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## Understanding gender differences in online experience and internet advertising

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# Understanding gender differences in online experience and internet advertising

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## Précis

The internet has provided another means for a brand to create awareness, offer purchasing, and help consumers experience a brand. Whether it is to entice sales or provide more information on a product or service, many companies know how important it is to create an online environment, as a growing number of the population continue to use the internet and for an increasing amount of tasks and time. In addition, as more companies and advertisers enter into the digital world, it is important to create a website or online experience that is meaningful, useful to the consumers and, one that is effective in generating the required results. In addition, marketers buy advertisement space on the basis that the demographic they are trying to reach will see it. Gender is one of the most important segmentations used because the sample is large enough, can offer specific implications, and numerous research and literature show that segmentation based on gender is important in a campaign because of the differences that exist among the sexes regarding advertising. Gender creates implications both on and offline for a brand or campaign because men and women perceive and are persuaded by advertising in different ways, but only in researching and understanding these differences in the online environment can marketers use them to better target the gender of their choice.

The purposes of this article is to first review the literature on gender differences in advertising then explore areas that are important in today's online environment including differences in the various areas of online experience and behavior such as shopping, privacy issues, internet usage, use of website, and new media and user generated content considerations. I will also look at online advertising particularly, online video ads and banner ads. I will attempt to show through research that there are differences that exist among the genders, which also translate to the online environment and specifically in the various areas of experience and

advertising. I will attempt to provide the implications it may have for advertisers by suggesting recommendations when creating a website targeting a specific gender.

Through my research, I have found that gender differences exist in online experience and behavior. Of the various online features, men more active participants, but women have surpassed them as the majority of internet users. Men frequent news, sports, financial sites, and prefer more choices on a website to keep them interested, but do not want detailed information unless they express interest by clicking on it. This is in contrast to women who tend to search entertainment, shopping sites, and spend more time emailing. Women are also more skeptical of their privacy issues and would likely leave a site that is not engaging them in a personal manner or using complicated navigation, and prefer features that allow them to have interpersonal communication. The recommendations outlined in the various sections of this article can be helpful to advertisers and businesses trying to attract specific genders to their sites.

## **I. Introduction**

Gender is a segmentation strategy in marketing because it is easily identifiable; the segments are accessible, measurable, large, and profitable. Numerous research have found that gender differences do exist in advertising and even more than race or ethnicity, it is a larger distinguishing factor of Internet use, online behavior, and attitudes (Wolin 2003.)

Males and females perceive advertising in different ways. Marketers need to consider different methods of creative appeal when trying to attract a sex to their message or image. For example, Axe, a line of grooming products made by Unilever, also known as Lynx in Europe used marketing research to find that their target, (young men) were most concerned about attracting the opposite sex over any other social aspect. This information helped to create a successful campaign that portrayed males using the Axe products, which made them appear more attractive to females (Neff 2004.) In contrast, a line of grooming products made for women by Unilever, Dove centers their campaign on the highly well known “Real Beauty” campaign, based around the idea that women are beautiful in every shape and form. These examples show how a similar line of product is advertised to the genders in very different ways but are both successful (Jeffers 2005.)

Marketers therefore, need to understand and customize their websites to specific genders because they will respond better to your site and advertising on it. The media landscape is changing and the internet is becoming more traditional. In addition, audiences are increasingly fragmented due to the large amount of different media outlets. The amount of audience members listening to radio, watching TV, and reading newspapers have decreased due to its presence online. TiVo’s and DVR’s have also increased the amount of audiences that may be ignoring or

skipping over ads. Advertisers have realized this, which explains the increase in online advertising; you go where you consumers are. Internet is no longer just a complement to traditional media, it has now become a necessity to continue a campaign or even base an entire one through.

However, who is really watching or seeing an ad online? Marketers can create and place ads to the likes of their consumer by understanding what appeals to them and makes them want to sit through an ad playing before a video loads, make them click on a banner ad on a website cluttered with them, or make them purchase something. All of this could be achieved by considering a number of factors including age, social class, lifestyles, etc, but for the purpose of this research, I will focus on how gender can help achieve online goals by looking at the differences that exist among them in the online environment so that they are more successfully targeted.

## **II. Review of Literature**

The literature regarding gender differences can be explained in various areas including biological, social, and information processing styles. I will explore each briefly and explain how it is useful for advertisers in understanding these differences.

