**Product placement in the UK**

**Media Promotion & Product Integration Project**

**in the UK**

Product placement occurs when a company pays a TV or film producer or a programme-maker to include its products or brands in a programme. Since February 2011 product placement has been allowed in TV programmes made for UK audiences. This project examines industry practices, media reporting and debate surrounding the release of rules.

Past placement is now permitted in films (including documentaries and short films), television and other genres, but is prohibited in news or children’s programmes, with a list of products such as tobacco, alcohol and medicines that cannot be placed. Since European rules were changed they are enforced in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive of 2007: all EC member states have released their rules to allow product placement.

**Research design and methods**

This research project examines current product placement in TV shows and analyses the reporting and discussion of product placement in both general news media and specialized trade media. This forms part of a broader study that explores the changing relationships between media and marketing communications and considers industry practices, policies and problems.

For the reporting analysis we used Nexis® to search for all articles in UK newspapers that included the terms ‘product placement’ or ‘brand integration’ between January 2011 – May 2014, resulting in a total of 608 discrete articles. We searched for relevant articles that were written in English, and coded each article in accordance with a coding sheet. The project is ongoing but key findings include:

- In general UK News of PP was mainly advertised by: 
  - Commercial food and drinks (Beverages, fast foods, alcoholic beverages), often by brand name.
  - Commercial media (encompassing the production of PP-related content such as documentaries, reality shows, etc.).
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- Coverage and criticism of PP tended to be episodic or based on a pre-existing narrative content, with approximately half the stories covering US film and television. Thematic reports, addressing the context of regulation of PP in UK TV were exceptional. However, readers were informed about the debate to which programmes are subjected, with a particular emphasis on the impact of PP on children.
- In general, the tone of the articles was critical, and the main focus of the discussions was the potential impact of PP on children and young people.
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- The project has highlighted the importance of marketing industry in the UK, especially when it comes to product placement. It has helped to develop critical thinking and analytical skills. As an example, when viewing a programme with product placement, critical thinking is needed to evaluate the role of the product in the context of the programme.
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**News coding and analysis**

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**Summarizing and next steps**

The first three years product placement has generated £1.5bn more and has less income than originally predicted by industry. The main reasons for this are:

1. **Supply and demand**
   - Insufficient incentives for PP due to a lack of established, regulated processes and market.
   - Limited market size and its impact on TV production costs.

2. **Market scepticism**
   - Lack of clear understanding of what constitutes PP.
   - Lack of clear guidelines for producers and programme-makers.

3. **Marketers’ caution**
   - Concerns about the effectiveness of PP in achieving marketing objectives.
   - Concerns about the transparency and accountability of PP practices.

The next phase of this project will be to complete the analysis of TV programmes and reporting of PP. This will contribute to a book-length study of media and marketing integration and to journal articles. This research will contribute to answering the question here, and why, has the integration of media and marketing become normalised?

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisors Dr Jonathan Hardy and UEL for the opportunity to undertake this project.

My motivation for applying for the internship was the opportunity to work closely with an academic on a research project that will contribute to something bigger in the world outside the university. This project involves many stages of research, from data collection to writing, which is the process of transforming raw data into a readable format. The process of writing is a challenging but rewarding one. This project involves many stages of research, from data collection to writing, which is the process of transforming raw data into a readable format. The process of writing is a challenging but rewarding one. This project involves many stages of research, from data collection to writing, which is the process of transforming raw data into a readable format. The process of writing is a challenging but rewarding one. This project involves many stages of research, from data collection to writing, which is the process of transforming raw data into a readable format. The process of writing is a challenging but rewarding one. This project involves many stages of research, from data collection to writing, which is the process of transforming raw data into a readable format. The process of writing is a challenging but rewarding one.

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Emmerdale

Emmerdale is a long-running British soap first broadcast in 1972. Emmerdale is sponsored by McVitie’s, Canadian fast food and drink company, and the world’s largest producer of French Fries. In one episode, a local shop offers a discount to customers who buy a McVitie’s chocolate bar and drink in High Fat Salt Sugar categories (Coca-Cola).

Prominent alcohol brands shown in programmes include Channel 4’s Big Brother and Emmerdale, which markets its product placement rules to by-pass controls on advertising and marketing integration to and from journals. This research will contribute to answering the question here, and why, has the integration of media and marketing become normalised?

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