The multidimensional nature and brand impact of user-generated ad parodies in social media

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What is the impact of ad parodies on the brands they spoof? This question arises from the recent confluence of heightening comedic interest in parodying advertising and the growing trend of amateurs creating their own ad parodies in social media. This article reports on a multi-phase study investigating the key dimensions of ad parodies and how they influence brand attitudes, attitudes towards the parodies, and intention to pass along the parodies. Four primary dimensions of ad parodies were discovered: humour, truth, mockery and offensiveness. Humour and truth were positively related to attitudes towards the parodies and intention to pass them along, while offensiveness was negatively related to attitudes towards the parodies. However, the dimensions of ad parodies had no impact on brand attitudes. The results demonstrate that, although advertisers should be aware of this trend, they can take comfort in consumers’ ability to distinguish between brand messages and entertainment.

Introduction

Cultural critics argue that parody has become a characteristic form of expression in the mixed and participatory media ecology of the digital age (Jenkins 2006, pp. 282–290). New media technology has provided vehicles that allow not only professionals but any user to borrow and remix artistic or popular culture content in a way that imitates the original content while creating new content and ways of seeing the past (Lessig 2008). This com-
plex cultural mix often combines the modern with classical elements to create a new form that has effectively flattened the old cultural hierarchy between highbrow and lowbrow art (Dentith 2000, p. 184; Hutcheon 2000, p. 115). Dentith (2000) labels the times we live in ‘karaoke culture’, in which we continuously recycle and re-voice cultural content if for no other reason than to fill the tremendous content void the new media provide (p. 184). The important idea here is that any internet user can become a participant in the production of popular culture, accompanied by the opportunity to influence that culture (Benkler 2006; Jenkins 2006). As a form of popular culture, advertising is always ripe for parody because its techniques (e.g. demonstrations, testimonials, spokespeople) are widely understood by consumers and, as a result, easily imitated and altered for comedic and critical effect.

One of the best-known recent commercial parodies has been made available to millions of viewers through the video-sharing website You Tube. The parody plays off a MacBook Air ad, in which the selling point is that the MacBook Air is so thin that you can put it inside a manila envelope. Using the same video, the parody of the spot re-dubs the voiceover to tell the viewer you cannot do a lot of things you can do with an ordinary laptop because it does not have an internal disk drive. You cannot play CDs and DVDs, but you can impress friends at parties by challenging them to be able to put their laptops inside an envelope, like you can with your $3000 MacBook Air (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3 for parodies used in the study). The technical ease with which this parody was done and posted supports Dentith’s observation that parody has become a popular form of cultural production that warrants further study.

An important impetus for the following multi-phase study was the confluence of the long tradition of ad parodies in professional media outlets such as Mad magazine and Saturday Night Live with the growth of social media and amateur production on the internet. This confluence gave the opportunity to parody commercials to non-media professionals including end users or other kinds of amateurs, and ‘media professionals outside of their professional routines and practices’ (OECD 2007, p. 8). This phenomenon also vastly expanded the audience for ad parodies, as many of the parodies posted on You Tube often receive more than a million views and some as many as tens of millions.
A second impetus for this study was the lack of research in the advertising-related journals on ad parodies. Once we embarked on a literature search and discussion of the issues surrounding studying ad parodies, it became apparent that almost all of the work on parodies resided in the humanities literature (Ben-Porat 1979, pp. 247–249; Rose 1993; Dentith 2000; Hutcheon 2000). Furthermore, this work was not based on empirical social-scientific research, and it continues to be characterised by definitional controversies. There is no scholarly consensus on how, exactly, to define parody, and how to distinguish it from other genres and formats such as satire, pastiche, mash-ups and remix. Even within the narrow context of advertising, Barbara Stern noted that ‘parodic advertising narratives are ambiguous hybrid forms’ (Stern 1991, pp. 17, 19).

While Stern mentioned parody within a paper that broadly discusses narrative point of view in advertising, only two other essays in advertising and marketing scholarship speak directly to ad parodies (Zinkhan & Johnson 1994; Vanden Bergh 2003). One of these focuses on the legal requirements for advertisers to be able to parody ads in their own commercials. Zinkhan and Johnson (1994) provide an informative discussion of the ‘fair use’ of copyrighted work that is parodied. As examples of such work, the types of parody we study here are imitations of original commercials for the purpose of being funny and critical at the same time, and not for selling a product or service. This type of borrowing of copyrighted work generally is protected and considered a special case of ‘fair use’ (p. v). Commenting on a different aspect of parody, Vanden Bergh (2003) interprets early ad parodies in Mad magazine as commentaries on the silliness of advertising conventions such as product demonstrations, unbridled optimism and exaggerated claims (p. 214). Neither of these essays was an empirical study, but they did represent the first small foray by advertising scholars into these uncharted waters.

While the cultural context discussed above provided the intellectual impetus for this study, we also saw very real practical implications for marketers. Specifically, the critical, disparaging and ridiculing characteristics of ad parodies might have a negative impact on the brands they feature and usually target. Consumer product companies that market nationally branded products or services might invest millions if not billions of dollars to build brands over the lifetime of their products’ or services’ life cycles (Keller 2008). The importance of a brand, its image, and consumer
attitudes towards brands is so great that companies will go to tremendous lengths to protect their investments in their brands.

Recently, social media and user-generated content (UGC) have presented a potential threat to consumer product companies’ efforts to build, manage and protect their brands because such content is outside their immediate control. UGC gets its power to influence from the perception that consumers are less biased and more credible sources of information than marketers and advertisers (Pornpitakpan 2004). This situation is exacerbated by social media’s viral nature. Any type of UGC that captures social media users’ imaginations, from product reviews to parodies of current advertising campaigns, can be widely disseminated to millions of people at the click of a mouse. Compared to the investment companies make in their brands, this UGC typically costs the creator virtually nothing. As a result, UGC affords consumers an easy but potentially powerful means to damage brands they do not like.

