How has the popularization of the World Wide Web affected advertisement design in Pakistan?
The World Wide Web and advertisement design

By

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisors and myself and God
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Abstract

In this dissertation I will be looking at the affects that have been on the popularity, or rather the rise in popularity with the internet as a tool for advertisement design and the various changes that have been bought upon with it.

This will be shown first through meticulous research, starting with understanding and highlighting design, then moving on to the various origins of design, and how the evolution in advertising has dealt with such changes, viewing the social networking era and of course looking at the interactivity and psychology behind such an aspect.

After that has been thoroughly understood we will move on to my views upon advertisement design, trends in mediums and the growing popularity of the internet as a tool for ad design. Why this must be done is simple, it is because I am speaking to you about the internet, so I will have to speak about all mediums or rather all of their trends to illustrate exactly how important the changes on advertisement design are by the internet. Of course I will speak to you about advertisements and design as well from an aesthetic point of view, pointing out information exchange, because after that is what the internet is all about. Information exchange and socializing; and that is also why social networks play a big part in this dissertation’s discussion.
Introduction

Salutations! Let us begin this journey of questions, inquiries and further queries. This dissertation’s question involves design within advertisements, the internet, and the other mediums used for advertisements. All of which will be in correlation to each other. Most of these questions and such revolve around design and its known features. But to look and analyze design we must go back, go back to where design stemmed out of, and that is art. Art is a gigantic cauldron of emotions, tastes, inspirations that are interpreted; well good art at least. The by-product of art, design, also deals with creating stunning visual compositions shared from a similar knowledge base, but its components are entirely different. “Where art draws in emotions, tastes, and inspirations; design requires motivation, skill, opinions and a desire to be understood. The personal attachment with art sends a different message to everyone, while the requirement of design is that the same message be mutually understood to everyone.”1 You could say art is a need while design is a want, but let’s not get into economics rather travel back to design.

So how important is design? Let’s just say the phrase ‘don’t judge a book by its cover’ is becoming neglected, and though you could still use it sometimes with actual books, it cannot be successfully applied to anything else in regards to design as a metaphor. This is precisely why design is so important; the fact that good design needs to be mutually understood, the fact that as technology moves forward so do the skills and mediums for design, and as socializing online increases by each passing day the requirement for designers would only naturally increase.

Just as with art you explore different mediums such as water-colors or clay or graphite pencils, with music the mediums are the instruments, with design therein exists mediums too. The mediums of design exist within the ultimate purpose of design. In this discussion that ultimate purpose is advertising and the examples of such mediums are television commercials, print advertisements, radio jingles, psychological marketing, and now the internet. Personally in my opinion I do believe that the internet is now the most powerful medium around the world and the fastest growing medium in Pakistan. You might not agree with me, but I won’t be making statements and leave out the essence.

Here in Pakistan we have been a bit slow to pick up on this useful and all-powerful medium in our advertisements but the popularity of the internet amongst the population is growing at an alarmingly fast rate. It is being provided and made available to more and more people, and although the percentage of population that uses the internet is infinitesimal, the impact is in the least easily noticeable. The ultimate effect that this medium has had on Pakistani advertisements and worldwide advertisements (although we will focus on Pakistan) is immensely and undoubtedly taking them to the next frontier.

Over the course of this dissertation I will be presenting to you factual information on all of the relevant sub-topics that I had mentioned earlier. Using this information I will be able to dissect my question, extract the possible answers and present them to you through my abstract views.
Literature Review

In order for me to successfully contribute my argument to you I have broken down my literature view in categories and sub categories, the categories that exist are Design, the Internet and Advertisement Design. Once the research has been lucratively exposed and understood it will help in setting up the structure of my argument.

Design

The role of design in advertising is profoundly the basis of the advertisement itself. Without a good fruitful execution in design it is impossible to take the next step forward and engage the viewer into whatever the purpose of the advertisement was. The whole purpose of advertising for a business is to speak to its consumers and engage them to buy whatever there is that the business is selling, and to effectively beat out their competition. Without good design it is impossible to attract these potential customers to bring revenue into the business. One of the major advantages is that “graphic design for advertisements can be cost efficient, ‘less talk, increase in market’, effectively appeal the audience.”\(^2\) Once good design for the advertisement has been executed successfully, the consumers are presented with a visual taste of the product.

In fact such is the importance of design that many believe that “graphic design is like mathematics – there’s no way to escape it. It is part of your daily life; wherever you go, whatever you look at, and whatever you do, you will always encounter a piece of graphic art.”\(^3\) And just as the case with mathematics, design within “advertising is divided into

\(^2\)http://www.joshuastyles.com/2010/02/importance-of-good-graphic-design-in.html
\(^3\)http://www.pubarticles.com/article-importance-of-graphic-design-in-advertising-1298466626.html
[three] types; imaged based, text based, image text and symbols.”⁴ Such is the importance of design now that it is imperative that a presidential campaign be implemented with breathtaking designs that win over the voters. However, let us now journey back into the history of design and its evolution to better understand its impact and importance in today’s world and with this dissertation.

The evolution and history of design

“The term Graphic Design was named by William Addison Dwiggins in the early 20th Century;”⁵ however, this does not mean that graphic design did not exist before this. In fact the earliest sign of graphic design can be found earlier than the “Upper Paleolithic period from 40,000 - 10,000 B.C”⁶ our humble ancestors in this timeline were learning how to design symbols to communicate with their unknown viewers. They sketched their drawings on rocks, cave walls and ceilings and have left them for us to see how it all began. One of the main reasons we can associate these cave “paintings” with design or even graphic design is (as I said before) that the message that is being conveyed through those cave markings needs to be understood as a collective thought by everyone and not a personal message to each individual viewer. Sure one can have an emotional attachment to these visual designs (which is a bit odd, but whatever floats their boat) but there will always be the underlying factor that the ultimate message of these symbols, paintings, and markings was the same for everyone to understand.

