Network Characteristics Of Advertising Portals: Fostering Web Marketing Development In Albania _____

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Abstract

Purpose: The main purpose of this study is to identify the peculiarities of advertisements in Albanian online portals. Also, it aims to introduce us to a general picture of advertisements used by Albanian online portals, as well as highlight their special elements. Monitoring and analysis of the content of advertisements in some of the most popular Albanian portals as well as studies by specialists in the field who know very well this part of the world and very little in Albania is another point at which the work will focus.

Methodology: The paper is a descriptive study of the literature of digital marketing in the albanian portals. Qualitative methods are used in the development of the paper, browsing mainly foreign literature, by reviewing different scientific papers, as well as a direct observation has been carried out to support the analysis of the peculiarities of advertisements on online portals in the period January-June 2023.

Findings: The application of advertising in Albania has gone through two stages, firstly we have the publication of the portal's own advertisementsl; in the second phase, we have a further development of technology, online portals were developed even more, and we have the orientation of advertisers towards the Internet, showing mostly local ads on these portals, then we have the application of non-local, mostly foreign ads.

Value: This study can serve as a starting point for more in-depth studies in this field, focusing on the specific elements of advertising in online portals in Albania.

Keywords: advertisement, portal, Cost-per-click, ad serve

Introduction

Today viewers and readers are becoming more demanding and selective. Online media has made it very easy to spread information in a few seconds in real time, thus competing with news television, but also with the written press, which has somehow left it in the "shadow". Technology has also added alternatives for users who are not only able to change the channel, but also shift their attention to the Internet, watch the latest movies and make other endless choices that this platform offers.

More and more businesses are switching from traditional marketing to digital marketing (Zanubiya, J., Meria, L., & Juliansah. 2023).

In this unstoppable evolution, even the advertising market, the main source of income for many television stations and newspapers, has focused mainly on online media that have attracted their attention.

This new communication platform includes all aspects of advertising as well as product research, promotion, and product sales. Radio and print media have a lower cost than television for advertising. Even in Albania, online marketing is becoming widely used, this is proven by the figures that show a decrease in advertising on television, mainly on the main national televisions.

The Internet is becoming popular for reasons of costs and specific targeting of the audience. A simple illustrative example, if you own a product and want to promote it, online media gives you the opportunity to define the budget, geographical space, specifics of the target group, such as age, gender, etc., and the entire amount will be spent on the target audience, whereas an advertisement in visual media you cannot control the audience so specifically.

The advertisement has been accompanied by many changes. New methods in its management and provision make it every day even more costly and necessary for the survival of the media, the online portal.



The role of advertising is essential in the media industry. For all types of media both traditional and new, it is the main source of income. Despite the radical changes that the media environment has undergone and influenced by the technological process, the status of advertising as the main source of income remains intact.

The application of new forms of advertising appears as an attempt to adapt to the behavior of audiences and as a response to the demand for increased efficiency on the part of advertisers. Meanwhile, the advertising industry is a growing business activity with significant impact on the economy.

However, this new media, along with a found freedom, also faced a series of new challenges, such as economic difficulties, conflict with the government or politics, lack of professionalism, as well as the resistance of new media owners to journalists for control of content.

The Covid-19 pandemic offers businesses an excellent opportunity to shift to real and honest marketing that can actually tackle urgent environmental and social challenges globally. (Alshaketheep *et al.* 2020).

Despite the global closure during the Covid-19 pandemic in March-May 2020, destinations continued to market themselves (Ketter, E., & Avraham, E. 2021).

An inherent and continuous problem in the analysis of the Albanian media market is the lack of accuracy, transparency and regular public data about advertising due to the lack of transparency of funds in the media and the lack of regular reliable studies of the advertising market. and advertising revenue.

In case of Balkan Media, the situation van be discribed as: "It is difficult to teach these new businesses that together with competition, responsibility must be exercised; something that is necessary in the media business (Avadani I, 2017)

The hopes of television remain with telecommunications companies and banks, which have the largest budgets available for marketing and advertising, while new advertisers are counted by the dropper. However, the big TVs are managing to hold on and take a major slice of the advertiser budgets pie.

In the conditions of an increasingly fierce competition, the use of advertising, one of the most important forms of communication, appears as a necessity not only in the economic sphere but also in the political, social, cultural, etc.

The main purpose of this study is to identify the peculiarities of advertisements in Albanian online portals. Also, it aims to introduce us to a general picture of advertisements used by Albanian online portals, as well as highlight their special elements. Monitoring and analysis of the content of advertisements in some of the most popular Albanian portals as well as studies by specialists in the field who know very well this part of the world and very little in Albania is another point at which the work will focus.

The development of technology and the creation of online portals in Albania has caused companies to shift advertising from traditional media to online ones.



This has created the need for portals to develop or borrow some of the technical and managerial platforms to publish, target and measure advertising on their portals with the aim of increasing the efficiency of advertising as well as the most efficient use of advertising spaces on the portal.

Methodology

The paper is a descriptive study of the literature of digital marketing in the albanian portals. Qualitative methods are used in the development of the paper, browsing mainly foreign literature, by reviewing different scientific papers, as well as a direct observation has been carried out to support the analysis of the peculiarities of advertisements on online portals in the period January-June 2023 (Albeu.com, Balkanweb.com and Top-Channel.tv). The selection of these portals was based on the most clicked in Albania (according to Alexa.com). Also, the monitoring carried out by the author of this paper on the advertising formats that use Albanian online portals, it was concluded that these three portals apply different advertisements and meet the criteria to be part of the study.

This study is focused on the types of online advertising, the application and investment of advertising agencies in online portals, the analysis of the peculiarities of advertising in online portals in Albania, as well as the monitoring of some of the most popular portals. We also gave a description for online advertising formats, in order that the reader will have a complete framework about the topic.

The study uses the most popular online portals located in Albania, where, there is a lack of scientific studies on the advertising market, especially in online media. The study presents a complete picture of the qualities of advertising in online portals.