### ***A. Biological gender differences***

Research in biological gender differences suggest that there are innate differences that exist among genders. Biology has been used to describe sex differences from hormones and chemicals in the brain and has suggested that men are more aggressive in nature due to the high presence of the hormone androgen, which includes testosterone. This is similarly seen in animals

with high aggression. Men are also considered more “left-brained,” meaning that they rely more on the left hemisphere that controls cognition and analytics. Women are thought to rely more on the right hemisphere, which controls facial recognition, and may lead to a higher level of sociability. Overall, the current thought is that biology produces more “aggression, competition, guilt and outer-directedness in males, and more passive, shame, inner-directedness, jealousy, and masochism in females” (Brody 1985.) In addition, the current scientific consensus is that gender differences in personality traits may be caused by biological reasons, but there is still debate as to how accurate the information may be because of a lack of strong evidence to suggest the emotions or behaviors that humans portray are indeed related to these factors. Because of this, it is also important to rely on other means of explaining gender differences (Brody 1985.)

## **B. *Social gender differences***

### **1. Social role theory**

Social role theory is a prevailing social science view that concludes sex differences arose from socialization. It suggests that a person first learns about sex specific skills and beliefs, and the expectancies that are associated with gender roles on people’s behavior and character come from socialization (Archer 1996.) The main component of this view is on division of labor between the sexes and it tries to understand why this has occurred and predict the patterns in males and females. It suggests each gender tries to acquire specific skills and resources for adaption to its gender role (Xie 2006.) Social role theory also suggests that men are more assertive and aggressive because historically they have had to acquire more authoritative or leadership roles. And the reason why women are more communal is because they have historically been in the position of child rearing and this role can be seen as adopted in today’s

culture from women occupying certain jobs disproportionately (social worker, teacher, nurse) (Putrevu 2001.)

## **2. Evolutionary psychology**

Evolutionary psychology is another prevailing view on sex differences in social behavior. This view encompasses the more recent change in Darwinism thinking, which looks more at how a type of behavior has originated. Evolutionary psychology has also been debated against the social role theory in which is better equipped to explain the differences but they both offer a glimpse into gender differences. This main feature of this view is there are differences in sexuality, mate selection, and aggression among the sexes. It states that many differences including the above come from the “selection pressures during human and prehuman evolution than as a consequence of the human division of labor” (Archer 1996.)

### ***C. Information processing styles***

#### **1. Selectivity hypothesis**

The Selectivity hypothesis is a widely accepted theory proposed by Meyers-Levy (1989) that suggests men and women process information differently which leads to the differences in advertising. According to Meyers-Levy, gender differences emerge because men tend to be persuaded more by overall messages and focus on specific topics whereas women are more likely to employ a more detailed analysis of the message content. Therefore, women go through a more intense processing strategy, known as comprehensive processers, while men are known as selective processers who do not need to elaborate on messages as much as women to make judgment or decisions (Putrevu 2001.) This model also explains that men are more responsive to

messages that appeal to their own self whereas women like ads that are more connected or interpersonal.

## **2. Item specific**

Item specific focuses on attention paid to detailed features of a message that can be clearly associated to the advertised product, brand or service, or context (Meyers-Levy 1991.) People who rely on item specific processing tend to stress “attributes that are unique or distinctive to a particular message.” In general, item specific processors are also interested in self-focused message, focus on one “item” at a time, and tend to be more analytical and logical. Men are more likely to be item specific which supports the selectivity hypothesis because this form of processing uses less comprehension since in this case the viewer is only focusing on certain topics or information (Putrevu 2001.)

One study first hypothesized that ads targeted to women would include more words, which would support their need of more information to make a decision. To test this, male orientated magazines and female orientated magazines were examined for their ads and the amount of words in them (Whissell 1997.) The results of the study showed that the male text contained more words, 2987 for men, 1786 for women. The initial hypothesis was rejected but upon examining the results more clearly, the author concluded that this does uphold the Meyers-Levy Selectivity hypothesis. The author states “if males were selective and heuristic processors who favor objective detail while females are comprehensive and emotional processors who pay attention to all dimensions of an advertisements, then more words will have to appear in male-directed advertisements for two reasons. First, more words are necessary if more object3. ive

detail is to be conveyed, and second more words are necessary if not all words are being processed” (Whissell 1997.)

