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Creative Insights on Rich Media

What aggregate trends in ad serving data can tell you about how to build better rich media creatives

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This report details much that aggregate trends in ad serving data can tell you about click-through rate, interaction rate, interaction time, expansion rate, expansion time and video complete rate. The data is based on hundreds of advertisers, thousands of campaigns and tens of billions of ad impressions. Most of these metrics can be used as an indicator of success for your rich media campaigns.

In each section, we'll focus on a specific metric of success. We'll show you how the choice of ad format and creative size can affect campaign performance. We'll end each section with industry benchmarks and advice on how to compare your campaign's performance to that of other advertisers in the same industry vertical.

Some examples in this report showcase how goal setting can influence creative decisions. We'll show you how the choice of a specific format or creative size can positively affect one or two metrics while negatively affecting a third metric.

For best campaign results, our advice is to set measurable campaign goals upfront and keep these goals in mind throughout the creative process. Advertisers should prioritize each of the metrics featured in this report and aim to beat the industry benchmarks for their top one or two goals.

Click-Through Rate

Not every click in a rich media unit produces a click-through. When a viewer clicks on a rich media unit, a number of outcomes are possible including expanding the unit, playing a video or otherwise interacting with the unit. The call-to-action for a viewer to click-through competes with all other possible forms of interaction within the unit. As a result, click-through rates can be lower for rich media than other forms of online advertising where the click-through is the only form of user interaction.

On average, DoubleClick Rich Media ads produce a .10% click-through rate. To enhance click-through results, advertisers can make a few simple creative choices.

Figure 1 shows that in-page video provides better click-through results than in-page non-video and expanding formats.

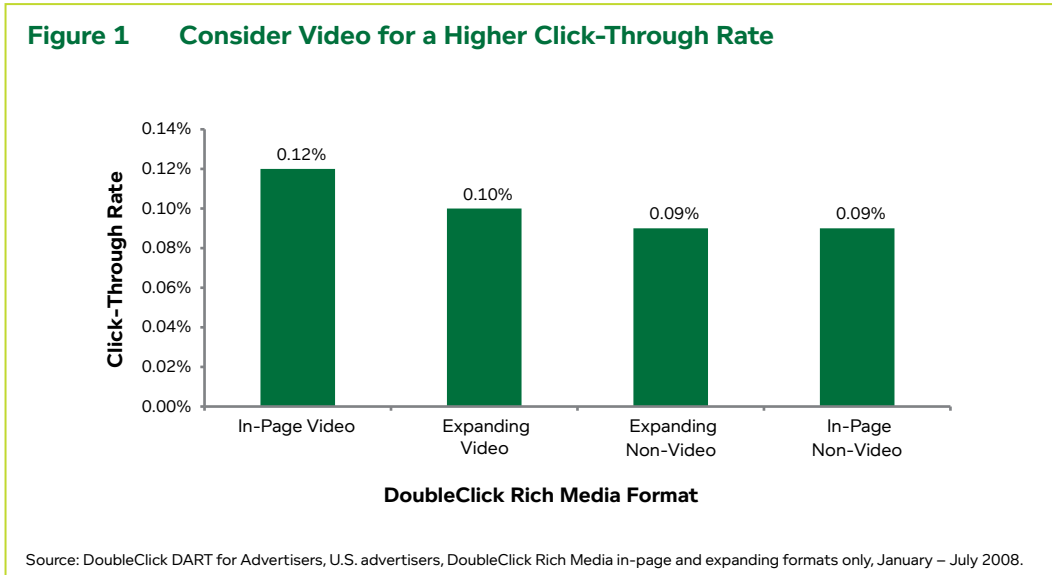
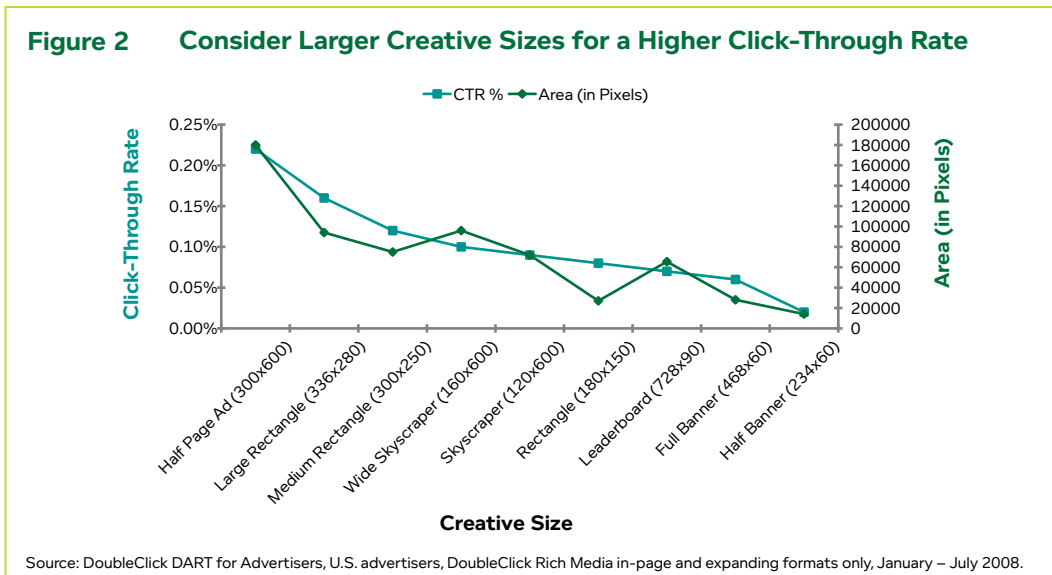
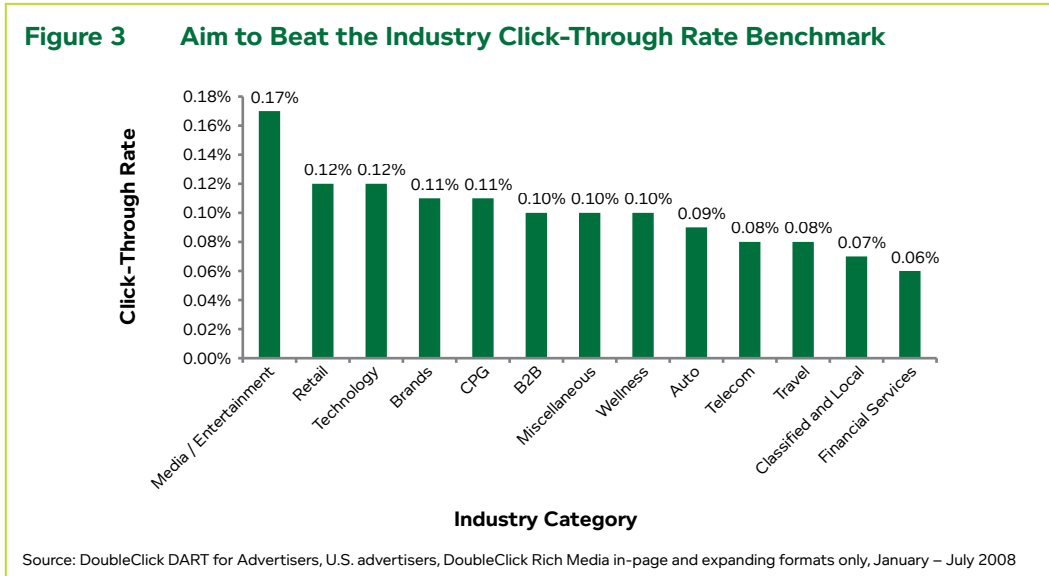


