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Static vs Animated Typography in Digital Advertising: A Consumer Engagement

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ABSTRACT
Advertising in the digital domain is now making use of typography as its chief means of communicating brand messaging in social media posts, display advertisements, and on mobile applications. In such a context, the decision to use either static typography (still typography) or kinetic typography (motion typography) is significant in terms of engaging audiences effectively and gaining their attention. Previous studies on the use of animation in online advertisements have found that motion tends to enhance the level of visual attention paid by users, but the results regarding click-through rates, attitudes, and overall engagement are variable. The present work seeks to bring together knowledge from previous work in relation to motion in digital advertising, and to apply this to typography. The use of animated typography is likely to surpass that of static typography in terms of attracting attention and aiding memory when there are constraints on time and increased levels of complexity of the message conveyed. The methodology used to conduct this study will involve a blend of qualitative and quantitative approaches, whereby an experiment will be conducted using eye tracking equipment followed by an actual A/B test in a real-life setting.

Keywords— Static typography, animated typography, kinetic typography, digital advertising, consumer engagement, eye-tracking, click-through rate.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising on digital and social media has seen a trend where creativity has moved away from image-heavy ads to short units, which consist of predominantly textual content, such as in-feed ads, story ads, and vertical video overlays. Typography plays a key role in the delivery of marketing communications in most of these ad formats .

Moreover, motion design and kinetic typography, that is, typography synchronized with rhythm, music, or narrative, have been frequently used in order to add a visual element to a plain message. There seems to be an opinion in the industry that "motion performs better"; however, empirical evidence proves quite the opposite: some research does not find any significant differences in the click-through rate or attitude toward static or animated social media ads, whereas others note positive impacts of animation in banner ads on consumers' attention and memory.[1]

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Animation, Attention and Recall

Studies on eye-tracking web banner advertisements reveal that animation leads to enhanced visual fixation and increases the chances of detecting the ad when compared to static banners. It was further observed that animated ads lead to improved recall of the topic covered, text used, and colours employed. However, excessively intense animations do not necessarily contribute to improved recall.[2]

From studies conducted regarding repetition and animation, it is found that although animation in banner ads might not attract much attention and result in poor recall compared to static ads because of avoidance behaviour, when exposed repeatedly for short periods of time, they can surpass static ads in terms of recall and attitudes towards them.

B. Animation in Social Media Advertising

The only study comparing static and animated ads on Instagram through laboratory testing and actual A/B test campaign results showed no statistically significant difference between either format in terms of click-through rate, intention to click,

attention, memory, recognition, and attitudes towards the ads. This is quite different from what case studies within industry reports and research papers produced by agencies suggest – a lot more engagement, CTR, and conversions by transitioning from static to animated or interactive ads, . Many case studies lack proper controls and look at full-motion videos instead of typographic motion only.

C. Animated vs Static Infographics and Educational Visuals

It has been observed that when comparing animated and static infographics, the former tend to be more engaging and useful in understanding information. This is due to the fact that in learning environments, animation has been seen to improve retention in learners if used to sequence information rather than present it all together . The above information is important to understand the benefits of animated typography[3].

D. Industry Perspectives on Kinetic Typography

According to industry literature, kinetic typography can be considered one of the means of drawing viewers' attention to the most significant elements of a presentation, as well as highlighting important words. It is claimed that adding movement to static text increases engagement ; however, most studies that support this hypothesis alter several variables simultaneously (images, transitions, audio), and thus it becomes impossible to isolate typographic motion's impact.

