MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

ANIMATED 3D GRAPHICS AS VISUAL BRAND COMMUNICATION ON UKRAINIAN TELEVISION

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ABSTRACT

The research of the use of 3D computer graphics in commercials is conducted based on monitoring of the commercial breaks on TV channels «1+1», «Inter» and «Ukraine» in the years 2015-2017. The TV channels for the research were chosen according to their performance and results of the international and Ukrainian festivals of advertising and TV design, as well as to the percentage of usage of 3D computer graphics in the winning projects. There were 27 round-the-clock monitoring sessions conducted. More than 17 000 commercials were defined and classified based on 3D computer graphics usage. The conclusions concerning the urgency of using three-dimensional animation as the means of visual brand communication and the quality level of the 3D computer graphics in the TV commercials are determined herewith.

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Introduction. Dynamic 3D graphics in broadcasting and TV commercials appears to be well developing in the sphere of visual communications. Visuals receive more and more complicated post processing when elements of 2D and 3D graphics are added to pictures filmed from nature. TV channels regularly break programming block in order to promote outside brands while direct commercials and also for their own media brand identification, while promo videos and advanced advertising. Channel's own brand lets it to create its recognizable image despite changes of faces and channel programs, to build the right strategy of positioning and promoting its own products (projects, programs, films) during the most suitable time for target audience watching depending on the network of the other competing channels. Media product, in its turn, is gaining new forms and powerful audio and visual options for TV airtime. Animated 3D graphics as a part of animation is one of the most common features in media design. 3D elements are directly used while creating an aesthetic appearance of the air, making navigation system for the viewer to have a guidance in broadcasting space and also in direct advertising. Composing most of the visual content of the television it is still left as understudied. «Throughout the past decade the usage of three dimensional elements has significantly risen and there are no evidences that this is just a temporary event» [1, p.122].

M. Murashko among other Ukrainian scientists developed a subject matter of animated graphics in her PhD work in 2017 «Project and art tools of motion design (based on commercial sample)» [3]. Design and projecting in television environment was studied by M. Marchenko and A. Yarmolenko, by considering peculiarities of visual communication projecting. In their article «Design and projecting in television environment» authors state that TV designer takes directly part in creating brand of broadcasting units [2, p.481]. Such American scientists as Gustavo E. [7] and Lovera C. [8] devote their works to the graphic design updated principles used in television environment as a form of branding. Leigh Hunt as one of the

foreign specialists studied TV branding and air promotion. His work of 2001 summarized experiences of traditional, cable and sputnik TV in the USA during the past 20 years and concluded the following «Our image as a visual expression of your values, defines outer appearance, voice and actions» [3, p.27].

Another profound work we have taken is «Branding TV: principles and practices» by oxford scientists W. McDowell and A. Batten [9]. Strategic brand communication campaigns were also revealed by Beth E. Barnes and Don E. Schultz [5]. Problems of using new editing technologies, digital effects and creating graphic television environment with them in the field of TV design were investigated by such modern theorists and research and practical workers as W. Weibel, I. Sazerland, P. Lowton, L. Dorfsmann. T. Dwyer, an American scientist, made also his input into studies of experiences of media communication and multimedia and originated basic knowledge of media convergence in his book in 2010, where he partially investigated multimedia design as well [6].

P.Pavlou and D. Stewart generalized new terms of marketing existing in the new millennium in their work «Interactive advertising: new conceptual basis of marketing combination elements integration» in 2014 [10]. In the frames of set scientific goals we studied works on 3D graphics and animation. Analysis of animation principles of investigated advertisement was made under the influence of works by P. Blair, N. Brown, M. Wiberg, R. Williams, C. Hart, A. Karlberg, Ya. Kemnitz, N. Kryvulia, and I. Kuznetsov.

Animated 3D graphics (with the main difference from two dimensional graphics is the ability to project not solely the length or width but also depth) has replaced classic animated methods and shows more reality that makes it easy to convey the message and the aim of brand messages itself. The graphics is used to fully capture audience attention creating effects that had not been possible in the past.

Hardware and software development, video art and graphics improvement, on the whole, make a great influence on visual communication methods, changing old methods of projecting and creating new opportunities. On the other side it caused new problems and challenges. Designing TV airtime and advertisement has significantly amended not just due to new technologies but also due to scientific intelligence. Marketing and branding researches gain quick development as well as studies of TV design and visual communication. To be able to use animated 3D graphics more effective as a component of branding, we shall research its functional features as a method of visual communication since it had not been done before.

Specifying objectives and methods.

