

NOVEL ADVERTISING PUSHING SELECTIVE BOUNDARIES



A short 40-second advertisement, that uses facial-recognition technology to choose the gender of the person looking at it, is being unveiled at London's West End on Wednesday. The advertisement has been commissioned by the Children's charity Plan UK. Such use of technology in interactive-advertising is being done for the first time in the United Kingdom. However, it is being initially launched at only one location and for a trial period of two weeks. Its future depends on how much interest it attracts and the success it enjoys. Clear Channel UK communications manager Guy Melzack has stated *"We are currently working on a campaign by campaign basis, but if the technology proves to be popular, more screens could be installed."* This remarkable innovation is the handiwork of Clear Channel UK and 3D Exposure and is estimated to have cost the makers \$60,000. They say that the advertisement will have a high-definition camera that will presume the passerby's gender, with 90 percent accuracy, based on the space between their eyes, the shape and width of their nose, length of the jaw line and their cheekbones. The advertisement will have a built in computer, touch screen and sound. If the machine thinks the viewer is a male, he will be directed to the Charity's campaign website. On the other hand, if the camera opines that the viewer is a female, she will get to see the full advertisement, which highlights the issue of girls in third-world countries, who face, poverty, prejudice and discrimination that prevents them from leading fruitful lives of their choice. Why would an advertiser want to limit his message to a select few? It breaks the basic rules of advertising that would normally prefer as wide an audience as possible. Charity Plan UK, Chief Executive Marie Stanton, clarified that their selective viewing policy was not discriminatory, but was part of its "Because I am a Girl" campaign, whose mission was to ensure that girl's in the poor sections of the world are not discriminated against and are able to receive a good education. She added *"We're not giving men and boys the choice to see the full ad on this occasion – so they get a glimpse of what it's like to have basic choices taken away. We hope to raise £250,000 over four months to provide access to education for girls from poor families."*

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