

# Interactive Food & Beverage Marketing:

Targeting  
Children and Youth  
in the Digital Age



Today, U.S. children are confronting myriad diseases associated with excessive weight gain and poor nutrition. Type 2 diabetes, a serious medical condition previously found only in adults, has become common in children and adolescents.<sup>1</sup> Government agencies and public health professionals have become increasingly concerned over the role of advertising in promoting “high-calorie, low-nutrient” products to young people.<sup>2</sup> Most of the policy debate has focused on TV commercials targeted at young children. However, marketing now extends far beyond the confines of television and even the Internet, into an expanding and ubiquitous digital media culture.<sup>3</sup> The proliferation of media in children’s lives has created a new “marketing ecosystem” that encompasses cell phones, mobile music devices, instant messaging, videogames, and virtual, three-dimensional worlds.<sup>4</sup> These new marketing practices are fundamentally transforming how food and beverage companies do business with young people in the twenty-first century.

*The findings presented here are based on a larger report, available online at [www.digitalads.org](http://www.digitalads.org)*

by  
Jeff Chester  
Center for Digital Democracy  
&  
Kathryn Montgomery  
American University

A report from  
Berkeley Media Studies Group



## Multicultural Marketing

Food companies are working with a growing number of ad agencies, market research firms, and consulting groups that specialize in developing digital strategies for targeting African-American and Latino children and youth. These multicultural marketing efforts have produced a variety of techniques tailored to specific ethnic groups, including African Americans and Hispanics who are deemed less cynical about and more receptive to advertising.<sup>i</sup> For example, African-American youth are considered particularly good candidates for “urban marketing” campaigns that employ peer-to-peer and viral strategies.<sup>ii</sup> “Hispanic and African American audiences,” explained one multicultural marketing expert, “are already utilizing mobile tools, such as text messaging, that are at the heart of most successful mobile campaigns at a much higher rate than the general population.”<sup>iii</sup> A presentation by the Interactive Advertising Bureau advised marketers: “Hispanics are best reached with an integrated multi-media message which entertains, engages, and provokes action.” Among the most effective ingredients for successful campaigns are “emotion” (particularly “humor”), “advergaming,” “viral marketing,” and “email registration.”<sup>iv</sup> Annual “U.S. Multicultural Kids” reports by Nickelodeon and Cultural Access Group provide a steady stream of useful market research on patterns of media use and product consumption among young ethnic consumers, in order to “optimize relevant and impactful brand relationships.”<sup>v</sup> According to the 2006 report, minority children have particularly strong influence on what their parents purchase, including decisions about snacks, breakfast foods, and other packaged food brands.<sup>vi</sup>

- Cheskin—a market research company whose clients include Nestlé, Coca-Cola, ConAgra, and General Mills—conducted a “video profile” of 30 bicultural U.S. Hispanic teens, 13-19, titled “Nuestro Futuro: Hispanic Teens in Their Own Words.” Promotional copy for the video promised marketers an intimate look into the lifestyles and longings of this lucrative youth demographic: “They live on MySpace.com and shop at Abercrombie, but listen to Spanish radio and embrace diversity. They’re proud of their unique individuality and their collective Hispanic heritage. It’s no secret that U.S. Hispanic teens are an appealing segment and a challenging one. So what’s the secret to reaching them?”<sup>vii</sup>
- Burrell Communications Group, *Advertising Age*’s “Multicultural Agency of the Year” for 2005, refers to its specialty as “Yurban Marketing”<sup>®</sup>. In a 2006 speech, co-CEO Fay Ferguson discussed effective ways for reaching young African Americans, describing a recent online campaign for one of the agency’s clients, McDonald’s, that “capitalized on the audience’s heavy involvement with NBA basketball.” Combining “All-Star updates, a sweepstakes and a branded game” on BET.com, the interactive promotion yielded impressive results: “an average visit to the McDonald’s-branded content area lasted more than 20 minutes, and more than 37 percent of site visitors played the game for an average of 25 minutes each.”<sup>viii</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Quoted in Justin Anderson, “Multicultural Clicks In,” *iMedia Connection*, 25 July 2006, <http://www.imediainconnection.com/content/10534.asp> (viewed 12 Mar. 2007). Felipe Korzenny, Betty Ann Korzenny, Holly McGavock, and Maria Gracia Inglessis, “The Multicultural Marketing Equation: Media, Attitudes, Brands, and Spending,” Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication, Florida State University, 2006, p. 6, <http://hmc.comm.fsu.edu/FSUALDMSMultiMktg.pdf> (viewed 12 Mar. 2007).

<sup>ii</sup> Felipe Korzenny, et al., “The Multicultural Marketing Equation: Media, Attitudes, Brands, and Spending.”

<sup>iii</sup> “Briabe Media Offers Multicultural Mobile Marketing Assessments for Brands Seeking to Better Connect with Hispanic and African American Customers,” press release, 27 Feb. 2007, <http://www.prwebdirect.com/releases/2007/2/prweb507171.htm> (viewed 16 Mar. 2007).

<sup>iv</sup> Interactive Advertising Bureau, “Reach U.S. Hispanics Through Online Marketing,” [http://www.iab.net/resources/docs/Hispanic\\_Presentation\\_Final.pdf](http://www.iab.net/resources/docs/Hispanic_Presentation_Final.pdf) (viewed 6 Apr. 2007).

