July 2006

The OPA White Papers
A Day in the Life: An Ethnographic Study of Media Consumption

Introduction

Making good advertising decisions requires a deep understanding of consumers' use of and interaction with media. Unfortunately, it is increasingly clear that our knowledge of media consumption is outdated. Consumers are changing the way they use and control media, businesses are changing the way they create and deliver media, and technology is changing just about everything in the media world.

"The Model is Broken," according to Jim Stengel, Global VP Marketing for P&G, and other leading marketers have reached the same conclusion. Advertisers need to change their attitudes and behaviors in response to consumers' changing media consumption habits.

However, it is difficult to keep pace with consumers' media habits. A challenge we face is that media measurement tools generally measure a single medium; therefore these tools cannot take consumers' simultaneous use of multiple media into account. We need to be able to compare the value offered by each medium. This is extremely difficult when each medium is measured with its own currency metrics. The multimedia world requires a consumer-centric multimedia measurement methodology.

This paper reports on an extensive analysis, funded by the Online Publishers Association (OPA), of the Middletown Media Study II conducted by the Ball State University Center for Media Design. At its core, the goal of the Day in the Life project is to address the problems outlined above. More specifically, we want to provide insight into the value of online audiences by addressing these questions:

- What are the media consumption habits of the average American?
- What are consumers saying about when, where and how they use media?
- Which target audiences can be reached and engaged online?
- How does online complement offline media?
- What are the implications for media, advertisers and marketers?

Summary of Findings

This unique observational study documented five important facts. The Web:

1. Has become a powerful medium in its own right
2. Reaches consumers in all major dayparts
3. Adds substantial incremental reach to other media, making it a great partner
4. Has an at-work presence exceeding all major media
5. Attracts a valuable audience that spends more than heavy TV users in many consumer categories

In addition to these quantitative findings, qualitative interviews conducted as part of the OPA project suggest three noteworthy observations:

1. Online drives offline usage and offline drives online usage
2. Consumers use the Web for commerce and purchase related research
3. The Internet draws people online with branded content

A Day in the Life: Methodology

- A Day in the Life uses ethnographic research, i.e., observation, as its method of data collection. Observation was used because previous research conducted by Ball State demonstrated that observation vs phone surveys or diaries provides a more accurate account of actual media consumption
  - For example, next day telephone interviews understate TV use by 62% and magazine use by 43% when compared with observation; diaries also understate these media consumption (13% and 29%, respectively) (Middletown Media Study 1)

- Three hundred fifty adults in Muncie and Indianapolis IN were observed in Spring 2005
  - This is an area known as "Middletown" because since the 1920's it has been deemed by sociologists as demographically reflecting America
    - Demographics are not limited to gender, age and race, but also include media-related qualities such as newspaper readership, broadband penetration and cell phone ownership

- Participants were observed on average nearly 13 hours – about 80% of the waking day

- Every 15 seconds, their media consumption and life activities were recorded
  - Fifteen media were tracked, including the 5 major ad supported media
  - 17 life activities were tracked (e.g., eating, child care, exercise, hobbies, etc)

- Observations were made at home, work, auto and other locations

A Day in the Life: Graphic Summary

As an illustration of the unique power of this study, Figure 1 shows a detailed view of the media usage of a 43 year old male, who is an affluent empty nester (married without children, with income over $60,000) from Muncie. This respondent's complex usage pattern, involving multiple media, often concurrently, was typical.

