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Presented by the Advertising Research Foundation

TITLE OF CASE STUDY: **Intel: Measuring Online Advertising based on Business Value and Engagement**

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Business Situation and Objectives

As an ingredient brand, Intel does not sell directly to the end customer (they sell to the OEMs such as HP, Dell, etc), making tying performance to end sales very difficult. In addition, the nature of Intel's product set and audience drives Intel to a high digital media mix. As a brand with a highly technical product, Intel has a much more complex message than many marketers, e.g. Coke, McDonald's. This requires more time to tell Intel's story, making measuring engagement and judging value of interactions within digital critical. Lastly, Intel faced a challenge that the attitudinal data by which they measured success, came on a delayed and infrequent basis. This made it difficult to course correct in a more rapid fashion to achieve the results Intel desired.

As a result of these multifaceted challenges, OMD and Intel developed a weighted digital engagement measurement system called the Value Point System (VPS). This went beyond previous types of single event "lead scoring" systems to develop a proprietary framework, whereby the success of online efforts are described in terms of the quality of consumer engagement across nearly 150 touch points across ads, Intel.com, and off-domain sponsorships. This system is driven by an automated and common tracking platform that covers the majority of Intel's digital ad spend. This approach now serves as the common foundation by which Intel makes both strategic and tactical decisions across digital paid media, social, and creative message performance. In addition, the VPS offers Intel a predictive set of indicators to steer the ship, while waiting for attitudinal or more "lagging indicators" to be reported.

Measuring user's brand engagement helps Intel optimize media to a) drive cost efficiencies based on value and b) improve brand engagement. Establishing a system also allows Intel to manage their digital marketing performance on a consistent and transparent standard for a single version of the truth.

Research Story

The key success metrics for Intel advertising efforts are to increase brand awareness & preference, and improve category relevance among target audience. However, these metrics are difficult to truly measure in real time and can take a few months until after the campaign is over. These lifts are measured via an ad effectiveness study under the direction of Intel's research team. However, these studies do not measure engagement with the brand based on behavioral activity.

Due to lag in obtaining attitudinal measures, there was a need to establish a set of metrics to aid near-real time media optimization. Such metrics were also needed to provide a more holistic rationale and leverage to negotiate media deals and identify opportunities with other media properties based on value-based cost efficiency and increased engagement. The new metrics established to measure brand engagement are a) cost per engagement and b) engagement per unique visitor.

Meaningful user interaction with online ads or, taking actions on Intel's website to learn more about the brand and its products are representative of "True online brand engagement." That being said, all user interactions within online ads or Intel's website are not equal; some interactions are more valuable more than others.

The research process to establish Intel's new measurement system involved the following steps:

a. Educating the stakeholders

b. Develop a weighting system to measure engagement (in-banner and on/off domain site)

c. System aggregation & implementation

Educating the stakeholders

The adoption of this new measurement system was dependent on reinforcing a culture of accountability and value at Intel and agencies. This momentum was achieved via iterative presentations on rationale and methodology, discussions around business needs and market challenges. This not only led to a cultural change but, also created client-side (Intel) advocates. Training documents were created to educate the stakeholders – Intel, agencies (media and creative), and publishers, regarding the new measurement system. Based on the media plan, creative type (engagement vs. awareness), and web page content, clear performance goals were established. The goals evolved over time, as more data was available.

Developing a weighting system to measure engagement

A stable weighting system was developed to account for a wide continuum of actions (150+) based on in-banner or site engagement. Scoring every action allowed for evaluation of user engagement with the brand based on the quality of the interaction to disseminate value proposition, starting with their exposure to the ad, and continuing-on to Intel's website. This system was consistent across campaigns to enable performance trending across time. Higher values were assigned to deeper levels of engagement and higher value proposition consumption. For example: Landing on an Intel's page that navigates users to a page of hyperlinks to select where else to go had a very low value while, navigating a page describing the benefits of using Intel processor(s) had a relatively higher value.

System implementation

An exhaustive global ad-server review led to use of a single ad serving system (Google's DoubleClick) for all digital media and, a single web analytics tool, Omniture, helped procure consistent data. Rich media creative was also served via DoubleClick utilizing custom metrics to value in-banner interactions. Utilizing Omniture's Genesis integration with DoubleClick provided the ability to tie back actions on Intel's website to a campaign, site, placement and creative in an automated and integrated fashion. In addition, system implementation included design, documentation, and training of a new campaign launch process, which ensured correct tracking to enable this integration. Data feeds from Omniture and DoubleClick were fed into a complex data warehouse that integrated the data. The refined data provided actionable metrics about brand engagement.

Campaign and Results

The measurement system was launched in May 2009 for all campaigns. Intel's award winning 'Sponsors of Tomorrow' campaign was launched during this period and measured using this methodology. The measurement system helped uncover numerous insights and learning.

As Intel moved from a branding to a more product focused messaging, the system continued to prove its effectiveness. Continuous learning and complex analyses led to dramatic improvement in cost efficiency and brand engagement. Ad campaigns were continuously optimized based on learning. The media planning teams moved budgets from lower engagement/value to higher engagement/value driving media at a site and placement level, driving value-based cost savings and higher engagement.

When comparing year-over-year (2010 vs. 2009) results, the Intel campaigns saw a 74% increase in value-based cost-efficiency and 172% increase in brand engagement. Most compellingly Intel finance was able to validate and warrant that the Value point System achieved a 70%~ cost reduction for a multi-million dollar savings based on program optimization around the system.

Learning and optimizing the campaigns

The measurement system helped identify global trends and learning applicable worldwide. Some of the key results are listed below.

Media Based

- Site categories that drove strong results were identified; regions not utilizing those categories were encouraged to utilize these high performing content areas. As a result, there was strong media performance improvement.

- The ability to analyze data at placement level enabled media planners to identify high performance areas within sites. These learning were applied in negotiating techniques as well as to buy criteria. For example: As news sites performed better (up to 200% higher), news sections within portals were utilized with performance following suit.

Emerging Media (Social and Mobile)

- The effectiveness of social media on major platforms was identified in multiple countries with highly active social media audience being validated engaging with Intel in several markets (Russia, India, and Brazil).

    - Other platforms were identified in each country to continue utilizing brand advocates for higher engagement.

- Mobile campaigns used the same measurement system and helped uncover an algorithm of behavioral targeting that drives higher engagement (95% higher)

Creative Based

- The effectiveness of video advertising was identified worldwide by analyzing data based on true engagement vs. click metrics.

    - Analysis shows up to 100% increase in brand engagement from video.

- The system helped establish the increase in engagement driven by explicit messaging about Intel products (150%) vs. interpretive messaging.

Purchase Behavioral

- Higher user engagement from product focused/lower funnel sites helped establish consumer funnel movement from ‘awareness’ to ‘consideration’ phase.

Web Based

- VPS also helped identify landing page effectiveness, using pre/post test methodology.

- The system established clear performance differences in media driving users to Intel’s on domain pages vs. Intel sponsored off domain pages.

    - Driving audience to Intel’s website drove 85% higher engagement vs. driving to a technology focused off-domain site.

- However, driving niche audience to a similar themed off-domain site drove higher engagement.
    - Driving sports audience to a sports themed site during the NCAA March Madness and Super Bowl drove almost 90% higher engagement vs. driving the same audience to a technology focused off-domain site.

Audience Based

- As the target audience varied, based on their traits such as demographics, there was increase or decrease in brand engagement.
    - A drop in engagement (25%) was expected with the change in audience from alpha techies to mainstream audience. Multiple countries confirmed this change with a drop in engagement levels varying from 15% to 40%.