéciale, on va l'appeler la série spéciale, la série spéciale..heu...

Comme la Citroën Picasso?

Non, Picasso c'est le nom d'un véhicule, un petit monospace. Je n'ai pas de nom de série spéciale qui me vient en tête. Une série spéciale c'est un modèle avec un nom spécial derrière. C'est à un moment donné afin de remettre un peu de pêche sur un véhicule ils sortent un série spéciale qui contient déjà un certain nombre de choses d'office.

Comme la Golf Joker alors?

Voilà, peut-être.

Ben sache que c'était super intéressant. Parce qu'on est allé sur les tournages de films. J'ai rencontré, je ne sais même plus comment il s'appelait, un acteur, bon c'était vraiment génial quoi.

Pourquoi es-tu allée sur les tournages de films?

Ben tout simplement parce qu'on avait prêté des véhicules. On avait prêté un véhicule pour le tournage de ce film et puis on déjeunait ce jour là avec le gars de la production. Il nous a dit venez voir le tournage, venez rencontrer un acteur. Ce n'est que du relationnel en fait. Et puis en plus il arrivait souvent qu'on prêtait non seulement un véhicule pour un tournage mais également un véhicule pour l'équipe du tournage.

Il y avait des petits deals alors?

Voilà. par exemple tu parlais de Picasso. Je ne me rappelle plus du modèle de l'époque, comme l'Espace de Renault. C'était le genre de véhicule qu'on avait besoin pour le tournage. Ils pouvaient mettre du matériel et du personnel dedans. Donc souvent ils demandaient deux véhicules.

Est-ce que vous mettiez des contraintes spécifiques ? Comme par exemple que le symbole de Citroën devait être bien visible dans le film, avec même avec le focus dessus?

Alors non, parce qu'on ne payait pas nous

C'est-à-dire?

Nous on paie pas, on prête le véhicule, c'est comme si on payait, mais on prête nos véhicules. On demandait effectivement, du moins, on pouvait demander un certain nombre de choses. Mais je ne me souviens pas très bien de cette partie. Je ne me souviens pas de ce qui était rédigé dans les contrats.

Donc à aucun moment le placement de produit de Citroën n'avait été pris pour de la pub?

Oui

Et il n'y avait jamais des problèmes légaux là-dessus?

Non, je ne crois pas. On paie pas, ben, on sponsorise quand on prête un véhicule. Mais on ne paie pas en tant que tel, parce que le placement de produits à l'américaine, là ils paient. Coca paie pour que Coca soit visible. Eux ils font vraiment une démarche volontaire, et nous, à l'époque, on n'avait pas cette démarche.

Mais par contre je me souviens de James Bond. James Bond c'est le truc salon. Je me souviens parce que je l'avais utilisé dans mon mémoire. Ca me revient. Effectivement, on n'avait pas cette démarche volontaire. Par exemple dans James Bond on cite Martini. Martini paie pour qu'ils disent qu'il boit du Martini. Et sa voiture c'était une Aston Martin.

Donc Aston Martin... Je pense que premièrement ils devaient payer et deuxièmement ils fournissaient la voiture pour être cité. Nous on ne payait pas. On avait une démarche volontaire mais on n'allait pas encore jusqu'à l'extrême, comme tu disais, à aller solliciter les productions, à aller savoir ce qui se tramait. Il n'y avait pas de budget pour ça en fait.

Donc il fallait vraiment que tu analyses le scénario pour voir si la voiture était mise en avant. Parce que je suppose, qu'il y avait également d'autres voitures qui apparaissaient dans le film.

Par exemple, dans Profil bas je me souviens que... Il me semble que les "méchants" avaient des voitures allemandes. Il fallait vraiment voir comment le véhicule était utilisé. S'il était utilisé par un personnage qui était connoté négativement, effectivement, il fallait se demander si cela n'avait pas d'influence sur la marque. Parce que tout dépend comment s'était utilisé. C'est jugé tout ça.

C'était juger aussi si on voyait beaucoup le véhicule. Parce que effectivement si c'était pour prêter un véhicule un mois, pour qu'il apparaisse dans le film pendant 30 secondes, ça ne vaut pas le coup.

Valérie, je te remercie beaucoup pour cet entretien.

Appendix B: Examples Citroën Product Placement

Examples of Citroën movie product placements



Citroën BX



Citroën MX (1989)

Those cars were used in the film "Operation Corned Beef" with Jean Reno and Christian Clavier.



Citroën DS Custom

The car used by secret agent Dragonfly (Angela Lindvall) in Roman Coppola's "CQ"



Citroën Fourgon Type H
numerous films



Citroën DS 19 (1963)

Irene Cassini (Uma Thurman) drives this in "Gattaca."



Citroën DS 21 "Fantomas" (1955)

This car gets used by the villain "Fantomas" in 3 films of the saga.



Citroën DS 21

Huber Fiorentini (Jean Reno) drives this car in "Wasabi". It is also the car used by the french police in "Catch me if you can" with Leonardo DiCaprio.



Citroën DS 21

The taxi cab of "Back to the Future 2" with Michael J. Fox.



Citroën 2 CV

Melina Havelock drives this in the James Bond film "For Your Eyes Only" with Roger Moore.

References: Moviecars.it – <http://www.moviecars.it/Citroën.php>

Internet Movie Cars Data Base – http://www.imcdb.org/movie_100303-L-operation-corned-beef.html

Appendix C: Interview Radon Labs GmbH

Interview with Bernd Beyreuther Founder Radon Labs GmbH, Berlin

Wie ist euer Standpunkt zum Thema Werbung allgemein?

Positiv. Werbung ist Teil unserer westlichen Kultur.

Findet ihr dass das Auftreten von Werbung oder Marken in einem Spiel eine Bereicherung für letzteres sind?

Grundsätzlich - Ja.

Glaubt ihr dass es für den Spieler einen Unterschied macht, ob die Werbung / Marken welche im Spiel auftreten, real (zB. Coca-Cola) oder fiktiv (zB. Radon-Cola) sind?

Ja. Reale Marken machen ein Spiel realer.
Fiktive Marken wirken meist parodistisch.

Könntet ihr euch vorstellen dass Produktplatzierung / eingebaute Werbung eine zusätzliche Einnahmequelle für Radon Labs sein könnte? Zum Beispiel: ein Persil Plakat in Schwarzenberg und als Gegenleistung zahlt die Firma Henkel für jedes verkaufte Spiel einen Euro.

Natürlich - ja. Wenn wir 1 Euro zusätzlich pro Spiel bekämen, würden wir sogar einen ganzen Persil-Level einbauen.

Die Firma Massive Interactive bietet ein Verfahren an um dynamisch Werbung / Produktplatzierung in Spiele einzuspielen. Die Spielehersteller bestimmen die Zonen für Placements / Werbung in ihrem Spiel, sowie die Art der Produkte / Werbung und Massive Interactive streamt dann automatisch den Inhalt der Zonen über das Internet ein. Was haltet ihr von einem solchen System und welchen Einfluss, glaubt ihr, wird dies auf die Spiele-Industrie haben?

Grundsätzlich interessant - aber nur in manchen Produkten machbar. Allerdings ist das kritisch wenn es stört. (So kann auch eine blinkende Werbung selbst im MS Messenger wirklich brutal nerven. Das darf natürlich nicht sein.) Der globale Einfluß so eines Systems auf Spiele an sich dürfte gering bleiben.

Findet ihr, dass der Spieler eine Möglichkeit haben sollte um Werbung / Produktplatzierung in seinem Spiel abschalten zu können?

Nein. Werbung in Spielen macht nur dann Sinn, wenn sie dicht und tief in das Setting integriert ist. Dort ist ein Abschalten nicht - oder schwer möglich.

Bitte gebt an für welche Spielkategorien ihr gerne Produktplatzierung / Werbung sehen möchtet:

- FPS (Halo, Doom,...)
- Jump and Run (Mario, Jak and Daxter,...)
- Kampf (Tekken, Street Fighter, Dead or Alive,...)
- Role Playing Games (Final Fantasy, Morrowind,...)
- Sportspiele (Pro Evolution Soccer, NHL 2005, NBA Live,...)
- Racing (Gran Turismo, Need for Speed,...)
- Management (Sim City, Sims...)
- Echtzeitstrategie (Warcraft, Age of Empires,...)
- Adventures (Day of the Tentacle, Myst,...)
- 3D Action (Metal Gear Solid, Silent Hill, Resident Evil,...)
- Massive Multiplayer Online Games (Everquest, Ultima Online, World of Warcraft,...)
- Puzzle (Tetris, ..)
- Oldies (PacMan, Space Invaders,...)
- Simulationen (Flight Simulator, Panzer Elite, Aces of the Pacific,...)

- Shoot'em up (R-Type,...)
 - Games mit Zusatz (Donkey Konga, Eye Toy, Virtua Cop, Dance Dance Revolution,...)
- ... äh. Gern überall - denke ich.

Appendix D: Interview Guide for players

Interview Guide for Players

Topic	Question	Points
Customer Profile	Personal Details	Age, gender, nationality
	Habitat	Place, roommates
	Hobbies	What hobbies,
	Movie goer profile	Last seen movie, what like it about
	RPG player	What game(s)
Video Games	Amount and frequency	How often, how long
	Video game profile	Last played game, best game played so far, Kind of games played usually
	MMOG	MMOG player, last MMOG played.
Product Placement	Advertising awareness	Best recent advertisement
		Best advertisement so far
		Worst advertisement so far
	Active brand awareness	Recall advertisements from memory
	Product placement awareness	Product placement in last seen movie
		Product placement in last played video game
Number of placements in last video game.		
Attitude towards product placement	Positive or negative.	
Improvements		When should product placement be used?
		What could be improved?

Appendix E: Player Interviews

These interviews have been conducted through instant messaging. GC stands for Georges Camy who conducted the interviews.

Interview with Arinyes 24, female, Dutch Anarchy Online Player

GC: I need the interview for my master thesis. It will be included in my thesis. So I need your approval that I may print it

Arinyes: I have no problem with that

Arinyes: you're free to ask

Arinyes: don't mean I'll have to answer, tho

GC: good. it will last approx 30 min

GC: no you don't have to.

GC: ok. so lets begin.

GC: tell me a bit about yourself. Just the big things so that we can situate you

Arinyes: Big things about me... well, I'm an AO player :P

Arinyes: I enjoy playing games, tho

Arinyes: I'm dutch and currently share a house with 3 others

GC: you live in the netherlands right?

Arinyes: yup

Arinyes: Dutch is also my native language, though english lies on a ver close second place

GC: what is your professional situation? you don't have to be precise

Arinyes: Currently I have a temporary full-time job

Arinyes: for the next two months

Arinyes: I'm employed through an agency who hire out hands in the area of post and archive

Arinyes: specialists, so to speak

Arinyes: I abhor the title, however

GC: what is your level of studies?

Arinyes: Hmm... I closed off the general higher education

Arinyes: it's one step below going to university

GC: do you have brothers and/or sisters?