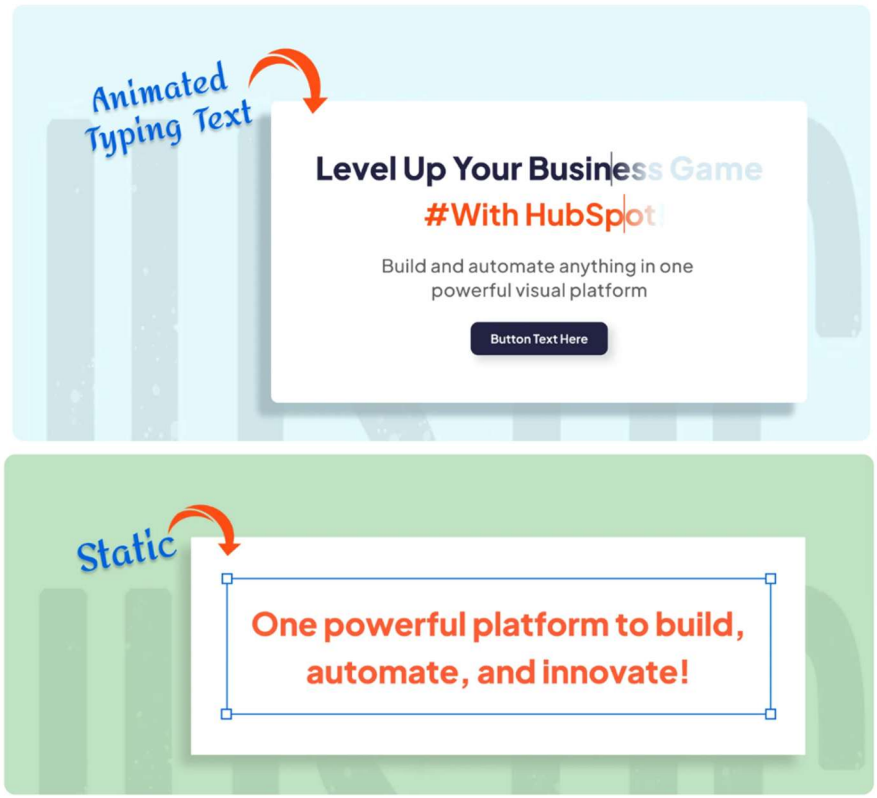

Fig. 1. Static vs. animated text comparison in digital advertising.
https://digitalwoods.io/blog/static-vs.-animated-text-which-drives-better-results

III. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Cognitive Capacity and Dual-Coding Theory

Limited capacity theories assume that people distribute cognitive capacities between competing inputs, while dual-coding theory assumes that encoding verbal and visual information increases the probability of remembering. Animated

typography represents an approach to dual-coding, as animated text combines verbal content (the text itself) with visual-timely information (animation). Good animation design minimizes intrinsic cognitive load, revealing timely information and drawing attention to important elements one after another.

B. Orienting Response and Banner Blindness

Motion and sudden appearances cause an orienting response, which is a form of involuntary reaction of attention to new stimuli. In research into web advertisement, researchers have found out that animated advertisements and pop-up advertisements generate a greater orienting response compared to static advertisements, thus indicating that animated advertisements attract greater attention. However, at the same time, animated advertisements function as a signal that advertises and consequently lead to banner blindness and avoidance in task-focused users.

C. Complex Messages and Temporal Sequencing

Animation is especially useful when dealing with complicated messages or processes, allowing for a gradual revealing or transformations over time. With simple messages – one single offer, a short call to action, or brand slogan – still images may work better, showing everything in one go, which makes them easy to read and comprehend. In such cases, message complexity works as a moderator, the more complicated the message is, the better animation fits.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Experimental Design

For this study, an experimental research design that combines elements of both lab-based experiments with eye tracking and field-based A/B tests in social or display advertising will be proposed. Lab-based experiments will examine attention and memorability and attitudes toward advertisements under controlled exposure conditions, while field tests will provide behaviour-based metrics such as click-through rate and swipe-up rate.
Participants are randomised to view either a static-typography or an animated-typography version of the same advertisements. Both of the advertisements are identical except for the fact that one of them has some typographic elements animated and moving in, out, up or down and/or scaling and/or moving around .

B. Stimuli Development

Stimulation includes a number of advertisements which differ based on their level of complexity (simple or complex) and platform format (such as video stories, in-feed posts, display banners). The static stimuli include all text simultaneously, while the animated stimuli use kinetic typography techniques, including fade-ins, slide-ins, and timing the highlight of certain keywords [4]. Images will be kept constant or reduced (such as a logo along with a plain background), and sound will not be used or will be neutral.

C. Participants and Procedure (Lab Study)

Subjects drawn from a relevant target population are randomly assigned to either static or animated typographic treatments. Following an initial pre-exposure survey, subjects look at a simulated social media stream or website containing ads intermingled within filler material as their eye movements are tracked.
Steps in procedure: (1) pre-exposure survey, (2) surfing task or passive reading exercise without referring to ads, (3) exposure to ads multiple times, (4) testing for recall and recognition, and (5) attitude and engagement-intention measures.

D. Measures

Key dependent variables should include fixation count, dwell time, and time to first fixation for attention. Cognitive outcomes should include free recall and recognition of the brand, slogan, and main promotional claim. Affective outcomes

should include attitude toward the ad, perceived intrusiveness, and attitude toward the brand, while behavioural outcomes should include click intention in the lab and click-through rate or swipe-up rate in the field test.

E. Field Experiment A/B Test

Concurrently, an A/B test at the platform level is conducted on a social or display network such as Instagram, TikTok, or programmatic display using the same static and kinetic typography ads. Metrics like impressions, CTR (click-through rate), and conversion rates are then captured from the platform's analytics. The comparison of equal impressions for each ad allows the measurement of the difference in behaviors that result from typographic movement.

F. Measures and Data Analysis

Measures include:
Attention: Number of fixations, dwell time, and time to first fixation on ad region (laboratory) [5].
Memory: Free recall and recognition of brand, message, and visuals.
Attitudes: Attitude towards the ad, perception of intrusion, and attitude towards the brand.
Engagement intention: Self-reports of likelihood of clicking/swiping for more info.
Behavioural data: Click-through rates, swipe-up rate, and conversion rate (field).
Analysis will involve ANOVAs or regression models where the independent variable is type of typography (static vs animated) and the moderators are message complexity, type of platform and task mode. Mediation can be used to investigate whether the differences in attention drive differences in memory, attitudes and engagement[6].

