



## Green, sex, cancer, secret, fat

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Dennis REDMONT Hello vacationers!

Did you read the headline above?

Congratulations. You have just been a victim of a "key word density test!"

Here you were curling up in a deck chair to dip in to a column that had all the juicy components of an enjoyable reading experience.

Well, the public relations industry gurus, mostly of the United States, have weighed in with a study about why you read what you read. And now you will know why your eye strayed when there was a new clean green trend, a sex scandal, a spectacular cancer recovery, a secret court investigation or a wiretap, and a fat person (or paycheck).

### **A scandal of all sorts: What has happened?**

The "hidden persuaders," the advertising clique uncovered by American sociologist Vance Packard in the 1950s, have been at work overtime competing for your eyeball. That's the name of the game.

Getting your attention away from your TV, from your DDs, from your iPods, from your work!

Your attention is required!

How do they do it?

Now we finally know.

They use this measurement called the "key word density tool."

The PR newswire, which carries commercial press releases and announcements from companies, offers its subscribers this measurement so it can grab your concentration.

"It lets you know the words someone would have to type into a search engine for your particular press release to be found and helps put your release at the top of the search engine," says David B.Armon, president of PR newswire.

"Green" and "environment" are huge right now, he told a reporter, as is "foreclosure." "We have done for 412 press releases that incorporate that word so far in 2008 up from 261 last year."

In the entertainment industry however, the most frequent nouns are baby, breakup, marriage, divorce.

All this strategy goes with another attention grabber, which is called "ambush marketing." It is another word

for stunts.

Watch for it at the current Olympics because it is happened before at Euro 2008.

Here is what transpired at the football tournament:

Dutch buyers of Heineken beer were given green hats to wear into the stadium. There was one problem: Heineken's rival Carlsberg was an official sponsor and had paid \$21 million for the privilege.

If TV had shown the Heineken hats, it would have ruined Calsberg. It still did because footage of the green hats being removed by guards as people entered the stadiums made it all over the TV news.

Another example of ambush marketing took place at Euro 2008 when Bavaria beer, a Dutch brand, offered fans orange plastic shorts. The officials at the stadium ordered them to remove them and many fans watched the match in their underwear, thus securing more publicity for Bavaria with further escalation of the brand war.

At the Olympics this month, 12 companies, including Coca Cola, Samsung and Visa, have paid \$866 million for official exclusive sponsorship. But ambush marketers are lurking in the darkness and so the Chinese are on the alert. Athletes are banned from taking their own drinks into the Olympic village and TV closeups are banned for food, drinks or clothing inside the stadium.

Why do these new fangled techniques like "key word density" and "ambush marketing" appear?

If you click to the Readers Institute of Northwestern University, you will find the answer.

People over 45 continue to read newspapers. Young adults between 18 and 24 do not.

Furthermore, you will spend 27 minutes on this newspaper and 57 minutes on Sunday.

But there is a mismatch because readers declare that they read 60 percent of a newspaper.

However, if an average person reads 230 words a minute, that would be 6,000 words, which would be only one or two newspaper pages.

So the public is lying!

That's why it needs to be ambushed to be attracted by key words.

So reporters have also been told by the venerable Times of London to use certain words in the first sentences of their news stories to attract attention. But there is also another goal there: These words suggested by the newspaper to appear in the lead of a story give it a priority on Internet search among other similar articles available on the Web.

Reporters now even get training courses on that subject, in order to push their articles higher up in the ranking in case of Internet searches.

Okay, so now it is your turn to apply your new tool!

Find out why you are being hoodwinked into reading the "summer articles," which you will continue to read in the winter.

**The color of Islam: Please read the newspaper now with new circumspection.**

How do you resist toxic word shock?

Take the words in the headline again and give them new meaning.

Green: How about the color of Islam?

Sex: No comment. It is in your fantasy.

Cancer: Yes, it is true there are new cures but skip over this one; eat healthy, exercise and remember many forms are becoming chronic rather than fatal.

Secret: Ok. Let your eye stray. I cannot prevent you from looking for revelations. Allow your imagination to run wild with conspiracy theories.

Fat: Too late. The U.S. presidential candidates are already deep into this one. Obama is already being seen as the thinnest presidential candidate since Abraham Lincoln and McCain is seen as too stocky.

So go on a diet and make it brief.

Remember you are on a summer vacation!

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