MMA

BRAND SAFETY REIMAGINED

A TOOLKIT FOR THE MODERN MARKETER

AN MMA INDIA BRAND SAFETY & SUITABILITY COUNCIL INITIATIVE 2022

CONTENTS

Industry perspectives on brand safety

Foreword

Lou Paskalis

President & Chief Operating Officer, MMA Global

Although the underlying issues of brand safety can be traced to the very origins of advertising itself, the concept of brand safety is less than a decade old. In the early days, these issues would manifest themselves in television where the question of the day was whether a particular episode of a program was "suitable" for family viewing.

I will admit that, at the dawn of my career, I enjoyed previewing episodes of television programs (on VHS tapes!) before they aired to make certain that they were "appropriate" for the products I intended to advertise during their broadcast. Fast forward thirty years and we can all agree that there has been no time in the history of our industry where the scope of what we now collectively refer to as brand safety has been remotely as complex, the issues have been more nuanced or the implications to marketers been more dire when they get it wrong.

You all know the drivers of this, a culture that is increasingly easily triggered, the ubiquity and immediacy of social media that gives every individual both a microphone and an amplifier, the increasing expectation, dare I say demand, that companies comport with an ever more complex menu of personal values and a growing number of agenda laden and politically motivated individuals who seek to divide populations for their own political gain.

Let's face it, advertising has become a bit of a minefield when it comes to issues of brand safety and suitability. We've come a long way from bot fraud and appropriate adjacencies, even though they are very much still a part of the brand safety portfolio.

And that's why I am pleased to introduce to you **Brand Safety Reimagined: A toolkit for the modern marketer.** This work is incredibly timely, thorough and relevant. It is designed to help you frame your individual approach to brand safety, because there simply is no one answer, the conversations and infrastructure required to build a brand safety capability in your company and how to goal and measure progress on your journey to not only protect your brand, but also your customers and your media investments. The goal cannot be to "solve" brand safety, because the work is never ending, it's really about solving for your readiness to address brand safety issues, both proactively, and, when necessary, reactively.

We are incredibly lucky to have benefited from the investment of time and money from so many partners along this journey. I would be remiss in not thanking the entire **MMA India Brand Safety & Suitability Council**. It's their thinking, advocacy and experience which has helped to ensure that the way forward that we outline in the following over a dozen chapters is as principled as it is pragmatic.

As you embark on your journey to build a brand safety and suitability capability in your organization, my advice is to start small, over rotate on transparency within your organization, particularly on the "why", and publish your goals widely and share your progress against them often, probably quarterly. In my own experience building a brand safety capability from scratch during my tenure at Bank of America, I can tell you that starting from scratch can be daunting. If I had had this guide in 2015 when we began our brand safety journey, it would have saved me at least two years in building out our capability and, as such, I know you will find tremendous value in these pages in the pursuit of establishing your own solution to mitigating risk and preparing for inevitable incidents in the brand safety arena.

Good luck!

Executive Summary

Moneka Khurana

Country Head & Board Member, India, MMA India

Brand Safety keeps getting bigger, and a constant journey towards betterment, keeping your strategies and outlook in mind. It becomes crucial to define your brand safety, prioritize transparency, choose a reputable programme provider, use insights to monitor campaigns in real-time, and assess negative targets and data. Brand Safety is of superlative importance given the spike in digital consumption and subsequent advertising on digital touchpoints.

In today's era, it is something that could not have a 'set and forget' mode; rather it needs ultra-careful diligence and vigilance especially with emerging challenges in new media environments.

MMA as a neutral trade body has taken the ownership of enabling the industry with the space and experts' point of views (POVs) to enable and empower brand safety strategy. MMA is perhaps the only trade body in India which has initiated heightened measures to create awareness around brand safety- a topic which is gaining momentum now.

The MMA Brand Safety & Suitability council has played a phenomenal role in demystifying what is brand safety and why it is important to India in the current times. Their expertise has helped MMA India to come up with this report which would serve as an educational tool for senior marketers and digital custodians to help marketers design a brand safety blueprint.

Notably, Brand safety reimagined: A toolkit for the modern marketer is an extension to MMA Global's Brand Safety and Suitability Strategy Guide which provides critical guidance to marketers on how to navigate band safety.

The report is a first-of-its-kind toolkit for marketers to steer brand safety, from understanding the issue to responding to critical incidents. It will also help in answering key questions such as who is responsible for brand safety and developing a culture of brand safety to manage external and unpredictable threats to your brand.

The report will help you to:

- Identify key stakeholders to manage brand safety in one's organisation and assigning clear roles and responsibilities

- Understand myths around ad fraud and digital campaigns and what the reality is

- Understand how brand safety be applied through a spectrum of solutions

- Learn how brands can avoid misinformation

- Understand industry perspectives on the future of brand safety

The report was prepared by marketers, for marketers with the strong objective of offering the best guidance and promulgating best practices for brand safety

Last but not the least, the MMA is the only marketing trade association that brings together the full ecosystem of marketers, tech providers, and sellers to architect the future of marketing, while relentlessly delivering growth today.

Led by CMOs, the MMA has always helped marketers lead the imperative for marketing change and we hope this Brand safety reimagined: A toolkit for the modern marketer will enable marketers with a brand safety blueprint for years to come. We are sure you will find it insightful.

To bring the effort to life, MMA has created another industry first initiative powered by MFilterit: a self-evaluation tool that delivers a risk rating for both Brand Safety & AdFraud.

Access Marketer Digital Advertising Safety & Integrity Tool: An MMA initiative powered by mFilterit here: https://questionaire.mfilterit.com/AdSafetyAndIntegrityTool

WHAT IS BRAND SAFETY AND WHY DOES IT MATTER TO INDIA?

NACHIKET DEOLE
HEAD OF SALES, INDIA, DOUBLE VERIFY

Average smartphone user in India spent 102 minutes consuming mobile media and 79 minutes consuming desktop media, according to research by Deloitte, in 2015. By 2020, the average media consumer in India was spending 108 minutes on YouTube alone. Since then, time spent online has only continued to increase, globally.

Advertisers understand that to connect with their audiences, they need a digital strategy. In India, digital ad spend will increase by 24% this year, according to **eMarketer** estimates, and brands are now investing roughly **one-third** of their total media ad budgets on digital buys.

Quality inventory – meaning an ad has the opportunity to be seen, in a brand suitable environment, by a real person, in the intended geography – is the foundation of digital media success.

A working definition of brand safety/ brand suitability

For the purposes of this guide, brand safety describes the controls that digital advertisers employ to protect a brand's ads from appearing alongside content that is generally inappropriate for any advertiser such as pornography, terrorism, hate speech and other potentially harmful content that most brands would want to avoid. In short, this is content that advertisers do not want to help monetize.

When it comes to brand suitability, however, one size does not fit all. What may be acceptable to one advertiser may be unacceptable to another. Advertisers these days are looking for granular and nuanced controls that cater to the specificities of the brand's message and sensitivities.

Brand suitability is now understood as the logical evolution of the traditional brand safety controls. It refers to brands avoiding content that is considered "unsuitable." Instead of relying on cookie-cutter approaches to avoid unsafe or inappropriate content, brand suitability encourages brands to establish a clear understanding of their core brand values, including the topics or events that may or may not align with those values.

Why does brand safety and suitability matter?

The rapid increase in digital ad spend across India has made brand safety a priority. Although digital advertising presents tremendous opportunities to engage consumers across all forms of addressable media, advertisers need to be attuned to the potential for brand safety and suitability incidents – which can negatively impact consumers. In fact, a survey conducted by **DoubleVerify/Sapio** found that more than half of consumers say they would be less likely, or would never, purchase from a brand if it appeared beside fake news. Moreover, eMarketer reports that 74% of consumers say brands are responsible for making sure their ads do not run on hate speech.

