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## New Findings: Adolescents and Digital Advertising

### Do Teenagers Need Special New Regulatory Protections?

Produced by [Hoag Levins](#)  
Published: [October 26, 2009](#)



Ellen Wartella said today's regulations for children's advertising are based on outdated market realities.



NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- Do adolescents require special new protections against digital marketing techniques? In her talk at the Children's Advertising Review Unit Conference, Ellen Wartella cited new findings that suggest they might. The regulations for children's advertising developed in the 1970s are based primarily on television viewing. But today's digital communications have completely changed the marketing environment. Ms. Wartella is a professor of psychology at the University of California and a CARU advisor.



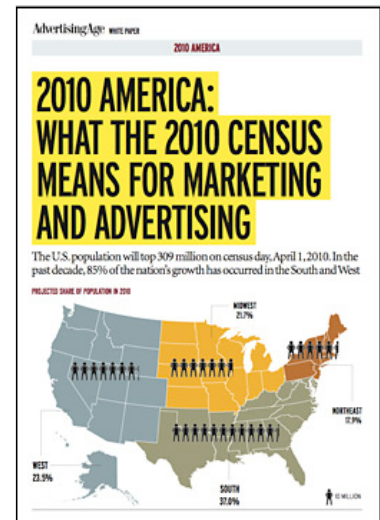
4 Comments

By Anthony | Stevenson Ranch, CA [October 26, 2009 06:35:17 pm](#):

I listened to the Ellen Wartella excerpt with great curiosity in a search of something new. Unfortunately, the gist of her professional observational concern was a rather pedantic warning regarding teen vulnerability. Professor, we are all in the business of persuasion and yes, dare I say it, some level of manipulation. Appreciating the veritable bombardment of solicitations on our collective minds, it is extremely difficult to find any examples of predatory practices and, I scarcely think

## WHITE PAPER: 2010 AMERICA

### What the 2010 Census Means for Marketing and Advertising



2010 America explains what you need to know about the biggest consumer market-research project of the decade: the 2010 U.S. census. Demographics expert Peter Francese, author of this highly readable Ad Age white paper, analyzes what the census will reveal about the changing face of consumers.



Power 150



teens are any more vulnerable than any other demographic. When one considers that the average attention span of a teen is genetically a fraction of an adult's, I am certain they are actually better suited to defend against such a perceived onslaught. All effective advertising or sales techniques are designed to evoke emotion and arousal at some level. If we fail with this connection, principals quickly find a new agency or consultant. Given your corollary, perhaps we should ban all advertising in order to relieve everyone of the burden of incessant self-defense.

Anthony De Rubeis  
 Forte Enterprises  
 Management Consulting  
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By GABRIEL | gabrielpbear.com, KY [October 27, 2009 03:43:45 am](#):

at 01:00 she identifies the fact that advertising aimed at senior citizens doesn't do it for teens.

"an argument can be made" --1:50ish... for anything at any time... but in this case that the industry...that self-regulatory or regulatory regime."

ok. she's doing a commercial for psychologists as consultants based on fear of an unknown outside force "the regulators" coming in because there is talk about the need for them.

if she were actually skilled at the craft she might add that "agencies like yours who purchased psych consultants avoided the dread regulatory animosity 26% more effectively than those who used other consultants".. and maybe a call to action.

"in the literature"...which of course is only accessible to those who "act now."

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By mrs\_pburton | Plano, TX [October 27, 2009 11:05:19 am](#):

Dear Anthony, "I scarcely think teens are any more vulnerable than any other demographic."...really? The teenage years are the MOST vulnerable years because that's when you are forming your belief systems, your moral compass, your personal choices, your SELF as you know it. Why wouldn't we protect this age when it comes to "predatory practices" or "manipulation" through advertising?

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By Anthony | Stevenson Ranch, CA [October 29, 2009 02:18:52 pm](#):

Having successfully raised teens into responsible adults, I am in full understanding of their inherent vulnerability. However, such pressures remain far more likely to emanate from their peers than from ADS. Thanks to the internet, teens of today are totally different and completely tech-savvy versus those of only 20-years ago. And, while often foolish, they are certainly no longer "children." They know how to tune out the noise, perhaps even better than the boomers who were raised during the heyday of Madison Ave. In conclusion, I simply do not believe that any specific demographic needs greater protection that already exists within the marketing world. If a piece is deemed predatory, it is already violating ethics. If current regulatory practices do not address the issue, the consumer will, by not buying the product. If psychologists think that by some new regulation, they can now "protect" today's youth, they are closing the barn door after the horses have gone.

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Todd Andriuk Ranks the Top Media and Marketing Blogs

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