A INTERNET E A COMUNICAÇÃO NO MERCADO OUTDOOR
ANÁLISE DOS WEBSITES DAS EMPRESAS DE PUBLICIDADE EXTERIOR EM PORTUGAL

THE INTERNET AND THE COMMUNICATION OF OUTDOOR ADVERTISING MARKET
WEB ANALYSE OF OUTDOOR ADVERTISING COMPANIES IN PORTUGAL

ABSTRACT The object of the present research is to study a group of Outdoor Advertising companies in Portugal. The main goal of this research is to analyze the websites of these companies which have a website with information about the different kind of outdoors. The specific goal is to understand what kind of information is on the website and to which is focused. The methodology applied to this research consists of quantitative analysis and content analysis of the websites of Outdoor Advertising companies. As result of this research is possible to group the number of companies to each categories of outdoors. The major number of websites focused the communication to the localization of the outdoors in the different Portuguese cities.

RESUMO O objecto de estudo neste trabalho de investigação é um grupo de empresas que detém redes de suportes de Publicidade Exterior em Portugal continental. O objectivo geral deste trabalho de investigação é realizar um estudo sobre os websites das empresas portuguesas que operam como distribuidoras no sector da Publicidade Exterior. Para isso serão analisados os websites das empresas seleccionadas: as empresas que actuam no sector da Publicidade Exterior com website e que detém uma rede de suportes de Outdoors. O objectivo específico é perceber qual a informação constante nos websites destas empresas e para quem é dirigida. A metodologia aplicada a esta pesquisa consiste na análise quantitativa e de conteúdo sobre os sites das empresas dos operadores de Publicidade Exterior em Portugal. Os resultados agrupam o número de empresas relativamente às categorias dos tipos de suportes. Por fim concluímos que a maioria dos websites analisados direcciona a sua comunicação para a localização dos suportes de Publicidade Exterior que disponibilizam.

KEYWORDS
Web Communication, Web, Websites analyse, Outdoor Advertising Companies

PALAVRAS-CHAVE
Comunicação na Web, Internet, Análise de sites, Empresas distribuidoras de Publicidade Exterior

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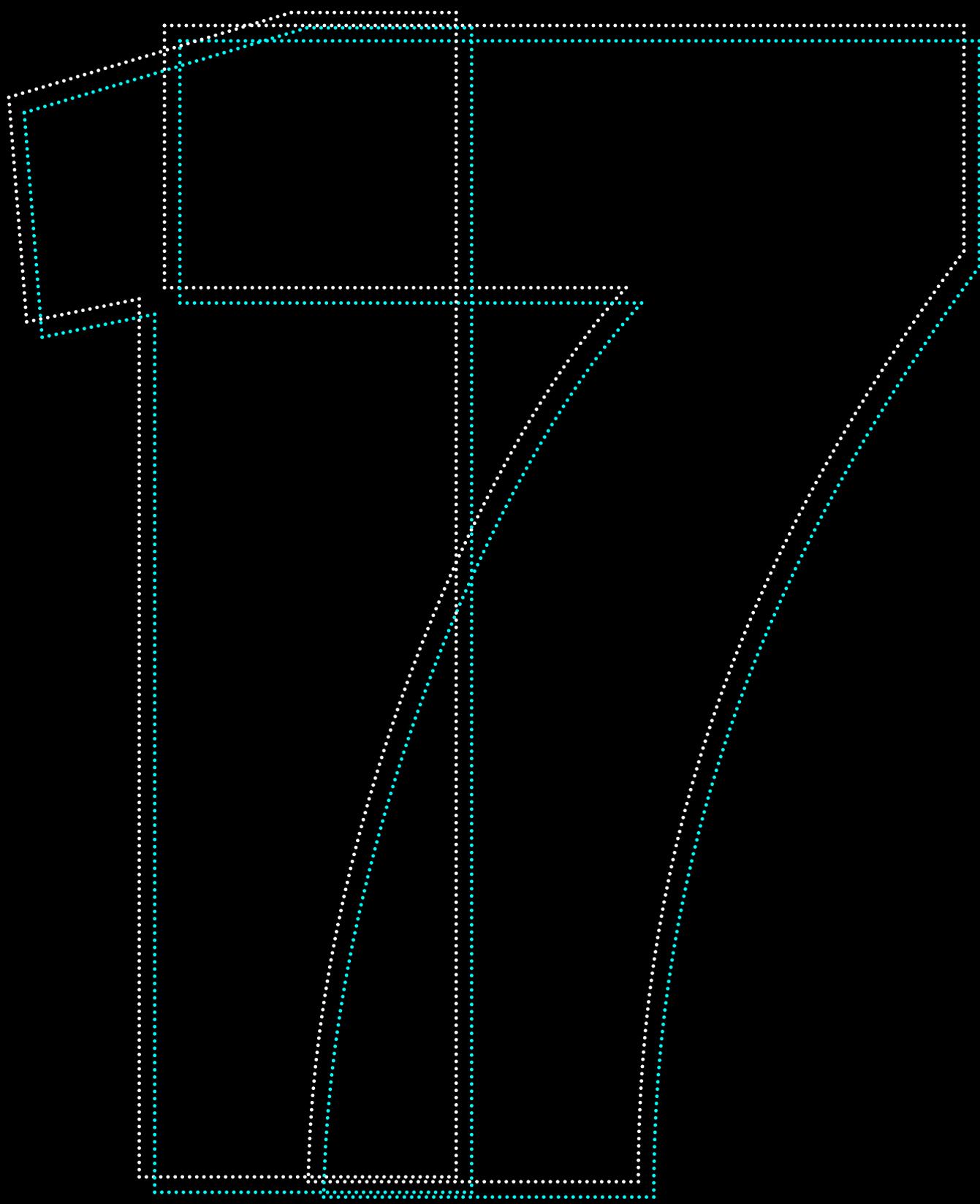
1.
INTRODUCTION

