WHAT CONSUMERS REALLY WANT: NEUROMETRIC RESPONSE TO IPAD MAGAZINE ADVERTISING

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Synopsis

In 2010, the iPad became the fastest adopted consumer electronics device ever. In the process, it defined a new computer category, cemented the App Store model of marketing, and re-defined digital design. Importantly for our industry and our companies, it ignited an optimistic Publishing Renaissance, and created a new advertising medium.

Given the unique consumer user experience with this new device, the expectation was that the engagement with advertising would be similarly unique, combining the best of magazines, video, and the web in a completely new and immersive way.

This paper explores the partnership between publisher (Time Inc.), advertising company (Universal McCann), and Biometrics leader (EmSense) to probe consumer engagement with the content and the advertising in three magazine apps, using a passive, scientific methodology that would separate the passion for the device with the response to the content and advertising.

The study comprised Biometric, Quantitative, and Qualitative methodologies, among a sample of 180 iPad owners in Chicago and San Francisco. The Biometrics component, using mobile eye tracking and a wireless EEG headset, captured visual, emotional, and cognitive response while reading two different iPad magazines. A 15-minute quantitative survey measured explicit responses to diagnostic questions, and the Qualitative interviews captured any additional thoughts and feelings.

The partners will share their insights on the dynamics of engagement on this platform, and lessons learned in creating effective iPad advertising.

Introduction

Without a doubt, 2010 was the year of the iPad, as tablets assumed a valued, occasionally unexpected, and even passionately beloved place in the hearts and mind of consumers. Not only was it the fastest adopted CE device ever, but Time Inc.'s research suggests that the iPad is spending more time in living rooms and kitchens than on commuter trains; in other words, part of the in-home entertainment and information ecosystem.

In the process of creating this integration, it also

- Created a new category of computers and computing;
- Cemented the App Store model of marketing and purchasing;
- Re-defined what digital design could and should be;
- And importantly for us…

It launched a Publishing Renaissance, creating new excitement and optimism around print brands and content, giving us hope of creating a consumer-driven revenue model; and it launched a new advertising medium: One that combined the best of video, magazines, and the web in a way that was immersive and engaging in an entirely new way.

TIME was the first magazine to launch an app on the iPad, and the day the iPad was launched, the TIME Magazine app was available for download from the App Store.

Since it was impossible to conduct any user research prior to launch, shortly afterwards, we began our Research program, with an emphasis, of course, on the experience, and how this experience would affect advertising engagement.

Opportunity

Shortly after the iPad introduction, Universal McCann approached us with an intriguing idea: A partnership to understand:

- What engagement looked like on the iPad;
- Whether we could use that knowledge to create a framework for measurement;
- And what were the implications for both messaging and creative?

With the goal of finding a way to separate the passion for the device itself with the reaction to the advertising, we knew we wanted to use Biometrics as the cornerstone, a passive and scientific methodology. Together, we wrote and issued an RFP, and selected EmSense, given their expertise in the methodology and their belief in large samples.

Methodology

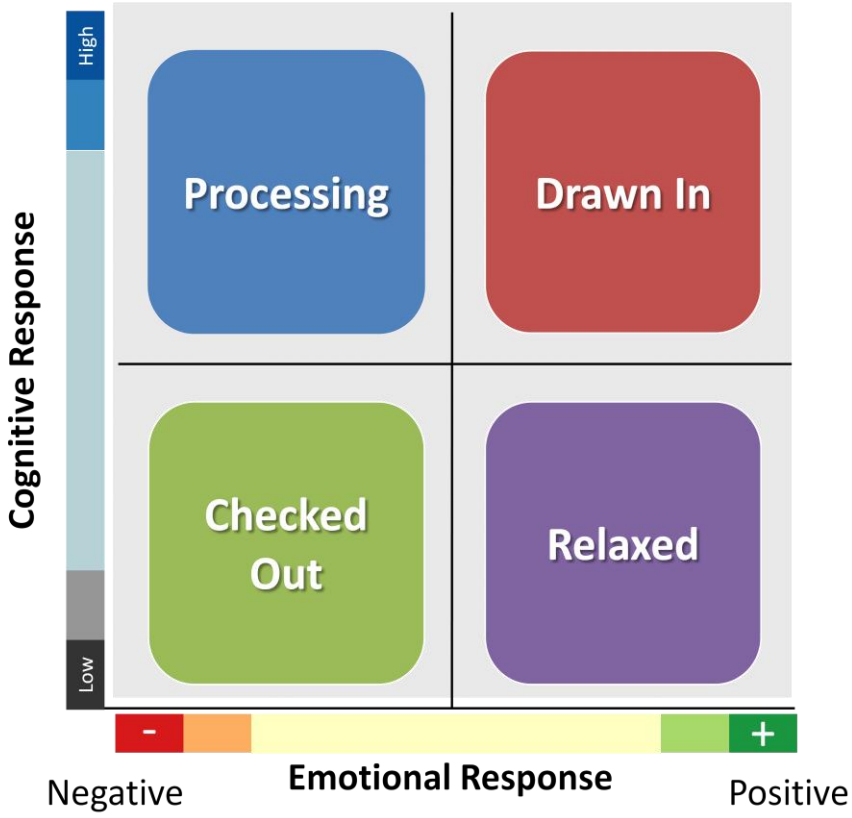
Our mission was to evaluate the iPad magazine experience and advertising response in as natural a way as possible. This meant finding iPad owners, 180 in total when the device was brand new, who also read magazines. It was important because we wanted to be sure to isolate reactions to the magazines, not the device itself. And just to be sure, we required respondents to bring their own iPads with them as proof of ownership.

