

BRAND SAFETY IN 2021

Trends & Challenges

MARCH, 2021

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BRAND SAFETY/SUITABILITY VS CONTEXTUAL TARGETING

While contextual brand safety/suitability and contextual targeting are **two different areas**, whereas the first one focuses **on monitoring, reporting and blocking unacceptable or unsuitable content**, and the latter one on **targeting contextually relevant or positive content**, vendors often offer both.

Mixing suitability and contextual relevance is reasonable.

Example: while a web page can be contextually relevant (travel) it can equally be unsuitable as it could contain a lot of nudity.



Brand Safety vs Suitability vs Contextual

- The Global Alliance for Responsible Media (GARM) maps content environments based on editorial approach to sensitive topics and contextual relevance

BRAND SAFETY FLOOR [NEVER SUITABLE]	HIGH RISK SUITABLE	MEDIUM RISK SUITABLE	LOW RISK SUITABLE	CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT
Graphic, excessive use or promotion and advocacy of “evil eleven content”	Glamorization/ gratuitous depiction of “evil eleven” content	Dramatic depiction and topical news coverage of “evil eleven” content	Educational, informative, scientific or documentary treatment of “evil eleven” content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endemic Target Relevant Related Interests Local Interest Professional Interest

GARM – [Global Alliance for Responsible Media](#) 11 ‘evil’ categories

Every single vendor has their own categories but working to align with GARM

IAB Tier 1 and Tier 2 Content Categories (e.g. News, Sports ...)

It will all be united through IAB Tier 1 and 2 V 2.2 Taxonomy

Examples of different risk levels

Psychology Today Find a Therapist Get Help Magazine Today US

Find a Therapist (City or Zip) Verified by Psychology Today

Conditions > Sexuality > Sexual Desire Disorder

ADULT: Low Risk

Diagnosis Dictionary



- Abuse/Neglect
- Addictions/Substance Abuse
- Aging
- Anxiety/Phobia
- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity

Sexual Desire Disorder

Sexual desire disorder is a psychiatric condition marked by a lack of desire for sexual activity over a prolonged period. In the DSM-5, Sexual Desire Disorder has been broken down into two separate conditions: Female Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder and Male Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder. Both of these refer to a low level of sexual interest resulting in a failure to initiate or respond to sexual intimacy. This can include an absence of sexual thoughts or fantasies, reduced or absent pleasure during sexual activity, and absent or reduced interest in internal or external erotic cues. Neither of these conditions can be diagnosed if the main problem is a "desire discrepancy" in which one partner desires more sexual activity than the other; rather, the conditions are diagnosed when symptoms have been present for a minimum of six months and cause clinically significant distress for the individual.

Female Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder and Male Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder can both be diagnosed as generalized, meaning they may be a

abc NEWS VIDEO LIVE SHOWS 2020 ELECTIONS CORONAVIRUS

DRUG ABUSE: Medium Risk

US overdose deaths appear to rise amid coronavirus pandemic

Available information suggests U.S. drug overdose deaths are on track to reach an all-time high this year

By MIKE STORBE and ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press
October 20, 2020, 12:31 PM • 6 min read



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ALCOHOL: High Risk

smartasset Take Retirement Quiz

UPVOTED

37 Drunken Degenerates Share Their Craziest Black-Out Stories

You could say the night got away from them.

Posted by mattstaff

Share Tweet Stumble Pin It

1

Sophomore in high school. Virgin. Woke up in a random bed in a random house with 4

pure Farmstead LOOKING TO GROW YOUR MEAL OPTIONS? LEARN MORE

VERIFICATION SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

1

IN-APP

MOST OF TECH
RELIES ON IN-
STORE DESCRIPTION

2

VIDEO

RECOGNISING
MOVING IMAGE,
STITCHING AUDIO IN
CAN BE
CHALLENGING
BEYOND VIDEO
META-DATA

3

POSITIVE VS NEGATIVE SENTIMENT

HUMANS HAVE
MILLION WAYS OF
BEING MEAN AND
NEGATIVE, CAN
TECH RECOGNISE
EVERY SINGLE
INSTANCE?

