

УДК 378.4

JEL: M31

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ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ОНЛАЙН МАРКЕТИНГУ У ВИЩИХ ОСВІТНІХ ЗАКЛАДАХ ПОЛЬЩІ ТА УКРАЇНИ

Ѓ Кисьолек А., Карий О., Прокопенко О., 2018

Процес цифрової трансформації маркетингу має вплив на кожну організацію, яка функціонує на ринку. Особливий статус серед них займають вищі освітні заклади, клієнти яких представлені цифровим поколінням. У статті викладені результати досліджень, присвячених використанню інтернету у маркетингових цілях, зокрема онлайн-рекламі, вищими освітніми закладами Польщі та України. За результатами дослідження, однією з домінуючих форм електронної реклами є різні форми візуалізації, особливо в форматі відео. Вищі освітні заклади вважають соціальні медіа надзвичайно важливою сферою маркетингової діяльності і електронне таргетування, як правило, здійснюється з використанням геолокації та демографічного націлювання.

Ключові слова: маркетинг вищих освітніх закладів, інтернет маркетинг, електронний маркетинг, менеджмент у ВОЗ, інтернет реклама, е-реклама.

ONLINE MARKETING OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF POLAND AND THE UKRAINE IN THE LIGHT OF RESEARCH

Ѓ Kisiołek A., Karyu O., Prokopenko O., 2018

Abstract The digitisation of marketing exerts influence on each and every organisation functioning on the market. In this respect, higher education institutions, whose clients represent the digitised generation, constitute a special case. The article presents the selected research results of the study devoted to the use of the Internet for the marketing purposes, specifically online advertisement, by higher education institutions in Poland and the Ukraine. According to the results of the research, various forms of display, particularly in the video format, are among the dominant forms of e-advertisement. Higher education institutions consider social media an enormously important sphere of marketing activity, and e-targeting is typically performed with the use of geolocation and demographic targeting.

Keywords: marketing of higher education institutions, Internet marketing, e-marketing, higher education management, internet advertising, e-advertising

Formulation of the problem. One of the consequences of the commercialisation of the market of higher education services is the transformation of the general idea of the university into a marketing-oriented organisation. The need to gain competitive advantage and compete for students – clients called for the implementation of the concept of marketing management of a higher education institution.

Out of a whole array of available marketing instruments that the marketing departments of these schools have at their disposal, the Internet cherishes a special status. The key point is the synergy of the two crucial features, namely convergence in the sphere of the currently available marketing tools towards

the digitalisation of marketing, as well as the lifestyle of the young generation that constitutes the target recipient group for higher education institutions. These areas get integrated and constitute a fruitful ground for research into the role of the Internet in the marketing activity of higher education institutions. An analysis along these lines becomes additionally relevant in the comparative context of two markets of educational services, i.e. Poland and the Ukraine, and set out for a specific marketing tool, in this case e-marketing.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Promotion is equated with the notion of marketing communication. Yet, as J. Wiktor claims, such an interpretation is rather narrow. Marketing communication construed in this sense, *vide* promotion, will thus mean “ a set of instruments and actions that the company implements in order to convey company or product information on the market, shape buyers’ needs and preferences, stimulate and channel the demand as well as decrease the product’s price flexibility” [16, p. 49]. In a broader sense, the term marketing communication represents the bilateral (thus interactive) dialogue with the surrounding environment. J. W. Wiktor emphasises that contrary to the promotion understood in the narrow sense, whose recipients are clients – acquirers, the recipients of marketing communication form a wider circle of “interested parties and consumers of social communication” [16, p. 50].

It can thus be assumed that promotion is a system of communication of an organisation with the target market and other entities relevant for the functioning of the former. In order to obtain high efficiency and effectiveness, promotion is coordinated with other elements of marketing strategy – products, prices, distribution channels used and the conduct of the personnel aiming to secure a fair share in the market for their organisation.

From the perspective of the organisation, all forms of promotion perform informative function in the system of communication between it and its surrounding environment as well as supports product sales on the market. The system of promotion (promotion-mix) in the traditional sense consists of the following elements:

- Advertisement – aiming at the presentation of the characteristic features of the company’s products. Traditionally, it appears in press, on the radio, TV or in the form of outdoor advertisement. Depending on the object advertised, it is either product or brand advertising. In the first case, given that the advertising efforts are designed to introduce a new product to the market, they focus on outlining its novel nature. In the other case, the advertisement is meant to promote a specific brand.

