Chapter 12

Online Facial Symmetry and Achieving Success in a Digital Entrepreneurship World

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ABSTRACT

The second most used page on a newly found website from which a client might buy an item is the ABOUT US page. Using real images of real employees has an overall positive effect on the outcome of that visit. However, it is not always as simple as that. Subtle differences in the content of the pictures may have more of an impact than previously thought. Online advertising has long been considered as a media where creativity is not needed, with the advertising agencies focusing on a few basic rules for displaying ads: call to action, numbers, colors, human figures or symbols and so on. The results are analyzed only on their conversion rate value, this being one of the main reasons why online advertising is being regarded as the future of advertising worldwide. This study is focusing on the Click Through Rate (CTR) impact of different ads using different Facial Symmetry Indices (FSI) on the human figures used. The hypothesis proposed is that a person with a higher FSI, noticeable only at a subconscious level, will generate more clicks on an online ad.

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INTRODUCTION

Online advertising has taken off in the recent years, having been adopted by the industry as the new ideal method of reaching out to potential clients and having them interact with certain brands. It has seen a constant rise in the budgets allocated to it year after year as the online media consumption is increasing at a steady pace, overtaking offline consumption back in 2013 (Global Web Index 2013).

The problem with online advertising is that it lacks the creativity factor that traditional advertising was using in order to differentiate between brands. Online advertising is characterized by a handful of repeating elements that rarely allow any form of creativity. But where offline advertising fails and online advertising excels is in the brand interaction area. And when you have brand interaction online, you have raw data that you can use to improve your advertising, thus obtaining more brand interaction between your product and the potential client. Which in turn generates even more data and this cycle goes on until you are certain that the ads that you placed online are maximizing your overall profit.

There are many aspects of online advertising that surpass the results that offline advertising obtains. Despite explaining some of them in the chapters to come, one that the author of this paper would mention now and the one that is the pillar of this paper is the ability to implement AB testing at a fraction of the costs if it was a technic used in offline advertising. You could literally have multiple online versions of the same advertisement, and observe which is the version that generates more user interaction, thus eliminating the low performing versions in the process.

The lack of creativity and the ability to use cost effective AB testing has led the advertising industry to seek out new and improved methods of achieving user interaction with a product in the online medium. What the author of this paper is proposing is that the FSI, or Facial Symmetry Index, of a person, even if it’s at a subconscious level, will generate different engagement levels from end-users when presented with this aspect in online ads.

To be more precise, the author is proposing that a higher FSI will generate more interaction than a lower one, with a more concise explanation being that people with symmetrical faces will generate more interaction than the ones with asymmetrical faces, at a purely subconscious level of acknowledgement.

This chapter is focusing on the click through rate (CTR) impact of different ads using different facial symmetry indexes (FSI) on the human figures used. The hypothesis proposed is that a person with a higher FSI, noticeable only at a subconscious level, will generate more clicks on an online ad than a person with a lower FSI.

The experiment used in this study shows a clear difference in CTR between a lower and a higher FSI, with women being more likely to click on an advertisement if the span between the two FSI is lower and men only clicking more on one type of FSI if the difference is at the maximum proposed without exiting the subconscious level of the viewer.

A higher FSI is causing a higher CTR with some demographics and it can be implied that the trust expectation of having a higher FSI pictures of employees in a new business environment can have a positive impact in the outcome of that new business. With the online advertising market becoming more influential with every passing year, the focus of advertisers with shift from the basic methods used in the present to new and subtle ways of gaining the engagement of the viewer. The facial symmetry index of the human figures used in this ads will have to be one criteria to be taken into account as it can provide a higher CTR and, as a result, a higher conversion rate.