<sup>v</sup> Nickelodeon and Cultural Access Group, “U.S. Multicultural Kids Study 2005,” p. 38, [http://www.accesscag.com/pdf/Multicultural\\_Kids\\_2005.pdf](http://www.accesscag.com/pdf/Multicultural_Kids_2005.pdf) (viewed 5 Apr. 2007).

<sup>vi</sup> Nickelodeon and Cultural Access Group, “U.S. Multicultural Kids Study 2006,” p. 37, [http://www.phoenixmi.com/prfiles/Multicultural\\_Kids\\_2006.pdf](http://www.phoenixmi.com/prfiles/Multicultural_Kids_2006.pdf) (viewed 6 Apr. 2007).

<sup>vii</sup> Cheskin, “Over 50 Years of Successful Relationships,” [http://www.cheskin.com/do\\_clients.php](http://www.cheskin.com/do_clients.php) (viewed 17 Apr. 2007); Cheskin, “Nuestro Futuro: Hispanic Teens in Their Own Words,” June 2006, [http://www.cheskin.com/view\\_articles.php?id=26](http://www.cheskin.com/view_articles.php?id=26) (viewed 6 Apr. 2007).

<sup>viii</sup> Anderson, “Multicultural Clicks In.”



## “Generation Digital”

- Approximately 70% of children 8-11 go online from home. Of those, 37% use instant messaging and 35% play games.<sup>i</sup>
- 93% of 12 to 17 year-olds use the Internet; more than half of online teens (55%) use social networks.<sup>ii</sup>
- Of the more than 25 million 12-17 year-olds in the U.S., 20 million are gamers.<sup>iii</sup>
- A majority of 13 to 17 year-olds (57%) have cell phones. Teenagers are more likely than other mobile users to use their phones to access shopping guides and get movie and restaurant information.<sup>iv</sup>
- 57% of online teenagers post their own “user-generated content” on the Web, including photos, stories, art work, audio, and video.<sup>v</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Wendy Davis, “Seven in 10 Tweens Surf Web at Home,” *Online Media Daily*, October 27, 2006, [http://publications.mediapost.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Articles.showArticleHomePage&art\\_aid=50280](http://publications.mediapost.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Articles.showArticleHomePage&art_aid=50280)

<sup>ii</sup> Amanda Lenhart and Mary Madden, “Teens, Privacy & Online Social Networks,” *Pew Internet & American Life*, April 18, 2007, [http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/211/report\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/211/report_display.asp)

<sup>iii</sup> Gameasure, <http://www.gameasure.com/> (viewed 21 Apr. 2007).

<sup>iv</sup> Bradley Johnson, “Understanding the ‘Generation Wireless’ Demographic,” *Advertising Age*, March 20, 2006, [http://adage.com/america-demographics/article?article\\_id=107325](http://adage.com/america-demographics/article?article_id=107325)

<sup>v</sup> “User-Generated Content,” *Pew Internet & American Life Project*, November 6, 2006, [http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/76/presentation\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/76/presentation_display.asp) (viewed 21 Apr. 2007).



## Mobile Marketing

Cell phones are one of the most important digital platforms for marketing to young people, enabling companies to directly target users based on previous buying history, location, and other profiling data. As the practice grows, mobile users will increasingly be sent personally tailored electronic pitches, designed to trigger immediate purchases and timed to reach them when they are near particular stores and restaurants.<sup>5</sup>

- McDonald's McFlurry mobile marketing campaign was designed to "create a compelling way to connect with the younger demographic." Six hundred McDonald's restaurants in California urged young cell phone users to text-message to a special phone number to receive an instant electronic coupon for a free McFlurry dessert. Youth were encouraged to "download free cell phone wallpaper and ring tones featuring top artists," and to email the promotional Web site link to their friends. Ads on buses, billboards, "wild postings" near high schools, and even skywriting airplanes promoted the "Text McFlurry 73260" message.<sup>6</sup>
- The Kellogg Company printed Web addresses on more than 6.5 million of its Kellogg's Corn Pops cereal packages. When customers go onto the "Gotta be Connected" Web page, they are run through a series of pop-up messages that capture personal information, along with cell phone data, including the phone number. Within days, Kellogg sends a text message with a trivia question. Those who answer the question correctly will receive a free Corn Pops screensaver, as well as a chance to win additional prizes, including "pre-paid airtime, a free phone, or other prizes."<sup>7</sup>

## Behavioral Profiling

Database marketing has become a core strategy for companies targeting teens, a linchpin of many digital media campaigns—not only on the Internet, but also on cell phones, video games, and other new platforms.<sup>8</sup> Marketers can compile a detailed profile of each customer, including demographic data, purchasing behavior, responses to advertising messages, and even the extent and nature of social networks. Marketers use the information to create messages tailored to the psychographic and behavioral patterns of the individual.