Arinyes: the dutch system is rather complex in that

Arinyes: I have one brother... younger

GC: ok. now lets move on to your interests. What are your main hobbies?

Arinyes: mostly writing

GC: what kind of writing?

Arinyes: stories

Arinyes: mainly in the directions of fantasy and sci-fi

Arinyes: sometimes when I'm inspired, I write the occasional poem

GC: talking about sci-fi and fantasy what are the last movies you saw?

Arinyes: new movie, or just what I watched last time

GC: watched last time

Arinyes: The Chronicles of Riddick last night

GC: did you like it?

Arinyes: Vin Diesel... need I say more? ^^

GC: what didn't you like about it?

Arinyes: what's there not to like? a hardcore-nothing-but-action movie in this day and age

Arinyes: I love the movie

Arinyes: I own the DVD

Arinyes: I don't buy movies I don't like

GC: ok. Do you remember if there were any ads in this movie?

Arinyes: except for the pre-movie nonsense, I don't remember seeing anything that supported one brand or another

GC: would you like to have seen an ad in the chronicles?

Arinyes: rather not
Arinyes: in a movie playing in some alternate place... it would be wrong for ads being put in there
Arinyes: I mean... seeing Nike or Coca Cola flash on a billboard in some futuristic other planet world...
Arinyes: It wouldn't fit in the context of the movie itself
GC: so if an ad fits in the context of the movie would it be acceptable?
Arinyes: of course
Arinyes: there's a movie called space truckers, which is about trucks being space ships and faring lanes
GC: would you say it enhances the realism?
Arinyes: in some cases it does
GC: tell me about that space truckers
Arinyes: well, for one, at the beginning you see a bunch of billboards the way you see them at the american highways
Arinyes: just floating across one of these space lanes
Arinyes: some you might recognize back to actual companies, though most of them were just there to add to the atmosphere
GC: and how did you find that?
Arinyes: a nice touch
GC: getting back to you : when did you begin playing video games?
Arinyes: boy... when I was about 5 or 6, I think
Arinyes: just a simple game on an ancient antique called P2000
GC: and since then did you play video games regularly?
Arinyes: yeah
Arinyes: back in the days that games could be VERY addictive
GC: how much time a day do you spent on games?
Arinyes: depends entirely on my fancy
Arinyes: I can spend whole days behind one game or another
Arinyes: and then only fire up my PC to write for as much as 2 months
GC: how much time do you spent behind your pc then?
Arinyes: off and on? a good deal of my waking time, I suppose
Arinyes: at work, it depends a bit on what I'm supposed to do
GC: what games do you play at the moment?
Arinyes: right now, I'm mostly just at AO
Arinyes: I did play some Need for Speed 2
Arinyes: NfS: Underground 2, I mean
GC: what do you think of massive multiplayer games?
Arinyes: they're interesting to say the least
Arinyes: just the concept of doing things with other living and thinking people instead of the stupid NPC computer characters
Arinyes: and as well, being able to talk with folks the globe over
GC: what is it that makes you play ao?
Arinyes: I dunno... just the fact I've befriended some folks, became in some way a part of their lives, etc....
GC: how do you like the interaction of funcom into the game?
Arinyes: you mean the ads they put in?
GC: i was thinking more generally, but yes what about the ads
Arinyes: well, it's fun to watch them from time to time
Arinyes: it gives a bit more of life in this place
Arinyes: not nearly enough really changes over time
Arinyes: camped wagons never move, for instance
GC: what about the new video one?
Arinyes: I've been watching it... I still haven't figured out what it's about
GC: how do you like it?
Arinyes: it's alright, I guess
GC: how do you like the alienware ads? "Powering the Grid"
Arinyes: well, they go their merry way, and I'll take my own
Arinyes: I'm not THAT much a fan of AO
GC: what do you mean by that?
Arinyes: well, I take it to a certain limit
Arinyes: I enjoy playing an RPG
Arinyes: but I'm not plunging headlong into it
GC: interesting

GC: so would you like to have "coca cola" served in the bars for example?
Arinyes: it doesn't fit
GC: what would fit then for example?
Arinyes: we're supposedly here millennia into some distant future and halfway across the universe
Arinyes: what does fit, is the stuff they sell
Arinyes: such as the bronto burger
Arinyes: and there's 2 coke's to be had
GC: but not mcdonalds
Arinyes: had*
Arinyes: no
Arinyes: if you make up a make-belief future distant planet...
Arinyes: it only stands to reason things have changed
Arinyes: Coca Cola won't last forever either
Arinyes: nor will McDonalds make such a break that the name will be preserved through history
GC: what kind of brands would fit in here then?
Arinyes: not any that we know
Arinyes: we're so far in the future with so many different technologies...
Arinyes: and so much more advanced
GC: so if I understand you right, you like only fake ads in the game?
Arinyes: mostly
GC: mostly? what are the exceptions?
Arinyes: ratings from a game magazine
Arinyes: things that might be relevant
GC: why?
Arinyes: well, it still is a game
Arinyes: a little flaunting of how great a game it is... it's something they should be proud of
GC: and in nfs?
Arinyes: well, there's no mention of ratings from any game magazine, but there's plenty in car parts
Arinyes: and so it should be
Arinyes: the game is about cars and the like
GC: and what about a "coca-cola" billboard?
GC: somewhere in the city?
Arinyes: I don't think it would've been out of place, had they done it
GC: it wouldn't enhance the realism?
Arinyes: difficult to tell
Arinyes: the city, so far I know, is one that's made up
Arinyes: however, it does have burger kings
Arinyes: so I guess, the coca cola sign would have found a good spot in there
Arinyes: there's a lack of billboards, to be sure
GC: do you think that when you get hungry playing the game, you would opt for burger king?
Arinyes laughs
Arinyes: that'll be the day
Arinyes: hardly
Arinyes: ads have long since been blown out of proportion, really
Arinyes: they were intended for letting people know what there was
Arinyes: not to make people buy stuff they don't need or want
GC: so in general you think that we have too much ads?
Arinyes: I think that the ads have surpassed the line of what they should be
Arinyes: these days it's all about come buy us, cause we're better than others
Arinyes: it's a strive for the customer that galls me
Arinyes: besides that, they're becoming annoying... hardly any creativity anymore
Arinyes: I applaud the few pearls that're found among the hundreds of trash
GC: what actual "pearls" do you remember?
Arinyes: geez... one sticks to mind...
Arinyes: I don't remember exactly what it was for
GC: just tell me
Arinyes: well, it pulled back a few scenes of other insurance companies
Arinyes: a scene where some guy found a fly in his soup and gives it CPR
GC: CPR ?
Arinyes: you know... the technique of bringing people from the brink of death

Arinyes: mouth to mouth and massaging the heart
GC: oh ok.
Arinyes: in the ad that I find a pearl, it's an old guy who finds a fly in his soup
Arinyes: then takes it out and smashes it
Arinyes: as normal people would
Arinyes: I just find it brilliant... it's really no-nonsense
GC: and what does it say? what is the message?
Arinyes: more or less, we're not coming with any bullshit
Arinyes: of course, in the end, it's still the same thing
Arinyes: but at least you know what you're to expect
GC: One last question. What would you recommend funcom in regards to the ads?
Arinyes: recommend... hmm... do as they've done before
Arinyes: leave the ads on the displays where they are
Arinyes: maybe just advertise a little more on coming events
Arinyes: if you want to make use of ads, that would be a good one
GC: as they did for the pvp tournament?
Arinyes: yeah
Arinyes: if they would do the same for parties at Reet's...
Arinyes: or one thing or the other...
Arinyes: it would be relevant to the game, that much would be sure
Arinyes: just like the alienware
Arinyes: I may not be too interested in it, but that doesn't mean it wouldn't serve a purpose
GC: So if it serves a purpose its alright
Arinyes: up to a certain point, yes
GC: what about miiir?
Arinyes: what about it/
Arinyes: the fashion line?
GC: yes
GC: How do you find it that it has no competitors?
Arinyes: considering how little is being added to clothes in general... --
Arinyes: in the end, it's still funcom that designs it
Arinyes: so, I think competition means little in fashion design
GC: Ok. I'm at the end of my questions. Do you have anything to ad?
Arinyes: not that I'm aware of^^
GC: well then, thank you very much :-)

**Interview with Lygea
27, female, Brazilian
Anarchy Online Player**

GC: tu sais que tu seras cité dans la thèse

GC: es-tu d'accord avec cela?

Lygea: nom, prenom, nationalité, etc

Lygea: ok

Lygea: oui

GC: ok.

GC: peux-tu me donner ton age, ta nationalité et ton sexe?

Lygea: Age: 27 ans

Lygea: Sexe: Féminin

Lygea: Nationalité: Brésilienne

Lygea:

GC: ou est-ce que tu habites?

Lygea: À Paris. Dans une résidence universitaire.

GC: tu y vis seul ou avec des collocs?

Lygea: seule.

GC: quels sont tes hobbies?

Lygea: Ces derniers temps, je fais du sport, je lis beaucoup et je joue à un mmorpg

GC: tu vas aussi au cinéma?

Lygea: Oui.

GC: quel était ton dernier film?

Lygea: Charlie et la Chocolaterie

Lygea: ou "The Island".

GC: lequel tu as préféré?

Lygea: "The Island"

GC: tu as aimé?

Lygea: Oui, beaucoup.

Lygea: Je l'ai beaucoup aimé.

GC: qu'est-ce que tu as aimé?

Lygea: Qu'est-ce que j'ai aimé dans le film? Il y a tellement de choses... J'ai aimé la façon dont l'histoire se déroulait, où les personnages vivaient au début dans une totale ignorance dans un système de vie codé sans se poser des questions. Un monde futuriste,

Lygea: où la Terre telle qu'on la connaissait n'existe plus.

GC: tout à fait autre chose maintenant.

GC: qu'est-ce que tu penses de la publicité?

Lygea: Dans quel sens?

GC: ton opinion en général sur la publicité. qu'est-ce qui te viens en tête quand on te fit pub?

Lygea: En tête

Lygea: Pardon. Erreur de frapper

Lygea: frappe!!

Lygea: J'aime énormément les belles publicités, les publicités bien faites.

Lygea: Celles qui sont intelligentes.

GC: quels sentiments te font elles

Lygea: J'ai eu pendant des semaines la chanson d'une pub d'une voiture dans ma tête. Les images et la musique étaient si paisibles, et le tout donnait une impression d'aventure. J'avais envie de conduire tout de suite, en écoutant la chanson.

GC: `est-ce que tu penses que montrer de la pub ou faire de la pub pour qch dans un film est une bonne chose?

Lygea: C'est un peu comme dans la vie réelle. Ça dépend de la manière dont on la conçoit et dont on la montre.

Lygea: Si c'est trop forcé, c'est plutôt gênant.

GC: est-ce que tu trouves qu'un film dans lequel on voit de la pub et des marques est plus "réaliste" qu'un film ou on n'en voit pas?

Lygea: Tout à fait. Si la publicité est bien inserée, comme que "naturellement", le résultat peut même être assez intéressant.