The concern is even greater at a time with unprecedented news cycles. Controversial news coverage, such as that about the vaccine or elections, have led to increases in hate speech and disinformation. Covid-19 disinformation, for example, spiked five-fold following a vaccine announcement in November 2020, compared with the month prior, according to **DV findings**. Brands need to know that their media investments are safeguarded, and that their advertisements are appearing on sites that support their brand values and that appear in the appropriate context.

They also need the flexibility to set their own risk thresholds.

It's important that brands establish a clear understanding of their core values and the topics that may or may not align with those values. Having a firm sense of core values enables advertisers to effectively work with verification providers and leverage the proper tools to avoid unsuitable content while maintaining scale.

Best Practices to Manage Brand Safety and Suitability Protection

Brand safety and suitability is unique to every brand, but a nuanced, flexible brand suitability toolkit can help brands maximize scale and protection. The list below covers the most current brand suitability tools marketers can leverage.

1. Review Settings for Category Avoidance and Adjust Accordingly

Brands and advertisers may wish to consider avoiding categories based on the 4A's Advertiser Protection Bureau (APB) and Global Alliance for Responsible Media (GARM) Brand Safety Floor and Brand Suitability Framework.

Brand Suitability Tiers, the first solution to align with APB/GARM standards, groups content based on risk. For example, a high risk tier for "Hate Speech and Cyberbullying" provides coverage for unmoderated content or the promotion of hate acts or hate groups. The medium risk tier provides coverage for professional news content about any hate acts or hate groups. The low risk tier provides coverage for educational content about these topics and/or content that only includes a minor mention of these subjects.

2. Ensure Language Coverage

Be aware of what language coverage your verification provider has. Make sure they're able to classify content in multiple languages to ensure coverage wherever your media is running.

3. Update Site and App Exclusion Lists

With app and site exclusion lists, clients can prevent their media from appearing on specific apps, domains and subdomains that they may deem inappropriate regardless of how the individual pages/articles are classified. With app and site inclusion lists, brands can proactively target content to only those apps and sites that they find acceptable.

4. Limit Use of Keyword Blocking

Keyword blocking gives advertisers the ability to block specific keywords or phrases within a URL that they designate as inappropriate. When activating keyword blocking, advertisers should consider specific topics, rather than broad topic areas. For example, including a broad word like "riot" would likely result in overblocking because it would cover all instances of the word riot, including phrases such as, "it's a laugh riot!" or "riot grrrl." A more specific phrase, such as "Capitol Riot," limits the incremental rate-of-avoidance.

5. Add Trusted News Homepages to Page Exception Lists

Add trusted news site homepages and section pages to page exception lists. Page exception lists allow a brand's ads to run irrespective of any content avoidance categories the brand may have set up. This is especially useful for programmatic buys and on high-volume entry pages where the consumer tends to associate the brand with the news publication rather than a specific headline adjacent to an ad.

DIGITAL INDIA'S TAKE ON BRAND SAFETY
EY MMA MARKETER SURVEY 2022

GEETANJALI BHATTACHARJI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AFRICA, INDIA & MIDDLE EAST | ADVISORY SERVICES, EY

Digital advertising in India has increased to 33% of total advertising in 2021 from 24% in 2019 as per the EY-FICCI M&E Report 2022.

To understand the impact of this shift on digital spend integrity and safety, EY MMA India conducted a Digital Marketer Brand Safety Survey in January 2022 amongst 100 leading marketers across the following sectors: FMCG, BFSI, Smartphones & CE, Online marketplaces, Telecom, Manufacturing, Media & Entertainment, Edtech, Automobiles, Healthcare, online gaming & government.

The survey addressed four key areas of impact:

1. Is there sufficient knowledge about Brand Safety?

2. Are marketers adopting tools to ensure Brand Safety for their consumers?

3. Is there an India specific context to Brand Safety given our diversity?

4. Which prevalent controls are keeping brands safe on digital?

The survey revealed that while knowledge on guidelines exists, implementation is weak
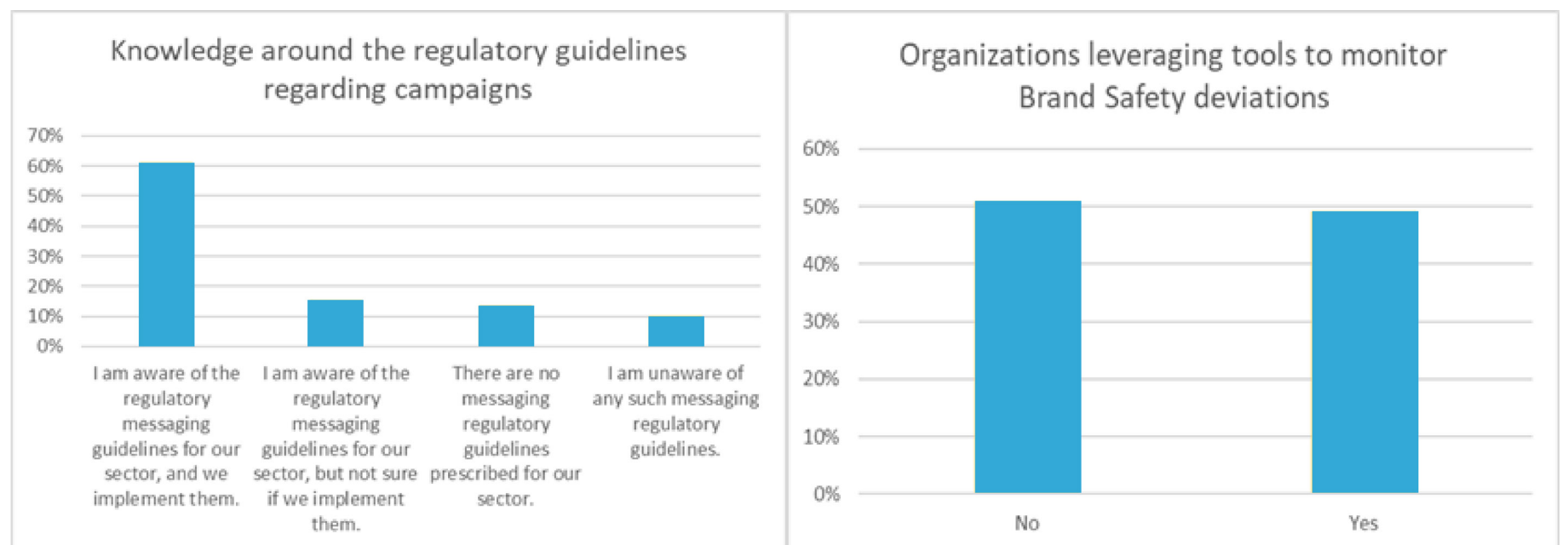
EY MMA Marketer Survey 2022 | Percentage of total respondents

61% of the respondents aware of the regulatory messaging guidelines; but a sizeable 51% confirmed that they do not leverage brand safety or ad-fraud tools within their organisations to monitor deviations.

It is evident that the restrictions in brand safety on account of regional languages needs to be better understood; in the India context.

Awareness of Brand Safety restrictions in the context of regional languages in India

EY MMA Marketer Survey 2022 | Percentage of total respondents

As high as 61% of the respondents unaware of the context of brand safety for regional languages

The prevalent controls are high for age & keyword/language lists...

