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Brand Safety: What Do Consumers Consider to Be Inappropriate Content?
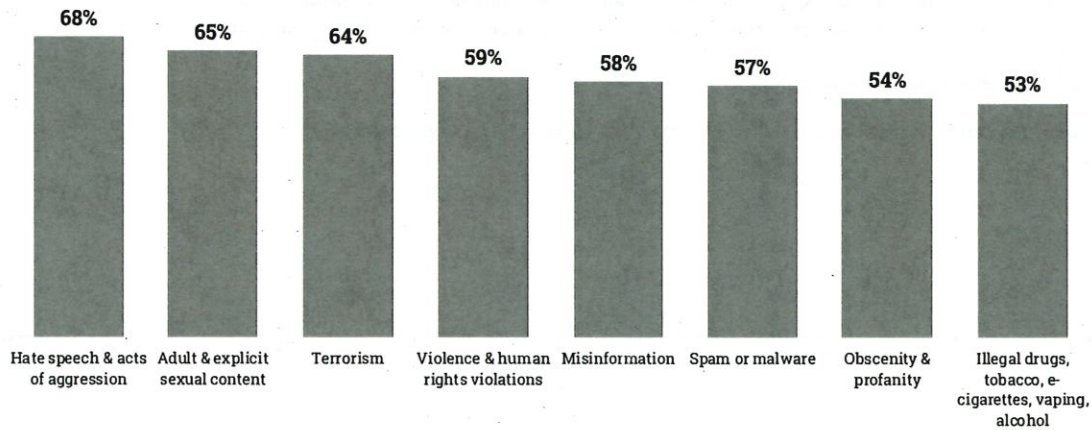
February 12, 2024

This article is included in these additional categories:

Advertising Trends | Creative & Formats | Digital | Social Media

Brand Safety: Content Types Deemed Inappropriate

marketing charts

"What type of content would you describe as inappropriate for a brand to advertise next to?"

Hate speech & acts of aggression	Adult & explicit sexual content	Terrorism	Violence & human rights violations	Misinformation	Spam or malware	Obscenity & profanity	Illegal drugs, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping, alcohol
68%	65%	64%	59%	58%	57%	54%	53%

Published on MarketingCharts.com in January 2024 | Data Source: Integral Ad Science

Based on a Q3 2023 survey of 1,095 US consumers

Almost 7 in 10 consumers believe the amount of inappropriate content online has grown over the past year, according to research [download page] from Integral Ad Science. This presents challenges for brands, as 82% of consumers also feel that it's important that the content surrounding online ads is appropriate.

With regards to the websites on which it's most important to see safe and appropriate content, two types stood out: news sites and social media. The latter is considered by digital media experts to be the most vulnerable to brand risk, particularly in a year when almost 6 in 10 media experts feel that the presidential election will create additional advertising challenges surrounding misinformation and fake news. Separate research has likewise found advertisers saying that paid social carries the most brand safety risk. This explains in part why marketers have soured on X/Twitter, as brand safety concerns are paramount there.

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This latest research puts the onus on brands for making sure their ads are in brand-safe environments: 72% of consumers agree that brands are responsible for the content surrounding their ads. This brings to mind other recent research in which 61% of consumers agreed with the statement: "I believe an advertiser approves of the content their ads appear next to."

So what types of content do consumers believe to be inappropriate for brands to advertise next to? While a majority feel that each of the types listed is inappropriate, some seem to elicit more agreement than others. At the top of the list is hate speech and acts of aggression, for which more than two-thirds (68%) feel it inappropriate for brands to advertise next to. Close behind, close to two-thirds cite adult and explicit sexual content (65%) and terrorism (64%) as being inappropriate types of content.

Somewhat surprisingly, only 57% feel that it's inappropriate to advertise next to spam or malware content, while the fewest concur with respect to obscenity and profanity (54%) and illegal drugs, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping, and alcohol content (53%).

And while a relatively small majority (58%) believe that it's inappropriate for brands to advertise next to misinformation, three-quarters (75%) feel less favorable to brands that advertise on sites that spread misinformation.

In other highlights from the report:

- 71% of consumers would feel less favorable to a brand that advertises near inappropriate content.
- The majority (56%) are unlikely to engage with an ad appearing near inappropriate content.
- More than 7 in 10 (71%) say that the content surrounding a brand's ad is a reflection of its values.

For more, download the report here.

About the Data: The results are based on a Q3 2023 survey of 1,095 US consumers.

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