

## A Whole New World: Behavioral Targeting 2007

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By [Anna Papadopoulos](#) | January 3, 2007

**Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right. --Oprah Winfrey**

I can't believe over a year has passed since I started writing about behavioral targeting, and it's more than two years since my first "official" behavioral-targeted campaign. Although it feels like a lot has happened in a year, in reality a lot has remained the same. The biggest difference are the number of new vendors that now offer some form of behavioral targeting, which unfortunately has led to more confusion and stagnation. As we decompress from the holidays, let's therefore reflect on what have we have learned in 2006 and where we are going in the New Year?

### What Have We Learned?

- **We like to say "behavioral targeting":** If you want to demonstrate your prowess in your next pitch, just mention the term behavioral targeting. Chances are, no one will challenge you. The word has been so overused, everyone just assumes they should know what it means. "Behavioral targeting, yes, of course, we need to do that. It's a given for a metal parts company."
- **United we stand, divided we fall:** I'm still surprised by the lack of collaboration and best practices around behavioral targeting. One reason the interactive media channel has grown exponentially has been the pervasive support of the entire community. Rich media is a good example. There are best practices being shared by publishers, rich media vendors, and advertisers; in comparison, we're hard pressed to find the same on behavioral targeting.
- **It works (when it's done right):** Results have been positive for most advertisers who have ventured out and experimented with behavioral targeting. Mitch Lowe, CEO of [Jumpstart Automotive Media](#), which offers behavioral-targeted buys aimed at auto intenders, said, "Almost all marketers indicate belief in targeting their message by true consumer behavior rather than using the guesswork that is demographic profiling."

As a marketer, you can usually spot a solid behavioral-targeted campaign through your own consumer experience. I was recently shopping online for a video game. After I was done researching, I was served an ad (in an unrelated environment) for a discount from one of the stores I'd visited. Not wanting to lose the offer, I immediately clicked the ad and then purchased the product. Once I completed the purchase, I didn't see the ad again. This sort of application doesn't happen by accident. It takes careful planning by the agency, client, and publisher.

### Where Do We Go From Here?

- **Let's be clear:** Instead of calling everything "behavioral targeting," let's be clear on what the opportunity is. If there are limitations, publishers must put them out there upfront. It's not enough to want to offer behavioral targeting. As advertisers become savvier, they will see through the transparencies and it will hurt the vendor in the long run. Hugh McGoran, VP of eastern sales at [Tacoda](#), shares this sentiment, "2006 has seen many networks distort the definition of behavioral targeting [BT] to meet their needs, or they have generalized it so that many buyers think they are buying BT when they are really just buying media from a provider who has 're-branded' their fairly traditional targeting methods."
- **Relevancy and personalization:** Effective targeting prevails online. It's one of the advantageous over other types of media. A major component of this is relevancy and personalization. Bill Gossman, CEO of [Revenue Science](#), compares behavioral targeting with search. "Search has shown us that, for the benefit of access to relevant content, consumers are willing to get relevant advertising. Over the course of the next year, consumers will demand this bargain for all digital media consumed, not just the 5 percent of online time spent using search."
- **Results rule:** Ah, the blessing and curse of online: measurement. Dave Morgan, CEO of Tacoda, said 2006 was the year of behavioral targeting hype, but 2007 will be about results. "Saying that you do behavioral targeting and putting cool targeting diagrams on Power Point slides will no longer be enough. Companies that do behavioral targeting right and deliver strong results for clients will do well. Others will go away."

Are we ready?

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