Guidelines followed by organizational teams when planning digital campaigns
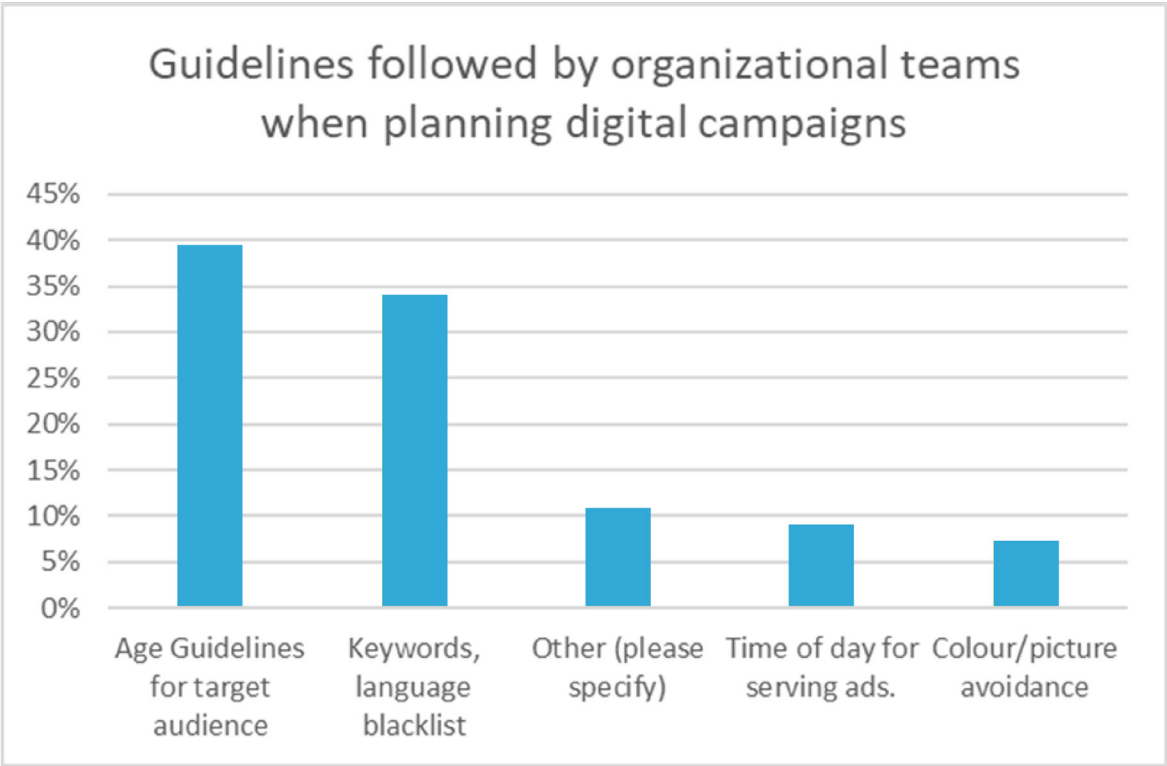
EY MMA Marketer Survey 2022 | Percentage of total respondents

>40% implement age based controls and language/keyword blacklists

...As well as for piracy and privacy management.
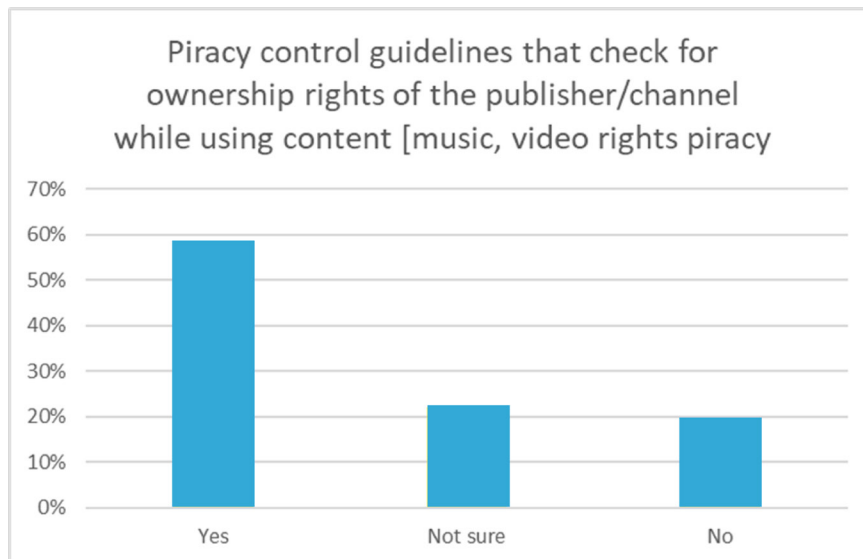
EY MMA Marketer Survey 2022 | Percentage of total respondents

60% of the respondents have piracy control guidelines in place

SUMMING UP

Some progress has taken place; but there is ground to cover. The blueprint for a better working world for digital marketers includes a 4-point agenda:
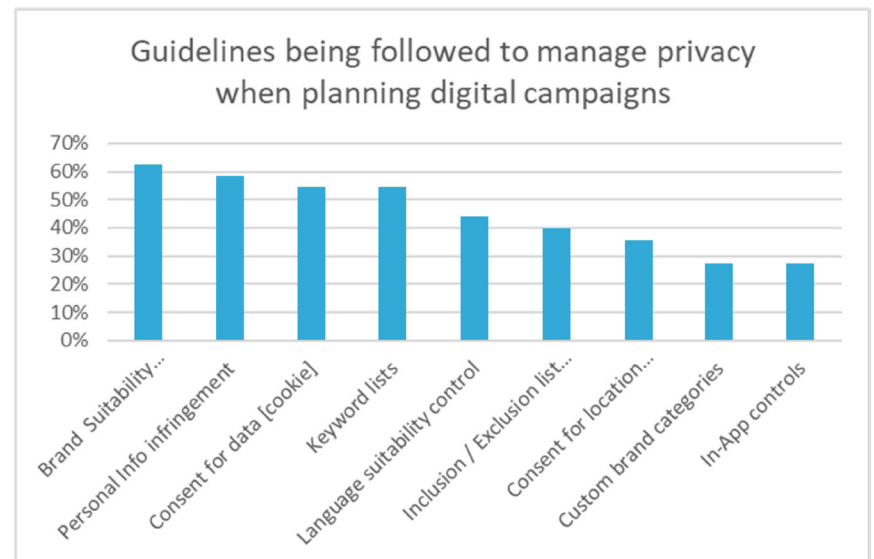
1. **REINFORCE** the importance of brand safety through trials

2. **BREAK** myths around brand safety by constant communication with stakeholders

3. **BUILD** an India specific tool-kit

4. **ADVOCATE** the advantages witnessed by the elite-few who are enforcing the framework diligently

The brand safety document has been developed to bring in advocates and deliver tools & guidelines to build for brands and more importantly; for consumers this better working world where they feel safe; with their rights not violated.

THE BRAND SAFETY FRAMEWORK

FAISAL KAWOOSA
FOUNDER, TECHARC

SALONI JAIN
LEAD ANALYST-DIGI TECH, TECHARC

The dream of 'Digital India' is seeing the dawn of the day: ease of access to the internet, acceleration of digital adoption by brands and consumers in the Covid induced world, 4G usage at an all time high.

Communicating in the digital world has never been easy in the Indian subcontinent as much as it is today. India being a land of diversity and expanse, the digital world is helping bridge the terrestrial and regional and vernacular gaps.

For brands, the digital world now offers a direct communication route for their customers. As the D2C economy booms, consumers and brands are leveraging digital platforms to purchase and sell products, build communities, sustain reputation, and carry forward a legacy for times to come. To do so, constant vigilance is required to ensure effective and brand safe communication. India is a country of people, a society, where context is most important, which often prevails over content. As majority of the new internet users join the internet bandwagon from tier II and tier III cities, India 2.0, these cities are more vernacularly skewed. With an audience this wide with regional, lingual, and cultural differences, a lot of questions have been taking the center stage with respect to the standards and measures put into practice to ensure brand safety, how brands communicate with its consumers and how the communication is being perceived by these internet savvy consumers. The past few years have witnessed an increased complexity of protecting a brand's image and reputation from a plethora of threats lurking in the digital world: fake news, advertising next to inappropriate content, ad fraud, contextual issues among others. Such threats demand an urgent need for a brand safety framework in India to act as a guide for marketers and brands to follow and ensure the safety and reputation of their brands.

