

Preface

When first thinking of putting together a compilation of writings on a particular topic, those that have such a notion believe they will give meaning to a paradigm, influence a research area, or at a minimum shed light exploring a critical phenomenon. Ultimately, the editors and authors hope that the exchange for the reader - in return for thoughtful consideration of and time invested with the material put before them - will be a level of understanding and newly acquired insight. Such was the thinking of the editors of this volume even though we knew that time would not be friendly to our efforts. The combination of advertising practice, available technology and media use has produced shifts in commercial and social communication that have become culturally defining. This volume provides both the baseline for such changes and the predictors of what comes next. In many ways the speed and the changes that have occurred during the compilation, editing and publication of this volume reflect Moore's Law and perhaps even surpassing the exponential levels of change implicit in his prophecy.

Throughout the book, authors integrate their beliefs and research findings by examining some of the most critical areas of interest within digital media. For example, the relationship between metrics and advertising theory, as well as conventional measurements of effectiveness, are presented early and remain an important element throughout the text. Further, chapters dealing with gaming and virtual realities stimulate provocative examination of consumer engagement and its relationship with individual characteristics. Likewise, the transformation of consumer preference from professionally created content and delivery to the consumption of user-generated content is fully explored. Certainly the prevalence of research illustrating how consumers respond to convenience, choice and control throughout several chapters reflects how significantly the mass media have transformed in recent years. Finally, social networks and the digital manifestations of word-of-mouth via blogs and wikis represent excellent examples of the strength of web-related efforts for stimulating consumer behavior. These digital experiences do not occur for consumers simply from being talked to by advertisers; rather they reflect a far more active – at times aggressive – level of communication.

The editors believe this book represents a wonderful cross-section of current research and understanding of digital media through contemporary communication. The metrics and theory throughout are well presented and reflect the multidisciplinary nature of digital media by connecting such industries as business, sports, politics, gaming and economics. Advertising within the realm of digital media goes well beyond simply identifying how much or how often a commercial message is delivered, but instead seeks to embrace consumer awareness, behavior and commercial impact that is unarguably attributed to mediated communication.

The time between submission of an edited manuscript and publication have seen – as mentioned earlier – new and significant additions to the complexity of digital media and advertising. Nevertheless,

the material assembled here remains seminal in almost all respects and ahead of development in many others. The predictions for what is to come next in this age of digital media are clearly articulated in virtually every chapter and the breadth represented is unequalled. We hope you enjoy the read.

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