- The term Public Relations (PR) encompasses actions designed to create and maintain a trustworthy image of the company in its surrounding environment. The basic types of PR activities are as follows:

- communication with the public opinion;
- contact with media representatives;
- undertaking relevant actions in crisis situations;
- lobbying;
- communication with investors;
- communication with company employees, the so-called internal PR.

- Sponsorship is a relatively new form of promotion consisting in the financing of institutions, people or sports events, cultural events, etc. and using this fact the promotion of the company – sponsor.

- Supplementary promotion (sales promotion, sales support) – comprises various actions targeting end buyers and commercial intermediaries such as, for instance, the distribution of samples, sampling, competitions [14, p. 101-102].

Advertisement is a type of promotion that aims to inform and persuade potential customers to buy products offered by a given company [14, p. 105]. The purpose of advertising is to present the specific characteristics of the advertised products. Traditionally, it appears in press, on the radio, TV or in the form of outdoor advertisement. Depending on the object advertised, it is either product or brand advertising. In the first case, given that the advertising efforts are designed to introduce a new product to the market, they

focus on outlining its novel nature. In the other case, the advertisement is meant to promote a specific brand.

Yet, it was already in the 90s of the 20th century that researchers observed that online marketing is vastly different from other forms of traditional marketing in the sense that the former offers unique opportunities that no other medium can provide. The topic has recently been discussed by D. Plata-Alf, G. Mazurek, A. Miegoń [10, p. 313-347], Ł. Kępiński, M. Kordowski, D. Sałkowski, K. Sztubecki [7], J. Królewski, P. Sala [5], D. M. Scott [8]. As for the most significant advantages of online advertisement, the following are mentioned most frequently:

- global range – country, continent, the whole world – just a mouse click away from the advertiser;
- significantly (sometimes even a dozen times) lower cost of providing roughly the same amount of information, in comparison with press ads or printed advertising materials;
- precise recipient targeting, also used in Poland thanks to the research carried out in recent years;
- precise measurement of the effectiveness of the advertisement (counting the number of views of an ordinary display banner was already a major breakthrough in the world of advertising);
- possibility to update the content on a regular basis (exceptions: websites, virtual catalogues, paid links, etc.) without generating additional expenses;
- easy access and supervision of the presented information;
- real-time advertising campaign modeling;
- a specific manner of provision of pull-type content, i.e., the addressee often has to perform certain actions in order to reach the message prepared by the company (e.g., click on the banner in order to be redirected to the target website);

Undoubtedly, the key feature of the above-mentioned characteristics of e-advertisement is its relatively lower cost in comparison to the traditional media, which implies that this medium will be an attractive solution for small companies as well, which, until recently, did not exist in the sphere of advertising. An ordinary web service based on a simple, but professional website, with the overall cost of preparation ranging from a few to several thousand zlotys, may serve a relevant example at this point. Nevertheless, the cost of e-advertising, due to its immense popularity, is constantly on the increase. Yet, given the possibility of precise targeting, it is still available to both big and small enterprises.

Each and every marketing activity must be customer – oriented. Thus, it is customers' needs that serve as a point of reference for the entire management process and determine its functions. Therefore, for an organisation to gain and maintain competitive advantage and thus secure its existence on the market in the long run, it is crucial that all the activities it undertakes should be marketing – driven. Each decision, process or even a single action, as well as the entire campaign, must allow for the demands of the market.

Following this line of reasoning, one should consider the degree to which educational services should be governed by the laws and mechanisms of free market economy. Why? Although educational services, in this case the services rendered by higher education institutions, share a number of mutual features with the service market understood in the traditional sense, they differ substantially in terms of the definition that underlies marketing a such, namely the definition of the client. In this respect, while it may seem necessary to acknowledge the fact that higher education services have become subjected to the laws of the market, an attempt to define the student-client of a higher education institution must be made. The answer to a question posed in this way will be dichotomous in nature. In theoretical terms, it will delineate the areas amenable to further exploration and analysis, and in practice it will constitute a fundamental issue determining the entire sector of marketing activity.

The fusion of focus on marketing and functional management calls for the introduction of yet another important term, i.e. marketing management, which, according to B. Tarczydło, encompasses “the planning, coordination and control over all the marketing activities carried out for the sake of a specific market project (...) which means giving up chaotic and selective actions and implementing reliable, targeted and well designed marketing efforts” [15, p. 248].