Figure 2 shows that larger creative sizes tend to produce higher click-through rates. Consider using creative sizes such as the half page ad, large rectangle or medium rectangle to get the best click-through results.



Campaign performance can be measured against industry benchmarks for click-through rates. **Figure 3** shows that advertisers can expect to get anywhere between a .06% and .17% click-through rate depending on the industry. A good measure of success is to beat the industry benchmark for click-through rate. For example, a CPG campaign should aim to get a click-through rate above .11%.



Interaction Rate

Interaction rate is a popular measure of rich media campaign performance. The metric places value on interactions within a unit, even if they do not result in a click-through. (See Appendix A for more information on how interactions are calculated.)

Advertisers can make simple creative choices to enhance interaction rates.

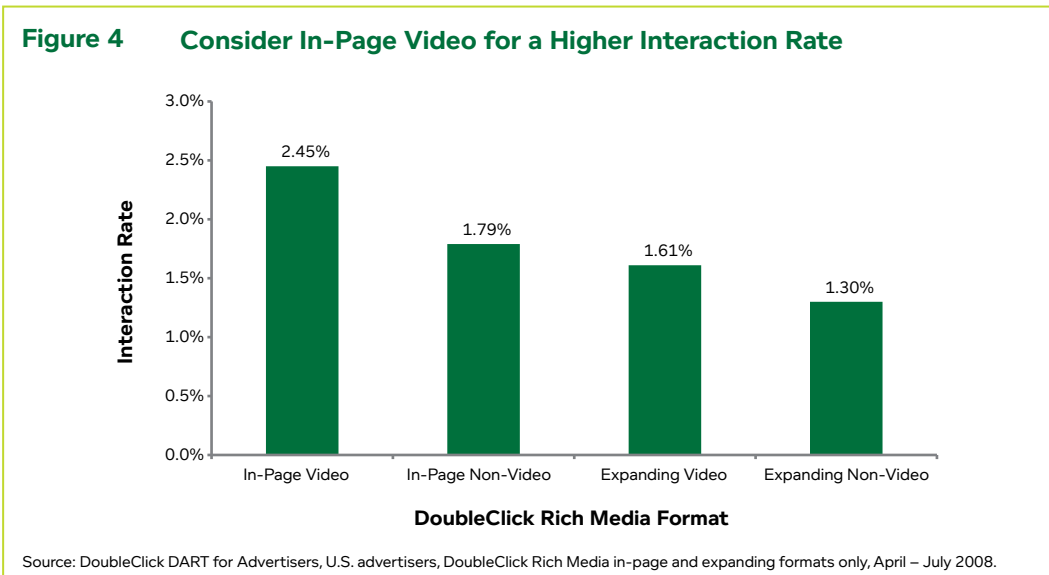


Figure 4 shows that in-page video has the highest performing interaction rate in comparison to in-page non-video and expanding formats. In addition, in-page non-video has a slightly better performing

interaction rate than expanding formats. Consider using in-page formats, especially in-page video, to achieve a higher interaction rate.