Figure 1

Day in the Life of an **Affluent Empty Nester (Male, 43, Muncie)**
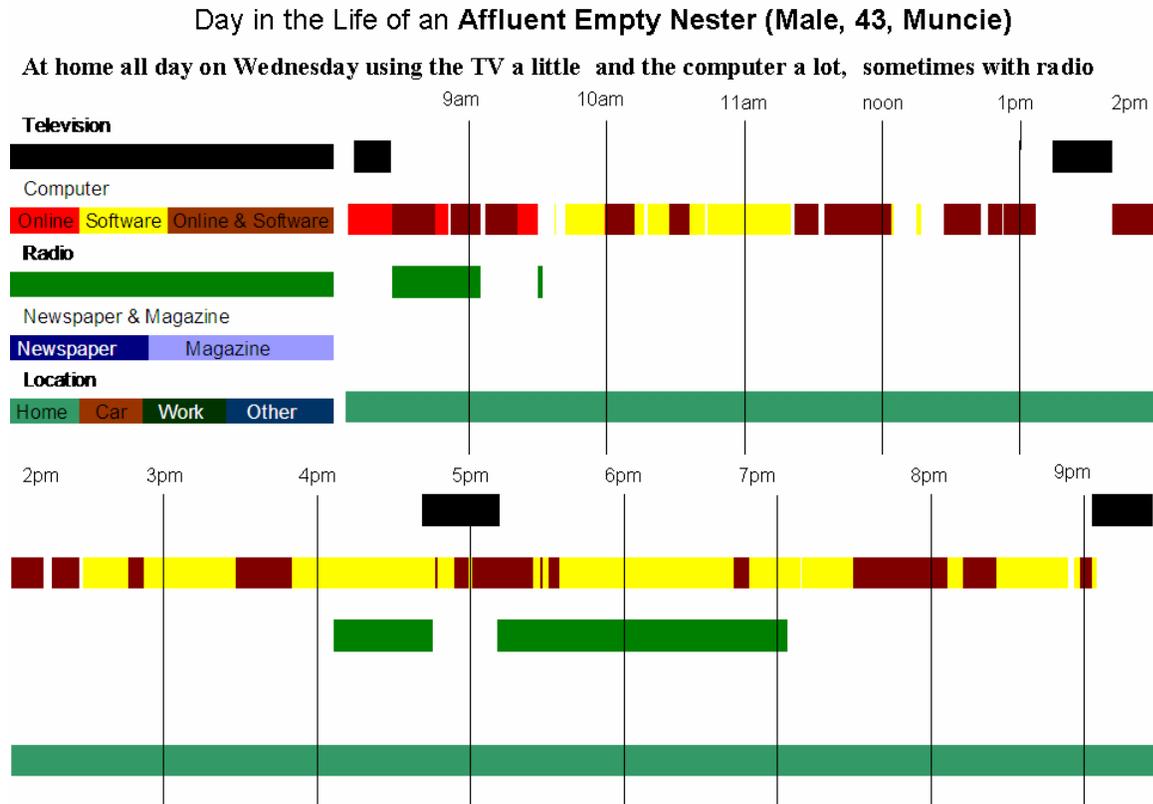
On the left there is an abbreviated list of some of the media this consumer may have used that day. In addition, the bottom line of the list includes the place of exposure. To the right of the legend is roughly the first half of the observed day showing a continuous record of the media used and place of exposure. The day is continued on the bottom portion of the chart.

The man represented in Figure 1 spent his entire Wednesday at home (as he works from home), watching a little television in four relatively brief episodes in the morning, mid-day, late afternoon and evening. But he was on his computer virtually the entire day, switching from online (shown in red) to software (shown in yellow) and often using both at once (shown in brown). The radio (shown in green) was also on sometimes while he was on his computer, but generally not when his TV was on. For this particular person, there was no print usage through the observed day, which was from shortly after 8am to nearly 9:30pm.

Figure 1 visually reflects the power of observation:

- This participant's media use was tracked for over 13 hours
- We ascertain not only which media were used but when
- Simultaneous media consumption was noted so that we understand what combinations of media use were prevalent
- Transitioning from one medium to another was tracked
- Media use by location was specified

When re-contacted later for an in-depth interview this respondent said, *I'm always on the Internet so that is a day-long thing…I would not be able to go a week without the Internet. Reading an article in the newspaper not covered to the depth that I want or an article in a context that I don't understand will cause me to seek more information. I always go in that direction: print to Internet. I read an article in the newspaper reviewing a new kind of phone and there wasn't enough technical detail so I went to the manufacturer's website.*

Last week there was a story on NPR about a particular singer, I went to NPR's website to find more information about the singer and then went to the singer's website to find out more information after that.

