

The click is not the only currency in online advertising

 By [Pierre Cassuto](#)

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Advertisers, agencies and publishers in South Africa are vastly undervaluing the worth of digital advertising by measuring its value only through the click-throughs it achieves.

The result is that digital publishers are often under-pricing their inventory, while advertisers are not effectively leveraging digital display as a brand-building platform.

Powerful branding tools

The model of pricing online ads by thousands of impressions and clicks is an unsustainable one, which has little in common with the metrics that advertisers use to measure the value of adverts in other media.

The click is not the only currency of value in digital media, since digital display advertising has been proven in a range of studies and surveys to be a powerful brand building tool, that grows the audience's awareness and recall of products and brands as well as purchase intent and brand favourability.

We're pricing digital ads on the assumption that people haven't noticed ads when they haven't clicked on them. That assumption is completely incorrect. Some marketers run online campaigns with the objective to drive in-store rather than online conversations.

Kagiso Media's digital properties, for example, have run a number of client campaigns where search and in-store activity demonstrated a leap in user activity and interest that outstripped the click-through rate.

Measurable metrics

Digital publishers have sought to differentiate themselves from other media by tying their pricing to click-through rates as a measurable metric. But they should now be aiming to show the brand-building effect that digital advertising has if they are to monetise their content in a more sustainable manner.

Media information and measurement firms such as Nielsen have metrics that advertisers have long used to track brand-building and other effects of advertising in other channels. There is no reason that brand-building effects should not similarly be built into the return on investment metrics for online advertising.

One should look at the impact that online advertising can have on offline purchase behaviour. Evaluating a campaign on the

number of clicks only, is a great underestimation of the number of potential consumers influenced.

Brand-building

The single-minded obsession with clicks harms brands as much as it does publishers. It means advertisers are not focusing on creating synergies between digital and traditional advertising to support brand-building efforts. They are also not optimising digital with brand-building as an objective in mind. Just as TV ads perform better when based on the programming context, online ads are impacted in a similar way.

In reality, forcing clicks may be more harmful than helpful to an advertiser's goals. Some of our most successful campaigns have been rich media ads that keep users in the same environment rather than sending them somewhere else with a click-through.

Keeping people in the same environment can actually be better for brand recall or brand favourability. This is one reason why native advertising is so successful and explains its growing popularity. Radio has been doing native advertising for many years - it's a proven model that builds user trust and engagement.

The click can be disruptive to your users. For some campaigns, click-throughs are important, but advertisers should also start thinking about how digital display impacts on their brand building efforts and business objectives beyond bringing users to their websites.

ABOUT PIERRE CASSUTO

Humanz is one of the world's fastest growing AI companies focused on empowering valuable creators and the marketers that work with them. Each day, Humanz analyzes hundreds of millions of social media profiles and content pieces as well as transaction data from online merchants, to generate better benchmarks and predictions for social commerce ROI, while also improving transparency, motivation and access for creators and marketers.

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