GC: càd?

Lygea: Bon, je voulais dire qu'un film dans lequel on voit de la pub (si la pub n'est pas trop exagérée) est plus réaliste.

GC: qu'est-ce que tu penses de la pub ou de l'apparition de marques dans un jeu vidéo?

GC: est-ce que c'est similaire pour toi?

GC:

GC: qu'est-ce que tu penses de la pub ou de l'apparition de marques dans un jeu vidéo?

GC: est-ce que c'est similaire pour toi?

Lygea: Dans le cas de la trilogie Back to the Future, par exemple. La publicité y est très bien insérée, au point d'être une addition à l'histoire elle-même.

GC:

GC: qu'est-ce que tu penses de la pub ou de l'apparition de marques dans un jeu vidéo?

GC: qu'est-ce que tu penses de la pub ou de l'apparition de marques dans un jeu vidéo?

Lygea: Dans un jeu vidéo, la question est plus délicate que dans un film.

Lygea: Si la pub n'a rien à avoir avec le jeu, ou si elle est trop ostensible

GC: c'est similaire aux films alors?

Lygea: A mon avis, la pub dans les jeux n'est pas similaire à celle dans les films. Du moins, pas dans tous les jeux. Dans un jeu de football, ou de course de voitures, la publicité (même si ostensible) fait en sorte que le jeu devienne plus réaliste.

Lygea: Mais ce ne sont pas tous les types de jeux qui se prêtent à la pub, du moins à la publicité très présente et très visible.

GC: est-ce que tu pense que indépendamment de ça, la pub devrait être utilisée pour rendre un jeu moins cher ou même gratuit?

Lygea: Certainement.

GC: dans ce cas est-ce qu'il devrait y avoir un bouton on/off pour les gens qui paient?

Lygea: Oui, je crois que ce serait une bonne chose.

GC: Ou penses-tu peut-on insérer de la pub?

Lygea: Dans les jeux de sport

Lygea: de course de voitures. Dans certains Adventure games la pub pourrait être même géniale si bien insérée.

GC: a quoi est-ce que tu penses en particulier?

Lygea: Peut-être dans certains mmorpg aussi, du moment où la publicité soit bien intégrée au jeu.

Lygea: En particulier?

Lygea: Bon, des canettes de coca-cola dans un adventure que je jouais avant...

GC: oui un exemple bien concret

GC: racontes!

Lygea: Dans les jeux de sport e de course de voitures, des panneaux publicitaires.

Lygea: Je jouais un adventure qui se déroulait simultanément au passé, au présent et au futur, dans la même maison.

GC: et pour ton jeu d'aventures c'était ou?

Lygea: Day of the Tentacle.

GC: raconte pour coca cola

Lygea: Bon, ça aurait été intéressant s'il y avait des choses réelles là-dedans. Une canette de coca-cola, c'est une chose réelle.

Lygea: Comme le jeu se déroulait en trois moments différents (passé, présent, futur), ça aurait pu constituer un élément de plus dans l'histoire.

GC: hum

GC: bonne idée

Lygea: Parfois, les marques attachent plus de concepts que les produits en soi.

GC: je reprends rapidement les questions oubliées

Lygea: C'est pour cela que le réalisme est plus grand lorsqu'on boit une "Coca-cola" et pas une "cola"

GC: tu te rappelles de la dernière pub que tu as vue?

Lygea: hum...

Lygea: de quelle sorte?

GC: la dernière

GC: tu as 3 secondes

GC: 2

Lygea: La toute dernière, je crois que c'était une affiche de glaces Nestlé.

GC: la dernière pub que tu as vu dans un film

Lygea: Une pub que je n'aime pas du tout; trop égoïste. ("je finis et je te le donne", ou qqchose comme ça)

Lygea: Dans le film ou avant le film?

GC: dans

Lygea: attends...

Lygea: question difficile; j'ai l'impression qu'on est tellement habitués à voir de la pub autour de nous qu'elle ne nous frappe pas quand on la voit dans un film. Je pense

GC: dernière pub vue dans un jeu vidéo?

Lygea: Les pubs dans Anarchy Online.

Lygea: Des panneaux avec des véhicules, par exemple

GC: est-ce que tu penses qu'on devrait mélanger des pubs "virtuelles" (space cola) et des pubs "réelles" (coca cola) dans un jeu?

Lygea: Aucune idée. Le résultat pourrait être confus.

Lygea: Mais dans la vie réelle, on retrouve dans les supermarchés des sodas de marques inconnues, des "space cola" qu'on oubliera une fois sortis.

GC: mais dans anarchy online ils font de la pub pour des avions futuristes aussi

Lygea: J'ai toujours pensé qu'ils étaient disponibles uniquement dans le jeu (ce sont les véhicules que je mentionne plus haut)

Lygea:

Yamaha - The Stiletto ?? Ce sont deux noms qui renvoient à des marques réelles. Le super air vehicle tellement convoité renvoie à yamaha.

[Remarque: Yamaha est le nom de marque de l'avion disponible en Anarchy Online]

GC: c'est vrai ça

Lygea: Par la prononciation et surtout par le dessin des lettres.

GC: vrai aussi

Lygea: Une dernière chose.

Lygea: Dans un jeu, du fait qu'on passe plus de temps devant l'écran, on remarque beaucoup plus les pubs.

Lygea: Comme on doit passer dans un même endroit à plusieurs reprises, on est plus conscient.

Lygea: Même parce qu'on doit savoir prendre ses repères

Lygea: Un panneau publicitaire, c'est une repère.

GC: très juste

Lygea: Dans un film, cela ne se passe pas.

Lygea: Je ne remarque les pubs dans les films que lorsqu'elles sont trop visibles, ou vraiment trop géniales.

Lygea: Dans un jeu, non.

Lygea: Elles peuvent avoir un rôle en soi.

GC: je te remercie pour cet entretien

Interview with Hawk
28, male, Luxembourgian
World of Warcraft Player

GC : ok. Dann fueren mer lass. Ziel mer e besselchen iwwert dech. Wei aal, waat's de sou mechs, wou's de schaffs

Hawk : also ech sin e jonken Druid deen ze Camp Tauroja opge ... e sorry nee lo awer serieux

Hawk : 28 Joer Letzebuenger Informatiker

Hawk : Hobbies Musek maachen (percussioun & guitar), Filmer, Liesen

Hawk : (et ass jo ok wann ech Kurzstil schreiwen ?)

Hawk : Hobbies och nach Reesen

GC : jo, daat ass keen Problem

Hawk : ech schaffen an engem Forschungsinstitut

GC : Filmer, Waat ass den leschten Film deens du gesin hues?

Hawk : wou ech techneschen Assistent sin

Hawk : Batman Begins

GC : An, wei fonns de en ?

Hawk : Erstaunlech gudd fir e Batman Film, mee d'Story un sech haat mech e weineg enttäuscht

GC : wisou daat?

Hawk : kllassesch verlueren Séil déi fir eppes guddes motivéiert gedd waat zem Schluss awer béis ass

Hawk : an hien bleiwt awer gudd

Hawk : irgendwéi wuer daat zimlech am Ufank évident

GC : Waat huet dir besonnesch gudd gefall un deem Film?

Hawk : d'Atmosphär ass gudd eriwier komm an de Film haat wirklech guer keen "Comic" Stil

Hawk : flott wuer och weis du gesin hues wéi d'Character sech entweckelt hun z.B. de Gordon

GC : zu eppes anescht : du spills rollespiller, gell? Waat gefällt dir esou drun?

Hawk : paper oder pc?

GC : beides

Hawk : pen&paper do d'Freiheet vun de Choixen déi een huet. Daat ass daat waat de greissten Spaass mecht, alles ass méiglech sou ze soen

Hawk : pc: d'Fantasie vun de Welten, Entwecklung vun engem Character deen emmer méi staark gett, och erem

Hawk : vergiess "och erem"

GC : Wei oft spills du Computerspiller?

GC : Stonnen pro Dag?

GC : Woch?

Hawk : hmm, ech mengen do muss du 2 cas berècksichtegen

Hawk : matt WoW dégénéreiert et e weineg am Moment: bis 12h pro Woch

Hawk : soss 6h pro Woch

GC : Waat fir eng Zort Computerspiller?

Hawk : daat meeht RP & Strategie, och FPS wann se vun der Story spannend a gudd sin (z.b. HL2)

Hawk : (ech schreiwen letzebuergesch wéi eng Kouh

GC : daat ass egal, et geet just emt d'Resultat, duerno maachen ech en online survey draus

GC : Beschten Spill daats du je gespilt hues?

Hawk : kann ech do puer Entwerten gin?

GC : JO

GC : jo, fuer duer

Hawk : Monkey Island 1&2, Planescape Torment, Baldur's Gate 1&2, Half-Life 1&2, Need For Speed Spiller, Civilization Spiller, Age of Empires 1&2, World of Warcraft

GC : Zu engem aaneren Thema : Publiciteit

GC : Waat ass dei leschten bescht Reklam un dei's du dech erenners?

Hawk : ech mengen Budweiser Reklame sin gudd mee dei laafen guer net hei

Hawk : am allgemengen fannen ech witzeg Reklamen gudd, et well mer elo keng gudd Afaalen dei hei leeft

GC : an dei leschten gudd Reklam un dei's du dech erenners? och wann se schons joeren hier ass?

Hawk : do wuer dach déi vun der Versecherung: "mein Haus, mein Auto, mein Pferd" deen aner "MEIN Haus, MEINE Autos, MEINE Villa" mee ech wees net mei waat daat fir eng wuer, geff mer e Moment

Hawk : de Problem ass kucken net mei vill Tele an schon guer keng Reklam

GC : hee net nokucken am Net

Hawk : neen maachen ech net

GC : Erenners du dech un iergend eng verstoppten Reklam oder eng Referenz an engem Film?