Illustrating that this respondent's use of multiple media was not uncommon, another respondent said, *Usually I will go to Comedy Central[.com] if I missed the Daily Show to see clips from the day before. Or go to MTV[.com] if there is a new video and I saw it in the morning, I would check out who was in the video; you can listen to music for free the first week the album is out. I try to read the Daily News everyday. I read some of the international newspapers, too. I find myself going to those newspapers websites as well. Examples of some of the larger ones I try to check every day…when I wake up in the morning I usually try to read the NY Times website, the Washington Post website, and USA Today, just some of the major national websites to check the news before I come in.*
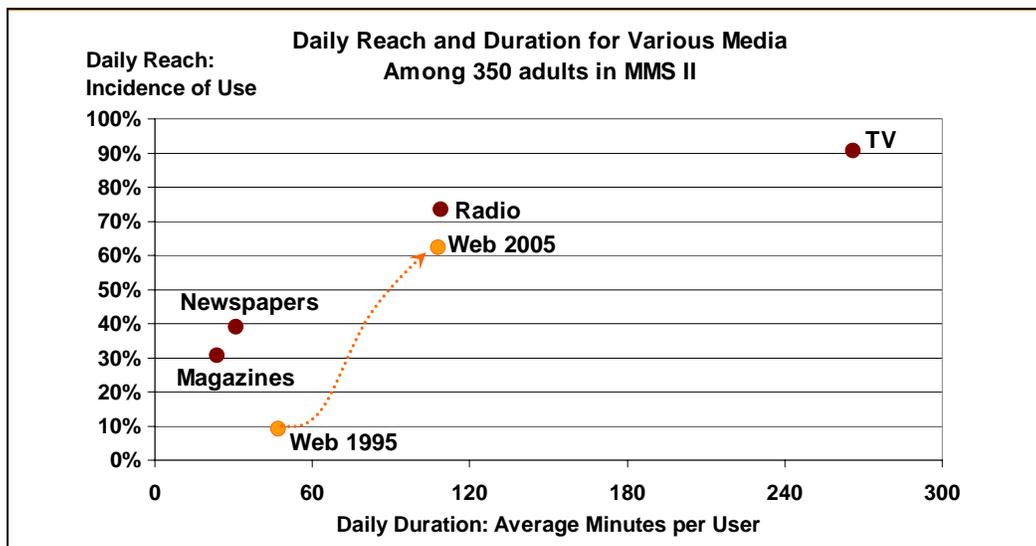
The Web's Powerful Reach

Reviewing the results from one participant provides a powerful example of how consumers simultaneously interact with multiple media. However, reviewing the results of all 350 observed consumers shows clearly that the Web has taken a strong position among all media.

A two-dimensional mapping approach was taken to summarize the key learning from all consumers. As seen in Chart 1, the vertical axis represents daily reach, which is the percentage of consumers spending some time during the measured day with each of the media, and the horizontal axis shows daily duration or the average time in minutes spent during the measured day among "users" of each of the media.

The Web reached 62% and was used for an average of 108 minutes on an average day for the average adult – very similar to radio and far outpacing the print media. The chart also notes the position of the Web ten years ago, demonstrating the medium's remarkable growth rate.

<u>**Chart 1**</u>

Daily Reach and Duration for Various Media Among 350 adults in MMS II

Daily Reach: Incidence of Use

%	Media
100%	
90%	TV (≈91%)
80%	
70%	Radio (≈73%)
60%	Web 2005 (≈62%)
50%	
40%	Newspapers (≈39%)
30%	Magazines (≈31%)
20%	
10%	Web 1995 (≈9%)
0%	

