

FROM THE EDITORS: WHY WE NEED THE *JOURNAL OF INTERACTIVE ADVERTISING*

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o "In a relationship-driven world, the key ingredient to successful media will be **interactivity**."

--Peter Georgescu, CEO, Young & Rubicam
[*Advertising Age*, April 14, 1997].

o "**Interactivity** is at the center of where advertising is going."

--Robert Schmetterer, CEO, Euro RSCG Worldwide
[*Advertising Age*, January 4, 1999].

o "We must blow apart the barriers that separate the best creative people in advertising and the technology experts who pioneered the internet."

--Robert Schmetterer, CEO, Euro RSCG Worldwide
[*Technology and The World of International Marketing Communications*, April 2000].

o "After the 20th century Industrial Age, we are shifting our global focus for the 21st century to our relationships and how we **interact**."

--Jack Myers, Chairman, The Myers Group, New York
[*Technology and the World of International Marketing Communications*, April 2000].

The above quotes (bold our own) by important international advertising practitioners point to the fast-growing role of "the interactive world" in the field and beyond. This inaugural issue of the *Journal of Interactive Advertising* is recognition of the importance of interactivity in our world and to the need for academicians to powerfully address the perplexing issues in the fast evolving "interactive age."

The quotes point to the changing nature of the "world view" of interactivity by advertising people. First, the thought was that interactivity pointed to one new medium, the internet. Second, there was recognition that this was not just about another new medium but rather about a concept that would pervade the entire advertising field in both academia and practice. Finally, there is the notion that interactivity goes far beyond traditional advertising boundaries to encompass the entire realm of human activities.

As the Interactive Editor of *Advertising Age* put it in their special 2000 issue entitled, *The Interactive Future*, "It's time to stop framing the world in terms of the internet; instead, let's consider how interactivity will change how consumers interact with marketers." (*Advertising Age*, Special Issue, 2000, p. 3, <http://adage.com/ifuture>)

As the Editors of this new academic undertaking, our sense is that the concept of "interactivity" as well as its many physical and mental manifestations is indeed at the center of not only where advertising is going but also where it now finds itself. This is why we chose to name this new journal with "interactive" in the title rather than "internet" in the title, for example. The internet may be just "another medium," but the underlying concept which it has brought into great importance, interactivity, is much more.

We are hopeful and optimistic that this new journal, *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, will provide a forum for the development of new ideas about interactivity and advertising, marketing and communication. In particular, we hope it will provide a forum for all to discuss in the near future what appear to be three major stages of "new media" introduction and the much broader issues surrounding that introduction:

Stage I. Today's ubiquitous online banner ads are simply a product of taking known methods and transferring them to the new media, a common first step with the advent of a new medium.

Stage II. In the second phase, however, there are invariably new tools and ideas developed exclusively to answer unique

problems that surround a new medium. These are being developed now, such as the user-centric audience measurement methods.

Stage III. The final phase will be apparent when techniques for the new medium "turn back" on the older formats. TV ads then look like interactive ads, for example.

Of course, the above stages are those that were observed in connection with the development of traditional media. Television once was considered "another new medium." A difference between the traditional media and the internet is a concept known for quite some time but which the internet has brought prominently to the foreground: interactivity. It is this aspect of "the interactive age" which makes it necessary to have a journal such as the *Journal of Interactive Advertising* as a public forum for these issues.

The first paragraph in the Manuscript Guidelines at the *Journal of Interactive Advertising* online site sets out the purpose of this new undertaking:

The *Journal of Interactive Advertising* is published to contribute to the development of knowledge about advertising and commercial communication that is interactive in nature. Interactivity may be construed as "human-machine-human", "human-machine", "human-message", or "machine-machine" mode for the purposes of *Journal of Interactive Advertising*. Articles submitted to *Journal of Interactive Advertising* should make a contribution to knowledge in the field of interactive communication. No one discipline or no single methodology is viewed as inherently superior. Research based in any of the social sciences is welcome.

Why do we need another journal in our field? Here are our three reasons: (1) to put into practice the concepts of interactivity in our academic discourse; (2) to emphasize that this is not just another new medium but an idea which is changing all aspects of advertising and marketing; and (3) to provide a forum to address the enormous challenges and complexity of these new ideas stemming from new technology in order to emphasize their importance to the social fabric.

