

### Internet ad spending forecast gets a trim

According to a report from Bloomberg News, the Internet forecasting firm eMarketer is cutting its growth expectations “by a few percentage points” for Internet advertising in 2008, and also now believes it may be too optimistic about 2009. An analyst for the firm told the news service that the prior forecast called for growth of 23 percent in 2008 (to a total of \$26 billion) and 16 percent in 2009.

Pharma companies spent an estimated \$75–\$80 million on Internet ads (excluding search and a few other tactics) in 2007, according to Nielsen Monitor-Plus. This total was expected to climb in 2008 as pharma marketers become savvier about using the Internet to reach patients. Determining that growth rate, however, is a tough question.

Many in the pharma sector believe the reported spending data for the Internet is open to question. “The published spending data for pharmaceutical e-marketing is drastically understated because it does not capture the spend for many of the core components of any brand’s online marketing campaigns,” said Paul Ivans, president of Evolution Road Consulting. For example, he noted, the numbers do not include “foundational components of an Rx brand’s online campaign,” such as paid search, sponsorships and performance-based programs.

### By the Numbers

An update on FDA approval of new molecular entities (NMEs) through early August of this year:

- nine new drugs have been approved, including Wyeth’s Pristiq to treat depression.
- 18 was the total of NMEs approved in 2007
- 22 “new” drugs were approved in 2006

This slowdown in drugs approval rates is being blamed on the FDA’s concerns about drug safety and a dearth of truly new products in the pipeline. The result is increasing pressure to make the most out of existing therapies.

A few of the key findings from the second annual comScore e-Marketing Effectiveness Benchmarks study:

- Visits to health-related Web sites are up 32 percent from 2006
- Interaction with a rich media ads increased unaided awareness 7.7 point and 9.4 points for aided awareness.
- 19.7%: the incremental adherence rate by patients when they visit a brand’s Web site (over control group)

### Surprise: fewer adults go online to search for health information



The number of people in the United States going online for health information, which had risen every year since Harris Interactive launched its study in 1998, declined in July, from 160 million in 2007 to 150 million this year. The 2008 number, however, still represents 81% of adults who are online (compared with 84% in 2007).

“The rapid growth in the number of “cyberchondriacs” seems to have plateaued, but we do not know if this pause is temporary or more permanent,” said Humphrey Taylor, chairman of The Harris Poll. The drop may also be explained by changes in the methodology, although it is clear that, for the first time, the numbers did not rise, according to a Harris statement.

This poll also found that 25 percent of those online search for health information often, on average 4.8 times per month, and 86 percent of these “cyberchondriacs” believe the online information is reliable. Just under one-half of online searchers have discussed what they found with their doctors, while a similar percentage goes online to look for information because of a discussion with their doctors.

The findings are based on a telephone poll of 1,010 U.S. adults between July 8 and 13, 2008.