- The "growth and health of our database marketing efforts have been a secret weapon for us to jump-start programs and have a continuous dialogue with our best consumers," said Pepsi's director of digital media and marketing. Using "real-time" tracking technologies, Pepsi is now "finally able to deliver high impact online advertising."<sup>9</sup>
- Coca-Cola uses a variety of techniques to track individuals' online behavior. For example, its "My Coke Rewards" program encourages consumers to use special codes from Coca-Cola products to access a Web site, where they can earn such rewards as downloadable ring tones and "amazing sports and entertainment experiences." This "next-generation" promotion, explained the company's technology partner, is "the most sophisticated example of how brands can utilize code promotions to capture behavioral and psychographic information about consumers." The campaign embodies the company's "vision" of "connect, collect and perfect"—"to connect with consumers, collect relevant information from consumers, and, finally, perfect those relationships over time."<sup>10</sup>



## Digital “360” Buzz Campaigns

Peer-to-peer marketing (sometimes called “buzz,” “word-of-mouth,” or “viral” marketing) has become a staple among youth advertisers.<sup>11</sup> Market researchers target key influential young people who can serve as “brand sirens,” promoting products to their peers through instant messaging, social networking sites, and blogs.<sup>12</sup> Companies are creating elaborate viral campaigns, sometimes using “hidden messages” to lure youth into a series of games and other activities across different media, generating buzz within the online youth subculture, all under the public radar. This “360” marketing strategy engages with young people repeatedly wherever they are—in cyberspace, watching TV, or offline.

- KFC used a high-pitched tone as a promotional “buzz” device for a recent “interactive advertising campaign.” The MosquitoTone™ was embedded in TV commercials to launch KFC’s new “Boneless Variety Bucket™.” In its press release, the company explained that the popular cell phone ring tone “is too high-pitched for most adults to hear because most people begin to lose the ability to hear high frequency tones starting at age 20. This is a fact not lost on young Americans who seek the sound for clandestine ring tones that don’t turn the heads of nearby adults.” In the TV commercial, the secret sounds were designed to attract the attention of young viewers and “drive” them to a Web site, where they could enter a contest to identify exactly where the tones could be heard in the ad, in order to win \$10 “KFC gift checks” redeemable for the new chicken meal at any KFC. The company’s chief marketing officer called the innovative buzz campaign “the 21<sup>st</sup> Century dinner bell.”<sup>13</sup>
- Sprite created an alternate reality game “Lost Experience”—based on the highly popular ABC TV series, “Lost”—giving viewers “a way to further their pursuit of the show’s mystery while inadvertently engaging in a Sprite-branded Web site.” Marketers began by creating a “faux-commercial” that aired during an episode of the TV series, in order to “leak” the Web address—Sublymonal.com—to viewers. Once online, site visitors were invited to participate in a scavenger hunt with “DJ podcasts, videos and hidden memos.” Codes were also hidden in print ads in *Entertainment Weekly* and *People* magazines. As a result, more than 500,000 codes were entered and Sprite’s Web traffic jumped 400%.<sup>14</sup>

## Infiltrating IM

The three major instant messaging formats—AOL’s AIM, Yahoo!’s Messenger, and MSN Messenger—all promote themselves aggressively to advertisers that want to permeate and surround teenagers’ ongoing casual conversations, “24/7.” AOL, Yahoo! and MSN Messenger offer a variety of strategies, including “roadblocks” and “takeover ads” that flood a site’s homepage with interactive commercials, as well as branded “bots” and buddy icons. Yahoo!’s “IMVironments” (IMVs) are customized “interactive backgrounds” in the IM space, whose “unique rich media features” create “fun and effective advertising.”<sup>15</sup> “On average,” explained one marketer, “we see 1.5 million people download a particular IMV, send over 100 million messages within it, and spend five to 10 minutes per user per day per IMV. This time spent is a particularly impressive statistic when you compare it to how much time in one day that user would spend watching a particular TV commercial for that advertiser.”<sup>16</sup>

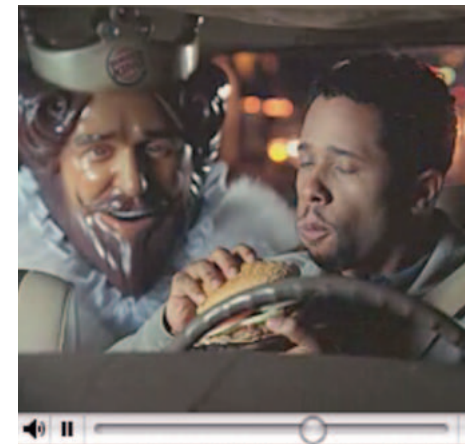
- The “M&M Always IMVironment” features the brand’s popular “spokescandies.” “There’s a new way to add a little more M&M® to your day,” the site chirps. “Chat with friends about life, love and chocolate with this cool IMV. There’s an M in everyone.”<sup>17</sup>
- “Max Out your chats!” urges the Yahoo! IMVironment sponsored by Kraft’s Lunchables. “New Lunchables Lunch Combinations Maxed Out Double-Stacked Tacos have arrived and you’re in charge of the flavor and the fun. Buzz a friend and take your chat from Mild to Wild—no salsa necessary! Try it now.”<sup>18</sup>



## Commercializing Online Communities

Marketers have aggressively moved into MySpace and other social networking sites, taking advantage of their large, highly detailed user profiles and expanding lists of “friends.” “The targeting we can do is phenomenal,” explained a marketer.<sup>19</sup> Social networks are also “breaking down that wall between what is marketing and what isn’t.” “[S]ometimes the marketing is so embedded in the social network sphere,” observed a recent trade article, “that it draws users to interact with the brand as if they were e-mailing friends.”<sup>20</sup>

- “Welcome to the King’s Court,” beckons the Burger King MySpace profile. “The virtual home of the Burger King. He’s giving away free episodes of the Fox shows ‘24,’ ‘Pinks,’ and ‘First Friend.’ ...And in typical King fashion, he’s giving you plenty of other stuff to check out too.”<sup>21</sup>
- At the MySpace Jack-in-the-Box profile, visitors are greeted by “Jack Box” himself, who announces that his goal is “to rule the fast food world with an iron fist.” You can read Jack’s daily blog entry, post your own poem about the joys of cheeseburgers, or “create a film and send it in” for a chance to win a “Jackie.”<sup>22</sup>