While much of the interest in UGC has centred on product reviews (e.g. Chevalier & Mayzlin 2006; Lee & Youn 2009), little attention has been paid to ad parodies that appear on popular content-sharing websites where users share funny and entertaining videos. These ad parodies are typically created by amateur internet users, and they tend to either ridicule or put playful twists on specific, current, professionally produced advertisements. A good ad parody can easily draw over a million views (e.g. a YouTube parody of a Snuggie commercial had over 11 million views in under six months) and threaten the brand image of the company that was unfortunate enough to attract this subversive imitation of one of its ads. An ad parody might be likened to David with his slingshot taking deadly aim at Goliath’s most vulnerable feature. Likewise, some ad parody content is targeted even more precisely, with the purpose of mocking a brand’s message and reputation.

The multi-phase study reported here first identifies the dimensions of user-generated ad parodies in social media and then tests their effects on consumer attitudes towards the brands featured in the ads, attitudes towards the parodies, and intention to share the parodies. It is quite easy for companies to overlook ad parodies as they focus on the more obvious forms of UGC in social media such as product reviews. Because ad parodies are often considered jokes, companies might not take them
seriously. However, it is precisely the brand-mocking characteristic of ad parodies that gives them the potential to subvert a brand’s image.

The central aim of this study is to generate new knowledge about consumer perceptions of user-generated ad parodies by identifying the dimensions within which consumers perceive them. It then tests how those consumer perceptions influence attitudes towards brands, attitudes towards ad parodies, and intention to share the parodies. This knowledge can ultimately be used to help marketers and advertisers further refine their brand management systems to include the monitoring of ad parodies and other marketing and advertising activities that might affect them. In addition, the outcomes of the study will help advertisers identify what to look for in these ad parodies and how they might combat the efforts of the internet vigilantes who create them.

**Literature review and research questions**

*User-generated content and social media*

For advertisers who need to manage their brands, UGC and social media provide both new opportunities and new dangers. Today’s consumers are not only buyers and audience members but also creators, distributors and end users of media content (Benkler 2006; Jenkins 2006; Interactive Advertising Bureau 2008; Lessig 2008). Social media, described by the Interactive Advertising Bureau as ‘the convergence of user commentary with video, photos, and music sharing, all presented in a simple, user-friendly format’, have provided consumers with the vehicle for such mass dissemination (Interactive Advertising Bureau 2008, p. 5). The rise of social media has been noted as one of the key drivers contributing to the growth of UGC (OECD 2007).

UGC is one of the internet’s fastest-growing categories of content (Interactive Advertising Bureau 2008). But, despite its growing popularity, UGC has no generally accepted definition (OECD 2007). The Interactive Advertising Bureau (2008) broadly defines UGC as ‘any material created and uploaded to the Internet by non-media professionals’ (p. 1). Notable in this definition are three main characteristics: it is amateur, created and uploaded. First, UGC is created by *non-media professionals*. Non-media professionals include end users, ordinary people, hobbyists or other kinds
of amateur. They may also include media professionals ‘outside of their professional routines and practices’ (OECD 2007, p. 8). Second, UGC is *created* material. To be considered UGC, a non-media professional must put ‘a certain amount of creative effort’ into developing new content or modifying existing content (OECD 2007, p. 8). Based on this definition, posting an existing advertisement on YouTube would not be considered UGC, but remixing images and sounds that transform the ad into an ad parody would be. Finally, UGC is material *uploaded* to the internet. Thus, a video of an ad parody stored privately on a non-media professional’s personal computer would not count as UGC.

Although UGC can be developed for any purpose, a growing number of people create UGC about brands, companies and services. In its focus on marketplace information, this type of UGC offers opportunities for marketers. If marketers constantly monitor UGC that provides marketplace information, they can find out how consumers perceive their brands and, in turn, use this information to strengthen them (Bannister 2006; OECD 2007). Because consumers typically judge marketplace information provided by other consumers to be trustworthy and credible (Pornpitakpan 2004), UGC about marketplace information may have greater impact on a brand than marketer-generated content. As a result, UGC about marketplace information can pose new challenges to marketers. In the context of professionally generated content like advertising, marketers can control information about their brands, but UGC represents a shift in this control from marketer to consumer. Such a shift is significant because in UGC it is not marketers but consumers who determine what to say about brands (Lee *et al.* 2009). When UGC contains negative brand information, it may of course afflict a brand with harmful consequences (Cheong & Morrison 2008).

As ideal vehicles for the distribution of UGC, social media sites are among the fastest-growing destinations on the internet. Facebook and YouTube are the number two and four top sites in both the US and worldwide (Alexa 2010). In the US alone, more than 170 million videos were viewed on YouTube in the month of January 2010, with the average viewer watching 93 videos. This represented a 50% year-to-year increase (ComScore 2010).

There are different categories of websites in the social media domain. First, social media platforms such as the one offered by Facebook allow
developers to create and post applications for wide distribution. The second category, social networking sites – again including Facebook, as well as others such as Twitter and LinkedIn – provide consumers with online venues for personal or professional networking. Users of social networking sites establish personal pages, and share information and content among their self-designated contacts. Third, the more specialised content-sharing sites allow the sharing of a specific type of content, as opposed to the broader and more generalised networking supported by social networking sites. Examples of sites in this last category include Flickr for photos, and YouTube and Vimeo for videos. In addition to posting content, users may forward links to the content, post comments or share the content via other social networks. In contrast to social networking sites, content-sharing networks focus on the content rather than the user (Interactive Advertising Bureau 2008).

Our study focuses on ad parodies that have been created and uploaded on social media, particularly content-sharing sites, for amateur purposes. These purposes may include sharing entertainment, debunking brand identities and advertising techniques, satirising the institution of advertising, engaging in cultural criticism, and showing off personal skills. UGC in the form of ad parodies pressures firms to be ever more vigilant about communication that falls outside their control yet demands monitoring.

