

Consumer Passion

For Passionate Consumers

February 05, 2008

Super Bowl Post-Game Report on Advertiser's Website Performance

If you polled consumers and asked them what items they consider indispensable to have while watching the Super Bowl, I think you'd find "laptop" ranking right there with nachos and favorite beverages. Advertisers know that an integrated marketing plan is essential when the average cost of a Super Bowl ad is nearly \$3 million, and when the average consumer now spends as much or more time online each day than watching television.



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So how did the advertisers do, in terms of website performance, on Super Sunday? **Competitive Research**, the industry analysis group of **Keynote Systems**, released the results of its *Super Bowl XLII 2008 Web site performance challenge*, which monitored the performance (responsiveness and reliability) of four leading mobile sports Web sites and 44 of the Super Bowl advertiser's Web sites. Keynote found that while the four mobile Web sites (ESPN, Yahoo Sports, FOX Sports and CBS) performed extremely well, 12 advertisers encountered significant performance problems.

Keynote found that approximately 25 percent of the Super Bowl advertiser's Web sites experienced significant to major performance slowdowns and outages, including Budlight/Budweiser, Cars.com, Careerbuilder.com, Hyundai, NFL, Salesgenie.com and Unilever. From Keynote's [press release](#):

*Just before the game, between 3:07 and 3:20 pm (PST) and then again from 7:28 to 7:49 pm (PST), both of Anheuser-Busch's flagship **Budlight** and **Budweiser** sites encountered slowdowns and errors. While normal performance for these sites range between 3-5 seconds, during these times, performance slowed to as much as 50 seconds and in many cases reported errors to visitor's Web browsers. These were also seen on Monday, February 4 between 5:40 to 5:50 am (PST) and 10:10 to 10:20 am (PST).*

***Cars.com** saw performance slowdowns at 4:07 and 4:18 pm (PST). Download speeds were 200-300 percent slower and appeared to be due to the Web servers taking a long time to respond to download requests. The situation worsened between 5:30 and 6:00 pm (PST) where downloads, which normally take 4-5 seconds to complete, were taking as long as 50-60 seconds. Finally, while significant slowdowns or errors have ceased, data has shown an increase in performance variability that began on Monday around 10:00 am (PST).*

*On Super Bowl Sunday, **Careerbuilder.com** hummed right along without any hiccups. However, the morning after the game between 10:20 and 10:53 am (PST) Keynote tracked slowdowns in creating an initial connection to their site.*

***Hyundai** took a few online hits between 5:45 and 6:00 pm (PST) and then again from 6:26 to 6:45 pm (PST). Download times took between 20 and 30 seconds, up from around three seconds prior.*

*The **National Football League's** Web site did surprisingly well the week leading up to and throughout the game. Keynote noticed only some minor slowdowns between 4:40 and 4:52 pm (PST). However, the following morning, between 10:46 and 11:30 am (PST), Keynote saw significant performance slowdowns and some minor outages. Previous download times took around 6 seconds while during this time, downloads took as long as 20 to 60 seconds.*

***Salesgenie.com's** Web site encountered major performance slowdowns — taking as long as 10-18 seconds*

from 5 seconds — as well as some errors downloading key elements on its Web site. These issues were seen between 1:30 and 2:00 pm (PST), 3:49 and 4:20 pm (PST), 5:35 and 6:24 pm (PST), and 7:21 and 8:35 pm (PST). Additionally, around 5:30 am (PST) on Monday, February 4, Keynote saw major slowdowns; albeit, at a lower scale.

***Unilever**, the maker of many domestic products, found its main home page slow down by as much as 500%, from 6 seconds to as long as 40 seconds. These issues were isolated between 4:01 and 4:30 pm (PST), 6:43 and 6:51 pm (PST), and 7:51 and 8:04 (PST). Interestingly, beginning around 2:45 am (PST) on Monday, some of these performance and availability issues continued. These performance slowdowns appear to be isolated incidents in making the first initial connection to the company's Web server(s).*

Keynote has an infrastructure of 2,400 measurement computers and mobile devices in over 240 locations around the world. The company also maintains what it calls one of the most representative panels of online users consisting of 160,000 consumers.

GoDaddy.com is the best example of an advertiser who's main purpose was to drive online traffic. GoDaddy says it tracked some 1.5 million online visits, attributed to it's TV ad, by the time post-game celebrations were being broadcast. GoDaddy invited viewers to see it's Danica Patrick "Exposure" ad online, which was banned by FOX.

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