Hawk : jo et tauchen baal emmer Mac Computeren an villmer op
Hawk : FedEx ass och oft ze sin
Hawk : ze gesin
Hawk : do wuer jo de Film mam Tom Hanks
GC : an wei fonns du en?
Hawk : gudd
GC : trotz all dem FedEx`?
Hawk : et huet ze der Geschicht gehéiert
Hawk : op et elo FedEx oder ExFed ass ass mier perseinlech egal
Hawk : heiansdo enneren se jo d'Nimm obwuehl et offensichtlech ass
GC : daat heescht?
Hawk : majo sin maachenaus FedEx ExFed an d'Faarwen vum Logo bleiwen awer
Hawk : oder z.B. aus Microsoft maachen se Macrosoft
Hawk : mee d'Font ass selwecht
Hawk : do gouw et jo och deen vill "Starters" wou et méi wéi offensichtlech Microsoft wuer
GC : Wei fenns du daat an den Computerspiller dann?
Hawk : de FILM
GC : Ass et dir egal op se reel Firmaen huelen oder irreeler, soulaang et an d'Geschicht passt?
Hawk : sou laang d'Reklam net stéiert. an ze der nogestallter Realitéit gehéiert
Hawk : jo
GC : hues du dann schons reel oder irrel Referenzen an Computerspiller gesin?
Hawk : z.B. un der Bande vun der Stroos an enger Autoscourse ass ok
Hawk : jo do, awer irrel
Hawk : reel mengen ech net dat ech daat schon gesin hun
GC : hues du need for speed gespillt?
Hawk : jo do wuer och ireel Reklam dran oder?
Hawk : oder jo indirekt reel Reklam fir d'Auten
GC : Do wuer och Burger King
Hawk : jo kann sin, wéi gesoot ech passen net drop op ob reel oder ireel
Hawk : Reklam huet selten (bewusst) en Afloss op meng Kaafentscheidungen
Hawk : onbewusst vlaischt mei, mee daat kann ech net soen, soss waer et jo net onbewusst
Hawk : Slogans sin meechtens schrott
GC : Fenns du et dann gudd wann een fir de Realismus ze hiewen real Produien an d'Spiller geif setzen?
Hawk : "nicht nur weiss sondern auch rein" ech laachen mech doud
Hawk : also bei den Autoen z.b. fannen ech et schon besser wann daat reel Modellen sin amplaaz soss irgendeppes
Hawk : hmm mengen schon
GC : An kinns du der Viirstellen eng Reklam am Wow ze gesin?
Hawk : neen waat dann? "Heiltrank von Bayer" zum selber brauen
GC : zum Beispill
Hawk : oder Avis Logo ob den Greifen ??? nee kann ech mer guer net virstellen
Hawk : du kanns jo nemmen realistesch reel Reklamen hun wann et der Zait am Spill entsprecht
Hawk : daat geng ech soguer absolut null fannen
Hawk : Beispill: Fallout: Leuchtreklamen mat Sony, Philipps asw ass ok
GC : Mee den Heiler kinnt zum Beispill Bayer heeschen.
Hawk : awer net an engem mettelalterlechen Spill daat passt net
Hawk : daat wier erem sou en onbewossten Trucs an daat fannen ech net esou gudd
Hawk : well do och de Spiller sech onbewosst manipuléieren léisst
GC : Wann et an engem futuristeschen oder zäitgemissem Spill passt, waat fenns du dann besser : "Philips powering the Matrix" oder just "Philips"
Hawk : einfach nemmen "Philips"
GC : mat aaneren Wieder: ass et besser wann et eng normal Reklam oder benotzung vum Produit ass, oder wann et un d'Spill ugepasst get?
GC : Wei zum Beispill den Audi am "minority report"
Hawk : neen normal Reklam, se soll haaptsechlech nemmen benotzt gin fir de Realismus ze hiewen
Hawk : et soll een net kennen Attributer mat enger Marque verbannen kennen, dei se nemmen duerch e Film/Spill kruut huet
Hawk : sou "wow Audi baut super-auten an de Filmer, dann sin hier Autoen och super"
Hawk : daat irritéiert de Consumer jo nemmen
GC : lol. klengt gudd

Hawk : déi breed Mass ass awer empfänglech fir sou onbewosst Messagen

Hawk : dohier kennt jo z.B. de Schéinheitswahn bei de Fraen

Hawk : "omg ech hun 5 Kilo zevill ech sin elo hässlech"

GC : lol. domadder kinnst du schons recht hun. Sou ech sin um Enn mat mengem Froen. Ech soen der villmolls merci

Appendix F: Forum List for Survey

List of Forums where the survey was posted to gather population sample

Anarchy Online Forum – <http://forums.anarchy-online.com/>
Art of war Forum – <http://artofwar.cybton.com/phpBB2>
Beepworld.de – http://www.beepworld.de/cgi-bin/forum_de/
edgeforums.net – <http://www.edgeforums.net/>
Gamekult.com – <http://www.gamekult.com/tout/forum/>
Gamershall.de – <http://web2.london047.server4you.de/wbb2/>
Games Forums – <http://forum.free-games.com.au/>
Gameplanet Forums – <http://www.gpforums.co.nz/>
GameSpy Forums – <http://www.forumplanet.com/gamespy/forum.asp?fid=6113>
Gaming Age Forum – <http://www.ga-forum.com>
Golem.de Forum – <http://forum.golem.de/phorum/index.php>
IGN Boards – <http://boards.ign.com/>
Jeuxfrance.com – <http://www.jeux-france.com/forums.html>
MegaGames Forum – <http://www.mgforums.com/forums/index.php>
nVNews MMORPG Forum – <http://www.nvnews.net/vbulletin/forumdisplay.php?f=42>
Spieleforum.de – <http://www.spieleforum.de/forum/index.php>
TheSmartMarks.com – <http://forums.thesmartmarks.com/index.php?showforum=14>

Appendix G: Survey

Survey Guide for Players

Topic	Question	Points
Player profile	1	Preferred games
	2	Amount of gaming in leisure time
	3	Number of bought games
Attitude towards ads	4	Too much ads?
Attitude towards product placement	5	On a general basis: product placement in movies a good thing?
	6	Enhances realism?
	7	Product placement in games if it lowers the cost / makes it free?
Interactive advertising	8	Option to turn it off (no, partially, completely) ?
	9	Type of ads (sponsored NPCs, environment, billboards, events,...)
	10	Mixture of real / fake advertisements
	11	Do fake products advertised in the game being available ingame
Personal Information	12	For what kind of games (Sci-Fi, Fantasy, FPS, MMORPG,...)
	13	Age
	14	Gender
	15	Occupation

Survey

Symbols used:

- One selection only (radio button)*
- Multiple selections possible (check box)*

1. What kind of games do you play most?

- FPS (*Halo, Doom...*)
- Jump and Run (*Mario, Jak and Daxter,...*)
- Fight (*Tekken, Street Fighter, Dead or Alive...*)
- Role Playing Games (*Final Fantasy, Morrowind,...*)
- Sports games (*Pro Evolution Soccer, NHL 2005, NBA Live,...*)
- Racing (*Gran Turismo, Need for Speed,...*)
- Management (*Sim City, The Sims...*)
- Strategy (*Warcraft, Age of Empires*)
- 3D Action (*Metal Gear Solid, Silent Hill, Resident Evil*)
- Massive Multiplayer Online Games (*Everquest, Ultima Online, World of Warcraft,...*)
- Puzzle (*Tetris,...*)
- Oldies (*PacMan, SpaceInvaders,...*)
- Vehicle Simulations (*Flight Simulator, Panzer Elite, Aces of the Pacific,...*)
- Shoot'em up (*R-Type,...*)
- Games requiring accessories (*Donkey Konga, Eye Toy, Virtua Cop, Dance Dance Revolution*)

2. What of the following do you possess?

- PC
- Console
- Handheld console
- Mobile phone with games

3. Please indicate the percentage of your leisure time that you spent playing video games from 0% to 100%:

.....

4. Please indicate the number of games that you bought during the last 2 months.

.....

5. Which of the following statements best represents how you feel about the current number of advertisements in your surroundings?

- There are too many advertisements.
- The amount of advertisements is just right
- There are not enough advertisements.

The following items concern brand appearances / advertisements in a game. A brand appearance could for example be a Coca-Cola can somewhere in the game, and an advertisement could be a billboard displaying the Coca-Cola logo

6. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement:

The appearance of a brand enhances the realism of a game.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- undecided
- agree
- strongly agree

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Brand appearances and advertisements in a game are a good thing if they lower the cost of the game or make it freely available.

- strongly disagree
- disagree

- undecided
- agree
- strongly agree

8. If there were advertisements / brand appearances which of the following would you prefer:

- an option to turn advertisements / appearances off
- an option to turn only real-life commercial advertisements/ appearances off
- the advertisements / appearances cannot be turned off

9. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement:

An option to turn advertisements / brand appearances in a game completely off should only be made available for players who pay for the game.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- undecided
- agree
- strongly agree

10. What kind of advertisements / brand appearances would you like to see in a game:

- Billboards
 - Billboards on a zeppelin
 - Brand sponsored Non Player Characters
 - Brand sponsored quests
 - Brand sponsored dungeons / levels
 - Brand sponsored monsters
 - Flyers, panels and other papers
 - Sponsored events
 - Branded clothing
 - Branded food
 - Brand logos on armour and other gear
 - Brand logos on weapons
 - Free in-game services if sponsored by a brand
- Other (please specify)

11. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement:

In-game advertisements for non-real-life brands are an enhancement for the game if the advertised product is available in-game.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- undecided
- agree
- strongly agree

12. For what kind of game would you like to see advertisements or brand appearances?

- FPS (*Halo, Doom...*)
- Jump and Run (*Mario, Jak and Daxter,...*)
- Fight (*Tekken, Street Fighter, Dead or Alive...*)
- Role Playing Games (*Final Fantasy, Morrowind,...*)
- Sports games (*Pro Evolution Soccer, NHL 2005, NBA Live,...*)
- Racing (*Gran Turismo, Need for Speed,...*)
- Management (*Sim City, The Sims,...*)
- Strategy (*Warcraft, Age of Empires*)
- 3D Action (*Metal Gear Solid, Silent Hill, Resident Evil*)
- Massive Multiplayer Online Games (*Everquest, Ultima Online, World of Warcraft,...*)
- Puzzle (*Tetris,...*)
- Oldies (*PacMan, SpaceInvaders,...*)
- Vehicle Simulations (*Flight Simulator, Aces of the Pacific,...*)
- Shoot'em up (*R-Type,...*)
- Games requiring accessories (*Donkey Konga, Eye Toy, Virtua Cop, Dance Dance Revolution*)

For the following items, I need to know something about the people who respond to the survey. This is done for statistical purposes only. The confidentiality of your responses will be assured. I have absolutely no possibility whatsoever to track the results back to you.

13. Please indicate your gender

- Male
- Female

14. Please indicate your age (*in years*)

...