4

NEW CHANNELS

CTV, GAMING, AUDIO
ALL BRING NEW
CHALLENGES –
FRAGMENTATION,
LACK OF STANDARDS

WHY IS 3RD IN THE '3RD PARTY' IMPORTANT?



INDEPENDENT: not relying on 1st or 2nd party data

ACCOUNTABLE: Keeping publishers and tech partners honest

TRADING: Independent measurement helps trading reconciliation

QUALITY MEASURE: fraud, viewability, cont. brand safety and in-demo – all make a quality impression.

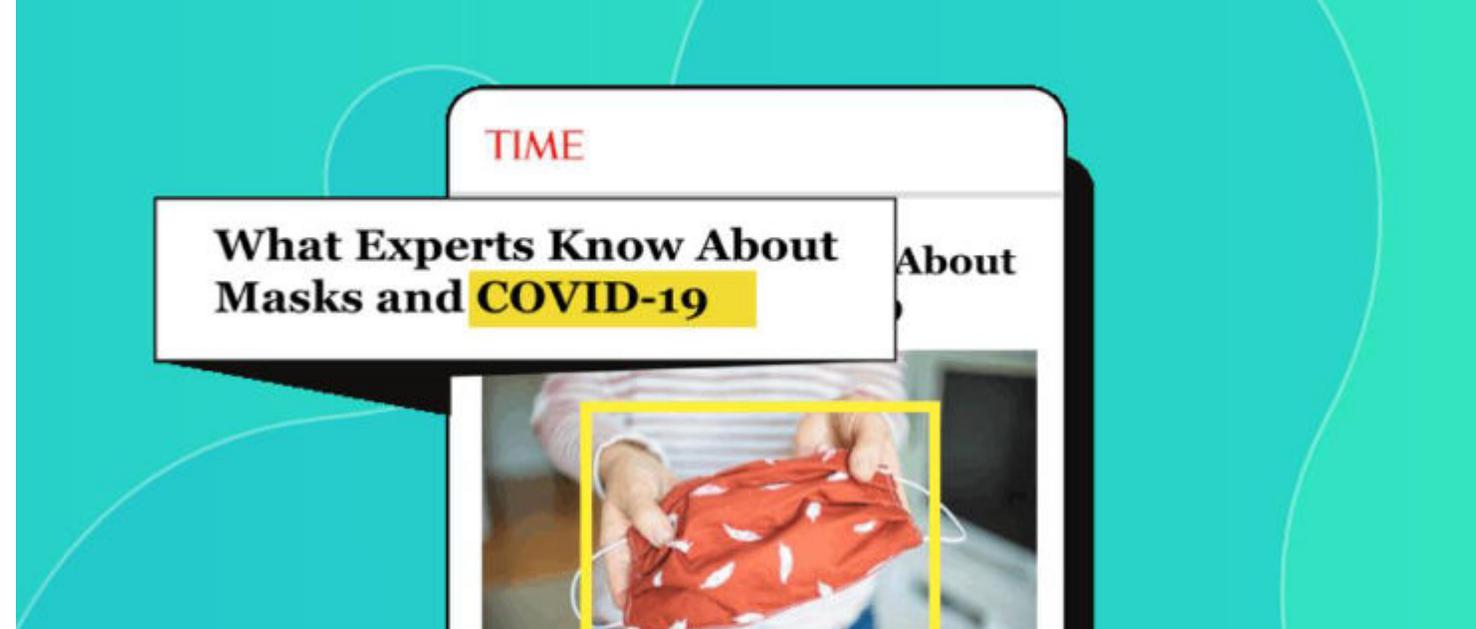
**If figures are not independently validated, what are you optimizing against?
Ultimately, verification is about **client value**.**

WHY WE NEED TO GET IT RIGHT?