**Parody, humour and their complex effects**

To distinguish different uses of parodic techniques, we categorise two basic types of parody that occur in the context of advertising. The first type consists of advertisements that parody other advertisements or other well-known cultural works and genres such as paintings, films, newscasts, cartoons, political speeches and television series. We call this type *parodic ads* because they are advertisements first and foremost, and they use the conventions of parody to serve an overarching commercial purpose. By contrast, the second type of advertising parody may or may not occur within an actual advertisement, and the target of its parodic techniques is always a specific, existing advertising campaign. Following Vanden Bergh (2003), we call this second type *ad parodies*. While Vanden Bergh discussed ad parodies produced by professional artists and entertainers for the commercial mass media, we note that they can also appear
in any number of places in the media environment, including amateur UGC in social media.

Ad parodies can be considered a subset of humour in advertising. Humour has long been a popular advertising technique, and researchers have examined it from a variety of perspectives (see, for example, Weinberger et al. 1995; Zhang 1996; Alden et al. 2000; Cline et al. 2003; Zhang & Zinkhan 2006; Cline & Kellaris 2007; Shabbir & Thwaites 2007). While advertisers use humour because they believe it works, researchers try to explain how and why it works. Perhaps an even more vexing question concerns when humour in advertising works. Seeking to answer that question, Speck (1991) outlined a widely influential framework of humour effects in persuasive communication. Drawing on theories of humour from Aristotle to the present, he summarised three processes that underlie humour: arousal–safety, incongruity–resolution and humorous disparagement (Speck 1991).

In the arousal–safety process, humour arises when we experience affective relief from some strain, anxiety or expectation (p. 6). For example, an ad parody may initially shock us by featuring unusually crude images, sounds or statements. However, once we realise we are viewing an imitation or remix of an ad, and that this imitation is not to be taken seriously, we experience relief because we evaluate the parodic expression as safe or inconsequential.

While the arousal–safety process produces emotional effects, the incongruity–resolution process has predominantly cognitive effects. When we undergo incongruity–resolution, we initially experience a discrepancy or surprise, but we then figure out how to reintegrate this incongruity within our cognitive schemata (pp. 7–8). In other words, incongruity resolution requires viewers to engage in cognitive problem solving. They perceive some confusion in the parodic expression, and to get the joke they must logically resolve that confusion with the help of the joke teller. To apply this process to ad parodies, a parody that imitates or remixes an original ad would produce confusion by incorporating something that doesn’t fit with the viewer’s expectations – for example, a voiceover that mocks the featured product or a product demonstration that highlights the product’s bugs rather than its features. But once viewers understand that the parody is indicating how the original ad might not have been telling the whole truth, they would resolve such incongruous elements logically.
The third process, humorous disparagement, refers to the use of humour as a tool for social criticism, censure and control. Disparaging humour is characterised by motivations of ridicule and attack. In the context of ad parodies, humorous disparagement requires more of an impulsive reaction from viewers, in that they perceive the ridicule directed at the product, brand or people in the ad, and then must decide whether or not they condone it. For example, a re-dubbed voiceover in an ad parody might make offensively disparaging remarks about the actors depicted in the ad, the social types they represent and the activities they are engaged in. In such cases, if viewers evaluate the parody as gratuitously insulting or offensive, they may be unwilling to take part in the disparagement.

Although ad parodies usually focus on advertising technique, they can also serve several other kinds of satirical purpose. For example, they can express the view that advertising is a pernicious institution of deception and social control. Or they can deflate a well-known brand’s symbolic prestige. Or they can ridicule the beliefs and behaviours of consumers who fetishise their favourite brands. Advertising professionals have themselves often produced parodies of other advertisements to disparage rival campaigns’ product claims, branding techniques, cultural meanings and creativity. Since ad parodies can serve various purposes, often simultaneously, it is likely that consumers will associate these different purposes with different dimensions of the parody technique itself.

In the age of UGC, consumers are now producing and disseminating ad parodies that serve purposes other than commercial competition. Some of these purposes reflect the intentions that cultural critics have associated with long-standing traditions of artistic and literary parody. Usually, these parodic intentions are negative and critical – for example, ridiculing hypocritical social norms, debunking powerful institutions and deflating hierarchies of cultural taste (Rose 1993, pp. 25–29). On the other hand, parodies can also praise and pay homage, as when artists or entertainers playfully rework the conventions of influential precursors. For example, in literary genres like the ‘mock epic’, 18th-century poets would write social satire in a style that simultaneously parodied and paid homage to the conventions of classical Greek and Roman exemplars. In such cases, the target of criticism was something in the social world, not the genre of classical epic poetry itself.
When a parody plays with a pre-existing form sympathetically – that is, ironically but not disparagingly – it satirises something other than the core message of the original text, image or video it imitates. In the context of advertising, parodists serve this purpose when they use the techniques of a well-known ad campaign to make a point about something other than the brand or product originally featured in the campaign. An example of this from the summer of 2010 is a political campaign ad by BlueAmericaPac that uses the techniques of the MasterCard ‘Priceless’ campaign to highlight the discrepancy between the Republican Minority Leader of the House of Representatives John Boehner’s extravagant personal expenses and his lack of support for federal financial programmes that help the middle class, the unemployed and the elderly. (For a similar example playing off the recent Mac vs PC campaigns starring Justin Long and John Hodgman, see Jenkins 2006, p. 282.)

By contrast, other kinds of ad parodies have a different and more focused purpose when they target an original ad’s commercial messages. When they disparage either a specific brand or the selling proposition featured in an ad, their parodic imitations are not necessarily homages. To the contrary, as the literary critic Northrop Frye (1971) observed, parody is ‘often a sign that certain vogues in handling conventions are getting worn out’ (p. 103). Similarly, Freud (1960/1905) proposed that parody has two other critical functions: ‘the degradation of something exalted’ and the unmasking of someone who ‘has seized dignity and authority by a deception’ (pp. 249–250). Given these different purposes of ad parodies, what needs to be determined are the conditions under which they might have either positive or negative effects on a brand.