It wasn't until the 90s of the 20th century that higher education institutions in both Poland and in the Ukraine encountered the conceptual framework drawing on the above-mentioned criteria. In recent years,

marketing activity of higher education institutions has been the subject matter of an extensive exchange of opinions on both domestic and international arena. A number of scholars, including M. J. Armstrong [1], B. R. Clark [2], R. S. Franz [5], M. Sirvanci [13], (in Poland:) H. Hall [6], A. Pabian [9], J. Dietl [3], I. Seredocha [12] and A. J. Fazlagić [4], among others, have explored it at length. Nowadays, it is not the question of whether such institutions should adapt to the concept of marketing management, but rather what strategies, methods and instruments they should use for that purpose.

Presentation of the main material. The study was carried out in the period from 6 Feb. 2017 to 28 June 2017 as part of the international research project entitled “The Internet in the marketing activity of higher education institutions”. The data was collected by means of computer assisted web interviews (CAWI). 123 Polish and 62 Ukrainian schools took part in the study. Out of the Polish higher education institutions, 32 % were public schools and the remaining ones were private. As for the Ukraine, the ratio was 93.5 % (public) to 6.5 % (private). Diagram 1 represents the distribution of the research sample.

The analysis of the type and degree of implementation of online marketing activities implemented by the Polish and the Ukrainian higher education institutions, it may be observed that the Internet is primarily used for communication with student and student service – related affairs. The student service function was relevant for as much as 57 % and 48 % of the Polish and the Ukrainian respondents, respectively. In similar vein, communication with students was rated high, i.e. 60 % and 55 % of the votes, respectively.

Yet another important activity is online advertisement. As the judgments indicate (54 % and 44 % of the Polish and the Ukrainian respondents, respectively), its use is at a medium level. As for sponsorship, 55 % of the respondents in Poland are of the opinion that its use is rather insignificant. In turn, 32 % and 31 % of the Ukrainian respondents, respectively, either do not know whether their schools use it or believe it to have little influence.

While public relations were rated high (55 %) in the Ukraine, in Poland they were considered to reach a medium (55 %) or a high level (29 %). Despite discrepancies between the specific results, they serve to show another area of high marketing activity of higher education institutions. With respect to supplementary promotion, 40 % of the Polish respondents claimed it was used at a medium level, and 27 % of the Ukrainian subjects admitted they did not know whether this type of promotion was used by their schools. In both countries, e-learning was rated high (38 % and 44 % of the respondents, respectively). The last category, i.e. E-commerce was rated rather low (43 % and 3 %, respectively). The detailed results are presented in Table 1.

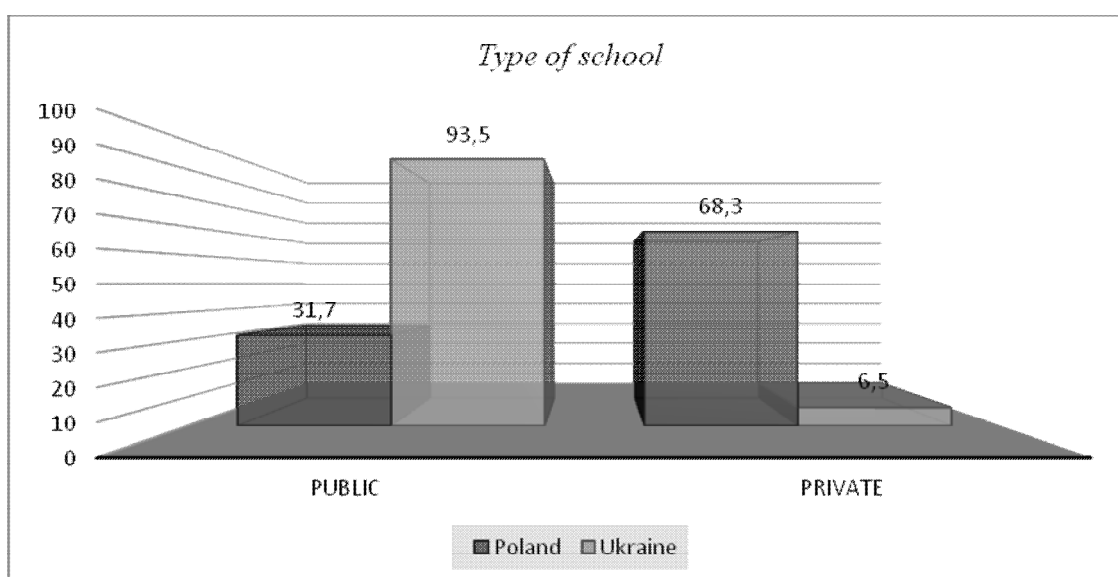


Diagram 1. Distribution of the research sample
 Author's own compilation based on the conducted research.

