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Threat of undead mobile banner ads

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By A LUXURY DAILY COLUMNIST

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Shock. Panic. Fear. We love to feel adrenaline, especially in the games we play. Popular in horror, fantasy, first-person shooter, stealth and RPG mobile game genres alike, the world loves zombies.

When it comes to application monetization, however, beware of the zombie culprit threatening to bring down the civilized mobile app world: the banner ad. Sure, it has been the mobile ad format mainstay since the beginning of mobile advertising, but that was over a decade ago, and banners have not evolved since.

While the industry was producing newer ad formats, the banner just stayed the same, even as viewers developed banner blindness and became desensitized to seeing them.

Yet these "undead" formats are still creeping their way into your app, and slowly seeping the life from it. Banner ads might as well be the "mindless, unthinking henchmen" of the in-app mobile ad world.

As in the 1985 film, Return of the Living Dead, zombies, like traditional banner ads, hunger for brains. There are simply smarter ad formats to leverage.

In time for Halloween, and to save your app from the total zombie apocalypse of banners, let us talk about the high-performance mobile ad options that deliver stronger returns for app developers and higher engagement for advertisers:

Mobile video ads are more engaging
EMarketer predicts United States advertisers will spend $5.5 billion on mobile video ads by 2019. And for good reason.

Video can easily convey more complex ideas and messaging than banners. In fact, we have seen 50 percent higher video engagement, as compared to interstitials of the same size, and more than 400 percent higher when considered against a standard banner.

Rewarded video ads give instant gratification
Incentivized video ads reward players who watch with virtual currency or other in-app perks or privileges such as game level advancements, extra lives and extra game skills/weapons.

The users opt-in to view the ad, which provides users a feeling of control over the experience. Advertisers get

undivided attention from a user who has chosen to watch the ad, and the viewer feels her or his time was valued and appreciated by way of receiving the in-app reward.

Native ads get more attention
Earlier this year, Nielsen performed a study tracking the eye movement of users viewing ads on mobile devices.

The neuroscience data revealed that in-feed native ads on mobile sites receive twice as much "visual focus" from consumers when compared to banners on mobile devices.

The same study also found that banner ads are processed more peripherally ("little-to-no visual focus on the text") compared to native ads.

When carefully placed into app environments, native ads can complement, rather than disrupt the user experience. For example, an ad for a music app that is designed to look like an album cover, and promoted within a list of favorite song titles.

It is no surprise that native ads are achieving excellent user engagement and user retention.

Trick or treat: Choose wisely
Do not get tricked into selecting default banners. Halloween is the perfect time to dust off the cobwebs and treat your app to high-performance, powerful ad formats.

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