Finally, this study can serve as a starting point for more in-depth studies in this field, focusing on the specific elements of advertising in online portals in Albania.

Literature Review

We as consumers are exposed to hundreds of commercial messages every day. They can be in the form of billboards or in the form of an advertisement, a newspaper, a television advertisement, a coupon, a brochure for advertising various products, in the form of a publicity, a sponsorship for a certain event, of a phone call and even as an email message. These are just some of the different means of communication used by companies and organizations in order to establish and maintain contacts with buyers, potential customers. These communications are included in the general



term "advertisements". The correct term for these different tools is marketing communications, and advertising is only one of the marketing communications. (Weigold, 2004)

Albert Lasker, who today is considered the father of modern advertising, at the beginning of the twentieth century, defined advertising as: "Commercial in written form, driven by a certain reason." But today this concept has changed, because at that time business and advertising were quite limited. The environment and needs of businesses have changed and so has the concept and practice of advertising. Advertising is any public announcement broadcast for payment or similar remuneration, for the purposes of self-promotion; that is intended for the promotion of the sale, purchase or production of a service; to advance an idea or issue; or to cause some other effects desired by the advertisers or the broadcaster itself.

Online advertising, also called internet advertising, uses the internet to distribute promotional messages, marketing messages to consumers. It includes email marketing, social media search, types of display advertising (including web banner advertising), and telephone advertising. Like new media it involves both a publisher, who integrates advertising into an online content, and an advertiser, who provides for the ad to appear on the publisher's content.

Online advertising is a big business that is growing very fast. In 2011, Internet advertising revenue in the United States surpassed that of cable television and nearly surpassed that of broadcast television.

Effective marketing enables the collection of data to understand more about the targeted consumers, allowing advertising and other strategies to be more directed. In addition, this was initiated to deeply understand how the digital marketing strategies of online business sellers work (Tabuena et al. 2022). The use of digital tools may allow SMEs to achieve a higher performance and efficiency in communicating with their customers, as well as to improve their growth and competitiveness in the market (Bermeo-Giraldo, M. C., Valencia-Arias. 2022).

But journalists define it as a communication, as public relations or as a process related to efforts to convince consumers; people see it as a marketing process; economists and sociologists tend to focus on the social economic or ethical significance of advertising.(Zela, 2017)

According to McCann-Erickson advertising is "the truth told the right way". For Bernbach "advertising is persuasion and persuasion is not a science but an art". Arens. W (2004) defines advertising as "the impersonal, structured and systematic communication of information usually intended to persuade about various products (goods, services, and ideas), financed by identified sponsors and distributed through various media".

Kotler and Armstrong define advertising as "any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor,

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which is intended to inform, persuade or remind about a product or certain service". (Kotler, 2013)

According to Richards and Curran (2002), advertising is a form of communication paid for by an identifiable source designed to persuade the recipient to take some action, now or in the future. Advertising is a form of communication that aims to persuade. It is about promoting a product or service to attract attention and helps build a brand through communication.

The wind of globalization, promotional integration and dot.com, the beginning of which coincides with the turn of the millennium, where the diversity of the media portfolio stands out with the growing presence of the Internet and new media in front of an increasingly sophisticated audience. Today's audience has greater power than ever in the 'fate' of the advertising message (filtering, avoidance, etc.), as well as thanks to new techniques there is a tendency for input from the market itself (crowdsourcing) in the realization of advertisements, etc.(Duka, 2012)

The development of the Internet has also brought changes in the marketing environment forcing marketers to rethink almost everything they do. In her doctoral thesis Loreta Axhami entitled "Advertising in audiovisual media and the specifics of Albanian models" states that "Currently there are approximately over two billion Internet users worldwide and the desire of consumers to receive information, the speed and convenience of receiving of this information as well as the ability to control what and how much information they receive has influenced the increase in the use of the Internet".

There is something new on the internet every day, we shop through it and there is nothing that cannot be found or bought there. Both customers and marketers have rapidly increased the use of this medium and the opportunity to target customers effectively through the Internet is very attractive and profitable for marketers.

Unlike other media, products and services offered for sale, the Internet is interactive. In their book "Advertising and promotion" George E. Belch and Michael A. Belch" state that" consumers not only control when and what messages and content they see but they provide their own content, offer products and services for sale as well as give feedback". Marketers are increasingly engaging consumers in a way never seen before through a variety of platforms that never existed before. (Belch, 2015)

In the beginning, the Internet was used by corporations that used it to create their sites there, mainly to provide information and there was no interaction. But, the role of the site changes very quickly and now through them a large number of objectives are achieved by making the website as creative as possible, promoting brand image, brand positioning, various promotions, product information, products and services for sale. thus enabling an interaction between the company and the customer.



According to Belch, the communication objectives that companies aim to achieve through the Internet are: creating awareness, generating interest, distributing information, creating an image, creating a strong brand (Belch, 2015).

The authors Kotler & Keller (2016) highlight several types of advertising on the web, which are: *banners, trick banner* (masked advertisement - the advertisement looks like a dialog box, so it attracts attention), *pop-up/pop-under* (advertisement window above/below the page in question), *interstitials* (transit ad - opens before the destination page is downloaded), *floating ad* (floating ads that wander for a certain time on the page and then disappear by themselves or are closed by the viewer), *expanding ad* (ads that when the page opens, and the ad zooms in to the domain of the page), *video ad* (video ad similar to television ad), *wallpaper ad* (background ad), paid search, *behavioral targeting, contextual ads, online commercials, video on demand, websites, videogames, instant messaging, podcasts, etc.*). But Internet advertising also includes social media ads (Facebook, Youtube, etc.) that focus more on the message and the ads that will appear, starting from the profile that users have on these media.