Framework:

The Brand Safety Framework is a document which aims to serve as a benchmark by paving the path for brands, advertisers, marketers, and publishers alike to ensure brand safety with respect to online advertisements.

AIM

Bring forth a transparency into the media supply chain by helping marketers decide where to spend their money.

Ensure that the campaign has reached the intended audience with measurable results and account for false/negative traffic.

The guidelines are designed to be adaptable and suitable to certain industry verticals keeping into account the breadth of the campaigns, multitude of audiences and environment plurality. The framework can be adopted for all digital environments, ranging from online platforms, social media networks, forums, websites, apps, streaming video, and audio services.

BRAND SAFETY FRAMEWORK

The framework has been designed keeping the Messaging (the content), Channel (the medium through which information is deployed) and the Impact that the brand is creating. To further the scope, each of the three variables have been broken down into various elements to deliver clarity.

MESSAGE

Content sentiment may be a determinant of the tone and intent of a writer or a determinant of objective aspects of a content topic that may be suitable for all brands. Safety checks will ensure that the content is within the set environment which does not promote or endorse illegal activity, harmful behavior, or cause serious offense to individuals and/or protected groups.

CHANNEL

After sorting the content as per the brand safety guidelines, the medium through which the content is circulated should be taken into account and the factors which are responsible for the dissemination of the message; the channel of medium through which it is circulated.

For any brand it is important to place ads on relevant editorial content feed to maximize brand reputation and ensure brand safety The tone and context of an ad should be kept in mind before placing an ad. For instance, take a burger joint placing an ad within content advocating a vegan lifestyle. This setup already brings the brand at risk.

Piracy means that the content of the original product is retransmitted and, therefore, there is no new creation, no infrastructure is required, no money is invested in creating content, and the same content of the same quality is made available to everyone for free. Piracy threats can be seen in illegal reproduction of journals, magazines and books, video piracy, cable piracy etc.

IMPACT

Engagement defines the amount of time an individual spends interacting with the ad.

While we chase engagement, there's a high risk of overlooking the fundamentals.

Are we reaching our target audience?

Is our ad getting seen or noticed?

Often, the unexpanded ads go unnoticed (users looking at the ad; for less than 2 seconds). It is in these 2 seconds that an impression must be created to make a bigger difference.

Suggested hierarchy:

- Brand safety: An ad served in a bad place can destroy value.

- Viewability/fraud: An ad that's never seen by a human can't add value.

- Audience composition: An ad that's seen by the right human has a better chance of working.

- Reach/frequency: Two sides of the same coin; ads are more effective and efficient when seen the right number of times by the right number of humans.

- Attention: Signals, such as time in view or scroll speed, point to the likelihood of an ad being noticed and seen, which can help us find the "best" impressions.

- Engagement: Once all these boxes are checked, go ahead and optimize toward engagement. Just don't compromise the first five metrics in the pursuit of No. 6.

Ad-Fraud

Fraud has challenged the digital advertising industry for years. Ad fraud is any deliberate activity that prevents the proper delivery of ads to the right people at the right time.

The utilization of bots—computers designed to act like humans— is a common practice that is used to fraudulently monetize ad impressions that are never even seen by humans. Bots are hard to catch because they are intentionally well disguised and continuously evolve to avoid detection. The risk of fraud has only increased, especially in times when digital consumption is higher. Brands need to keep in mind that the ad which is being bought has the relevant audience at the right time.

Often, our browsers start installing certain add-ons which start running ads on the browser without our intention which in turn creates tons of fraudulent traffic over the internet. This makes it look like a human seeing the ad, counting as a conversion. Another example is when ads are run on unknown inventory without knowing the domain name or understanding whether the domain is brand safe or not- domain spoofing.

The framework will provide guidelines in forms of questionnaires and findings to assess the digital environment, build/reinstate consumer trust and help raise standards across the wider industry. The framework aims to bring to light the nuances in digital advertisement with respect to objective/s of the campaign.

STAKEHOLDER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

MMA GLOBAL'S BRAND SAFETY AND SUITABILITY STRATEGY GUIDE

Stakeholder roles and responsibilities will vary across small, mid-size, and large brands; no two marketing organisations look or behave the same way.

Start with internal stakeholders and identify the individuals and teams who should be responsible for, engaged with, and/or consulted on brand safety and suitability. After you consider internal stakeholders, then identify external partners, experts, and consultants. Assign clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability along the lines of a RACI model (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed).

It's okay if you don't have a dedicated brand safety officer – most companies don't have one, though it's a trend to keep an eye on. But it should be established who will ultimately be responsible, which stakeholders will be involved, and the roles they will play per RACI. It's not advisable to completely outsource brand safety to an agency; marketers must take the lead role.

Three key points to consider:

- Need to have an operating model to organise and bring groups of people together with clear roles and responsibilities.

- Identify an individual who is in charge of this group—most likely the person who oversees your brand's paid media investment.

- Keep oversight of the process and mechanics internal—don't delegate to the agency.

Depending on your company, here are the potential internal stakeholders you should consider:

- CMO and leaders on the CMO's team

- Legal team, which may include risk and privacy compliance

- Media team

- Data team

- Social Media team

- Public Relations, Corporate Communications, Public Affairs teams

- Privacy and Compliance teams

Here are potential external stakeholders you should consider:

- Agency partners

- Industry trade organisations to which your company belongs

- Publishers and ad networks

IDENTIFY THE PLAYERS AND MAKE THEM ACCOUNTABLE

To put a finer point on it, during a brand safety incident, anyone who has skin in the game in your supply chain must be informed and engaged—consider these parties as you identify stakeholders. Establish clear roles for brand safety, incident planning, communication, and accountability. Decide how you will keep appropriate stakeholders informed and the appropriate cadence.

Brand safety and suitability should be part of the CMO and marketing team's agenda. It should be "owned" by the marketing organisation and leaders of paid and owned media. The communications and PR teams, along with risk leaders, are also key.

A small group of "owners" who represent paid and owned media should comprise a core team. Additional team members could be roped in to minimize risk. Ensure roles and responsibilities facilitate ongoing communication and sharing among the team once you agree on your strategy. Some occasional tabletop exercises should be organised to ensure the concerned team knows what to do in the event of an actual brand safety and suitability incident.

KNOW YOUR METRICS IN BRAND SAFETY & VIEWABILITY

CHINTAN SONI
VICE PRESIDENT, MADISON DIGITAL-
PRODUCTS, MADISON

Before you start with any optimization step towards brand safety and viewability it's important to know your own metrics and understand them in depth so you know once you take the measure how they have improved over the period of time.

Important metrics Track:

1. Current Viewability percentage of your brand

2. Current Deliveries in non-brand safe environment

3. Current percentage of invalid traffic - See the percentage of impressions that would have been bought, had they not been filtered pre-bid as invalid traffic

Just to give a perspective, we looked at the % of total impressions deliveries happening in non-brand safe environments across the categories we see the following percentage (India).

• Without Default Brand-safety filters of a DSP: 35-40%

• With Default Brand-safety filters: 8-10%

• With 3rd Party Solutions Pre-Bid/Post-bid: (DV, mFilterIT, IAS, MOAT): ~<2%

This means without any filters a brand could be spending ~35% of the money on the placements where it should not have been shown. Here is an example of widely used DSP i.e. DV360 interface; while this is for DV360 other DSPs should be able to give this report in the dashboard to get the detailed view on the brand-safety/Viewability and invalids traffic follow the steps.