### **3. Relational processing**

Relational processing focuses on the similarities that help to connect the product to a larger category (Meyers-Levy 1991.) Relational processors tend to be more creative, intuitive, verbally skillful, and can focus on different aspects at once, and be more subjective. Women tend to be more relational processors, which support the comprehensive processors noted by the selectivity hypothesis. This theory also stresses that women will be more attracted to messages that are “self-generated as well as other-generated information in a given social setting” which supports previous findings that women would prefer or pay attention to messages, which shows interpersonal communication (Putrevu 2001.)

### **III. Summarize**

All of these theories help to explain why women lag behind their counterparts in their acceptance of technology and the internet, and maybe their receptivity to internet advertising. Socialization and role theory suggests that people grow up behaving in a way they believe is expected of them. The same way boys believe they should play with cars and girls with dolls, technology has been thought to be a boy’s interest. Given these theories, one could suggest that advertisers rely on a few simple attributes of a product that are unique or stand out in some way when targeting men, which would appeal to their need of self-focused messages, and messages targeting women should be communal in nature or stress relationships with others, and offer detailed information of the product. However if marketers were to look more closely at factors

regarding the online environment specifically, they would be able to better target their gender by creating their website or online promotion to better appeal to them.

Current research suggests that women are outnumbering men online, there were “95.9 million males online in 2009, or 48.2% of the Internet population, compared with 103.2 million females” (eMarketer April 14, 2009.) According to the U.S Census, males will also no longer be the majority of the general U.S population. Between 2008 and 2013, men will hold steady at 48%, which may also help account for the increasing internet usage by women. Men are however spending more time on average using the internet compared to women. Nielson Online found in November 2008, males spent an average of 4.4 hours longer than females, and recorded an average of 60 PC sessions (a month) per male Internet user compared with an average of 54 sessions for female users (eMarketer April 14, 2009.)

The current statistics says over 40,000 men received a bachelor of science in computer science compared to only 8,852 women in 2006 (National Science Foundation. 2006.) We also know that more women outnumber men in jobs that are nurturing or require a strong interpersonal communication such as nursing and social work. The career choices of genders show that there are discrepancies in the job market that may indeed be due to biological, social or information processing differences.

Whatever form of explaining gender differences are used the consensus is that there does seem to exist differences in males and females and this can be correlated or lend a hand to the current social experiences the genders undergo, including their experience online. In addition, it can explain why men are more active participants; because socially they are seen to be more technologically equipped, and being left-brained can be more inclined to understand the

analytics. This also proposes an opportunity for advertisers to understand how they can use these differences to create an online marketing strategy that engages their choice of gender. But first, we need to explore what the genders are doing online and what their habits are.

#### **IV. Online experience and behavior**

##### ***A. Shopping behavior***

Conflicting results have come out as to which sex is more likely to shop online. For men, online shopping behavior is more goal-oriented, much like offline trips to a store. They are not as bothered by sites cluttered with ads and, do not abandon them as quickly as women do (Phillips 2009.) A study aimed at discovering patterns on internet shopping regarding different demographics found males are more likely to shop online and more willing “to purchase from unfamiliar online stores”. Other results of the study found that Hispanic, college educated and younger consumers fit into this likely e-commerce group. The study however makes no suggestion as to why the male sex is more likely to shop online or why they would do so from unfamiliar stores as compared to females (Stranahan 2007.)

Another article found that men shop more online which supports previous findings, and concludes gender is a significant predictor of a person’s intention to make online purchases. “Advertisers and retailers view women as one of the fastest growing population segments using the Web. However, if women are less likely than men to use the web to make purchases, it may be more profitable for organizations to focus sites on products and services that attract males’ shoppers” (Slyke 2002.) The article however suggests that if the correct measures are taken to encourage or attract the female consumer, than this segment may increase online purchases.

However, other research also suggests that this may be due to the fact that men are historically more accepting of technology and the likelihood of using the internet for shopping purposes is also shaped by ones years of computer experience, age, occupation, and educational level. Therefore, this article does not disregard females as an unprofitable market; and seeks not only to understand the gender differences that may exist, but more importantly, make suggestions as to what specific features are important in attracting a particular sex to a website. This is regardless of which sex may be spending more money online, especially because current statistics suggests that females are increasing in internet usage and therefore, may soon surpass males in the amount of online purchases made.

### ***B. Trust and privacy issues***

In general, women tend to view the internet and e-commerce as less trust worthy than men do. In a study conducted on 420 consumers in a large southeastern area, the researchers found that relative to males, females found web advertising more deceptive than TV advertising, preferred traditional advertising because they found it more enjoyable, and overall exhibited a less positive attitude towards internet advertising versus “traditional advertising”. For this study traditional refers strictly to magazine, TV, radio and newspapers (Wolin 2003).

