

ECON 321, Assignment 23: Chandra, Targeted Advertising

1. Read the whole paper, paying particular attention to Table V with the main regression results.
2. Since these results show that audience segmentation raises advertising rates, let's see if we can see any incidental evidence of this on websites.
3. In your browser, turn off all ad-blockers. Also make sure you are not logged in to any services like Google Toolbar, Facebook Toolbar, etc. You may want to use a web browser you don't normally use.
4. Go to a site that aggregates news-type content. It could be Google News, Reddit, a Twitter feed, whatever. List which aggregator you went to.
5. Pick a link. The link has to be to a story in advertising-based media (so don't pick a link to a government or nonprofit website, a company that sells merchandise, etc.). Capture the aggregator's link, including whatever "snippet" they used to get your attention.
6. Click through to the link's source. Write down the name of this website. Make a list of all ads you see on the same page as the story.
7. Now go to alexa.com and type in the name of the website you went to. Click on details, and write the website's world and US rank, and its "Audience Snapshot" which tells the demographics of site visitors.
8. Try to look for stories that are very targeted to a particular local area, education level, race or ethnicity, age group, or income group. Do you find any evidence of targeted advertising?
9. If you're willing, log in to your Facebook and/or Google account. Then redo the steps with the same link. Do the ads change?