

## Marketers Have Eyes on the 'Third Screen'

*Eric Pfanner*



OLD media lagged behind in the race to go online, in part because the prospects for advertising — traditionally the major revenue source for newspapers, magazines and television — seemed unclear on the Internet. Then, online advertising took off, and the old media are still playing catch-up.

Now, with the next iteration of the Internet, the mobile Web, spreading around the world, publishers and other content providers are trying to avoid coming in late on another advertising bonanza.

Last week in London, the Online Publishers Association released a study showing that mobile Internet use was on the rise, as was acceptance of mobile advertising.

The survey — conducted by TNS Media Intelligence in the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain — found that 76 percent of cellphone owners in those countries had Web access from mobile devices. The researchers polled about 1,000 people in each country and found that more than a third of those who had mobile Web access used it. The population using the Web ranged from 34 percent in France to 54 percent in Britain.

Studies commissioned by trade organizations are sometimes just disguised marketing exercises, and the publishing group's numbers seem surprisingly high when compared with other recent surveys of Web access by mobile phone users. According to M:Metrics, a research firm based in Seattle, 14 percent of British cellphone users went to the Web for news and information in the fourth quarter. In Germany, the firm said, a mere 3.2 percent did so.

Still, even if the lower estimates are closer to reality, mobile marketing could be a big thing simply because the potential audience size is enormous. About a billion mobile phones will be sold around the world this year, and globally, there are more cellphones than PCs.

"I always hear about the cellphone as being the third screen, but I think about it as the first one," said Bob Greenberg, chief executive of R/GA, an agency based in New York that specializes in digital advertising, speaking at a conference sponsored by the publishers' association. "It's with me all the time."

In advertising terms, however, the mobile phone remains very much the third screen, behind television and the computer.

Mobile advertising has grown rapidly in markets like Japan, but outside Asia, activity is still dominated by "text and response" campaigns that for example, ask users to send text messages for more information on a product, or enter a contest.

The personal nature of the link between cellphones and their users has made marketers tread carefully. Some mobile advertising — unsolicited text-message spam, for instance — is illegal or against advertising regulatory codes in many countries.

The online publishers' survey indicated that consumers remained wary. Only 18 percent of respondents in the United States said they were receptive to the idea of watching ads in exchange for free mobile content. The percentage was higher in Europe, where 37 percent said they would do so.

But the study also showed how effective mobile advertising could be if the personal space could be entered deftly. Sizable percentages of respondents said they had visited a Web site or requested more information about a product after seeing a mobile ad.

To get more marketers, Nokia announced last week two new services to increase mobile advertising. One program will help digital advertising specialists introduce campaigns for cellphone-based media applications like music players and navigation systems. The other will help agencies adapt digital campaigns for the mobile Web.

"It was kind of natural for us to try to figure out how advertising will work inside these platforms," said Harry Santamaki, vice president for multimedia strategy and business development at Nokia.

With mobile media embracing various devices and formats, from video game players to portable newspaper readers, that may be no easy task. But if the marketing can be believed, the payoff could be sizable.

**Disponível em <<http://www.nytimes.com>>. Acesso em 22/3/2007.**