Another study conducted on gender online privacy concerns looked closely at such concerns as “online buying risk from credit card misuse, fraud sites, loss of privacy, shipping problems, product performance, and the two aspects of risk, (probability of failure and severity of consequences)(Garbarino 2004.) The study once again found than women scored higher than men did in all categories and in this case, it did not relate to expertise or experience. Simmons Choice 3 2008 found that men had an index of 109, compared to women with 91 respectively, in

answering agree a lot to the statement “it’s safe to make purchases online” (Figure A-1.) The study however, also gave a recommendation as to how to make women feel more comfortable with the site. They found that the risk associated with purchasing online dramatically decreased for women when given a positive recommendation from a friend, but men did not show a significant difference.

Using factors as this study did, marketers can further probe this area to find out which area concerns their consumers the most and try to reduce that risk, regardless of if they are a first time visitor or an experienced shopper. Being an experienced shopper and using the internet frequently even for online purchases does not ease the consumers mind about a new website they have not tried before. Therefore, websites should still consider that for consumers and particularly women, it should make the audience feel that the website is protecting their privacy and should have a privacy policy or security feature visible. To reduce the risk of women’s perceptions on purchasing, websites should also feature a “tell a friend link” or “share with a friend”. This way not only do you help create word of mouth; females in particular would be more willingly to visit your site as shown by the previous study.

### ***C. Internet usage***

A study conducted on 569 university students, found that men used the internet an average of 7.7 hours a week compared to 5 hours a week for females in 2002 (Sexton 2002.) In addition, not only do men and women use the internet for a different amount of hours but also for different reasons. Various research suggests that men tend to watch sports, news, weather, and gaming sites, whereas females tend to look at shopping, health related sites, entertainment, interpersonal communication, and academic reasons. Men more so than females are also

decreasing their usage of other media and enjoying a larger amount of various online activities (Figure A-2.) Research has shown that females lagged behind men in computer usage and hence internet usage because of the stereotype of men being able to use technology better than females. Men were also historically first to use the computer and internet in larger numbers because they were out in the workforce in larger numbers while many women were still at home and did not have leisure time to devote to learning and using the internet.

One study published in the *Social Science Quarterly* looked at the abilities of males and females to use the internet and found that there is no significant difference in regards to online usage ability. However, females do exhibit a lower self-assessment of their online skills, which may affect their experience of the internet, and which may have come from them historically not being exposed to it. This provides an opportunity to advertisers when trying to appeal to females to encourage women to click or stay on a site by showing them how easy it is for them to use it or provide a tutorial of the website. This can lead into ease of use, which is important because having a difficult navigation can hinder a consumers experience with your website (Hargittai 2006.)

#### ***D. Use of websites***

A study researching web site differences in female versus male orientated sites, found that there is differences that exist. Females prefer sites that have a higher amount of links to different subjects, employ welcome messages, use rounded lines versus straight lines, use language that is more informal, have a larger variety of color, and prefer an easy and quick navigation. One of the researchers, Dr. Rod Gunn indicated, “There is no doubt about the

strength of men's and women's preference for sites produced by people of their own sex” (Moss 2006.)

Another study supports the previous finding when looking at different criteria of website usage including ease of use, download speed, navigation, and personalization, among other factors. The study found that overall female’s rate ease of use, (or effort needed to use the site), and navigation, (amount of clicks needed to get to another page, ease of finding different links or subjects) more importantly than their male counterparts, while males rated download speed as most important. (Pearson 2007.) The study suggests that the findings support “previous research that found that females utilize the World Wide Web for developing relationships and focus on ease of use, while males use the World Wide Web more for information gathering.”