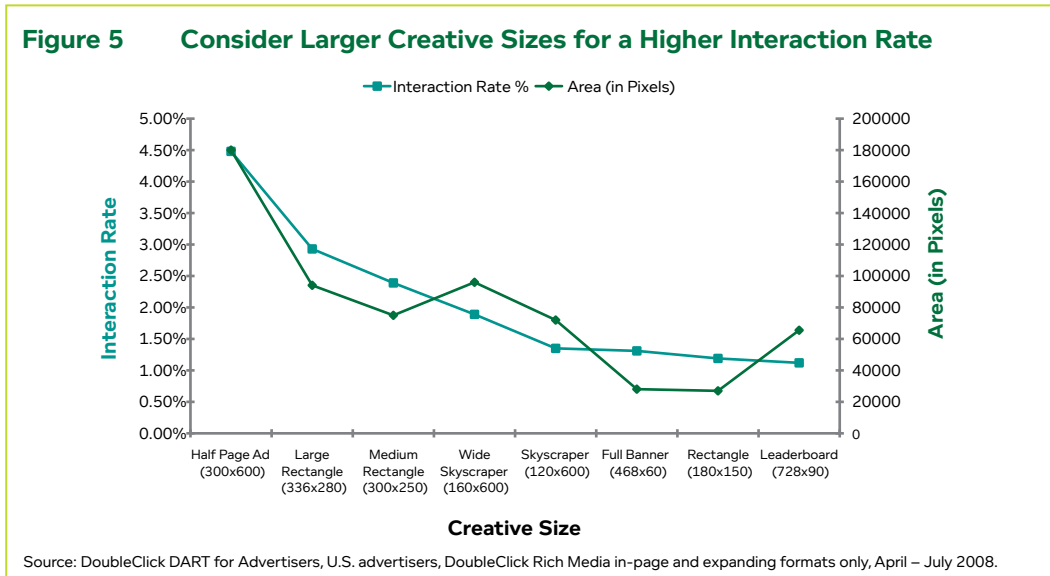
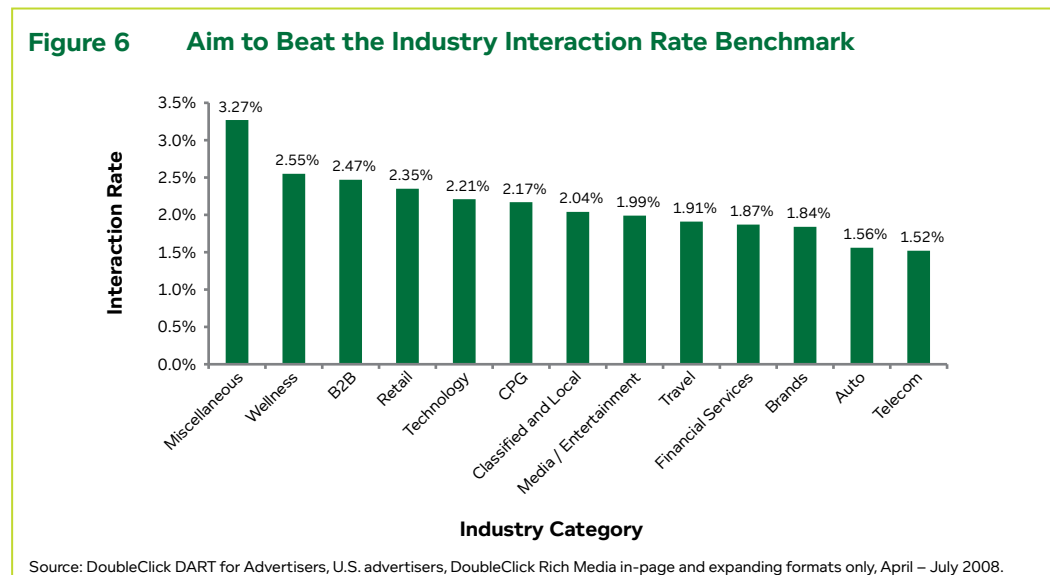


Figure 5 shows a strong relationship between ad size, as determined by total pixel area (pixel width x pixel height), and interaction rate. To get a better interaction rate, consider using the larger creative ad sizes, such as the 300x600 half page ad, 336x380 large rectangle, 300x250 medium rectangle or 160x600 wide skyscraper. Note that the 728x90 leaderboard has the lowest interaction rate, despite taking up over 60000 square pixels of screen real estate. We believe this is due to viewer fatigue of leaderboard creatives caused by the high number of impressions and routine page positioning.



Campaign performance can be measured against industry benchmarks for interaction rates. **Figure 6** shows that advertisers can expect to get anywhere between a 1.52% and 3.27% interaction rate depending on the industry. A good measure of success is to beat the industry benchmark for interaction rates. For example, a Travel campaign should aim to get an interaction rate above 1.91%.

Average Interaction Time

Average interaction time is a measure of how long viewers are interacting with an ad unit. (See Appendix B for the full definition.)

The amount of time users spend interacting with DoubleClick Rich Media units is just over 11 seconds on average. There are very few gains to be made to average interaction time by controlling the format or creative size of the ad units. Rather, interaction time is dependent on how interesting and engaging your creative is.

Figure 7 shows there is only a ½ second gain to be made by selecting an in-page non-video format over an in-page video format.

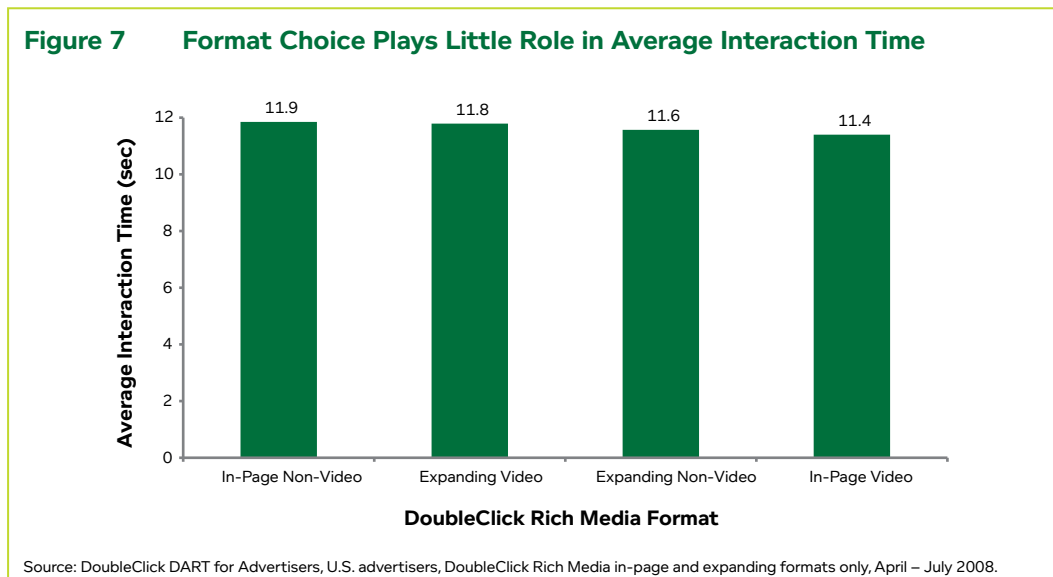
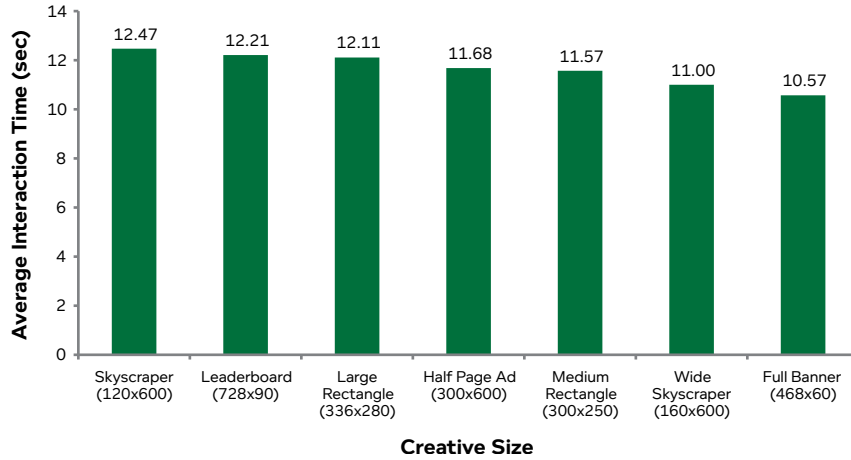


