Kilpatrick

March 19, 2020

# COVID-19: Digital Advertising Turnaround!

by Jon Neiditz

---

*Please note: The below information may require updating, including additional clarification, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to develop. Please monitor our main COVID-19 Task Force page for updates.*

The digital advertising industry has been under attack through the GDPR and the CCPA for years now. The usual, ineffectual counters to these attacks from industry proponents trying to demonstrate the value of digital advertising are quickly consumed by the flames of the techlash. The lives we will now be living as the workplace exodus brings everybody home for the first time since the first industrial revolution, however – perhaps even in multiple waves over the next 18 months – may offer the digital advertising world a unique opportunity to provide concrete assistance to some of those hardest-hit by COVID-19: local businesses and local communities.

These will be the most critical discoveries and opportunities:

1. The customers of local community businesses are more local and stationary than ever; “they ain’t going nowhere."
2. That whole location-tracking kerfuffle (like a number of the state privacy bills it was inspiring) is simply over for now; home address is all the location information digital advertisers need now. No more location surveillance necessary, a welcome spring rain on the techlash wildfires, particularly in concert with death of cookies.
3. Customers often want to help support their community and its small businesses. (You want to be where everybody knows your name, not necessarily where a computer knows that you’re a shoe intender.)
4. Therefore, the face of retailer and its associated goodwill are important to the relationship and to sales; it just has to become – at least for now – an electronic face. Consumer agreements and spending simply must take place remotely.
5. The delivery systems of the retailer, on the other hand, need to change and are changing fast, perhaps for the longer-term; for example, producers of food for local restaurants are delivering straight to the home.
6. Digital advertising platforms are uniquely able to reach local households with the new electronic faces of local businesses and community organizations in which those households would be interested.
7. By connecting local customers with local businesses, and helping both thrive, the digital advertising industry could establish its criticality to the maintenance of local businesses and communities during and after COVID-19.

We are stepping up very well to our duty to be alone for the sake of others, relying heavily on the social technology that keeps community alive. Digital advertising can contribute tremendously to the new e-faces urgently needed by local communities if they are to survive, and that activity will be key to ending the current techlash. Let's get to work.