This research work has the goal of studying the communication with the publics in the websites of companies working in Outdoor Advertising Market in Portugal, that provides advertisers and media agencies Outdoor Advertising networks in Portugal.

THE INTERNET

The Internet made possible communication between a company and its public faster and in a more economic way. Communication is one of the most important aspects of a company and is considered an ally to business management, since the way in which communication is carried out with the publics of a company make the difference between creating a positive or negative image and make the difference between selling or not their products / services. It is important to have a good product or service with a good quality / price ratio but if it is not communicated it does not exist. The complexity of the current market drives companies to adopt increasingly innovative techniques to communicate and to help their sales.

The Internet has been described as a communication mechanism and in this sense allows interaction with a variety of public (Watson, et al. 2000: 97). In this research we look to the communication with the different publics of a company in a Public Relations perspective and the importance of Internet sites and corporate public relations has been studied and highlighted (Hallahan, 2000: 223-224; Kent & Taylor, 1998: 321-322).

The methodology applied in this study consists of content analysis on the company websites of the operators of Outdoor Advertising in Portugal. The results show that the information in the websites of these companies is placed to inform the public about the networks of Outdoor, trying to get a sale.

2.
THE INTERNET – A MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION

Soon the Internet has become an essential tool for organizational communication, which allows companies to communicate with their public (Stuart & Jones, 2004: 3; Baumann, 2011: 110). So far, the technique used most frequently to communicate was the advertising in different medias of mass communication: Television, Press and Radio. Secondly it is mentioned the Internet as a tool for communication and business management(Carrillo et al. 2005: 565). Other previous research demonstrated the high importance of business sites in Public Relations making more effective communication with the company publics. (Hill & White, 2000: 32; Kent et al., 2003: 64)

Outras investigações já realizadas provaram a elevada importância dos sites empresariais nas Relações Públicas tornando mais eficaz a comunicação com os seus públicos.

A internet tem a vocação de revolucionar a comunicação e colocar à disposição das organizações um amplo leque de possibilidades para melhorar a sua imagem e comunicar com os seus públicos, com custos económicos reduzidos, aproveitando as possibilidades multimédia. Por outro lado, a relação com os meios de comunicação é fortemente potenciada com a utilização da internet (Costa et al., 2007: 273-274).

A internet tem sido descrita como um mecanismo de comunicação e neste sentido é encarada como meio de co-

municação para fins diversos que permite a interacção com uma diversidade de públicos (Watson, et al. 2000: 97). For Stuart & Jones (2004: 5) the Internet can take on different roles in the communication of a company and the most significant differentiating factor is the ability to access the message at a time that is convenient for the public.

TABLE 1. ROLE OF THE INTERNET IN THE COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMPANY (ADAPTED FROM STUART & JONES 2004:5).

ROLE OF THE INTERNET IN THE COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMPANY
Persuasive Advertising Media
Educate and inform customers
One way to communicate and interact with customers
One way to build and maintain relationships with customers
Just a source of entertainment

Internet has been appointed as a mean of communication between a company and its stakeholders. However, Web 2.0 can be analyzed in order to expand the market, especially for smaller firms.