Figure 8 shows that creative size selection can produce gains in average interaction time of up to 1.9 seconds. While this is four times the ½ second gain made possible through format selection, it's hardly enough of an improvement to dictate creative size selection.

If interaction time is an important goal of your campaign, we suggest the use of highly interactive features such as polls, games and sweet-spot video.

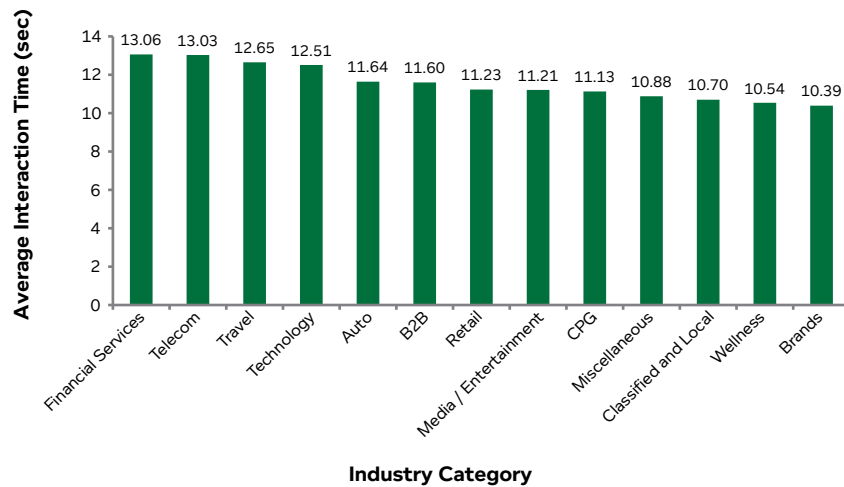
Figure 8 Choice of Creative Size Also Plays Small Role in Average Interaction Time



Source: DoubleClick DART for Advertisers, U.S. advertisers, DoubleClick Rich Media in-page and expanding formats only, April – July 2008.

The benchmarks for average interaction time show little deviation from the norm. **Figure 9** shows that advertisers can expect to get between a 10.4 and 13.1 second average interaction time. Advertisers can assume that their DoubleClick Rich Media campaign will have an interaction time within this range.

Figure 9 Industry Average Interaction Time Benchmarks



Source: DoubleClick DART for Advertisers, U.S. advertisers, DoubleClick Rich Media in-page and expanding formats only, April – July 2008.

Expansion Rate

Expanding ad units contain rich content and features that can only be accessed by viewers when they expand the ad. (See Appendix C for the definition of expansion rate.)

On average, 1.94% of expanding ad impressions served get expanded by viewers. Advertisers can make simple creative choices to enhance expansion rates.

Figure 10 shows that the expansion rate improves from 1.85% to 2.18% when comparing expanding units without video to expanding units with Video. To achieve the highest expansion rate possible, consider using video in your expanding units.

