

Last year, a little over 56 million euros were spent on digital advertising in Serbia. In one year, this market has grown by 19.5 percent, which places our country in third place in Europe, while it has increased as much as six times in a decade.

These are just some of the data presented at the tenth Digital Day Lite conference, held in Belgrade on June 3rd, traditionally organized by the IAB Serbia Association. The topic of this most important digital conference in the region was a kind of revolution in the digital industry in the previous ten years. The events in this market since its beginnings were presented by leaders in this field, representatives of domestic and foreign companies, and the recapitulation of the state of the digital market in Serbia last year, in numbers, is illustrated through the results of AdEX analysis.

“Our digital market has been at the top in terms of consumption growth in Europe for years,” said Igor Chernisevski, chairman of the Education Committee at IAB Serbia. From nine million of its value in 2010, we have reached today’s 56.22 million euros. Display advertising leads with almost 37 million euros and a growth of 16 percent, while “paid search” records a growth of 30 percent. “Local display” experienced a drop of 16 percent and with 9.2 million last year we came to the figure of 10 years ago – 7.7 million euros. The value of the mobile advertising market for last year amounted to 44.23 million euros, which is an increase of almost 46 percent compared to the previous year, while video advertising increased from 7.8 to 9.7 million euros. Advertising on social networks also recorded a serious growth of 33.8 percent and a value of 15.76 million euros. Of that, as much as 14 million euros went to advertising on Facebook and Instagram. The share of other social networks is much smaller – we spent 78,000 euros on Snapchat, 780,000 euros on LinkedIn, 454,000 on Twitter, and 402,000 euros on Viber.

The conference was also marked by two panel discussions, four keynote lectures and two case studies of representatives of leading global and domestic digital companies.

Ivan Radojicic, Brand Partnerships Manager from TikTok, spoke about the creation and development of their platform, which in just three years has gathered 100 million active users across Europe and has become an indispensable part of popular culture.

“Over the past year, this platform has become a global phenomenon. We had the most app downloads in the world, and now we are already in the 100 most valuable brands in the world, and among the 10 in the entire entertainment industry,” said Radojicic. “Unlike other social networks, TikTok is based on content, instead of on the question of who you follow and who follows you. Millions of viewers can be achieved overnight, and for a start, only a mobile phone is enough.”

Even before TikTok for business users came to life in Serbia, Radojicic advised marketing companies to join the platform, research and follow up on comments about their brand that probably already exist on the platform. The advice is also to unite with the creators.

From the leading digital marketing agency in Albania, Vatra, the guest speaker was Gerton

Bejo, its founder and CEO. He spoke about the changes and adjustments of marketing agencies and all professionals in the creative and communication industry, which marked the previous decade. He emphasized that changes in the coming era will develop at the speed of light.

“In order to survive, marketing agencies will have to transform into giant production machines of design, services and content delivery, they will have to adapt to new technologies, attitudes, the audience,” Bejo said. What was a successful digital marketing campaign five years ago is now old-fashioned. Those who are in the industry today, they are revolutionaries, they have to decode the desires of the market. Accepting change and adjusting are crucial to this business. Bejo reminded how much resistance there was, for example, in 2006 towards Facebook, and that today it is considered a traditional medium, while television took 60 years for such a status.

Soco Nunez de Cela spoke about how advertising companies on digital channels have developed and how communication with consumers on social networks has had effects in further building the global Burger King brand. The witty way in which their cheeseburger “Whopper” as a counterpart to McDonald’s is closer to customers, the courage to use the moment, whether political or sports, was rewarded with millions of shares and great success.

“A good campaign requires courage, because the safe zone will not lead to a new one, and courage brings what has not been seen before. It is important to be relevant and stay your own. The most important thing is to create your own recognizable image, a style that will make you different. It is not crucial that only a large budget is behind a successful campaign. We have proved that the idea is more important,” said de Cela.

