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## 2008 Online Predictions Galore: Take your pick.

By Karlene Lukovitz - Mediapost publications

**YES, IT'S THAT TIME OF** year, when visions of the New Year begin to dance in the heads of industry prognosticators and pundits. For your convenience and mulling pleasure, OMD has consolidated a host of online-relevant predictions from far and wide: • Mark Zagorski, chief marketing officer, MediaSpan Group, Inc.:

**Prediction #1:** The consolidation trend in online advertising will continue, particularly in the vertical network segment, where niche publishers will be snapped up by larger brands

looking to strengthen their footholds and expand sellable inventory. The 70/10 rule (70% of online dollars are concentrated among the top 10 properties) will become the 80/8 rule.

**Prediction #2:** A user-generated news portal will launch and become the most highly trafficked news Web site in the world. Google will purchase it and finally do what they said they wanted no part of-- becoming a content producer. But they will do so without hiring a single writer.

• Robert Kadar, president, Good Health Advertising Inc.:

**Prediction #1:** Growth in online media spending will outpace that of any other measured media.

**Prediction #2:** Pharma marketers will begin to develop best practices for participating in online social media.

- Mitch Lowe, CEO, Jumpstart Automotive Media:

**Prediction #1:** 2008 will be the year that targeting by audience, rather than context, will become the norm.

**Prediction #2:** The auto industry will spend at least 8% of its advertising budget--more than \$3 billion in total--on digital advertising.

- Dana Ghavami, CEO, CheckM8Inc.:

**Prediction #1:** As 2007 was the year that validated the online medium as a crucial part of the advertising mix, 2008 will be a defining year for how online ad inventory will be brokered. The major media portals and networks will attempt to become clearinghouses of online advertising, while media sellers and buyers will be jiving with marketplace exchanges for direct ad placements. All in all, ad dollars will find the best ways to reach content-specific sites, rather than increased spending in broader strokes.

**Prediction #2:** As 2007 was the year that blurred all the lines between media and technology companies, with the acquisition of all major ad-serving providers, the reshaped ad technology landscape will take a new form in 2008. The vacuum created by substantial conflicts of interest and sensitivity of data in ulterior, interest-owned hands will give rise to new, independent leaders to service the major media brands.

- Thomas Ordahl, partner, and other executives from Group 1066, LLC:

**Prediction #1:** Google stirs up telecom. Google has been rattling its saber about the January spectrum auction, to the tune of at least \$4.6 billion. Google's intention to provide open access to the data network could mean a new kind of broadband access that would be significantly cheaper for customers than the telcos' current, closed offerings. Whatever the auction's outcome, Google's participation will shake up what has become a very staid game.

**Prediction #2:** Open-sourcing will be the strategy of the year on the campaign trail. The 2008 primary season has already seen the emergence of the open-source campaign. The rabid supporters of Ron Paul raised over \$4 million in one day, independent of the Congressman's campaign. YouTube and other social networking sites are overflowing with supporter-created content intended to sway opinion. One supporter even took out a full-page ad in USA Today for his preferred candidate. Smart businesses will be watching, and have some great best practices from which to draw in opening up control of their brands.

**Prediction #3:** "Crowd" will be the word of the year. Businesspeople love buzzwords, and none will be buzzing more than terms paired with "crowd." They'll replace 2007's mashup as the most overused, over-hyped phrases. Get ready for crowdsourcing, crowdstorming, crowdbursting and who knows what else.