

Interview from the WdM Web Seminar with Marvin Vogt, eye square

"When it comes to advertising impact, television is almost always first."

In a pre-interview for the WDM web seminar, eye square's Marvin Vogt talked about what makes the "Track the Success" study so special along with what influences the COVID-19 crisis had on the circumstances. Additionally, he explained the study design and presented the first round of results.

Marvin Vogt and Florian Passlick conducted the "Track the Success" study on behalf of Screenforce, one of the largest home ethnographies in the DACH region in recent years. The study examined how users perceive different media channels (TV, BVOD, YouTube and Facebook) and the advertising shown on those platforms, along with what implications these have on perception, reaction and impact. This will also be presented at the "Woche der Marktforschung" event in October 2021.

Below is the interview with Marvin Vogt:

You have studied the impact of identical commercials on TV, BVOD, YouTube and Facebook channels- are there any results you can share with us right now?

Marvin Vogt: I'll try to summarize this as briefly as possible. At Screenforce Days, the results of the "main study" were already presented, i.e. the most important findings on perception, reaction and effect of advertising on all four channels. Basically, a consistent pattern emerged; in terms of advertising impact, TV is almost always in first place, closely followed by BVOD [editor's note: BVOD stands for Broadcaster Video-On-Demand]. YouTube follows some distance in third place and Facebook, again, with some distance in fourth place. This applied to recall performance as well as to purchase intention.

What was interesting about our design was that we were able to use Eyes on Screen technology, facial emotion analysis, skin conductance values, and technical variables, such as full-screen use on the smartphones to examine how the participants felt throughout their media consumption and therefore identifying factors for advertising success. For example, we found that visual attention was highest on the TV (i.e., participants looked at the screen the most and for the longest amount of time when the ad took up 100% of the screen at all times.). In comparison, YouTube, had the problem that media experience on smartphones was almost always only used in portrait mode, which meant that an ad only took up about 25 percent of the screen and on top of that, people were

less likely to look at the screen period. For example, in turn, the emotion analysis of the participants' faces was able to show that advertising on Facebook is significantly less able to evoke positive emotions compared to the other channels. An open-minded attitude, or positive emotionalization, are important factors in advertising success, therefore it would be in the advertisers' best interests to strategize appropriately.

On the subject of activation, we were able to clarify that viewers using TV as a lean-back medium are in a very relaxed state and are able to absorb advertising better than YouTube as a lean-forward medium, where increased activation indicates that advertising is more likely to be perceived as annoying here – these were proven with statements from personal assessment of media consumption. Overall, this study demonstrates nicely that the advertising effect is the result of a three-stage model, i.e., the contact quality (perception and reaction) determines the final effect.

The subjects were able to participate from home, is that correct? Can you describe the study design?

Marvin Vogt: Over the years, we had the chance to conduct a significant amount of ethnographic studies for our clients. Normally, we visited participants at home and help with the setup of cameras, cell phones, etc. In this study, there were many unique challenges; on the one hand, a personal visit was not possible and on the other hand, we wanted to be able to determine and vary the environments and the program experimentally on the TV and the smartphone. As a solution, we re-developed the "in home media ethnography" concept from scratch and created a study design that could be conducted completely remotely. Participants received a home kit for their session, which included all the necessary technology, accessories, spare parts, and detailed step-by-step instructions. With this kit, the participants were able to build the setup on their own with the help of many pictures. When they were ready, they were called by an employee for a final check-up. Utilizing a split screen, we were also able to digitally access the devices on site and help with any problems.

The participants then each used two different media in succession, e.g. 20 min of BVOD on the TV and 10 min of Facebook on the smartphone. Using our InContext technology, the commercials were very naturally embedded in the respective environment and ran on BVOD as a pre- or mid-roll, while other commercials appeared on Facebook as a post by the advertising brand in the news feed. Of course, we also had enough content available, so that at BVOD, for example, it was possible to choose from several genres and channels, or at Facebook, a public news feed was used. During the entire session, the participants' faces were recorded via webcam to be able to later determine head movements and rotations for gaze identification as well as facial expressions for the detection of

emotions. A skin conductance meter was also worn for the entire duration. At the end of the tasks, participants filled out a questionnaire about their experiences, and after successful completion, they dismantled everything and returned the home kit.

To be able to interview participants in their real reception situations: what are the advantages of this, for you and for the test subjects?

Marvin Vogt: The more natural an observation and interview situation, the higher the external validity. In applied media research, that's our goal, so to speak, and the biggest challenge for study design and evaluation. When people watch TV on their own sofa with their own remote control, it makes a lot of difference, because the results are more transferable to reality. Instead of inviting participants to a lab and asking them to "behave as if you were at home," we can study actual behaviour in their personal, real home, which increases the real-world value of the data obtained.

From your point of view, what impact did the COVID restrictions have in retrospect: did they make your work more difficult or easier, what influence did they have on the results of the study?

Marvin Vogt: Without the restrictions, we probably would have taken a different approach together with the Screenforce team and COVID obviously made us rethink our approach. But such a large and comprehensive ethnography always means a lot of careful planning and good project management. We wanted to conduct the study as safely as possible for everyone involved without compromising on data quality. All in all, the pandemic probably neither made our work more difficult nor easier, but only shifted the effort to different or new places: we, of course, had to make sure that enough home kits were available in all cities and countries at all times, that they were thoroughly disinfected after the last session, or that the batteries on all devices were recharged. From a distance, this was certainly more time-consuming than if one of us had been on site. At the same time, however, no team of researchers, project managers and operators had to travel through Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and could manage everything from Berlin.

In addition to webcams and measuring devices, participants were also given smartphones and laptops. In other words, was the media content on the devices provided? Does that lead to distortions and how was this dealt with, if necessary?

Marvin Vogt: Yes, having our own smartphone would have been even nicer, but we always must make a few compromises. Technically it would have been feasible, but for data protection reasons, we have decided not to record the private cell phones of our participants over longer periods of

time. The problem becomes even bigger if we also want to record the smartphone screens and thus, for example, the private feed on Facebook. Therefore, we decided to use test devices and not to use private accounts. We were also able to set up our own devices in advance so that the participants could use them directly, which in turn, significantly improved usability. We also asked the participants in advance which operating system they use privately, so that they would not be exposed to an unfamiliar interface, i.e. our smartphones were not so unfamiliar in the end, especially since the display of BVOD, YouTube and Facebook on the different devices only differs very slightly anyway. The laptops we provided were connected to the private TV set, so there were ultimately no distortions at all here.

About Marvin Vogt:



Marvin Vogt works as a Research Consultant in eye square's Brand and Media Experience Unit. He completed his Master of Science in Marketing and Consumer Psychology with a focus on purchasing and consumer behavior with distinction at the University of Sussex. Prior to joining eye square, he worked for a pharmaceutical company where he established, and developed a new medical technology brand. He is also a trained banker. In addition to his work as a research consultant, he is a lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences, where he teaches empirical research methods. He has references from audible, Disney, e.on, HanseMerkur, Screenforce, SevenOne, Unilever and Union Investment.