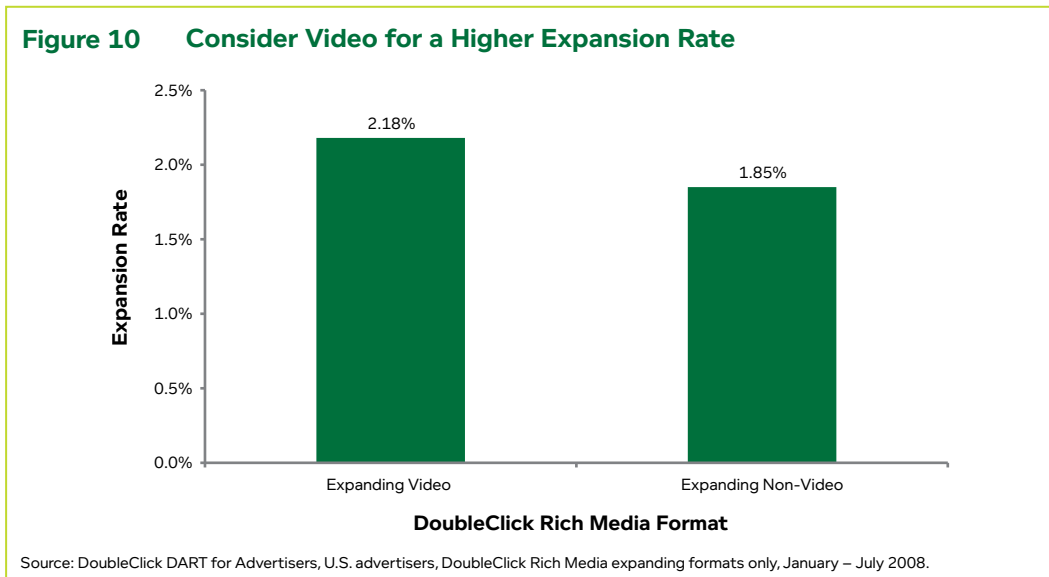
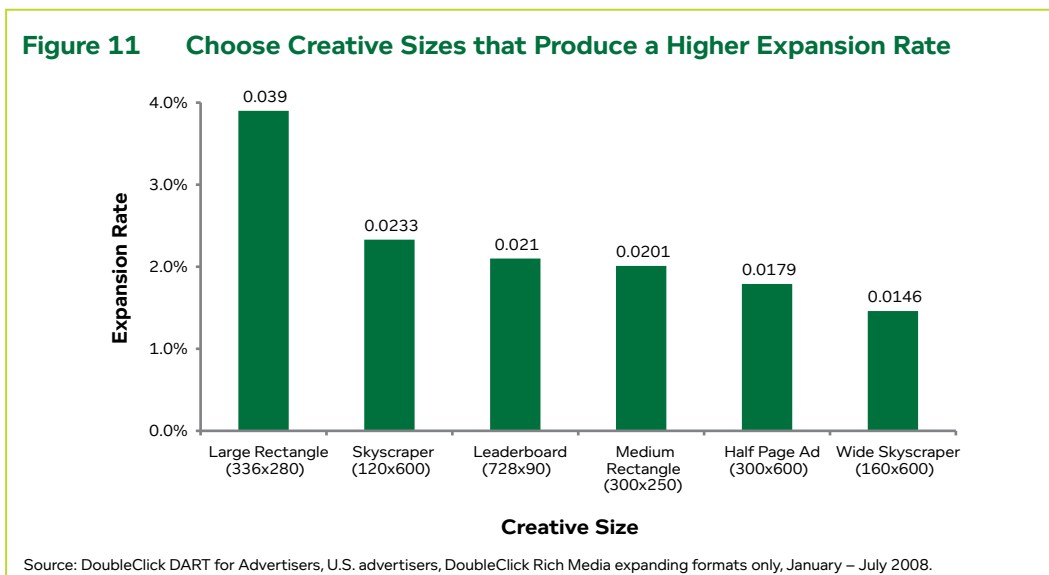
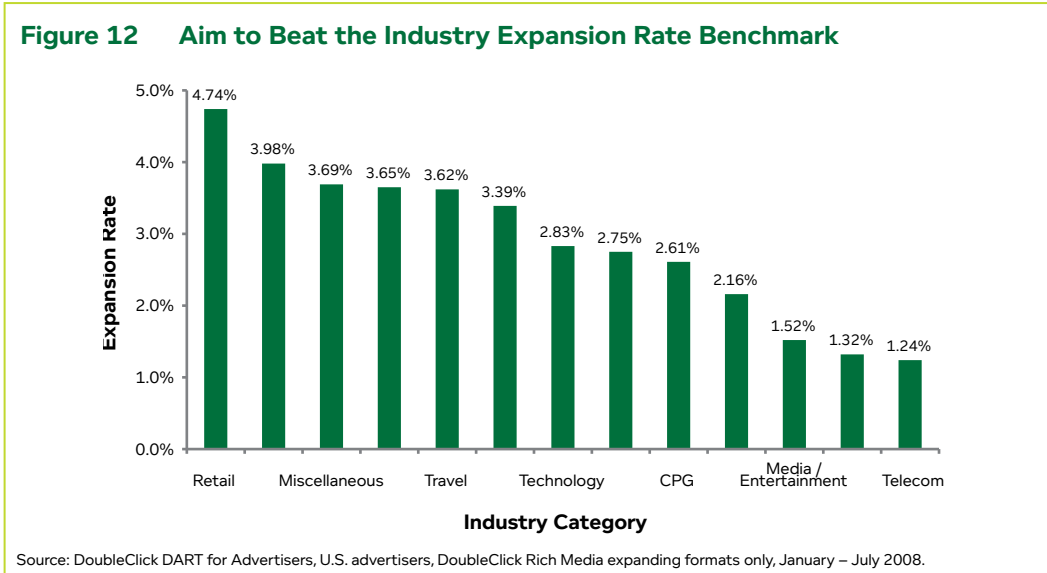


Figure 11 shows that use of the 336x280 large rectangle results in the highest expansion rate of the six creative sizes measured at 3.90%. To improve expansion rates, try using more large rectangles.



Campaign performance can be measured against industry benchmarks for expansion rates. **Figure 12** shows that advertisers can expect to get anywhere between a 1.24% and 4.74% expansion rate depending on the industry. A good measure of success is to beat the industry benchmark for expansion rates. For example, a Wellness campaign should aim to get an expansion rate above 2.75%.



Average Expanding Time

To make the most of expansion activities, advertisers can aim to increase the amount of time viewers spend within the expanded creative unit. (See Appendix D for the definition of average expanding time.)