The study was designed so that each respondent saw two magazines on the iPad - - either Time and People or Time and Sports Illustrated. First, the sample was fitted with the EmSense EmBand™ which is a dry, wireless, lightweight, comfortable EEG headband. The device also captures heart rate, blinking, breathing, skin temperature and head movement. Secondly, the respondents were fitted with mobile eye tracking glasses that enable us to capture where people look in real time with great specificity. The fact that the glasses are of the "mobile" variety means that respondents are able to move freely and naturally. Base measurements were taken and then participants read each magazine at their own pace and desired navigation.

Meanwhile, we were capturing every place respondents looked in real time with a neurometric overlay for EEG measured positive and negative emotion, plus active cognitive engagement. In layman's terms, this meant that we were capturing whether or not people were feeling positive or negative regarding what they were looking at in terms of specific pictures, text, video, etc. Plus, we established how mentally engaged they were with each element they focused on: Were they actively processing or thinking about what they were looking at or were they on "mental idle"?

In addition, we administered a follow-up survey and then peeled respondents off to another room for one-on-one qualitative interviews. This enabled our results to be a comprehensive examination of the convergence of how people respond to iPad magazines and advertising viscerally in contrast with what they say rationally and how they emote in words. All of this took place in central locations in Chicago and San Francisco in August/September of 2010.

The neurometric results were evaluated along an analytic grid that enables us to decipher how engaged the audience is with each ad as a whole and by element, as well as, how they feel about that ad or element positively or negatively. The grid has two axes: positive and negative emotion and resting to high cognitive engagement.



Beyond being totally turned off or disengaged, there are three possible summary states of reaction. When cognition is high and emotion is negative, people are usually trying to figure out what they are seeing. Sometimes they are confused or frustrated. But in most cases they are *"Processing"* . When cognition is high and emotions are highly positive, respondents are actively engaged and highly attentive. There is an element of excitement and we call this being *"Drawn In"*. The other scenario is when readers are not thinking too hard (usually a pleasant state) and also feeling positive emotionally. This is a form of enjoyment called, *"Relaxed"*.

This essentially becomes the key to easy understanding of how ads and their elements performed on the iPad from a neurometric, visceral response perspective.

Key Learnings

The methodology provided the team with multiple datasets with which to evaluate the reaction to the ads shown in the test. The datasets included:

- Neurometric measures of emotional and cognitive response to each ad
- Eye tracking measures of time spent and degree of attention paid to each ad. Attention levels were identified as follows:
    - % Noting: Percentage of respondents with at least one fixation on the ad. This was referred to as "Spotting Power."
    - % Evaluating: Percentage of respondents with a fixation on the ad of a half second or longer. This was referred to as "Stopping power."
    - % Converted: A calculation of Stopping Power divided by Spotting power.
- Quantitative survey responses
- Qualitative verbatims from post-test one-on-one interviews

Interrogating the datasets on both a granular and aggregate level allowed us visibility into how respondents were actually interracting with the advertising. We had the means to formulate an idea of what ad engagement looks like on the iPad and the role and value of advertising on this type of digital platform.

