Self-Presentation Potential as a Significant Motivator for Sharing Video Advertisements on Social Networking Sites

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Author Note

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Abstract

Individuals, advertisers and cultures alike have been fascinated with viral content and its remarkable reach since the formation of the social web. Past research has uncovered commonalities amongst viral content, but little research has considered the role of social networking sites and self-presentation via online sharing. While past studies have focused upon evoked emotions and the entertainment value of an advertisement in relation to the likelihood an individual would share the piece of content, this study tests three motivators: brand association, entertainment value and self-presentation potential. College students (N=100) were presented with four viral video advertisements and asked questions regarding the videos’ attributes and the likelihood they would share the video online. This process was done in order to determine which of the three categories were the most influential motivator and predictor of online sharing behavior. It was hypothesized and found that self-presentation potential was the most significant predictor of sharing behavior over and above brand association and the entertainment value of the advertisement. These results have remarkable importance as even more value is being placed upon online video advertising, social networking sites and our online images.

Keywords: Viral video, advertising, electronic word-of-mouth, self-presentation, online
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Introduction

As a sharer or audience member online, many of us have participated and fueled a video’s viral status. While the majority of adult Internet users have watched a video on a video-sharing website such as YouTube (Purcell, 2010), media sharing has risen as one of the most conventional behaviors on the social web (Stefanone, Lackaff & Rosen, 2011). As Facebook has amassed 1.39 billion monthly active users, up 13% year over year, (Kokalitcheva, 2015), Instagram has gathered 300 million monthly active users (Smith, 2015), and Twitter has gained 288 million monthly active users (Twitter, 2015). Social networking sites or SNSs are becoming go-to places online to share content and create images of ourselves, anytime we want, for many to see. For every minute in 2014, three billion Internet users shared 2,460,000 pieces of Facebook content, posted 216,000 new Instagram photos and tweeted 277,000 messages (Keen, 2015). Americans are spending an average of 42 minutes a day on Facebook, 21 minutes a day on Instagram and 17 minutes a day on Twitter (Bennet, 2014). By 2018, more than 60% of the world will be online (Keen, 2015). As time progresses, our online lives are becoming just, if not, sometimes more valuable to us as our away from keyboard lives. Tracking and understanding this migration is vital.

With these increasing statistics, advertisers have followed suit, seeking ways to engage audiences, strategically employing their own content and videos while betting on viral success (Southgate, Westoby & Page, 2010). Unfortunately, for every viral video advertisement, there are dozens that go unrecognized (Leskovec, Adamic & Huberman, 2007). Unearthing the differentiation between advertisements that individuals despise watching, and ones that sweep across SNSs, reaching jaw-dropping viral statuses, is the essence of this paper.
In just one month in 2014, upwards of 182.4 million Americans viewed 49.2 billion online videos and 24.6 billion online video advertisements (ComScore, 2014). Such statistics have prompted brands to take notice, each now wanting their own moment of recognition online. In the United States alone, the fascination with viral videos is so intense, that many advertising agencies have increased their budgets for it (Feed Company, 2008). While still growing, these budgets are expected to hit $30 billion by 2016 (eMarketer, 2012). This makes online social video advertising the fastest growing segment of advertising today (Tucker, 2014). As specified by some estimates, nearly one-third of 4,100 brands worldwide have attempted viral video advertising and according to the top executives in the field, 72% revealed that their clients were “interested” or “very interested” in utilizing viral video advertising as a component of their marketing campaigns (Feed Company, 2008; Lindstrom, 2009).

With these numbers and interest in video advertising growing day by day, digital marketing strategy is tactically shifting from paid media to un-paid or earned media, where potential consumers are becoming the channel of delivery themselves (Corocan, 2009). Much like one would tell a friend about a great new band, detergent or restaurant, word-of-mouth exists online and reaches an even larger audience. Electronic word-of-mouth, eWOM, or public online sharing is the exemplification of un-paid or earned media and has been named the ultimate commander of idolized viral status. Understanding the motivation for eWOM may hold the key to better comprehending and therefore reaching viral status.

What makes a viral video advertisement so alluring to a brand is the thought of the viewer watching and sharing the branded content of his or her own accord. Similar to offline earned media when a consumer sports a large logo across their sweatshirt subsequently and implicitly advertising for the brand, with online unpaid media, the sharer of the video
advertisement is also implicitly advertising for the brand but sometimes reaches a larger and more social audience. Brands are also interested in viral video advertisements due to the audience’s ability to replay, rate, comment and share the video, ultimately strengthening the relationship between the viewer and brand (Southgate et al., 2010). With a viral video advertisement, other advantages are acquired such as additional brand publicity from news and entertainment sources reporting the success of the video (Dobele, Lindgreen, Beverland, Vanhamme & Van Wijk, 2007; Dye, 2000; Eckler & Bolls, 2011; Hann et al., 2008; Kirby & Marsden, 2006; Southgate et al., 2010). The value placed upon online video advertising continues to be warranted as studies suggest this form of content also produces higher brand recall rates compared to non-video advertising formats (Brown, 2008; Lee, Ham & Kim, 2013).

