BSZ Bau und Technik Dresden
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Englisch FOS

How marketers target kids

Kids represent an important target group to marketers because in addition to their own purchasing power they influence their parents' buying decisions and they're the adult consumers of the future.
Industry spending on advertising to children has exploded over the past two decades. [...]
Parents today are willing to buy more for their kids because trends such as smaller family size, dual incomes and postponing children until later in life mean that families have more disposable income. As well, guilt can play a role in spending decisions as time-stressed parents substitute material goods for time spent with their kids. [...]

The Internet
The Internet is an extremely desirable medium for marketers wanting to target children:

- It's part of youth culture. This generation of young people is growing up with the Internet as a daily and routine part of their lives.
- Parents generally do not understand the extent to which kids are being marketed to online.
- Kids are often online alone, without parental supervision.
- Unlike broadcasting media, which have codes regarding advertising to kids, the Internet is unregulated.
- Sophisticated technologies make it easy to collect information from young people for marketing research, and to target individual children with personalized advertising.
- Unlike broadcasting media, which have codes regarding advertising to kids, the Internet is unregulated.
- By creating engaging, interactive environments based on products and brand names, companies can build brand loyalties from an early age.

Marketing adult entertainment to kids
Children are often aware of and want to see entertainment meant for older audiences because it is actively marketed to them. In a report released in 2000, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) revealed how the movie, music and video games industries routinely market violent entertainment to young children.
The FTC studied 44 films rated ‚Restricted‘, and discovered that 80 per cent were targeted to children under 17. Marketing plans included TV commercials run during hours when young viewers were most likely to be watching. One studio's plan for a violent R-rated film stated, „Our goal was to find the elusive teen target audience, and make sure that everyone between the ages of 12 and 18 was exposed to the film.“
Music containing ‚explicit-content‘ labels were targeted at young people through extensive advertising in the most popular teen venues in television, and radio, in print, and online.
Of the video game companies investigated for the report, 70 per cent regularly marketed Mature rated games (for 17 years and older) to children. Marketing plans included placing advertising in media that would reach a subsuantial percentage of children under 17.
The FTC report also highlighted the fact that toys based on characters from mature entertainment are often marketed to young children. Mature and Teen rated video games are advertised in youth magazines; and toys based on Restricted movies and M-rated video games are marketed to children as young as four.

Source: Green Line, Oberstufe, Sachsen, Ernst Klett Verlag, 1. Auflage, Stuttgart 2009, S. 202-203.

1 Text comprehension

Read the text and answer in complete sentences. Use your own words. Don't quote.

1.1 Point out the reasons given for the dramatic increase in the amount of money spent on advertising to children.

1.2 The text describes the Internet as „an extremely desirable medium for marketers wanting to target children." Explain.

1.3 Summarize the findings of the FTC report.

1.4 Beyond the text, think of ways to protect children from the influence of marketers.

2 Beyond the text

Comment on the effectiveness of online advertising compared to advertising in other media.

Write a text of about 250 words.