Objectives — to research peculiarities of animated 3D graphics functions as a method of visual communication of TV brands based on direct advertisement and promo videos on Ukrainian channels. In order to reach the goal set in this study we raised an *objective* to monitor usage of animated 3D graphics in designing interim units between programs specified according to TV design quality ranking of the following Ukrainian channels: «1+1», «Inter», and «Ukraine» during 2015-2017.

Object of study — animated 3D graphics in direct advertisement and promo videos on TV.

Chosen channels differ with their brand ideological visions but their analysis will help us to trace possible interrelations of 3D graphics usage according to corresponding all-around functions.

Elements of airtime designing in inter-programs units that use 3D graphics are investigated, namely: idents, promo videos, advanced advertising. Advertisement and airtime design made by mentioned methods are considered as a part of visual concept of brands. Graphics in the process of programs' designing (such as captions, titles etc.) are not analyzed in the context of this study.

Subject of study. Function features and usage of animated 3D graphics functions as a method of visual communication of TV brands**.**

3D graphics is analyzed here as a component of media design that is an instrument of branding.

Methods of study. The work is based on an integrated approach that allows studying 3D graphics both in advertisement and promo videos. We used methods of classification, comparative and systematic methods, analysis of documentary information such as content monitoring, expert questionnaire and method of formal and figuratively stylistic analysis. Graphic and analytical method was used for visualizing study findings.

Research results. Level of Ukrainian TV design in the frames of world development is quite stable. Animated 3D graphics is well known in the industry and is developing quite fast. Visual design becomes a great advantage in the industry, makes product quality better and with more profit, TV channels consider broadcast design as a method of branding.

For defining a general level of an airtime design on Ukrainian channels we reviewed their nominations at eight international TV design contests and festivals and composed an according ranking.

Having analyzed 12 winning promo videos of 4 Ukrainian TV channels at «Promax/BDA» festival, we came to a conclusion that animated 3D graphics is commonly used in the most videos of Ukrainian creators who were considered as world's best (9 examples which is 75%). Partially this statistic may seem that according to jury's opinion videos that use 3D graphics are more qualified. We also specified that some channels use this type of graphics almost in every researched video of theirs («ICTV», «Ukraine» – 100%), some channels prefer partially usage of three dimensional rights in designing air time («1+1» – 66,6%, «Inter» – 33,3%).

Thus, we systemized successes of Ukrainian channels in the field of TV design that were honored both on the national and international levels. Level of quality of designing an airtime was showed in the light of jury's marks. Moreover after looking through the list of winners of 8 international festivals («PROMAX/BDA», «New York Festivals International Television», «Bassawards», «The one club of creativity», «The Motion Awards», «D&AD Professional Awards», «Filmteractive», «Epica Awards»), we noted that Ukrainian channels took an active part in the first two festivals mentioned above. It was concluded that the best broadcast design belonged to «1+1» and «Ukraine» channels, which, in general, won international TV design and promotion contests for about 5 times, «Inter» and «ICTV» channels - 4 times.

Table. 1. Ukrainian channels among other prizewinners of international marketing, promotion and TV design contests.

	«1+1»	Inter	Ukraine	«ICTV»
«PROMAX/BDA»	5 times: 2010, 2011, 2017, 2017, 2017	4 times: 2015, 2015, 2017, 2017	4 times: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2014	4 times: 2013, 2014, 2014, 2017
«New York Festivals International Television»	-	-	1 time: 2012	-

Alongside to this it was observed that in 12 winning Ukrainian projects 3D graphics was used no less than in 75 % of examples. But while analyzing 50 winning works of years 2016-2017 that belonged to the world's best TV companies, it was demonstrated that an interest to 3D graphics had been withered contrary to «flat design» or motion graphics style on the whole that partially are partially used by 3D animation. An international Promax BDA prize is considered as one of the most prestigious by the specialists in this field, awarding it to Ukrainian channels means their remarkable achievements in media marketing, taking into account all the parts of the projects starting from promotion and design and finishing with branding and audience interaction. What also should be mentioned is a low activity of national TV brands in other festivals and contests of the industry.

Table. 2. Usage of 3D graphics by Ukrainian channels in prize winning works of Promax BDA Promotion in 2009-2017.

Ukrainian channel	Amount of PromaxBDA Promotion prizes in 2009 - 2017	Amounts of unique video works	Amount of video works with animated 3D graphics	Percentage of winning works with animated 3D graphics
«1+1»	5	3	2	66,6%
«Inter»	4	3	1 (2 N/A)	33,3%
«ICTV»	4	4	4	100%
«Ukraine»	4	2	2	100%
Total	17	12	9 (2 N/A)	75%

According to the results of taking winning places in 6 all-Ukrainian festivals (Teletriumph, Ukrainian Design: The Very Best Of, Kyiv International Advertising Festival, KAKADU Awards, ADC*UA Awards, RED APPLE*UA), we have defined eight Ukrainian channels that were mentioned by experts as some of the best in the field of promotion and TV design in Ukraine in 2001 - 2016. Leaders

among Ukrainian expert judgment are «ICTV», «1+1», «STB». For 15 years in the frames of Teletriumph festival 3D graphics was used by Ukrainian channels not less than in 59 % of 32 winning works.

