



Fastweb shows that trick-play adverts can pay

Pay TV operators have been struggling to find a way of enticing their customers to watch adverts within non-linear content, and most importantly respond to them. But now Israeli on-demand advertising specialist justAd believes it has found the answer, and can cite its first customer, Italian cable and IPTV operator Fastweb, to prove it.

The answer is to play suitable adverts during the very trick-play actions that customers have used to avoid adverts in the first place. That is, while fast forwarding and pausing. Indeed 86% of adverts shown within on-demand adverts are skipped, according to justAd VP of Marketing Eli Sadoun.

JustAd is not alone in realizing that this may be the way forward for advertising in on-demand content, but believes it has been the first to come up with convincing evidence that it works. The essence, according to Sadoun, is to steal from the Internet model, which means playing adverts suited to the context and allowing consumers to be in control, giving them the option to decline watching the advert if they wish.

But, unlike what often happens in the case of adverts flashing up while web pages load, there is no delay imposed whatsoever, since they fit entirely within the time slot allowed by the trick-play action. Internet ads often impose a slight delay unless the user chooses to skip them.

Fastweb now uses the justAd solution to promote both its own VOD content and for external advertisers. In the case of its own content, the result has been to boost sales of children's movies by 11.2% and drama by 15.1%. It has also found that it is important to show adverts that match the slot, with different types being suitable for fast-forward play and pause.

The point is that fast-forward defines a fairly precise time slot; on average 12 seconds. By contrast, the pause time is more variable depending on what the consumer is doing during the interval, but the average duration is much longer, about two minutes, providing the opportunity for a more substantial advert.

In the beginning Fastweb played an advert with a purchase option during a fast-forward, which would take well over that average 12 second action time to execute. The result, as demonstrated by the feedback, was that viewers were aborting that advert more often than others that required no action. But the advert was watched more frequently when it was transferred to the pause slot.

Sadoun says the benefits of JustAd's solution have won it another, as yet unnamed, European customer – this time a cable operator.