

# Observation Report 3:

## Professional Event

### Review/Reflections

**When:** Nov 7, 2024

**Where:** Virtual

**What:** Talk

**Organised by:** UXPA International

**Speaker:** Chenlu Wang

In this talk, product designer Chenlu Wang, with experience at Google Ads, YouTube, and TikTok, delved into the evolving landscape of creator-driven advertising, with a focus on digital platforms like YouTube. She began by discussing the history of advertising, emphasizing how it has transitioned from traditional print and billboard ads to the dynamic digital ads we see today—search ads, display ads, and, importantly, video and social ads. This evolution reflects a significant shift towards more targeted, data-driven advertising, which is more efficient in reaching specific demographics at ideal moments.

What struck me most was Wang's focus on creator-driven ads—those made by content creators for platforms like YouTube and TikTok. These ads often blend seamlessly with other digital content, feeling more authentic and less disruptive than the traditional ads we're used to. She shared some impressive data stating that creator ads drove social media investments to an all-time high, reaching a market value of \$24 billion in 2024. This is because these ads are more likely to capture attention since they look and feel like genuine content. For many people, seeing a trusted creator talk about a product feels more like advice from a friend than an advertisement.

This whole shift is deeply rooted in personalization. Wang mentioned how the internet and algorithms have transformed the advertising landscape. Advertisers can now tailor their messages to specific demographics, learning about our buying habits, preferences, and even the time of day we're most likely to shop. We're in an era where technology has amplified consumerism in ways that were unimaginable just a couple of decades ago. The algorithms that track our interactions feed us ads that seem to know exactly what we might be looking for—sometimes even before we do. This level of personalization is powerful, but it's also addictive, fueling a culture where the "buy now" button has become almost reflexive.

But maybe that's something we have to learn to guard against. After all, I'd like to believe we're shaping this world of digital consumerism as much as it shapes us. So, on that note, I'll admit I've already bought three things today from Instagram ads—fueled by holiday sales and the allure of "limited-time" offers. Algorithms: 3, Me: 0.