⁵ http://guity-novin.blogspot.com/2010/02/history-of-graphic-design-medium-is.html
⁶ http://guity-novin.blogspot.com/2010/02/history-of-graphic-design-medium-is.html
So we have established where it came from, let us see what it encompasses. “In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium - that is, of any extension of ourselves - result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of us, or by any new technology.”7 What this means is that graphic design has such a wide effect into our world that its message and the meaning continually alters and evolves to this day. So as we observe this process we will see the evidence behind it.

As graphic design evolved so did the use of it, pretty soon by the late 1700s broadside posters were being released, these are posters that involve letterpress, wood type, and lithography and so on. The evolution continued throughout the decades, by the 1800s poster art became very common and the role and portrayal of women in these posters started to take off. One important aspect to mention was that during the time of the two world wars’ many designers had fled to neutral Switzerland. “Influences from Constructivism, De Stijl and the Bauhaus were incorporated into a design style that exemplified Swiss neutrality and rationality. It was the graphic equivalent of Modernism, the predominate style of world architecture and design from the 1950's through the 1970's. Totally devoid of emotion, or national affiliation, this international style was perfectly suited to the increasingly global post-WWII marketplace.”8

7 Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media
8 http://www.designhistory.org/advertising_fall_08.html
Not only were the visuals evolving but the components such as the typography evolved too. With block lettering the Avant Garde’s and Bauhaus’s influence on graphic design was established, especially on typography. A graphic designer by the name of Jan Tschichold (1903-1972) was integral in this result. Over years of work Jan and a few other designers called “The Circle of New Advertising Designers. It was this group that formulated the principles of what was proclaimed The New Typography.”9 They structured the New Typography as such “asymmetric balance of elements; content designed by hierarchy; intentional white space utilization; and sans serif typography.”10 Overtime more and more elements and rules of design were being structured. The colors started to play an important role with Andy Warhol’s pop art, David Carson learnt and broke the rules of typography creating further structures, all of this process and evolution was integral in the story of graphic design.

Now that we have analyzed and understood the history of evolution of graphic design we can catch our connecting flight and continue on to our journey, where we will now discuss the origins of advertising.

Origins of advertising

“Graphic design as we know it today originated in the late 19th century as a tool for advertising.”11 Through this early advertising agents were fashioned, their job was to successfully sell a newspaper space. For instance, a company by the name of Pears Soap

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9 http://www.designhistory.org/advertising_fall_08.html
10 http://www.designhistory.org/advertising_fall_08.html
11 http://www.designhistory.org/advertising_fall_08.html
had carried out an advertising campaign in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century. “Thomas Barrett, whom many consider the father of modern advertising, launched a series of ads featuring children, animals, flowers, and beautiful women to promote the company’s products.”\textsuperscript{12}

Eventually new mass media was introduced such as radio and cinema; advertisers were rushing to get a piece of the action. When televisions came in they were not very popular as with the high price of buying one, but as the economy improved by the 1950’s the popularity of television as a medium had surpassed that of radio. Come the late 20\textsuperscript{th} century and almost every available medium was being used, from newspapers to direct mail; from radio to television; outdoor signs to of course the Internet.

At the moment the future of advertising seems endless and one with limitless possibilities, but as time goes on and the rate of information exchange is increasing at an alarming rate, we could see unforeseen events take place with advertising. I will talk about this in detail further on, it is quite remarkable.

\textbf{Psychology and interactivity}

Our everyday lives revolve around psychology and interaction. The psychological aspect of advertising and graphic design has been prevalent since the cave markings time. Even if there were minimal psychological information exchange, there still was some evident. Interaction is in itself very important during these times of the internet, for

\textsuperscript{12} http://pdf.employmentcrossing.com/advertising/170123.pdf
instance “How will your website anticipate and meet users' needs and support your business goals at the same time? This question is answered by specialists in the world of web design known as interaction designers.”13 So psychology and interaction being in our everyday lives, as I mentioned before graphic design is around in our everyday lives, nevertheless it would make sense that the two theories collide and fuse together to play a vital role hand in hand with the advertising of Pakistan.

So what do interaction designers really do? “Interaction designers are concerned with how an application or Web site functions. They investigate whether the application or Web site performs the intended task in a predictable manner. They ask questions such as, "Does the Save button save the information or give you an error message?" and "Does the shopping cart on the Web site actually register the items when the user clicks the 'Add this item to the shopping carts button'?"14

In questionnaires it has been analyzed that if the simple ‘click’ or ‘save’ button does not really look like a button then less users choose to click on it as opposed to if the button actually resembled a button. So communication is vital when it comes to interactivity in design.

“Interaction design is typically the foundation upon which other website design elements are based. To understand how important it is, consider clicking on a website that looks visually stunning, yet leaves you completely baffled. Despite its incredible appearance, you have no idea what to do at the site or what steps to take to achieve your goals.

14 http://mootee.typepad.com/innovation_playground/2010/09/interaction-design-is-more-than-design-it-has-the-power-to-transform-cultures-.html
The first step in interaction design involves trying to understand users' needs and tasks. Only then can a website's features be organized to meet those needs. Finally, once an organization is established, visual design including color, imagery and other elements can be created to suit the needs of the user and fulfill a business' goals.”

Social media

Social media is the all in all most popular past-time in people’s lives these days, and a favored tool for businesses, these statements can be said with simple observation to back it up. However seeing the nature of the position that we are in, I intend to provide you with all the references.

An article on the web talks about this new tool of advertising. “A new report from Universal McCann, one of the world’s largest media service firms, looks at how Internet based commentary is an increasingly powerful force. Blogs, Twitter, FriendFeed, Facebook, and other forms of social media are not only shaping thoughts, they are also shaping where dollars are spent through reviews and product descriptions.” Certainly a statement from one of the largest media firms should be concrete enough to convince you, but the more the better, so read on.