The term "Digital Marketing" was used for the first time in the 1990s. Immediately with the advent of the Internet and the development of the "Web 1.0" platform, this term expanded even more, giving even more advantages to its users. "Web 1.0" allowed any user to be able to find various information on the Internet, but it did not provide the possibility of interactivity so that even Internet users could share this information on the Internet. The "Web 1.0" platform meant that marketers were not yet sure that their advertising strategy would be successful because until that time the Internet was not yet fully spread throughout the world." (Monnappa, 2018)

Then came Web 2.0, where people became more active participants rather than remaining passive users. Web 2.0 allowed users to interact with other users and other businesses by providing interactivity and real-time information sharing. As a result, the volumes of information circulation, including the channels used by digital marketers increased more. In 2004 Internet advertising and marketing in the US alone brought in about \$2.9 billion.

The integration of online businesses and the publication of their products online made it possible for costumers to have the opportunity to view and buy the product at any time, as well as for the seller to be available to his customers at any time. Statistics compiled by MarketingTechBlog for 2017 show that posting on social media is the top online activity in the US. The average American spends 37 minutes a day on social media. According to the statistics of this study, 99% of online advertisers use Facebook as a market, 97% use Twitter, 70% use Google+, 69% use Pinterest and 59% use Instagram.



"70% of B2C marketers have acquired customers through Facebook. 67% of Twitter users are more likely to buy from brands they follow on Twitter. 83.8% of luxury brands have a presence on the social network Pinterest. Three pages The first social networks used by marketers are "LinkedIn", "Twitter" and "Facebook". (Technology, 2017)

The digital market is in a constant state of flux and a digital marketing professional must find ways to keep up with this change. They should be able to keep an eye on new trends and the development of the newest and smarter Search Engine algorithm.

Online Advertising Formats

Online advertising has evolved since its inception, from a static image that appears at the top of a web page, to now there is a wide variety of ad types that we see used on websites. In this paper, as stated above, the types of web advertising will be analyzed. Which are: banner ads, rich media ads, video ads and native ads.

Banner Ads

"Banner" ads have been popular throughout the internet and will continue to be present on websites forever. The banner ad developed relatively early as a major part of online advertising and continues to dominate as the most widely used online advertising format. A banner ad is a special type of online advertising resource that can be found anywhere on a web page. It can be positioned very easily at the top, bottom or side of a page. "Banner" ads are generally graphic ads or ads coded in "HTML" or "javascript" enabling the display of a specific ad which, when clicked, sends the user to the advertiser's site. The sizes of online banner ads are: 300x250, 728x90, 468x60, 300x600, etc.

Unlike some other types of ads, banner ads can also contain video or Rich Media. In general, the banner ad is a type of format familiar to early Internet users and is now being eclipsed by more sophisticated ad formats.

Without banners there would be no Google or Facebook, as the search engine and social media keep a percentage of the revenue earned through banners to fund their business. It all started when the first banner of AT&T, a US phone company, appeared on HotWired.com. *"Have you ever clicked your mouse here?"* it read, with an arrow pointing to the right side that read: *"You will."*

In 1995, the first commercial contract to show advertisements on the Internet was signed, and its distribution led to a reorganization of the site's content and a change in graphics. (Weigold, 2004)



Banner advertising as stated above refers to the use of a rectangular graphic display that spans the top, bottom, or sides of a web page.

Banner ads continue to bring low revenue. On average standard banner ads, those with no interactivity beyond animations, only deliver about 0.05% CTR (some say 0.01%) for every 10,000 ads that are displayed, about 5 clicks are received. Banners are usually best understood not as click drivers, but awareness drivers that fit into a larger strategy.

Marketing agencies such as Tipping Point Communications in the US use the banner as part of campaigns that also include mobile tactics, online video and audio streaming and other ad formats such as high-impact billboards, rich media banners. While banner ads have evolved rapidly, the basics of online advertising stemming from those early banners remain the same.(Techopedia, 2018)

Rich media ads

"Rich Media" is a digital advertising term for an ad that includes advanced display features such as video, audio, or other elements that encourage viewers to interact and engage with the content the ad presents.

While text ads are sold with words and banner ads are sold with pictures, rich media ads offer more ways to engage your audience with an ad. This ad format has features such as being expandable and scrollable across web pages.

Rich media advertising can collect data about audience behavior, including the number of extensions, multiple exits and video completions to obtain highly detailed data about the success of the campaign.

Rich Media enables advertising agencies to create complex ads that can yield interesting data about the users who engage with them. Using HTML5 technology, this ad format can include multiple content elements in one placement such as video, audio, games, etc. (Google, 2019)

Video Ads

The growth and expansion of digital media, the proliferation of increasingly sophisticated mobile devices and the improvement of broadband coverage and 3G and 4G services has meant that we all use the Internet to watch our favorite shows, watch video clips of songs on Youtube or to check for the most viral videos on Facebook. Our insatiable "appetite" for video has not gone unnoticed by advertisers, and as a result, there has been significant growth in the video advertising market as well. Recent studies show that video spending has reached one billion dollars by in 2018.(Bagguley, 2015)

Advertisers are very interested in videos because videos are incredibly easy to make and post but can stay online attracting views for as long as we want.



"Native" Ads

Unlike the above forms of advertising, "native" advertising is an interesting enough form that the user does not immediately realize that it is an advertisement. "Native" ads are formats that manage to match the look, ideology and functionality of the media format or website in which they appear.

They are often found on social media networks or as recommended content on a website or online media.

These forms of advertising appear as content on the website itself and appear to be part of the site's editorial flow even though it is actually a sponsored post, which has advertising as its purpose.

To better understand native ads and where we most often encounter them, below we will bring some more detailed forms of them:

• The social media newsfeed

Social media are the first to use the most native advertising. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, etc., are an example of native ads that appear by navigating in the form of a post including photos, videos, text and redirect links to the advertiser's site. Recently, this form of advertising is becoming more present in the newsfeed of social media, appearing while we are looking at the posts of friends or the posts of the pages we follow.

• Portals and websites with an informative character

Informative websites, news portals, online magazines or blogs are the ones that use "native" ads the most, positioning them at the end of reading an article or article. These ads are titled as "Similar Articles" and appear in the form of an article since native ads are able to fit very easily with the category of the article and look like a real editorial post. (Outbrain, 2017)

"Pop-up " advertisement

Pop-up ads are forms of online advertising on *the World Wide Web*. A pop-up is a graphical user area, usually a small window, that appears suddenly on a visual page. The pop-up window containing an advertisement is usually generated by JavaScript using cross-site scripting (XSS), sometimes with a secondary payload using Adobe Flash.