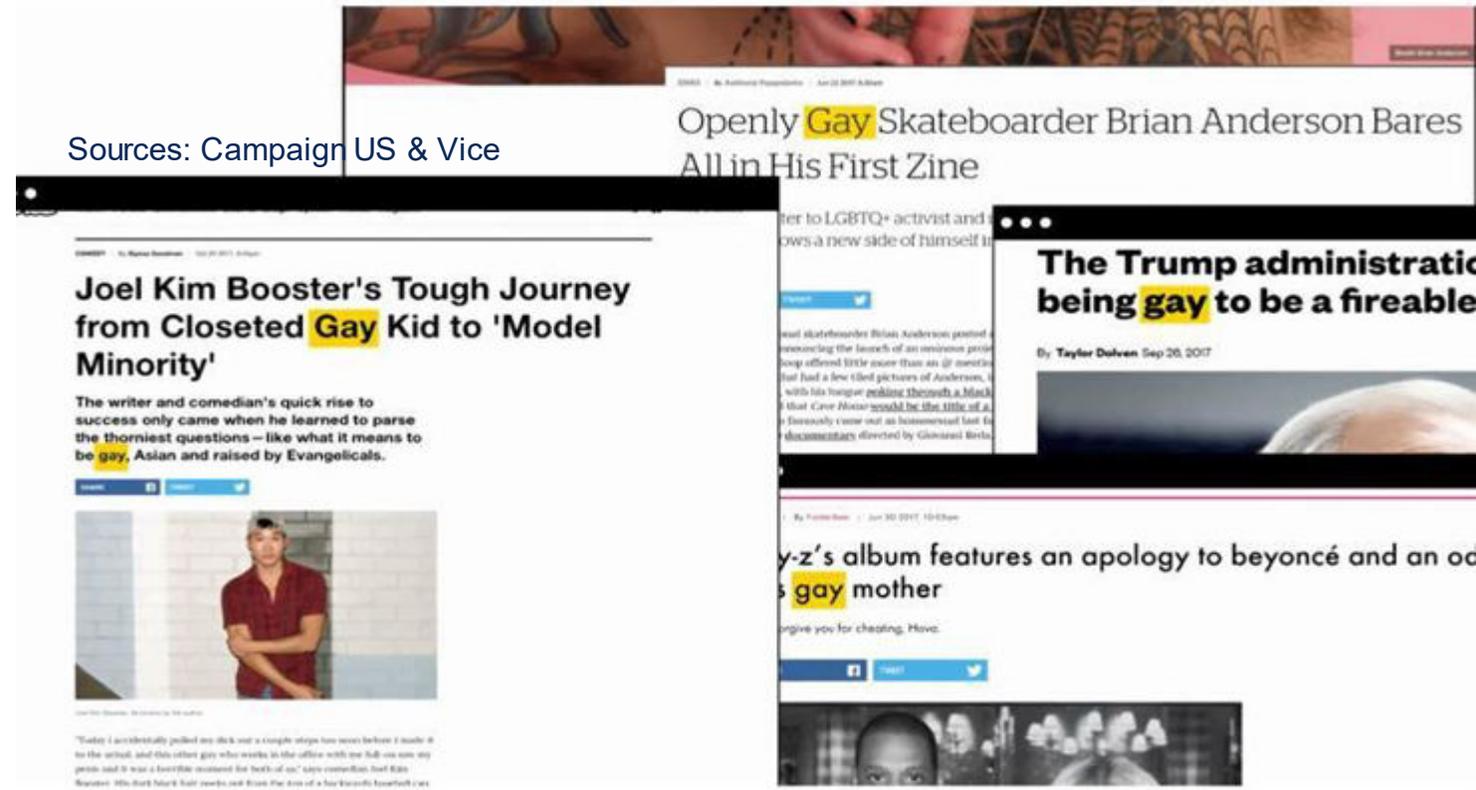
Because it can hurt performance, reputation and scale

It is possible to over-do brand safety by:

- Not understanding clients' risk profile
- Using inappropriate and generic keywords
- Overlaying too many brand safety settings and options
- Not understanding what we are buying



Sources: Campaign US & Vice

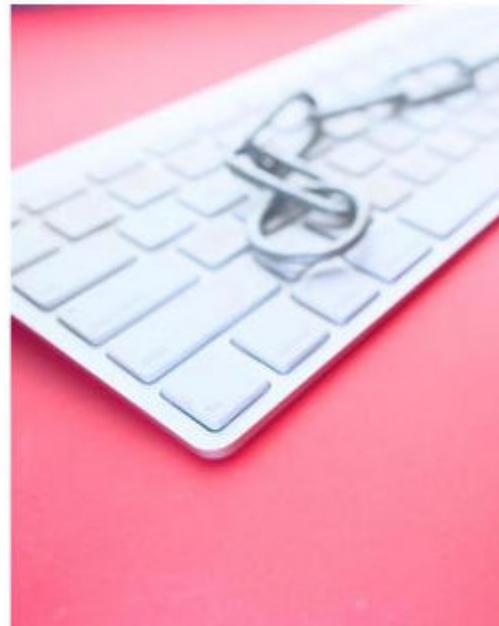


Are we checking our bias?

Majority of positive LGBT content is flagged 'brand unsafe'

MarketingDive, 2020

Advertisers are often stopped from buying ads on safe websites due to inaccurate keyword blocking.



Campaign US, September 2019

BRIEF

Brands blocking ads on Black Lives Matter-related keywords draws criticism



The image by Eden, Janine and Jim (2020) is licensed under CC BY 2.0

AUTHOR

Dianna Christie

Dive Brief:

- Vice Media Group is calling on brands and agencies to make a change in their brand safety practices and to step up and support stories that cover

KEYWORD BLOCKING

We recommend the usage of **content/semantic targeting/avoidance segments** instead of using keyword blocking (be it via a DSP or 3rd party tech).

However, we recognise that some clients require an extra layer of protection on top of the pre-bid avoidance or targeting segments

If this is the case, we must ensure that the keyword list best practice is followed.



KEYWORD BLOCKING BEST PRACTICE

1. NO GENERAL KEYWORD LIST
2. Starting with a **concise set of keywords deemed unsuitable** by the brand
3. Starting with **the worst of the worst (swearwords and/or slur)**
4. If used, better block **keyword combinations** which are likely to result in blocking negative content and not the positive one as well.
5. Ensure that your keywords **do not block diversity publication and are not discriminatory**: (DO NOT block terms such as Bible, Quran, Islam, Bi, Lesbian, LGBTQ, Christian etc.)
6. Reviewing whether these keywords are appropriate to the level of brand safety in place and address only the types of content to be avoided
7. Customising for brand specific requirements, for example to address known negative PR topics
8. Asking “**would blocking this keyword prevent my ad from also appearing alongside any safe content?**” and adjusting appropriately
9. **Not using a one-size-fits-all** and all-risk encompassing list
10. Not adopting a past list
11. Setting a regular review cadence and ensuring clear ownership of changes
12. If used to address a public crisis or negative PR issue, ensure these specific terms are part of the review cadence
13. Understand the trade-offs across scale, reach, cost and quality of using excessive lists and the risk of blocking safe content



INVEST IN QUALITY



HOW TO MANAGE IN-APP RISK?

Viewability

Measurement of in-app viewability requires an integration of vendor's Software Development Kit with the app. If they are all to integrate their SDKs with every app, that would overload the apps. [IAB TechLab](#) developed an Open Measurement SDK open for integration with every app. This facilitates measurement of viewability in-app.

Recommendation:

- Prioritise apps with OMSDK integration
- Deploy 3rd party verification - MRC certified for in-app video and display viewability

Invalid Traffic (IVT)

Invalid traffic in-app is a traditional pain point. In-app fraud comes in a lot of forms.