## “Brand-saturated” Environments

Food and beverage companies have created their own online branded entertainment sites, seamlessly weaving a variety of interactive content with product pitches and cartoon “spokescharacters.” Designed to encourage young consumers to engage playfully with products over long periods of time, many offer “free” content, games, merchandise, and endless replays of television commercials.<sup>23</sup> With the growth of broadband technology, these digital playgrounds have evolved into highly sophisticated “immersive” experiences, including entire programs and “channels” built around brands. Multicultural marketers are keenly aware of the strong interest in music among African American and Hispanic/Latino youth, and have created branded entertainment featuring popular celebrities and offering free downloads of their recordings.<sup>24</sup>

- Burger King created its own “branded online channel,” called Diddy TV, “using rapper P. Diddy’s star power to direct attention to, in his words, another ‘king’—Burger King. Burger King is now a media entity as well as a restaurant chain.”<sup>25</sup>
- The Mars candy company enlisted the musical group, Black Eyed Peas, to make a series of “Webisodes” called “Instant Def,” in order to promote Snickers bars to teens. “Four hip-hop performers—played by actual hip-hop stars will.i.am, Fergie, Taboo and apl.de.ap—pose in front of a gritty urban scene. A fluorescent Snickers sign blinks atop a tower in the background.” The brand is featured prominently in the storylines. A Snickers factory “played a vital role in the first episode, when a candy-mix explosion gave the stars superhero powers.”<sup>26</sup>

## Viral Video

Short online videos are an increasingly popular way of promoting brands among youth, who like to consume these “quick snacks of media” and forward the links to their friends through IM, text messaging, and blogs.<sup>27</sup> Marketers are creating their own “viral videos” to promote their brands through peer-to-peer networks and video sharing services like YouTube. In some cases the sponsoring company is identified, while in others it is disguised.

- Wendy’s placed several “commercials masquerading as videos” on YouTube, specifically designed to attract “young consumers.” In one video, “Molly Grows Up”—which generated more than 300,000 views—a young girl orders “her first 99-cent Junior Bacon cheeseburger and Frosty.” While Wendy’s own corporate name was not connected to the intentionally humorous videos, users who watched them were sent to a special Web site for “Wendy’s 99-cent value menu.”<sup>28</sup>
- In January 2007, Domino’s Pizza revealed that it was behind a viral video that had been “capturing the attention of millions in the Internet community.” To promote its “Anything Goes Deal Contest”—featuring any large pizza, on any crust, with any toppings for \$9.99—the company placed a series of viral videos on MySpace and other popular social networking sites, using “larger-than-life characters” offering to sell big-ticket items. The first video, “MacKenzie Gets What MacKenzie Wants,” featured a “spoiled rich girl who wanted a blue car for her birthday but got a red one instead. Her whining persisted until she got the car she wanted and then, much to the surprise and delight of video viewers, she decided to offer her red car [a Saab® 9-3 convertible AERO] on eBay for only \$9.99.” The campaign was a hit, according to the company. “With over two million views across multiple video sites, the popularity of the MacKenzie videos earned a top spot on several video sharing Web sites.”<sup>29</sup>



## Recruiting Brand Advocates

With more young people creating their own online “user-generated content,” marketers encourage them to “co-create” and promote commercials for their favorite brands.<sup>30</sup> In marketing circles, two new buzzwords—“consumer-generated” and “brand-generated” media—are often used interchangeably, suggesting an intentional blurring of roles. The strategy is designed to foster powerful emotional connections between consumers and products, tap into a stable of young creative talent willing to offer services for free, and produce a new generation of “brand advocates.”

- At General Mills’ Millsberry.com Web site, children are encouraged to make the “best movie” about “Lucky” (of Lucky Charms cereal) and then vote for the winning video. The site provides a pre-branded kit of settings and spokescharacters, making it easy to combine them into a personalized commercial.<sup>31</sup>
- Pizza Hut’s contest invited pizza enthusiasts to create a short video, “demonstrating their devotion to Pizza Hut Pizza” and showing why they should earn the title of “Honorary Vice President of Pizza.” Contestants were encouraged to engage in a variety of creative acts to show their loyalty to the brand, such as “decorating their room with Pizza Hut memorabilia.” Entrants submitted their videos on YouTube, ensuring they would be seen by thousands of viewers, whether they won or not.<sup>32</sup>



f, Defenders of old  
Hop  
6 at 4:10 PM by SnackBoard  
www.InstantDef.com

Views:  
295  
Comments:  
0

Share this  
Clip URL:  
<http://www.>



## “Game-vertising”

In-game advertising, or “game-vertising”, is a highly sophisticated, finely tuned strategy that combines product placement, behavioral targeting, and viral marketing to forge ongoing relationships between brands and individual gamers. Marketing through interactive games works particularly well for snack, beverage, and other “impulse” food products. Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Mountain Dew, Gatorade, McDonald’s, Burger King and KFC, for example, were the “most recalled brands” in an October 2006 survey of video game players.<sup>33</sup> Not only can marketers incorporate their brands into the storylines of popular games, they can also use software that enables them to respond to a player’s actions in real time, changing, adding, or updating advertising messages to tailor their appeal to that particular individual.<sup>34</sup> At a recent conference on interactive advertising, software developers explained how they purposefully create games to make them “in sync with the brand,” ensuring that images players see in the game are similar to what “they see in the supermarket aisle...[and on TV] Saturday morning.” Games must always be “addictive,” should include a “viral component,” and be “continually updated” to facilitate ongoing data collection and analysis.<sup>35</sup>

