

A lesson in maximising Adsense returns from Peter Chec and Edwin van der Sar

As a neutral, I really enjoyed the Champions League final last night, and the nail biting penalty shootout. I was also struck by the differing strategies being applied by the two goalkeepers, Edwin van Der Sar and Peter Chec.

Van der Sar went for the camouflage approach to his kit - a shade of green similar to the hastily laid Russian turf. Chec however went for day glow orange, apparently scientifically proven to make him appear larger to an onrushing attacker.

It reminded me of an important principle when placing Adsense adverts. Blend, complement or contrast. By choosing the right colour palette for your adverts you can dramatically influence the number of people clicking on them, and therefore the money you make.

I run a site with a friend Federico as a nice back burner hobby, Italyum.com and the Adsense returns each year provide more than enough money for holidays for our respective families. So which strategy to apply?

Adsense really got my attention back in 2004 when from one site I started to make \$100 a day. The site was only 6 pages in size, and took no more than a couple of days to make but it was generating a nice return on my invested time.

My experiments continued, and on this site and others I discovered by tweaking the colour palette of the ad you could increase (or decrease!) revenue. This happens because you change the click through rate of the ads - more clicks, more cash from Google. There are other ways of increasing revenue but that is for another time.

There are three strategies:

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Blend - Let's call this the Van der Sar approach - your ads appear to be part of your site.

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Complementary - You ads stand out from the surrounding content, but in an eye pleasing fashion.

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Contrast - The Chec approach! Eye searing stand out ads to grab the attention.

So which strategy to choose? The absolutely true answer is - it is impossible to say! Every site is different, the surrounding content plays its part. However Google with their access to huge amounts of click through data suggest a basic approach thus:

Ads within content

Ads adjacent to content

Light background behind ads

Blend

Blend or complement

Dark background behind ads

Blend, complement or contrast

Contrast or complement

Extract from <https://www.google.com/adsense/support/bin/answer.py?answer=17957>

But it is so easy to test each approach and measure the results that you'd be crazy not to. Don't always go for one approach assuming it will be best. We have used blend on Italyum for a long time now, but have switched to complementary for a while, and results are encouraging.

Let me know how you get on, or contact me if you want to know more about maximising AdSense revenue.