“According to the report the growth in social media and consumer opinion online has leveled the playing field in sectors where expertise has traditionally been key to purchase decisions such as finance, the advice of total strangers is being increasingly trusted. The

report, *When Did We Start Trusting Strangers?*, is based on a survey of 17,000 Internet users in 29 countries and examines the growth of consumer recommendation and the tools that drive it across the globe. The report calls this new social media an ‘Influence Economy’

It notes that many of the changes that are taking place are a carryover of old school word of mouth, only now in virtual format. As more people move into social media, they are utilizing the social platforms to communicate with friends, family, and peers. This makes the conversation going on today very similar to yesteryear, only now the projection is farther, and the signal is more powerful. In fact, 58% of those surveyed use Social Media to stay in contact with existing connections. As the web offers more and more micro formats that allow for reviews, personalization of web services, and user generated content, this change will continue.”^{17}

As we read on from the same article and analyze the effects it has had on markets around the world. “Some interesting notes on markets found in the report include the fact that Asia and Brazil are leading the charge, with consumers in South Korea, Hong Kong, Philippines, India, Pakistan and China most ready to comment. Of all of the verticals films, music and technology are the most commented on, but all have been impacted; around 40% of global Internet users have commented on property, financial products and utilities. Males, 25-34-years-old, early adopting desk workers, are the new brand of super-influencers. They are using the tools of social media to shape opinions and purchasing patterns. The report found that bloggers are also very active in terms of

^{17} http://www.marketingpilgrim.com/2008/09/the-consumer-and-social-media.html
sharing opinions and recommendations; 32% have shared recommended websites, 29% their favorite music and 28% opinions on products and brands.”

**Blogs**

Surprisingly, marketers indicated that blogs were the top area in which they planned on increasing their social media efforts.

Small businesses were much more likely to be increasing their blogging activities.

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19 http://www.penn-olson.com/2010/05/01/7-benefits-of-social-media-marketing-revealed/
Research and Methodology

2 year old kids question everything, your spouse (if you have one) questions you, even umpire decisions are now being questioned, so narrowing down a question was not too much of an issue. Questioning the impact that a medium such as the internet has had on advertisements and its design also came to me without too much hassle. The real deal was researching, researching and did I mention researching on how to present to you, dear reader, my theories and results so that you know that I know my knee from my elbow.

In order to successfully accomplish that, I needed to do extensive research on the internet and its origins along with its future, advertisement in Pakistan, and everywhere else around the world as well. This was important as it provided the important compare and contrast elements that are so evidently popular in a debate and conversation. It is very easy to drift away from the question and drop into other subject matter, but in order to be focused, headstrong and stay on track I have split my analysis into three main categories:

i. Advertisement Design

ii. Trends in mediums used in Pakistani adverts

iii. Growing popularity of the world wide web with Pakistani adverts

The bulk of my information came from the World Wide Web, since it prevails in the importance of my topic. Research that was done involves finding the coming of age of internet recognition, the different effects and consequences that it had on advertisement design in Pakistan, and the future it holds for, again, advertisement design in this wonderful nation of ours. Further research on the internet in ad design revealed to me the
possibilities that it has on design in advertisements and the key major mediums that are
evident in it. These major mediums as I instilled in my review was social media and
design marketing, and this has become the backbone of every business. Through this
research the true value of the internet in this day and age dawned upon me; the reasons
for choosing the web as a medium, one of which as I mention is the ability to make it
interactive to millions around the country and millions and millions around the world.
The internet also played an important role on highlighting the importance of the opinions,
which are the most challenging aspects to contend with in advertising. Furthermore I
intend to conduct interviews with agencies in Pakistan and advertisers as they are heavily
involved in such a market and will have extensive knowledge of the subject matter in
discussion.

With regards to design the research was extensive and vast. Almost every aspect of
graphic design in advertisements needed to be explored when it came to design. In order
for you to understand the ultimate purpose of the design I discuss the beginning of
advertisement design. With more and more research done I conversed on the evolution of
mediums in ad design and its advantages and disadvantages as well as the reaction of the
competition. In addition to all this I read about the importance of BTL (below the line)
advertising and its successful comparison to ATL (above the line) advertising. Through
interviews and questionnaires I intend to figure out the trends in advertising design in
Pakistan from first hand designers’ experience.

My first interview was with the head of the PR of Hum TV, who goes by the name
Shehnaz Ramsi. I had decided to interview her because of her constant involvement with
the rest of the media world. I had asked her questions relating to the interaction with the
channel’s audience and its methods of communication. Also, because of her experience in the field of media and public relations her insight on how the cogs of this industry are affected and work was vital.

My second interview was with a graphic designer by the name of Sarah Ismail. My interview with her consisted of me asking her some general questions such as, what are the future trends in Pakistan’s advertising. All her answers were specific and to the point and her answers did not seem biased as she always tried to keep a level playing field in regards to if something came up in opposition. Basically, the interview cleared some of the problems that I was facing in my analysis.

Another important aspect that, because of its importance, could have easily been a sub-chapter (but I didn’t do it since I didn’t deem it necessary) was the psychology of ad design and the psychology of the internet and its components with regard to ad design.
Analysis and Discussion

So basically now that we have established the main categories enlisted in the literature review we can move on to the chunk of this discussion which involves analyzing the possible subjects of my argument.

In order to successfully do that, I will identify and venture you into three main categories which respectively in order are; advertisement design, trends in mediums used in Pakistani adverts, and finally the growing popularity of the internet especially in Pakistani adverts. Understanding these categories individually will give you, dear reader, an insight to my process of thinking and how I came about to my conclusions. Of course the whole analysis will consist of understanding and applying the interviews and various surveys that I had conducted in order to come to a conclusion in regard to my question.

Advertisement Design

Where should I begin, should I dump upon you the various bits of information that I have accumulated or should I decide to engage you in the process of advertisement design (its elements, evolution and everything else) in accordance to my research, in Pakistan. Somehow I do believe that the latter would be more appreciated. So let us begin.

The reason why design in advertisements has to be appealing both visually and conceptually is because of the simple fact that there is nothing else that plays such an important role both consciously and subconsciously. For instance Frosties has had to
keep a generally similar design on its packaging over the years so as not to lose its individuality in the market, as basically as A.R. Mumtaz says “the design has to work around the idea.” This is where elements of design come in, and they play a very important role in the making of the advertisement. In fact, research has indicated that over 80% of all ads do not even get a chance to be noticed, and the simple truth is that Pakistani ads do not utilize these elements successfully. When a piece of advertisement has a certain pattern and rhythm that has all the colors and forms and negative spaces balancing and contrasting in good harmony with each other, then the possibilities of the advertisement being retained in the viewer’s memory increases drastically; and this is not just the case for print ads, all these elements, in regard to the medium chosen for the ad, needs unity within the advertisement. So overall these aesthetic values in design are so important that even the in charge of advertising and PR of Hum Tv (Shehnaz Ramsi) is quoted as saying “aesthetics play a very important role in our advertisements, and it has been like that from day one.”