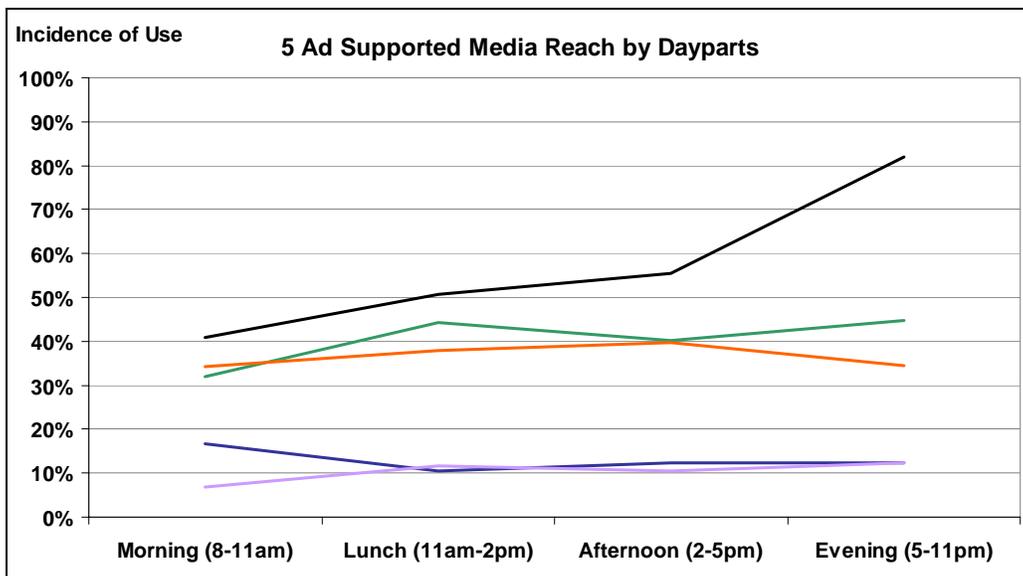Daily Duration: Average Minutes per User (0, 60, 120, 180, 240, 300)

The Web's claim to mass medium status is based on more than its large daily reach among adults. It also exhibits mass appeal, with no major differences in daily reach level or time spent by users each day among the six major age/gender groups (M18-34, M35-49, M50+, W18-34, W35-49, and W50+). This is in sharp contrast to some lingering impressions of the Web as the domain only of young men. By comparison, the daily reach levels of the print media exhibit a 3:1 ratio from older to younger readers and the daily television usage of the 50+ demo exceeds that of the 18-34 demo by about 50%. The appeal of the Web is far more homogeneous – the mark of a true mass medium.

Web Shows Strength Across All Dayparts

If we look at the reach patterns for the major media through the day (Chart 2) we can see that the Web joins TV and Radio in achieving significant reach in all major dayparts (morning 8-11am, lunch 11am-12pm, afternoon 2-5pm and evening 5-11pm). It is clear that television's strength is largely concentrated in fringe through primetime, where it far exceeds the reach of the other media. However, during the rest of the day, the reach of the Web is far closer to television than might have been expected (within 10 or 15 reach points).

In fact, the Web has a remarkably persistent presence throughout the consumer's day. One reason for this remarkable strength is that the Web has become the number one reach medium at work – for all six age/gender groups. Radio is the second reach medium at work.   An even more remarkable finding of this study is that the Web is the number two reach medium at home, for the four age/gender groups below 50. Of course, television ranks number one at home for all age/gender groups – but the Web is the only medium to rank number one or two at both home and at work.

Chart 2

Chart shows "5 Ad Supported Media Reach by Dayparts" with vertical axis labeled "Incidence of Use" ranging from 0% to 100%, and horizontal axis showing Morning (8-11am), Lunch (11am-2pm), Afternoon (2-5pm), Evening (5-11pm).

