The patrimonialization process of advertising: from scorn and mistrust to documentary heritage, archive, and history
A three-steps demonstration for a three-steps process of patrimonialization

I. From scorn to cultural and digital heritage
II. From cultural heritage to (digital) archive
III. From archive to historical (and digital) analysis
I. Advertising from scorn to cultural and digital heritage

A. The quest for a cultural and artistic legitimacy

B. The way to economical necessity

C. The social consecration

D. The transformation of advertising in the last decade through digital approaches
The time of scorn and mistrust

A long tradition of mistrust inherited from vendors of miraculous remedies

The dangers of dvertising as manipulation:

Packard, Vance, *The hidden persuaders.*
A. The quest for a cultural and artistic legitimacy

The prestige of posters designers in the 19th century

Jules Chéret (1836-1932) :
Advertetisement for « Saxoléine » (1891)

Toulouse Lautrec (1864-1901) :
Advertisement for bicycles, 1896

The collection mania :
Exhibitions at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France

A collection mania reinforced by digital media
B. The way to economical necessity

• **Advertising as necessary to the press:** while advertising had first relied on the press for its earlier development, the relationship gradually reversed to the point that advertising finally became necessary to the press.

• **Advertising as necessary to companies:**
  - an informational tool first
  - From advertising to marketing and branding: an emotional value – an appeal to the consumers' emotions and experience in order to build an intimate and faithful relationship with the product and the brand identity.
C. The social consecration of advertising

- An *information* medium for consumers about the products, especially the new and « modern » ones, and to face the diversification of products and brands in the age of industrialization and segmentation, replacing the « word-of-mouth » tradition

- A *pedagogical* tool for educating consumers and society to « modernity »
Digital tools both renew and strengthen « traditional » trends, and rise new problems and challenges :

- **New forms of ads and new medias** blowing the boundaries between business, games and education (online or mobiles ads, banners, email, advergames) – increasing the visual impact of ads and playing on consumers imaginary, memory and identity

- **New strategies and potentialities**: directly targeting consumers, refining market segmentation, more efficient, but also more intrusive – viral marketing both rooted in the « word and mouth » tradition and capitalizing on social networking (Facebook, Twitter)

- **New temporalities**: interactivity, brand awareness, consumers loyalty

- **New problems and critics**:
  - For consumers: intrusiveness, personal data and confidentiality
  - For advertisers: copyrights issue (as creative contents has became more easily accessible and less easy to control)
Special contributors to this process of recognition

- Advertisers themselves: the professionalization process of advertising:
  - Institutions: professional organizations (IAA), festivals and awards (Lions Cannes Festival, Clio Awards)
  - Theories and specialized: literature: journals (Advertising Age) and handbooks, the building of a body of theoretical and practical references (psychoanalysis, sociology, artistic movements – Art Déco, Art Nouveau...)
  - Specialization and complexification of the profession – new roles and functions (artistic directors, advertising agencies, printers, designers...), hierarchy, power relationships, professional conflicts...

- Scholars since the 1980s:
  - Pope, The making of modern advertising, 1983
  - The Advertising Age Encyclopedia of advertising, 2003
II. From cultural heritage to (digital) archive

Three challenges for archivists:

A. Selection

B. Collection

C. Preservation and presentation
A. The challenge of selection

Considering the overabundance of advertising materials, which ads are worth to be preserved and selected, according to which criteria?

- **Scarcity/ubiquity**: rare and endangered ads should be privileged.
- **Quality of metadata**: producers, sources, dates and place of production should be known; original ads should be documented by others available materials (archives of the companies, advertising agencies...).
- **Representativeness**: considering the polymorphous nature of ad, its various versions, formats and medias, we should preserve a sample of each type in order to make comparisons.
How the selection process of ads is affected by the digital age?

Old problems are aggravated and new challenges are created in the digital age:

- Far from solving the abundance-scarcity dilemma, digitization increase the risk of submersion
- Digital medias aggravate the risk of rapid obsolescence and increase the ever-changing and short-living nature of ads, their fragility and mutability

Various solutions can be proposed:

- To face the temporal constraints of preservation, archivists can use existing tools such as Internet Archive and the Way Back Machine
- New tools should be designed to collect ads in realtime before operating a gradual and refining process of selection
- Archivists should be taught a specific digital literacy to use these tools
- To solve problems of privacy and scarcity, archivists should call for consumers and ad collectors' participation, promoting a sort of « crowdsourcing »
B. The challenge of collection

Databases, collections and corpora should be build according to four main principles (ex. Duke University – John Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising and Marketing History):

- The **origin** of ads (preserving the unity given by the former institution, company, collector, donator...)

- The **thematic coverage** (« Medicine and Medicine Avenue »)

- The **medium** (press, posters...) (AdAcces for the Canadian and American press, AdView for TV commercials, ROAD and ROAD 2.0 for outdoor advertising)

- The **time period** (« Emergence of Advertising in America » from 1850 to 1920)

http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/hartman/
New challenges and solutions for collecting ads at the digital age

**Intellectual property constraints, copyright and trademarks complications:**

- **Different domains of rights** are concerned: creative contents, business names and logos, computer-generated graphic symbols, graphic users interfaces or website designs

- « **Valuable » and sensitive ads** (considered as artworks) vs « **vulgar » and less sensitive ads

- **Different levels of uses and users for ad materials** should be seriated by **archivists:** from simple storage to limited availability (to scholars and professionals) or broader access to the general public or ad fans

**A few solutions:**

- **Collaboration** between research centers, cultural institutions (museums, archives and documentation centers), advertisers, general public and private collectors

- **Institutional support, team and large-scale projects** in order to build large and reliable databases, and to gain companies and advertisers' trust

- New appropriate **laws and regulations** – a sort of « digital property bill of rights » - and a global solution
C. The challenge of preservation and presentation

- Should ads be systematically digitized or only preserved on paper format? Is digitization more accurate to certain types of ads (TV commercials, online and born-digital ads)?
- What are the advantages and limitations of digitization?
  - Easier, better and broader access
  - Information are lost (materiality), as original materials are not anymore accessible once digitized
- What are the advantages and limitations of each technique of digitization?
- Time and costs of digitization? Money constraints introduce bias between institutions, researchers and corpora
III. From archive to historical (and digital) analysis

Since 1980s, historians and scholars have developed methodologies and tools to scrutinize advertising:

- **Pope, « Making sense of advertisements »**: the most achieved attempt to adapt historical method to the specific study of ads – a guideline for historians, an introduction to advertising and its history, a methodology, other resources (case studies, exercises), but too focused on American advertising

- **O'Barr, « Ad Text »**: a digital curriculum offering thematic « dossiers », courses and various resources but too American-focused and less historical-oriented than Pope

- **My personal methodology** developed for my **PhD thesis dealing with advertising in Modern Shanghai, using Omeka** and participating in a **global platform** with other doctoral student (IAO Scholar): both a **quantitative** approach (building databases, collections and corpora, making relations between ads and other materials), and a **qualitative** approach (analyzing individual ads, inspired from **software studies** – Lev Manovich)
Références


Online resources

Duke University Library : [http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/hartman/](http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/hartman/)

[http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/ads/](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/ads/)


Thanks for your attention!
Comments are welcome!

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http://advertisinghistory.hypotheses.org/
http://dhlyon.hypotheses.org/