With the rise and functionality of YouTube and other SNSs that promote media sharing, the role of viral video advertising has established itself in the marketing mix of many corporates (Cashmore, 2009; Eckler & Bolls, 2011; O’Malley 2011; Tsai, 2009). As successful advertising strategies alter, those unable to harness eWOM or adapt in the face of environmental change such as the monumental shift into online living has proven to be deadly (Bernd, Oliver & Sebastian, 2010).

Unfortunately, when it comes to uncovering the precious, successful attributes of viral content and especially viral video advertisements, past research has primarily focused on shared superficial variables such as common subject matter or evoked emotions. There has been little priority placed upon more complicated components leading to viral status such as the motivators and consequences of sharing content, the role of SNSs, and the act of identity construction and self-presentation via eWOM.
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While individuals self-present on a daily basis away from the keyboard, the desire to communicate constructed selves has also been found online (Dittmar & Pepper, 1992; Goffman, 1959; Schau & Gilly, 2003; Wiley, 1994). Furthermore, in relation to online video advertisements and eWOM, it is critical to note that sharing is considered a social process employed in the construction and expression of identities, which is a leading facet of SNSs (Taylor, Strutton & Thomson, 2012). To these points, while online video advertisements, eWOM and SNSs swell in preeminence and are believed to be dependent upon each other, it is paramount to not only acknowledge this interdependence, but to also better understand this link in relation to identity construction and self-presentation.

With the growth of size and functionality of SNSs and the platforms’ linchpin of controlling images of a constructed self, the motivation of self-presentation may operate as a critical component in the process of achieving revered viral status. In this study, I aim to underline the inherent effect of self-presentational behavior on SNSs, concentrating on eWOM in relation to the success of online video advertisements.

**Literature Review**

**eWOM & Going Viral**

With past research, recurrent underlying factors have been discovered amongst various pieces of online viral content. What has been supported time after time is that a piece of online content's achieved viral status is principally linked to its ability to evoke emotional responses (Dobel et al., 2007; Kibby, 2005; Teixeira, Wedel & Pieters, 2012; Phelps, Lewis, Mobilio, Perry & Raman, 2004). More specifically, it has been found that content which evoked positive emotions were found to increase the likelihood of eWOM consequentially leading to viral status
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(Chiu, Hsieh, Kao, & Lee, 2007; Eckler & Bolls, 2011; Guadagno, Rempala, Murphy & Okdie, 2013; Berger & Milkman, 2012). Work by Nelson-Field, Riebe and Newstead (2013) found that videos which evoked more arousing emotions, whether positive or negative, were almost twice as likely to be passed along via eWOM than those that evoked less arousing emotions. More precisely, videos that evoked highly arousing positive emotions were more likely to get passed along via eWOM than those that evoked highly arousing negative emotions (Nelson-Field et al., 2013). Berger and Milkman (2012) coupled this evoked arousal with a physiological reaction, ultimately driving the individual to engage in the physical act of sharing online. On top of this, previous research has not found any relationship between a viewer’s involvement with a brand and their likelihood to engage in eWOM, consequentially inferring that any brand and its online video advertisement can achieve viral status (Southgate et al., 2010; Taylor et al. 2012).

While a lot of work regarding eWOM has focused on all forms of online media, only a fraction of the work has strictly focused upon video advertisements. These studies reveal that individuals appear to be motivated to share online video advertisements that initiate personal growth (Ho & Dempsey, 2010), publicize altruism (Ho & Dempsey, 2010; Phelps et al., 2004) or broadcast superior knowledge or opinion leadership, which all appear to self-enhance an individual’s online image (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard 1993; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2004; Lyons & Henderson, 2005; Taylor, Strutton & Thomson, 2012).

Lastly, it has been found that more outrageous, sexual, humorous, violent and overall entertaining content increases an individual’s likelihood of engaging in eWOM (Brown, Bhadury & Pope, 2010; Berger & Milkman, 2012; Chui et al., 2007; Porter & Golan, 2006; Taylor et al., 2012). With this being the case, why is it that we do not find pornography to be publically shared
online and floating amongst SNSs? I hypothesize there must be a more intricate, psychological and authoritative motivator behind eWOM on SNSs.