Trends are already seen though are very limited on this stage. Analyzing victories and frequency of using 3D graphics in works of TV design allowed illustrating success of Ukrainian TV industry in visual communication, branding and promotion in general. The research is the beginning of generalizing Ukrainian TV design and has to be further developed. The review let us to define channels for further monitoring and partially summarize the development level of Ukrainian TV design.

To investigate ranges of using animated 3D graphics as a method of visual communications in advertisement, we monitored TV channels for presence of advertisement with 3D elements comparing to advertisement without 3D. We made records of TV airtime per day every quarter in the period from 1.03.2015 to 1.03.2017 of three Ukrainian channels: «1+1», «Inter», and «Ukraine». Thusly, during two years, we conducted 8 monitors of each channel, that stands for 27 around the clock monitors of inter-program block, specified and classified more than 17000 video works that is more than 1500 video hours.

27 media plans of direct advertisement release and TV programs previews were set up, we divided advertisements according to their type, advertised brand and its product, 3D graphics presence.

Monitoring stated that mostly it was used in direct advertisement and much less percentage have advanced advertising, promos, or idents (in average 85% till 15%). While collecting data, we observed that for audience communication channels give around 30 % of all inter-program block during 24 hours and less than 15 minutes of airtime in general. We made 27 detailed reports with 3D usage statistics in accordance with categories, types, brands, etc. and 8 general reports that allowed defining average figures of all channels during the research period. Thus we saw a positive dynamics of 3D graphics usage in every category. The research has development potential, inasmuch it is necessary to analyze other Ukrainian channels as well and to investigate connection with channel's rating, considering the fact that we already chose channels that have best criteria in TV design and that are leaders in viewer rating.

We may see from the general analysis of three channels in a three year period that 3D graphics was used in 53% of videos (in 9159 from 17201). In addition to that we observed a small increase in 2016 by 3% and decrease 2017 by around by 8% in comparison to 2015. According to a recapitulative statistics of direct advertisement we define regressive dynamics by 5% (from 56% to 51%). Advanced advertisements and promos actively used 3D graphics in 2016, in 2017 only 33% of video works had it that is less by 11% comparing to a starting point of 45% in 2015.

