

## Online Advertising Reach Across Sites —Dispelling the Myth

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### Introduction

Reach, the number of people exposed to a particular ad, is a critical metric to advertisers for planning and measuring the success of campaigns. In the offline world, advertisers know that, if they buy time on *Friends* and *Will & Grace*, they are likely to reach many of the same people on both shows. That is, the advertisers are likely to experience duplication of reach across shows, as both are on the same network, the same night, with similar audiences.

In the online world, duplication of reach across sites is not as straightforward to predict. While many websites have the same users, to what extent are those users exposed to the same campaign across those sites? Given that most advertisers tend to buy sites in similar genres, many expect to experience significant amounts of duplication. For example, if an advertiser buys ads on ESPN.com and FoxSports.com, will the same website visitors see the ads on both sites?

Let's say the marketer's goal is to maximize reach and do it cost effectively by reducing duplication across sites. It then becomes important to understand how much duplication there is across those two sites for a given campaign. This is complex due to the fact that online marketing is not a broadcast medium. Users who visit both sites may not necessarily be reached on both sites, as they will only see the ads that are rotated to them while they are on each site.

To help marketers understand how much duplication there is across sites in a campaign, the Atlas Institute set out to answer the question, "To what extent do advertisers today reach the same people via different websites in a campaign?" The answer is important, because it helps marketers mitigate media dollars wasted by reaching the same users on multiple sites.

### Methodology

To measure reach across sites, the Institute used data from a sample of online advertising campaigns served using the Atlas Digital Marketing Suite. 58 unique advertisers contributed to the analysis. (Though the Atlas Institute is unable to disclose the specific advertisers and sites that contributed to this study, it can be noted that many had campaigns focused on specific genres.) For each campaign, the percent of people reached by ads on multiple sites was calculated.

Advertisers were further segmented to understand how different reach levels affect duplicate reach across sites. Low reach levels were defined as 1-10 million people, and high reach levels as 10 million or more people. For the advertisers with lower reach levels, the fewest number of sites for any given campaign was 9. The typical high reach advertiser had about 20 sites on their media plans, with up to 80 sites for the largest campaigns.

### Wide Reach Requires Multiple Sites

Unlike broadcast television or popular print media, for advertisers to reach greater numbers of their target audience online cost effectively, it is a safe strategy to increase the number of sites they advertise on, without fear of excess duplication.

## What We've Learned

As expected, as an advertiser has greater reach, more people see the ads on more than one site. Surprisingly though, the same person rarely sees an advertiser's ads on more than one site –even in large campaigns.

Sites Reached in Campaign	Campaigns Reaching 1-10M Users	Campaigns Reaching 10M+ Users
1	96%	84%
2	4%	13%
3	0%	2%
4	0%	0%

Percent of users reached on 1 or more sites

The table at left shows that, for advertisers in this study with a monthly reach of 1-10 million unique users, 96% of the users seeing an advertiser's ads during a given month see those ads on only one site. The remaining 4% of users see an advertiser's ads on only two sites. For clients with a monthly reach of 10 million or more unique users, 84% see ads on one site, 13% on two sites, and 2% on three sites. In other words, it is a myth that advertisers reach a significant overlap of the same people among the sites in each campaign. In fact, advertisers do not experience significant duplication across sites in a given campaign.

## What This Means for Advertisers

It's worth noting that the more inventory an advertiser buys from two websites with significant user overlap, the greater the chance will be for duplication of reach across sites. For example, buying fixed placements on both ESPN.com and FoxSports.com might generate higher overlap levels. However, in most cases today, advertisers are buying small percentages of any given site's inventory, and as a result, most advertisers observe very little duplicate reach. Unlike broadcast television or popular print media, for advertisers to reach greater numbers of their target audience online cost effectively, it is a safe strategy to increase the number of sites they advertise on, without fear of excess duplication.

## About the Atlas Institute

The Atlas Institute is the research and education arm of Atlas, a provider of accountable marketing tools and expertise for agencies, marketers, and publishers. The Institute publishes Digital Marketing Insights, a series of publications by Atlas senior marketing analysts and digital marketing experts that help our customers improve their digital marketing effectiveness. Many of these findings are also made available to the digital marketing industry at large. Each Digital Marketing Insight report is designed to help marketers more successfully build value with their customers, throughout the customer lifecycle: from awareness to acquisition and from retention to growth. The Atlas Institute also provides education in digital marketing to Atlas customers and partners. To view a full listing of the Atlas Institute's Digital Marketing Insights, please visit [www.AtlasSolutions.com/insights](http://www.AtlasSolutions.com/insights).