**Self-Presentation**

The “self” is thought to organize self-referent memories and serves to guide the process and categorization of self-referent information (Markus, 1977, 1980; Kihlstrom & Cantor, 1983; Nasby, 1985, 1989; Taylor et al., 2012). In order to reinforce and express a conceptualization of self, individuals may often use signs, symbols, possessions, products, and brands (Belk, 1988; Levy, 1959; Kleine, Kleine & Allen, 1995; McCracken, 1986; Richins, 1994a, 1994b; Taylor et al., 2012; Williams & Bendelow, 1998). Additionally, in order to create positive images of one’s self, individuals may cautiously select and provide information relying upon others’ feedback. Ultimately, here, one is manipulating the way in which others perceive them (Goffman, 1959). According to Leary, this practice is called self-presentation, or “the process of controlling how one is perceived by other people” (Leary, 1996, p.2). For Goffman, self-presentation is the act of “[conveying] an impression to others which it is in his interests to convey” (Goffman, 1959, p. 4).

Earlier work by Goffman (1959) proposed that social interactions could be compared to performances, where individuals manage the impression that observers have of them. Primarily motivated by the acquisition of approval and avoidance of disapproval, the goal of self-presentation is to compel others to accept the features that an individual claims for themselves, obtain a specific outcome, and also evoke a favorable evaluation (Goffman, 1959; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In other words, an individual often publicizes and associates themself with favorable impressions while avoiding unfavorable features (Goffman, 1959; Paulhus & Levitt, 1987; Paulhus, Graf & Van Selst, 1989). By engaging in self-presentation, individuals can
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achieve and lean towards a desired-image of the self and/or the ideal image an individual would like others to have of them (Derlega et al., 1993; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Self-presentation is not only a critical factor in everyday life and a key to relationship formation and development, but is also salient in every interpersonal encounter (Dominick, 1999; Leary, Allen & Terry, 2011; Rui & Stefanone, 2012).

According to Arkin (1981), there are two distinct channels of self-presentation: “protective” and “acquisitive” strategies. Tedeschi and Melburg (1984) also break self-presentation down into two channels, but name them “defensive” and “assertive” strategies. For the sake of clarity and continuity, “protective” and “defensive” will be regarded as synonymous, while “acquisitive” and “assertive” strategies will be treated as the same. Defensive self-presentation is classified as the avoidance of disapproval and the protection or restoration of an identity (Lee, Ham & Kim, 2013; Rui & Stefanone, 2012). On the other hand, assertive self-presentation is understood as the development or creation of identities with an emphasis placed upon attractive features and association with positive images or outcomes (Brown, Collins & Schmidt, 1988; Lee et al., 1999; Rui & Stefanone, 2012).

In the present study, attention is placed upon two widely prevalent and specific assertive self-presentational strategy practices. The first is called “ingratiation”, which is the strategy of conveying an impression of being likable (Leary, 1996). The second strategy is called “competence”, which is the strategy associated with self-promotion (Jones, 1990). These two strategies will remain a focus as work by Jones (1990) found that ingratiation and competence are the two most commonly used self-presentation strategies in face-to-face interactions. This is to be expected as individuals' tendency to self-enhance is one of the most dominant social motivations (Baumiester, 1998; Fiske, 2001; Sedikides, 1993).
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Self-Presentation Online

Online, self-presentation strategies are not so different. Studies have found that online, ingratiation and competence are also the two most commonly applied self-presentation strategy practices (Bortree, 2005; Dominick, 1999; Trammel & Keshelashvili, 2005). Furthermore, Papacharissi (2002) noted that Goffman's work on self-presentation strategies could be applied to personal webpages including SNSs, as individuals are capable of manipulating what is presented and shown online, ultimately conveying a controlled and ideal image of oneself to others. Work by Schau and Gilly (2003) found that the creation of postings on personal websites is a conspicuous form of self-presentation that assumes external social observation. Additionally, work by Lee, Im and Taylor (2008) further support this previous notion, proposing that the fundamental motive for presenting oneself online is aimed at conveying desired images to others. Even more work by Rui and Stefanone (2012) conclude that the norms of a given culture that guide social interactions and self-presentation exist online, just as they would away from the keyboard.