The aim of the next stage of the research was to to evaluate the way in which higher education institutions make use of the specific forms of online advertising. Both groups of respondents (46 % and 53 %, respectively), rated the use of traditional banners for marketing purposes relatively high. The results obtained for the traditional, display-type activities converge on the market trend of e-advertising in the sense that (at least in Poland) the former exercise a dominant influence on the latter. According to both the Polish and the Ukrainian respondents, derivative forms of traditional banners (e.g., skyscraper, billboard, other non-standard size billboards), Pop up, Interstitial, Superstitial and Top layer (animation displayed in the foreground of the visual interface projected onto the content page) were used rather infrequently. The research reveals, however, that they are slightly more popular in the Ukraine.

Table 1

The popularity and degree of implementation of selected e-marketing activities by higher education institutions in Poland and the Ukraine.

Answer	Country	Not used	Infrequent use	Medium use	Frequent use	Very frequent use	I don't know	No answer	TOTAL
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Marketing research	Poland	20	15	39	16	7	4	0	100
	Ukraine	7	10	45	27	3	8	0	100
student service	Poland	0	3	18	57	22	0	0	100
	Ukraine	2	7	24	48	19	0	0	100
communication with students	Poland	0	2	20	60	18	0	0	100
	Ukraine	0	8	29	55	8	0	0	100
advertisement	Poland	0	7	54	28	12	0	0	100
	Ukraine	3	16	44	21	16	0	0	100
sponsorship	Poland	23	42	22	7	2	4	0	100
	Ukraine	11	31	8	13	3	32	2	100
Public relations	Poland	0	7	55	29	9	0	0	100
	Ukraine	0	3	34	55	8	0	0	100
Supplementary promotion	Poland	31	19	40	8	2	0	0	100
	Ukraine	11	13	16	24	8	27	0	100
e-learning	Poland	30	12	7	38	13	0	0	100
	Ukraine	13	7	15	44	23	0	0	100
e-commerce	Poland	15	43	24	10	2	7	0	100
	Ukraine	10	32	16	11	31	0	0	100

Source: Author's own compilation.

The Polish respondents found video advertisement to be either well (55 %) or very well (15 %) implemented. In the Ukraine, however, the results regarding the use of this form of e-advertising were also high, yet distributed more evenly, i.e. 36 % judged this tool as very good (the percentage score markedly higher than the one obtained for the Polish respondents) and 26 % considered it good. The results obtained are very interesting in that they reveal growing popularity of video advertisement, which is consistent with the European trends observed in this area.

The respondents rated the use of sponsored articles by higher education institutions as either good or very good (32 % and 34 % in Poland, and 11 % and 27 % in the Ukraine, respectively). This traditional

form of online advertising remains highly popular with educational websites and webpages facilitating the selection of a higher education institution or the field of study. The use of WWW sponsorship was rated as good by 33 % of the Polish respondents. In turn, the Ukrainian respondents were undecided as to whether their schools make use of this form of advertisement.

Table 2

Popularity of selected online advertising tools used by higher education institutions in Poland and the Ukraine

Answer	Country	not used so far	infrequent	neither infrequent nor frequent	frequent	very frequent	I don't know	TOTAL
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Traditional banners	Poland	7	0	21	46	24	2	100
	Ukraine	7	2	11	52	19	10	100
Derivative forms of traditional banners (e.g., skyscraper, billboard, other non-standard size billboards)	Poland	40	1	27	20	6	7	100
	Ukraine	29	0	24	27	2	18	100
Pop up	Poland	50	10	22	7	5	7	100
	Ukraine	45	0	8	23	7	18	100
Interstitial, superstitial	Poland	58	4	11	11	4	11	100
	Ukraine	42	0	8	16	11	23	100
Top layer (animation displayed in the foreground of the visual interface projected onto the content page)	Poland	50	5	29	12	2	2	100
	Ukraine	37	5	24	16	7	11	100
Video advertisement	Poland	4	0	22	55	15	5	100
	Ukraine	16	5	13	26	36	5	100
Sponsored article	Poland	29	11	17	32	11	0	100
	Ukraine	21	5	3	34	27	10	100
WWW sponsorship	Poland	17	0	11	33	17	22	100
	Ukraine	26	0	3	11	18	40	100
Advertising activity in Social Media	Poland	0	0	12	37	51	0	100
	Ukraine	5	0	10	44	37	5	100
Amplifying on Internet fora	Poland	32	4	27	18	8	11	100
	Ukraine	19	0	11	21	11	37	100
Direct e-mail (mailing)	Poland	17	12	44	19	2	7	100
	Ukraine	7	5	8	39	19	23	100

Author's own compilation based on the conducted research.