Online Complements and Extends Offline

While the Web exhibits clear benefits as a reach medium on its own, it also offers excellent benefits as a potent partner for other major media. This study found that during every daypart, the Web extends the reach of TV, magazines and print.
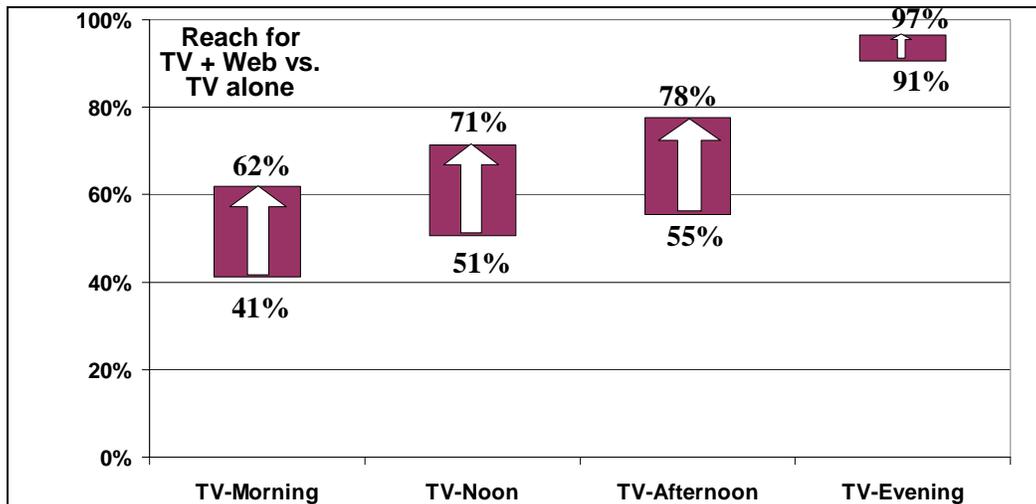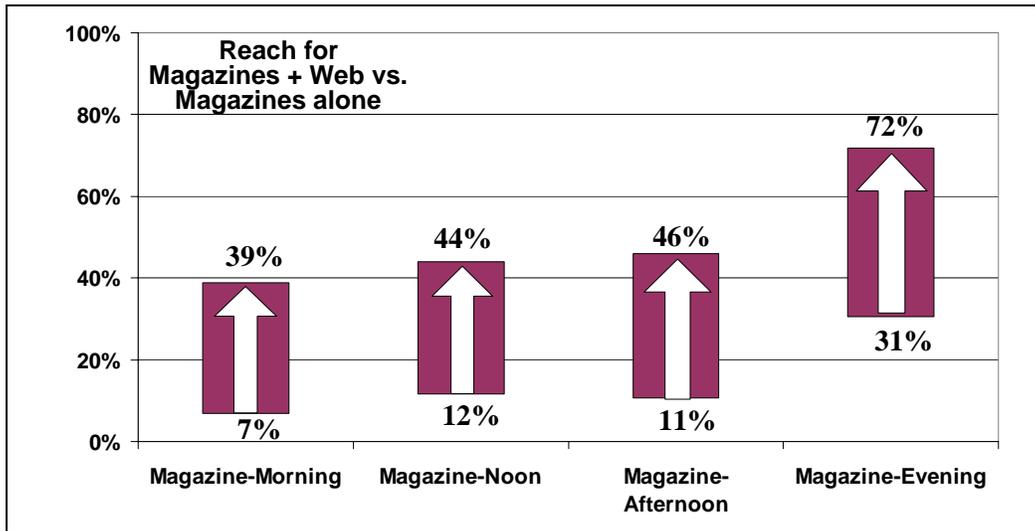
Chart 3

Chart 3 shows the incremental reach the Web offers to television throughout the day, demonstrating that it adds to TV's reach in all major dayparts. For example in the morning, television reaches 41% of observed consumers; by adding the Web (purple area with arrows inside) reach increases by 21 points to 62%. Similar reach lifts are offered throughout the day. Even in primetime, the Web reaches most of those relatively few consumers who are not reached by television. Where a television-only plan would achieve weaker reach levels during the day, a television plus Web plan can reach the majority of adults throughout the day.

The Web also adds to magazines' reach in all major dayparts. As seen in Chart 4, the Web boosts magazine reach by a factor of at least 2 and often by a factor of 4. Though it is a challenge for Magazines alone to provide mass reach, used in combination with the Web, they can.

Chart 4

Looking at the Web's complementary reach role with newspapers, a pattern similar to magazines emerges – the Web adds substantial reach throughout the day (Chart 5). While the reach of a newspaper-only campaign might be limited, newspapers plus the Web can provide substantial reach levels.

