

## Young people notice 10 percent of all Internet advertisements

The result of a new survey shows that four out of five young people do not remember the commercials they have been exposed to. Even though they have spent 15 minutes of intense pressure of information on the Internet. This was found from a survey that The Swedish Consumers' Association initiated and researchers in Media and Communication Studies and Cognition at the Humanities Laboratory, Lund University, have been in charge of.

– Half a second is enough for a person to be affected. Besides, these teenagers are unconscious of the impact and the purpose of the advertisements, which makes them extra vulnerable and easy to influence, noted Louise Ekström, Project manager.

The survey studied the behaviour of young people online. The responsible scientist at Lund University, Ms Helena Sandberg, PhD and Assistant professor has several years of experience research of children behaviour, advertising and media. She commented.

– We found that the young people in the survey paid attention to 10 percent of all the advertisements that they were exposed to. That is 15 seconds of the total amount of time they have been on the Internet, which is a lot of milliseconds. Studies show that it only takes a few milliseconds for a viewer to perceive and process information. Furthermore, they are very sceptical to marketing and say that it lies, deceives and disturbs them. In order to avoid the advertisements many choose to hold their hands in front of the screen to avoid the banners, they also change their e-mail address, install spam-filters and erase all the incoming mail that contains commercials and offers.

The Nordic Council of Ministers is financing the project where 44 ninth graders from two schools participated. They have been answering questions about school, health, family situation, their daily life and consumption. The questionnaire got hold of their attitudes and relation to different medias. While surfing the Internet for 15 minutes their eye movements were registered through highly advanced equipment. Afterwards the children were interviewed. The results show that they have a critical attitude towards commercials in general, but still help companies by forwarding commercial to their friends. They also think that they are not influenced by commercials and advertisements, but think that *other* teenagers are. This ambiguous attitude in combination with their difficulties explaining the purpose of the commercials shows that there is need to strengthen young peoples knowledge about the media landscape and source criticism.

Young people spend increasingly more time in front of the computer than watching TV. Companies invest enormous amounts into commercial on the Internet. It is also getting more common to use mobile telephones to get in contact with the target groups. According to 72 percent of the young people the e-mail they received was the most annoying out of all 58 percent were annoyed to get advertisements sent to their mobile phones.

– These teenagers are insulted by getting ads to their private territory. They also trust the people they are chatting with. We therefore demand that young people are not to be confronted with commercial messages while chatting and visiting online communities! commented Louise Ekström.

The Swedish Consumer's Association now poses the following requirements for advertising towards young people:

- Ban junk food marketing aimed towards young people.
- A complete ban on TV-commercials aimed towards children across the European Union.
- Support independent research in the area.
- Separate advertisements from editorial articles and use a more easy-to-find commercial sign.
- Start using health policies at communities and social utilities and stop trying to influence children and teenagers at these web sites!
- The legal institutes in Sweden must process cases that concern the Internet and hidden influence.

# Sveriges Konsumenter

THE SWEDISH CONSUMERS' ASSOCIATION

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*The Swedish Consumers Association is an independent, non-partisan consumer organisation consisting of 27 member organisations and private members. We work both nationally and internationally with issues that are important to consumers. Our aim is to strengthen the position of consumers in order to improve people's ability to bring their consumer power to bear. For more information: [www.sverigeskonsumenter.se](http://www.sverigeskonsumenter.se)*