SNSs have not only created an entirely new yet popularized process of self-presentation, but have given rise to new methodologies of evaluating personality and identity (Mehdizadeh, 2010; Rui & Stefanone, 2012). SNSs are a type of controlled environment where the strategic manipulation of information is undeniably evident and effortless (Mehdizadeh, 2010; Stefanone, Lackaff & Rosen, 2011). On top of that, it has also been stated that the functionality of computer-mediated communication promotes assertive self-presentation and optimized personal features (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006). It is clear and agreed that individuals are more likely to share information and content in order to present themselves in a more positive, rather than negative light (Berger, 2013).
With SNSs like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, individuals have time to reflect and construct what they prefer to share with others (Wong, 2012). While many may think individuals like, comment, upload and share impulsively, findings by Ellison et al. (2006) suggest that individuals are in fact aware of their posturing online in regards to pleasing others. Supplemental work by Birnbaum (2008) supported this notion by further unveiling that individuals are cautious about the type of features they publicize with others on Facebook. It has also been found that individuals manipulate their image towards an ideal self rather than their real self (Mehdizadeh, 2010) as identity is a social product, which can primarily dictate one's experience online (Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin, 2008). In specific regard to relationship formation, self-presentation strategies are critical, as others use this information as means to contemplate possible pursuits (Derlega, Winstead, Wong & Greenspan, 1987). Even when it comes to interacting with strangers, individuals still tend to make themselves look good, underlining the existence of self-presentation strategies online and away from the keyboard (Schlenker & Pontari, 2000).

When it comes to self-presentation online, it is fundamental to note audience differentiation. With a distinction between narrowcasting and broadcasting, a critical component of an audience is its size (Barasch & Berger, 2014). It has been found that one’s audience size has an impact on the content that individual shares. Compared to narrowcasting, broadcasting leads an individual to avoid sharing content which makes them look bad, reframe negative events to make themselves look “less bad” and ultimately avoid negativity (Barasch & Berger, 2014). On the other hand, narrowcasting decreases the proclivity for an individual to share self-presentational content (Barasch & Berger, 2014), allowing one to share more personally interesting or intimate information.
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As mentioned earlier, while individuals may reinforce and express a conceptualization of self through signs, symbols and possessions, online postings such as video advertisements can also be used. Through empirical and theoretical support, it can now be theorized that sharing an online video advertisements may assist in the process of assertive self-presentation online. Conversely, self-presentation may also be a primitive influencer for eWOM and a cause for many video advertisements’ viral statuses. With the previously mentioned literature and research, I hypothesize that self-presentational potential is a more significant predictor of eWOM behavior on SNSs than both the individual’s association with the advertised brand and the entertainment value of the video.

Methods

Participants

Participants (N=100) were undergraduate students from Franklin & Marshall College, varying in sex (Males = 35, Females = 65) and age (M = 19.8, SD = 1.13). In order to attract the largest sample possible, psychology students (N=60) were compensated with course credit and non-psychology students (N=40) were enticed with the opportunity to choose a prize if they were selected in a participant raffle. Four of the non-psychology student participants from the study were chosen at random and given the opportunity to select either an e-Reader, Fitness Tracker or Bluetooth Speaker, which were all equal in $100 value.

It is to be noted that there were originally 132 participants in the study but many were removed for various reasons. Of the 32 disqualified participants, many did not pass the first step of instructions leading them to the first video (N=17). Off those remaining, the others were disqualified due to the fact that they either did not watch all of the videos (N=6), did not reach
the debrief form (N=4), or completed the study in under eight minutes, which was an implausible amount of time (N=5). These 32 participants were excluded from the final analyses leaving a total sample size of 100 participants for analysis.

While many disparage the use of college students, this study justifies their use. First, college students frequently use SNSs, while their online image remains a valuable component of their identity. Secondly, from an advertising and marketing perspective, the Millennial cohort still remains an unknown, yet highly regarded demographic. Research on this demographic is incredibly beneficial. Lastly, student samples are considered homogenous, reducing Type II error compared to heterogenous samples (Calder, Phillips & Tybout, 1981).

Survey

Before the commencement of the provided online survey, subjects were asked to complete a statement of informed consent which highlighted the participant’s requirements, confidentiality, right to withdrawal, and time commitment (See Appendix A). The hypothesis about self-presentation was not mentioned to avoid influencing participants’ responses.

After consent, participants began their survey. The survey included four online viral video advertisements (See Appendix B), and a set of repeated 16 questions per each video (See Appendix C). The participants were asked to watch each video and then immediately answer the following 16 questions regarding that specific video. This was done for each video and every participant watched all four videos. The videos and questions were all randomized in order to ensure no order effects were present and no attention was placed upon the groups of questions being asked. The survey was not conducted in a lab setting, but distributed online via Qualtrics, allowing participants to select their own comfortable environment and emulate the setting in which they were most likely to watch such video advertisements online.
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The survey questions were adapted from past studies (Lee et al., 1999; Nelson-Field et al., 2013; Taylor et al., 2012) regarding online sharing behavior and self-presentation. Three distinct categories of motivators for eWOM were focused upon: brand association, video entertainment and self-presentation potential. There were five questions per motivator; totaling 15 randomized questions plus a final question inquiring about the likelihood the participant would share that video online (See Appendix C). For example, the brand category asked questions about the participant’s loyalty to the brand and how relevant the brand is to him or her. The entertainment category asked questions about how emotional, distinctive and funny the video was to him or her. Lastly, the self-presentation category asked questions about the video’s ability to make the participant look good if he or she shared it. The five questions per category were averaged together, creating a mean score for each of the three motivators of sharing. The survey and overall study was constructed to underline which category of motivators was the most influential in regards to the participant’s likelihood to engage in eWOM. It is important to note that self-reported “likelihood to share” responses positively predict online viral viewing volume and forwarding behavior (Southgate et al., 2010; Taylor et al., 2012).

