

The Impact of APP Splash Screen Ads on User Experience and Media Ecology

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Abstract: With the rapid development of mobile Internet, APP splash screen advertisement, as a new form of advertisement, has gradually become an important part of the advertising industry. These advertisements are mandated to display upon user app launch, resulting in high visibility and immediacy. However, many controversies regarding user experience has also been sparked. Beginning with core communication concepts, this paper examines the role and effects of APP splash screen ads in information dissemination, investigating their impact on user behavior, particularly regarding cognitive and attitudinal shifts. In addition, it explores the effects of app splash screen advertising on the media ecology, including user acceptance of advertising and challenges to traditional media models. Through a review of existing literature and case studies, the paper aims to reveal the dynamic role of advertising in the digital communication environment. As such, the paper may propose corresponding optimization strategies and solutions to improve user experience and promote the healthy development of the advertising industry.

Keywords: APP Splash Screen Ads, User Experience, Media Ecology, Digital Media

1. Introduction

APP splash screen ads appear as the first advertisements displayed when users open the app, usually presented in a non-skippable full-screen or half-screen format [1]. And this form of advertisement is marked by its immediacy, high visibility, and significant interactivity. With the rapid development of the mobile Internet, APP splash screen ads have increasingly become a crucial component of the advertising industry. In the digital communication environment, this kind of advertisement not only attracts users' attention quickly [2], but may exert a significant influence on user experience and the dissemination of information. The paper aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the impact of APP splash screen ads on user behavior and media ecology, especially how it affects users' cognition and attitude. Through the integration of the theoretical framework of communication studies, the paper examines the role of this advertising format in the information dissemination process and analyze its advantages and disadvantages in terms of user experience. In addition, the paper adopts the methods of literature review and case study analysis to review the research results in related fields and analyze the actual effects and user feedback of current APP splash screen ads through examples. It can be expected to help provide optimization strategies for the advertising industry to improve user experience and promote the development of a healthy media ecosystem.

2. The current situation and features of APP splash screen Ads

2.1. The current situation of APP splash screen Ads

As an emerging form of advertising, APP splash screen ads have seen widespread application and development in China in recent years. Relevant data shows that the scale of the mobile advertising market in China continues to grow, with app splash screen ads capturing a significant market share. The proliferation of this advertising format offers advertisers a multitude of revenue streams, including avenues for brand exposure and conversion rate optimization. However, it also presents a challenge to users, as it can result in an overload of information and visual clutter. In the context of information dissemination, APP splash screen ads rapidly capture user attention via a forced display method, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the advertisement. The immediate and unavoidable nature of these ads allows advertisers to convey information as users access the application, thereby ensuring the exposure of the advertisement content [3].

Nevertheless, this forced display can lead to a gradual decline in user acceptance of the ads, as users may feel compelled to watch them, resulting in fatigue that negatively affects their overall experience. Furthermore, with the continuous evolution of advertising formats, user expectations regarding both content quality and presentation methods are increasingly elevated. If the advertising content fails to align with users' interests and needs, or if the duration of display is excessively prolonged, it may provoke user aversion, thereby resulting in a counterproductive advertising effect. This effect is especially evident in the current context of information overload, where users are increasingly inclined to engage in selective reception and filtration of information. Thus, advertisers should closely pay more attention to user feedback and acceptance when developing splash screen advertising strategies to strike a balance in information dissemination, enhancing user satisfaction and brand loyalty [4].

2.2. The features of APP splash screen Ads

App splash screen ads can quickly capture users' attention in a short amount of time, but frequent displays may lead to user fatigue. These ads are characterized by their significant timeliness, as they are immediately visible when users open the app, ensuring the prompt delivery of information. Also, splash screen ads are displayed first when users enter the app, gaining primary visual attention and greatly enhancing brand and information exposure. Moreover, many splash screen ads incorporate interactive elements such as buttons and slides, which enrich the interaction experience between users and the ads, allowing users to actively engage rather than passively receive information. In terms of content format, APP splash screen ads are diverse, including images, text, and videos, effectively attracting various types of users and enhancing the flexibility and appeal of information delivery. Finally, APP splash screen ads can be directly shown when users open the app, enabling advertisers to target their audience with precision based on user behavior and preferences, thereby improving conversion rates. While app splash screen ads exhibit strong immediacy and interactivity in information dissemination, they also present challenges related to user fatigue and declining acceptance. Thus, advertisers need to carefully design ad content and display strategies to maintain user attention and satisfaction.