As Speck points out (1991, p. 9), disparaging humour often creates an ambiguity between the intention of serious attack and playful wit. This ambiguity has important implications for the effects of ad parodies on a brand. If the disparaging effect predominates and the original brand is its target, one would expect that the brand would be harmed. But if the playful wit effect predominates, the brand may not be harmed because the humour might reinforce a pleasant emotional association with the brand. Or, alternatively, the brand may not be harmed because the parody’s purpose is to use the brand’s meanings to attack something else not originally associated with the brand – for example, political candidates, environmentally harmful behaviours or exploitative corporate practices.
Since ad parodies can have these various purposes and targets, we expect that there would be a plurality of dimensions through which consumers perceive them. In addition, informed by Speck's typology of different humour processes, we argue that consumer perceptions of the varying dimensions of ad parodies influence the magnitude and direction of the parodies’ effects on brand attitudes. According to this typology, we would expect consumers to have varying reactions related to the different cognitive and affective responses elicited by those processes. Because there has been little prior research exploring ad parodies’ potential effects, and because these effects need to be gauged more accurately, we must first identify the dimensions of ad parodies as perceived by consumers. For these reasons, we present the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the different dimensions of ad parodies as perceived by consumers?

RQ2: How will consumer perceptions of dimensions of a user-generated ad parody influence attitude towards the brand, attitude towards the ad parody and intention to pass along the parody?

**Multi-phase study**

Ad parodies, to date, have not been the subject of advertising research, and as a result little is known about their characteristics. But, without such knowledge, it is difficult to study how they might affect attitudes towards brands, attitudes towards the parodies themselves, and viewers’ intention to pass the parodies along via social media to others. Our first step in resolving the lack of empirical research into the nature of ad parodies was to implement a two-stage factor-analytic study of the dimensions of ad parodies. Once the important dimensions associated with ad parodies were determined, the final-stage study was performed to see how these dimensions influenced attitudes towards the brands parodied, attitudes towards the ad parodies, and intention to pass along the parodies via social media. This final-stage study is described after the factor-analytic study below.
Phase 1

Given the lack of existing literature on ad parodies, an open-ended question approach was first used to create an inventory of words that describe ad parodies.

Advertisements
To create a more comprehensive inventory of words that describe ad parodies, three ad parodies that have a high number of views on YouTube – Snuggie ad parody (over 11 million views), MacBook Air ad parody (over 4 million views), and Dove Evolution ad parody (over 2 million views) – and their corresponding original ads were used (see Appendix 1 for descriptions of the ads used in Phase 1).

Participants
A total of 96 undergraduate students at a large Midwestern university participated in Phase 1. The ages of participants ranged from 18 to 28 ($M = 20.56$, $SD = 1.47$). Women (65.6%) outnumbered men. Two participants did not provide their ages, and one did not indicate his or her sex. Participants received extra credit for their participation.

Procedure
In a classroom setting, participants were asked to watch three sets comprising an original ad and an ad parody. After watching each ad, participants were asked to write down all the words they could think of that described it. After watching all six ads, they were then asked to write down all the words they could think of that described ad parodies in general. Thus, participants were given a total of four opportunities to describe ad parodies. Given that the purpose of Phase 1 was to create a comprehensive inventory of words that describe ad parodies, no definition of ad parodies was provided to participants to avoid biasing their own descriptions. Next, they were asked to provide demographic information.

Results
This open-ended question approach generated 184 unique words, including funny (mentioned 232 times), true (84 times), humorous (36 times), hilarious (35 times), realistic (32 times), sarcastic (20 times), entertain-
ing (20 times), make fun of (18 times), mean (18 times) and creative (18 times).

**Phase 2**

Based on the findings from Phase 1, a survey method was used to discover and quantify the dimensions of ad parodies.

**Advertisements**

To generate variations in participants’ perceptions of dimensions of ad parodies, four videos on YouTube – *Dove Real Beauty* ad parody, *iPhone* ad parody, *Progressive Insurance* ad parody and *Nike Basketball Freestyle* ad parody – and their corresponding original ads were selected for Phase 2 (see Appendix 2 for descriptions of the ads used in Phase 2).

**Participants**

A total of 258 undergraduate students at the same university as Phase 1 (but different from participants in Phase 1) participated in Phase 2. The ages of participants ranged from 19 to 31 ($M = 21.21$, $SD = 1.32$). There were more women (67.1%) than men. Participants received extra credit for their participation.

**Measure**

To discover dimensions of ad parodies, 44 unique words that were mentioned at least five times in Phase 1 were selected, because for a word to be mentioned five times, at least two participants had to write down that word. To avoid a possible order effect of the words influencing participants’ perceptions about ad parodies, four versions of the ordering of the words were created using a random number generator (www.randomizer.org). Participants’ perceptions of ad parodies were measured by rating each of the 44 words, after viewing the four pairs comprising an original ad and an ad parody, on a seven-point scale (1 being ‘extremely inconsistent’ and 7 being ‘extremely consistent’) according to how consistent or inconsistent it was with their meaning for the term ‘ad parodies’ (Vanden Bergh *et al.* 1981).
Procedure
In a classroom setting, participants first watched four pairs of videos consisting of an original ad and an ad parody. They were randomly assigned to one of four versions of the questionnaire and, after viewing the ad pairs, rated each of the 44 words. Again, a definition of ad parodies was not given to participants, to avoid biasing their ratings. Finally, they provided demographic information.

Results
Our first research question asked how consumers would perceive dimensions of user-generated ad parodies. To discover the dimensions of ad parodies, data from four different versions of the questionnaire were collapsed for subsequent analyses. Principal components factor analysis with Varimax rotation was then run over the 44 items, with an eigenvalue of 1.0 set as the stopping criterion of factor extraction. A factor analysis approach has commonly been used when identifying dimensions of a new concept (Vanden Bergh et al. 1981; Rifon et al. 2004). To select items that are considered to be meaningful for a particular factor, a factor loading of 0.4 or higher and no high loadings on any other factor were required. After dropping 18 items that did not meet these criteria, principal components factor analysis was run again over the remaining 26 items. These procedures generated five factors that explained 60.9% of the total variance. Two items, ‘pointless’ and ‘ridiculous’, which comprised a fifth factor, were eliminated due to low reliability. The final principal components factor analysis generated four factors that accounted for 59.9% of the total variance (see Table 1).