For Para Dholakia & Kshetri (2004:311) the Internet can be a critical factor in improving and increasing the market for providing small to medium sized businesses the opportunity to overcome the limitations of its size enabling compete more effectively in larger markets.

In a market perspective, the Internet allows smaller companies to increase international market opportunities (Hamill & Gregory, 1997:2; Lituchy & Rail, 2000:3). In this sense, Williams (1999:20), reinforces that the Internet increases the opportunities for SMEs, which increase the capabilities of these to compete with other companies both locally and nationally, assuming the role of a promotional tool and allowing transactions twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

The global or integrated communication should be proactive, but most of the SMEs performs a reactive communication, implementing communication actions in order to respond to specific needs (Carrillo et al., 2005: 24-25).

Portuguese companies are at different stages in using the Internet as a tool that complements the communication actions and the relations with the stakeholders. Pereira (2007:303-304) refers to information and communication technologies produce many efficiencies in communication, including the ability to communicate faster and more accurately to the target groups. The research done by Pereira (2007:315) concluded that the percentage of companies that rely on the capabilities of information and communication technologies to help achieve the objectives of deliver information is 28%, a low value which may denote a lack of confidence.

3.
THE DIFFER-ENT GENRES ON THE WEB

In this research work, we approach Web 2.0 as a privileged tool that currently allows you to pass information about the business and the company's products.

In a initial stage, many companies look at Web, as one more way to disseminate information and often move the existing documents to this new virtual space. But some companies have begun to experience the capabilities of the Web to communicate and interact in new ways by creating new genres of communication (Crowston & Williams, 2000: 201). A Gender is a classified statement characterized by having similar content and form, in which the content refers to themes and topics.

The forms are the physical and linguistic characteristics observed (Shepherd & Watters, 1998:97).

Roussinov et al (2001:2) refer that companies have used the Web to publish information such as brochures, annual reports and pages about countries, states or cities and press releases from government agencies. These authors reported that with the different genres or types of Internet communication clearly defined it will be easier to find information in the moment of the survey.

Thus, fourteen genres are defined to facilitate searching on the Web that are: arts and cultural activities, academic research, Shopping, News, Health, Travel Plans, Hobbies, Computer Information, Countries, Reading, Job, Help for use computers and printers, laser time, Education. From this list highlight two types of information that are related to our research topic. The Genre Shopping is associated with items such as product information, advertising, business pages and lists of products. The Genre "News" is linked to pages of companies, articles, lists of results, records, product information, articles and pages of stock quotes (Rouxinol *et all* 2001: 4-5).

The work of these authors includes the business pages in two different genres included in the sites most used, according to the respondents. In the first place was registered the academic research (22%), in second place was recorded Shopping (12%) and News in fifth at 7.10%.

These results show that the companies' public research on the business sites, which explains the importance of corporate websites in the communication strategies of the companies.

4.
METHODOLOGY

In this paper will be present a survey realized among a group of companies that operate in specifies advertising market. It is a group of outdoor network suppliers: the outdoor advertising companies in Portuguese market.

The aim of this research work is to analyze the websites of a thirty group of Portuguese companies to see if this business tool is being used to communicate the advantages of this business and more specifically the type of outdoor networks that each company offers to their clients and where they are located.

The methodology was based on quantitative and content analysis of websites of thirty companies operating as suppliers in Portuguese Outdoor Advertising market.

4.1 RESULTS ANALYSIS – THE WEBSITES OF OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SUPPLIERS

In order to analyze the websites of Portuguese Outdoor Advertising suppliers was built a framework with information common to all websites. The essential criteria data for this business that should be easily identified on the website of each of these companies are:

· Company name / logo
· Contacts and location of company
· City – Capital District where the company is headquartered
· Information on the Outdoor Advertising Media: media type and location

The websites of the companies surveyed complied with these requirements, the last one, information on media Outdoor Advertising, is the one which occupies more space on the website of this group of companies.

Table two presents the number of companies grouped in different types of media according to the categories presented in the same table. It is clear that most, sixteen companies, provide outdoor locations and Street Furniture.

The large outdoors format or screens is a trend used more lately that would be more developed if there weren't law restrictions. The supplier of large outdoors format is in the second position, once we could count six companies that has this kind of market as the principal activity. Production or printing of outdoor advertising is one aspect of the business that turns out to complement the other shares and that is assumed by several companies that provide outdoor networks.

In the market of Outdoor Advertising is often a company to provide different types of media, so some companies that offer the Billboard also have positions in outdoor ads in the Large Format, and their own graphic to print their posters.

Companies that have a larger size and are in the market for over ten years, eventually encompass several aspects of the business.