Navigate to the quality dropdown

Go to Advertiser > Insertion orders or Advertiser > Insertion Orders / Line items in Display & Video 360. While viewing line items or insertion orders click the dropdown then choose Quality for viewability and content information. Each chart is clickable for additional insights.
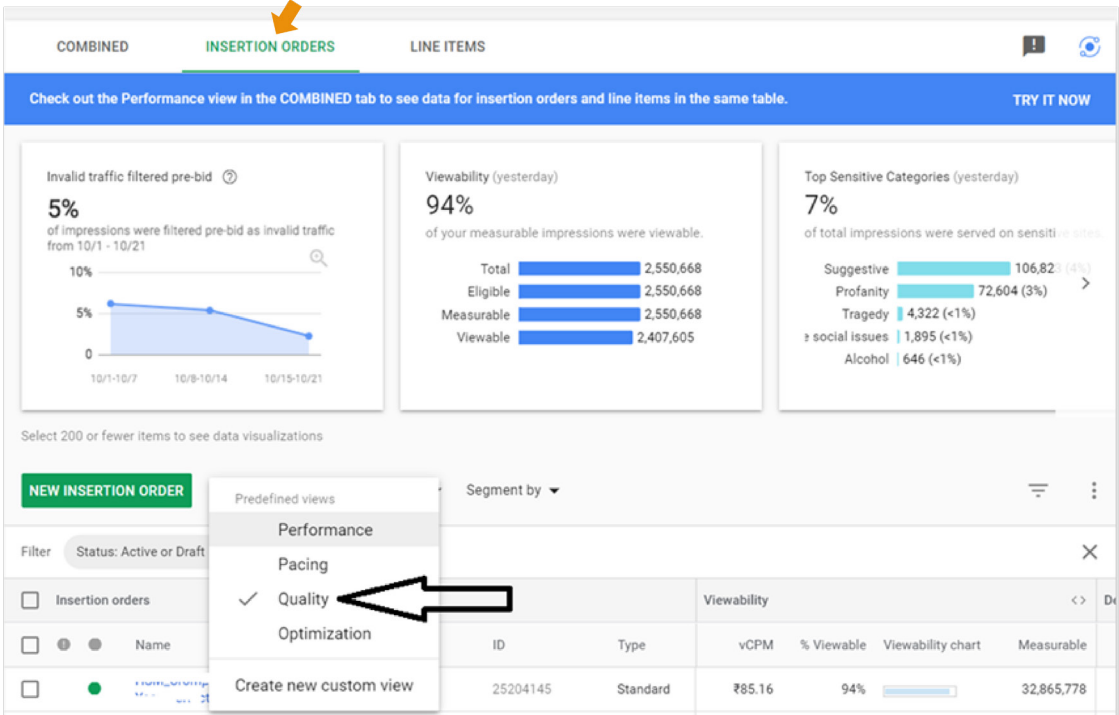
Advertisers need to take a look at following metrics and dimensions in their DSPs to get the hang of where their brand is standing at this stage.

- **Sensitive category breakdown:** This column helps determine if your content is serving near objectionable material. It displays the impressions that served near content that falls into a sensitive category. You can also click View all, in the Brand safety column of the quality view, for a popup that gives more information (including screenshots for sensitive categories) about your content issues. There are approx 17 sub categories which you can easily exclude from your targeting when launching a campaign.

- **Digital content label breakdown:** Digital content labels are similar to a movie rating system for web content. This column shows a percentage breakdown of the type of content that your ads served near.

- **App breakdown:** See impressions by app name and ID, and the platform (Android or iOS) that they served on.

How Can Advertisers Ensure Brand Safety is Applied

- Always ensure that content i.e. "not yet rated" is blocked with no exception, this is because the system has not yet identified the sensitivity of the content and it can be dangerous to keep that block open.

- Mature Audiences should also be blocked by default and Ensure 17 Sensitive Category Exclusions are always ticked.

- You also need to start creating a "Brand Safety Negative Keyword List" at an Advertiser Level so you can apply and use it across your Display, Video, Native, Rich Media [all open inventory only] & YT campaigns, there needs to be continuous improvement to this list. Ideally it's a good practice to look at the placement-wise report on a weekly basis and expand your negative keyword/exclusion list.

- When launching a campaign if your inventory requirement is not very high, restrict your placement to only YouTube search or YouTube video. You can tick-off "video partners"

- Make sure all settings and filters are applied at Advertiser, IO (Insertion Order) or LI (Line item) level from exclusions

- Websites running on open exchanges must be curated carefully with biddable team leads.

- Only buy inventory with certified sellers and resellers who are complaint with Ads.txt

- Ensure that you're not getting any IVT (Invalid traffic) from websites with your campaigns (Standard Report Metric in DV360 / in 3rd Party Verification Partner like MOAT/IAS).

Use of 3rd Party Verification Services

While most DSPs offer viewability and brand safety in their own ways, they are not specialized for the same.

Default filters may not completely eradicate non-safe placement because in India the lion share of content consumption happens in vernacular language, and the filters available with your DSPs works only in English language. Companies such as mFilterIT, DoubleVerify, IAS offer pre- and post-bid solutions across platforms, channels and formats with support for Indian vernacular languages.

Viewability

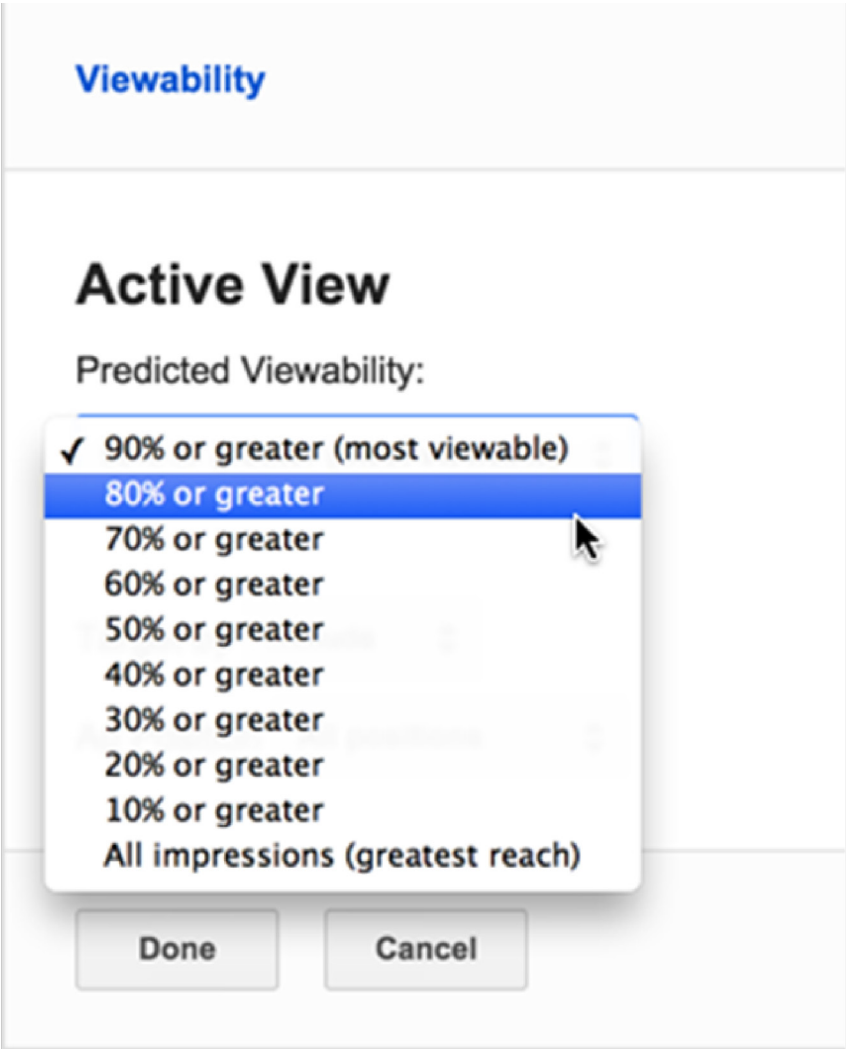Viewability levels remain at about 50% globally. As per MRC Display Ad Viewability: A display ad will be considered as "viewable" if 50% of the ad creative is visible for at least one second in the viewable space of the browser. MRC Video Ad Viewability: A video ad impression will be counted if 50% of the pixels of the ad are visible in the viewable space of the browser for at least two continuous seconds.

