

INTERMEDIATE

Food companies are targeting kids online



Ever-greedy corporate marketers have found a new means of ensnaring children into the net of consumerism. Not content with bombarding kids on TV,

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giveaway toys than food.

The report sadly increases the likelihood of a new word entering the English vocabulary – the “advergame” – an immoral and callous technique to get kids hooked while having online fun. In addition, a variety of other advertising and marketing tactics designed to lure kids into spending an unlimited amount of online time being blitzed with corporate logos are employed on these sites. These include viral marketing (encouraging children to contact their peers about a specific product or brand, found on 64% of sites); sweepstakes and promotions (65%); memberships (25%); on-demand access to TV ads (53%); and incentives for product purchase (38%). Kaiser’s William Dietz said the scale of this advertising was an “eye opener”. It raises ethical concerns about the role food advertising plays in childhood obesity. Kaiser vice president Vicky Rideout warned the reach of online advertising is much deeper than that of television.