Of course, the above issues can be addressed and they are and will be addressed in our traditional academic journals relating to this field. We believe that *Journal of Interactive Advertising* will add importantly to this discussion of ideas and practices in at least two ways: (1) the primary focus of the *Journal of Interactive Advertising* is on the concept of interactivity in advertising, marketing and communication; and (2) the *Journal of Interactive Advertising* is in a format which takes

advantage of the "interactivity" it purports to cover in its content.

The *Journal of Interactive Advertising* is an exclusively "paperless, online publication." Manuscripts are received via email, reviewers submit reviews that are passed on to authors via email, the Editors converse about the *Journal of Interactive Advertising* matters almost exclusively via email, and the *Journal of Interactive Advertising* is available only in electronic form. The "100 percent paperless office" has been a standing joke for many years. It appears the joke is no longer appropriate. It is our aim as Editors to make this endeavor as 100 percent paperless as possible. For example, while our Manuscript Guidelines do provide word-length limits for articles, we will not be under the ordinary cost constraints of traditional publications on page length and number of articles. We aim to make available for public discourse all worthy manuscripts. We also hope that the issues will put "interactivity" into practice so that formats will advance and change as time goes on with respect to use of multimedia in articles. We also aim to experiment with inline reader feedback in the future. In other words, we expect this *Journal* to "practice what it preaches" with respect to interactivity.

An important article appeared in the *Journal of Advertising* in December 1994 entitled, "Notes and Comments: The Death of Advertising." The authors made the suggestion that the advent of new technology and the demise of mass media would make traditional advertising irrelevant or unusable. Clearly, many of the ideas put forth in that comment have come to pass. One-to-one relationships and the importance of direct advertising and marketing concepts have become clear in the interactive age. Of course, the main point of the rather inflammatory title of that article was to draw attention to what the authors referred to as "the new media advertising approach" which would replace traditional mass media advertising. Advertising has, since 1994, enjoyed a resurgence of growth as interactive advertising has had its impact in Stages I, II and III as outlined above. In fact, it has been a major contributor to the growth of "traditional advertising," let alone interactive advertising in the new media.

It is worthwhile to recall a part of the above 1994 with respect to the academic world in advertising, marketing and communication:

"Advertising (academic) departments (and their extension, the academic discipline of advertising) arose primarily to teach the knowledge and skills required in advertising agencies and to conduct basic research on the methods of creative effective

mass media advertisements. The textbooks and **journal articles** (bold our own) today still reflect the advertising environment of the prime of advertising (1950-1985). ... To survive, advertising departments must broaden themselves significantly to embrace many non-traditional forms of marketing communications. In particular, because marketing in the 21st century will be centered on **interactive** (bold our own) multimedia, advertising departments must redefine themselves, specializing in information transfer on the information superhighway." (*Journal of Advertising*, December 1994, pp. 75-76)

What is interactive advertising? It is, of course, in part, the objective of the *Journal of Interactive Advertising* to shed light on this question. The inaugural issue, therefore, is largely given over to this question from theoretical and practical perspectives, which have implication both for practice and academia. Below is one possible definition out of many preliminary definitions that the Editors offer:

Interactive advertising is the paid and unpaid presentation and promotion of products, services and ideas by an identified sponsor through mediated means involving mutual action between consumers and producers.

We look forward with you to rigorous debate about what interactive advertising means and what it holds for the future.

We invite each of you to contribute to this discussion by submitting your important ideas for possible dissemination through the *Journal of Interactive Advertising*.

We greatly thank each author for contributing prescient thoughts to this first issue of the *Journal of Interactive Advertising*.

It is of great joy to the Editors that 83 of the most prominent academicians and practitioners in the fields of advertising, communication, marketing and several other disciplines have agreed to join the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Interactive Advertising*. We thank them for their selfless work toward improving our field.

We thank our colleagues in the Departments of Advertising at Michigan State University and The University of Texas at Austin for formally agreeing to sponsor this new endeavor.

We encourage you to interact with us now by providing your ideas about this first issue of the *Journal of Interactive Advertising*. Please send email to editors@jiad.org. We welcome your suggestions about how to make this a worthwhile venture for you.