



A Publisher's Guide to Effective Widget Placement

[EDISONDA](#) user experience studio has conducted usability and eyetracking tests of the [AdTaily](#) widget, to assess its performance and functionality. Based on the results of these tests, we have come up with some tips for our publishers, which we want to share with you, so that you could get more out of using this self-service advertising solution.

Content vs. advertising

As a publisher, you find yourself in front of a dilemma: you want to put together your website's content and the advertising space (widget) together in a way that will make both your readers and your advertisers happy. It's not an easy task.

On one hand, placing the widget in a highly visible part of your website will make it more attractive to the advertisers, because all they want is your readers' attention.

On the other hand though, your readers do not like obtrusive advertisements. Also, you don't want to have to redesign your entire website, just to display the ads in a more prominent location.

It doesn't have to be a problem. The needs of your readers and your advertisers can be reconciled, and this short guide, based on the aforementioned research, will help you in achieving that goal.

Where are the ads most visible?

The tests of user behavior while using the Internet have revealed some eye movement patterns on the websites. Concentration and time spent watching different elements of a website decrease systematically as the user's moves from left to the right of the website (which is the same as the usual reading pattern).

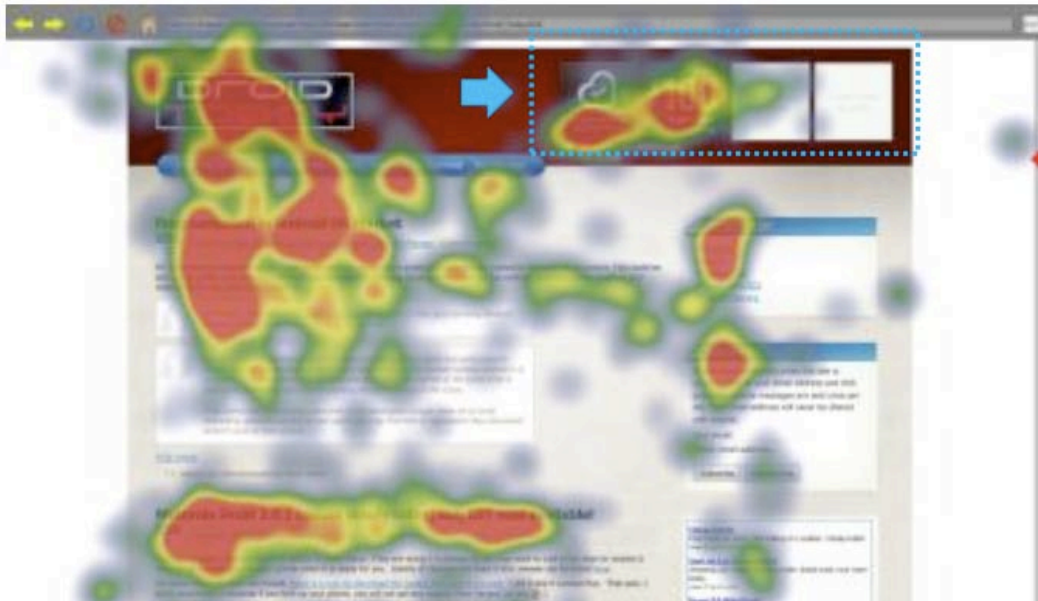
Similarly, the upper part of the website is viewed with more attention than the lower part. The lower something is placed, the less attention it gets from the users.

The picture below is an example of results from the eyetracking test. It illustrates which parts of a website the viewers pay most attention to (the red spots):