Additionally, following parameters needs to be looked at when gauging the digital ad Viewability

1. **Video quality:** Additional information is available for video line items. An ad must first be measurable for location or audio, to report location or audio data.

2. **Prominence:** Video prominence (low, medium, or high) is calculated based on video player size and location. A large player at the top left of a browser window is considered high prominence. A small player at the bottom right of a browser window is considered low prominence.

3. **Player size:** A breakdown of video player sizes that your ads played in. Red indicates a small player (desktop: less than 400 pixels wide by 300 pixels high, mobile: up to 20% of screen covered), blue indicates a large player (desktop: greater than 400 pixels wide by 300 pixels high, but smaller than 1280 pixels wide by 720 pixels high, mobile: more than 20% and up to 90% of screen covered), and green indicates an HD player (desktop: 1280 pixels wide by 720 pixels high, or larger, mobile: more than 90% of screen covered).

4. **Muted at start:** The percentage of video players that were muted at the start of your video ad.

5. **Player location:** The location of the video player in the browser window. X is the number of pixels from the left edge of the browser. Y is the number of pixels from the top edge of the browser.

As an advertiser you need to ask your agency partner/in-house digital team for Target Viewability setting: With this you can target inventory based on how viewable a given impression is likely to be. In DV360 Predicted viewability is powered by Google's Active View technology. Ideally when you launch a campaign try targeting Viewability >80%

Viewability

Active View

Predicted Viewability:

✓ 90% or greater (most viewable)
80% or greater
70% or greater
60% or greater
50% or greater
40% or greater
30% or greater
20% or greater
10% or greater
All impressions (greatest reach)

Done   Cancel

BREAK THE MYTHS IN THE ECOSYSTEM

DHIRAJ GUPTA
CTO & FOUNDER, MFILTERIT

Every company running digital campaigns, from the largest spenders to the new-age start-ups, they're all bleeding precious marketing spends due to ad fraud. From affiliate traffic to walled gardens fraud is omnipresent.

From media campaigns to performance-driven campaigns, the scope of fraud encompasses the entire digital landscape. And yet, awareness about such a pertinent issue is abysmally low. The problem of low conversions persists because fraudulent traffic dominates the overall traffic flow. mFilterIt aims to pop the bubble of myths around ad fraud, an issue upon which CMO's and marketers have a myopic view. It becomes quintessential to make the brands and decision-makers aware and make them responsible for their own financial resources. As a result, this document highlights the myths associated with running digital campaigns and how important it is to bust these unacknowledged, unaccounted, and underrepresented myths.

MYTHS

1. Ad Fraud Doesn't Exist

According to a recent study, only 36% of the online traffic comprises humans. The rest is a mix of good and bad bots. Advertisers across industries get this traffic from several consortiums of publishers and affiliates, as a practice of fraudulently representing online advertising impressions, clicks, conversion, or data events in order to generate revenue. Fraud across BFSI, OTT & Media, Gaming & Ed Tech is detected to the extent of 35-45% both on apps and web.

It's not that fraud is low; it's just that fraud uncovering is low. There's more to it which are better disguised owing to sophisticated technologies hence fraud detection technology

sees less and less of it.

2. There is only 2% fraud across the publisher ecosystem

A lot of brands believe that ad fraud averages out to 2% of their advertising spend. This is a major misconception propagated by the publisher community as a way out for delivering fraudulent ad inventory. The 2% number seems so insignificant for it doesn't account for a major advertising loss.

Buying direct, through programmatic or affiliates, does not make you less vulnerable to ad fraud. On walled gardens and affiliates the actual fraud is anywhere between 15-18% and 22-35% respectively. Mix of organic & invalid traffic results in averaged out fraud levels even in trusted publishers who often unwittingly purchase invalid traffic through third-party services. Good Reputation is no Promise of Good Traffic.

3. Impressions and viewability are the sources of measurement for Ad Fraud

About 18% of impressions are never viewed by real people. In recent times, the focus on efficiencies and down-the-funnel metrics has become important. As a result, CPC campaigns have grown.

Brands need to consider looking across the funnel and "follow-the-money" in terms of where the fraud analysis should be on. Your fraud detection needs to be on your pay-out metrics and no longer tied to impressions only. The problem of limited checks in the impression level fraud detection due to the limited time available is now overcome in the full funnel fraud detection analysis.

The further advantage of using the funnel metrics for fraud detection is that fraud detection checks are possible by behavioural and deterministic checks which help to map the quality of publishers across the funnel.

4. Publisher reports give a clear picture of where the Brand has spent its marketing budgets

Ad placement reports and whether the ads were actually executed on those placements are not verified in publisher reports. There is a lack of data integrity on these numbers. What is important to note is that an ad placement report is more than often taken from the publishers themselves i.e., the very people placing the ad and receiving payment for it. As a result, the quantum of bad ad placements can never be determined because of a conflict of interest. Moreover, their reporting is always window-dressed.

5. There is no fraud on Walled Gardens

Walled gardens are not innocent in this entire ballgame. The rate of fraudulent traffic to the overall traffic on their platforms average out to 10%. The quantum of the problem is so huge because they constitute up to 80% of the overall traffic on the web. Estimating the size of the overall digital advertising spend to be Rs.25000 crore (approx.), these walled gardens encompass a universal spend of Rs.20,000 crore. This means there is a wastage of marketing spend of about Rs.2000 crore owing to fraud.

Although walled-gardens mention that they have a system to detect invalid clicks, they don't stop it. They usually refund, instead of providing any data! The entire game is around trust; if the lot believes the report is true without any actual data backing it, then it provides a false sense of confidence that the walled-gardens are taking care of their clients. Generally, the refunds are a minuscule

percentage of the actual fraud levels and a lot of the SIVT fraud is missed out by the refunds.

At a time where trust, which is essential to the proper functioning of our industry, is strained – demonstrated by ongoing antitrust lawsuits, GDPR/CCPA distrust movement, and uncertainty around cookie-less advertising – the industry must take collaborative action to actively and collectively eradicate ad fraud from digital media.

6. Global, English based Brand Safety analysis provide regional context

India has 22 official languages out of which only five are supported by Google. According to recent study 95% of video consumed are in regional languages. Regular blacklisting tools will be rendered redundant.

Brand safety issues may be the same across the globe but every country and region has its distinct culture and expectations which makes it unique and subjective. What may be inappropriate and unsafe in one region may be accepted culturally in another. As a result, brands would usually adopt contextual targeting measures like keyword blocking and URL blocklists to protect the legacy of their brands. However, these tactics do not offer the flexibility of customization and control that you need to safely advertise today.

They're outdated and ineffective. Because keywords and URL blocking relies on a basic interpretation of words to categorize content and the associated inventory as "safe". Also, these approaches, lead to over-blocking content that is safe— meaning that you either leave money on the table and miss out on valuable inventory or risk yourself a brand safety violation. Also, regionalization influences contextuality which becomes critical while analysing safety issues for brands.

7. There is no Ad Fraud on Performance Campaigns

Another common misconception among brands and advertising agencies is that performance campaigns are free from fraud as they are targeted campaigns. Many performance marketers propagate the myth because they don't pay for impressions or clicks. By not paying for impressions or clicks, they avoid ad fraud and click fraud, but that doesn't mean they are still not the victims of fraud — like affiliate fraud or app install fraud.

Even though they were paying for "performance" only – leads & sales, they were still being ripped off. The Uber case is clearer cut - the app installs were faked and didn't even happen. But affiliate fraud, or performance fraud, as it is now known usually involves some real sales and leads, with a whole bunch of fake ones mixed in.

Performance Campaigns attract invalid traffic to the tune of 30-35% across the industry. It wastes budget, gives misleading impressions on the effectiveness of campaigns, compromises business models and damages brand reputation.

