IRISH CONTENT SITES SHOW HIGHER ADVERTISING RESPONSE IN THE FORM OF BRAND AWARENESS AND PURCHASE DECISIONS

Study of Irish Online Advertising Engagement Finds Irish Content Websites Show Higher Trust, Engagement and Responsiveness

- Irish Internet users are over three times as likely to trust Irish content sites compared to social networks and almost twice as likely over portal sites
- Respondents are almost twice as likely to believe that advertising on Irish content sites is better at influencing positive brand opinion than on portals or social media

17th April 2012 – The Association of Online Publishers (AOP) Ireland, the industry body representing Irish digital publishing companies, has announced the results of a study of online engagement in Ireland, a specially commissioned report in association with Amárach Research. The study examined Irish Internet users' attitudes to online content and their level of engagement across Irish content sites (e.g. Irish newspaper, TV, radio and magazine sites), social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), and portals (e.g. MSN, Yahoo!).

The study investigated how Irish Internet users react to advertising and how their engagement impacted upon their resulting purchasing decisions based on different site types. The findings suggest that the more engaged a user is with a particular site type, the more effective the advertising contained within that particular media will be, with advertising responsiveness strongest on Irish content sites compared to social networks and portals.

The key engagement findings from the research report included:

- 61% of Irish Internet users believe that Irish content sites are trustworthy (18% for social networks/35% for portals)
- 57% of Irish Internet users believe Irish content sites are an essential source of information (28% for social networks/37% for portals)
- 53% of the survey respondents said that they talk to people about the information that they have seen on Irish content sites (46% for social networks/35% for portals)
- 41% of the research participants indicated that information on Irish content sites is not available elsewhere (36% for social networks/32% for portals)

- 49% of participants thought that Irish content sites are opinion leaders (27% for social networks/27% for portals)

Respondents who trusted the sites they used were more likely to trust the brands advertising on these sites and, as a result, more likely to respond to the advertising on these sites. The key advertising results from the survey included:

- 81% of Irish internet users agree that advertising is well matched to the content on Irish content sites (63% for social networks/69% for portals)
- 30% of research participants said that they have searched for a brand prompted by advertising on Irish content sites (23% for social networks/26% for portals)
- 25% of the survey respondents have bought a brand prompted by advertising on Irish content and news sites (14% for social networks/20% for portals)
- 22% of Irish Internet users report that they have purchased a product/service after seeing content about it on Irish content and news sites (15% for social networks/15% for portals)

Commenting on the results, Julian Douglas, Chairman of AOP Ireland, said, "*The online sector is an increasingly competitive marketplace, with a huge growth in online advertising. Recent figures from IAB Ireland show that spend on online advertising grew by 20.5%. With a wide variety of online advertising opportunities available and a challenging economic environment, Irish brand owners are looking to ensure that they get a maximum return on their investment*."

"*Trying to understand the relationship between consumers and online advertising is complicated as although they may visit certain sites frequently and spend considerable time on them, they may not actually notice the advertising. The research findings suggest that the more an audience trusts a particular type of site and the relevance of that site's content will influence the effectiveness of the advertising displayed. In other words, the environment and context drives advertising engagement, with the study illustrating that responsiveness is strongest on Irish content sites compared to social media and portals.*"

"*AOP Ireland members work with market leading brands and companies, to help them engage with their customers in trusted local environments using unique, local and relevant content. We offer our*

customers solutions that lead to engaging experiences online and access to relevant communities. The research results highlight this in terms of the levels of engagement displayed by Irish Internet users and their response levels to advertising on our sites."

Gerard O'Neill of Amárach Research, added, "*The research findings are fascinating given the huge focus on social media today. Irish consumers are differentiating between the types of sites that they use, and it is clear that Irish content sites play a unique and powerful role in meeting their online needs. The findings show that the context of where an advert appears plays a strong role in how a consumer will respond to it. The research also suggests that advertising responsiveness, including brand awareness and purchase decisions, is higher for Irish content sites versus other types of sites.*"

AOP Ireland is an industry body representing Irish digital publishing companies that create original, branded, local, quality content. Current members include entertainment.ie, irishtimes.com, tv3.ie, independent.ie and rte.ie.

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Notes to Editors:

Amárach Research conducted quantitative online research with a representative sample of Irish adults online consisting of 500 people and 1,000 users of AOP member sites. Percentages noted in the document refer to those in the nationally representative sample. The field work was conducted between 17th and 31st January 2012. A presentation on the result findings is available on request.

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