

The Science of Decision-Making: Connecting People and Policy

Tobacco Center
of Regulatory Science

Testing Tobacco Ad Restrictions and Counterads in a 3D Virtual Retail Store

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Overview

Using a 3D virtual convenience store application (RTI iShoppe), we will test the potential impact of restricting and countering tobacco and e-cigarette marketing at the point-of-sale (POS) on youth and adults.

The findings can help guide the development of policies to regulate tobacco and e-cigarette marketing in order to reduce youth and adult smoking.

Background

Studies show that exposure to POS cigarette advertising and promotions is associated with smoking experimentation and progression to regular smoking among youth, and unplanned tobacco purchases and urges to smoke among adult smokers. The 2009 Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act gives states and local governments the authority to regulate the time, place, and manner of cigarette advertising.

Focus

- A. Design and optimize virtual store conditions using eye tracking and Google GLASS.
- B. Conduct randomized controlled experiments using virtual stores to test:
 - 1) banning POS tobacco displays;
 - 2) banning tobacco price promotions;
 - 3) posting antismoking signs at the POS;
 - 4) banning e-cigarette promotions and/or displays.

Methodology

Randomized Experiments

Sample: Per virtual store condition

- youth current smokers (N=200);
- youth susceptible never smokers (N=200);
- adult current smokers (N=200);
- adult recent quitters (N=200).

Shopping Task: Each participant will be randomized to a virtual store condition and asked to complete a shopping task.

Key Outcomes: Tobacco/ e-cigarette purchase attempts (youth and adults) and urge to smoke (adults).

Progress

Optimizing Virtual Store

Using Google GLASS to understand retail product mix, store layout, and extent of tobacco ads/displays in shoppers' view.

Experimenting with lighting and interactive multiple characters to increase realism.

Conducting Pilot Studies

How to reveal people's true preferences during virtual shopping task; Testing type, number, & placement of antismoking signs.

Virtual Store



Customizing
Virtual Store

Data gathered using
Google GLASS