As I spoke and highlighted the evolutionary phases in design within advertisements we were reminded of not only evolution of design but the evolution in the role and use of design for these advertisements. I provided substantial evidence to you that showed how over time the popularization of different mediums kept having an effect on the role of design within advertisements. Similarly as radio gained popularity, businesses invested in this medium as it would aid them to reach out for a greater chunk of the market I could go on and on with examples but this topic of mediums will be discussed in a later chapter, what I wanted to highlight through these examples was the simple fact that as these advertisement tools were popularized, these elements and
aesthetic values were directly affected as well. Not only because of the change of medium, but also because of the new rules and elements that came into play as the full potential of the medium was explored. Another similar example would be the transition of popularity from print ads to radio. As this new medium at the time was released it gained recognition amongst businesses and advertisers, so this prompted a new wave of design rules and elements to be utilized, brutally. Overtime more and more mediums were released and this caused a plethora of rules in design to be understood.

Over the years as technology evolved, respectively so did everything else in the world. With this evolutionary process, it was inevitable for mankind in its existence to develop means where the rate of information exchanged would drastically increase. Now I did mention information exchange before in my literature review, briefly, what did has to do with advertising design I will now explain. You see ever since the cave painting era, there has been a certain rate of information exchange that is looked at, that rate is the rate of information exchange being doubled. As quoted from a documentary of the graphic novelist Alan Moore who explains the theory of period information doubling; he did such works as Watchmen and From Hell.

“as I understand the theory of period information doubling, this state that if we take one period of human information, as being the time between the invention if the first hand axe, say around 50,000BC and 1AD, then this is one period of human information and we can measure it by how many human inventions we came up during that time. Then we see how long it takes for us to have twice as many inventions. This means that human information has doubled. As it turns out after the first period 50,000 period, the second period is about 1500 years, say about the time of the Renaissance. By then we had twice
as much information. To double again, human information took a couple of hundred years. The period speeds up, between 1960 and 1970 human information doubled. As I understand it, at the last count human information was doubling every 18 months. Further to this, there is a point somewhere around 2015 where human information is doubling every thousandth of a second. This means that in each thousandth of a second we will have accumulated more information then we have in the entire previous history of the world. At this point I believe all bets are off. I cannot imagine the kind of culture that might exist after such a flashpoint of knowledge. I believe that our culture would move into a completely different state, would move past the boiling point, from a fluid culture to a culture of steam.”

I am sure after reading this lengthy theory of information exchange you must be thinking that I have gone completely off track, but bear with me. You see what Mr. Moore is talking about is the simple fact that everything that we respond to and absorb is in fact information. Getting a text from your family about the car they got in Canada is information, whether there is electricity at your house or not is information, and the all new Blu-Ray, High Def., 3D, Food Warming television being released tomorrow is information. So when Alan Moore spoke about human information doubling using an example such as human inventions and related it to the theory of period information doubling; which you just read, basically speaking about how information exchange of that particular example (in this case human inventions) is continuously accelerating, so in our case we will replace human inventions with the design of advertisements in Pakistan. In this way we have seen this information exchange period’s (as in the information of advertisement design) rate accelerate over the years. The primitive example would be
cave paintings, they advertise its history, and as we move further ahead and the rate accelerates we see more and more information being presented to us; swiftly, easily, and indefinitely. Indefinitely because this rate (just like the rate of Alan Moore’s human inventions’ information doubling was reaching its pinnacle) is at such velocity it leaves us with little option but to receive it and involuntarily respond to it even if our response is minimal. For instance say you are watching a movie, let’s say Transformers, in the film there are hundreds of brands being advertised subliminally and most of them in case are the vehicles themselves. Let us take one car as an example, for instance the Camaro.

After watching the film many of the viewers will believe that although there is no way that if they get that car it will change to Bumblebee (the Transformers’ name), but they will believe, even if it is minimal, the car’s torque, its luscious interior, its horsepower, and its appeal. So even if some of them never went out of their way or even remotely tried to discover the car’s advertisements, they were exposed to it indefinitely, and they reacted involuntarily.

