

Internet
Week
Gone Wild

Search
Engines of
Change

Tim Hanlon
Is Not
Afraid

The
iPhone
of Cars

Gaming
Gets
Really Real

MediaPost's

THE
TOP ONLINE
MARKETERS
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Who's Still Spending?

As forecasters wonder if we've hit bottom, our list of the 50 top online spenders may come in handy

MARKETS

The Best Five (or Six) Years

College slackers open their parents' pocketbooks by Tanya Irwin

Forget Animal House and the old stereotypes regarding college students. Today's 18- to 24-year-olds have more than beer bong on their minds.

These are savvy consumers with sophisticated tastes in clothing, dining and recreation. They each have about \$300 in monthly discretionary spending,

according to the 360 Youth/Harris Interactive College Explorer Study. That adds up to \$170-\$200 billion in annual spending, a record amount, according to a recent Packaged Facts study of college consumers.

Not only do they spend money on themselves, their family and friends, but they also influence the purchases of the people around them, says Scott Hines, vice president of marketing at SeeSaw Networks. "They will be the next dominant generation of purchasing Americans," Hines says. "If they become loyal to a brand, they present an enormous lifetime value in potential revenue for that brand."

Away from the direct influence of their parents, college students make hundreds of first-time, independent buying decisions. These are decisions that will influence their preferences and purchasing habits for years to come.

These young adults grew up in a media-saturated, brand-conscious world, Hines says. And those attributes make them a great advertising opportunity for "entry level" luxury brands in particular, he adds.

Weekday evenings are spent studying, with much of that time spent on the Internet. Along with doing research for class, college kids are also catching up on email or perusing social networking Web sites. They rarely watch more than six to eight hours of TV a week and when they're watching, they are likely to fast forward through ads using their DVRs. Traditional TV, print and radio advertising is just not going to be effective in reaching college students. The Internet represents the best shot at them.

Back To School

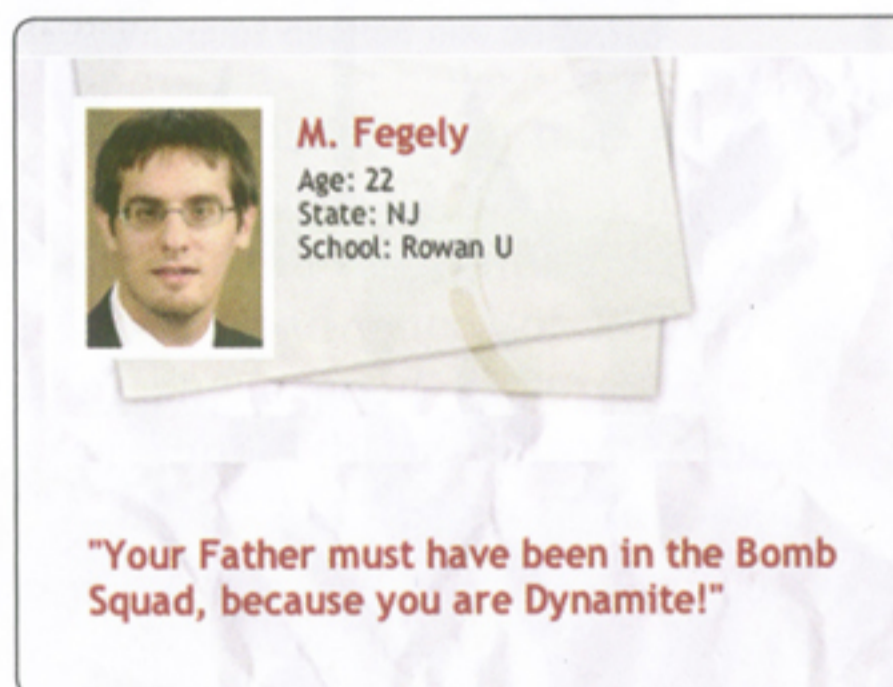
PointRoll launched an online campaign in partnership with Alloy Media + Marketing, a provider of media and marketing programs reaching targeted consumer segments, for the Pentel "Hyper-G Smoothest Line." The ad was designed and produced by Alloy and served by PointRoll.