The pop-up ad originated on *Tripod.com* in the late 1990s. Ethan Zuckerman created pop-up ads, he wrote code that would launch ads in separate windows in response to complaints from advertisements. It created the pop-up window. Zuckerman later apologized for suddenly annoying ads appearing online, but those had since evolved.

In online advertising, pop-up ads are highly visible and more effective than banner ads. Pop-up ads are versatile and can include most types of ads. For advertisers, this remains one of the most popular methods of reaching consumers



online, as click-through rates are higher than other forms of advertising. In other words, the return on investment for pop-up ads is high. When used correctly with the page, it can lead to better tagging, as they have the potential to leave a lasting impact with viewers.

Pop-up ads often annoy users, as they usually appear on the desktop, require time and effort to close the window open on the page. Many find these ads annoying as they cover other pages and become active popups. For advertisers, the cost of pop-up ads is usually high compared to other types.

Opera was the first browser to include tools to block pop-up ads; Mozilla browser later improved on this part by blocking only pop-ups generated as page loads. In the early 2000s, all major browsers except Internet Explorer allowed users to block almost all unwanted pop-ups. In 2004, Microsoft released Windows XP SP2, which added pop-up blocking to Internet Explorer. Most modern browsers offer pop-up blocking tools; third-party tools add other features, such as ad filtering. (CNN, 2014)

"Pop-under " advertisement

Pop-under ads are similar to pop-up ads, but the opening of these ads is hidden behind the main browser window instead of being placed in front of it. As popup ads became more prevalent and intrusive, often taking up the entire computer screen, many users would immediately close pop-up ads that appeared without seeing them. Pop-under ads do not immediately block the view of content, but remain unnoticed until the user closes or minimizes the main browser window

Flash Ads

A flash ad is an animated banner created using Adobe Flash technology. These banners use complex animations (like movies) and sounds and are often interactive (they "react" based on what the user is doing). Physically, flash banners are objects uploaded to web pages and can be positioned in any ad space of a web page. These types of ads are considered more effective and more attractive to the user.

Online advertising sources and their management

Small businesses not only need to receive outside income to achieve goals and keep the business running, but because cash flow and resources are limited, they cannot engage in marketing campaigns and high profile advertising that more powerful competitors may have.

As a result, many small businesses overlook the possibility of advertising, seeing it as an unnecessary expense. The problem with this is that without a marketing and advertising strategy, it is almost impossible to build a base that will bring



in enough income for the business to exist. This is a kind of dilemma for most entrepreneurs as it takes more expenses to place more ads and it is necessary to create a lot of ads to earn a lot of income. Fortunately, there are some possible solutions. Below we will talk in more detail about advertising resources that are used by modern entrepreneurs and that do not cost. These sources provide the benefits of a full advertising campaign, saving a business budget and bringing benefits. Let's start with advertising agencies.

Advertising agencies

An advertising agency creates, plans and manages all aspects of the client's advertising. Advertising agencies can specialize in specific areas, such as interactive advertising, or they can be full-service agencies that create advertising materials such as brochures, catalogs, print ads, radio and television ads, online and social media campaigns, and advertisements.

In an advertising agency, the president of the agency is at the center, followed by the creative director, account manager, copywriters, graphic designers and a media director. Some agencies also work with freelance copywriters and/or freelance graphic designers who usually don't work in one place.

Advertising agencies have very similar functions, but there are many differences that set them apart from each other. There are three different types:

a) Above The Line (ATL)

These are the big agencies that deal with key accounts and create national (and even international) advertising campaigns that take up a significant portion of the client's budget. This includes major television, magazine, newspaper and nontraditional media campaigns.

b) Below The Line (BTL)

These agencies don't have the budgets or recognition of ATL agencies, but they are still very important to the media (even more so these days when online media is so dominant). BTL agencies usually deal with direct mail (email), local advertising, online advertising and small media campaigns.

c) Though the line (TTL)

Perhaps more common these days, TTL agencies are a mix of ATL and BTL. They create campaigns on TV, radio, down to smaller and less important media ads. TTL agencies are so common these days because of the rise of social media and smartphones. Tactics that were once considered BTL are now receiving big budget funding, including campaigns for Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

In addition to these three main groups of advertising agencies, there are also other types of specialized agencies, which include:

a) Digital Advertising Agencies

These agencies have a primary focus on all aspects of digital. They deal with websites, apps, online campaigns and anything else that is considered "digital



advertising". Digital Advertising Agencies can also create radio and even TV ads, but their day job is all about the internet.

b) Advertising agencies for health

There is a need for specialists who only focus on healthcare products and services, as these areas can be very difficult to handle. Healthcare advertising agencies handle pharmaceutical products, hospitals, medical devices and anything else that would be considered too impossible for a traditional agency.

c) Financial / Technical Advertising Agencies

Like healthcare, the world of finance and technology can be a minefield to navigate. These agencies have financial specialists who know well their objectives and what needs to be addressed.

d) In House Advertising Agencies

These agencies are based in a company and work only for that entity. Whether it's a big brand like Apple or Nike, or something much smaller, they work exclusively for that product or service and are employed by the advertising company. Some people consider this to be a "sale" because it is no longer working on a diverse range of brands. (Duncan, 2018)

Ad networks

Ad networks developed even more during the dotcom boom that began in the mid-1990s. As the number of digital sites and publishers proliferated, they needed an easy way to increase demand to buy space and earn ad revenue. Also, advertisers needed help scaling their digital ads across a growing number of sites without having to deal directly with each publisher.