15. Please indicate your occupation

- upper / middle management
- general administration / supervisor / clerical
- professional (doctor/lawyer/specialist)
- sales / service
- self-employed / owner
- blue collar / trades
- homemaker
- retired
- student
- unemployed / between jobs
- other (*please specify*)

Appendix H: Survey Report

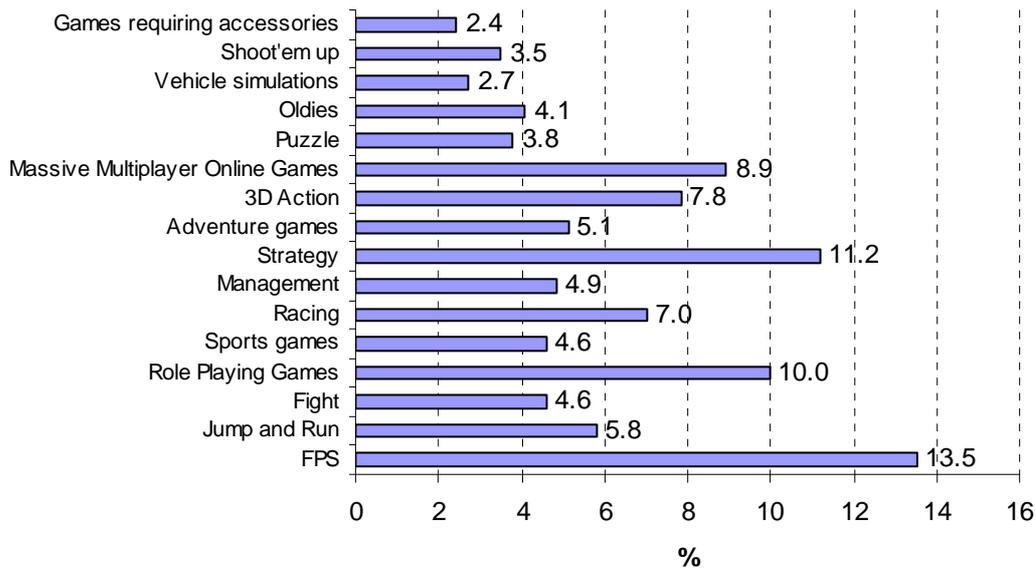
Total number of responses: 155

First response: September 14, 2005

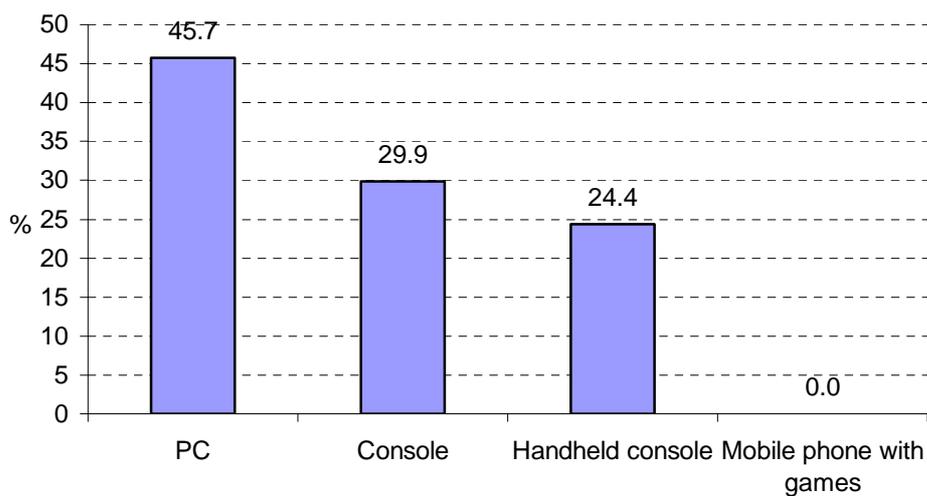
Last response: September 21, 2005

Results

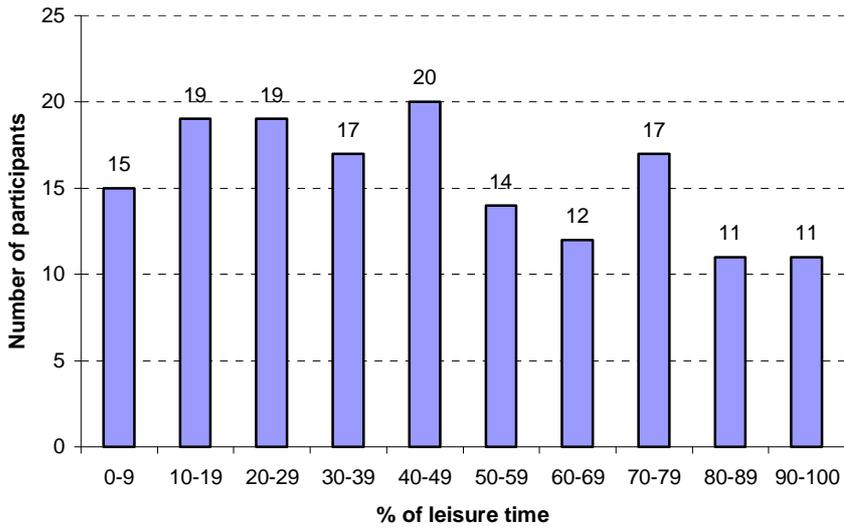
1. What kind of games do you play most? *(Multiple selections possible)*



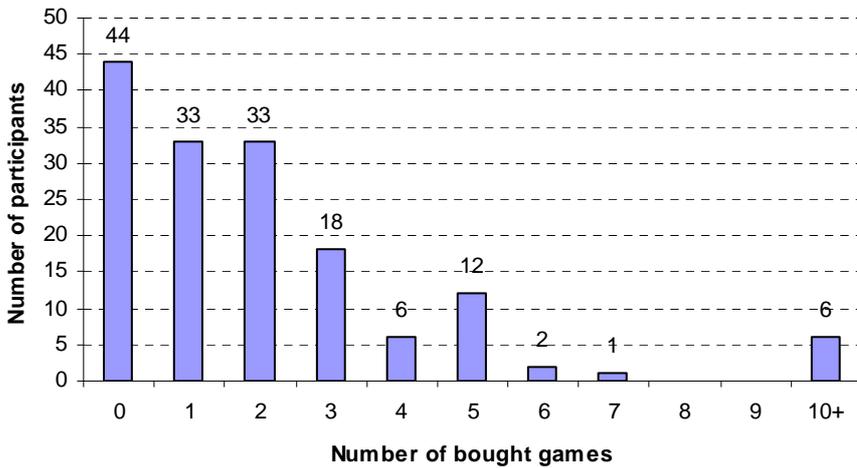
2. What of the following do you possess? *(Multiple selections possible)*



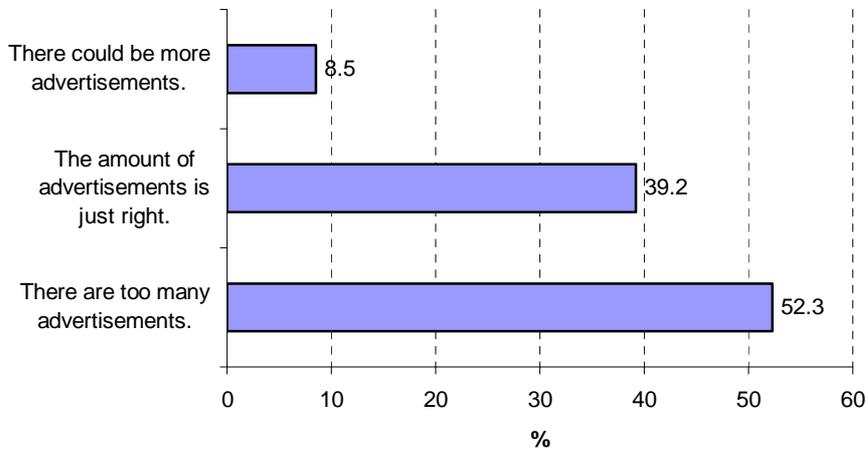
3. Please indicate the percentage of your leisure time that you spent playing video games from 0% to 100%:



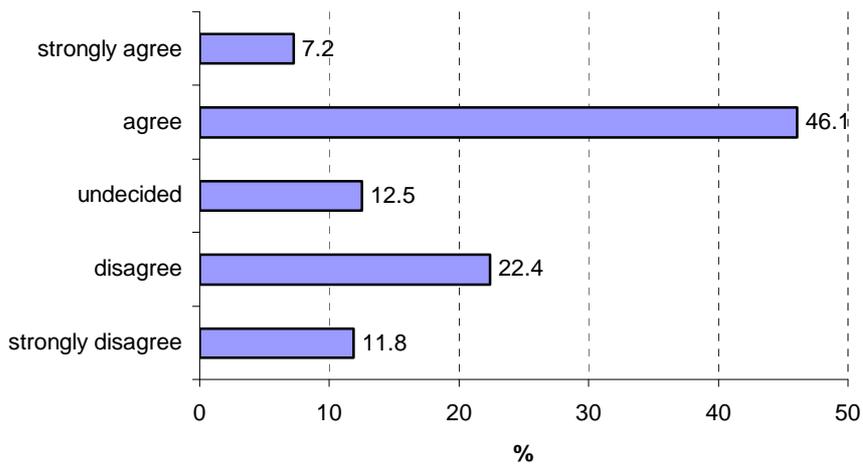
4. Please indicate the number of games that you bought during the last 2 months.



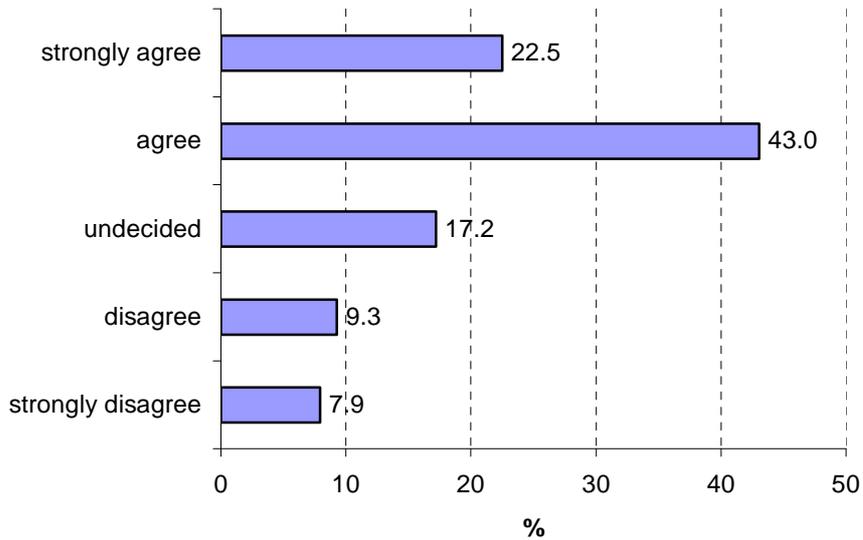
5. Which of the following statements best represents how you feel about the current number of advertisements in your surroundings?



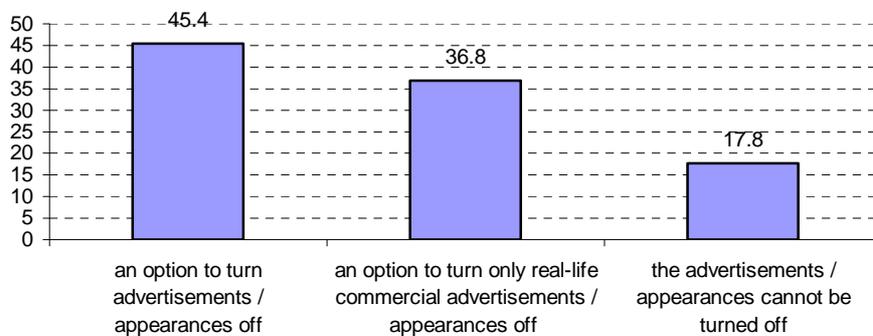
6. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement:
The appearance of a brand enhances the realism of a game.



7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement:
Brand appearances and advertisements in a game are a good thing if they lower the cost of the game or make it freely available.

