The effects of native advertising disclosure format on audience perceptions of legacy and online news publishers
This experimental study examines elements of native advertising disclosures that influence consumers’ ability to recognize content as paid advertising and contrasts subsequent evaluations of legacy and digital-first publishers with those exposed to online display advertising. Although fewer than 1 in 10 participants were able to recognize native advertising, our study shows that effectively designed disclosure labels facilitate recognition. However, participants who did recognize native advertising had lessened opinions of the publisher and the institution of advertising, overall.

This experiment with a representative sample of US adults (N = 800) examines the effects of disclosure design characteristics in sponsored news on readers’ ability to recognize such content as paid advertising, and examines whether such recognition differently affects perceptions of legacy and digital-first publishers. Although fewer than 1 in 10 participants were able to recognize native advertising, our study shows that effectively designed disclosure labels facilitate recognition. However, participants who did recognize native advertising had lessened opinions of the publisher and the institution of advertising, overall.


Audiences are often surprised at the full range of services the BBC provides, as they tend to think first of the smaller range of services they themselves use regularly. Some people are broadly supportive of the notion of the BBC providing a diverse range of services, though there is also a feeling that perhaps some specialist output could be catered for within the mainstream services. perceptions of value for money and indeed, throughout the study, the audience cites the programmes they watch on the BBC as the reasons behind the scores they give on a number of different measures2. When the full range of the BBC’s television, radio and online services are shown to people, they are often surprised by its scale and scope20. July 2012. Native advertising is a type of advertising, mostly online, that matches the form and function of the platform upon which it appears. In many cases, it manifests as either an article or video, produced by an advertiser with the specific intent to promote a product, while matching the form and style which would otherwise be seen in the work of the platform's editorial staff. The word “native” refers to this coherence of the content with the other media that appear on the platform.