#### ***E. New media and user generated content considerations***

New media and user generated content has already begun to affect the face of media as many companies and advertisers are beginning to use this as an important means to complement a campaign, such as the introduction of company pages, (profiles) on the popular social networking site, Facebook. User generated content or UGC is defined as “any material created and uploaded to the Internet by non-media professionals”. The consumer therefore is the creator and end-user of the content (Interactive Advertising Bureau 2008.) UGC can take many forms. The following is a list of different forms and a short explanation of how it works:

BLOGS	A Journal or diary that is for public viewing online usually updated frequently and has a theme or subject matter.
WIKIS	Built, maintained and edited through contributions from anyone with access

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SOCIAL NETWORKING	Can be public or private usually involving a profile of yourself and personal information used for communicating and connecting to others
CONTENT SHARING	Allows for uploading and sharing of a specific form of content
WIDGETS	Portable applications found on various sites that can contain advertising messages or various content, can be shared or uploaded by a user to other supportable sites
DISCUSSIONS	Threaded discussion forums where members reply to posts from other members
RSS FEEDS	A family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated content such as blog entries, news headlines or podcasts, enabling users to keep up with their favorite websites in an automated manner that's easier than checking them manually
PODCASTS	A collection of digital media files distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and personal computers.
RATINGS & REVIEWS	<u>Websites</u> designed for <u>users</u> to vote on or rate people, <u>content</u> , among other things

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Breaking this information down further we can see the differences in gender that comes into play. Over all men, outnumber women in their use and frequency of most user generated content sites. For example, Yankelovich, a leading consumer research company, recently classified a group as the Online Video Downloader's who were for the most part males, 18-24 year olds. This segment likes to be on top of trends, and expresses their opinions to their friends and families. They also frequently share or send clips, files, and music to others. This is important because it shows there is a loyal following or base of consumers who are actively participating in this or have made it a daily activity. In addition, their activities correlate with

other forms of UGC's which can be leveraged by companies looking to create or maintain a presence online through this means. For example, a company can leverage this group by allowing them to be able to create a profile or give them a space similar to social networking site so they can share and send files to friends. They also like to express their opinions and they may like the idea of participating in a blog, discussion board, or forum (Yankelovich 2008.)

However, women are heavily engaging in one particular form of USC. Current statistics shows that social networking will increase to usage by 42% of internet users by 2010 (Interactive Advertising Bureau 2008.) And woman are believed to be the heavy user of these sites which supports previous research suggesting they are more relationship-driven in their online behavior (Hoffman 2008.) Therefore, marketers should closely monitor the individual forms of USC and gender participation within it as to not assume one gender is participating greatly in all forms, which we see may not be the case.

## **V. Online Advertising**

Online advertising has drastically increased in the past few years as the world of media has undergone changes. For example, the decline in radio listening can be seen as a correlation to the increase in online radio listening. Similarly, the decline in reading print newspaper, which resulted in less ad spending and the closing down of several publications can be attributed to its increase in online readership. Nielson Net Ratings found that 21% of people are primarily only reading newspapers online. And, with newspapers online, comes with it interaction such as editorial blogs and online message boards, therefore many people are also accessing online news for various reasons not available in the print version (Nielson Net Ratings 2005.) The Internet's share of total media ad spending is rising by at least 1 percentage point every year. Simply put,

marketers are spending more on Internet ads, and spending less on advertising in other media, such as newspapers, radio, and magazines. Furthermore, it is projected that the online share of ad dollars will continue to grow, rising from nearly 10% this year to slightly more than 15% in 2013 (eMarketer April 8, 2009.)

Online advertising may take many forms including online videos, banners, text links, overlays, and embedded ads. I choose to look at online videos and banner ad because more research and measurement need to be conducted on other forms before any sufficient conclusions be made. I will explain the current research on the effectiveness and more importantly whether or not gender differences exist and if so how it can be used to target genders.

#### ***A. Online videos***

66.8 percent of all U.S. Internet users are estimated to be viewing some form of video advertising (in-stream, in banner, in-text) at least once a month in 2008. That share equates to 129.5 million people who will view online video ads this year, and that figure is projected to rise over the next five years to 183.3 million viewers in 2013 (Miller 2008.) When broken down further into gender, it is estimated that 78% of current male internet users are viewing online videos compared to 66% of females (Aho 2007.)

Specifically, males 18-24 are the heaviest viewers of online videos; a recent survey found that almost one-third of men age 18-24 said they watch online video content daily and go to these sites mostly for entertainment, sports, and news. It also found that this group is least likely to stop watching a video when an advertisement comes on (Burst Media Research 2007.) Simmons Choice 2007 further supports these findings, which shows that men are 34 times as likely to visit financial information and stock trading online. It also shows that men are 39 times

more likely to visit these sites 16-29 times a month (Figure A-3.) The male target nonetheless proves an important segment of online video viewers but more importantly, this research provides marketers with the opportunity to place their video ads more specifically. For example to target males and specifically 18-24 year olds, it may be more beneficial to place an ad before a video commentary on the stock market loads on a financial site such as Bloomberg which you know they are likely to watch rather than placing a static banner ad on the same webpage.