As noted earlier, when both Cognition and Emotion were high, the ad fell into a quadrant called "DRAWN IN." Viewers were interested, anticipatory, and processing information.

Some ads fell into the quadrant called "RELAXED." Depending on the creative execution and the campaign goals, this experience - high positive emotion and low cognition - is often desirable, giving the user an emotionally pleasant, familiar, and non-taxing experience. An ad that fell in the upper left, on the other hand, likely frustrated or confused the user. And when both were low, the user was disengaged and probably checked out.

Only one of the 23 ads in our study fell into the quadrant called CHECKED OUT – a solid finding on the power of iPad advertising, and one suggesting good creative instincts, even early on. In other words, there can be a variety of response combinations that describe a successful ad.

While these findings quantitatively and passively answered our fundamental question on reader reaction to iPad advertising, we needed to understand how to interpret these results and those from our other datasets in the context of engagement, and impact on brand performance metrics. We also wanted to understand which elements were driving our neurometric scores.

We discovered that there are some fundamental building blocks to creating effective advertising experiences. At the micro level, there are tactics and executional elements that improve consumer interaction and enjoyment.
At a macro level, we learned that successful platform engagement and brand engagement is a lot more complex than for other media. After extensive analysis of our datasets, especially the eye-tracking data, there emerged three primary dynamics that drove engagement. We termed these: Visual Attention, Accessibility, and Propulsion.

Visual Attention describes an ad's power to grab a reader's attention, to linger on the ad and notice its elements. Attention is represented as time spent with the ad after an initial fixation. Drivers of visual attention include striking graphics and headlines on the first page.

The second dynamic is Accessibility, defined as having easy entry points to either stay on an ad page, or to go deeper into the ad, via the act of swiping or tapping, easily and without frustration. Consumers need clarity to continue and will lose interest quickly if the interactive instructions (often in the form of buttons) are not clear.

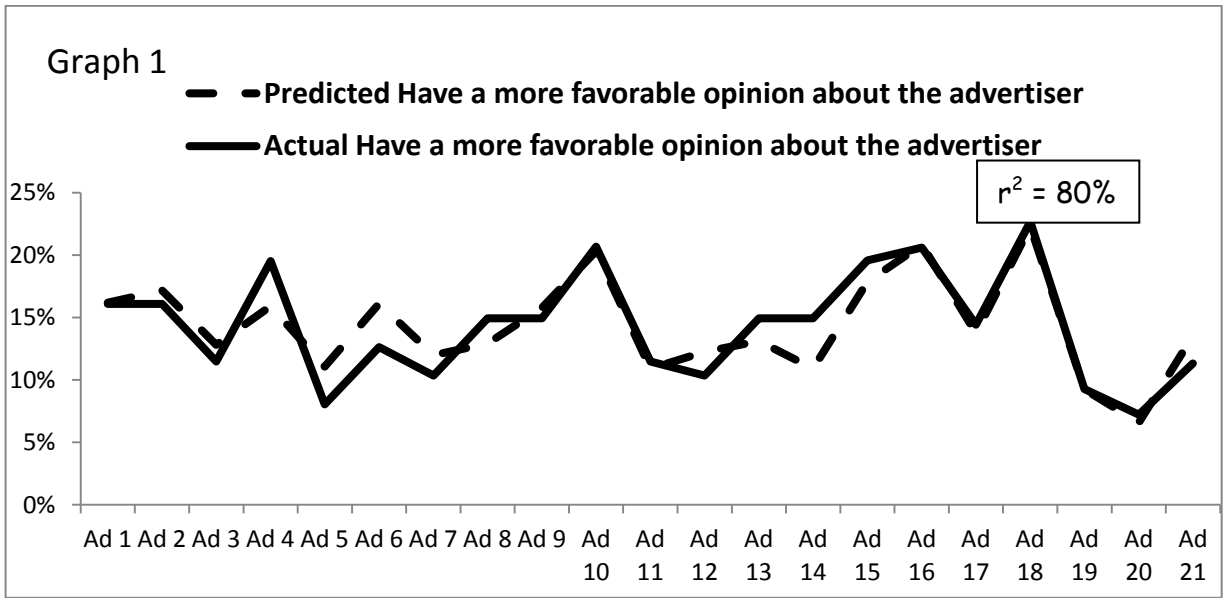
The third dynamic is Propulsion. Propulsion refers to the ad's ability to drive through the often multilevel ad experience, by moving from the initial layer through to the interactive elements and features. The ad should draw the reader through the ad and its various levels, and thus is reliant on both strong Visual Attention and Accessibility. This encourages maximum interaction with the brand message. Lack of propulsion represents a wasted opportunity for an advertiser to connect the

consumer to the brand. Propulsion was calculated based on noting scores from the various layers of the ad and its interactive features.