Promotional activity in Social Media constitutes yet another important instrument of online marketing in both the countries. The respondents in Poland rated the activity of higher education institutions in this respect as very good (51 %) or good (37 %) (88 % of the votes altogether). High scores were also obtained for the Ukrainian respondents, i.e. 37 % and 44 % (very good and good, respectively), thus reaching altogether 81 % of the votes in this category. Given that these were the highest results

obtained for a specific type of online marketing in both the countries, it is to be assumed that activity in Social Media is the instrument that is most commonly used for marketing purposes by higher education institutions.

The presence in Social Media is also connected with amplifying on Internet fora, yet the Polish schools did not use this tool, and the Ukrainian respondents could not say whether the Ukrainian schools used it or not. Considering the results obtained in the category of Social Media, it should be pointed out that their importance for higher education institutions can hardly be overestimated, as they may turn out very useful in the process of creating a positive image and prestige.

E-mail marketing was considered highly popular in the Ukraine (39 % – good, 19 % – very good), and relatively popular in Poland (19 % and 2 %, respectively). The discrepancy revealed may be considered a puzzling fact, yet it should be noted that the Polish market has been characterised for a couple of years now by decreasing popularity of direct e-mailing. The detailed results are presented in Table 2.

Precise online advertisement targeting is one of the biggest virtues of this form of promotion and a point of reference for programmatic, which constitutes an entirely new niche in the realm of e-marketing. The popularity of advertising in the programmatic model has been on the upsurge, mostly due to the fact that it allows an automated process of purchase and sale of advertising space. D. Plafa-Alf, G. Mazurek and A. Miegoń [10, p. 321-323] argue convincingly that this state of affairs is due to the fact that programmatic differs from the traditional purchase of advertising in three major respects. These are:

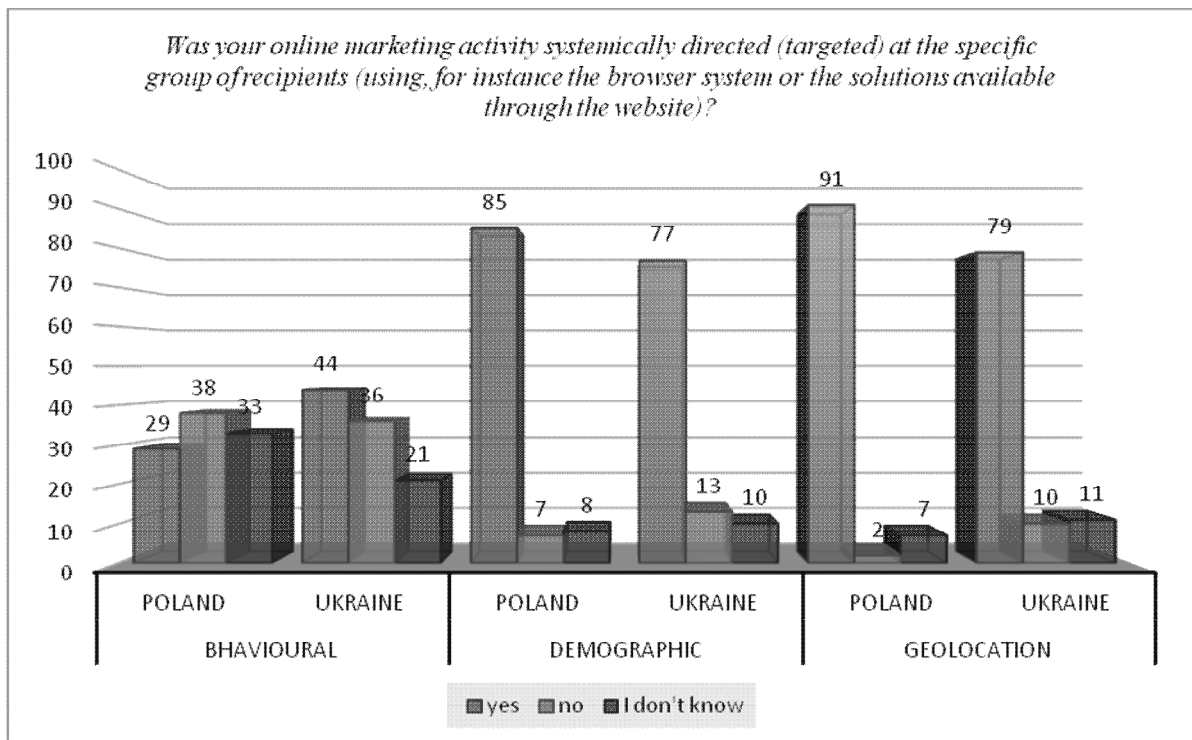
- Effectiveness – thanks to cookies, the ad provider pay for each display of a given advertisement for a specific user;
- Automated sales of advertisements – the sales process takes place DSP (Demand Side Platform), where content publishers offer advertising space and marketers (potential buyers) place purchase bids;
- Customisation – based on the analysis of Internet users' behaviour, it is possible to adjust the broadcasting of advertisements to their needs.