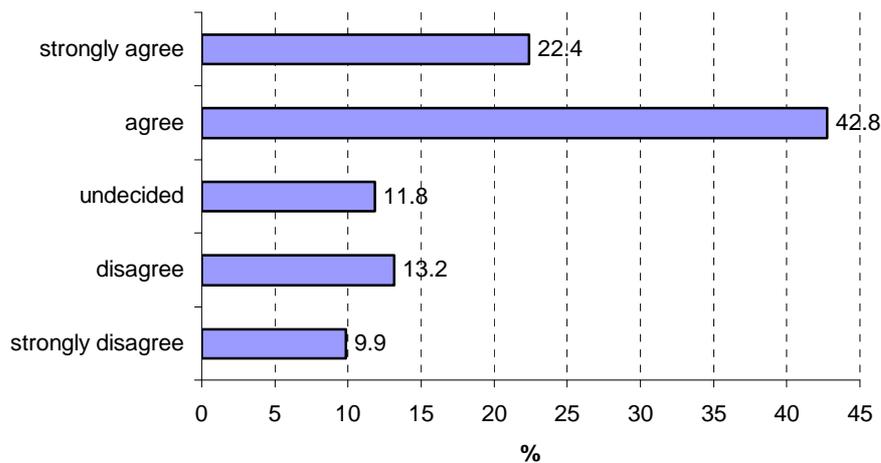


8. If there were advertisements / brand appearances which of the following would you prefer:

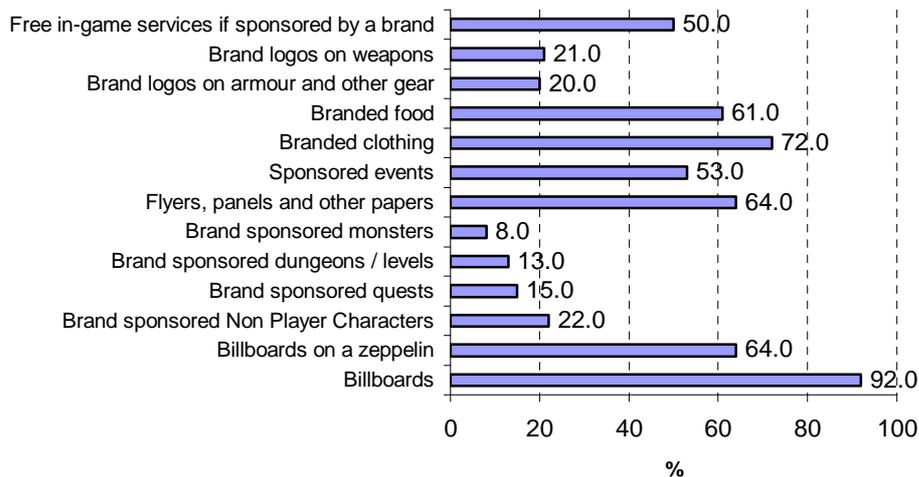


9. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement:

An option to turn advertisements / brand appearances in a game completely off should only be made available for players who pay for the game.



10. What kind of advertisements / brand appearances would you like to see in a game: (Multiple selections possible)



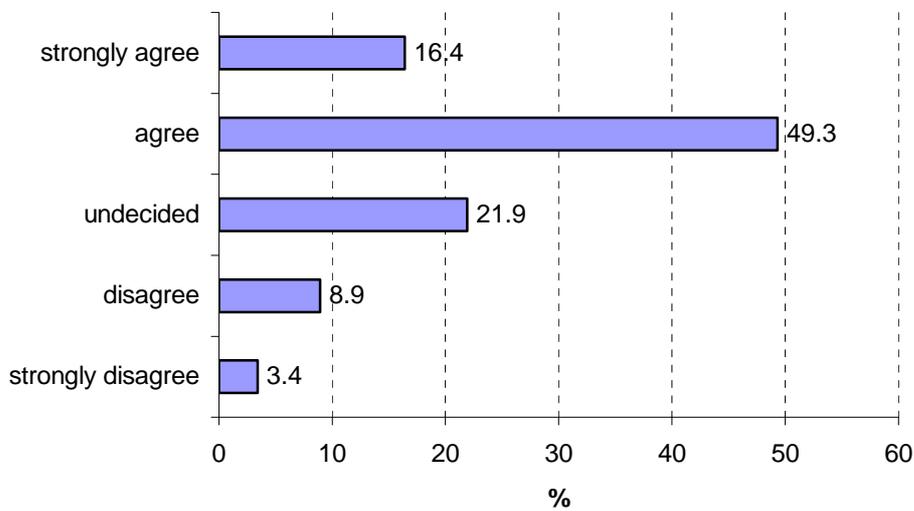
Other (please specify)

- Pepsi/Coca-Cola drink machines
- Brand logos on transportation vehicles
- To add more detail - brands should only advertise in suitable circumstances. IE, no adverts in fantasy themed games!
- No advertisements at all.
- none! That's just another way of influencing kids to buy more rubbish they don't need
- none
- They do advertising in Anarchy Online on many kinds of popular things...
- Anything that ties into the game. Like Branded clothes, or a brand of vehicle that is driving around. Just nothing that is forced on you.
- none
- I wouldn't really want to see an advertisement in a game.
- None, in-game advertising detracts from any and all realistic game play. It destroys the fantasy world that most players enjoy visiting when they play games. The only possible exception is the GTA series and most racing games where realistic vehicles are raced / used in a more "realistic" environment. The only other acceptable advertising example is Question #11. That can potentially build realism within a game since it relates directly to the game.

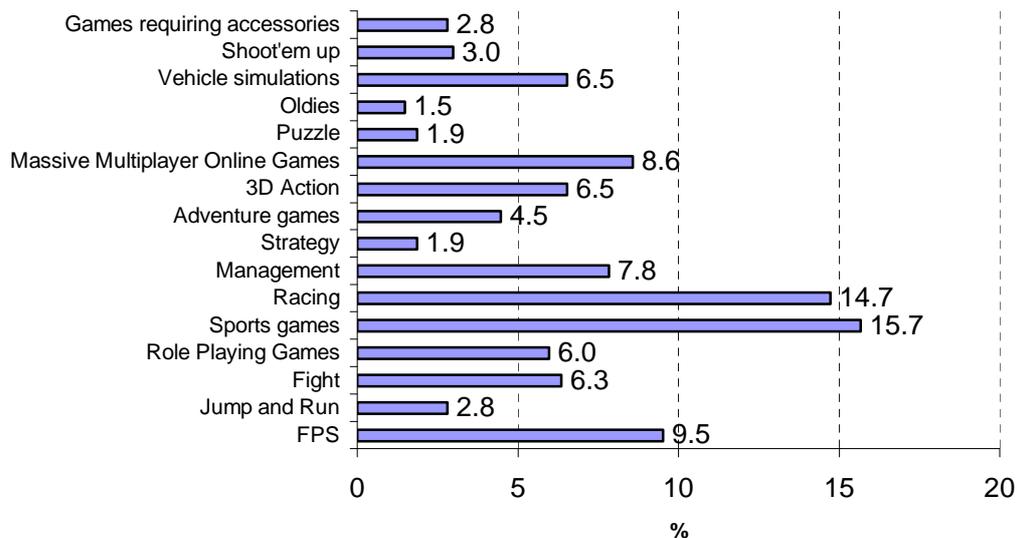
- brand sponsored events are going to be coming more and more common very soon, Microsoft even gave an example about a XBOX 360 online event in their E3 2005 keynote speech which you might want to take a look at.
- nothing
- None, unless as stated above game was free due to ads
- Anything really, as long as it is not out of context. E.g. A coca-cola advert on a medieval knights helmet. I believe context is the key in in-game advertising.
- Brands painted on fields (similar to stadium fields on TV sports)
- In-game virtual tv and radio ads
- On menu screens, loading screens, pause screens, space for players to select a sponsor of their own or in their environment such as based on a list
- Nothing too intrusive

11. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement:

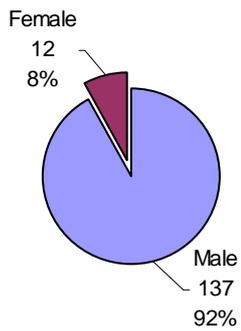
In-game advertisements for non-real-life brands are an enhancement for the game if the advertised product is available in-game.



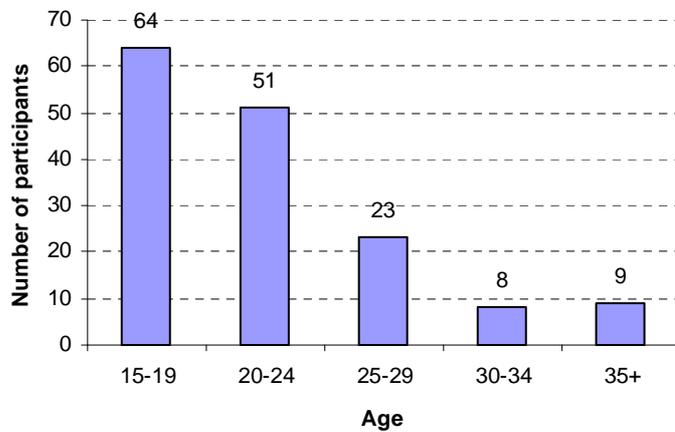
12. For what kind of game would you like to see advertisements or brand appearances? (Multiple selections possible)