In the beginning, it was 'DoubleClick', launched in 1996, the digital services agency promoted the concept of an ad network and attracted the attention of the buyer by tracking the performance of the ads and the solutions used for reporting. The company acted as an intermediary between advertisers and a network of publishers. 'DoubleClick' survived and was bought by Google in 2007 for \$3.1 billion. By that time, Google AdSense was four years old, having started in 2003. Today, the Google Display Network for Google AdSense publishers is the largest ad network in the world, and "DoubleClick for Publishers (DFP)" already has renamed to "Google Ad Manager" acts as the premium network of Google publishers. With the growth of motion and video, ad networks that specifically offer these spaces have formed and many of them have been collected by Google (AdMob), Yahoo (Flurry and BrightRoll), Twitter (MoPub), AOL (Millenial Media, Adap.tv) and Facebook (LiveRail). TubeMogul and Tremor Video are examples of independent ad networks. Chartboost, InMobi, Smaato, StartApp and TapJoy are among the still independent mobile ad networks. (Marvin, 2015)



An advertising network, or ad network, connects businesses that want to display ads on websites and that want to be there for a long time against payment. The primary attribute of an ad network as stated is the accumulation of space and matching the needs of the advertiser.

The term "ad network" is media neutral, but is often used to mean "online ad network" as the market for ad space that advertisers seek is increasingly found online. The main difference between traditional and online ad networks is that online ones deliver ads to viewers via a server. Distributing advertising through a central distributor allows the business owner to use different methods of targeting, tracking and reporting that do not exist in traditional media alternatives.

Ad networks work with anyone who has unsold ad space across the network, helping them and wants to monetize their offers. The networks then aggregate this space and sell it to advertisers.

The main function of an ad network is to collect space from publishers and match it with advertiser demand. Ad networks make it possible for advertisers to buy digital ads in places that offer this option as well as in apps.

Advertising networks provide an efficient way for media buyers to coordinate advertising campaigns in dozens, hundreds, or thousands of different locations. Campaigns often make it possible to include ads in a category (run-of-category) or an entire network (run-of-network).

Online advertising space inventory comes in many different forms, including space on desktop and mobile websites, blogs, mobile apps, e-mail and other media. An advertiser can purchase a network package or an in-network category package. The ad network serves ads from its central ad server.

The benefits of using ad networks are many for content providers and advertisers. Content providers find them an easy and reliable way to sell inventory, even though the revenue is usually less than what they could earn from selling space. Advertisers also like the ease of use. With minimal effort, they can purchase a campaign targeting a specific group of consumers on websites all over the world. Ad networks are also known for flexible payment models.

Disadvantages for advertisers is limited control over ad placements. Ads may appear next to inappropriate content. Many advertisers have also complained that their campaign analytics often do not match the spaces provided by the networks. Despite these obstacles, many businesses find their ad networks an affordable and efficient way to reach their target customers.

Google CPC

Cost-per-click (CPC) means you pay for every click on your ad. For campaigns businesses set a maximum cost-per-click bid, or simply set a "Maximum CPC" - this is the highest amount a business is willing to pay for a click on their ad.



Google Ads, AKA Google AdWords, are Google's advertising systems in which advertisers enter certain keywords in order for their clickable ads to appear in Google search results. Advertisers have to pay for these clicks, so Google makes money from search.

The average cost per click with Google Ads in developed countries can range from \$1 to \$2. However, CPCs can vary widely, from the lowest price to over \$50 per click.(Google, Google Ads Help, 2019)

RTB (Real-time Bidding)

Real-time bidding (RTB) is a means of buying and selling ad inventory based on an impression, through an instant programmatic auction, similar to the financial markets. With real-time bidding, ad buyers display an ad with a bid, and if the bid is won, the buyer's ad appears immediately on the publisher's site. Real -time bidding enables advertisers to manage and select ads from multiple networks by giving users access to multiple different networks, allowing them to create and launch ad campaigns, as well as share percentages of unsold space.

RTB effectively promotes static sub-auctions for both advertisers and publishers in terms of ad inventory sold, although results vary by execution and local conditions. RTB replaced the traditional inventory selling model and enabled both publishers and advertisers to place the right ads to the right users based on real-time data.

Advertisers use websites as 'proxies' for their ads. If they wanted to reach sports fans, they would buy ads on a sports-related site, for example. The advent of RTB has enabled them to show their ads to targeted users.

RTB is a type of programmatic advertising, but not all programmatic ads use RTB. Some technology-driven "programmatic" platforms allow publishers to presell space for a fixed price, as opposed to an auction or marketplace. This is also known as a direct program or a guaranteed program.

Thanks to real-time bidding, ad buyers no longer need to work directly with publishers or ad networks to negotiate ad prices. Using exchanges and other technologies, they can access a large amount of space in a wide range of countries and choose only the spaces they consider most valuable to them. This reduces the number of spaces lost to the wrong users, but also minimizes the need for expensive and unreliable ad buyers.

Some large publishers are wary of RTB because they feel it allows advertisers to pay less for their space. However, they are increasingly becoming more comfortable with it, as bidding platforms allow them to control the minimum prices at which their space is sold, otherwise known as price floors. This allows publishers to open their ads in an auction, and set a reserve price that must be met in order for the transaction to go through.



Research suggests that real-time bid (RTB) digital ad spending reached \$23.5 billion in the United States in 2018, compared to spending of \$6.3 billion in 2014 (Marshall, 2018).

Header Bidding

Staged bidding, also known as pre-bidding or pre-bidding, is an advanced programmatic technique where publishers offer an opportunity for multiple spaces to be exchanged simultaneously before making calls to their servers (mainly DoubleClick for Publishers). The idea is that by giving multiple demand sources the bid for the same space at the same time, publishers increase their 'yield' and make more money.

"Header Bidding" is also an advanced programmatic advertising technique that serves as an alternative to Google's "waterfall" method. Tiered bidding offers publishers a way to simultaneously bid where ads should appear at the same time.

Ad Servers

An 'Ad server' is a piece of advertising technology (AdTech) used by publishers, advertisers, advertising agencies and advertising networks to manage and run online advertising campaigns. Ad servers are responsible for making immediate decisions about which ads to display on a website, then to display them. Additionally, ad servers collect and report data (such as impressions, clicks, etc.) for advertisers to gain insights and monitor the performance of their ads.

