# Everything about Display Advertising

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## 1. Introduction

Display advertising is an online form of advertising similar to billboards, television ads and print ads. The ad has a simple concept and instantly provides the viewer with upfront information about the product or service. A display ad is embedded into a web page and consists of images and text. It can include sounds, animation or video to attract more attention, or with the help of some programming, can be highly interactive. HTML code is used to instruct a web server to load the specified website when the display ad is clicked on. Revenue for display advertising is usually earned on a cost per click (CPC) basis.

The main aim of a display advertisement is to target traffic to the website that is publishing the ad. Like all other forms of advertising, it also aims at sales of the advertised product or services and creating brand recognition and awareness.

## 2. History of Display Advertising

Display advertising has only been around for the past 15 years. The first ever display ad was sold in 1993 by Global Network Navigator (GNN), which now holds the title for the first commercial website in history. But HotWired, the world's first commercial magazine, changed history by being the first to sell a large amount of display ads to various corporate companies. In 1994, HotWired placed the first display ad on its website. The ad was purchased by AT&T and was 468 x 60 pixels in size. It read, "Have you ever clicked your mouse right here? You will". Since then, display advertising has come a long way. Up until 2004, display ads were measured and sold solely on the number of impressions, but today it also relies on tracking, the amount of clicks received and conversions made.

## 3. What is Display Advertising

Display advertising is nothing more and nothing less than advertising on digital channels. Ads can be shown on websites, mobile sites and mobile apps, as well as in games and social media messages. The ads themselves may come in many different forms, including:

- Text
- Images
- Animated images
- Video
- Games
- Audio

## 4. Types of Display Advertising

There are four types of display advertising.

### 4.1 Category

You are advertising a new beauty cream so you would publish your ad on websites that have a largely female audience like fashion or beauty sites. You choose to advertise in this category of websites because their visitors are your target audience and your ad is of topical interest to them. This type of advertising is best for raising brand awareness as it involves a long list of websites for your ad to be published on.

### 4.2 Contextual

Placing display advertisements about the latest Jeep model on a car forum website. Your display ad matches the content of the web page and is of topical interest to its visitors. This type of advertising works best combined with category advertisement.

### 4.3 Behavioural

If you have been visiting a list of different real estate websites in search of a new apartment, you will be served an ad for real estate listings. Behavioral display advertising targets a specific audience based on their web history with the help of cookies. This form of display advertising focuses on a smaller audience but provides more solid leads in the end.

### 4.4 Retargeting

You checked the Group on website and later on, while you're surfing online elsewhere, you see Group on display advertisements. With retargeting in display advertising, visitors who have already been to the specified website are served the ad when they continue browsing elsewhere on the Internet. This form of advertising is more expensive and targets a smaller audience, but promises a good end result as the viewer has already established an interest in the product or service by visiting the publisher's website before.

## 5. Trends in Display Advertising

Some trends have been obvious for years, like the rise of video as online medium for display advertising and the importance of mobile ad device. In this paragraph, a few other trends are discussed, including bigger, richer and more functional ads, the rise of ad blockers and the trend of increasing relevance of display advertising and the way in which ad space is bought using programmatic real-time bidding.

Each day, new ways to get the attention of users are discovered in the form of homepage take-overs (where the entire homepage of a website is dominated by the advertiser), page peelers and more. The rise of YouTube also started the development of video display adds. Online video proved a much richer medium. However it has also led several advertisers to re-using their TV commercials for online display forgetting that a user usually can click away after 5 to 7 seconds (missing the key message of the 20-second TV commercial).

The display ads are nearly becoming full fledge applications. Hewlett Packard introduced the first interactive banner in 1996, allowing the user to play Ping Pong in the banner itself. Since then, banners have become more interactive allowing users for example to configure their car while inside a display advertisement.

However, in the end, most of the bigger, richer and more functional display ads only tend to irritate users more. Causing the rise of the ad blockers.

## 6. Advantages of Display Advertising

1. Display advertising supports two main market goals:
   - Reach: communicating a brand or marketing message.
   - Action: letting the customer do something (for example, click on the add to go to an online shop or landing page)

   Here, display advertising differs from traditional advertising as it allows the customer to directly act upon the ad by clicking it. This is one of the biggest advantages display advertising has over traditional ads in newspapers, magazines or TV, and billboard adds.
2. A second advantage is that it can be measured better than traditional display media. Among other things, the following can be measured:
   - The number of times the ad has been shown (it may be shown below the fold of the screen and never actually been seen by the user)
   - The number of times the add has been "seen" (the number of times the ad has been shown visible to the user)
   - The number of times the ad has been clicked
   - The interactions further down the funnel (such as brochure downloaded and product bought)

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In the end, the ROI of each display ad campaign can be measured allowing the marketer to A/B test display ads much more rigorously.

3. The third benefit of display campaigns is that they can be changed or updated in real time. The marketer usually has the right to stop and start a display campaign or change the channels where the banners are displayed at a moment's whim giving him much more control over where the marketing money is being spent.

4. In addition, the content of display ads can be adapted in real time. 2002 TUI Travel already showed its last minute trips in display advertising. At each moment, it could change the price or even the entire trip was being shown across tens of websites that showed its banners.

## 7. Disadvantages of Display Advertising

Display advertising, like any kind of media, has several disadvantages. In this paragraph, two are discussed in more detail: banner blindness and improved measurement.

Several studies have proven that users no longer see display ads, either consciously or unconsciously. This phenomenon has been labelled "banner blindness". Users not only subconsciously avoid banners but also other site elements that look like banners.

## 8. Conclusion

These studies conclusively show that online display advertising directly increases viewer engagement, which in turn produces larger numbers of qualified, committed prospects and increases actual sales. Online display advertising not only improves the bottom line, but increases the return on advertisers' investments in all marketing, content, and sales related efforts.

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