Immediately following the completed survey, participants were debriefed and given information about the main focus of the study, hypothesis and goals of the research (See Appendix D). Participants were asked not to mention the true nature of the study or their participation until a certain date, which was when the study was expected to be completed. Participants were also provided with contact information if any questions or concerns arose.

Videos

In order to select online viral video advertisements, it was important to adhere to past literature. According to Wells, Moriarty & Burnett (2000), advertising is “paid non-personal
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communication from an identified sponsor using mass media to persuade or influence audience” (p. 6). On top of that, according to Porter & Golan (2003), viral advertising is “unpaid peer-to-peer communication of provocative content originating from an identified sponsor using the Internet to persuade or influence an audience to pass along the content to others” (p. 31).

Moreover it is noted, that with viral advertisements, content pertaining to brands are spread to potential consumers, who pass that content along to other potential consumers rapidly (Dobele et al., 2007; Southgate et al., 2010). These definitions also resurface the concept of earned media and eWOM.

The selected viral video advertisements were collected amongst a wide variety and date range spanning the past few years. The four selected online viral video advertisements were all uploaded to YouTube.com. The selected viral video advertisements maintain four distinct viral statuses including 10, 20, 50 and 65 million views. Additionally, the advertisements were selected to cover a range of goods and businesses. The videos also range in emotion, demographic appeal, length, filmmaking techniques and credited advertising agency (See Appendix B). Lastly, all selected videos were viewed from the originally uploaded and brand account, controlling the content.

Results

Primary Analyses. A multiple regression analysis was applied to test which one of the three categories of motivators had the most influence on the likelihood an individual would engage in eWOM. For each multiple regression analysis, the likelihood a participant would engage in eWOM was entered as the dependent variable. The tested independent variables were each of the category motivator means including brand, entertainment and self-presentation. This
was tested for each advertisement and with all of the advertisements’ data combined in order to thoroughly test the hypothesis.

For the Old Spice video, the advertisement’s brand and entertainment category factors were not significant predictors of the likelihood of eWOM, but self-presentation was found to be a significant predictor of eWOM (β=.86, p<.001) (See Table 1). For the Kmart video, the advertisement’s brand and entertainment category factors were also not significant predictors of the likelihood of eWOM, but self-presentation was once again found to be a significant predictor of eWOM (β=.73, p<.001) (See Table 2). For the Devil’s Due video, the advertisement’s brand category factor was not a significant predictor but the entertainment category factor (β=.22, p=.01) and self-presentation category factor (β=.58, p<.001) were significant predictors of eWOM (See Table 3). Lastly, for the Dove video, the advertisement’s brand category factor was not a significant predictor, but like Devil’s Due, Dove’s entertainment category factor (β=.27, p=.003) and self-presentation category factor (β=.51, p<.001) were significant predictors of eWOM (See Table 4). Predicted by my hypothesis, self-presentation potential was found to be the most prevalent and significant motivator when it came to the likelihood an individual would engage in eWOM behavior pertaining to the online video advertisement (β=.78, p<.001) (See Table 5).

**Secondary Analyses.** While the brand category factor was not found to be a significant predictor of eWOM for any of the videos, males viewed brand as a more important influencer of eWOM (β=.27, p=.08) than females (β=.06, p=.63) (See Table 6).

When examining all of the entertainment category questions separately, emotion (β=.4, p<.001) was found to be the only significant entertainment category question predictable of
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eWOM behavior for all of the videos, despite the entire entertainment category only being significant for the Devil’s Due and Dove advertisements (See Tables 7 & 8).