8. Most traffic is clean and most of the BOTS can be simply identified

Automated traffic takes up 64% of internet traffic (much more than human traffic!)– and whilst just 25% of automated traffic was made up by good bots, such as search engine crawlers and social network bots, 39% of all traffic was from bad bots. Good bots politely inform the website that they are a bot. Bad bots make extreme efforts to evade detection as a bot (obviously).

Most bot traffic comes in from the two largest public cloud vendors, AWS and Microsoft Azure, in roughly equal measure. This is likely because it is easy to set up a free account with either of the providers and then use the account to set up the bad bots. When left unchecked, these bad bots can steal data, affect

site performance, and even lead to a breach. That's why it's critically important to detect and effectively block bot traffic.

If the internet was a company, we humans aren't in control anymore and the BOTS already dominate its multiple spheres.

9. Blacklisting keywords is blocklisting

In today's pandemic era, brand safety has become a major concern among brands and marketers. They do not want their ads to be shown next to content dealing with morbidity, violence, hate speech, or any other form of derogatory content. One of the common ways to deal with such issues and a marketer's favourite tool is to blacklist certain keywords to ensure that the ads are not placed next to objectionable content.

Keyword-based blacklisting is not the way to successfully advertise and ensure brand safety. Blacklisting keywords assumes that the platform already knows the context of the content. This is not true for regional content. Basically, platforms are unable to support regional languages (especially in a wide regional disparate country like India) and hence keyword-based blacklisting doesn't work.

Context-based blacklisting is the need of the hour which has to be constantly updated based on the news story, relevancy with AI-powered algorithms. This will ensure that the campaign's efficacy is at its highest whilst ensuring a brand-safe environment.

10. Brand Safety is not my issue

Brand safety is imperative for every size of the enterprise, irrespective of the industry, vertical, and scale of operation. To set the idea straight, no matter at what scale the enterprise functions at, no matter the industry it caters to, one instance of unsafe advertising practice may lead towards a forever reputation loss.

With the powerful voice given to these consumers via social media platforms, it takes one negative tweet/post about a brand to tarnish the reputation forever, thus compromising the brand's safety.

Misconceptions around the fact that brand safety is only for B2C companies have been hovering around for some time. But, can't a B2B company be marred with complex challenges the advertising ecosystem presents?

Just to put things in perspective a recent study conducted in Singapore suggested that 7 out of 10 believe that Ad Placements on misinformative content is a brand's doing. Thus resting the case about the detrimental impact of not addressing the issue has on the brand.

11. Brand safety has nothing to do with ROI and is an unnecessary cost

Most of the time, unsafe content is actually poor performing for your campaign as well. Your ads on unsafe inventory will actually perform poorly and degrade the ROI of your campaign in general. This means that by solving for brand safety (and protecting your brand) you also get the benefit of better campaign performance and improving the ROI of your campaigns. This is a significant contribution of your business case for the brand safety analysis and can help advertisers consider BS tools from a cost to a performance-enhancing tool that can justify its cost easily.

1 out of 3 potential customers disengage because of Brand Safety issues.

12. Advertiser is in control of all the channels

It was recently reported that YouTube served ads for major advertisers next to propaganda videos, paedophilia content, and Nazi videos. Known advertisers including Netflix, Adidas were forced to suspend YouTube spending and boycott the medium altogether. Does Facebook and Twitter's meddling in the US presidential election or fake news propaganda on these platforms ring a bell? Such instances of channel abuse have highlighted that brand safety is more important than ever. The medium through which information is disseminated has to be taken into account for the consumers to trust your brand which affects the safety aspect of a brand. There exists a relation between the price paid, audience quality, and brand safety. All equally form the entire gamut of safe branding.

Digital advertising has exploded. Networks of fake websites fool the algorithms into believing they are real publications. Even ads that do make it to real humans are not all that likely to be seen by the people the advertiser is looking for. This was the core promise of digital advertising. But there's increasing evidence that this promise was the biggest lie of all. A Nielsen analysis of a household-income-adjusted ad campaign found that only 25% of its ads were reaching the right households. As much as 65% of location-targeted ad spend was wasted.

BRAND SAFETY: NEED TO KEEP THE ECOSYSTEM CLEAN, HEALTHY & TRUSTWORTHY FOR BRANDS

NITIN GUPTA
CEO, XAPADS MEDIA

Brand Safety as the term suggests refers to a set of guidelines or protocols with the aim of protecting a Brand's Image and Reputation from the negative or damaging influence of questionable or inappropriate content while advertising.

A classic example of a Brand's Ad appearing with "Inappropriate content" can be a Chocolate brand's Ad on a story about Diabetics. Now the keywords covering chocolate can be sugar, sweets, and energy which are positive for a chocolate brand but negative for a person suffering from diabetes. This clearly proves that Programmatic Advertising, if not used right, is a knife that can cut both ways.

Further, things get trickier in the case of Image / Rich Media / Video heavy content, as not all of the programmatic platforms have the capabilities to scan the Images / Videos for the content & context, and can expose the brands with inappropriate content.

Secondly with the exponential rise in the Digital Content, the biggest issue now is with the Context and not only the content, For example, the keyword "travel" can be a positive keyword for the OTA Platforms, but if the keyword is present in stories covering Russia / Ukraine War, Covid-19 etc. talking about the limitations of traveling, then obviously it becomes completely out of context.

Being one of the key stakeholders in Programmatic Advertising Infrastructure, it becomes not only our Role & responsibility but our duty to address these challenges from a futuristic approach to keep the ecosystem clean.

Over the years, we have created a set of protocols, which are deeply embedded in our technology infrastructure, having multiple checkpoints & targeting that covers but are not limited to:

• Due-Diligence of Publishing partners before onboarding

• Periodic Scans of Publishers

• Real-Time Contextual Scanning

• Third-Party Tools for an extra layer of checks

Some of the Platforms adhere to the guidelines to ensure Brand Safety and much-required trust to the brands, but still, the majority of the players in the ecosystem are playing catch up.

With the emergence of Decentralized & Blockchain Technology, we are seeing a whole new world of Decentralized Apps & Metaverse Platforms, which is a new world whole-together.

Web 3.0 focuses on Experiences rather than Content, where being the real-time environment, the content & context changes rapidly, which completely obsoletes the Tools & Checks being used currently.

Brand Safety challenges in Web 3.0 are going to be way bigger than what we experienced in Web 2.0, and being the Stakeholders of the ecosystem, it becomes our duty to address these, before Brands start losing trust in the Programmatic Architecture.

I hereby urge our peers in the Programmatic Advertising industry, to take Brand Safety seriously and ensure all the checks are in place, as it is our responsibility to keep the ecosystem clean, healthy & trustworthy for Brands.

Lastly, increase your R&D spend on Web 3.0, so we can collectively address the upcoming challenges.

RESOURCES AND BUDGETING FOR BRAND SAFETY AND SUITABILITY

MMA GLOBAL'S BRAND SAFETY AND SUITABILITY STRATEGY GUIDE

Brand safety and suitability tools and resources help you monitor your advertising. The amount you invest in brand safety and suitability is specific to your brand, but it is also a human resource and out-of-pocket expense. The investment typically lives in the marketing budget.

Take the example of a large Fortune 500 firm that has an equal balance in the amount it invested in brand safety and suitability and the amount it recovered by deploying solutions. The cost wound up as a net neutral expense. As this marketer reduces its brand safety infractions, the question is this: What's the value of the risk averted? If the marketer hadn't invested in brand safety, the question becomes this: What's the cost associated with that risk?

Resources you can use

Determine the types of vendors and tools you need.

- Do you have the internal resources and talent to proactively monitor and manage the vendors and tools?

- Do you feel confident selecting one or more vendors? Some vendors focus on fraud and viewability and have added brand safety— do they have the experience of monitoring brand safety on a real-time?

Analyze the costs associated with brand safety and suitability as an operating expense within your media budget. More third parties may be needed. But only pay for what you need. Costs can add up quickly and even be duplicative, so start with a firm understanding of what your internal media team and external media agency have in place.