It is estimated that online video advertising spending will increase from \$505 million this year to \$1.9 billion in 2011, according to eMarketer, (Note: that this does not separate user generated from professional) and the 2012 Olympics is also being considered a future driving force for online video frequency, which suggests a healthy future for online video ads.

This does not suggest that only males, particularly 18-24 year olds are streaming online videos, but it does show how demographics play an important part in finding the heavy users of this activity. Research shows that women are not the majority of online video watchers and therefore it may not be as profitable to develop ads to reach them in this manner. However, if marketers were to understand why women are not viewing videos at a more proportionate manner to men, they may be able to adapt videos to better suit a woman's preference or, place them in sites where woman may be more responsive. For example, we know men are largely using the internet to read information regarding sports, as well, much sports information exist on the web as video highlights of recent games, suggesting they are consuming video because it is related to an activity they are already searching for. Therefore, video marketers trying to reach women may not have yet figured out the right way to do so, and should not write them off as not receptive of online video.

## ***B. Banner Ads***

Banner ads entail embedding an advertisement within a web page and can take various forms including animated, static, skyscrapers, etc. Overall it has been said that click through rates are decreasing or remaining low (Business week 2007.) However, does this mean those banner ads are ineffective? One study which looked into banner ad effectiveness found that even though the click through rates were low, ad recall and awareness were present and this may be more important in the future because it leaves an impression in the consumers mind of your brand. This study also looked at different types of banner ads including various sizes, different colored backgrounds, and animated versus static ads, among other factors. The study found one type of banner ad to be more effective than another banner ad if it resulted in higher brand recognition. In this case, animated and larger ads did prove more effective than static or smaller sized ads and high color contrast ads performed more poorly than non-contrasting ads (Dreze 2003.) This study however made no mention of significant differences among the genders.

Another study on banner ads looked into gender differences and found overall, there was no significant gender difference between banner ad effectiveness and consumer characteristics such as attitude, involvement, and expectations, which supports the previous study. The study did find however, some important features that may enhance a genders experience. Men had a positive attitude towards an ad if they were given choices or options, if they were not, they would have negative feelings toward the product and be likely to leave the site. For women, an important factor involved shopping and searching, they wanted more options when it comes to searching for a product in both narrow and broad focus, meaning they want to choose how much information they see (Palanisamy 2004.) Therefore, color, size, and animation may be less

important when creating a banner ad for either sex; rather the content or the way the message is presented should be considered the factor that leads to clicks or at least brand recognition.

comScore, a leader in measuring the digital environment also reported the low click through rate of .01% in a recent study but suggests that this may not be as important because there is still an increase in exposure and sales following the ads being seen, which supports previous studies (comScore 2008.)

These studies suggest that more research and particularly experiments regarding banner ads and their effect on gender needs to be conducted before making a solid conclusion on whether or not differences exist in the genders appeal of a certain type of banner ad. However, advertisers should not rely solely on click through rates when measuring responsiveness by their gender to a website, as this may be misleading because click through rates are too low overall to have a sufficient distinguishing effect over a particular gender. Click through rates also do not measure recall, attentiveness, or post purchase behavior after having seen the ad, which may be more important in uncovering the differences, if any exist among genders regarding their intent to click on a banner ad.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Though some studies conflict on the existence of relevant gender differences and its implications, this article suggest that gender difference does exist in a variety of areas regarding the online environment, and marketers should consider these differences when creating a website to attract either sex.

Because men and women may be attracted to websites for different reasons, marketers in considering their intentions and motivations can carefully create a website catering to needs or

concerns of that sex. Findings of this article suggests that women remain more wary than men in privacy issues, they are more likely to frequent entertainment, shopping sites, and have more interpersonal communication, but, their risk of purchasing can be reduced. Therefore, it would be wise to create a site that focuses on privacy, ease of use, attractive design, some variable of communication, either sending an email to a friend or being able to post to a discussion board. Doing so can greatly increase the chance of women responding to your website favorably. Men continue to frequent news and sports sites, and overall spend more time online and for a larger amount of reasons. When targeting males, it is important to engage them in active participation whether is it watching a video or playing a game, which are features that could easily be added to a website.