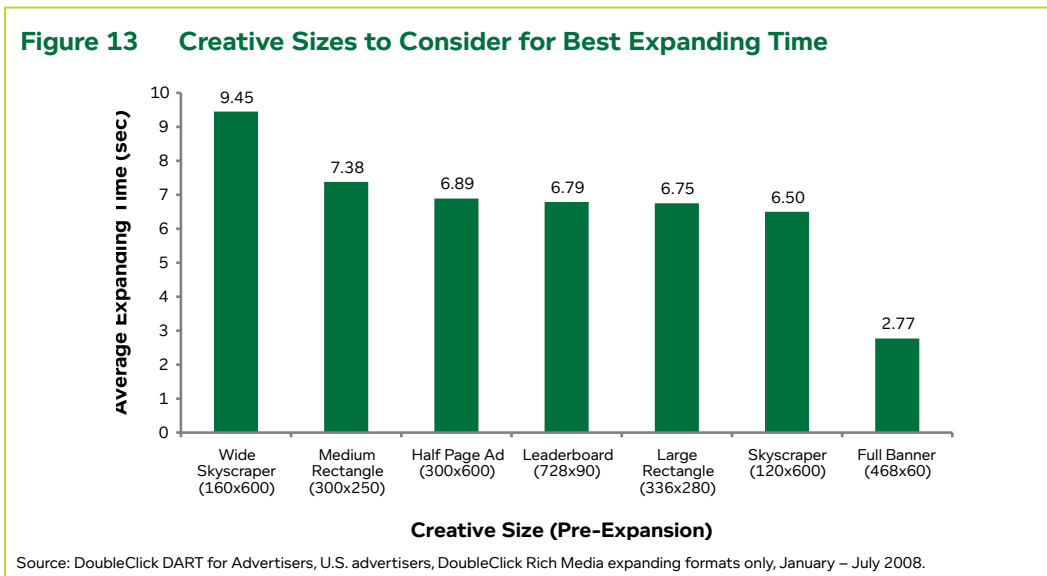


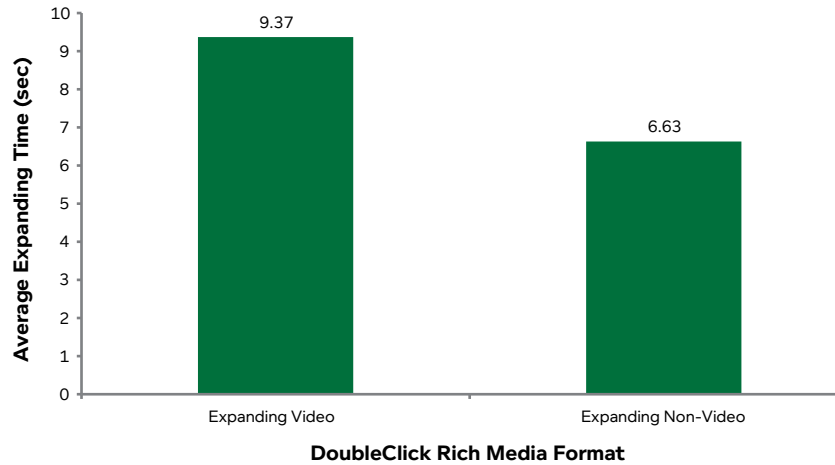
Figure 13 shows that for best average expanding time, avoid the 468x60 full banner.

Together, Figure 13 and Figure 11 show that one creative size can't always address multiple performance goals. In Figure 13, the wide skyscraper shows the highest expanding time at 9.5 seconds. In Figure 11,

the wide skyscraper shows the lowest expanding rate at 1.46%. While a relatively few number of viewers are expanding the wide skyscraper, once they have expanded it, viewers are spending more time in the unit than any other creative size. This exemplifies the importance of deciding upfront the performance metrics that will best drive the overall success of the campaign.

Figure 14 shows that the use of video in an ad unit provides a 2.8 second increase to average expanding time. For best expanding times, use video.

Figure 14 Add Video to Improve the Expanding Time

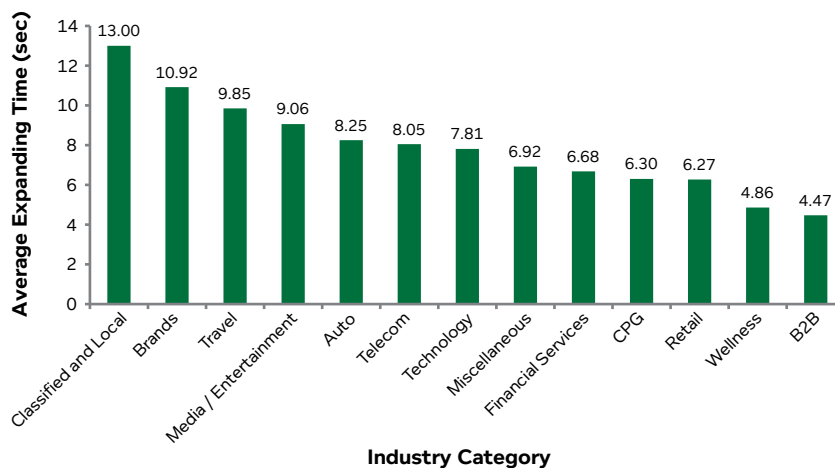


Source: DoubleClick DART for Advertisers, U.S. advertisers, DoubleClick Rich Media expanding formats only, January – July 2008.

Campaign performance can be measured against industry benchmarks for average expanding time.

Figure 15 shows that advertisers can expect to get anywhere between a 4.5 and 13.0 second average expanding time. A good measure of success is to beat the industry benchmark for average expanding time. For example, a Telecom campaign should aim to get an average expanding time above 8.1 seconds.

Figure 15 Aim to Beat the Industry Expanding Time Benchmark



Source: DoubleClick DART for Advertisers, U.S. advertisers, DoubleClick Rich Media expanding formats only, January – July 2008.

Video Complete Rate

The video complete rate is a measure of how many of video impressions served and commenced to play were watched through to the end of the video advertising message. (See Appendix E for information on how video completes are measured.)

Advertisers can make a few simple creative choices to enhance video complete rates.

Figure 16 shows that 40% of video plays are completed in the expanding video format. An even larger 55% of video plays are completed in the in-page video format. These numbers speak to the effectiveness of video at delivering an advertiser’s message to audiences.

The choice between auto-play and user-initiated video will affect video complete rates. Our aggregate data skews toward auto-play video. We believe that advertisers using user-initiated video should expect lower video complete rates than what you see in Figure 16.