The only problem in Pakistan with ad designs I think is that there is no complete successful level of communication. Ali.R.M points out that “it is the responsibility of the brands to actually trust the consumers, to understand that the average consumer could actually be as smart as or even smarter than the average client and ad agency.” If the agencies and brands can take this into consideration then definitely Pakistan can move swiftly forward within the advertising world, because there is no shortage of talent and there is no shortage of money that can be spent on advertisements.
So back to relating all this to my dissertation question, how has something like the internet’s popularity affected design within advertisements in Pakistan? You see not only has the rate of information exchange of advertisement design been doubling and evolving, but the mediums have also been. The mediums evolve and get better and their task of sending out information as it is directly related to the rate of ad design’s information exchange, improves with every cycle. So in the beginning when there were letter presses and hand lettering used for every print ad and every banner. Now it has been replaced to banners that offer much more than the simple information that the product sells. Now the banner; in unique ways made possible through design and the new medium on the block, the internet, displays information on the colors used, to the proportions of the banner changing (because as discussed before these are elements of design and elements of design is information) as you interact with it. Observing this evolution in mediums we can see that this is truly spectacular. We have progressed from lithography and word presses to radio to door to door salesmen to television and currently sailing over the powerful tide of the internet and its recurring tools. Sometimes such mediums are used that we in our wildest dreams wouldn’t imagine, as Ali R. Mumtaz says “But if you are talking about specific mediums then, again as I said anything can be used, if you see the BMW example they use your eyelids as a medium.” Going back to the internet, just to quote one of my sources from my research, “The single most beneficial thing that the Internet has done is to create a new medium for designers. Design becomes a living, breathing animal that users can interact with.” What this now sheds light upon is the whole interaction game play. Now interaction is much broader
than what I spoke about in my literature review, but the main idea of interaction which involves turning the audience from being passively participant to a more proactive type is still inherent. So what this medium such as the internet and its tools have done is that they have captured the true way to keep users and the audience for the brand in question, be proactively involved with the advertisement design as well as the ad itself. When we outline the basic tasks of interaction designers we see that “are concerned with how an application or Web site functions. They investigate whether the application or Web site performs the intended task in a predictable manner. They ask questions such as, ‘Does the Save button save the information or give you an error message?’ and ‘Does the shopping cart on the Web site actually register the items when the user clicks the 'Add this item to the shopping carts’ button?’” Interaction design was the first step in web and internet design, and as the web offered more and more micro formats meaning, the possibilities of what could be done with this powerful medium and its tools kept introducing new ways to use design within advertisements. This meant that the web would become more personal, and opinions and comments would greatly affect the overall results of the brand. This gave rise to a new economy in itself known as the Influence economy. Just to give you a hint at its effect, “The influence economy is all about truth and transparency. Brands that live up to their marketing promises and deliver quality products will benefit from consumer recommendation. Marketers need to engage with this new platform if they are to ensure their brands thrive in the era of influence,” says Tom Smith, Head of Consumer Futures, EMEA at Universal McCann. Some interesting notes on markets found in the report include the fact that Asia and Brazil are leading the charge, with consumers in South Korea, Hong Kong, Philippines, India, Pakistan and China most
ready to comment. So with Pakistanis being so involved with the internet world and being so proactive (as it is in our nature to be) the rise of social media would inherently and its tools would strongly impress upon opinions, purchasing patterns and have a psychological effect on the minds of the consumers. “Psychologically, what the internet has done is that it has opened a domain of advertising that may be public but it is accessed by the private human consciousness.” (Suri) In fact such is the power of social media that as illustrated in the pie chart in my literature review, blogs, Facebook, Twitter are the top areas in which most businesses are advertising these days. This is because these brands know that they “need to reach out to these creators as they will become the most powerful voices in the influence economy. The old media of expert commentators is being replaced by the consumer and anybody with an opinion and a computer can be part of it.”

Growing popularity of the World Wide Web with Pakistani adverts

Although over the past few years Pakistan has seriously picked up on the influence economy. What this has done is that it has caused a growth in the popularity of the internet as a tool and medium for advertising and its relevant designs. “Social media will get popular because the return of investment is higher and the coverage is more widespread.” (Fursid) In turn this has cause an increase in demand of designers who have the sufficient knowledge to work with internet design. As the demand rises the supply slowly responds. With an increasing number of graphic designers coming out into the market each year the popularity of the internet as a tool for adverts will only rise. “The
internet has proven to be the most convenient portal to access the world. It’s accessible, non-bulky, and fairly easy to use and is a one stop shop for a plethora of knowledge and information. Hence, the internet lends itself to making millions of people aware about a certain brand/ product from all over the world. As an audience, I think we've become used to seeing billboards and posters all over. We hardly pay attention to them unless it’s phenomenally different (rare case- might I add). When your confined to a 13 inch screen, it’s hard to avoid a flashing advertisement. So, in that case the internet makes advertising almost unavoidable. Also, the internet provides the option of interaction. When you get the urge to delve further, you have that option to click and be routed to a website or facebook page.” (Sarah) Here Ms. Ismail has encompassed not only the complete power of the internet but also the psychological effects it has on us. Let us take an example, during the cricket world cup Mobilink had done numerous television commercials that were aired at that time, the influence allowed the designers to see which websites were being visited during that time span, and this allowed them to place their interactive adverts on those websites so that they got multiple exposure. Furthermore based on the future of advertising Ms. Ismail went on to say “The methods to advertise such as cut out bus shelters and billboards are becoming far more common now. Backlit billboards are now going to be adopted far more because of the energy consumption and brightness of external lights. Beyond that, I see advertising embracing the internet far more- also because e-commerce is becoming huge in Pakistan- companies are doing as much as 50% of their business on Facebook etc.” With the help of these tools it is clear that although the audience feels that they are the ones in control given how important their feedback is,
it is really the way the designers pose their queries to them which keeps the latter in control.

The internet however cannot replace human interaction of advertisement, “because of the simple reason that human interaction is the natural way and you can only go so far to disrupt the nature of our world.” (Saadia) However it can certainly be the number one choice to advertise on. “I would say it would take another four years. Things should change dramatically, with the influx of cell phones and people having handsets and smart phones, the major issue is language in terms of our language, Urdu content is limited. If Urdu content is seen on the internet, then you would see more of the mass market on the internet and then obviously it would become the more popular medium.” (Shehlah) Of course the more popular users of the internet are the smaller segment of the population but I believe that because these people are the ones with more disposable income, the poorer persons who if exposed and taught of the internet would definitely grasp its notion more quickly than otherwise believed. This is because it would represent them as status figures and everyone loves to be a status figure. And speaking to the C.E.O of Logic Box, Shehlah, she pointed out that “, the good thing is, design on the net is getting more and more cerebral, by cerebral I mean is that there is a thought behind what is happening, and there is a lot of attention to detail. When you have a 1000x1000 pixel of space for a website and even if you are making a button of 200x300 pixel of space and that button performs an extremely important function and it has to be a standalone product, and it has to share the whole website and compliment it. So this means that every little pixel that goes on the net, is extremely important and it has to deliver what it is supposed to otherwise it is of no use. So it really is mind boggling how much detail goes into
designing a website. Print and boarding doesn’t need that much attention to detail you can let things go. Over the net these things change a lot, and you have to understand that the net audience is really a global audience.” So if the mass market segment that eventually could grasp the internet then they will be exposed to design of not only Pakistani pages, but also of a global standard and hence their own standard for design would increase subconsciously. Meaning, more exposure will result in better knowledge, which would in turn result in a smarter population.
Conclusion

The rise in popularity of the World Wide Web in Pakistan has caused significant and numerous changes in advertisement design. For one there has been an increase in demand of coders and designers who are familiar with these tools of social media, blogs and viral videos. There has been a rise to the influence economy which allows for a wider range of audience all over the world, which also provides with the most feedback than any other medium could possibly establish. And finally the continuing rise in its popularity has prompted these designers to recognize this medium, learn and apply its rules and elements of design and continuously explore it. We have seen throughout the internet through viral videos and social networking sites how effective the internet can be. Burger King managed to convince people to get rid of their friends, Lynx dropped angels into subway stations, so if they can there is no reason why Pakistan should not follow.