Chart 5
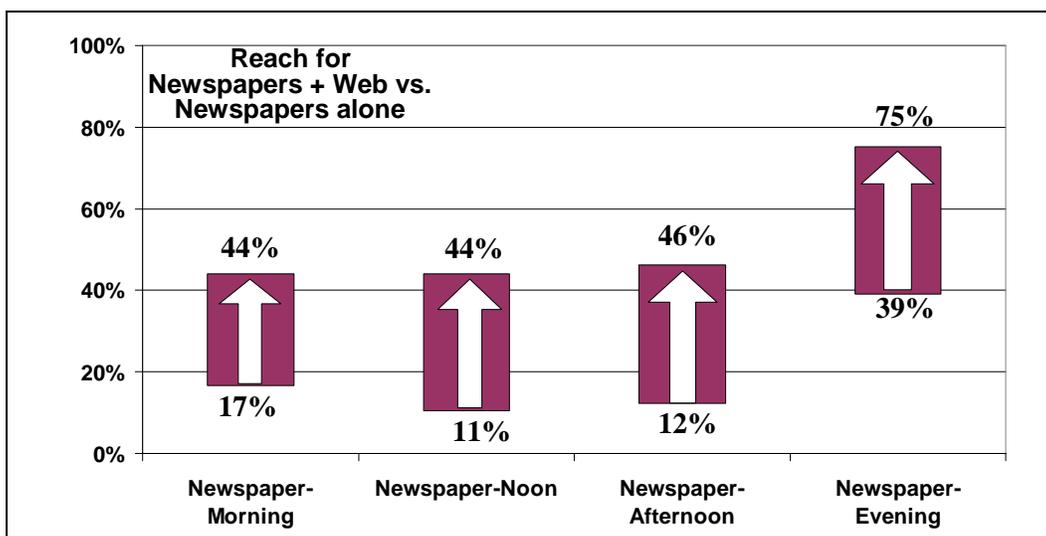
Web Reaches Valuable Audiences

As the Web complements the reach of other media, it also increases the average value of the audience reached by marketers. In fact, Web users showed greater annual spending across every category reviewed in this study.

A Geographic Information System using Census Block Group data was used to infer financial information about the respondents of the Middletown Media Study II based on the neighborhoods in which they live. This information was used to compare two mutually exclusive media user groups:
- TV Dominant – heavy TV viewers, but average to light, or non-Web users
- Web Dominant – heavy Web users, but average to light, or non-TV users

Chart 6
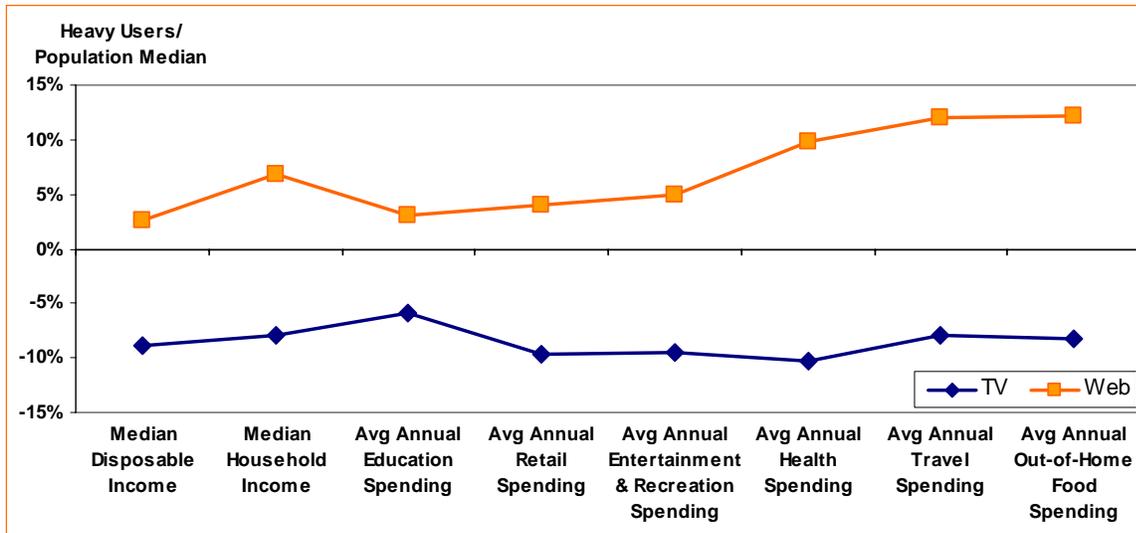
Compared with the TV Dominant group, the Web Dominants have higher household and disposable income. And this translates directly into higher spending across many vital categories for marketers. The Web Dominants annual spending exceeded that of the TV Dominants by:
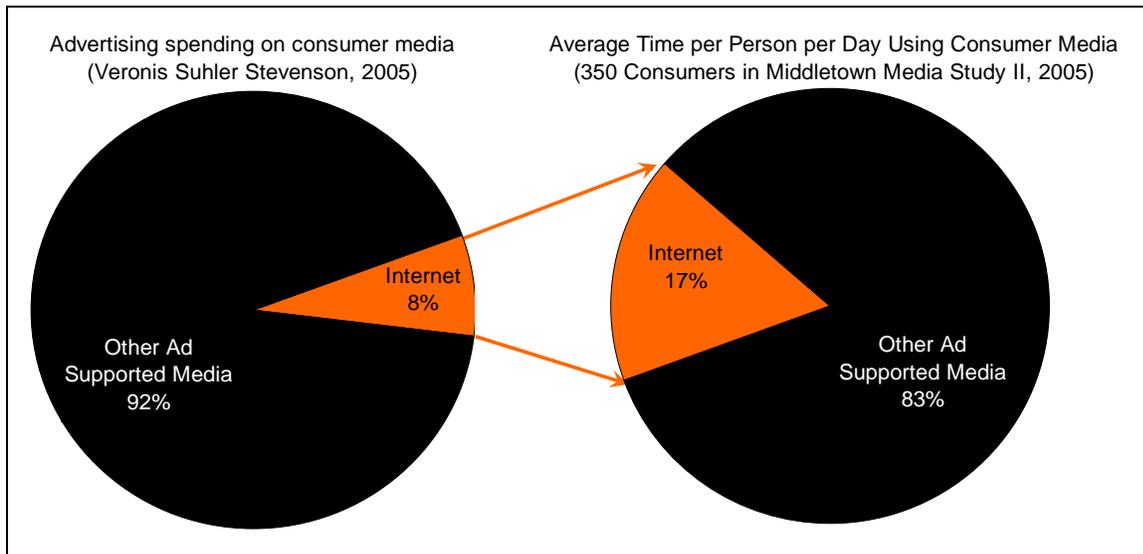
- 24% for retail
- 25% for entertainment and recreation
- 23% for food away from home
- 22% for health
- 25% for travel

