

# TARGETED AND MASS ADVERTISING

COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION > 2.6 MANAGING DIGITAL IDENTITY

TARGET GROUP	AGE GROUP	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	FORMAT	COPYRIGHT	LANGUAGE
All, Job seekers, School drop outs	All	Level 1	Activity sheet	Creative Commons (BY-SA)	English, French

This workshop reflects on the role and place of advertising in our daily lives. The aim is to discuss advertising with the participants and to understand the difference between mass advertising and targeted advertising according to their objectives (sell, incite, get people to react, prevent).

**General Objective** Knowledge acquisition

**Preparation time for facilitator** less than 1 hour

**Competence area** 1 - Information and data literacy

**Time needed to complete activity (for learner)** 0 - 1 hour

**Name of author** Nothing 2hide

**Resource originally created in** French

## WORKSHOP DIRECTIONS

### 1 Introduction

This workshop aims to introduce participants to online advertising and help them understand how it works (cookies, personal data), and how to anticipate and prevent it where desired.

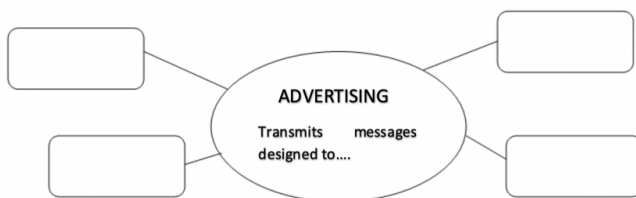
**Facilitation tips:** For more on personal data, see [‘Personal Data: Keeping Track’](#).

### 2 Advertising objectives

Firstly, discuss with participants on the reasons for advertising.

For this, give out copies of the ‘What is advertising for?’ sheet below. One per person or per group if the workshop is sorted into groups (if there are larger number of participants for example). Then display the four examples of advertising below using a projector and ask participants to pick one verb to characterise the aim of each ad.

1. What’s the point of advertising?



#### **Pepsi Ad (2017)**

Objective: sell/prompt purchase

#### **2008 Barack Obama electoral campaign ad**

Image not found or type unknown



Objective : Incite

### Food crisis appeal ad



Objective: provoke a particular reaction

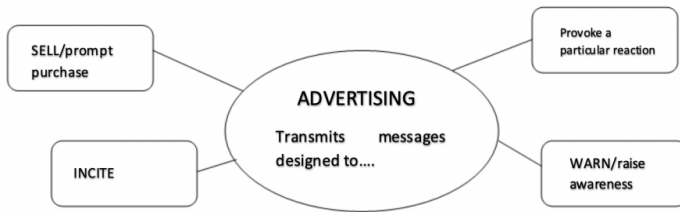
### Road safety ad



Objective: Warn/raise awareness

## Answers

## 1. What's the point of advertising?



## 3 Some context

Participants should now search for the first appearance of advertising (in any form). The goal is to help them understand that ads have been around for a long time and in various forms. We will now discuss how advertising has evolved since the emergence of the internet. You may use this [website](#) or any other useful one to get some information about the historical timeline for advertising.

You can make it game-based by having the groups be teams: the first team to get all the right answers wins.

## 4 Targeted and Mass Advertising

Start a debate with the group using guided questions:

‘If I’m watching the same American TV channel as you at the same time in different parts of the US, will the advertising be the same?’

The same questions can be asked for radio and written press. Participants will realise that they will generally be exposed to the same advertising. This is called ‘mass advertising’.

Now we can ask if online advertising is mass advertising. The questions can be asked as before but concerning internet:

‘If we’re on a website, on the same page and place (in the same room), will we see the same

advertising?’

Answer: not always. Some sites advertise by associating ads with the content of an article, for example, and will therefore appear the same regardless of the user in question. However on many sites and search engines, ads are targeted according to our online behaviour.

Ask the group to test this by going to news sites like [the Guardian](#), [Yahoo](#), [BuzzFeed](#) and [Sky Sports](#).