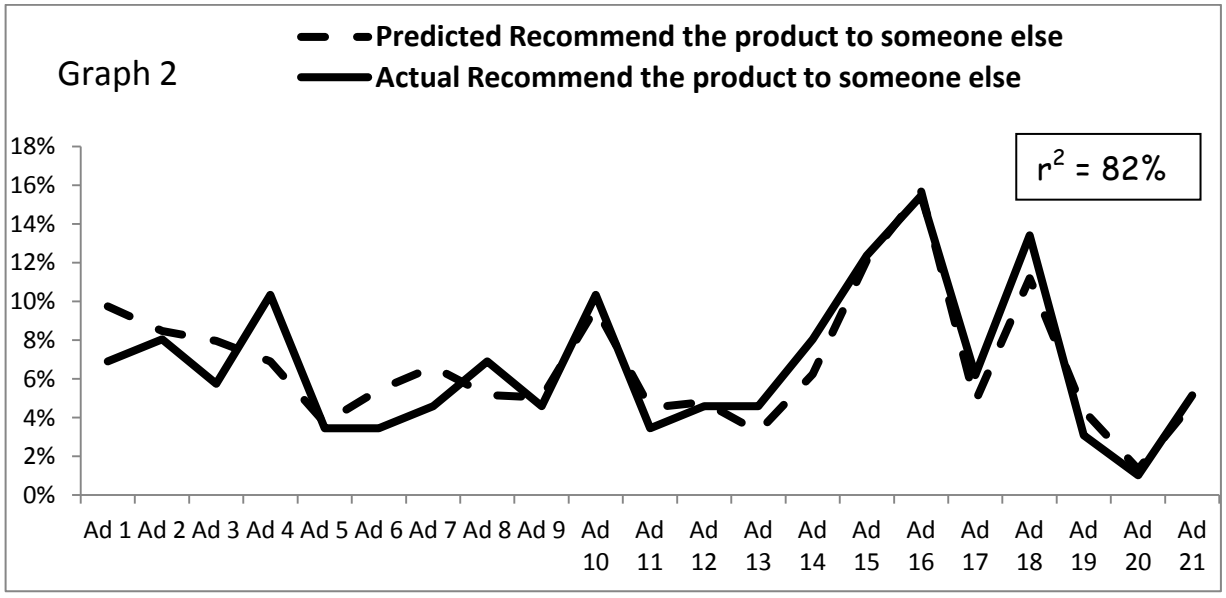
What can propulsion mean for advertisers? This question was addressed using data from the survey that was administered to respondents after the neurometric testing. We wanted to find out the connections between the neurometric data and consumer response in order to understand if the iPad ad experience would translate into ad response.

Using regression analyses, there is evidence that suggests that propulsion can potentially drive key brand metrics of favorability, recommendation, and action:

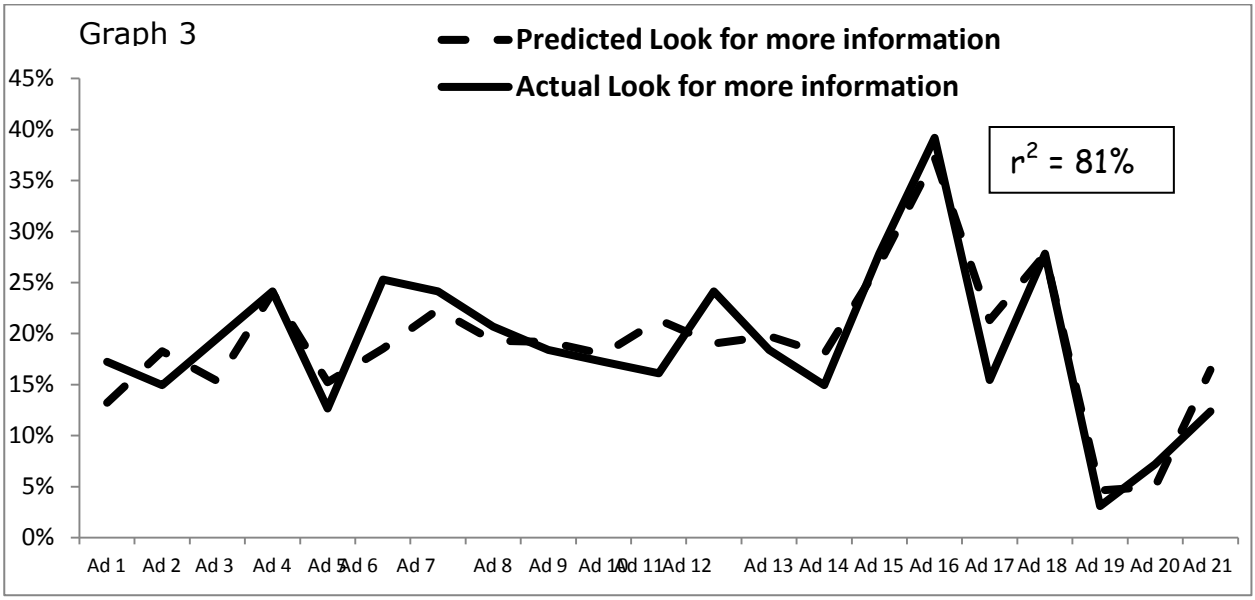
Propulsion Drove Brand Image: Along with factors such as brand awareness and positive emotion towards the ad, propulsion played a powerful role in driving a more favorable opinion of the brand. (Graph 1)



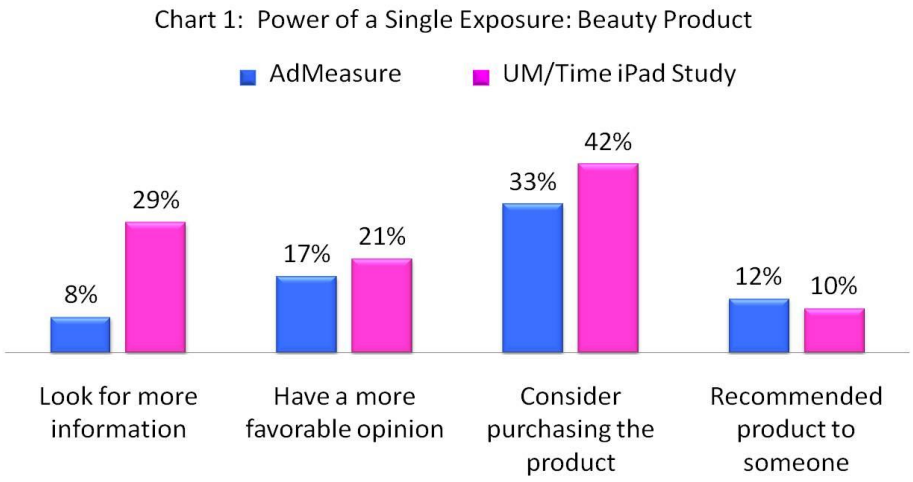
Propulsion Drove Recommendation: Propulsion, in conjunction with brand awareness and time spent with the ad, lead to a higher likelihood to recommend the product to someone else. (Graph 2)



Propulsion Led Readers to Seek More Information: **Propulsion** was the single largest predictive factor in generating users who wanted to seek more information about the product. (Graph 3)



The Power of a Single Exposure: One additional analysis was to examine how "actions taken" metrics from the GFK/MRI's Starch Admeasure service benchmarked against the same metrics from our post-test respondent survey. This was done for ads that had nearly identical creative executions in both the hard-copy print ads and the iPad ads. Though it is only directional at this point, the data suggests that a single exposure on the iPad has the potential to generate as much response as a hard copy ad. The "actions taken" scores were higher, or on par, for an iPad beauty product ad relative to the hard copy version.



Implications

We believe that the Study delivered on the goals, and demonstrated the unique elements of engagement on the iPad.

In addition, we learned that collaboration, which our partnership exemplified, will be critical for success, since this opportunity demands the best insights from Media Agencies, Creative Agencies, Marketers, Technology Companies, and Publishers; no single entity has all the answers.

Our key takeaways were:

- iPad advertising adds to the overall experience;
- iPad ad and app content that is experienced seamlessly with editorial is more likely to grab attention and interest;
- Propulsion represents an opportunity to extend the conversation with the reader;
- Propulsion generates brand awareness and brand interest post-exposure.