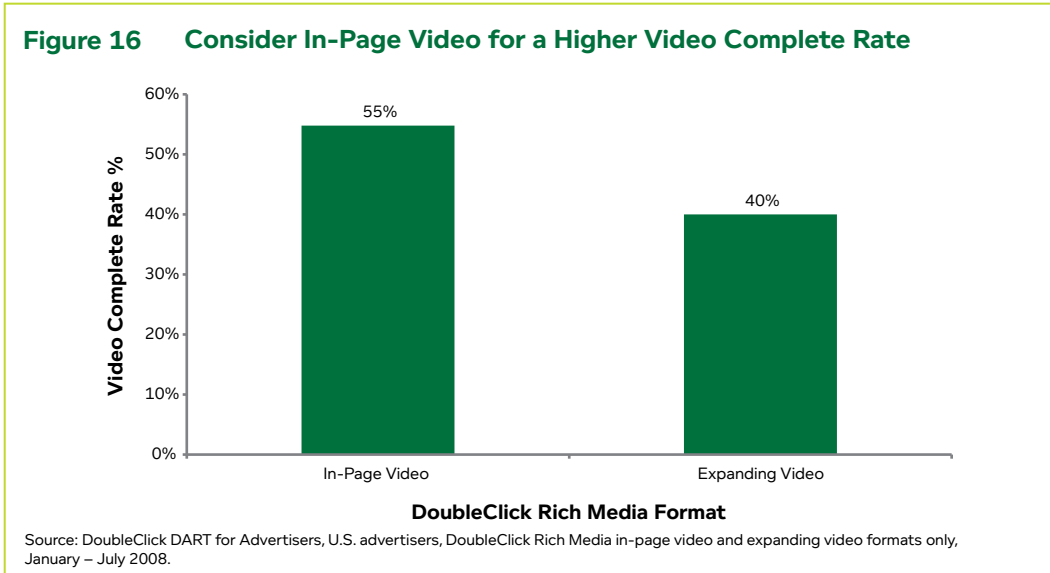
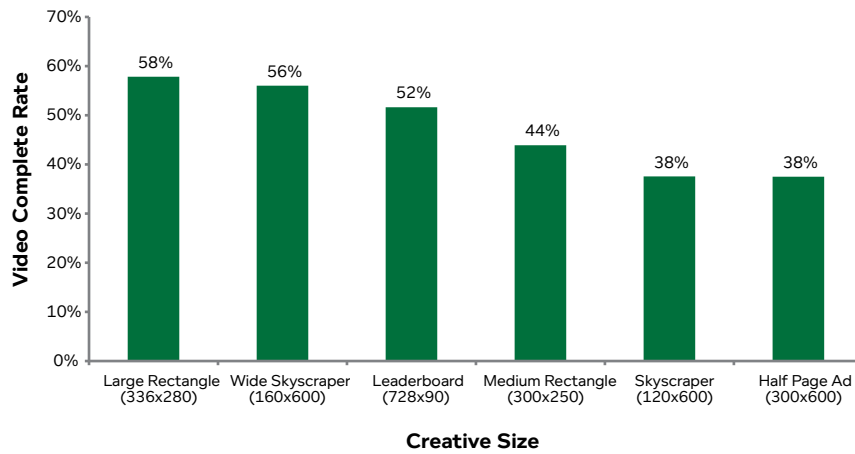


Figure 17 Choose Creative Sizes that Produce a Higher Video Complete Rate

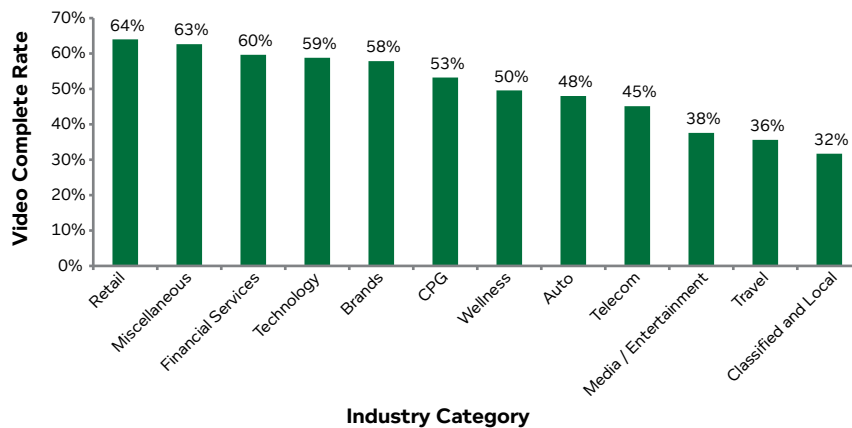


Source: DoubleClick DART for Advertisers, U.S. advertisers, DoubleClick Rich Media in-page video and expanding video formats only, January – July 2008.

Figure 17 shows three creative sizes that garner, on average, video complete rates above 50%. These creative sizes include the 336x280 large rectangle, the 160x600 wide skyscraper and the 728x90 leaderboard. It also shows the 300x600 half page ad with a below average video complete rate. If you recall from Figure 2 and Figure 5, the half page ad was the best performing creative size by click-through rate and by interaction rate. This highlights the importance of defining goals early on in the campaign since the same creative size may be a good choice for a click-through or interaction goal and a bad choice for a video complete goal.

Campaign performance can be measured against industry benchmarks for video complete rate. **Figure 18** shows that advertisers can expect to get anywhere between a 32% and 64% video complete rate. A good measure of success is to beat the industry benchmark for video complete rate. For example, a Financial Services campaign should aim to get a video complete rate above 60%.

Figure 18 Aim to Beat the Industry Video Complete Rate Benchmark



Source: DoubleClick DART for Advertisers, U.S. advertisers, DoubleClick Rich Media in-page video and expanding video formats only, January – July 2008.

Conclusion

This report showed you a lot about what aggregate trends in ad serving data can tell you about click-through rate, interaction rate, interaction time, expansion rate, expansion time and video complete rate. You can use each of these metrics as an indicator of success for your rich media campaigns.