- Sony partnered with Pizza Hut to build into its “Everquest II” videogame the ability to order pizza. “All the player has to do is type in the command ‘pizza,’ and voila—Pizza Hut’s online order page pops up,” explained a trade article. “While it’s just pizza now, the in-game purchasing potential is wide open.”<sup>36</sup>
- At Viacom’s Neopets.com—targeted at 8-to-17-year-olds—young gamers create and “take care of” virtual pets, earning virtual currency (neopoints) to pay for their upkeep by participating in contests and games. The site earns substantial advertising revenues from “User Initiated Brand Integrated Advertising—activities or games built around advertisers’ products and services that help build relationships and generate revenues with Neopets visitors.” For example, participants can earn points by buying or selling “valuable commodities such as McDonald’s Fries” or “winning games such as Cinnamon Toast Crunch Umpire Strikes Out.” Food companies that have sponsored various activities on Neopets include McDonald’s, Frito-Lay, Nestlé, Kellogg’s, Mars, Procter & Gamble, General Mills, Kraft Foods, and Carl’s Jr./Hardees.<sup>37</sup>

## Advertising Through Avatars

Immersive three-dimensional environments are on the cutting edge of digital marketing. These “virtual worlds” are complex, multi-layered enterprises that combine many of the most popular online activities—such as instant messaging, interactive gaming, and social networking—into increasingly elaborate settings in which individuals create their own online identities through avatars. “Once the stuff of science fiction,” explains the Web site for the new-media ad agency Millions of Us, “virtual worlds are becoming central to the future of marketing, technology, entertainment and brand-building.”<sup>38</sup> Marketing through avatars is “one of the most effective kinds of advertising going,” commented one advertising executive, explaining that the speed with which a “brand or marketing message can spread through a virtual world from avatar to avatar is breathtaking.”<sup>39</sup> Among the food and beverage brands actively engaged in avatar-based strategies are Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Kellogg, Nabisco, Kraft, Pizza Hut, P&G, and Subway.<sup>40</sup>

- Habbo Hotel—“a teen community where you can meet people, play games and create your own online space”—aggressively promotes itself as a marketing venue, providing “companies and brands with a completely new and exciting way of building their brand value among teenagers around the world.” Marketers can “check in” to the hotel and can also “sponsor” various “elements” on the site, encouraging the virtual “Habbos” to “decorate their pages with cool objects, but free of charge.” Habbo Hotel’s “pre-programmed bots” have been designed “to reply to particular sentences that involve the current promotion taking place in the room.” Among the “Quests & Activities” currently featured on the home page of Habbo Hotel is a promotional game for Kellogg’s Pop-Tarts. “The Crazy Good Pop-Tarts Pastries are Hollywood Bound,” the site announces. “Find out where they are now!” Hotel inhabitants are also offered virtual incentives to take part in a poll: “Are you fashionable like Strawberry, courageous and creative like Blueberry, divalicious like Brown Sugar Cinnamon, silly like S’mores or sophisticated and studious like Cherry? Let us know who is most like you! Just for voting, you’ll have a chance to receive one of 20 free RARES! [Habbo furniture]”<sup>41</sup>
- MyCoke.com is a virtual, immersive environment in which users are “encouraged to associate personal identity with brand identity.” The site offers a multitude of interactive activities to engage teens, including chat, music downloading and mixing, user-generated video, blogs, and its own currency. Coca-Cola worked with interactive marketing expert Studiocom (part of the WPP Group) to create Coke Studios, a “massive multiplayer online environment” where “teens hang out as their alter-identities, or ‘v-egos.’” Teens who want to become part of the MyCoke community are greeted with encouraging step-by-step instructions on the site: “Ready to reinvent yourself?” “Be who you want with your V-ego.” After completing the site’s registration process: “You’ve just made millions of new friends! People are cool. We’ll help you meet more of them.”<sup>42</sup>



**HABBO**

NEW TO HABBO? REGISTER HERE!  
**JOIN NOW - IT'S EASY AND FREE!**

1. Type Your Birthday  
Create Your Habbo  
Enter Habbo Hotel  
Make Your Habbo Home  
Have Fun!

WHEN IS YOUR BIRTHDAY?

*Market researchers target key influential young people who can serve as “brand sirens,” promoting products to their peers through instant messaging, social networking sites and blogs.*

### **Creating a Healthy Media Environment for the 21st Century**

Choices about what to eat are always made within a larger context. These choices are shaped, to a large extent, by the relentless onslaught of food and beverage marketing, first on TV and now on a multitude of ever-present digital platforms. The practices documented in this report reveal that food and beverage marketers now target children and adolescents with unprecedented reach and sophistication. These practices deserve close scrutiny and immediate action by policy makers and the public. The following are recommended steps in that direction:

- As part of its current proceeding on food marketing to children, the Federal Trade Commission should require all food and beverage companies to report the full extent of their digital marketing and market-research practices targeted at both children and adolescents, including the targeting of Hispanic/Latino, African American, and other multicultural groups.
- The appropriate Congressional committees should hold hearings on contemporary food marketing practices targeted at children and adolescents.
- The Federal Trade Commission, the Federal Communications Commission, and Congress should work together, along with the industry and the public health and child advocacy communities, to develop a new set of rules governing the marketing of food and beverage products to children. New regulations must take into account the full spectrum of advertising and marketing practices across all media, and apply to all children, including adolescents. Direct attention needs to be focused on each of the 10 practices described in this report.
- Government agencies, such as the Department of Health and Human Services and the Federal Trade Commission, should regularly monitor the digital media marketing industries, with a particular focus on the impact of new advertising practices on children’s nutrition and health.
- Private and public funds should be established to support broad, multi-disciplinary research on the interactive media and their relationship to the health of children and adolescents.
- Venture capitalists and other financial investors in the digital media should develop policies for ensuring that the companies they fund do not engage in deceptive or unfair marketing of food products to children and adolescents.
- Avenues should be created so young people can become leaders in the effort to monitor and understand new marketing practices targeting them and to educate their peers—and adults—about digital marketing and its relationship to health.

While the growth and expansion of the interactive marketing system will continue unabated, there is still time to create interventions that can help the twenty-first century media culture serve the health of our children rather than undermine it.