Since then, ad servers have come a long way, constantly evolving along with the entire ecosystem to meet the growing demands of both advertisers and publishers.

Some of the functionality that was added to ad servers over time, such as budget control and frequency coverage, has also been incorporated into more of the newer platforms, such as DSPs and SSPs. While first-party and third-party ad servers are essentially the same, they are used by publishers and advertisers for slightly different reasons (Zawadziński, 2017).

To understand how ad servers work, it's really important to know why they appeared in the first place. When the popularity of the Internet began to increase in the early to mid-1990s, traditional print publishers began to move there. This not only created large amounts of content, but also a chance to take advantage of a silent opportunity to display ads.

The purpose of online advertising and ways to track them

Every business is different from other businesses in several ways. This is what makes products and services unique to the customer. If you are going to advertise your business online, it is important to keep in mind the fact that you need to



clearly identify what you are willing to achieve from online advertising and the priority of these online advertising goals.

This way, you are on your way to making wise decisions about managing your campaigns based on the goals you have. Identifying your online advertising goals and pursuing them accordingly will definitely give you great success in terms of performance and results.

Some hints why businesses should go for online advertising:

a) Increasing brand awareness

Brand awareness is among the most popular online advertising goals. Building awareness of your business and its products is the main goal for a campaign. Within this goal, you're really aiming to create a situation where your customers will interact with your brand through a wide range of ways, like consuming your videos, trying out games, or even communicating with other customers. This is the best way to promote or create movement for the new product or model.

b) Customer engagement

If impressions explain how many people have seen your ad, customer interactions represent how well they interact with your product or service. A click on your ad means engagement. Also, opening and watching a video through your ad is considered a customer engagement.

c) Reinforce the impression

Determining that your primary reason is to increase awareness and visibility of your company or product. Increasing traffic and encouraging visitors to find and interact with you is one of your online advertising goals. At this point, you need to dig deep in order to attract impressions to increase brand loyalty and motivate your customers more and more.

Save your precious time by looking at factors like CTR on Search Networks campaigns and looking at conversions for Display Campaigns to know how your efforts are doing. Also, data from Reach and Frequency numbers can show how well your goal is building awareness in the minds of your customers.

d) Increased conversion

In digital marketing campaigns, a conversion is counted when a click is made on your ad and this click leads to your website. Registrations, purchases, downloads are also some key factors in increasing conversion.

Taking action to track conversion data and optimizing campaigns according to the data collected is a crucial step to increase sales and conversion.

e) Directing to the page with the corresponding URL

Among the best practices in Internet advertising purposes is to direct a customer from your ad to the right page where he can buy from you the desired specified product and without wandering through many different pages.

This way, your ad will be easier to remember and will further enhance the



user experience on your site. So, choose and forward the relevant URLs to the destination when you have the goal of increasing sales. Also, it is important to look at the progress of clicks, click through rate, performance of search words and terms.

This is about identifying and tracking online advertising goals! As you can see, defining the goals of online advertising is important as it will easily lead you to set up the right campaigns and with the right settings of your goals in order to engage well with the right customers and to measure and follow your work or success.

f) Online advertising targeting

Customer targeting is a strong point in online advertising where marketers can use sophisticated methods to target an audience with certain characteristics based on the product or person the advertiser is promoting. "These traits may be demographic, focused on race, economic status, gender, age, education level, income level, and employment, or they may be psychologically focused, based on values, personality, attitudes, opinions, style of their livelihoods and interests". (Jansen, 2013)

With the emergence of new online channels, the need for targeted advertising is increasing as companies aim to minimize lost advertising through information technology. Newer new media advertising currently uses second-order proxies for targeting, such as tracking consumers' online or mobile activities, associating historical demographics of website consumers with new website access. consumers, using a search term as a basis to imply interest, or contextual advertising.

g) Advertising targeting effectiveness

Audience targeting in online advertising has improved the effectiveness of advertising and reduced the "waste created" by sending ads to consumers who are unlikely to buy that product or service, targeted advertising or improved targeting leads to lower advertising expenditures which in the end may not have any positive effect.

According to Andrew Sneddon, researcher of the field in his book" *In Advertising* and depp autonomy" says that: "Many argue for the ethical unacceptability of targeted advertising, but due to the commercial context of advertising this is accepted because the consumer has a good one, who can choose what to accept and what to reject".

Shiffman says that people have the cognitive competence and are equipped with the necessary faculties to decide whether they will be affected by advertising or not. "Those who argue against note, for example, that advertising can make us buy things we don't want or that, since advertising is embedded in a capitalist system, it only presents choices based on consumer-centered reality and thus limits exposure to the non-materialism of living". (Shiffman, 1990)



Although the effects of targeted advertising are mainly focused on the customers who are targeted, but it also has an effect on the customers who are not the target of an advertisement. Its unsolicited audiences often see an ad targeted at other groups and begin to form judgments and decisions about it and even the brand and company after seeing an unsolicited ad, these judgments can influence future consumer behavior . (de Run, 2007)

Analysis Of Advertising On Albanian Online Portals

In this part of the paper, as a beginning, a detailed online advertising formats that are applied by the portals in Albania are studied by monitoring and examining them in detail. Monitoring and review are performed by analyzing the use, presence, type, size, format of advertisements that are explained in the theoretical part of this paper.

Advertisements on the Top-Channel.tv online portal

Top-Channel.tv was created in December 2001 under the ownership of the company Top Media and comes online as a news portal of one of the most watched television channels in Albania: Top Channel TV. The online editorial office has a staff of 11 employees: 10 journalists or editors and 1 webmaster. The auxiliary and administrative activities are covered by the staff of the parent media. The portal is generalist in nature, and covers a wide range of information from politics to entertainment. The published material is mostly what is also produced for the Top Channel TV channel, which means that most of the fund is news and videos of TV programs. The portal has also made available to its readers the application for Android and iPhone, to be reached in a comfortable way by those who access the site through mobile phones. The editorial office also successfully uses social media to expand its audience. Top Channel's Facebook page, until the end of June 2023, has accumulated about 1,500,000 likes, which speaks of an effective use of social networks. Top Channel also has its own YouTube channel, where until June 21, 2023, it has published 342,00,000 videos, some of which have also had record viewership for the Albanian online audience.

