

## SCIMARK REPORT

BY JORDAN PINE

## EBOLA 911

**Description:** A book about the Ebola virus

**Main Pitch:** "Information . . . to protect you and your family from the Ebola virus"

**Main Offer:** \$14.99

**Bonus:** None

**Marketer:** TELEBrands

**Website:** [www.Ebola911Now.com](http://www.Ebola911Now.com)

**Rating:** 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

Prevention doesn't sell. Fear is not an emotion that typically puts people in a buying mood. And yet we have this book, an attempt to capitalize on the fear and prevention hysteria being created by media hype over Ebola. Interestingly,



timing products to news events can pay off in DR. Several marketers capitalized on the election of President Obama in 2008, including TELEBrands with its **Obama Victory Plate**. TELEBrands also got the jump when Prince William proposed to Kate Middleton, and its **Royal Heirloom Ring** became a 2011 **True Top Spender** as a result. However, trying to capitalize on an epidemic scare instead of a celebratory event with a book instead of a collectible does not seem like a winning strategy. TELEBrands has certainly had success with books (**Who Knew?; Pest Cures;**

**Dump Cakes**) but all are reference books with a logical, long-term place on the shelf. If the Ebola panic is anything like the bird flu, West Nile virus or swine flu panics, the hype could be over before enough product ships to make the campaign profitable.

## WONDER WHALE

**Description:** A faucet cover

**Main Pitch:** "Turns bath time into bump-free, tear-free fun time"

**Main Offer:** \$10 for one

**Bonus:** Second one (just pay P&H)

**Marketer:** Allstar Products Group

**Website:** [www.GetWonderWhale.com](http://www.GetWonderWhale.com)

**Rating:** 3 out of 5 ★★★☆☆

When it comes to evaluating DRTV products for adults, I have several tried-and-true criteria (e.g., the SciMark Seven), an archive of DR history (my blog) and some new research methodologies (such as the surveys featured last month) to help me form smart opinions. When it comes to DR products for kids, none of those things is particularly useful. The key criteria — coolness, play value and "pester power" — are subjective. My blog features mostly unanticipated hits, such as **Pillow Pets** and **Gyro Bowl**. And you can't survey kids online. That leaves me with only one old-school method for forming an opinion: Asking a producer. Or, in this case, asking *this producer* (Hutton-Miller). To understand why, go online and watch the Wonder Whale commercial. Others produce commercials for kids, but none do it with such consistent perfection.



## KITTY CATCH MAT

**Description:** A mess mat for cats

**Main Pitch:** "Actually wipes your cat's paws clean as they leave their litter box"

**Main Offer:** \$14.99 for one

**Bonus:** Second one (just pay P&H) and Kitty Mitt

**Marketer:** Ontel Products

**Website:** [www.KittyCatchMat.com](http://www.KittyCatchMat.com)

**Rating:** 2 out of 5 ★★☆☆☆

The best pet products solve a problem for both the owner and pet. For instance, Allstar's 2010 hit **Emery Cat** saved owners' drapes while giving cats a place to express their scratching instincts — and saved both from a painful claw-clipping session. The more recent success of Allstar/Lenfest's **Cat's Meow** is more difficult to explain, but providing a cat with a way to express its predator instinct without the presentation of actual dead vermin (something for which cats are notorious) seems like a win-win. In this case, the product only solves a problem for the owner — preventing cat-litter mess. My guess is that shedding fur is an even bigger problem for pet owners, and yet that hasn't propelled any of the many fur-cleaning gadgets that have been tried to success. On a separate note, this item reminds me of a doormat duel I wrote about in the April 2011 edition of *Response*. Ontel's version was called the **Clean Step Mat**. The item never lived up to its potential, but perhaps it inspired this idea.



## WHAT MAKES UP THE SCIMARK SEVEN?

The **PRODUCT** should be: (1) needed; (2) targeted; and (3) different.

The **CATEGORY** should be: (4) un-crowded.

The **COMMERCIAL** should be: (5) engaging; (6) motivating; and (7) clear.

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