When further investigating the significant self-presentation category, the five category questions were divided into two groups consisting of “status” and “bonding” intentional behaviors. The status-oriented intentions explored whether the video would “positively impact others’ perceptions” of the participant, bring “positive attention from others”, and make the participant “look good” if he or she shared the video (See Appendix C, Questions 11-13). The bonding-oriented intentions explored whether “sharing the video would entertain others” and if the participant “would share the video for others to enjoy” (See Appendix C, Questions 14 & 15). It was found there was a smaller effect size for status-oriented self-presentation intention questions (β=.27, p=.002), relative to the bonding-oriented self-presentation intention questions (β=.60, p<.001) as predictors for eWOM (See Table 9). For males, there was a larger effect size for status-oriented questions on eWOM (β=.40, p=.01) than for females (β=.22, p=.05) (See Table 10). On the other hand, for females, there was a stronger effect size for the bonding-oriented questions on eWOM (β=.64, p<.001) than for males (β=.49, p=.002) (See Table 11).

Table 1. eWOM predicted by brand, entertainment, and self-presentation for the Old Spice ad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
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<td>.07</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.01</td>
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<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.44</td>
<td>.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Presentation</td>
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<td>.86</td>
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Table 2. eWOM predicted by brand, entertainment, and self-presentation for the Kmart ad

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<td>.11</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.10</td>
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<td>.12</td>
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<td>.70</td>
<td>.48</td>
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<td>Self-Presentation</td>
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<td>.73</td>
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SELF-PRESENTATION AS MOTIVATOR FOR eWOM

Table 3. eWOM predicted by brand, entertainment, and self-presentation for the Devil’s Due ad

<table>
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Table 4. eWOM predicted by brand, entertainment, and self-presentation for the Dove ad

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<th>t</th>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Presentation</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. eWOM predicted by brand, entertainment, and self-presentation for all ads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Presentation</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. eWOM predicted by brand for all ads by sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Brand</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Brand</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. eWOM predicted by entertainment components for all ads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entertaining</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>1.855</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funny</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinctive</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-1.40</td>
<td>.16</td>
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</table>
Table 8. eWOM predicted by the emotional entertainment component for each ad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Spice</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kmart</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devil’s Due</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. eWOM predicted by status-oriented and bonding-oriented intentions for all ads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intentions</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonding</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>6.97</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. eWOM predicted by status-oriented intentions for all ads by sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Self</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Self</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. eWOM predicted by bonding-oriented intentions for all ads by sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Bonding</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Bonding</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

Brands

Consistent with past research (Southgate et al., 2010; Taylor et al., 2012), the brand advertised in the video did not play a role in the participant’s likelihood to engage in eWOM (See Tables 1, 2, 3 & 4). This further suggests that any brand has the potential to create an online viral video advertisement, regardless of individuals’ pre-existing levels of brand association.
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**Entertainment**

When analyzing each of the videos’ data combined, the entertainment category was not found to be a significant predictor of eWOM (See Table 5). However the entertainment category showed to be a significant influencer of eWOM for the Devil’s Due and the Dove advertisements individually (See Tables 3 & 4). Moreover, consistent with the many past findings, my study further suggests that in regards to the entertainment value of a given piece of content, evoked emotion is a significant predictor of eWOM (See Tables 7). This was found across each video (See Table 8).

**Self-Presentation**

As hypothesized, self-presentation was the most prevalent and significant predictor of eWOM pertaining to the presented online video advertisements (See Table 5). Out of brand association, entertainment value, and self-presentation potential, self-presentation was the only significant category of questions across all four videos (See Tables 1, 2, 3 & 4) and when all the videos’ data was combined (See Table 5). These effects were present in the regression models over and above the effects of brand association and entertainment value.

To further investigate the self-presentation category, the five self-presentation questions were split into two groups, separated by “status” and “bonding” oriented intentions. Interestingly, bonding-oriented self-presentation intentions were found to be a more powerful motivator of eWOM than status-oriented self-presentation intentions across each video and when all the videos’ data was combined (See Table 9).

**Sex Differences**

While brand association was an insignificant motivator of eWOM for both males and females, females viewed brand association even less as a potential motivator for eWOM than
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males (See Table 6). Furthermore, when splitting the self-presentation category questions into the “status” and “bonding” oriented intentions, males’ status-oriented intentions were a stronger predictor of eWOM than females’ status-oriented intentions (See Table 10). Conversely, bonding-oriented intentions were a more powerful predictor of eWOM for females than for males (See Table 11).

Overall

My findings suggest that the most powerful motivator of eWOM pertaining to video advertisements is self-presentation potential. This predictor was found to be more significant than brand association and entertainment value, which has been solely focused upon in much of past research. We now better conceptualize the potent presence of self-presentational behavior on SNSs and its influence upon eWOM, which was once thought to be a benign, spontaneous and altruistic act. As pivotal as these results stand, they simultaneously act as a grave prompt to begin discussing the future of the social web. As past studies and my research shows, self-presentation exists online. However, the question now arises; how salient and customary has self-presentation become on SNSs and is this gratifying or discouraging news?