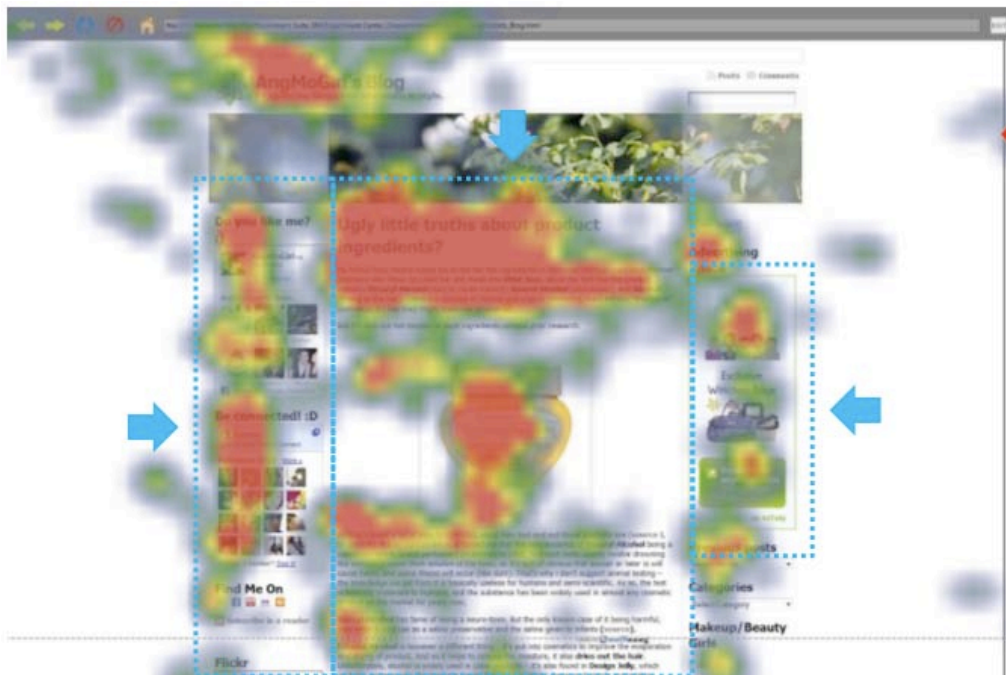
The top of the page

Thus, obviously, one of the best locations for an ad is the header of the website, as it is one of the most visible ones, and it's the first thing the visitors look at. However, most publishers prefer to leave that space for the identification/name of their website.



The right column

One of the most popular ad placements, in case of a three-column system (with the central part reserved for the site's content), is the right column. As long as the advertising widget is located towards the top of the website, this guarantees high visibility of the ads. At the same time, the ads located in the right column are not invasive, and the readers don't mind seeing them in there. Moreover, this setup doesn't ruin the layout of the page.



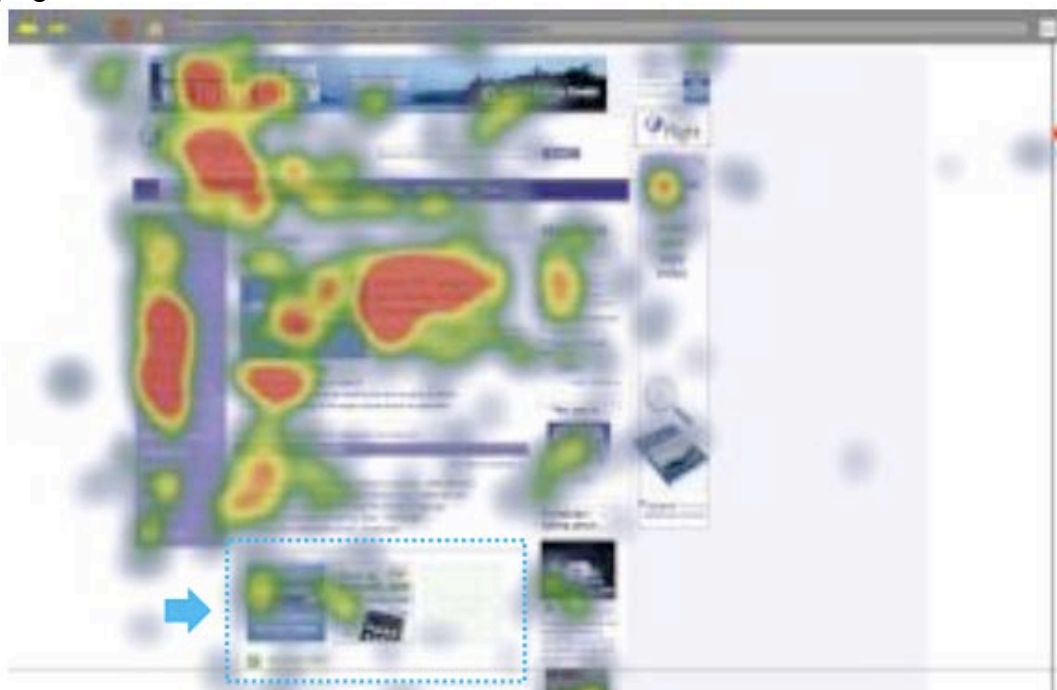
The situation changes if the page consists of more than three columns, like on many news sites. In such a case, the visitors tend to concentrate on the central (content) columns, and the ads placed in the outmost right column are much

less effective. The ads placed in the left column are also ineffective, as the website users tend to use it for navigation purpose only.



