



Media Eye

YOU CAN MUTE IT, BUT TV ADS CAN STILL TALK

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Ad recall of TVCs is a key measurement of effectiveness, and now broadcasters will undoubtedly be clamouring to promote a new study which has found that viewers can hit mute, talk over and divert attention away from the TV screen, and still recall an ad.

The research conducted by the University of South Australia's Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science, has recently found that people don't necessarily have to be actively watching an ad for it have some effect on them.

Researcher Dr Erica Riebe, said during the survey they went to people's homes and observed viewers who were passively watching their TV screens, talking to other people in the room or looking after children while the TV was on in the background.

"There's an assumption that people have to actively watch TV to respond to it, but we found people were able to recall ads and recall either the brands that were being advertised or the message the advertiser was trying to convey," Riebe said.

However, she also noted that people generally did not want to watch ads, but good creative is what is ensured cut through.

Its other finding referred to the impact of clutter which not surprisingly revealed that more ads within a break resulted in lower ad recall.

"Given that they watched around 36 ads an hour, which is how much Australian TV is showing at the moment... on average [respondents] could recall six ads within an hour," Riebe said.

The length of ad breaks has come up for some scrutiny in recent times, with independent media consultancy firm, the Faulkner Group (FG), last year undertaking research into the number of ads within a break compared to those in 2001.

It revealed that for its clients, their spots were appearing in ad breaks containing six or more commercials. This occurred in 79% of cases in 2005, compared to 71% in 2001. Further, in 2001 around 29% of its clients' spots featured in breaks with five or fewer ads and by 2005 this had fallen to 21%.

And while clutter continues to be a concern for many, the first spot in the break is still the most coveted, with the University of SA research revealing that there was slightly higher recall for the first ad within a break.

But concern remains over the fact that the number of network promotions within breaks has significantly increased.

The 2005 FG research found that in 2001 the number of network promotions placed at the beginning and end of ad breaks was 32% in comparison to the number of breaks that had no promotions. By 2005 this has increased to 56%. Riebe said the issue of clutter will also be looked at in an upcoming study which will take into account channel flicking.