



A very sociable year for those with an open mind

IT WAS in 2006 that audience measurements started to record the long-threatened shift away from some traditional broadcast media and towards the so-called social media of the internet. The disruptive power of the internet is making itself felt in advertising and media now as much as any industry.

In 2006 in the UK, the online ad market surpassed radio, cinema and outdoor in value. And the new working adult primetime online is 9 to 5.

Those who adapt and find new ways to reach audiences where they are - online or offline - will succeed. So we asked four leaders in Irish AdLand to point to examples of excellence in this brave new world. The only condition was that you couldn't recommend your own work - which meant that Chemistry's Ray Sheerin couldn't nominate his own agency's ICAD-winning 'Dublin Coastal Development' viral campaign for property site Funda.ie.

STUART FOGARTY

Actually this wasn't difficult for me at all because I think 2006 marked a new breed, a new shift in adland which came with the onslaught of Bebo, YouTube, MySpace and the rest. For some of us it's a threat, but for the brave it's another great new day.

One Agency in Canada doesn't employ creatives. It farms its work out to, eh, consumers. Think about it. In a world of digital cameras, broadband and desktop editing, there's a good chance that the guy in his bedroom will have a funny idea.

So in second place MasterCard, who capitalised on this era of

'customer-made' content with their online promotion 'Write a Priceless Ad' on YouTube, Bebo etc. You've all wanted to do one, so here's the chance to see it made. And who'll judge it the winner? Consumers of course. And how many will download it? Millions. But they were

pipped by L'Oreal's 'make your own commercial'. Same idea but a tangible look at the way in which the world changed in 2006. First and groundbreaking. First and frightening. Mark my words.

Stuart Fogarty is a Shareholder Director at Irish-owned Agency, AFAO'Meara.

RAY SHEERIN

The best online work of the year has to be the ad for the Scissor Sisters' 'I don't feel like dancin'' single, made

by ICAN. This initially looked like a fairly conventional viral campaign where senders could select the costumes and wigs for the dancers in the video to the single but the power of the communications comes from the fact that headshots can also be included of the sender and the friend to whom they forward the email. Which I'm quite sure people did, in their droves. (See it: www.ican.ie/campaigns/universal-music/dancesisterdance)

The ambient campaign of the year for me was for Guinness, making very effective use of the on-trade environment during the Six Nations. Bunting all around the tops of walls in pubs featured the pitch-side front row of the crowd, while the rest of the bar was marked out as if it were the pitch (the bar being the try line etc.). A great way to leverage a bit of patriotism at point-of-purchase!

Ray Sheerin is managing director, Chemistry

PETER CAHILL

This is indeed the year of YouTube and user-generated content, so it's not so much a campaign I've identified as an authentic user-generated phenomenon and how the

two different brands involved reacted. It's a story about how they interact with their brand, how brand

conversations and dialogues start and are maintained - and how brands can create ideas that will engage and entertain their audiences.

My all time favourite for this year has to be the Mentos Coke fountain. A truly bizarre almost scientific discovery. (Apparently if you add a packet of mentos mints to a 1.5 litre of Coke this creates a reaction that causes a fountain. Check it out on YouTube. Anyway needless to say the kids loved it and began to play set records and post video clips. Interestingly we had too very different reactions from the brands - Mentos embraced the idea (very healthy sales up lift) and set up a web page and competition. However Coke took the completely opposite stance and very publicly denounced the practice as un-American or unhealthy or un-something (more than likely advised by a bus load of attorneys).

Peter Cahill is Head of Integration, Cawley Nea/TBW

TOM DOHERTY

Not a day went by in 2006 that some amazing statistic about the growth of on-line advertising didn't appear - on-line has become bigger than cinema, outdoor, radio, press, Jesus.

The statistic I'd like to see is how much was spent off-line advertising

on-line? Before the dot.com crash in the USA, huge budgets were spent directing consumers to websites - the realisation being that the lack of any shelf or street space meant that dot.com brands had to spend more to achieve share of mind.

Where on-line works best is when it is used not just as an advertising medium but also as a sales channel, point of contact and the clothes that the brand wears.

The old saying "all sales are local" no longer applies yet there is little point in producing wonderful on-line advertising unless it drives sales in the market where the brand is on sale.

The Carlton Draught "Big Ad" claims to be the most watched online commercial ever made yet it's popularity didn't apparently translate directly in sales in Australia.

A multinational online campaign that I admired in 2006 was the Coke GTA execution while, in an Irish Broadband 'Perfect Boyfriend /Girlfriend in a Box' idea.

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A big hit: the Scissor Sisters' interactive 'I Don't Feel Like Dancin' video (left) and Irish Broadband's 'girlfriend in a box'