The first factor, labelled ‘humour’, accounted for 25.28% of the variance with ten items ($\alpha = 0.92$). This factor represents consumer perceptions of ad parodies being humorous and entertaining. The second factor, ‘mockery’, consisted of five items ($\alpha = 0.79$), explaining 13.37% of the variance. This factor represents consumer perceptions of ad parodies mocking and making fun of advertisers’ claims about a branded product. The third factor was labelled as ‘truth’ and represents consumer perceptions of ad parodies exposing advertisers’ false or exaggerated claims about a branded product. This factor consisted of four items ($\alpha = 0.79$) and accounted for 11.16% of the variance. Finally, the fourth factor, ‘offensiveness’, accounted for 10.06% of the variance with five items ($\alpha = 0.72$). This factor reflects consumer perceptions of ad parodies being offensive and disgusting.
Phase 3
To confirm the four dimensions of ad parodies identified in Phase 2, and examine whether and how consumer perceptions of the four dimensions of ad parodies influence attitude towards a brand being parodied, attitude
towards an ad parody and intention to pass along the ad parody to others, a survey-based audience reception study was used.

**Advertisements**
Due to the difficulty of creating ad parodies varying the four dimensions of ad parodies identified in Phase 2, this study used existing ad parodies on YouTube and their corresponding original ads. To generate variations in participants’ perceptions of the four dimensions of ad parodies, four pairs consisting of an original ad and an ad parody for the following brands were used: *MacBook Air, Taco Bell Drive-Thru Diet, Google Search* and *Lexus IS* (see Appendix 3 for descriptions of the ads used in Phase 3).

**Participants**
Overall, 170 undergraduate students at the same university as Phases 1 and 2 (but different from the participants in Phases 1 and 2) participated in Phase 3. Twenty-eight participants reported watching at least one ad parody used in Phase 3 prior to the survey and thus were excluded from the subsequent analyses. The final sample included responses from a total of 142 participants. The ages of participants ranged from 19 to 28 (*M* = 21.09, *SD* = 1.34). There were more women (66.9%) than men. Five participants did not provide their ages and two did not indicate their sex. Participants received extra credit for their participation.

**Procedure**
Participants were assigned to watch one of four pairs of an original ad and its corresponding ad parody, viewing the ads in a classroom setting. To avoid having participants guess the purpose of the research, they were also shown two filler ads between the original ad and the ad parody. After watching each ad, they were asked to indicate whether they had seen the ad prior to the study, their familiarity with and attitude towards the brand, attitude towards the ad (or the ad parody) and intention to pass along the ad (or the ad parody) to others. Additionally, after viewing the ad parody, they rated each of the 24 words. They were then asked to provide demographic information.
Measure

Perceived dimensions of the ad parody: Consumer perceptions of the four dimensions of ad parody identified by the principal components factor analysis in Phase 2 – humour, mockery, truth and offensiveness – were measured using a seven-point scale (1 being ‘extremely inconsistent’ and 7 being ‘extremely consistent’) to rate each of the 24 words according to how consistent or inconsistent it is with their meaning for the assigned ad parody. Results of confirmatory factor analysis are discussed in the following results section.

Familiarity with the brand: Familiarity with the brand was measured with a single item, unfamiliar–familiar, on a seven-point scale.

Attitude towards the brand: Pre-brand attitude (i.e. brand attitude measured after watching an original ad) and post-brand attitude (i.e. brand attitude measured after watching an ad parody) were measured with three items on a seven-point scale: good–bad, unpleasant–pleasant and favourable–unfavourable (α = 0.94, pre-brand attitude; α = 0.95, post-brand attitude) (MacKenzie & Lutz 1989).

Attitude towards the ad: Attitude towards the original ad and attitude towards the ad parody were measured with four items on a seven-point scale: I dislike/like it, I feel positive/negative about it, I feel favourable/unfavourable about it, and I feel bad/good about it (α = 0.95, attitude towards the original ad; α = 0.95, attitude towards the ad parody) (Holbrook & Batra 1987).

Intention to pass along the ad: Intention to pass along the original ad and intention to pass along the ad parody to others were measured with four items on a seven-point scale: likely–unlikely, improbable–probable, possible–impossible and uncertain–certain (α = 0.86, intention to pass along the original ad; α = 0.95, intention to pass along the ad parody). These items were adapted from the purchase intention scale (Bearden et al. 1984).

Results

Our second research question asked whether and how participants’ perceptions of the dimensions of ad parodies influence their post-brand attitude, attitude towards the ad parody, and intention to pass along the
ad parody to others. To address this research question, data from four different pairs of the original ad and the ad parody were collapsed for subsequent analyses.

**Perceived dimensions of the ad parody:** To confirm the four dimensions of ad parodies identified in Phase 2, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was run with the 24 items that describe dimensions of ad parodies, using AMOS 17. Based on a review of modification indices, five items were removed due to cross-loading, and three covariances among error terms, which were considered to correlate with one another conceptually, were allowed. The modified measurement model indicated an acceptable degree of fit: $\chi^2 = 231.238$, $df = 143$, $p < 0.001$; NFI = 0.90; CFI = 0.96; and RMSEA = 0.07. All remaining items were loaded on the corresponding dimensions identified in Phase 2. Reliabilities of the four dimensions ranged from 0.70 to 0.96. In sum, the CFA confirmed the four dimensions of ad parodies identified in Phase 2, namely humour, mockery, truth and offensiveness (see Table 1).