"Top Channel owns approximately half of the market with 12,104, 450 euros or 43 percent marking a slight increase compared to 2014" - writes Loreta Axhami Zela in her doctoral thesis. In contrast to the official data of the NRC, according to data from McMonitoring, Top Channel ranks second in terms of advertising revenue after Klan TV, owning 26 percent of the market in 2018 and 24 percent in 2017. (TopChannel, 2001).



Analysis of advertisements used by the Top-Channel.tv online portal;

- First ad is a banner ad, which is coming from the Ad server the same portal, is a local advertisement provided by the media itself. Since the ads is coming from Ad servers, they are the possible that are targeted, to count the clicks or views that can the made on it.
- Second ad coming by advertising agencies since we accessed it from Germany.
- The third ad, is again a banner ad which coming from the Ad server the itself portal and for this, it is local advertisement which is provided by the media itself.



FIGURE 1- www.top-channel.tv - Accessed from Germany

In the picture below, we can see the change in advertising when the visitor is from Albania.

- The first ad remains the same because, as we said above, it is an untargeted ad that advertises the media activity itself.
- The first ad introduces the banner ad, which are a popular form of online advertising. Banner advertising is based on the use of an image that appears in a rectangular shape at the top, bottom, middle or side of the web.
- In the space of the second ad which comes from the Ad Server of the portal, we notice that we have another ad for a visitor from Albania.

The "Top Channel" portal a part of the ads is managed by the "Lupon Media" advertising agency, which is an advertising network that uses "Header Bidding"



which we have analyzed above. As noted, the advertising agency has a pretty good system to target ads to each visitor.



FIGURE 2- www.top-channel.tv - Accessed from Albania

The portal of "Top Channel" as an Ad Server for the management of local advertisements which provides self-use of the system "Google Ad Manager" (formerly Google DFP), making it possible to have very precise targeting for all their advertisements.

Advertisements on the online portal Balkanweb.com

Balkanweb.com was launched in February 2000 as an online news agency, it was founded by the Edisud company as an original website and did not belong directly to any of the traditional media owned by this company, such as Gazeta Shqiptare, TV News24, or Radio Rash, even though it was fed to a considerable extent by materials created by these media. The aim was to create an online agency that reflects the latest news faster than traditional media. Since 2007, this media, as well as other media of the Mediasud group, are owned by Focus Group. The website is generalist in nature. The core of balkanweb.com's editorial staff consists of 5 journalists, 1 proofreader and 2 webmasters. The Balkanweb Facebook page has a total of 29,5198 likes in May 2019. To create opportunities for audience interaction, the website has a comment space and several options for feedback and "share" or "like" for each article. (Hysenbelliu, 2000)

The first ad on "Balkanweb.com" is a 728x90 pixel banner ad that comes from the portal's own Ad Server. This advertisement is placed provided by the portal itself and may generate measurement data for the number of clicks or views it



may have during the specified advertising period. Advertising space number two is of banner format but smaller than the ads we analyzed above. This ad is 300x100 pixels in size and is a static image. The advertisement also comes from the Ad Server of the portal itself and may generate measurement data for the number of clicks or views it may receive.

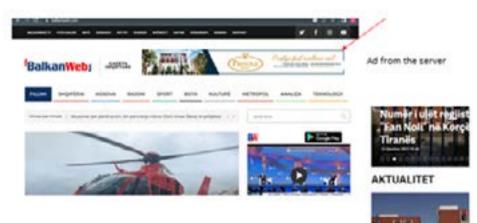




FIGURE 4- www.balkanweb.com - Accessed from Germany



The first ad comes from the Ad Server of the portal and has the same dimensions. Instead of the advertisement of "Prestige Home", since the accessing of the portal is made from Germany, the advertisement of "Birra Korça" appears. This is the change of the number one advertising space.

Ad space number two has no change. The ad is the same as the previous access of a visitor from Germany and it is again a local ad coming from the portal's Ad Server. Portal "Balkanweb.com" as an Ad Server for managing local advertisements which it provides itself uses the system "Revive Adserver" (http://ads.balkanweb.



com) , which is a free Open Source adserver, simple to use but not very efficient in targeting and managing ads.

Advertisements on the Albeu.com online portal

The Albeu.com news portal belongs to the category of individual websites and among them is considered one of the most successful in the Albanian online space. It was founded on July 4, 2003 by Idaver Sherifi, known for his passion and desire to invest in wind media, an investment that after many years turned out to be successful. In its economic activity, albeu.com is profitable, while the number of employees has increased from 3 to 11.

The portal has on its main page a number of advertisements, which are the main source of income generation for this media. Under the slogan "Portal of all Albanians", the website has created three large sections, which respectively cover the events of the day from Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. The published news are mostly original, produced by Albeu. Whereas most of the editorials and analyzes are taken from other online media, noting the relevant source. The portal also publishes many videos or photos taken from the Internet, especially when it comes to sensational news related to well-known names or sensational events from the world. Even though it is generalist in nature, a significant part of the published information belongs to "soft news". , divided into categories: sports, showbiz, technology, curiosity, lifestyle, entertainment, humor, etc. It must be said that this category of information has the most readers on the web, and it is a trend not only of Albanian websites but also of world ones.(Zguri, 2015)

"Albeu.com" is the portal that is also included in our study because it is an online media, which is not based on a traditional media such as the two portals that we analyzed above, "Top-Channel.tv" and "Balkanweb.com".

Since advertisements are the only revenue generator to ensure the continuity of the portal, we also notice from the following photo that the main page of the portal does not have many advertising spaces, making access to it easier and faster. In the next picture we have accessed the portal "Albeu.com" from Germany to observe what is the strategy that the portal organizes the ads and how effective is their targeting.





