Have I Got News For You

Name one thing is everywhere. It's in your home, your street, your town, your car, your 'everywhere'. No, it's not oxygen although sometimes it feels that we take in about as much of it. Advertising. That's what is everywhere, or at least it seems like it. No, I will stick to my guns here, it IS everywhere. Not only that but it seems to be taking up more and more of our time, space, energy (trying to avoid it) and of course money.

Turn on the television and I will bet that over the course of the day you will spend more time watching adverts than you do anything else. You do the math!  Where there used to be just 3 or 4 adverts between programmes there are now sometimes as many as 10 or 12, not to mention those in the breaks during programmes. Turn on your radio, car or phone, and you will see the same trend, three or 4 times the number of adverts between videos, music or whatever other programmes you watch or listen to.  It's been said (not sure by who but there was probably an advert for it) that we spend a third of our lives sleeping. Sorry to you insomnia suffers, but apparently most of us do. Pity that another third of it is watching, listening to, or being bombarded by, adverts.

Not only do we have more adverting on our TVs, radio, shops and other places where we are known to hang out, but social media, mobiles, emails, Internet surfing, means that we have no hiding place. Pop into you favourite shop, pub, supermarket, shopping precinct, hotel retreat, even hairdresser, and in the time it takes you get to your room, escape to your car, bus or train, or even away to some quieter street on your walk home, you will hear that familiar 'ding' on your mobile that means your presence was noted.  From thereon you will receive offers for everything you can think of, even from places you didn't visit that day but perhaps just passed by.

Believe me, I have tried to avoid them. Fast-forwarding the TV to avoid watching them, downloading programmes because there are usually none during downloads, deleting unsolicited offers and adverts and surveys on my mobile, no matter what they are offering. Those on your mobile are automated so they just keep coming back.

I have come to the conclusion that the only way to escape them is to break out of the digital world, switch off everything that connects to anything, stay out of the car, don’t go near anything that looks remotely like a shop or appears to sell anything, though that may be difficult as we all need to eat and drink.  The truth is we are doomed to remain a captive audience. Unless, of course, they are plans to colonise Mars or some other world out there.

Mind you, there would be an advert for that wouldn’t there?

 Tom Kelly

19 November 2017