In each section, we focused on a specific metric of success and provided some key takeaways:

- For higher click-through rate, consider using video and larger creative sizes
- For higher interaction rates, consider using in-page units, especially in-page video units, and larger creative sizes
- When measuring average interaction time, expect something close to the average, which is just above 11 seconds
- For higher expansion rates and expansion times, consider using expanding video units
- For higher video complete rates, consider using in-page units

Some examples in this report showcased how goal setting can influence creative decisions. We showed you how the choice of a specific format or creative size can positively affect one or two metrics while negatively affecting a third metric.

For best campaign results, our advice is to set measurable campaign goals upfront and keep these goals in mind throughout the creative process. Advertisers should prioritize each of the metrics featured in this report and aim to beat the industry benchmarks for their top one or two goals.

Appendix A: Measuring Interactions

There's currently no standard way to measure interactions across the online advertising industry. Each rich media vendor calculates interactions in a different way and many vendors do not disclose details on their methodology. As a result, it is impossible to compare interaction rates between vendors in a meaningful way.

In lieu of a measurement standard for interactions, we recommend two key best practices for working with interaction metrics.

1. **Only compare and contrast data that comes from the same system and that adheres to the same methodology.**

For example, the interaction methodology for DoubleClick Rich Media was upgraded on February 2, 2008. This means that any DoubleClick Rich Media campaign with creative uploaded between February 2, 2008 and the present can only be accurately compared to other DoubleClick Rich Media campaigns or benchmarks on the same timeline. Similarly, DoubleClick Rich Media campaigns with creative uploaded on or before February 2, 2008 can only be accurately compared to other DoubleClick Rich Media campaigns or benchmarks on the same timeline. Campaigns that have some creatives uploaded under the new methodology and other creatives uploaded under the old methodology should not be compared to any other campaign or to any benchmark due to the use of mixed methodologies.

2. Know the definitions and methodology behind the metrics.

For DoubleClick Rich Media, the methodology for interaction metrics are as follows:

Interaction Rate: The ratio of DoubleClick Rich Media ad interactions to the number of rich media ad impressions displayed. This number is reached using the following calculation:

$$\text{Interaction Rate} = \frac{\text{Interactions} + \text{Rich Media Impressions}}{\text{Rich Media Impressions}}$$

Interactions: The number of times that a user interacts with a DoubleClick Rich Media ad. Interactions are captured when the user does one or more of the following:

- Clicks an Exit link
- Makes the ad display in Full Screen mode
- Mouses over the ad for 1 continuous second

Rich Media Impressions: The number of times that a DoubleClick Rich Media ad unit is displayed.

Appendix B: Definition of Average Interaction Time

Average Interaction Time: The average amount of time, in seconds, that a user interacts with a DoubleClick Rich Media ad. Multiple interactions with an ad during a single ad view are aggregated.

Appendix C: Definition of Expansion Rate

Expansion Rate: Expansion rate is calculated by dividing expansion time counters by DoubleClick Rich Media expanding ad impressions.

Appendix D: Definition of Average Expanding Time

Average Expanding Time: The average amount of time, in seconds, that an expanding ad is viewed in an expanded state. Any expansion times that exceed four minutes are capped. This extended expansion time can occur, for example, when a user opens an expanding ad on his or her browser then steps away for an hour without collapsing the ad or closing the browser. The capping rule helps prevent skewed results.

Appendix E: Measuring Video Completes

The video complete rate is calculated by the following formula and definitions:

$$\text{Video Complete Rate} = \frac{\text{Video Completes} + \text{Video Plays}}{\text{Video Plays}}$$

Video Completes: The number of times a video played to its completion. For example, the number of times a 15-second video plays for its full 15 seconds.

Video Plays: The number of impressions where a video was played.

Appendix F: About the Source Data

The data contained in this report is from DoubleClick's Ad Serving Trend Report Application (ASTRA). DoubleClick has built this robust software tool to analyze online advertising campaign activity across its DART ad serving platform. Presently, the tool reports click-through rates, interaction rates, interaction times, expansion rates, expansion times and video complete rates for ads for thousands of advertisers using the DART for Advertisers (DFA) and DoubleClick Rich Media platforms.

These data are carefully normalized to reflect industry norms to the best of our ability. The Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) was consulted on the design of ASTRA and advised on aspects of its

methodological design, including the use of medians instead of mean averages for the calculation of the benchmark metrics noted above.

Data shown here represent activity of a wide range of ad formats for DFA advertisers in the United States. The majority of data is from January 2008 to July 2008. The data on interaction rates and interaction times is from April 2008 to July 2008.

ASTRA reports on a data set of the activity of thousands of DFA advertisers that have been categorized by industry and country geography. Industry categories are defined by the sub-categories they represent. To make category assignments, each DFA advertiser is assigned to a single industry sub-category. Sub-category assignments then roll-up into category assignments. For example, the Brands industry category is a roll-up of advertiser data from six sub-categories: Apparel Brands, Household Brands, Luxury Brands, Miscellaneous Brands, Office Brands and Sports Brands. The Miscellaneous category reports on advertiser data from the collection of advertisers that don't clearly fit into any industry category or sub-category.

To ensure statistical soundness as well as client confidentiality, minimums have been applied to the data sets that can be reported on: at least four advertises and four DART networks must be represented for any metric to be reported at any dimension of the data (e.g., by product category, by ad size, by time period).

About DoubleClick

DoubleClick is a premier provider of digital marketing technology and services. The world's top marketers, publishers and agencies utilize DoubleClick's expertise in ad serving, rich media, video, mobile, search and affiliate marketing to help them make the most of the digital medium. From its position at the nerve center of digital marketing, DoubleClick provides superior insights and insider knowledge to its customers. DoubleClick is a division of Google Inc. (NASDAQ: GOOG) Learn more at www.doubleclick.com.



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