

15 QUESTIONS ABOUT NATIVE ADVERTISING



Massimo Moruzzi

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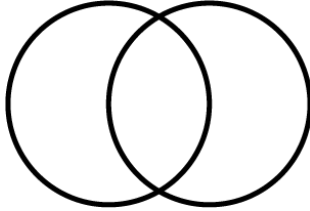
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Massimo Moruzzi

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INTRO



What is native advertising? Is it a new practice, or little more than a new name? Is it legal?

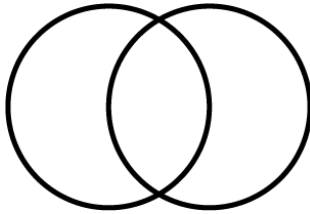
Is it the same as content marketing? How does it relate to what was sold to us as the greatest content marketing strategy ever, i.e. social media marketing?

Does native advertising happen only on social media, or has the practice spread to newspapers?

Does native advertising work? For whom does it work? Does it have negative consequences for society?

How was the problem dealt with in the past? Should native advertisement be deregulated, or should it be more seriously regulated? Which other problems may native advertising face?

1. WHAT IS NATIVE ADVERTISING?



Native advertising is the latest name given to the practice of placing advertisements that look like the editorial content of a publication.

[1]

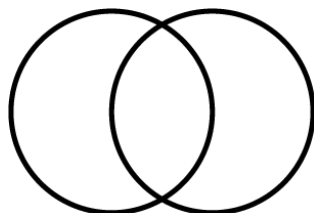
Native advertising usually takes the form of an article or a video which is produced by an advertiser with the intent to promote a product or a brand, while matching the style used in the normal content of the publication.

This practice gets more attention by consumers, as some of the credibility of the news publication rubs off on the advertising mater-

ial.

Native advertising is increasingly popular on the web, the mixing of content and advertising being for the most part accepted on websites with no content of their own, such as search engines or social media websites.

2. IS IT A NEW PRACTICE?



No.

In the 20th Century, the word *advertorial* was coined in the United States by blending “advertisement” and “editorial” to describe newspaper ads made to look like editorial content. [2]

In the previous century, advertisers in the US paid to place *reading notices* in newspapers. These *notices* looked like regular articles about products or companies, but they were written by the companies themselves.

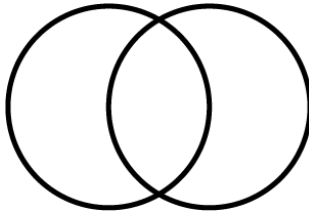
The price for this kind of advertising was at least twice the rate which was being asked

for traditional advertising clearly set apart from editorial content.

In 1909, retail store marketer Albert Edgar wrote that they were worth the premium precisely because “the public reads them as matters of news and not as items of advertising”.

[3]

3. IS NATIVE ADVERTISING LEGAL?



Every country has its own rules. [4]

The most common labels used on reputable websites are “Advertisement”, “Ad”, “Promoted”, “Sponsored”, “Featured Partner”, or “Suggested Post” in the top or at the bottom of the ads.

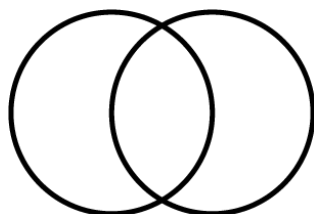
Sometimes the brand name of the sponsor is mentioned, as in “Promoted by [brand]”, “Sponsored by [brand]” etc.

However, there is no agreed upon industry-standard disclosure.

And, to make matters worse, some disclosures are hard to understand.

While “Ad” next to sponsored results on a search engine might be clear enough, what does an article “Sponsored by [brand]” mean? Is it like a TV show “Brought to you by [brand]”, or is the brand having a say in the content of the article itself?

4. ARE CONTENT MARKETING AND NATIVE ADVERTISING THE SAME?



No.

Content Marketing is a form of marketing focused on creating content deemed relevant for a target audience.

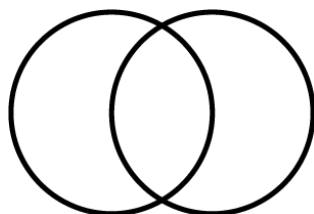
Content marketing dates back to the second half of the 19th Century, with publications such *The American Bee Journal*, *The Edison Electric Lighting Company Bulletin*, or the *Jell-O Recipe Book*. [5]

Another very successful case of content

marketing is the *Guide Michelin*. [6]

Content marketing can attract attention, generate brand awareness and credibility, increase sales, expand the customer base via sharing of the material and even coalesce a community of users around a problem and a product that can help solve that problem.

5. WHAT HAPPENED TO SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING?



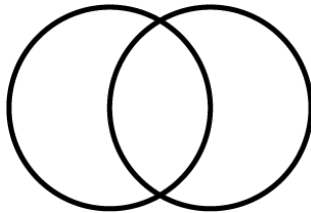
Only a few years ago, everybody was praising social media marketing as the greatest content marketing distribution channel ever. Did things not work out as beautifully as planned?

Companies sent their customers away from their pristine websites and over to Facebook and Twitter and Instagram, where they pumped out as many *messages* as possible, only to find out that not too many people were content about their content. [7]

Then things went totally down the drain when Facebook started talking about “organic reach”, or the percentage of a company's fans who would on average see a company's posts, and then proceeded to slash said reach. [8]

As a result, companies turned to native advertising to push their content.

6. WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING TODAY?



Some people agree that it was not wise to think they could pump their messages for free via Facebook forever.

Some think that it didn't make sense.

According to Julie Fleischer, Director of Data, Content and Media at Kraft, brands shouldn't post content they don't deem worthy of paying to distribute. Content marketing makes sense only if the content you produce is good enough that you want to pay to distribute it. [9]

Today, a better definition of social media marketing would probably include every marketing activity done on social media, both the work to create content to be shared there and the native advertising work that is increasingly necessary to push said content.

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