3. The impact of APP splash screen Ads on user experience

3.1. User cognition and attitude

The mandatory display feature of APP splash screen ads exerts a direct influence on user cognition and attitudes. Users are often faced with non-skippable ads that require them to wait a specified

amount of time before closing them, thus ruining their overall experience. When the close button is not clearly visible or the ad cannot be dismissed easily, confusion and dissatisfaction among users significantly increase. Despite users typically feeling annoyed rather than outright dislike, partly due to the relatively short duration of the ads, the cumulative effect of these brief interruptions can still influence their overall perceptions of the app. From a communication studies perspective, the formation of user attitudes is closely linked to the relevance of the ad content and its presentation. When the ad content does not align with user needs, negative emotions may intensify. Research indicates that users' emotional responses to ads not only affect their acceptance of the advertisement but can also have a potential impact on brand loyalty. Therefore, designers must rigorously evaluate user experience and perceptions when developing app splash screen ads to optimize the presentation and content, thereby mitigating negative impacts and enhancing user satisfaction. By analyzing user feedback and behavioral data, advertisers can more accurately adjust their advertising strategies to improve overall user experience and brand recognition [5].

3.2. User experience evaluation

The evaluation of user experience can be analyzed across several dimensions, including ad content, duration, frequency, interactivity, and closability. For example, the “Shake to Redirect Ads” feature on e-commerce platforms such as JD.com and Taobao effectively capture user attention upon app entry, leveraging unconscious behaviors to enhance ad engagement. To minimize user resistance, ad content should closely match users’ interests and needs, avoiding intrusive promotional messages. This approach aligns with the recipient-oriented theory in communication studies, emphasizing that information must meet audience expectations. Managing ad duration is critical, as studies indicate that excessively long advertisements can reduce viewer attention, whereas overly brief ads may fail to communicate information effectively. Therefore, ad duration should be kept between 3-5 seconds to ensure users can effectively receive information without feeling annoyed [6].

Moreover, ad frequency should be carefully regulated, as excessive exposure may lead to ad fatigue, thereby negatively affecting the overall user experience within the application. Additionally, interactivity serves as a crucial factor in enhancing user engagement and improving the overall user experience. The incorporation of interactive elements, such as clicks and swipes, has the potential to enhance user engagement and interest, thus improving the effectiveness of advertisements. More importantly, incorporating a clearly visible close button empowers users to actively decide whether to continue viewing the ad. This design strategy aligns with the control principle in user experience design, effectively reducing negative emotions and complaints [7].

4. The impact of APP splash screen Ads on the media ecology

4.1. Role transformation and market competition

APP splash screen ads redefine the interaction between advertisers and target users by accurately targeting users and using big data and algorithms. Compared with traditional advertising models, splash screen ads are not only more personalized and timely, but can also adjust the displayed content in real time based on user behavior data. Although this change provides advertisers with more market opportunities, it also makes the advertising market more competitive. In this process, advertisers need to constantly explore new technological innovations and business models to ensure the effectiveness and competitiveness of their advertising. Nevertheless, the forced display nature of splash screen ads can also affect the user experience. Users cannot skip ads when opening an APP and must wait patiently, which to a certain extent increases users’ rejection of ads. In addition, deficiencies in advertising design, such as the presence of unclear or inconvenient close buttons, have the potential to elicit user dissatisfaction and negatively impact the overall user experience of the APP. Therefore,

advertisers and media platforms need to find a balance between advertising creativity and user experience to ensure that the effectiveness of advertising does not sacrifice user satisfaction [8].

4.2. Innovation and economic growth in digital advertising

As an important upgrade of advertising forms, splash screen ads not only provide advertisers with a new source of income, but also promote the innovative development of digital advertising. Through a variety of display forms, such as static images, dynamic videos and interactive ads, splash screen ads can effectively convey brand information and enhance users' brand memory. This high exposure rate makes the brand leave a deep impression in the minds of users, especially in improving brand image and popularity. In addition, splash screen ads have brought considerable economic benefits to media platforms. As the advertising market has grown, revenue generated by media platforms from splash screen advertisements has continued to rise, stimulating the advancement of content creation and innovation. By continuously optimizing their advertising delivery strategies, media platforms can more effectively leverage user data, enhance the precision of their advertisements and user click-through rates, and ultimately achieve a mutually beneficial outcome for all stakeholders [9].