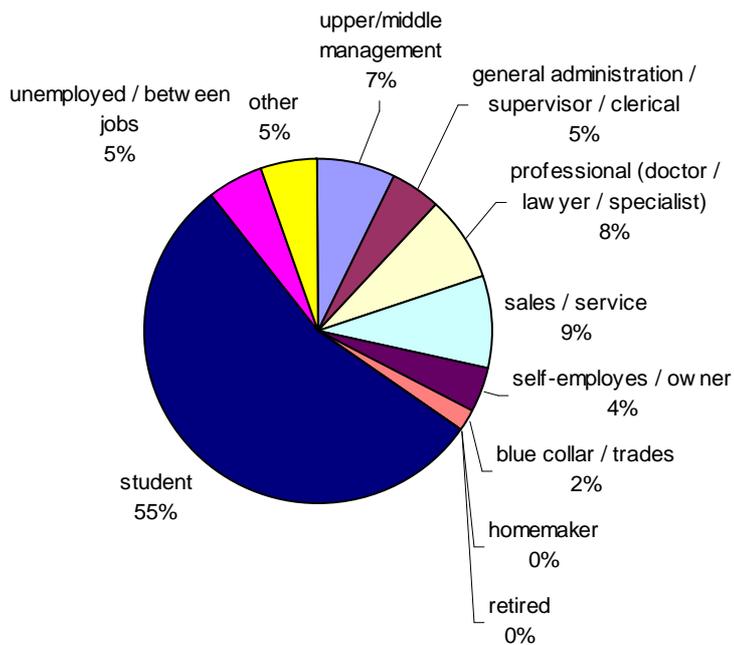
13. Please indicate your gender



14. Please indicate your age (in years)

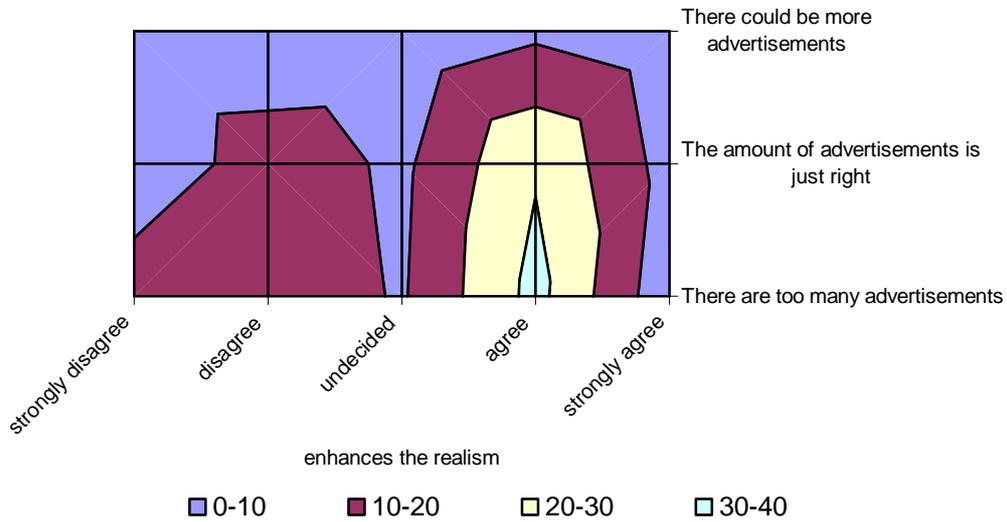


15. Please indicate your occupation



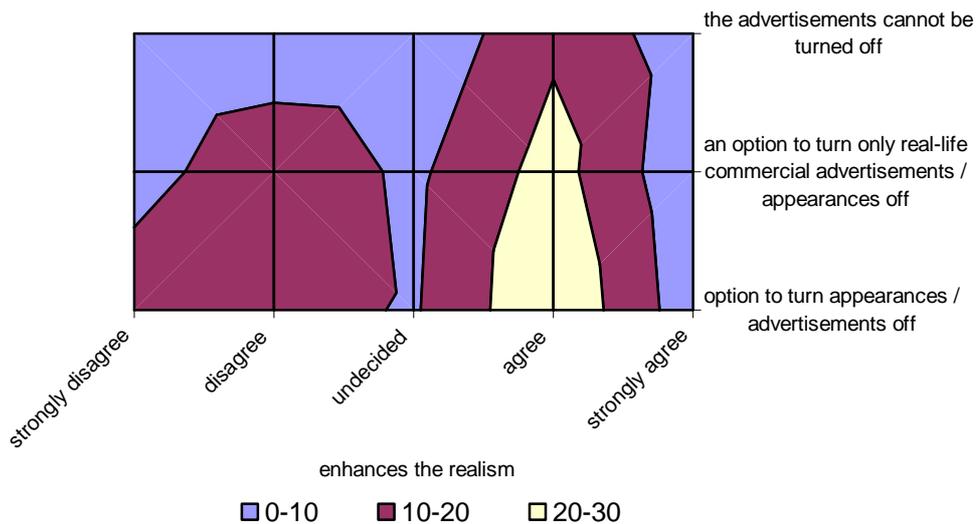
Cross Tables

6x5: Interaction between “in-game advertisement enhances the realism of the game” and attitude towards current advertisement pressure



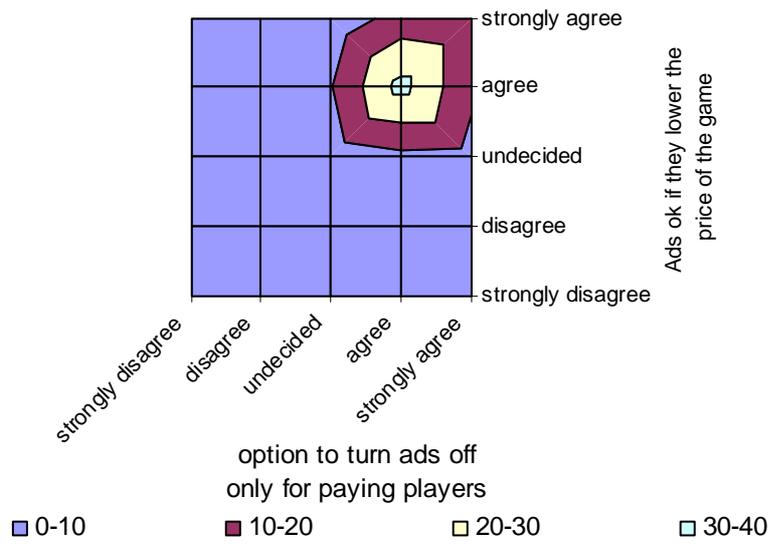
χ^2 : significant at the 5% level

6x8: Interaction between “in-game advertisement enhances the realism of the game” and possibility to turn in-game advertisements off



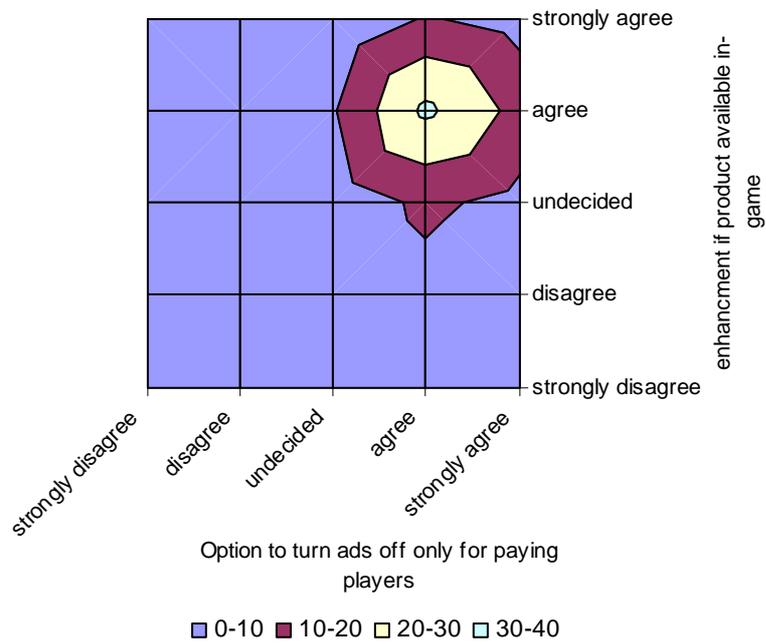
χ^2 : significant at the 5% level

7x9: Interaction between possibility to turn in-game advertisements off and “advertisements are ok if they lower the price of the game”



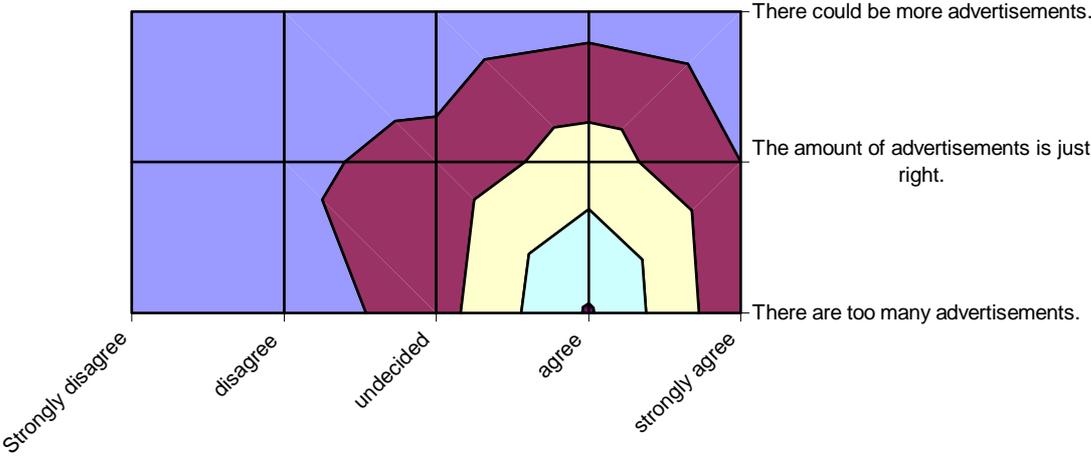
χ^2 : significant at the 1% level

11x9: Relation between option to turn ads off only for paying players and “advertisements are an enhancement if the product is available in-game”



χ^2 : significant at the 15% level

5x11: Relation between “advertisements are an enhancement if the product is available in-game” and general advertisement attitude



enhancement if product available in-game

0-10 10-20 20-30 30-40 40-50

χ^2 : significant at the 50% level

12x10: Relevance of advertisement type in game genre

	Billboards	Billboards on a zeppelin	Brand sponsored Non Player Characters	Brand sponsored quests	Brand sponsored dungeons / levels	Brand sponsored monsters	Flyers, panels and other papers	Sponsored events	Branded clothing	Branded food	Brand logos on armour and other gear	Brand logos on weapons	Free in-game services if sponsored by a brand
FPS	38	30	12	9	7	5	30	25	28	27	10	10	22
Jump and Run	11	11	4	4	3	2	12	9	11	9	4	4	8
Fight	21	17	5	4	3	2	21	15	20	19	4	4	13
Role Playing Games	23	18	6	7	5	4	19	15	19	16	7	7	12
Sports games	59	41	15	11	9	7	46	32	53	44	13	14	34
Racing	56	42	12	9	7	5	41	31	43	36	8	11	31
Management	26	20	8	6	3	2	23	20	25	22	5	6	21
Strategy	5	4	3	3	3	1	3	5	4	2	4	3	6
Adventure games	19	17	3	4	3	2	16	13	20	18	6	5	12
3D Action	23	18	7	6	4	3	25	16	23	18	8	7	16
Massive Multiplayer Online Games	38	25	11	7	6	4	29	19	30	24	10	9	25
Puzzle	5	3	2	1	1	1	7	4	7	4	4	4	4
Oldies	5	4	2	2	2	1	5	3	5	4	3	2	4
Vehicle simulations	24	18	8	5	6	4	24	14	21	18	8	9	18
Shoot'em up	10	10	3	4	3	2	9	7	10	7	4	3	6
Games requiring accessories	9	9	3	5	3	2	8	5	8	8	3	2	7

Relevance of Ad type in game	higher than	
low		
medium	10	
high	25	
strong	40	

Appendix I: Forum User Themes

Thematic summary

Billboards work the same way as they do in real life

Annoyance

- Specific to video billboards

- Lag issues

- Advertisements do not belong in the game under any form

Too many billboards and not enough variation

Virtual advertisements are wanted

- Confusion about virtual advertisements

Enhances the realism if done rightly

Not enough advertisements

Billboards could be used as information tool

Billboards work the same way as they do in real life

I don't think I every really noticed a ad. Wouldnt care because I just usualy block things out and usually focused on what I am doing.