If participants don't see any ads, explain that on news sites, ads are harder and harder to discern. They appear less frequently on the side columns or at the header and more often in the form of 'sponsored content', as such:

Sponsored

## 'I worried I wouldn't be able to put food on the table for my family': How the Covid-19 pandemic threatened businesses - and how the Government is helping them



When the country was put on pause, British businesses were hit hard.

3 shares



## Sponsored »



### Upskill in cobot automation from home with Universal Robots

Universal Robots boasts a 10-year legacy in developing and providing collaborative robots and has a strong footprint in the manufacturing industry across Ireland



### Saving money in times of crisis: what's the best option for Irish savers?

Almost all areas of life are being affected by the spread of the Covid-19 virus. However, in troubled times fixing your interest rates now might be a life-line for your savings later on



### Keogh's Crisps: how a business born out of one crisis is adapting to another

Tom Keogh of Keogh's Crisps talks about the ups and down of the potato business and the fundraising initiative he's launched to support healthcare workers



### The future of flexible work

What will the world of work look like after Covid-19? Adam Coleman, CEO of HRLocker, shares his thoughts on the future of flexible working

5

## Blocking targeted ads

To explain how targeted advertising works, show [this video](#).

This video explains how **cookies** work.

This video being quite 'pro-'cookies, give some ways cookies can be blocked. Before this, ask if the group members have any idea how they might block cookies.

### Answers

- use special tools to block certain cookies and ads that come with them
- use private browsing ('incognito' on Chrome)
- delete browser history
- block cookies directly using the browser

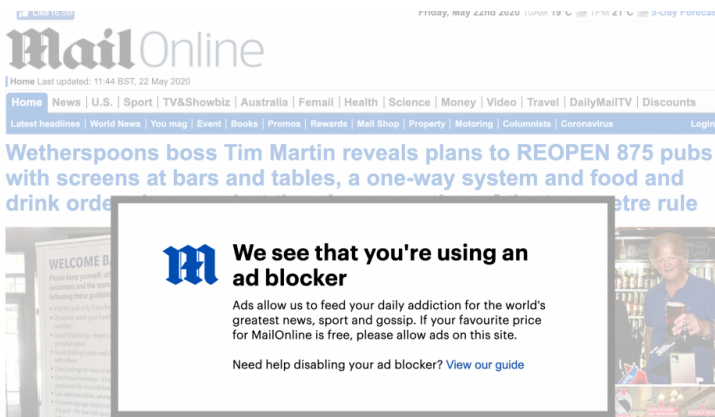
Ask the group if they know about any tools to block cookies and ads.

The most well-known is Adblock. This is a shame since Equeo, the parent company of Adblock, has made agreements with various ad agencies. Adblock actually allows certain ads if their agencies pay to be added to the white list. Adblock is therefore not a true ad blocker.

Browser extensions that are really effective against targeting ads are [Disconnect](#) and [Privacy Badger](#). These are available for Firefox and Chrome.

Install [Privacy Badger](#) and demonstrate how it works. Once it's installed, project your display and go to the website of the UK tabloid newspaper [the Daily Mail](#).

This site along with many others live off ad revenue. When they see a visitor using an ad block tool, they display a message and prevent them from going any further. You will be greeted with the following message:



If you uninstall or turn off privacy badger, the 'ad blocker' screen will disappear and you will be able to navigate the site again.

## 6 Conclusion

The previous screen will provide a jumping off point to discuss the role of advertising in the online



economy: if we block ads, we suppress revenue sources for websites. Ask if participants are aware of other ways to make money online. They will be aware of streaming services like Netflix, Spotify, etc. These sites use another model – subscription – to generate income.

**We almost always need to pay for quality content.** Either users pay with their data, with targeted ads, or they pay in the literal sense of the term with their money. This is why we are seeing more and more paid websites appearing. Many news sites offer paid alternatives to advertising, i.e. if a user subscribes, they will be able to browse the website ad-free.

To go further with this subject, see '[Identifying Online Advertising](#)'.

*The content of this activity was partially inspired by [this article](#) from the French blog 'Doc à bord' by Marie Guillet. It was published under the license CC BY.*