**Impact on post-brand attitude:** To examine the impact of perceived dimensions of an ad parody on post-brand attitude, a hierarchical multiple regression was performed. Three dummy variables for the four types of ad parodies, familiarity with the brand, attitude towards the original ad and pre-brand attitude were entered into the first block to control for the influences of these variables on the effect of perceived dimensions of the ad parody on post-brand attitude. The four perceived dimensions of ad parody were entered into the second block.

As shown in Table 2, the overall model was significant: $F$ (10, 128) = 23.27, $p < 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.62$. The control variables together explained 61% of the variance in post-brand attitude, $F$ (6, 132) = 36.36, $p < 0.001$. Among the control variables, pre-brand attitude ($\beta = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$) largely affected post-brand attitude. Additionally, participants exposed to the MacBook ad parody ($\beta = -0.15$, $p < 0.01$) were less likely to have a favourable attitude towards the brand after watching the ad parody than those exposed to the Google Search ad parody. The perceived dimensions of the ad parody together, however, did not significantly contribute to additional variance in post-brand attitude.
Table 2: Hierarchical multiple regression results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude towards brand</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First block</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with brand</td>
<td>0.15</td>
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<td>Pre-attitude towards brand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attitude towards original ad</td>
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<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexus ad parody(^1)</td>
<td>−0.16</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>−0.04</td>
<td>−0.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>MacBook ad parody(^2)</td>
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<td>−0.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taco Bell ad parody(^3)</td>
<td>−0.49</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>−0.12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second block</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth</td>
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<td>−0.02</td>
<td>−0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mockery</td>
<td>−0.19</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>−0.13</td>
<td>−2.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensiveness</td>
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<td>−0.09</td>
<td>−1.19</td>
</tr>
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<td>$F_{\text{change}}$ (4, 128) = 1.99, n.s., $R^2_{\text{change}}$ = 0.02</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The overall model: $F$ (10, 128) = 23.27, $p &lt; 0.001$, adj. $R^2$ = 0.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude towards ad parody</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First block</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with brand</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
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<td>Attitude towards original ad</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexus ad parody(^1)</td>
<td>−1.91</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>−0.44</td>
<td>−5.01***</td>
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<tr>
<td>MacBook ad parody(^2)</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>2.38*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taco Bell ad parody(^3)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second block</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>8.18***</td>
</tr>
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<td>Truth</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>3.89***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mockery</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
<td>−0.07</td>
<td>−1.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offensiveness</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
<td>−0.13</td>
<td>−2.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>The overall model: $F$ (9, 131) = 38.23, $p &lt; 0.001$, adj. $R^2$ = 0.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intention to pass along ad parody</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First block</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with brand</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>−0.03</td>
<td>−0.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intent to pass along original ad</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>4.11***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lexus ad parody(^1)</td>
<td>−1.51</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>−0.31</td>
<td>−3.24**</td>
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<tr>
<td>MacBook ad parody(^2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taco Bell ad parody(^3)</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>$F$ (5, 133) = 9.83, $p &lt; 0.001$, adj. $R^2$ = 0.24</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second block</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>6.38***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>2.35*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mockery</td>
<td>−0.10</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>−0.00</td>
<td>−0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensiveness</td>
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<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>$F_{\text{change}}$ (4, 131) = 20.41, $p &lt; 0.001$, $R^2_{\text{change}}$ = 0.28</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The overall model: $F$ (9, 131) = 17.67, $p &lt; 0.001$, adj. $R^2$ = 0.52</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$; \(^1\) dummy-coded with Lexus ad parody = 1, other ad parodies = 0; \(^2\) dummy-coded with MacBook ad parody = 1, other ad parodies = 0; \(^3\) dummy-coded with Taco Bell ad parody = 1, other ad parodies = 0.
Impact on attitude towards ad parody: A hierarchical multiple regression was again performed to examine the impact of perceived dimensions of an ad parody on attitude towards the ad parody. Three dummy variables for the four types of ad parodies, brand familiarity and attitude towards the original ad were entered into the first block to control for the influences of these variables. The four perceived dimensions of the ad parody were entered into the second block.

As shown in Table 2, the overall model was significant: $F(9, 131) = 38.23, p < 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.71$. The control variables together explained 34% of the variance in attitude towards the ad parody, $F(5, 135) = 15.43, p < 0.01$. Among the control variables, compared to those exposed to the Google Search ad parody, participants exposed to the Lexus ad parody ($\beta = -0.44, p < 0.001$) were less likely to have a favourable attitude towards the ad parody, while those exposed to the MacBook ad parody ($\beta = 0.19, p < 0.05$) were more likely to have a favourable attitude towards the ad parody. Neither brand familiarity nor attitude towards the original ad affected attitude towards the ad parody. Additionally, the perceived dimensions of the ad parody together explained an additional 36% of the variance in attitude towards the ad parody $F(4, 131) = 42.83, p < 0.001$. Both perceived humour ($\beta = 0.57, p < 0.001$) and perceived truth ($\beta = 0.23, p < 0.001$) were positively related to attitude towards the ad parody, while perceived offensiveness of the ad parody was negatively related ($\beta = -0.13, p < 0.05$). Perceived mockery had no effect on attitude towards the ad parody.

Impact on intention to pass along the ad parody: To examine the impact of perceived dimensions of an ad parody on intention to pass along the ad parody, a hierarchical multiple regression was again performed. Three dummy variables for the four types of ad parodies, brand familiarity and intention to pass along the original ad were entered into the first block to control for the influences of these variables. Four perceived dimensions of the ad parody were entered into the second block.

As shown in Table 2, the overall model was significant: $F(9, 131) = 17.67, p < 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.52$. The control variables together explained 24% of the variance in intention to pass along the ad parody, $F(5, 133) = 9.83, p < 0.001$. Among the control variables, intention to pass along the original ad ($\beta = 0.34, p < 0.001$) positively influenced intention
to pass along the ad parody. Additionally, participants exposed to the *Lexus* ad parody ($\beta = -0.31, p < 0.001$) were less likely to intend to pass along the ad parody than those exposed to the *Google Search* ad parody. Finally, the perceived dimensions of the ad parody together explained an additional 28% of the variance in intention to pass along the ad parody $F (4, 131) = 20.41, p < 0.001$. Both the perceived humour ($\beta = 0.57, p < 0.001$) and perceived truth ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.05$) dimensions were positively related to intention to pass along the ad parody. Neither perceived mockery nor perceived offensiveness had effect on intention to pass along the ad parody.