It is interesting to compare usage of 3D graphics by chosen channels during three year term. Mostly it is used by «Ukraine» channel (61%) that proves 3D graphics usage in 53% of videos (9159 videos from 17201). Leader in using 3D graphics in direct advertising is «Inter» channel (58%). «Ukraine» channel used 3D in advanced advertising and promos most commonly (81%).
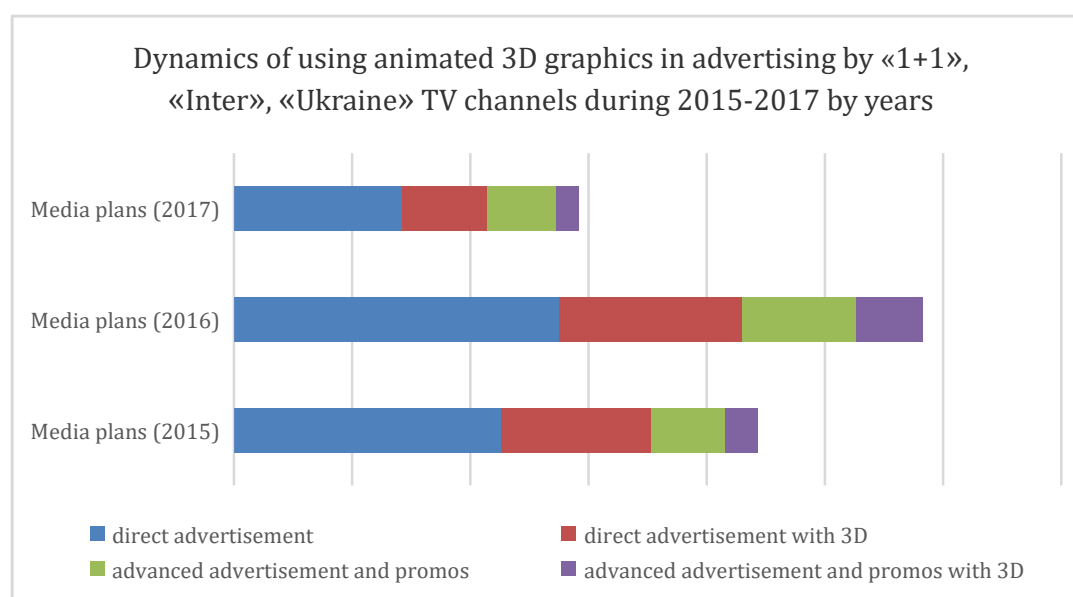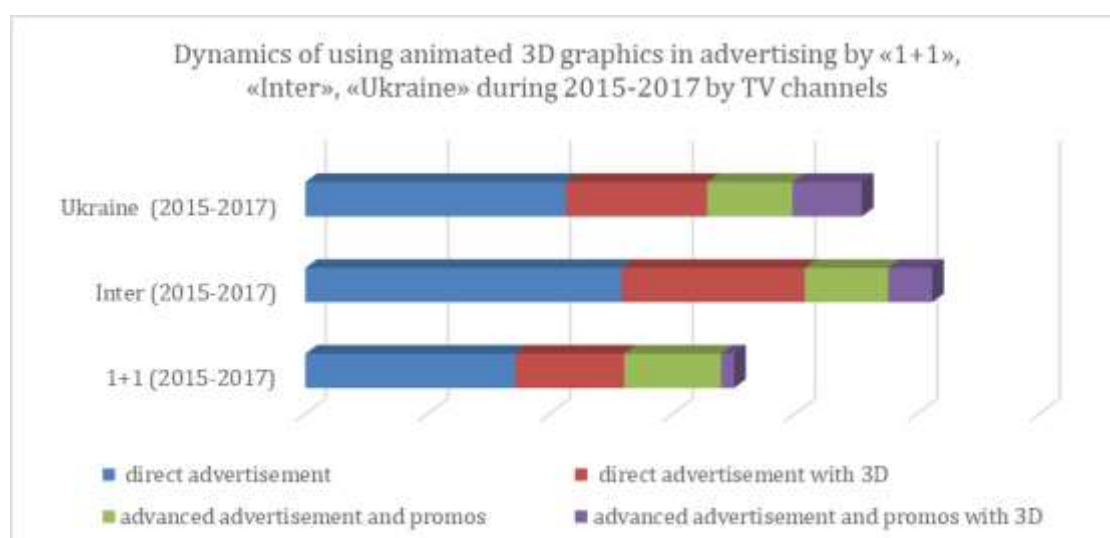

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Table 3.

1+1, Inter, Ukraine acc. to years	Total	Total with 3D	%	Direct adv.	Direct adv. with 3D	%	Advanced adv. and promos	Advanced adv. and promos 3D	%
2017 y.	4013	1827	46%	2847	1441	51%	1166	386	33%
2016 y.	7427	4226	57%	5501	3097	56%	1926	1129	59%
2015 y.	5761	3106	54%	4516	2546	56%	1245	556	45%
Total	**17201**	**9159**	**53%**	**12864**	**7084**	**55%**	**4337**	**2071**	**48%**

Table 4.

1+1, Inter, Ukraine channels in general	Total	Total with 3D	%	Direct advertising	Direct advertising with 3D	%	Advanced advertising and promos	Advanced advertising and promos 3D	%
1+1 2015-2017	5012	2002	40%	3430	1783	52%	1582	215	**14%**
Inter 2015-2017	6536	3712	57%	5175	2990	58%	1361	722	53%
Ukraine 2015-2017	5653	3445	61%	4259	2311	54%	1394	1134	81%
Total	**17201**	**9159**	**53%**	**12864**	**7084**	**55%**	**4337**	**2071**	**48%**

Conclusions. Scientific novelty of the received results lies in the fact that this study has *first time*:

- investigated animated 3D graphics/ systemized parameters of 3D graphics as a method of visual communication, design, and branding in commercials and promo videos on Ukrainian channels;

- generalized experience of using animated 3D graphics by Ukrainian media brands;

- proved an importance of using 3D graphics elements in TV design nowadays;

- monitored animated 3D graphics usage in designing inter-program blocks of «1+1», «Inter», «Ukraine» channels during 2015-2017 (around 20 thousands videos are analyzed, statistical classification between chosen channels, types, brands, products, video length that use 3D is conducted);

- established that animated 3D graphics in airtime design has primarily image function and then informative;

- separated animated 3D graphics as a part of 3D animation that is one of the directions of multimedia design;

- systemized based on conducted monitoring, professional, creative and technological achievements in the field of promotion and design of Ukrainian TV brands;

further developed:

- knowledge on history development of 3D elements of advertising and TV design in the early XXI century;

- structured research vocabulary; specified a definition of term «Animated 3D graphics» and set its indicators;

- image of media design as a system element in image creating and visual communication of brands.

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