A lecture on the evolution of digital classifieds as constants was given by Biljana Stojkovic, Chief Digital Officer from Sasomange classifieds. She emphasized that the pandemic showed that readiness for adaptation and innovations on the market, changes in consumer habits and budget are necessary, but that brand marketing is extremely important.

“One of the trends in the advertisements during the corona is the increase in the purchase of luxury real estate and cars, a group has emerged that believes that money should not be saved,” said Stojkovic. The global trend is for classifieds to become sales brokers and property owners. The “iBuyer” platform is the future of this market, because for now the advertisers have insight only until the sale, and they have no control over the transaction. According to her, statistics for the digital classifieds market predict growth.

“Digital advertising is growing, so for this year we can expect eight million euros of income from digital ads, ie fees paid by advertisers to find their ad online,” said Stojkovic. “It is predicted that the average cost for ads per internet user for general ads will be 0.55 euros this year. Revenue is expected to grow by 5 percent by next year, and by 2025, as much as half of ad revenue will be generated via mobile devices.”

That as many as 5.22 billion people in the world use a mobile phone or 66.6 percent of the total population, she reminded at the opening of the first panel “State of digital: 2011 vs 2021” moderator Aleksandra Martinovic, Chief Executive Officer of the Serbia Today portal. As she said, today the Internet is used by 4.66 billion inhabitants of the planet, which is 7.6 percent more than the previous year. There are 4.2 billion users of social networks - 13 percent more, and twice as many as in 2016. The average social media user spends two hours, and at the top of that table are Filipinos with more than 4 hours spent on social networks. At the bottom of this ladder are the Japanese with only one hour. On average, an Internet user spends seven hours online.

Participants in this discussion, Igor Zezelj, Chief Executive Officer at Adria Media Group and Srdjan Saper, founder of the I&F Group, also tried to answer questions about how much digital has changed over the past decade.

The availability of information today has accelerated the making of agency campaigns hundreds of times, so while at the beginning of the development of this industry they were prepared for two years, today they are created in a day. Digital is the initiator of many changes, and since 2010, its influence on all spheres has started. Today, almost all companies have undergone some form of digital transformation. Fewer and fewer have special digital departments, but have already included it in the way of thinking. The first media to respond to the challenge in 2010 opened websites, and soon others adapted to the changes. Although digital gives everyone a chance, democratizes even knowledge, panelists believe that ideas and creativity are still key in this industry, concluded the participants of this panel.

Second panel “Have we been tearing up digital for ten years?” he discussed how the expansion of digital agencies came from isolated phenomena, the origin and development of digital marketing in Serbia, how it all began and how the first digital marketing agencies came into being. Was it courage, vision or a simple need of the market - this question was asked by panel moderator Ivan Zivkovic, Managing Director from Pioniri Communications by Danka Trbojevic, Managing Director of Drive, Goran Jankuloski, management partner from Ziska, Vesna Ceranic, Associate Partner from the Executive Group agency and Igor Grmusa, Country Manager from the Degordian agency.

This industry was a great success, the biggest progress was made in the past year, which was accelerated by the pandemic, so brands are increasingly realizing that digital is not just a “side story”, but a serious business worth investing in, it was pointed out on this panel. Despite the greater trust of clients, there is still a fear among them to be innovative. One of the problems that experts in this field talked about is the hyperproduction of digital content, for which the solution in the future will be the focus on quality. In addition, it was said that today there are occupations that could not be foreseen a decade ago, but that there is a search for the right staff - creative and digital people ready to learn, develop further

independently and after studies, ready to embark on any new problem and accept challenge. For now, it is difficult to keep young people, they easily leave companies in search of change.

At the end of the program, viewers could hear two case studies. The first “How a pirate brand sails the market” was presented by Milja Sljakinic from Ziska and Andreja Sreskovic from the company Jaffa Crvenka, and the second about the transformation in online video advertising was presented by Nina Ivanovic and Naum Petkoski from the Brid TV Company. Following the conference program, the IAB MIXX Awards were given to the best digital agencies for campaigns and projects implemented during 2020, Kamatica reports.