Recommendation:

- Buy on an inclusion list of vetted apps
- Buy apps-ads.txt inventory
- Use TAG-certified supply chain
- Deploy 3rd party verification partner – MRC certified for in-app fraud filtration
- Preferably activate pre-bid targeting
- If using managed service – ensure GroupM Terms and Conditions are in place
- Regularly evaluate delivery reports and optimise

Brand safety/suitability

Brand safety/suitability of apps depends on the content of the app (content vertical) and the actual content (user-generated content such as gaming, or professionally produced aka news).

In-app brand safety measurement usually relies on App Store descriptions and rating. Very few vendors go beyond this very basic methodology.

Recommendation:

- Buy on an inclusion list of vetted apps
- Deploy 3rd party verification partner for pre-bid
- If using managed service – ensure GroupM Terms and Conditions are in place
- Regularly evaluate delivery reports and optimise

Precise geolocation

Apps are installed on mobile phones and tablets which allow app-owners to infer very precise geolocation of users. Buyers are then offered a possibility to target users by their precise geo-location (e.g. corner of the 5th and the 4th Street etc.)

This carries ethical and legal risk.

Recommendation:

- Confirm all location data partner selections are vetted by GroupM and approved by the GroupM Data Partnerships team.
- Consider adding a location verification service on all campaigns targeting location, especially with limited geo-fenced target areas.
- Ensure a high measure of due diligence with local privacy regulations.

HOW TO MANAGE CTV RISK?

Viewability

Since CTV is essentially an in-app environment, JavaScript is largely not present. Therefore, viewability measurement may rely on software development kit (SDK) integrations. We encourage rapid development of IAB Tech Lab's open measurement SDK (OMSDK) for CTV to improve universal viewability measurement coverage in CTV.

Recommendation:

- Prioritise apps with OMSDK integration

Invalid Traffic (IVT)

Higher CPMs, a fragmented ecosystem, new technologies, and a lack of widely adopted industry standards, have resulted in an OTT/CTV landscape vulnerable to fraud.

Recommendation:

- Buy on an inclusion list of vetted apps
- Buy apps-ads.txt inventory
- Deploy 3rd party verification partner – MRC certified for app and OTT SIVT If using managed service – ensure GroupM Terms and Conditions are in place
- Regularly evaluate delivery reports and optimise

Brand safety/suitability

Contextual brand safety issues arise in CTV based on contractual non-transparency and misalignment of expectations versus reality. To protect their primary direct-sales channels, many CTV publishers prohibit resellers from reporting on app-level placements for a given campaign.

Recommendation:

- Buy on an inclusion list of vetted apps
- Require full app-level transparency
- Regularly evaluate delivery reports and optimise

CTV can be bought in many ways which will determine risk levels. For more information on different supply paths and associated risk, refer to [4As CTV Brand Safety Guide](#).

2020/1 BRAND SAFETY

Social Responsibility

- Disinformation (elections, vaccination, COVID), Black Lives Matter and other societal issues have raised the bar for advertisers – put your money where your values are
- Brand purpose aligned with media investment
- Diversity & inclusion: removing bias from keyword blocking/content avoidance & consciously funding diversity publications
- Supporting quality journalism

Social Platforms

- Increased scrutiny over policy definitions & policy enforcement
- GARM Brand Safety & Suitability Framework
- Social platforms adopting more 1st party controls, 3rd party verification & controls

New Channels/Platforms

- Audio, CTV and Gaming are complex & bring their own challenges (lack of standardisation and measurement)
- TikTok, ClubHouse have stormed the world

Risk & industry cooperation

- Risk is relative to a brand, risk assessment is crucial
- GARM, TAG, CAN, IAB Gold Standard and other organisations focused on improving things

MAIN TRENDS

1

QUALITY FIRST

In social, programmatic display/video or CTV, quality is the best measure of brand safety.

2

ETHICS

Moving from brand safety to societal safety & responsibility.

3

BRAND PURPOSE

Media investment is a reflection

4

BACK TO BASICS

Of media vetting

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS?

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