We don’t know what is in store but we do know that at the rate that we are inventing new mediums and tools there is no bar set as to where we can say ‘there can be no more changes to design,’ advertisement design is such that it will always evolve and adapt to the situation that is present at the time and the popularization of any new medium will always have a transverse effect on advertising design. Currently this new medium is the internet and social networking in particular, we as a nation are painfully social, what with all the “frandship” texts and what not. So why should Pakistan not get on this roller coaster of a ride, the changes to the country’s advertising design will be vast but there is
no shortage of minds that are ready for that and don’t forget, the consumer can be as smart, or even smarter than both the agency and the brand.
Appendix

Interview with Sarah Ismail

OK: What role does the internet play in advertising a product?

SI: The internet has proven to be the most convenient portal to access the world. Its accessible, non-bulky, fairly easy to use and is a one stop shop for a plethora of knowledge and information. Hence, the internet lends itself to making millions of people aware about a certain brand/product from all over the world. As an audience, I think we've become used to seeing billboards and posters all over. We hardly pay attention to them unless it’s phenomenally different (rare case- might I add). When you’re confined to a 13 inch screen, it’s hard to avoid a flashing advertisement. So, in that case the internet makes advertising almost unavoidable. Also, the internet provides the option of interaction. When you get the urge to delve further, you have that option to click and be routed to a website or facebook page.

OK: Why has Pakistan in your opinion been slow to pick up on the various mediums of advertising (esp. internet)?

SI: The main challenge for ad agencies is to sell new and creative methods of advertising to clients who have been advertising in magazines and hoardings for eons. Its a risk and its hard to convince people to put their money into something new. As a people, we are safe and reluctant to invest in innovative methods. Therefore, mediums like the Internet have been embraced late in the day. When the whole world is thriving on it and its been tried and tested, only then does it become safe. BTL activities that are a great way to advertise have only recently started being done. The most prominent BTL was done
by Minute Maid where oranges had been put in trees. It got people talking. And it’s not rocket science.

OK: What future trends do you see in Pakistan's advertising?

SI: Advertising in Pakistan has for as long as I can remember, been safe and conventional. There has to be a woman in bread or cooking oil ad, even if it makes no practical sense to have her there. She has to be good looking too. There has been an attempt to break away and come up with groundbreaking campaigns such as Djuice 'Khamoshi ka Boycott' - but when we try too hard, disasters happen. However, as communicators, it is our job to speak to the masses. You can't take a Rooh Afza ad and make it too suave and sophisticated. It is meant for a particular audience and they understand predominantly the visual which has been set in stone since rooh afza came into being. Daring companies are so less in number that their ads become vastly talked about viral sensations (eg; Butterfly: 'wikileaks, butterfly doesn't). They get mixed responses and are more likely to decide that being this open next time round wouldn't be such a wise option. However, advertising has adopted a cleaner and sleeker approach with some brands eg- Walls Fruttare, Owsum milk and Cadbury. There are still conventional brands out there with terrible graphics and ridiculous taglines- I don't see that changing any time soon only because people fear change- in case they lose their audience, and it seems as though people running these companies don't have proper guidance- they have the same advertising agencies for decades. Some products are also such that need no advertising. I go in a store and inevitably buy Hashmi Kajal- I don't need to see an ad for it. The methods to advertise such as cut out bus shelters and billboards are becoming far more common now. Backlit billboards are now going to be adopted far more because of
the energy consumption and brightness of external lights. Beyond that, I see advertising embracing the internet far more- also because e-commerce is becoming huge in Pakistan-companies are doing as much as 50% of their business on Facebook etc.

**Interview with Ali Reza Mumtaz,** Chief Creative Officer at IAL Saatchi and Saatchi

OK: What do you identify as mediums or tools in advertising design?

ARM: pretty much everything. Starting from print, media, outdoor down to ambient and guerilla, brand statements, product statements. But if you are talking about specific mediums then, again as I said anything can be used, if you see the BMW example they use your eyelids as a medium. So anything will do. The big ones are definitely those that I mentioned before, I mean the transition is even happening to mobile phones that are mixed with traditional advertising.

OK: How has the content within the advertisement evolved?

ARM: The major shift that has happened is that a lot of content is being derived from the consumer, which is what is happening now, not just derived but influenced. Consumer will start playing the role more frequently in regards to the content.

O.K: What future do you foresee in the world if Internet playing in the world of advertisement design?

A.R.M: a bigger role, more integration. In the sense that it will leverage everything else that you do. It will start at that point but it will get to the point where it will become the
main medium. Right now the rest of the world is using the internet as a primary form of communication backed up by TV, and that is where Pakistan is headed, hopefully.

O.K: Back to Pakistan, why do you think Pakistan has been slow to follow up?

A.R.M: I would say adoption to technology, we are slow to adapt to it. It is more of a cultural thing, for example PayPal is not here or EBay, because of this trust issue that exists it doesn’t work in Pakistan. There is no reason why it shouldn’t come here though.

O.K: How have the rules and elements of design changed with the advent of the internet?

A.R.M: I think that it changes depending on how technology moves forward. New technology emerges so we can use it on the internet. Everything changes, with Flash technology and rich media for example, you went from static banners to actual moving images; static images to animations, so the design will change as the technology races forward.

O.K: So does interaction now play an important role?

A.R.M: Yes, definitely if you look at the example of Arcade Fire, it heavily involved interaction; the design has to change with it. Adapting to Google street view and what not, the design has to work around it. So basically the design has to work around the idea.

O.K: What elements of design are uniform throughout the evolution of design?

A.R.M: the basics would stay the same, the basic rules are the same everywhere, tracking, leading, colors, how you react to colors. Its just how you use them, that is what changes. For example a writer today would use the same words that Dickens used 100
years ago, but the just rearrange them in a different and new way. You have all these
different elements and it is just a game of rearranging them in a new way.