The comprehensive back-to-school initiative leveraged Alloy's youth-targeted online advertising network, teen.com, to promote its new line of eco-friendly Hyper-G pens to the college market.

Upon rollover, the ad unit expanded, streamed a collection of smooth and irreverent pickup lines by college students, and invited users to submit their own "Smoothest Line" video at yoursmoothestline.com for a chance to win a national sweepstakes. According to PointRoll metrics, the Pentel ad unit performed at an interaction rate 284 percent greater than average.

Catherine Spurway, vice president of strategy and marketing for PointRoll, says, "The interactive elements — computer configurators, apparel selectors, data feeds of school supply sales and more — inspired students and parents to engage, resulting in interaction rates of 5 percent, over 11 seconds on average of time spent interacting with the brand, and over 100 million conversion opportunities."

Alloy's interactive campaign for Pentel also included an on-campus experiential component on 37 college campuses, which captured students' "Smoothest Line" videos and posted them to a dedicated Pentel contest microsite. In addition, the campaign was promoted in college newspapers, on campus posters and through on-location brand buzz squads.



A finalist for the Smoothest Line contest that would work on exactly 0% of women worldwide.

"We wanted to introduce college consumers to our new Hyper-G pen in a unique way that would get them talking about us and connect them to our product with a fun and interactive experience," says Marty Furman, chief operating officer at Pentel.

"With the constant online messages and media that college-aged consumers encounter on a daily basis, marketers need to approach this group in the same manner they are engaging online — interactively," says Dea Lawrence, vice president of West Coast sales at PointRoll. "With the increase in social networks and smart connected devices, the college-aged demographic is best targeted online. This age group has more access to the Internet than ever, and it is important for marketers to offer rich, engaging and interactive online campaigns that catch and keep their attention."