SNSs are multiplying and so are the connections being created, amount of content being shared and money being pumped into them. As time has progressed, we have become attracted to SNSs as they allow opportunities to connect and share content without having to consider time or geographical boundaries. Due to our lives displayed on SNSs every second of the day, it is becoming expected to believe that we are always online and that our online lives are in fact “real” because of their permeation into our away from keyboard discussions. Being the case, it is in our best interest to self-present and display our desired image for all to see. As living our lives on SNSs has become increasingly customary, what this study implies is that, it may be time to
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step back and analyze our behaviors on SNSs as self-presentation exists and may be taking priority in some of our actions, creating a drastic dissociation between our online and away from keyboard lives.

As this study suggests, self-presentation may be beginning to dictate our behavior online. Due to the fact online, individuals are always viewing others' manipulated selves, these individuals are automatically comparing those images to their own un-manipulated and genuine away from keyboard selves. To combat this inner comparison, individuals may tend to also engage in self-presentational behavior or in other words “keep up.” To the idea, according to Facebook everybody leads perfect lives, is a surreal yet sobering ideology. Research has begun to pay attention to the negative consequences of SNS spectating and life comparison including depression, distress, envy and lowered life satisfaction. Moreover, as SNSs become relied upon as memory surrogates, they may be providing a distorted account of our own manipulated image, warping our very own perception of ourselves (PBS, 2012).

When acknowledging the tested video advertisements and the results, it is pragmatic and necessary to view these videos as possible vessels to promote the self to others. Online video advertisements are serving as deeper, more psychological applications than the currently recognized service of promoting products and brands. This may underline our inherent desire to connect and self-present. Brands and advertisers should no longer place as much emphasis upon the entertainment value of their video content, but begin focusing on their video advertisement’s ability to act as a method for status-enhancement, opportunity to perfect social posturing and excuse to phatically socialize with others. According to this study, these attributes will influence an individual’s likelihood to engage in eWOM behavior.
Limitations & Future Research

With any study, there are many limitations and restrictions. First, a larger, more comprehensive Millennial cohort would have been beneficial to study. Although only a small age range of the Millennial cohort was tested, 18-22 year-olds, the entire Millennial demographic encompasses 15-35 year-olds. Moreover, a wider participant pool spanning different schools and professions would have also been beneficial to study. Individual differences including personality traits may also influence eWOM and should be considered and later tested. Lastly, opening this research to explore different cultures and their online behaviors would be advantageous.

Regarding the survey questions, now that we know self-presentation is the most significant predictor of eWOM, deeper questioning regarding this component is essential. Further research surveying status and bonding-oriented intentions is something to be further investigated.

As different as the videos were in this study, future research should sample even more videos, stemming from even more products, businesses and services. Future research should not just examine online video advertisements, but also test other types of viral videos and other forms of viral content such as pictures and articles.

Additional exploration into other social phenomenon should be carried out to test its existence on SNSs and whether they can also be experimented on. Most importantly, future research should begin comparing the frequency and significance of self-presentation on SNSs and away from the keyboard in order to better understand its current role and prevalence online.

As this study reveals the significance of self-presentation on SNSs, it may be inferred that self-presentational behavior has become too ordinary of a practice online. However, it can also
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be found that individuals self-present less on SNSs than they do away from the keyboard. No matter the case, we must curb excessive self-presentational behavior on SNSs before these services and platforms become too distorted, artificial and inauthentic to be taken as serious entities of the web.
Appendix A
Statement of Informed Consent Form

Title: Effects of Online Video Advertisements on College Students

Principal Investigator:
Matt Klein (Student Researcher) at mklein2@fandm.edu or 973-479-4635

The purpose of an informed consent is to ensure that you understand the purpose of this study, the nature of your involvement, and the conditions of your participation. It provides the information necessary for you to make the decision concerning whether or not you wish to participate in this study. If you have any questions or concerns while reading this form, please ask the Researcher for clarification.

Research Personnel: In addition to the principal investigator listed above, the following individuals also involved in this research may be contacted if you have any questions or concerns or need further information about this study: Dr. Allison Troy (Psychology Faculty Sponsor) at atroy@fandm.edu or 717-291-3833 and Dirk Eitzen (Film & Media Studies Faculty Sponsor) at deitzen@fandm.edu or 717-291-4297. If any ethical concerns about this study arise, please contact Meredith Bashaw (Psychology Department Chair, Franklin & Marshall College) at meredith.bashaw@fandm.edu or 717-358-4428.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of advertising techniques on college-aged students.

Task Requirements: Participants will be asked to watch a video advertisement and immediately asked to answer questions regarding that video. There will be four total videos to watch.

Duration/Locale: The study will not take longer than 15-20 minutes. Participants are asked to complete the survey where they feel most comfortable.