O.K: What problems do you identify need fixing in ad design in Pakistan?

A.R.M: They need to evolve and move forward and they are. The problem is totally with
brands, consumers are aware of what goes abroad. So people react the same way to it, but
it is the responsibility of the brands to actually trust the consumers, to understand that the
average consumer could actually be as smart as or even smarter than the average client
and ad agency. If you look at the Panda cheese ad, they had the typical father comes
home mother brings the cheese advertisements the way Egyptian ads had been working
for 20 years, nobody gave a shit about that brand. Then all of a sudden these guys did this
weirdest ad in the world with a violent Panda, and that brand went off the charts, it
became the most well known brand in Egypt , not only in Egypt but it went on global
news.

Interview with Saadia Y. Siddik, Strategy Planner at IAL Saatchi and Saatchi

O.K: How relevant is the increase in social media usage in Pakistan?

S.Y.S: To be honest, it has grown quite a bit but, if the increase is still in comparison to
the world not very relevant. In terms of brand awareness, social networking sites like
Facebook have been quite effective, but in Pakistan that is the problem. Brands just create
a Facebook page and leave it to that, they need to understand that social media needs as
much or more attention as does any other medium in advertising. Currently the interactivity is low.

O.K: How effective can social media be in Pakistan, as a medium of advertising?

S.Y.S: It can be very effective, because there are telecommunication companies that are providing such services such as Warid and Ufone, as well as the consumers are ready for it. They want to be as informed and as updated as the rest of the more popular world. The only problem lies with the trust and safety issue as piracy is very common here.

O.K: Do you think that the internet as a medium for advertisement design can replace all others?

S.Y.S: Well the future is vast and ever-expanding; considerably. I mean sure everything is becoming online and less physical interaction is needed for us to carry on with our everyday lives with online shopping and what-not. But I don’t think it can replace it, sure it can play a big role in it but replacing is a notion that I personally cannot grasp. This is because of the simple reason that human interaction is the natural way and you can only go so far to disrupt the nature of our world.

Interview with Wahab Suri, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Karachi University

O.K: What attributes does the internet have as a tool for advertising design?
W.S: The attributes fall under ownership of design, basically design was much more private before but now the laws are much more ineffective. At one level it is a domain of freedom, but on the other hand it is a domain of necessity and determinance, because all of these facilities are available under the mechanism of certain commands. There are certain forces which control all of these factors, they can affect and track you down, but it requires a substantial amount of resources and paths both technological and legal paths which transcends the domain of nation-state as well. The major issue is not that design is affected, but it is rather that the borrowing of design cannot be tracked down, this piracy and distorted version cannot be tracked down because of its initial stages. Maybe in the foreseeable future it could be.

O.K: What is the psychology behind using internet as a tool for advertising?

W.S: Number one reason is that it is cost effective. Currently all sorts of advertising is not possible on the World Wide Web. With most forms of advertising the main deal is that the advertisement comes to you involuntarily, without your control. The beauty of internet advertising is that you control the adverts and it depends on your tastes and again it is cost effective. The bigger consumer markets of the world do not depend upon the internet up till now, those being the second and third world nations. Also the language is also very limited.

O.K: Why does design in advertisements need to be appealing, aside from the fact that it needs to sell the product?

W.S: It is your presumption that the ad is appealing. It is controversial issue whether it is appealing or not. Today’s advertising domain believes that direct advertising is more
effective (micro credit system) than digitally constructed advertisements.

Psychologically, what I mean is that there are particular products that when buy, recognize, reach them your cultural, social, political, religious barriers are present. For instance 50-60% feels embarrassed in Pakistan when buying a condom. Psychologically, what the internet has done is that it has opened a domain of advertising that may be public but it is accessed by the private human consciousness. The consumers may have the power but there still remains the fact that socially unacceptable ideas are being practiced socially online. So they may be advertising it but it would be very difficult to track it down.

**Interview with Shehnaz Ramsi, PR and liason with the public mediam at Hum TV**

O.K: What are your responsibilities as head of PR and publications of Hum TV?

S.R: Responsibilities are very varied because I’m not just selling Public Relations but also publications. so under Public Relations basically I am handling everything that has to do with keeping our company in liason with the rest of the media allies, particularly the best. Because with channels since we are competitors I am not that much involved in with giving out information to them because obviously we are competitors. So they know that they we are carrying our news but with the print media we are constantly giving them information, feeding them about our programming, anything new that we have photographed, very often we assist them in getting in touch with other artists that are not related to our work but it is just that these are activites we do in getting interviews of various artists. We have press conferences on a regualr basis so whenever we have a new
programme that we are going to be launching in that particular season so we have major
press conferences otherwise we have small press meetings at the office so they are
constantly in touch with the press and basically public relations is a lot to do with the
press. Then of course there are whole lot of PR activities that we are attending ourselves
so that way we are representing our channel. There are notches that you get practically
every day from OUP, Granduer. They are on a daily basis; there are some events or the
other that we get invited to and we get invited to these events for two reasons because: we
are the PR department of our network so they would like those events covered as they
know we take our photographers, cameramen and we get the event covered and show
them on our channel. Aside from that, because I am also the editor of two magazines I get
all the invitations because as the editor of the magazine I can do their coverage in my
magazine. So basically it is all interlinked and so there are a lot of events that we cover
outside our own network.

O.K: What are your preferred mediums in advertising? How do you go about using
them?

S.R: Okay so basically in this PR, I am handling the print. What we do is that we use our
own platforms, our own channels for advertising our own programs. We don’t advertise
on other channels, I don’t think that there is even barter with other channels. All the
programs, commercials that you see, all the promos that you see of our own plays, of our
own programs, you will see them on our three channels. It’s not paid for at times but it is
cost effective. Similarly we use print for advertising - it’s not my preferred medium, I do
it more because of PR with certain press people. I forward them print ads. Basically I feel
that a one-to-one with the press and holding these press conferences and we have second-hand material – not ad but regular information about what we’re doing works with us.

O.K: Don’t you think that with social media you could achieve that?

