

# Click Away Syndrome

By Bob Osgoodby

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We see literally hundreds of ads every week that arrive by email, are published in Ezines we subscribe to, or possibly banner ads on web sites. Most of them fit into the "click away" category and are not even read. Every now and then however, one gets our attention and we visit their web site, or request further information by email.

First, let's examine the "click away" variety. The best shot for a "click away" is sending multiple offers (unsolicited commercial email) advertising the same thing. Face it - if we didn't "bite" on the scam of earning millions to help get money out of a country, getting the same or similar messages every day get automatically filtered out or you simply deleted.

While email marketing may well be the marketing tool of the future, until it is brought under control and the scamsters brought to task, it has a long way to go. Many people don't mind receiving offers via email, but many others place spam in the same genre as the telemarketer that always calls just when you sit down for dinner.

Predictable subject lines are usually the give away. I really do know if I asked for information about something, and when I didn't and receive one that says "Here is the Information You Requested", it immediately hits the circular bin. In point of fact, people who receive large amounts of spam have made the automatic deletion of spam into an art form.

While banner ads are heavily hyped they are easily ignored. I personally can't remember the last time I did click on one, but from the consumer's perspective, they are a step above the email spam. At least the advertiser is giving you the option to go to their web site or not. There is a variation however that fits into the "pain in the neck" variety. These are the "pop-up" ads that appear when you are at a web site. You then have to close the window that pops up, before you can continue viewing the site. When this starts to happen, I normally close both.

Personally I take great umbrage with AOL's policy of putting an ad on the opening page every time I want to use their service. We join an ISP for Internet Access and pay a monthly fee for that service. We shouldn't have ads in our face every time we try to use it.

Ezine advertising is another form, but that can also be misused. If I subscribe to a publication, I don't mind seeing ads as that is the financial support required to meet the expenses of the

publication. Thinly disguised articles however, which are actually ads and have little or no content are a misuse, and fall into the spam category.

If you are considering advertising in a publication, how do they group their ads. If they are in a separate mailing with the content in "Part 1" and the ads in "Part 2" you are probably wasting your money. People quickly scan "Part 1" for the content and then delete "Part 2" without even reading it. If there are multiple ads in a row, one after the other, you are also probably wasting your money as people tend to simply skip past them.

OK - let's say you find an ezine that does it correctly, you must have an ad that gets the readers attention. This takes time to develop and usually your best bet is to test several ads in the same publication, and track the response rate. It doesn't normally pay to compare response rates in different publications with different ads in each. The demographics of the subscribers are different and what may pull in one, may not in another.

How do you track the response rate? Well, there are basically three ways that this can be done. The easiest way is to use a different email address for each ad. Anything you receive at that address, came from a specific ad. If you only have one email address to track them, you can use a specialized address such as: <mailto:onoesenses-on@mail-list.com?subject=YB> with a different subject for each ad. Another way, if you own your own web site is to have a different "home page" for each ad you wish to track. These are basically "mirror" pages with a different URL - any hits you receive there came from a specific ad.

Once you find an ad that works in one publication, try it in another. Before you know it, you will have an ad program that will not suffer from the automatic "Click Away Syndrome".

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