Potential Risk/Discomfort: There are no recognized risks regarding this study. However, if you feel anxious and/or uncomfortable about your performance in this study, please bring your concerns to the Researcher's attention immediately.

Benefits/Rewards: By participating in this study, subjects are receiving course credit or the chance to win an e-reader, fitness tracker or blue-tooth speaker. Four participants will randomly be chosen and asked to select the prize of their choice. Participants may also enjoy the selected videos or take pleasure in assisting with psychological research.

Anonymity/Confidentiality: The data collected in this study are confidential. All data are coded such that your name is not associated with the data. The information provided will be used for research purposes only. The coded data are made available only to the researchers associated with this project.
Appendix A (cont.)
Statement of Informed Consent Form (cont.)

Right to Withdraw: You will be permitted to not answer any question(s) that you choose to omit. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time without academic penalty. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Please check:
I have read the above description of the study and understand the conditions of my participation.
Appendix B

Video List

“Vacation” by Old Spice (:30 seconds)
~10,000,000 views
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3R2cnxz27LI
In this advertisement, the ultimate ladies man explains why every man should be wearing Old Spice deodorant and what can happen if he does. In this absurd single take, the viewer is transported to numerous locations, while seductively informed about the wild and unrealistic effects of the Old Spice smell.

"Ship My Pants" by Kmart (:35 seconds)
~22,000,000 views
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l03UmJbK0lA
In this advertisement, a clever play on words is exercised to express how free and easy it is to “ship” Kmart’s products from in the store. This video shows different characters “shipping” their products including little Billy who can’t wait to “ship” his pants and a mother who just “shipped” her drawers.

“Devil Baby Attack” by Devil’s Die (1:48 seconds)
~50,000,000 views
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUKMUZ4tlJg
In this advertisement, a robotic, devilish looking baby is created to terrify unsuspecting citizens in New York City. In this prank, we secretly watch the remote-controlled baby in a stroller pop out and release a blood-curling scream at its victim. The prank intensifies when they baby begins projectile vomiting and flipping the middle finger.

"Real Beauty Sketches" by Dove (3:00 seconds)
~65,500,000 views
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpaOjMXyJGk
In this advertisement, women are brought in to a loft space and asked to describe themselves to a forensic sketch artist who cannot see them. Next, another woman is brought in to describe the subject again, but does so more pleasantly. At the end of the video, the two sketches are compared revealing how much more attractive the second portrait is compared to the self-described portrait.
Appendix C
Survey

Primary Questions:
1. Sex?
2. How old are you?

In this study you will be asked to watch a video in its entirety, whether or not you've seen it before. Once it's over, please continue onto the next page to answer questions regarding the video you just watched. The videos range in length from 30 seconds to 3 minutes. There will be four videos in total.

Brand Questions:
Rate the following statements from 1-7 (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)
1. I associate myself with this brand/store/movie.
2. I enjoy this brand/store/movie.
3. This brand/store/movie is relevant to me.
4. I identify with this brand/store/movie.
5. This brand/store/movie is important to me

Entertainment Questions:
Rate the following statements from 1-7 (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)
6. This video was entertaining
7. This video was funny
8. This video was enjoyable
9. This video was emotional
10. This video was distinctive

Self-Presentation Questions:
Rate the following statements from 1-7 (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)
11.S. Sharing this video will positively impact others’ perception of me
12.S. Sharing this video will bring me positive attention from others
13.S. Sharing this video will make me look good to others
14.B. Sharing this video will entertain others
15.B. I would share this video for others to enjoy
(S = Status; B = Bonding)

Share:
Rate the following statements from 1-7 (1 = very unlikely; 7 = very likely)
16. What is the likelihood that you would share this video?

Benchmark Share:
Rate the following statements from 1-7 (1 = very unlikely; 7 = very likely)
17. How often do you share videos online?
Appendix D
Debrief Form

Title: Millennials’ Primary Motivator for Sharing Online Viral Video Advertisements on Social Networking Sites; Assertive Self-Presentational Behavior

What were we trying to do in this experiment?
We are examining the potential motivators that affect why one would share an online video advertisement. With three categories of motivators (entertainment value, brand association and self-presentation opportunity), we wanted to see which was the most influential and primary reason why one would share the online video advertisement.

What is the goal of this research?
The goal of the research is to better understand how individuals are adopting technology when it comes to their identity and presented image online. This research also helps brands and advertisers create more influential content that will get people to share their messages for them.

Thanks for participating! Please do not discuss this study until April ’15!

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please feel to email or call any of the contacts below. If you would like a copy of the completed article and results, please email or call one of the researchers or the faculty sponsor.

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