Limitations of this article are that much of the research measured different criteria, ages, and experience with the online environment. This article also considers the U.S market, but if you were to look at different ethnicities, countries, cultures, or ages you may also help further segment your target. For example, according to Scarborough Research, 54% of Hispanics were online in 2008. While that is up slightly over the previous year, it still trails the 69% penetration rate of total US users. Yet, music, video, audio, and movies, in that order, were the most popular types of content viewed or downloaded using broadband, and in larger numbers than the average U.S population. This kind of information may help marketers create campaigns that are more viral in nature for certain consumers such as Hispanics (eMarketer April 9 2009.)

Finally, the future of the internet is ever changing, new forms of advertising and ways to capture an audience's attention are being created and growing in popularity such as social media and online video consumption. The way people spend their time will change and marketers need to keep abreast of this as well as any gender differences that may exist. Much research regarding

this area conflicts such as men are considered a large percent of user generated content participants, but this may only be in certain forms such as online videos since research also shows woman are the majority in social networking sites. This article also reflects facts and figures at the time it was written and may not reflect the changing views or ad spending.

**A. *Further Research***

More research needs to be done on the various forms of online advertising and gender behavior online because it is constantly changing and should include other forms such as text links, video overlays, and e-mail marketing, which may able have an effect on a gender's experience with a website or online behavior. Research regarding banner ads, videos, shopping, privacy issues, internet usage, user generated content, and website design suggests that overall, gender differences do exist but can be explored more in-depth to understand *why* these differences exist which may help to provide further implications and recommendations on how to attract the target.

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## Appendix A: Data

Figure A-1

	Target: RESPONDENT- GENDER[MALE] Population: 105754 (000)					Target: RESPONDENT- GENDER[FEMALE] Population: 113097 (000)				
Totals	Unwgt	(000)	Vert%	Horz%	Index	Unwgt	(000)	Vert%	Horz%	Index
<b>AGREE A LOT:</b>	10878	105754	100	48.32	100	13703	113097	100	51.68	100
IT'S SAFE TO MAKE PURCHASES ONLINE	1495	15084	14.3	52.91	109	1587	13427	11.87	47.09	91
Source: Simmons Spring 2008 NHCS Weighted by: Population	Adult Full Year Unf St/Tip_Pts (C) 2008 SMRB Inc. All Rights Reserved									

Figure A-2

	Target: RESPONDENT- GENDER[MALE] Population: 102,474 (000)					Target: RESPONDENT- GENDER[FEMALE] Population: 110,014 (000)				
	Sample	(000)	Vert%	Horz%	Index	Sample	(000)	Vert%	Horz%	Index
Totals <b>ATTITUDES</b> (LIFESTY/INTRNET)-AGREE A LOT	10,706	102,474	100%	48%	100	13,732	110,014	100%	52%	100
I SPEND LESS TIME READ MAGS B/C INTERNET	780	7,131	6.96%	61%	127	605	4,548	4.13%	39%	75
I SPEND LESS TIME WATCH TV B/C INTERNET	717	7,059	6.89%	62%	128	603	4,379	3.98%	38%	74
I LSTN LESS TO NON-INTRNT RADIO B/C INT	456	3,841	3.75%	58%	119	397	2,829	2.57%	42%	82
Choices 3 Crosstabulation Report NCS: SPRING 2006 ADULT FULL YEAR-REISSUE (MAY 2005-JUNE 2006)										
										Copyright SMRB 2006

Figure A-3

	Target: RESPONDENT- GENDER[MALE] Population: 44881(000)					Target: RESPONDENT- GENDER[FEMALE] Population:65009 (000)				
	Sample	(000)	Vert%	Horz%	Index	Sample	(000)	Vert%	Horz%	Index
Totals	10,706	44,881	100%	41%	100	13,732	65,009	100%	59%	100
<b>ONLINE ACTIVITIES-USED/VISIT LST 30 DAYS:</b>										
FINANCIAL INFORMATION/STOCK TRADING	1347	5136	11.00%	53.00%	130	857	4,561	7.02%	47%	80
<b>#TIMES USED/VISIT LST 30 DAYS: 16 OR MORE</b>										
FINANCIAL INFORMATION/STOCK TRADING	456	1,580	3.52%	60%	147	187	1,055	1.62%	40%	68
Choices 3 Crosstabulation Report NCS: SPRING 2006 ADULT FULL YEAR-REISSUE (MAY 2005-JUNE 2006)						Copyright SMRB 2006				