The central column

An ad placed in the central part of the website is situated right on the path of the viewer's eyesight. If it is placed (and differentiated from the website's content) correctly, it shouldn't hinder the transition between different elements of the page.



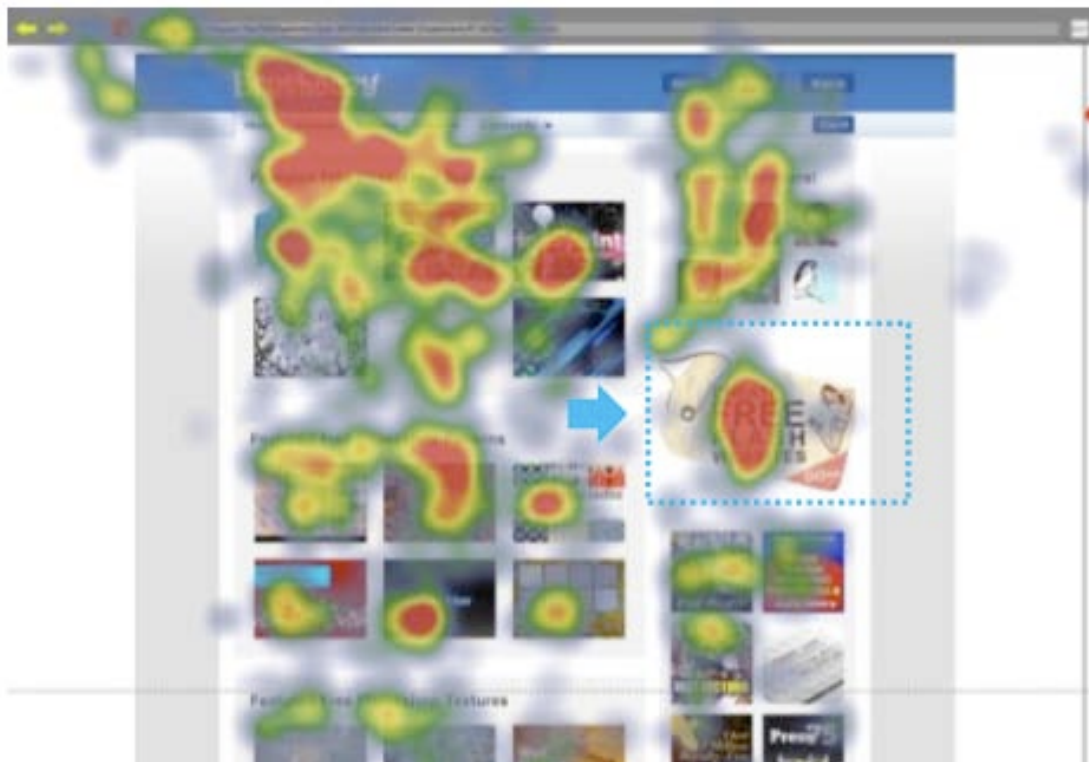
Above the page fold

In most cases, placing any element of the website below the fold of the page (the place where for a given screen resolution the browser window ends), drastically reduces its visibility. Thus, placing the widget in such location will make it barely noticeable to both the readers and the potential advertisers. Of course, the effectiveness of an ad placed below the fold may be higher if that's where a lot of content relevant to the users is located.



The surroundings of the widget

Distinctive elements of the website are noticed more often and get the users' attention for longer. The AdTaily widget can be distinguished from the rest of the website by changing its settings (the background or surrounding box color, the color of the text, and the text of the button) or its placement relative to the other elements of the site.



Integrating the widget and the website's content

Adapting the look of the widget to that of the dominant elements of the website (by changing its shape or color) often increases its visibility, probably because the viewers don't realize that they are looking at an ad. However, because in this case the ad may be treated as any other element of the site, the increased visibility may not necessarily mean increased effectiveness.

It is probably better to somehow differentiate the widget from the rest of the website, especially since distinct elements also tend to attract the viewers' attention.