TABLE 2. OUTDOOR ADVERTISING COMPANIES GROUPED ACCORDING TO THE NETWORK OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEDIA.

TYPE OF NETWORKS AVAILABLE ACCORDING TO MEDIA GROUPS OUTDOOR ADVERTISING[1]	NUMBER OF COMPANIES
Rede de diferentes tipos de suportes:	
Outdoor 4x3, 8x3 e Mupis e outro tipo de suporte que deriva do cartaz[2]	16
Grande formato ou Telas	6
Redes de transportes públicos[3]:	
Redes de Autocarros Grande Lisboa e nacional	
Metro Grande Lisboa e Porto	
Táxis rede nacional	
Comboios rede nacional	4
Rede de Multibanco (nacional)	1
Impressão e /ou Produção	1
Suportes inovadores	2

A content analysis of websites of the Outdoor Advertising suppliers showed that few companies put on the website detailed information about the networks of outdoor advertising, having been observed in these sample two companies.

The majority, twenty-three companies, chooses to use the picture of where the outdoor is located with the address. These photographs are a proof of the advertisers that each firm has. The picture of the outdoor advertising also shows the image of a particular campaign.

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[1] In the market of Outdoor Advertising is often a company to provide different types of media, so some companies that offer the Billboard also have positions in outdoor ads in the Large Format, and their own graphic to print their posters.

[2] Outdoor advertising is considered the first form of advertising. The first modern poster is signed by Jules Cheret, with the name of *Bal du Moulin Rouge*, dated from the late sixties of the nineteenth century. (Mesquita 2006: 46).
In 1930 in Portugal, the modern poster has dual function of being exposed indoor and outdoor in public spaces. In general presents a vertical format 70x100cm or 80 x 120 cm. (Estrela, 2004:64).

[3] Outdoor advertising companies in transports are the ones who have Outdoor Advertising networks in transport and / or in the transport stations.

If these photos are effective in showing the actual location of the posters, they not clearly inform the advertisers about how the outdoor network positions are sold. The advertiser can put his campaign in a few outdoors or must by a national network to announce their products services?

Most sites follows a simple structure, and are focused in the visual information about the outdoor networks that the company offers. The usual information about the companies as history, mission and values is reduced. Our analysis showed that only four companies have an area on the website dedicated to information for the press, showing that communication with the journalists is not yet a priority.

5.
CONCLUSIONS

The Outdoor Advertising suppliers apparently focus their websites communication to active publics. In these websites there are few additional information on the definition and categories of this media, as well as the relation between suppliers and advertiser. Altogether, this means that these companies assume that their websites are viewed by customers / advertisers who know the business and that they already have basic knowledge. Prospects or advertisers looking for the first time this advertising medium, cannot find easily information from how to use outdoor advertising media and if can contact directly these kind of companies or must contract a creative or media advertising agency first.

Different authors point to the need to rank websites in their different genres. This is the easiest way to show the importance of corporate websites and consequently the way they communicate with different audiences. Studies show that corporate websites are the second most visited by different types of public companies (12%).

On the other hand, the Internet can be a critical factor to increase and improve the market of companies of all the dimensions, by providing the opportunity to spread and then sell products to regional, national or international markets.

In the literature review were pointed the different roles that the Internet can have. The role more used in this group of companies is one that regards the Internet as one more way to educate and inform customers. The websites of these companies are basically a vehicle to show the network outdoor advertising.

Regarding the interaction with customers, we found that in some cases it is associated to the location of the posters using the googlemap to see where the context is actually located (ten companies in a total of thirty). In two websites was found a simulator that allows placing a picture of the advertiser's campaign in a specific billboard that is represented with a photograph of its location on the street.

The group of companies analyzed, uses the website as a tool to communicate with their audiences, in the perspective of presenting their network outdoor advertising. Most of the sites analyzed, twenty-three in total of thirty, put the picture of the poster with it's address in a footer label.

For communication with other audiences that should be a priority for these companies - the journalists of press, radio and Television, only three sites of these companies had Press Area. It is common knowledge that the area devoted to the press means having a communication professional working in the external communication planned by the companies, or, hiring a Public Relations Agency. In Portugal, has been the trend that biggest companies have a Public Relations Agency, once the media are amplifiers of the corporate message. However, there are companies that are unaware of this aspect of communication, and they can not afford to pay to a Communication professional.

Overall, we conclude that the Outdoor Advertising Suppliers use the websites as a channel to communicate the business. However these companies may take advantage of the Internet to spread the advantages of Outdoor Advertising and persuade effectively the different stakeholders to generate more business opportunities and news.

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