Bakufu, if you are only seeing the Dredlock ads then you don't have the option turned on. If you have the option turned on, you should see ads for Fanta, Sprite, and Batman Begins movie instead of the Dredlock Arms ads.

Katrinams, I agree. I barely take notice of the ads as I run past them. I generally just go about my gaming business and pretty much ignore the ads. Of course they are there and the companies who paid for them are banking that you will notice them and support their product. But hey, the fact is that on my way to work I probably see 40-50 advertisements as billboards and other such means and I completely ignore them as I focus on getting to work on time. I think its pretty much the same thing as being online in AO. You sorta rush past them as you are on your way to doing your usual thing.

Annoyance

but what about those that dont WANT to see those things at all? been on 3 minuts before I could not take those tings any longer and logged out again, number of ppl in my org were unhappy with those things as well, seeing they are EVERYWHERE.

turning off should be jsut that, turning them off. Gone obnoxious billboards, I play a game to relax, not to be reminded of the place I live in with commercials everywhere you turn

I agree that turning off the adds should REMOVE the billboards completely from sight. There are a lot of billboards, and they are an eyesore.

I applaude FCs idea, but I think you guys kinda messed up on implementing it: paying players should not have any trace of the RL adds -- not even their canvases -- distracting their gaming.

jsut in game about 3 minutes and I am allready concidering canceling account for good cause of them, virtual products or not, I am not playing a game to be swamped by billboards.

Not only are they all over Athens, but inside shops, and in missions *cry*

Its a bit too much

wonder if next step will be Pop-ups *whacking hecklers, getting adds so that you need to focus 100 percent to stay alive* POP-UP! Did you incured today? It can help you prevent annoying loss of xp and items up-on death. Visit a cell-scanning terminal near you!

rant off

just needed to vent ..

I loved the ingame billboards till Fanta started to advertise..
NO! I don't wanna fanta!

Specific to video billboards

Video Billboards - Ultra Cool & Ultra Annoying?

I love the video billboards, but then im a techno geek, and i just like the idea of watching videos, ingame Seems really cool, nice work Stick a movie on for us!!

However.... That said, from a clan perspective, OA whompas is one of THE major camping grounds for standing around, chatting, buffing, tradeskilling, whatever The video billboard right behind that group is waffling on 24 hours a day... "one of us is a hero, one of us is a fraud.. all of us are lost...."

ARRRRGGGG those words are forever buned into my head now

How about interspersing the video adverts with a few static ones, say 3 to 5 minutes, to give those of us who like to play with sound on, a break!

Lag issues

But then to get to the important issue. When this is launched with psepse and coke and so on, what will paying cutomers see? Are the only two choices, one grey board with that dreadlock thingy or comercial adds? Or will there be a third option so that those of us paying will actually still get the ingame adds for helpbot and so on? Think that's the most important question along with lag/fps issues.
Any comments on that?

And if the adds will differ betwen paying and not paying customers, wich I sincerly hope they will beacuse giveing paying customers a grey uggly dreadlock thingy or comercial adds is bad, how will u differentiat them? How are u planing to make the server understand what adds to send to whom? will this not yet activated system affect performance for ppl with limited bandwidth? Cause I asume it will increase traffic while leaving entering zone and if there is a system to automaticly update the boards. As it is right now I've got three accounts running on one connection and I would not want more strain on it. It can kope with the ammount but it would make things laggy if ot had to get more info than it already does.

Advertisements do not belong in a game under any form

Ao is a GAME, NOT a mirror of reality.

Have you ever seen soemone fly like metas, have you ever seen slayerdroids running on the highways, have you ever seen a doctor heal a patient from some 10 meters away? Or did you ever take the internet to get home after work, rather then drive home with bus.car or biek?

well I ahvent, and I am sure I will not in this lifetime either.

Should those(and tons of other things) be removed from the game to make it realistic? Off course not, so then why should those billboards remain in game for the sake of realism?

According to any logical RP, the society in game has evolved past gratuitous advertising and only a few discreet holdovers remain -- e.g. some advertising in item descriptions, and widespread propaganda. It is hard swallow that society has devolved to return to advertising.

Too many billboards and not enough variation

they really are hideous, I wouldn't care if there weren't so many of them, and you hadn't BUTCHERED the stores to put billboards in them, and more so if they didn't have the same ****ing "in character" advertisement on every single one.

1. To much of those bilboards, They are everywhere.
2. Some variety of advertisements would be good.

But Entire OA is plaster with only one uninteresting board. before we actually had some variety...Standing on OA hill I can now see 6 "Dreadloch Arms & Gear" It's ugly and missplaced. If we now are to have ads for froobs. pls limit the amout of boards so we do not have to see this ugly **** all the time...

tone down the frequency a LOT and add some variation I might not be so upset either. Those 2 things in oa before I could live with, the ads in subway entry room was not so bad either. but having an ugly billbaord with the same add everyway you look is just bloody obnoxious.

Agree, this is way excessive, not only breaks the RP ambient, its plain unrealistic (at least Borealis is).I cant find that massification of billboards even in my city.
I wonder why we pay.

It looks weird only because they have the same ad on every billboard. Kind of unrealistic that the same gun dealer would have rented every billboard on Rubi-Ka.

The billboards wouldnt bother me if there was some veriety but seeing the same dredlock ad over and over again is starting to do my head in.

Virtual advertisements are wanted

Yes I agree, I'm annoyed, I have RL adds turned off, I'll be damned if I'm looking at adds while using a service I pay for, but I really want to see the IC adds, either bring them in, or have all of them removed when you have the RL adds turned off kthx.

I'm guessing that IC adds can't compete with the amount of cash RL adds can pay. Just like television, highest bidder gets the highest visibility. Definately need a IC system of billboards and a RL system of billboards. Then add a No Billboards option for those who don't give a jack.

I'd definately like to see more Omni-Tek IC billboards though, much like those in the Omni-Entertainment Screening Area. I can just see, "Omni-Tek is your friend." running on every billboard 24/7. Wouldn't that be scary...in a good way.

Personally I turned the "not-paying" ADs on awhile ago kinda out of curiosity. Is it a case of paying customers not having those turned on not seeing the player ADs? Cause I don't think I saw any player ADs in awhile. I'm perfectly fine with fr00b accounts getting the pay ADs & me as well if I turn em on, but I'd like us all to get the player ones, or at least paying customers who turn on the "not-payd account" ADs

The billboards...Why isn't RL seperated from in-game?
Okay, I've waited awhile and held off this question for quite a bit because I thought someone would have asked it before. But I didn't see anybody say anything about it...

Now, I LOVE the in-character billboards. They add a lot of flavor to the game and it's something that should seriously continue for as long as possible.

As long as the adds the paying players see is all ingame related i only see it benefitting the RP aspect of AO...

My problem, however, is that in order to SEE any of these in-character billboards, we the paying customers who do not wish to be bugged with RL advertising must turn on the RL ads.

Is this intended? If we turn them off, it turns off the billboard rotations completely, and EVERY billboard is for that Dreadloch company (Which is some really nice artwork by that new guy ya got - kudos to some good art). But that's all you ever see. No RUR billboard, no awesome Ninj00 billboard with me and him and company in it, no Froobs But Intelligent or CoT billboards....What I'd love is to be able to seperate the in-character billboards (ALL OF THEM, not just Dreadloch) from the RL billboards. This will become even more important when you guys put in the billboards that have video and sound in them, as stated in that letter from Znore.

Confusion about virtual advertisements

where do i find this "dreadloch arms & gear" anyway? maybe she sell some phat stuff

Where I can find Deadloch ?

Terrorific... Just wanted to add they have stated in another post that the Dreadloch and all the advertisements being the same is a temporary thing the billboards are in the state of testing i was concerned about the same thing too...

Enhances the realism if done rightly

Hard to pretend you are an enfocer in 290th century fighting for Omni-Tek under a logo of the next street t-shirt trading company or whatever those will b..If you dont have the environment you cannot play a role and the game looses or may b changes its purpose.

At the same time if you decide to enable the billboards to show commercial products they should be designed to work whit AO and 29479. And believe me this is the price the non paying customers have to pay, when we normal paying customers don't.

These billboards only furthers the RP aspect of the game as i can pretty much 100% gurantee you that commercials are here to stay and will be here even more so in 28000 years well that's what my 5 dollars are on anyway...

If you want complete nothing to do with realism and the world you live in they should remove all social aspects of AO too... I would suggest a Fantasy game if you wanna be without a ounce of realism...

A place like Rubi-Ka is just BEGGING for advertisement, especially from gun companies that want to sell their wares to the new arrivals on the planet. Not to mention you may see advertisements and propaganda from Omni-Tek, the Clans, or even an occasional billboard hijacked to display an alien threat, or something the Dustbrigade have to say. The billboards add life to a dull area, and let you know that there are "forces" in the game world other than the players themselves.

Peronsally, I want to see lots of adds, particualrily made up ones to add realism. Don't want realism?

Not enough advertisements

So to follow the train of thought that the ads add to sci-fi realism because they were a part of society 7000 years in the past (or whatever it is): then why doesn't all armor have logos on them? Where are my yalm hood ornaments or the words "Juicy" emblazoned on the ass of my Chosen pants?

Sure we don't like advertising IRL, but guess what? It's only gonna get WORSE in the future. This game tries to portray the future, and in actuality, if you want realism, it isn't real enough - every corporation in the galaxy would be trying to get their share of the new market opened on Rubi-Ka, and if they can't flat out own it like Omni-Tek can, then they can own advertisements and dealerships and such.

The billboards are doing their work well, I suppose....They just need to be about more than that Dreadloch company.

Come on guys, this is a Sci-Fi game not your troll and elves fairy tale. If anything, there should be more ad's, flying ad's, fictional ad's, ad's for our own player cities (but minus the lag) - you name it. All this fits into the capitalistic world that AO is.

Billboards could be used as information tool

i hate them when they interrupt a movie, but ads on the streets or in newspapers is fine... If noone was advertising you'd never know when something new appeared on the market.

advertising is a way of imparting knowledge to a crowd, and we all know that ignorance is the bane of the world.

Create "Live" Newsfeeds

Now that the billboards have been added to the game, I noticed that one of the boards (maybe more, but I've only seen this one in Borealis) across from the whompas in Borealis has begun showing short video clips. I saw a short skateboarding demonstration the other day.

Well, why not create a weekly news feed with short video clips that could be aired over a few of the boards, perhaps one board per faction. You could have the news board in OA, Rome Blue (or Trade Grid), and Borealis (the most populated faction cities). The news feeds could have storyline updates, or mentions of holiday events (like the Christmas Leets). You could even have storyline characters give public addresses over the news boards sort of like how the Cardassians did in Deep Space Nine.

It would add alot to the atmosphere of the game and enhance the whole "Big Brother" aspect.

Appendix J: About the Author

At the time of the writing of this thesis, Georges Camy is 28 years old. He holds a Master's Degree in Multimedia Engineering and has worked for some Game Developing studios, Web Agencies as well as The General Electric Company.