**Conclusion and discussion**

Cultural critics have identified two primary dimensions of parody. On the one hand, there is humour or playful wit. On the other, there is disparagement or ridicule (Rose 1993; Hutcheon 2000). But the problem for the social science researcher is that no empirical studies have investigated whether consumers perceive ad parodies in the same way cultural critics and social scientists do. Do lay audiences see both dimensions of humour and disparagement? Or do they see other dimensions not yet identified? Furthermore, how does the way lay audiences perceive the characteristics of ad parodies influence their attitudes towards the brands being spoofed and the parodies themselves?

The results reported for the first two phases of this multi-phase study show that consumers do see the dimensions of humour and disparagement (labelled ‘mockery’ here), but they also perceive two additional dimensions, truth and offensiveness. The truth dimension appears to be specific to advertising in that ad parodies often debunk specific claims made in the original ads. The perception of truth in parodies could be related to the presence of puffery in the original ads. While consumers may expect to find exaggerations in the form of puffery in advertisements, they also consider puffery to be information that should be ignored (Lincoln & Allman 1996). Thus we find that, when ad parodies draw attention to the hyped puff claim, they are interpreted as portraying the truth.

The offensiveness dimension appears to be a reaction to the extremes ad parodies can take in their effort to mock and be funny. Apparently, some consumers see offensiveness in what often is blatant use of vulgarity or offensive imagery. One person’s humour is another person’s offensive-
ness. Indeed, what consumers view as offensive is likely to be a function of numerous factors, such as the context of the message, the similarity of the viewer to the message source, and scepticism towards advertising in general (Dickinson & Gill 2009).

Identifying the dimensions of ad parodies is important because it enables researchers to test the relationship between empirically discovered dimensions and their effects on brand attitudes. Specifically, it enables researchers to see if ad parodies have an impact on the brands parodied. Additionally, because a strong parody can have a viral effect (Southgate et al. 2010), it also is important to know how these perceived dimensions influence attitudes towards the ad parodies and viewers’ intentions to pass the videos along to others.

Despite the finding that consumers identified these four dimensions of ad parodies, our results indicate that they do not have an effect on brand attitudes. Rather, the only variable we found that had a significant effect on post-exposure brand attitude was pre-brand attitude. While we found no effect on brand attitude, the ad parody dimensions did influence participants’ attitudes towards the parodies themselves and the intent to pass them along.

Specifically, this study found that the more positive dimensions of humour and truth resulted in more positive attitudes towards the ad parodies and the intention to pass them along. Since humour has a long history as a popular advertising technique, there is little surprise that perceptions of humour in ad parodies can have positive outcomes. As for the truth dimension, its positive effects can be partially explained by viewers’ tendency to discount claims in the original ad that they would have interpreted as puffery. Surprisingly, the negative dimensions – mockery and offensiveness – had little effect. Offensiveness hurts the attitudes towards the ad parodies but not intent to share them with others, and mockery appears unrelated to the attitudes towards the parodies themselves and the intent to pass them along.

While not all viewers will interpret ad parodies the same way, and they will differ in their interpretations of mockery or offensiveness, marketers should note the potential for negative outcomes. However, at least in the study reported here, the outcomes did not include depressed brand attitudes. The results appear to be related to audiences’ perceptions of YouTube as a site where they go to be entertained and amused, not to
find product information (Rodgers et al. 2007). These results demonstrate that although advertisers should be aware of the increasing tendency for social media users to mock their ads through parody, they can take comfort in consumers’ ability to distinguish between brand messages and entertainment.

On the positive side for advertisers, although an ad parody does not appear to impact the brand, it can create a viral response that might help in spreading the original ad’s themes, imagery or catchphrases. The best scenario for an advertiser, then, is to attract or encourage user-generated parodies that pay homage to the original in the same way ad parodies of the Bud Light ‘Wassup?’ campaign did. In that case, the object of parody was the entertaining style and scenario of the campaign, not the product claims of the advertisement.

The rise of social media has created a new playing field for advertisers. Much of the media content that can potentially spread negative messages about the brands they create and manage now lies outside their control and in the hands of amateurs. Parodies appear to be a favourite form of user-generated content because the original idea is there for the taking. All the user has to do is find something in the original that can be altered or remixed for comedic effect. Product advertising is particularly vulnerable for several reasons: its claims are usually one-sided; it has a singular dominant message of selling a product or service; and the persuasive techniques it uses can often be hackneyed and clichéd. Parodists know this, and as we have seen for years in Mad magazine and on Saturday Night Live, they are waiting for the opportunity to pounce. In those earlier outlets, it was only media professionals who created and disseminated ad parodies. Today, with the rise of UGC and social media, consumers can easily join the fray. And they are legion.

Limitations and future research

Although this study makes a significant contribution to the advertising literature by studying the widely used but hitherto neglected genre of ad parodies, it is not without limitations. It used a convenience sample of college students at a large Midwestern university in the United States. While college students were deemed appropriate for this exploratory study, they are not fully representative of all users of video-sharing social media.
sites. According to a recent audience profile by Quantcast (2010), the use of YouTube is most prominent among 18–34 years olds. However, 18–34 years olds represent only 36% of those who visited YouTube in May 2010. Additionally, to create an inventory of words that describe ad parodies, this study used three ad parodies that have a high number of views on YouTube in Phase 1. It is possible that the use of other ad parodies might have generated a different set of words. Future research should, therefore, replicate this study using a variety of populations and a more comprehensive set of ad parodies.

