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'Ad-ID' Standard Faces Old Adoption Hurdles

12 Sep 2003

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The digital ad tagging system developed by the Association of American Ad Agencies (4As) and the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) has been received with positive feedback, but very little actual use. The Ad-ID system functions as the equivalent of the ancient and expensive Industry Standard Coding Identification (ISCI) used for TV ads. The new codes consist of nine digits, rather than the ISCI's mere eight digits, but actual advertisers are finding that difference a subtle factor in the face of licensing terms that call for payments from \$25 per use to \$10,000 per year for an unlimited license.

In the past, tagging standardization efforts have failed despite being free of charge. The earliest known industry-wide effort stemmed from an Anderson & Lembke/SF initiative in 1995, which failed because then-popular ad servers such as DoubleClick and MatchLogic found that their marketshare could be protected via proprietary standards.

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Contextual advertising has been getting a lot of press lately, chiefly because of its effectiveness. Compared to other online ad targeting methods, such as targeting by demographics, contextual advertising represents the first step in a shift in how we think about audiences. Rather than targeting audiences solely on demographics (Men 18-49, College students), contextual advertising is just part of a larger movement that is sweeping the online marketing world. This movement is known as behavioral marketing.

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