



U7 Research Opportunity - Value of Quality News Environments

There is an existing body of work that showcases the value of **'hard-news'** for advertisers. Contrary to the belief of many advertisers, there is insufficient evidence that hard-news stories create a negative halo-effect, instead these environments are just as likely to generate positive response as soft-news would. It appears that brand safety is more of a 'PR' issue given the negligible impact on brand perception providing the environment is of sufficient quality.

These findings call into question the current approaches to brand safety and highlight the complexities involved that are often ignored through the heavy-handed use of keyword blocking and exclusion lists. This is an issue of heightened importance in 2020 given the impact of COVID-19 and the developing social justice movements around the world. Existing research means that advertisers should be comfortable advertising against this content without fear, however, the rise in news consumption has not correlated with an increase in advertiser spend.

Our proposal

We are proposing a research study to address this disparity.

By building on the [Newswork study](#) we would look at how the increased 'approach response' to hard-news content translates to increased attention and how that attention results in improved brand outcomes.

The intention is to create **a series of controlled environments** that give respondents the opportunity to **browse both soft and hard news stories on both premium news-brand sites and social media platforms**. These stories will be specifically chosen to include current affairs such as the COVID-19 pandemic and social justice movements such as Black Lives Matter as well as 'safer' content.

The mixture of content and publisher type will allow us to compare the response to advertising collected via a survey across multiple factors. For instance are news environments more effective vehicles for advertising compared to social? Is there a halo-effect based on the content the advertising appears alongside, either positive or negative?

Display and video advertising formats will be inserted within these environments to emulate a real-life browsing scenario and we will incorporate a mixture of B2C and B2B brands to see if there are any differences based on category.

Our partners

To create these environments and track attention we would need to work with a third-party research vendor who has the sufficient technological capabilities such as: **Amplified Intelligence, Lumen** or **Eye Square**. This will allow us to measure whether the advertising is looked at within each environment and the impact of attention on branding metrics.

To complement this work, our sister company **Storyful**, a social intelligence firm, can conduct a study of the factors driving shifts in brand sentiment and evolving consumer behaviours and expectations of brands — exploring what drives positive and negative engagement with socially-oriented advertising and marketing.



Get in touch!

nicola.spooner@unrulygroup.com

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