4.3. User experience and advertising ecosystem challenges

Although splash screen ads have brought many positive effects to advertisers and media platforms, their negative impact on user experience cannot be ignored. Frequent advertising interference may lead to a decrease in the frequency of users' use of APPs, and some users even choose to use ad blocking software, further affecting the effectiveness of advertising. This behavior not only reduces user satisfaction, but may also have adverse consequences for the entire advertising ecosystem and weaken the return on investment of advertisers. More seriously, if there are malicious behaviors in splash screen ads, such as forced extension of display time, random jumps or inability to close, it infringes on the basic rights and interests of users, including the right to choose and the right to know. This infringement not only arouses user disgust, but may lead to user loss, and ultimately affect the market competitiveness of APPs. In the current Internet environment, the popularity of ad filtering may pose a threat to the business operation model. Advertisers' revenue is directly affected, and users' resistance to advertising may be further intensified. Furthermore, many ad blocking software lack compliance and are incompletely qualified, which makes the healthy development of the advertising ecosystem face greater challenges [8].

5. Optimization strategies for APP splash screen Ads

5.1. User experience improvement

In order to enhance the user experience, it is essential that advertising content be concise, clear, and focused on conveying key information. Lengthy descriptions should be avoided to minimize user distraction. The application of communication theories, such as the information transfer model, can assist advertisers in the development of effective information architecture, thereby ensuring that users can access essential information in the most efficient manner.

Moreover, advertising content should be customized to align with user interests and needs, effectively conveying the value proposition of products or services. It should also engage users emotionally through compelling narratives or scenarios, increasing their likelihood of revisiting the application. From a technical optimization perspective, it is crucial to enhance the loading speed of advertising assets, ensure seamless adaptation of advertisements across diverse screen sizes and device types, and utilize high-resolution imagery to support a wide array of advertising formats, including static images, dynamic visuals, and video content. This visual impact can enhance user

attention and improve the overall effect of advertising. Combined with the “visual communication” theory in communication, it can further optimize the user's sensory experience [9,10].

5.2. Delivery strategy improvement

Advertisers should use data analysis tools to accurately deliver ads according to user behavior and preferences to improve the click-through rate and conversion rate of ads. Combined with the “audience theory” in communication, by understanding the characteristics and needs of target users, select appropriate advertising materials to improve user acceptance. Meanwhile, it is necessary to regularly collect data such as ad display, click, and close, and adjust the design, content or display strategy of ads in a timely manner according to the analysis results to ensure efficient dissemination of ads. Reasonable setting of ad display duration is also key. Providing obvious “skip” or “close” buttons can effectively reduce user dissatisfaction and avoid ads blocking the core functions of the APP. Advertisers should select high-quality advertising materials, increase creativity and quality, and improve user stay time, click-through rate and conversion rate. This strategy can not only improve the effectiveness of advertising, but also enhance user loyalty and satisfaction with the APP, thus forming a virtuous circle and achieving a win-win situation of user experience and advertising revenue [9].

6. Conclusion

As a nascent form of advertising, APP splash screen ads have not only established a novel profit model for the advertising industry, but have also exerted a significant influence on user experience and media ecology. Although the mandatory display characteristics of this form of advertising can effectively increase brand exposure, it may also lead to user resistance, thus affecting their overall experience of using the APP. As a result, it has become imperative to enhance the standardization and oversight of APP splash screen ads, with a view to optimizing the user experience. This study examines the role of APP splash screen advertisements within the current communication ecosystem, drawing on relevant communication theories to analyze their influences on information dissemination and user cognition. Future research should investigate the effects of advertising in various communication environments and examine how users’ responses to advertising evolve over time. This will help advertisers better understand user behavior and optimize advertising strategies to achieve a dual improvement in advertising effects and user experience. Through these efforts, a more harmonious user experience and a healthier media ecology in the future of digital advertising can be anticipated.

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