- <sup>1</sup> Institute of Medicine. Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth. Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the balance. Washington DC: The National Academies Press, 2005.
- <sup>2</sup> Institute of Medicine. Committee on Food Marketing and the Diets of Children and youth. Food marketing to children and youth: Threat or opportunity? National Academies Press, 2006.
- <sup>3</sup> Elizabeth S. Moore, It's Child's Play: Advergaming and the Online Marketing of Food to Children (Menlo Park, CA: The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006), <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/7536.pdf> (viewed 26 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>4</sup> John G. Singer, "Marketing Ecosystems: Framing Brand Management for Business Ecosystems," 4 Jan. 2006, <http://www.crm2day.com/library/pdf.php?pdf=50216-0.pdf> (viewed 12 Dec. 2007).
- <sup>5</sup> "Solutions for Mobile Operators," JumpTap, [http://www.jumptap.com/solutions\\_mob\\_adinv.aspx](http://www.jumptap.com/solutions_mob_adinv.aspx) (viewed 28 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>6</sup> Amy Johannes, "McDonald's Serves Up Mobile Coupons in California," PROMO Magazine, 26 Oct. 2005, [http://promomagazine.com/incentives/mclds\\_coupons\\_102605/](http://promomagazine.com/incentives/mclds_coupons_102605/) (viewed 26 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>7</sup> Mobile Marketing Association, "Case Studies: Kellogg's Corn Pops," 7 Mar. 2005, <http://mmaglobal.com/modules/wfsection/article.php?articleid=23> (viewed 29 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>8</sup> The 1998 Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) has created some safeguards in the digital marketing arena, forbidding marketers from soliciting personally identifiable information from children under the age of 13 without prior parental permission. For a case history of COPPA and its impact, see Kathryn C. Montgomery, Generation Digital: Politics, Commerce, and Childhood in the Age of the Internet. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007. See also Jeff Chester, Digital Destiny: New Media and the Future of Democracy. New York: The New Press, 2007.
- <sup>9</sup> Dawn Anfuso, "Pepsi's John Vail," iMedia Connection, 1 Sept. 2005, (viewed 28 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>10</sup> Jeff Zabin, "Cracking the Code on Next-Generation Code Promotions," Chief Marketer, 15 Sept. 2006, [http://chiefmarketer.com/disciplines/promotions/code\\_promotions\\_09152006/](http://chiefmarketer.com/disciplines/promotions/code_promotions_09152006/) (viewed 28 Mar. 2007); Jeff Zabin, Pareto Rules, 26 Sept. 2006, <http://www.paretorules.com/> (viewed 28 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>11</sup> See Martin Lindstrom and individual contributors, BRANDchild (London: Kogan Page, 2003), 137-156. See also Mark Hughes, Buzzmarketing: Get People to Talk About Your Stuff (New York: Portfolio, 2005); Buzz Marketing, <http://www.buzzmarketing.com/index.html> (viewed 29 Mar. 2007); and Emanuel Rosen, The Anatomy of Buzz: How to Create Word of Mouth Marketing (New York: Doubleday, 2000).
- <sup>12</sup> Starcom Mediavest Group, "Tapping into the Super Influencer: What You Need to Know to Engage the Elusive Young Consumer," 2006, <http://www.brandsirens.com/presentation.pdf>; Tobi Elkin, "Study: Some 13-34s Show High Brand Loyalty," Online Media Daily, 26 Sept. 2006, <http://publications.mediapost.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Articles.san&s=48721&Nid=23744&p=328566> (both viewed 29 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>13</sup> Nina M. Lentini, "KFC Aims Ring tone Ad Aimed At Those Who Can Hear It," Marketing Daily, 12 Apr. 2007, [http://publications.mediapost.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Articles.showArticle&art\\_aid=58606](http://publications.mediapost.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Articles.showArticle&art_aid=58606); KFC Corporation, "KFC Makes Noise with New Interactive TV Advertising," press release, 11 Apr. 2007, <http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=109&STORY=/www/story/04-11-2007/0004563459> (both viewed 17 Apr. 2007).
- <sup>14</sup> Andy Sernovitz and Shannon Stairhime, "Chrysler, Coke: New Brand Buzz Leaders," iMedia Connection, 8 Feb. 2007, <http://www.imediainconnection.com/content/13526.asp> (viewed 28 Mar. 2007); "Crea a Viral Campaign," Word of Mouth Marketing Association, <http://www.womma.org/casestudy/examples/create-a-viral-campaign/> (viewed 29 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>15</sup> Joseph Jaffe, "Instant Messaging has Potential," iMedia Connection, 28 Apr. 2003, <http://www.imediainconnection.com/global/5728.asp?ref=http://www.imediainconnection.com/content/1059.asp> (viewed 29 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>16</sup> Quoted in Jaffe, "Instant Messaging has Potential."
- <sup>17</sup> "IMVironments: Food and Drink," Yahoo! Messenger, [http://messenger.yahoo.com/imv.php\\_ylt=AhP4H.Kjy3g\\_DYV38XSyIriQMMIF6c-at=Food%20and%20Drink](http://messenger.yahoo.com/imv.php_ylt=AhP4H.Kjy3g_DYV38XSyIriQMMIF6c-at=Food%20and%20Drink) (viewed 26 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>18</sup> "IMVironments: Food and Drink."
- <sup>19</sup> Quoted in Annette Bourdeau, "The Kids are Online," Strategy, May 2005, <http://www.strategymag.com/articles/magazine/20050501/online.html> (viewed 28 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>20</sup> Michelle Halpern, "Mass Connection," Marketing, 23 Jan. 2006, [http://www.marketingmag.ca/magazine/current/in\\_context/article.jsp?3fcon tent=20060123\\_73700\\_73700](http://www.marketingmag.ca/magazine/current/in_context/article.jsp?3fcon tent=20060123_73700_73700) (subscription required).
- <sup>21</sup> "Welcome to the King's Court," MySpace, <http://www.myspace.com/burgerking> (viewed 29 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>22</sup> Jack Box, MySpace.com, <http://www.myspace.com/jackbox> (viewed 16 Apr. 2007).
- <sup>23</sup> For a description of some of the current branded entertainment sites food companies have created for children, see Moore, It's Child's Play.
- <sup>24</sup> Felipe Korzeny, Betty Ann Korzeny, Holly McGavock, and Maria Gracia Inglessis, "The Multicultural Marketing Equation: Media, Attitudes, Brands, and Spending," Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication, Florida State University, 2006, p. 6, <http://hmc.comm.fsu.edu/FSUAOLDM3MultiMktg.pdf> (viewed 12 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>25</sup> Martin Lindstrom, "Brand Marketer, Storyteller," ClickZ Network, 24 Oct. 2006, <http://www.clickz.com/showPage.html?page=3623749> (viewed 28 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>26</sup> Louise Story, "Brands Produce Their Own Shows," New York Times, 10 Nov. 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/10/business/media/10adco.html?ex=1179374400&en=f4ac2f85334d1c54&ei=5070> (viewed 28 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>27</sup> Piper Jaffray Investment Research, "The User Revolution," Feb. 2007, 75.