Two Final Considerations

Time is money…or at least there should be a relationship between the two. This study has focused on how consumers use the Web in a multimedia context – how it fits into a day in their lives and interacts with other media. The next question, then, is how the Web fits into the lives, or at least the media plans, of advertisers and their agencies.

Comparing advertising dollar spending data to consumer time spending data from this study, Chart 7, reveals a serious misalignment.

Chart 7

Advertising spending on consumer media
(Veronis Suhler Stevenson, 2005)

Average Time per Person per Day Using Consumer Media
(350 Consumers in Middletown Media Study II, 2005)

Internet 8%

Other Ad Supported Media 92%

Internet 17%

Other Ad Supported Media 83%

Most consumers have made the Web an integral part of their media day. When will most advertisers make the Web an integral part of their media plans?

The OPA White Papers

For questions about this series or to submit an idea for a future white paper, please contact:

Stuart Schneiderman
Research Director
Online Publishers Association
249 West 17th Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10011
Email: stuarts@online-publishers.org

About the Ball State University Center for Media Design

Ball State University's Center for Media Design (CMD) is a consumer-centric media insight and R&D facility that was founded in 2002 with the first of two $20M grants. The Center's mission is to provide consumer-centric media insight in a business friendly context.

CMD carries on a decades-long tradition of groundbreaking sociological studies know as the "the Middletown Studies" that go back to the 1920s when the world was trying to figure out what would be the impact of new technologies, such as the automobile, at that time, on the ways Americans behave and relate to each other. These studies found Muncie, IN to be representative of what was happening in the nation as a whole. Decades of additional research followed, again looking at the Muncie area, referred to symbolically as Middletown, essentially a microcosm of American society.

By the early 2000s attention had quite appropriately turned to the impact of media, so in 2003 the first Middletown Media Study was conducted. The key learning from the Middletown Media Study I was that consumer-centric multi-media research requires a methodology based on observation. Observation was found to be superior to either telephone interviews or diaries in providing high quality information on consumer exposure to multiple media, especially when used concurrently.

About the Online Publishers Association

Founded in June 2001, the Online Publishers Association is an industry trade organization whose mission is to advance the interests of high-quality online publishers before the advertising community, the press, the government and the public. Members of OPA represent the standards in Internet publishing with respect to editorial quality and integrity, credibility and accountability. OPA member sites have a combined, unduplicated reach of 109.5 million visitors, or 65 percent of the total U.S. Internet audience (Source: comScore Media Metrix, July 2005 combined home/work/university data). For more information, www.online-publishers.org.