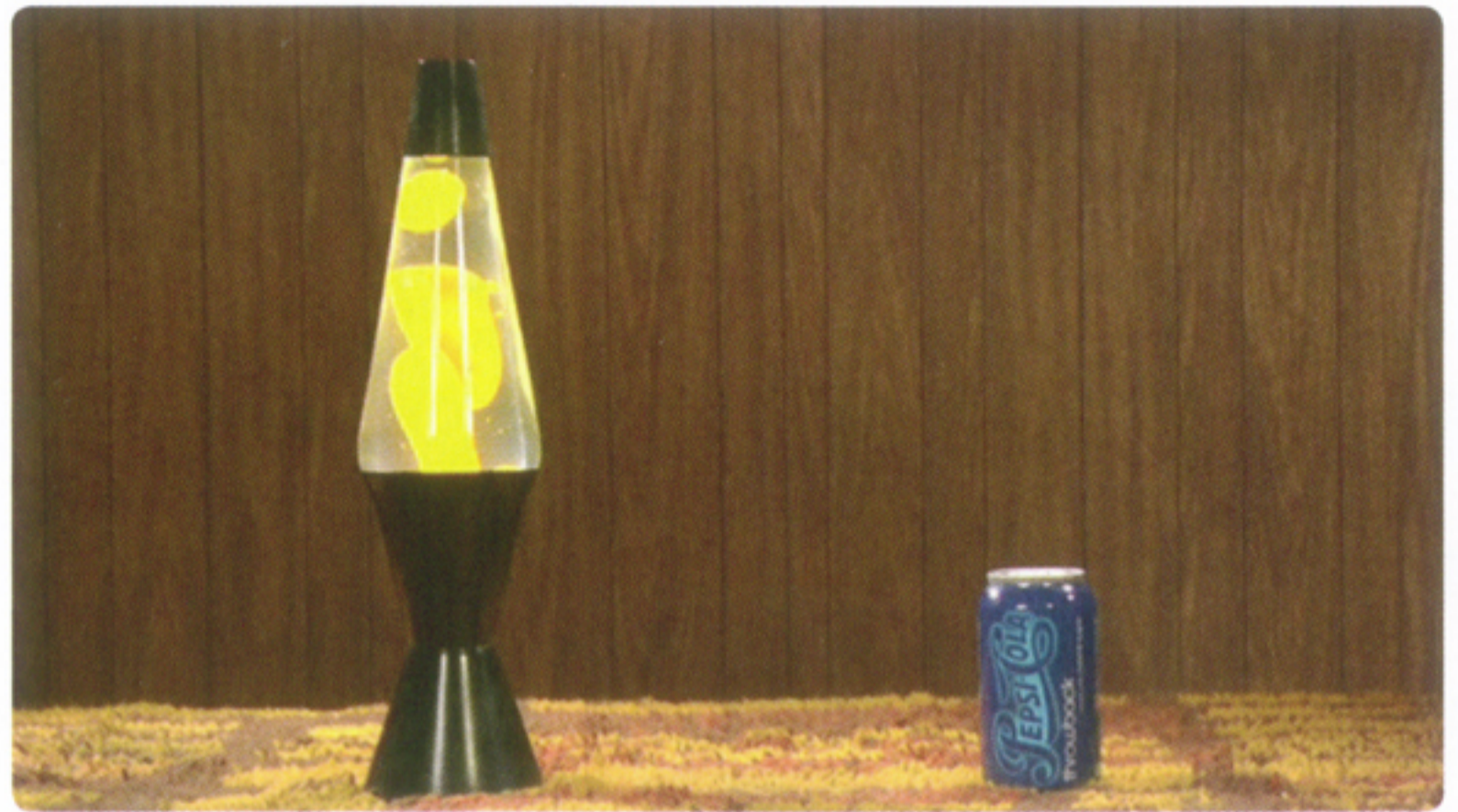
We Are the Champions

Champion athletic apparel brand launched Hoodie Remix through a dedicated site, hoodieremix.com, an interactive online contest in self-expression that pays tribute to the hooded sweatshirt — a favorite of college students.

Fans of the hoodie were invited to log on and create their own unique design through a user-friendly template that offers a mix of color, pattern and overall style options. With interchangeable hoods, sleeves, pockets and more, consumers were free to customize and create their own design of a Champion classic. All Hoodie Remix designs submitted by eligible participants to the site will be made available for public viewing and voting.

Banner ads supporting the contest, created by digital agency Night Agency, are running on Web properties including ESPN, MTV, People, Daily Candy and Men's Health. Consumers were also encouraged to share their designs via voter widgets ideal for Facebook, MySpace and other popular community sites. The winning entry, which had not been selected as of press time, may also be produced and sold as a limited-edition hoodie by Champion.

New York-based Night Agency also created a campaign for the STA (Student Travel Agency) that targeted college kids online and offered a bunch of on/offline cross-promotions including a trip around the world as an STA rep. They created an entire new site for the initiative and encouraged a "community" feeling with online chat rooms



and activities online that also resulted in in-store redemption and brand recognition.

"STA has over 50,000 students who have signed up and opted in by way of our social media programs," says Darren Paul, managing partner at Night Agency. Over 189,000 entries were submitted for the HoodieRemix contest, he adds.

That '70s Show

Everything old is new again since today's college students have an affinity for nostalgia. A new Pepsi ad campaign includes retro-oriented spots running online via Hulu during shows from the '70s and '80s.

The 15-second ads promote "Pepsi Throwback," a beverage launched in April to tap into the nostalgia market. It features packaging reminiscent of '70s designs — and uses real sugar like the soft-drink formula did 40 years ago (a nod to the bad publicity received by high fructose corn syrup.)

The beverage giant hopes the ads will connect with a youth audience that is discovering programs from the '70s and '80s, thanks to Hulu.

In one spot, a Pepsi Throwback can reminisces with a vintage Polaroid camera. Another, called "Pet Rock," shows a Pepsi Throwback can chatting with a U.S. Bicentennial-era collector's item about how the two "go way back."

Pepsi worked with youth entertainment site collegehumor.com to create three of the commercials. CollegeHumor's spots feature two guys spoofing the '80s. In one, they are shown playing video games when a phone call arrives from someone who uses vintage catchphrases like "Eat my shorts." See, we told you they had more than beer bong on their minds. Not much more, but still. ■

Pepsi Throwback doesn't make us pine for the days of UHF and pet rock simplicity, but we're weak in the nostalgic knees at the thought of a radical roller skating shindig.