

COLUMNS

## Eye tracking is changing mobile marketing

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What if I told you that the entire system used to measure the impact of mobile advertisements is flawed – and you could do something about it?

Do I have your attention?

Click-through rates are a meaningful measure but do not show the whole picture. Click or no click, merely seeing an ad on a smartphone or tablet can have a powerful effect on your brand.

Or conversely, a click may simply be the accidental by-product of fat fingers on a small device. Millions of inadvertent clicks occur every day by frustrated consumers before they ever see the ad.

Impressions, on the other hand, measure how many times an ad is displayed. But just because it is displayed on a mobile device does not mean the user actually sees it. Not even close.

All over the map

The savviest digital advertisers are now moving beyond the metrics of reach, targeting and engagement to ensure that visitors are reading the right messages and experiencing

the intended effect of their advertisements.

How? With eye tracking.

Eye tracking can reveal the effectiveness of email campaigns, mobile ad banners, landing pages and game advertising by allowing you to see through the eyes of your users with real-time, 0.5 degree precision.

Heat maps are one of the many data outputs we can create from eye tracking, illustrating which areas of a display receive more or less visual engagement.

Eye tracking can help companies optimize mobile advertising for small screen sizes, touch screens and mobile users' behavior. It can exhibit how a consumer's attention is distributed over a mobile Web page or within an application.

We can even compare how ads and designs are seen on different devices in different contexts, such as where the consumer will look for a call to action.

In this manner, eye tracking is an exceedingly powerful tool for designers and mobile marketers to better understand, create, evaluate – and sell their product.

Yesterday's self-reporting methods for evaluating advertisements such as surveys and focus groups are insightful but have inherent biases.

Instead of asking people to recall their reactions or describe their engagement, eye tracking lets you see it, in real time. It minimizes recall errors and the social desirability effect, and reveals information conventional research methods normally miss.

With eye tracking, you will get deep predictive insights based on empirical data to truly understand what catches attention and causes people to actually spend time on an ad.

And it is more accessible than ever.

### Getting the picture

Recent advances in the technology have made eye tracking more affordable and less invasive. That is great news for mobile.

Gone are the Frankenstein days of head mounts, plugs and wires hindering true user experience.

Track your mobile audience on the fly with sensors built directly into monitors or special eyewear.

Observe their natural interactions with standalone eye trackers that allow users to hold the device, rotate between landscape and portrait modes, and interact from a comfortable viewing angle.

Of course, with great power comes great responsibility.

The new eye-tracking technology must be applied strategically, conducted skillfully and analyzed scientifically.

Just because the equipment is easier to use, and a heat map is easy to look at, does not replace the value of thoughtful experimental design, analysis and a background in the science of visual perception.

EYE TRACKING can have a powerful impact on your brand and bottom line as mobile marketers for the first time can prove the true effect of their campaigns. It can also revolutionize the entire digital advertising industry, providing both advertisers and publishers a way to move beyond counting clicks.

With eye tracking we can design away the effects of banner blindness. But do not be blinded by the advances in the technology. Eye tracking must be handled with care.

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