FIGURE 5- www.albeu.com - Accessed from Germany

This is the home page of the "Albeu.com" portal accessed from Germany.

- The first ad, which is positioned at the top of the page alongside the portal logo, is a banner ad, which comes from an advertising agency.
- Ad number one is not a local ad and in our case accessed from Germany, it shows that this advertising space of the portal is quite well targeted.
- Advertising space number two is also a banner ad which is positioned alongside the portal's main news.
- Again this ad is not native and is tailored to the visitor accessing the portal.



FIGURE 6- www.albeu.com - Accessed from Albania



The photo above shows the front page of the "Albeu.com" portal, in this case accessing it from Albania, we notice that we have some changes in the advertising spaces. Comparing it to the case when we accessed it from Germany, this time we don't have the column advertising spaces on the left and right of the page.

- In the picture above, we have the main page of the "Albeu.com" portal again, but this time accessing it from Albania, to see what the changes will be in the advertising spaces of the portal and whether we will still have the same ads as when the we accessed from Germany.
- In this case, we do not have an ad positioned at the top of the page as it was in the case of the ad accessed from Germany.
- The first ad, this time comes from the Ad Server of the portal and is also a local ad of an Albanian brand in banner format. The advertisements that come from the Ad Server of the portal can be targeted and generate data on the number of clicks, views or actions of the visitor in it.
- The second advertisement is a local advertisement which comes from the advertising agency with which the "Albeu.com" portal cooperates.

The "Albeu.com" portal as an Ad Server for managing local advertisements which it provides itself uses the "Google Ad Manager" system as well as "Revive Adserver" (http://ads.albeu.com), which is an Open Source adserver without paid, easy-to-use native ad targeting and management.

From the advertisements on the "Albeu.com" portal, which we analyzed above in both cases of our access, we notice that the portal dedicates more advertising space to the advertising agency because it enables better targeting and more regular operation.

Conclusions

The changes taking place in the online media industry are significant as they have a very profound impact on these media, through which most advertising is carried out. Recent developments in foreign markets testify to a decline in the role of television as a medium for reaching large audiences, thereby indicating significant changes in the way media advertising budgets are spent.

Television is losing its monopolistic position as a mass communication medium, especially with the introduction of new media into the market, which have attracted the attention of advertisers. In these media, to ensure audience capture, advertisers must integrate their communications in several online media to target their customers. They must recognize the fact that many people watching TV programs



is changing, because they use laptops, tablets and smart phones, which are capable of performing several processes at the same time, and in addition to watching television programs, viewers have the opportunity to engage in other activities.

Advertising, the single main source of television data, is shrinking, big businesses are not only constantly cutting their marketing budgets, but are increasingly turning to online advertising, which is simpler, more efficient, there are less expenses, bring in more income, as there is also their target market. The online market is rapidly developing and the most difficult to measure due to informality. This is necessary in the conditions where the media environment is constantly changing due to the influence of technology.

The application of advertising in Albania has gone through two stages, firstly we have the publication of the portal's own advertisements, the various shows that the television broadcasts, since most of the most popular televisions in Albania have their own online media on the Internet as well.

In the second phase, we have the further development of technology, online portals were developed even more, and we have the orientation of advertisers towards the Internet, showing mostly local ads on these portals, then we have the application of non-local, mostly foreign ads.

Based on the monitoring carried out in the framework of this study, it results that the ads of the analyzed online portals have some particularities that distinguish them from each other, such as the format, types of ads, their different sizes, etc. The most used ads are banner ads, non-local and local.

According to the analysis we did, we noticed that non-local ads always come from advertising agencies and local ads either come from the Ad Server of the portal or are untargeted ads and are placed directly on the page.

Meanwhile, regarding the application of these types of advertisements on online portals from the analysis carried out in this paper, we say that the advertisements on the Top-Channel portal belong to the banner format and are of different sizes. As it was said a little higher in some portal ads, we can't get any information about the clicks or the visibility of the ad, because they are untargeted ads. Ads that come from the portal's own AdServer, which means they are local and are hard to target. There are also non-native ads that we accessed for analysis and mostly come from an advertising agency. The portal as AdServer for the management of local ads uses the "Google Ad Manager" system (formerly Google DFP), making it possible to have very precise targeting for all ads.

It should be mentioned that on this portal part of the ads are managed by the "Lupon Media" advertising agency, which is an advertising network that uses "Header Bidding" that we analyzed in the theoretical part. The advertising agency has a pretty good system to target ads to each visitor.



The "Balkanweb.com" portal mainly uses banner ads that are 728x90 pixels, 120x270 pixels, and come from the portal's own Ad Server. There are local ads provided by the portal itself, but there are also non-local ones. On the main page of the portal there are ads that are positioned on the left side of the page and are also banners with dimensions of 251x564 pixels. These non-native ads come from the advertising agency that the portal uses and are targeted by appearing according to the visitor's location and preferences. As for managing local ads , the "Balkanweb. com" portal as AdServer uses the "Revive Adserver" system, which is a free Open Source adserver, simple to use but, as we said, not very efficient in targeting and managing ads.

Meanwhile, the Albeu.com portal, uses banner ads with standard sizes, and they come from the advertising agency. These are not native ads. Local advertisements used by this portal are 300x250 pixels in size and generate data on the number of clicks, views or actions of the visitor on it. For local advertising management , the "Albeu.com" portal as AdServer uses the "Google Ad Manager" system and "Revive Adserver", which is a free Open Source adserver. This portal, from the analysis of the ads it used, showed that it pays a lot of attention to the advertising space where we mention the advertising agency because it also enables better targeting and more regular operation.

It's important to notice that in the three portals there was no application of other types of online advertising, except for the banner format.

Bearing in mind that at the time when consumers are losing interest and attention to television advertisements, the number of online portals available to them is increasing, therefore, it is important for advertisers that the viewer continues to be focused to these advertisements, and that should be produced different variations of the same theme or the production of creative messages that attract the attention of the readers and will keep them "stuck" behind the ads.

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