Children are increasingly exposed to marketing online. Online games, applications and social media sites are all used to attract Europe’s young consumers. A European Commission study examined the impact of online marketing on children’s behaviour.

**How children are targeted in online games**

- **Contextual ads**
- **Ads for unhealthy lifestyle**
- **Ads for unhealthy foods**
- **Targeted ads**
- **Prompts to make In-app purchases**

Two behavioural experiments with children were conducted as part of this study. One investigated the effects of being exposed to embedded advertisements in games and the other investigated the effects of being exposed to prompts to make In-app purchases.

Children are vulnerable to prompts to make In-app purchases. Advertisements in online games has an impact on children’s behaviour. Some controls can reduce their spending.

Parents in different countries have different approaches to monitoring their children’s activities online. The results below show tendencies in the 8 EU countries studied. These differences mean that children across the EU do not have the same level of protection against online marketing.

Parents have an important role to play in moderating their children’s behaviour online, but they are not always aware of all the risks.

**What are the effects**

Contextual advertisements in online games are understood as part of the daily experience. Online advertisements are perceived as normal, and their impact on children is low. Embedding advertisements into games is considered normal by children and is perceived as integrated into the gameplay.

- **Black boxes**
  - Advergames are hidden high-interest games.
  - Contained embedded ('hidden') ads
  - Contained contextual ads
  - Contained inducements to keep playing
  - Contained In-app purchases

Advertisements in online games have different impacts on children depending on the type of game. Advertisements in social media games have a lower impact on children’s behaviour. Children are more likely to be exposed to advertisements in application games than in social media games. Advergames are more likely to be exposed to advertisements than application games.

- **Application games**
  - 9/12 applications games
  - 1/12 application games
  - 5/12 application games

- **Social media games**
  - 6/6 social media games
  - 6/6 social media games

Advergames are more likely to be exposed to advertisements than application games.

- **Application games**
  - Advergames: 0/7
  - Application games: 7/7

- **Social media games**
  - Advergames: 3/7
  - Social media games: 3/7

Advergames are more likely to be exposed to advertisements than application games.

**Online protection**

Parents have a crucial role to play in protecting their children from online advertisements. They should be aware of the different types of advertisements and the potential impact on their children’s behaviour. The study analysed the impact of online marketing through an in-depth analysis of games, behavioural experiments, focus groups, surveys as well as a literature review and a regulatory review. See the full study online.

**Parents’ concerns about children’s accesses online**

Parents are concerned about the impact of online marketing on their children's behaviour online. The study found that parents are concerned about the impact of online marketing on their children's behaviour online. The study found that parents are concerned about the impact of online marketing on their children's behaviour online.

- 27% of parents are concerned about the impact of online marketing on their children's behaviour online.

**MAIN CONCERNS**

- Advergames can lead to a subconscious change in children’s behaviour.
- Advergames can lead to increased spending.
- Advergames can lead to increased purchases.
- Advergames can lead to increased In-app purchases.
- Advergames can lead to increased诱导ments to keep playing.

**PARENTS’ PERCEPTION OF CHILDREN’S ATTITUDE TO ONLINE MARKETING**

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**APPLICATIONS**

- **Online Video Games**
  - Contained embedded ads
  - Contained contextual ads
  - Contained In-app purchases

- **Application Games**
  - Contained embedded ads
  - Contained contextual ads
  - Contained In-app purchases

- **Social Media Games**
  - Contained embedded ads
  - Contained contextual ads
  - Contained In-app purchases

**Advergames**

Advergames are online video games that promote a particular brand, product or marketing message by integrating it into the game. They are designed to be engaging and addictive, and they encourage children to spend money on in-app purchases. Advergames can lead to a subconscious change in children’s behaviour, as they are designed to be highly addictive and engaging.

Advergames are more likely to be exposed to advertisements than application games. This means that children are more likely to be exposed to advertisements in Advergames than in application games. Advergames are more likely to be exposed to advertisements than application games.

Advergames can lead to increased spending, purchases and In-app purchases. They are designed to be highly addictive and engaging, and they encourage children to spend money on in-app purchases.

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