

DOOH vs Pooh vs Mobile Equals Identity Crisis

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Abstract

I'm not a marketing expert. My interests revolve around creating applications that best fulfill the needs of potential users. In cases when the user does not have specified expectations, or does not know all the options, my role is to present an idea along with the possibilities. When creating new ideas, it is necessary to simplify the schemes. At this moment, my aim is to simplify the schemes around DOOH. The meeting I attended in Amsterdam has shown that this would not be an easy task. Nothing is specified and few know what to do in order for the interest reach a peak that will make the whole area profitable.

The first thing that intrigued me during the Amsterdam¹ conference was the attempt (made by almost everybody) to create a "better" and more "detailed" definition of our point of interest - DOOH. Another common "curiosity" was emphasizing the fact (or rather a truism) that mobile phones are a great market, worth concentrating on. Listening to the presentations easily created the impression that the DOOH field is going through an identity crisis, accompanied by impatience, annoyance, or even frustration.

OOH is the short for out-of-home advertising. According to Wikipedia, the annual income from this industry reaches 7 billion dollars. In a nutshell, the industry is deals with placing advertising billboards in cities and charging businesses according to the purchased campaign. With the growing popularity of big screens somebody has reached the conclusion that it is worth to call the new branch of the industry Digital-OOH. In my opinion it is too much of a simplification. Using computers for directing what and how should be displayed creates a whole new way of attracting the public's interest. Besides, static billboards placed in public places influence the potential recipient for a much longer time, and their content is more likely to actually sink into the people's minds. In case of advertising clips the viewing time must be much longer. Thus, placing huge LED screens at the crossroads in cities or next to highways is not the right strategy. More and more voices are against marring the streets with screens that present content which is beyond anyone's control²³. In my opinion, the excitement coming from the possibility of placing an advertisement in the city center will soon pass, or become strongly limited. This means that calling the industry Digital-OOH will no longer be accurate. Maybe the board of OVAB (Out-of-home Video Advertising Bureau), the main organizer of the Amsterdam conference, had reached the same conclusion changing the name to DPAA (Digital Place-based Advertising Association) just one month after the ISE 2010. The fact that the decision in no way pushes the industry into a state of prosperity is very well addressed in the blogosphere⁴⁵⁶.



Fig. 1: Pooh + DOOH = PuDuS

Mobile phones are another direction willingly followed by gold diggers in the industry (which until today bears the unfortunate tag DOOH). According to Gartner's⁷ report concluding the sales of mobile phones in Q4 of 2009, the total number of devices sold was 1.211 billion. The figure is really impressive. It is not hard to see why many treat advertising on mobile phone as a great source of income. The question is whether this is something that should remain within the interest of DOOH. Not necessarily. There are too many big players on the market (i.e. Google, Microsoft, et al.) who keep their eye on the ball. Besides, despite very quick technology progress, mobile phones are still mainly used for conversations or e-mailing. The percentage of users operating the advanced features is still rather small. The fact that 17 % of mobile phones in the USA are Smartphones⁸ does not necessarily reflect the

¹ <http://www.iseurope.org/kcms/home.php?site=dooh>

² <http://www.dailydooh.com/archives/24852>

³ http://www.rapidcityjournal.com/news/article_a6f1776a-3565-11df-ba0d-001cc4c03286.html

⁴ <http://realdigitalmedia.blogspot.com/2010/03/solving-wrong-problem.html>

⁵ <http://experiate.net/2010/03/25/my-take-whats-in-a-name-a-lot/>

⁶ <http://www.dailydooh.com/archives/24703>

⁷ <http://www.gartner.com/it/page.jsp?id=1306513>

⁸ http://www.mediapost.com/publications/?fa=Articles.showArticle&art_aid=120085&nid=109540

situation on the global market, especially in countries such as Brazil, Russia, or India (it is difficult for me to include China here ;-)). What is more, we shouldn't ignore the latest events connected with releasing the iPad by Apple. It is hard resist the feeling that Apple has recognized the limits of a mobile phone and is launching a hybrid of a phone and a computer. In this situation I am beginning to wonder if at the next DOOH conference I'm going to hear that tablets are the future of this industry. . .

While reading the above statements it hard not to ask the question: if everything is so messy and undefined, nobody really knows what to do then why bother? It seems that I have just joined the collective search for the "goldmine".



Fig. 2: The ScreenBullet Team in Search of the Goldmine.