S.R: We’ve started that recently, we do not have blogs but we have started Facebook for all the channels, we’ve started Facebook for our magazines. Yes, hundred percent, it is the in thing to do these days everybody has become techno savvy and a lot of people don’t read newspapers and magazines anymore but they do go on Facebook, they do go on the net so increasingly we are using Facebook now to advertise our product channel-wise as well as magazine-wise.

O.K: Being in a TV channel, interaction is very important. How have you dealt with the audiences needs and wants to maintain that level?

S.R: I think they are always kept in mind because if your audience is not interested in your product, you’ve lost it. So basically we cater to their needs in our ‘Farmaahishi’ program. We are always getting research done for food items. The chefs will always consider that. So at the end of the show when there is a meeting between the producer and the chef, they will inform them that there is quite a lot of demand for such and such dish so they will incorporate it in the next show and they will make sure that that item is made. So you will often hear when you watch Masala TV and when they ask “Aap ki koi farmaahish hai?” They say, “Jee aap ne tou saari puri kar deen”. And I hear that very often, which a good thing is because they do keep that in mind.
O.K: Have you tried playing an important role in terms of social awareness?

S.R: We do that all the time. As a channel we are doing that all the time. I mean whether it’s Eid, whether it’s Ramzan, whether it’s Moharram, I mean you name it, all the holidays that we have, the programming is created for all these days, even if it is Valentine’s Day or Mother’s day or Father’s day. I mean these things are now all part of our culture. So we do special programming for those things to make people aware, I mean we could do something like Iqbal Day or Quaid-e-Azam Day. There are all these special programming created for that.

**Interview with Shehlah Zahiruddin Abbas, C.E.O Logic Box design house**

O.K: What makes an advertisement pleasing?

S.Z.A: It is a very basic point that the ad needs to speak and communicate to the target consumer. If you have narrowed down exactly and precisely who you are targeting which very possible, so you will have that ideal consumer in mind. Once you have the psychographics of the ideal consumer profile sorted out, then obviously it is very easy to make an ad that will please that particular segment. For example, using confectionaries there are certain colors and compositions that would appeal to the kids who would be your target consumers. And with that you will keep their profile in mind.

O.K: What is in Pakistan the more successful medium to advertise with?

S.Z.A: Television, most definitely.
O.K: How far off do you think internet is in terms of mediums used to advertising?

S.Z.A: The internet is very powerful and is trying to get powerful. Internet penetration it is immense. In terms of mass medium, and I really mean mass medium, putting TV first and billboards second. I wouldn’t say the internet is anywhere near but I would say it would take another four years. Things should change dramatically, with the influx of cell phones and people having handsets and smart phones, the major issue is language in terms of our language, Urdu content is limited. If Urdu content is seen on the internet, then you would see more of the mass market on the internet and then obviously it would become the more popular medium. Having said that, people with more disposable income are more on the net, that segment that have their own particular market then it would be a lucrative decision to advertise on the net. The rest of the products however do not target this segment. It definitely is a growing market, four years is a long time in terms internet years and what needs to happen is that business houses and others need to generate content that is not targeted to people like you and I.

O.K: What can you tell me about the changes in design and its evolution?

S.Z.A: there has been a major shift and changes in design, for example just last week I was designing a website for somebody and with the navigation buttons my designer had given those navigation buttons a blue background. And I had asked him why had he done that and the client said to me that the blue background is appealing, I had turned around and said to them “this is so 2010.” So this is the rate at which design is evolving. Year to year you could see the changes. I can look at designs and websites and I can tell you what year’s aesthetics it belongs to. However, the good thing is design on the net is getting
more and more cerebral, by cerebral I mean is that there is a thought behind what is happening, and there is a lot of attention to detail. When you have a 1000x1000 pixel of space for a website and even if you are making a button of 200x300 pixel of space and that button performs an extremely important function and it has to be a standalone product, and it has to share the whole website and compliment it. So this means that every little pixel that goes on the net, is extremely important and it has to deliver what it is supposed to otherwise it is of no use. So it really is mind boggling how much detail goes into designing a website. Print and boarding doesn’t need that much attention to detail you can let things go. Over the net these things change a lot, and you have to understand that the net audience is really a global audience, so I am looking at websites from around the world. So my aesthetics have been trained as opposed to the untrained eye. So I can tell a good commercial from a bad commercial, good design to bad design, from something which is contemporary to something that is two years old, which is in internet age is 20 years old. So you have an aesthetically mature audience which makes your task as a designer even more important.

O.K: Is it the client’s or the agency’s fault that our nation is so behind in terms of internet and social network advertising?

S.Z.A: Both. Because both are doing their own jobs and could care less about the market, each one of them are looking to make their own share.

**Interview with Abdul Qadir “Fursid”, User developer at Creative Chaos**

O.K: how do you control the exposure when you are advertising on the internet?
F: There is no control, but if you look at it from an advertiser’s point of view, then there are certain ways online to find this numerical value out. Facebook has its own mechanism and for its amount of budgets.

O.K: what are the changes in ad design with regards to the internet?

F: In terms of design yes, because it is a different medium as compared to conventional media. You have to conform to this medium and it has its own interaction level, so there are animating ads and pop up ads and all other sorts of ads.

O.K: The fast pace of information exchange do you think we receive it indefinitely or is it controlled?

F: People know of this concern, and advertisers have tried to work around it. There has been certain debates ads showing up on emails, if I am talking to you about a certain topic, so a contextual ad would show up on my screen. Similarly, if I was on a social networking website a contextual ad would be seen again. They are still trying to give these ads some context.

O.K: Do you think we have any control over what we view?

F: I still believe in Pakistan, regardless of Pakistan, the basic sort of control that I get exposed to, let alone online I am getting spam on my mobile. It is annoying but I still cannot get it to stop. If I had a choice I would stop it but that is not in my control.

O.K: How do you think Pakistan should respond to this rise of social media advertising around the world?
F: Social media is still evolving not only in Pakistan but also around the world. We are at it a bit late but people are getting a hang of it. Some of the organizations are using cleverly, and some just don’t get it. There will always be people who still go to conventional media. Social media will get popular because the return of investment is higher and the coverage is more widespread.
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