V. EXPECTED RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The hypothesis states that animated typography will perform better than static typography on attention measures, scoring higher on fixations per second and time to first fixation, especially when used in incidental exposure within visually busy newsfeeds[7]. Animated typography is also expected to perform better on memory tasks like recall and recognition, due to enhanced encoding through motion and temporal information.
Results for attitudinal measures will be more complex, as repeated exposure to animated advertisements will lead to positive changes in attitudes in certain settings, but initial exposure to such advertisements will sometimes trigger avoidance behaviours [8]. Differences between behavioural measures, such as click-through rate or swipe-up rate, will be minor in most cases, with greater benefits for animated typography in entertainment-based platforms where motion is natural and algorithmically supported.

Study/Source	Comparison	Main Finding	What It Suggests
Bayles & Chaparro (2001)	Static vs animated banner ads	Animated ads showed stronger recall and recognition outcomes in banner contexts.journals.sagepub	Evidence that motion can improve memory and noticeability.
Bayles & Chaparro (2001)	Static vs animated banner ads	Animation and format affected perception and memory of online ads, with effects varying by condition.journals.sagepub	Supports the argument that animation effects depend on context, not just motion alone.
High-Cost Banner Blindness (2004)	Animated vs static banner exposure	Animation increased attention in some cases, but ad avoidance and banner blindness still mattered.eng.auburn	Explains why motion can both attract and repel attention.

Animated advertisements in a digital market (2022)	Static vs animated digital ads	No significant difference was found in several engagement measures, including attention and click-related outcomes.diva-portal	A counter-evidence against assuming animation always performs better.

Table 1. Summary of research results regarding static compared to animated typography in digital advertising.

VI. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

From a practitioner's perspective, the study suggests that animated typography should be employed judiciously rather than indiscriminately. Motion-based text is particularly useful in situations where brands are trying to garner attention within scrolling feeds, where there is a need to convey a sequence of information, or where content is shared via video-centric social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels.

There will also continue to be contexts where static typography is appropriate, such as where a message is short, where users' needs are task-oriented and thus prone to interruptions, or where budgetary limitations and concerns around file size preclude the use of animation. In addition, designers must also think about accessibility issues and avoid motion that is too rapid[9].

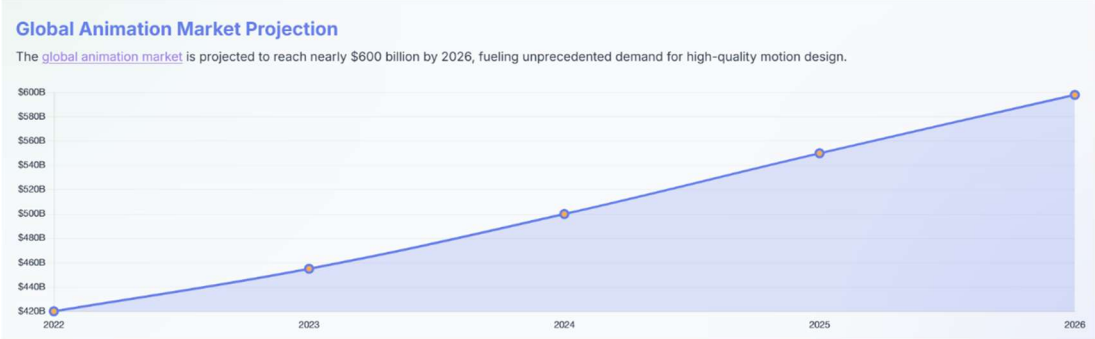

Fig. 2. Motion typography examples used in digital design.

https://advids.co/insights/the-role-of-typography-in-motion-design-beyond-kinetic-text

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study addresses typographic animation while keeping imagery and sounds constant, unlike most campaigns that incorporate various aspects of motion [10]. Lab-based eye tracking enhances internal validity but fails to account for the way people behave in their day-to-day, multitasking lives[11].

Further research might include cross-cultural differences when it comes to reaction to animating typefaces, effects of exposure on brand value and fatigue, and interactions with other media. Exploration of newer media, such as augmented and virtual reality would provide a platform for typefaces to animate in a 3D environment [12].

VIII. CONCLUSION

Static and dynamic typography are examples of complementary approaches that can be used to communicate advertising messages through digital media. Current literature has shown that dynamic typography is more efficient in increasing the level of attention and memory of the reader, especially when dealing with complicated messages and motion-driven platforms; on the other hand, static typography becomes highly effective in cases where the message is simple and the context task-oriented.

The current study will investigate this phenomenon in order to establish the circumstances under which either method should be employed in practice. It is crucial to note that the strategic use of typography

motion should depend on certain factors, rather than the use of one over the other being better in all conditions.

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