- <sup>28</sup> "The Bureau for Better Value," MySpace.com, <http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=145511442>; Lisa Bertagnoli, "Wendy's Hits A YouTube Nerve," Marketing Daily, 27 Oct. 2006, [http://publications.mediapost.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Articles.showArticle&art\\_aid=50292](http://publications.mediapost.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Articles.showArticle&art_aid=50292) (both viewed 29 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>29</sup> Domino's Pizza, "Domino's Revealed as Creator of Popular Internet Videos; Colorful Videos Launched to Create Buzz over Anything Goes Deal," press release, 25 Jan. 2007, <http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=109&STORY=/www/story/01-25-2007/0004512862&EDATE=> (viewed 29 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>30</sup> Pew Internet & American Life Project, "Home Broadband Adoption 2006," 28 May 2006, [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Broadband\\_trends\\_2006.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Broadband_trends_2006.pdf) (viewed 29 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>31</sup> "Lucky's Magic Movie Maker," Lucky Charms, <http://www.luckycharms.millsberry.com/ruby/index.html> (viewed 31 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>32</sup> Pizza Hut, "Pizza Hut® Announces Search for Honorary VP of Pizza," press release, 21 Feb. 2007, <http://www.pegasusnews.com/news/2007/feb/21/pizza-hut-announces-search-honorary-vp-pizza/>; "America's Favorite Pizza Fan Contest," Pizza Hut, <http://www.pizzahut.com/vpofpizza/> (both viewed 29 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>33</sup> "Coke, Nike Are Tops In Video Game Ads: Study," PROMO Magazine, 10 Nov. 2006, [http://promomagazine.com/research/other/brands videogame\\_study\\_111006/index.html](http://promomagazine.com/research/other/brands videogame_study_111006/index.html) (viewed 30 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>34</sup> Microsoft, "Microsoft to Acquire In-Game Advertising Pioneer Massive Inc.," press release, 4 May 2006, <http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/press/2006/may06/05-04MassiveIncPR.mspx> (viewed 29 Mar. 2007); John Gaudiosi, "Google Gets In-Game with Adscape," The Hollywood Reporter, 20 Mar. 2007, [http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/hr/content\\_display/business/news/e3i898ca0de1754206ae43bdbc6ee2d9ffd](http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/hr/content_display/business/news/e3i898ca0de1754206ae43bdbc6ee2d9ffd) (viewed 30 Mar. 2007); Mike Shields, "In-Game Ads Could Reach \$2 Bil," Adweek, 12 Apr. 2006, [http://www.adweek.com/aw/national/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1002343563](http://www.adweek.com/aw/national/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1002343563) (viewed 30 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>35</sup> Author's personal notes, Mixx Conference, Interactive Advertising Bureau, New York City, 25-26 Sept. 2006, <http://www.mixx-expo.com/2.6/agenda.aspx>.
- <sup>36</sup> Bourdeau, "The Kids are Online."
- <sup>37</sup> Jack Myers, "Neopets.com Fulfills Promise of Immersive Advertising," Jack Myers Media Village, 5 July 2005, <http://www.mediaivillage.com/jmr/2005/07/05/jmr-07-05-05/>; "Google AdSense Case Study," Google, n.d., [https://www.google.com/adsense/static/en\\_US/NeoPets.html](https://www.google.com/adsense/static/en_US/NeoPets.html). For advertiser lists, see Neopets, Inc., "Thinkway Toys and NeoPets, Inc. Announce Licensing Agreement," press release, 17 July 2002, <http://info.neopets.com/presskit/articles/recent/yahoo1.html>, and Myers, "Neopets.com Fulfills Promise of Immersive Advertising." See also discussion of McDonald's "branded shop" and General Mills games in Zachary Rodgers, "The Stickiest Site in the World," ClickZ Network, 16 Aug. 2004, <http://www.clickz.com/showPage.html?page=3395581> (all viewed 2 Apr. 2007).
- <sup>38</sup> Millions of Us, <http://www.millionsofus.com/about.php> (viewed 31 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>39</sup> Jesse Shannon, "Marketing's New Manifestation: Why Avatars Best Represent Online User Engagement," Adotas, 17 July 2006, <http://www.adotas.com/2006/07/marketing-s-new-manifestation-why-avatars-best-represent-online-user-engagement> (viewed 30 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>40</sup> Shannon, "Marketing's New Manifestation."
- <sup>41</sup> Saluke Corporation, "Habbo Takes Creativity and Self-expression to a New Level," press release, 1 Feb. 2007, [http://www.saluke.com/pressroom\\_releases\\_01022007.html](http://www.saluke.com/pressroom_releases_01022007.html) (viewed 31 Mar. 2007); "Youuniversal Branding," part 1, Trendwatching.com, n.d., [http://www.trendwatching.com/trends/youuniversal\\_branding.htm](http://www.trendwatching.com/trends/youuniversal_branding.htm) (viewed 3 Mar. 2007). See also "Sprite Checks Into the Habbo Hotel," Media in Canada, 19 Apr. 2005, <http://www.mediaincanada.com/articles/mic/20050419/habbo.html>; "Interactive: The 2005 Media Innovation Awards," Marketing Magazine, 21 Nov. 2005, [http://www.marketingmag.ca/magazine/current/media\\_innovation\\_awards/art\\_icle.jsp?content=20051121\\_72361\\_72361](http://www.marketingmag.ca/magazine/current/media_innovation_awards/art_icle.jsp?content=20051121_72361_72361) (both viewed 31 Mar. 2007). "The Crazy Good™ Pop-Tarts® Toaster Pastries are Hollywood Bound!" Habbo, <http://www.habbo.com/news/poptarts07.html>; "Pop-Tarts® Toaster Pastries Go Hollywood!" Habbo, <http://www.habbo.com/entertainment/poptarts07>; Pop-Tarts, <http://www.poptarts.com/> (all viewed 31 Mar. 2007).
- <sup>42</sup> Betsy Book, "Advertising & Branding Models in Social Virtual Worlds," presentation to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 19 Feb. 2006, available as a PowerPoint download at <http://www.virtualworldsreview.com/> (viewed 30 Mar. 2007). See description of Coca-Cola's Coke Studios at Studiocom, <http://www.studiocom.com/public/site/home.html> (viewed 2 Apr. 2007); "Youuniversal Branding," "Cokestudios," MyCoke.com, [http://www.mycoke.com/home.html?unnel=coke\\_studios&section=16](http://www.mycoke.com/home.html?unnel=coke_studios&section=16) (viewed 17 Apr. 2007). "Coke in the Community," Brand Strategy, 5 Feb. 2007. See also James Harkin, "Get a (Second) Life," FT.com, 17 Nov. 2006, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/09b81c2-753a-11db-aea1-0000779e2340.html>; "Yes Logo," New World Notes, 6 Apr. 2006, [http://nwn.blogs.com/nwn/2006/04/yes\\_logo.html](http://nwn.blogs.com/nwn/2006/04/yes_logo.html); "Second Life: Coke Machine," Brands in Games, 15 Feb. 2006, <http://www.vedrashko.com/advertising/2006/02/second-life-coke-machine.html> (all viewed 31 Mar. 2007).

© 2007 Berkeley Media Studies Group,  
a project of the Public Health Institute

See examples of digital marketing practices online, and  
download copies of this brief or the full report at [www.digitalads.org](http://www.digitalads.org)  
or visit [www.democraticmedia.org](http://www.democraticmedia.org) or [www.bmsg.org](http://www.bmsg.org)

This report was funded in part by The California  
Endowment, The Robert Wood Johnson  
Foundation, the Center for Digital Democracy,  
and Berkeley Media Studies Group.



BERKELEY MEDIA STUDIES GROUP

Berkeley Media Studies Group  
2140 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 804  
Berkeley, CA 94704