Appendix 1: Short descriptions of ads used in Phase 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand/campaign</th>
<th>Original ad:</th>
<th>Ad parody:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snuggie</td>
<td>Demonstrates how the Snuggie, a blanket with sleeves, keeps you warm and lets you engage in different activities such as reading, talking on the phone, using the TV remote and eating snacks that would be more difficult with a regular blanket that could slip off.</td>
<td>Spoofs concept by calling Snuggie a robe you wear backwards. Makes fun of the activities you can do in a Snuggie that you also can do with a regular blanket such as holding a baby, using a laptop and watching the O’Reilly Factor on TV. Ridicules the people who use a Snuggie by calling them shut-ins and fools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacBook Air</td>
<td>Visually demonstrates that the MacBook Air is so thin you can put it inside a manila envelope.</td>
<td>Uses a voiceover with same video as the original to say that you cannot do many things you can do with ordinary laptops like play CDs and DVDs without an external disk drive. But you can impress friends at a party by challenging them to be able to put their laptops inside an envelope like you can with your $3000 MacBook Air.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove Evolution</td>
<td>Demonstrates how a fashion model’s face can be touched up using a computer to make her artificially beautiful. Shows final image on an outdoor board. Commercial ends with the line, ‘No wonder our perception of beauty is distorted.’ Spot is part of Dove’s self-esteem campaign for girls and women.</td>
<td>Uses same computer touch-up technique as used in original, but on a regular-looking guy to turn him into a fat slob after showing him overeating and drinking. Shows final image on an outdoor board. Commercial ends with the line, ‘Thank God our perception of real life is distorted.’ Claims the spot is part of ‘Lardos’ campaign against real life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 2: Short descriptions of ads used in Phase 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand/campaign</th>
<th>Descriptions of ads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Dove Real Beauty          | **Original ad:** A montage of young girls with the song ‘True Colors’ playing over the images. Superimposed on each girl’s image is a worry related to her beauty – freckles, being fat, wanting to be blonde and thinking she is ugly. Spot ends by reinforcing the idea that all girls are beautiful in their own way so they should feel good about themselves. Spot is part of Dove’s self-esteem campaign.  
**Ad parody:** Similar montage as the original with ‘True Colors’ playing over images of young girls with their worries superimposed in text over the images. Frames are inserted between images with Dove products pictured with the phrase, ‘Buy Me’ placed on the label under the Dove name. Two frames at the end contain text on a blank background that say, ‘Let’s Change Their Minds’ on the first slide and ‘Help Us Raise Money. Buy Our Products’ on the next slide. |
| iPhone                    | **Original ad:** Demonstrates how easy the iPhone is to use by just showing a hand navigating the touchscreen and accessing music, email, the web and receiving a phone call, supported by a voiceover that says, ‘this is your music, this is your email …’, etc.  
**Ad parody:** Uses a similar visual demonstration as in the original, showing how easy the iPhone is to navigate, supported by a voice over that says, ‘this is your email, this is your music …’, etc. Then at the end it shows an empty wallet with the voiceover, ‘this is your wallet’. |
| Progressive Insurance     | **Original ad:** Flo, a female salesperson for Progressive, and a customer discuss how easy it is to get discounts on Progressive car insurance. She asks him if he is safe driver, he says, ‘yes’, and she says, ‘discount’. This back and forth is done two more times for owning a home and buying online. He gets overenthusiastic with his responses and she says to him that he doesn’t get a discount for agreeing with her.  
**Ad parody:** Parody uses same footage and back-and-forth discussion as in original. After each time Flo asks the customer about his safe driving, owning a home and buying online, footage is inserted that shows a car being driven recklessly, a shack for a house and him using his laptop while driving a car. |
| Nike Basketball Freestyle | **Original ad:** Guys in a gym dribbling basketballs and freestyling by showing their tricks such as dribbling behind the back, through their legs, passing behind their backs, and so on. Commercial demonstrates the players’ basketball skills and competitiveness by trying to outdo each other.  
**Ad parody:** Uses same format as original but shows guys making mistakes such as getting hit on the head with the ball, losing their dribble, and doing stupid tricks like sitting on and bouncing on the ball as they try to outdo each other. People who are not basketball players like a biker and pregnant women appear in the spot. Includes visual jokes within the parody such as the pregnant women giving birth to a basketball and a guy slam-dunking a ball into a child’s little two-foot-high basketball hoop at the end. |
Appendix 3: Short descriptions of ads used in Phase 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand/campaign</th>
<th>Descriptions of ads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| MacBook Air    | *Original ad:* Visually demonstrates that the MacBook Air is so thin you can put it inside a manila envelope.  
*Ad parody:* Uses a voiceover with same video as the original to say that you cannot do many things you can do with ordinary laptops like play CDs and DVDs without an external disk drive. But you can impress friends at a party by challenging them to be able to put their laptops inside an envelope like you can do with your $3000 MacBook Air. |
| Taco Bell Drive-Thru Diet | *Original ad:* Female spokesperson tells how she lost weight by replacing her normal fast foods she eats with items from Taco Bell’s Drive-Thru Diet menu. The menu includes seven items each containing under nine grams of fat.  
*Ad parody:* Christine claims to have lost 792 pounds on the Taco Bell Bull___t diet by replacing the fast food she normally eats with items from Taco Bell’s Bull___t menu that includes seven items each containing under 900 grams of fat. |
| Google Search  | *Original ad:* Google demonstrates how to use its search box by showing how to search for things related to an unfolding romance between an American boy and a French girl. He searches for cafés, menus, chocolate truffles, jobs in Paris, churches and, at the end of the story, for instructions on how to assemble a crib.  
*Ad parody:* Uses same demonstration format as the original but in this scenario the guy gets the girl pregnant and runs away to Paraguay. The final line of the parody is: ‘Keep from making the same mistake twice.’ |
| Lexus IS       | *Original ad:* Commercial shows excitement of driving the Lexus IS 250 by showing a couple driving the car and screaming, but with no sound, as they enjoy the experience.  
*Ad parody:* Uses similar footage as the original but dubs in the sound of belching and burping when the driver is shown screaming. |

References


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