A relevant example of the advertising sales in programmatic is Google Adwords that offers advertisement in Google search engine, Google AdSense advertising network, as well as other products of this company. In this system, the client – ad provider pays for the effects obtained only, i.e. once the target user clicks on the advertisement displayed. Clients – ad provider may be corporations or small companies, since it is the ad provider who sets the budget limit for a given campaign. The price of clicking on advertisement displayed once a given phrase has been keyed in is a different issue, as this price is settled in the course of a tender and depends on the number of ad providers who want their ads to be connected with a given phrase.

The considerations above provided motivation for the research aiming to verify whether the online marketing activity conducted by the Polish and the Ukrainian higher education institutions were directed (targeted) at a specific group of recipients (e.g. by means of the browser system or a website). The scores are represented graphically in Diagram 2.

Both the Polish and the Ukrainian schools target their activities demographically and geographically. 85 % and 77 % of the Polish and the Ukrainian higher education institutions, respectively, admit they use demographic targeting. As for geolocation, the scores are, respectively, 91 % and 79 %. The two method of profiling and reaching the target recipient are the distinct characteristics of online marketing, as opposed to the so-called traditional marketing. Behavioural targeting constitutes yet another milestone in the analysis of the behaviour of Internet users. This type of marketing evokes a lot of emotions concerning, among other things, the right to privacy, security on the Web, the boundary between business and ethics, or, as in the big case of Cambridge Analytica, between politics and ethics with socio-technical manipulation in the background. However, marketers consider the opportunities that behavioural targeting offers as by definition the source material for the implementation of strategies relating to the marketing communication of virtually each and every organisation.

From the perspective of the education market, higher education institutions in both Poland and the Ukraine utilise behavioural targeting, yet on a smaller scale than it is the case with geolocation or demographic targeting. While 29 % of the Polish schools declared that they used this form of e-advertising, for the Ukrainian schools the score obtained was 44 %, thereby indicating that it is more popular with the latter.



*Diagram 2. Forms of online advertisement targeting used by higher education institutions in Poland and the Ukraine
Author's own compilation based on the conducted research.*

Conclusions and perspectives for further research. Given the commoditisation of education as well as the marketisation of the entire sphere of higher education, higher education institutions in both Poland and the Ukraine have faced the need to implement managerial marketing activities. Out of the marketing tools available to marketers nowadays, the Internet is appears most dynamic and offers the inventory of tools that seem most attractive to the age groups constituting the target recipients of higher education institutions. This observation provided motivation for the research that crucially encompasses the sphere of online advertising.

In both countries, display with the emphasis on the traditional forms, plays the dominant role in the sphere of Internet marketing. Other derivative formats seem less popular with both the Polish and the Ukrainian higher education institutions. Video e-marketing emerges as the most prospective form of e-advertisement and it is to be expected that its share in the market will gradually increase.

Precise targeting is one of the biggest advantages of e-marketing and, in this respect, geolocation and demographic targeting are commonly used by both Polish and Ukrainian higher education institutions. Behavioural targeting is significantly less popular, and in Poland it is even less popular than in the Ukraine. This type of targeting is expected to gain on importance in the foreseeable future.

In both Poland and the Ukraine, it is social media that constitute the most popular and high-ranking e-marketing instrument. This tool is becoming increasingly popular with the higher education institutions because it gathers their current and potential students. One may risk the assumption that part of the so-called student life has transferred to SM, which is why this channel currently is and is bound to be so vital for each and every higher education institution.

The research results presented may serve as the background for discussions as well as the point of departure or further research, especially in the areas characterised by biggest dynamics, e.g. video advertising, programmatic advertising, as well as the entire sphere of advertising in social media.

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