Keep in mind that third-party ad tech costs are typically CPM-based (cost-per-thousand) and, if applied to your media budget, may reduce the amount of working media that hits the market, so consider treating it as an operational expense.

Finally, as a rule of thumb, pursue industry-certified solutions that have broad support. This is a rapidly emerging space, so review your vendor-based solution needs routinely, with a bias to more integrated solutions and emerging threa

MEET QUARTERLY AND ASK QUESTIONS

It is a best practice to meet with vendors quarterly to review performance and costs against benchmarks that you can easily set to gauge progress and performance and know about new products. Regular check-ins with your media partners should be conducted.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Identify the expenses associated with acquiring the right brand safety and suitability tools; only pay for what you need.

- Understand that brand safety and suitability is an operational expense that will come from the marketing budget.

BRAND SAFETY TOOL SELECTION AND ASSESSMENT

MMA GLOBAL'S BRAND SAFETY AND SUITABILITY STRATEGY GUIDE

The section is about considering non-paid tools to ensure the brand safety and suitability standards are being met. In this chapter, you will learn to identify non-paid brand safety and suitability solutions such as inclusion listing and exclusion listing that don't require using an outside vendor.

Deploy 'free' tactics & tools— inclusion lists, exclusion lists, and more

There are plenty of options for smaller marketers that may not have the resources to bring on a third-party viewability resource, and there are many things big and small brands alike can do in the course of daily operations. Examples include deploying inclusion lists, exclusion lists, keyword blocking, contextual and content targeting, and audience targeting to ensure your brand assets are not being deployed next to user-generated content. Ads.txt is a method for publishers and distributors to declare who is authorised to sell their inventory, improving transparency for programmatic buyers.

While working with third-party vendors may indeed be necessary to implement your full brand safety and suitability plan, there are also non-paid solutions you can pursue. For example, there are tools to set up and manage your campaigns— think of these as defensive tactics. Also, be strategic and break tools down by channel, as in the examples below:

Digital, Search, and Social

- Inclusion List: Lists of sites the advertiser deems safe.

- Exclusion List: Lists of sites the advertiser deems unsafe that need to be blocked.

- Keyword blocking: A list of words (as opposed to sites) marketers want to block ads from appearing next to. As an instance, a hotel company might choose to block the words "disaster" and "terror attack."

While keyword blocking and filtering are useful, there are a few things to consider. Don't block something just because it's controversial. Think about what's being funded and what your advertising investment is going toward. Monitoring keywords through your brand safety and suitability tools is needed instead of blocking them.

Additional digital tools / control measures

- Audience targeting can be used to help minimise exposure to unsuitable content and sites.

- Content targeting can be used to help ensure your brand appears alongside suitable content environments.

Digital Purchasing Considerations

- Buy from a private marketplace (PMP) that's more likely to consist of brand-safe sites.

- Use Ads.txt for programmatic media buying which is considered a secure method for publishers and distributors to indicate who is authorised to sell their inventory, improving transparency for programmatic buyers.

Ads.txt supports the following types of supplier relationships:

- Domain owners that sell on exchanges through their own accounts.

- Networks and sales houses that programmatically sell on behalf of domain owners.

Social

Consider placements that can be subject to user-generated content such as:

- Facebook right-hand rail ads.

- Facebook newsfeed ads.

- Instagram feed Stories.

- Facebook Audience Network (ads that appear on the network have limited safety controls).

- YouTube.

All channels—Broadcast, Print, Digital, and Social

Create lists of content and category exclusions

and negotiate them into your media purchasing

agreements, such as the following topics:

- Adult

- Misinformation

- Derogatory

- Downloads and sharing

- Weapons

- Gambling

- Violence

- Suggestive

- Profanity

- Alcohol

- Drugs

Print

Avoid print media titles containing articles with content unsuitable for the brand. If there is a question regarding the content of the magazine or articles, request to review article content prior to placing advertising.

Broadcast TV/Connected TV/Radio/etc:

Prepare a blacklist of programming based on the suitability of content. If there is a question on content, request an option to vet the programming before airing.

Standardize your approach

Marketers must evaluate the risk of brand safety and suitability on a channel-by-channel basis and employ "tools" as standard guidance when they run campaigns.

Marketers should ensure quarterly reviews and updates to inclusion lists/exclusion lists/keywords blocked, and request reports from media providers that include detailed placement-level tracking.

VENDOR SELECTION AND MANAGEMENT

MMA GLOBAL'S BRAND SAFETY AND SUITABILITY STRATEGY GUIDE

This chapter addresses the considerations that go into the selection and management of brand safety and suitability related vendors. You will learn how to assess, manage, and evaluate vendors based on your needs and their performance.

The vendor evaluation and selection process is part and parcel of creating a sustainable brand safety and suitability strategy. Putting a specific process in place will help your organisation enforce brand safety standards uniformly and measure brand safety compliance holistically across your entire digital media investment. With the availability of several solution providers in the market and the landscape can be confusing to navigate, we have broken the process down into a manageable flow.

The basics: Ad verification vendors

You will establish and enforce brand safety standards through a mix of third-party verification services, manual input and tools (internal to your brand or agency-managed), and the use of native brand safety safeguards that can be activated within walled garden platforms and publishers.

Follow standard ad verification capabilities while finalising vendors:

- Pre-Bid Ad Blocking: The ability to identify non-brand inventory, pre-programmatic bid.

- Post-Bid Ad Blocking: The ability to remove an ad from a non-safe environment, post bid.

- Ad Monitoring: Reporting on ads in non-safe placements when blocking isn't possible.

- Keyword Avoidance List Management: Exclusion of URLs and pages containing non-brand safe language from the pool of suitable ad inventory.

- URL Inclusion List Implementation and Management: Application of a finite list of sites deemed appropriate for ad placement.

Consider tools in your vendor selection process to proactively manage brand safety:

- Internal Brand/Agency Managed Tools

- Keyword Avoidance Lists (By Language)

- URL Inclusion List

- Mobile App Inclusion List

- Do Not Buy Lists

- Corporate Ethics Code Considerations

External Walled Garden Tools

- Publisher Content Inclusion lists: Categories of content, URLs, Videos, etc. unique to the platform that can be used to create platform-specific inclusion lists.

- Content Category Exclusion Lists: Platform-specific categories of content that can be omitted from a buy if deemed non-brand safe.

- Creator Channel Inclusion Lists/Exclusion Lists: Categories of content creators and channels unique to the platform that can be used to create platform-specific inclusion lists.

- AI/Machine Learning Algorithms.

Conduct a needs assessment

First, conduct a needs assessment. Analyze your portfolio and audiences to determine the scope that your approach to brand safety and suitability may require from a potential technology provider.

Examining your media mix, messaging, and audiences is a great place to start. The following types of questions will guide the level of customization that may be required:

- Is your business highly consumer-focused with a need for broad audience reach or are you marketing largely to business decisions makers? Or a mix of both?

- What percentage of your overall media investment is digital and social in nature and can perhaps be managed at the platform level?

Ad verification vendor marketplace

Currently, there are a handful of major players and a host of other emerging technologies and startups offering various capabilities in the ad verification space. There are also smaller providers with niche capabilities around fraud and contextual targeting that can be complementary to your brand safety and suitability tech stack.

Develop RFP criteria

Always establish criteria for an ad verification RFP before engaging vendors. The criteria should consist of weighted categories aligned with the pre-established thresholds for brand-safe impressions.

Managing safeguards & marketer inputs
While ad verification technologies are critical to ensuring brand safety and suitability at scale, the manual and brand-specific inputs that power these technologies and guide brands' approach to safety in the walled garden/social environments are also key drivers of success. Tools like inclusion lists and exclusion lists, keyword avoidance lists, and the brand's understanding of placements within walled gardens should be assessed and revised at a regular cadence to ensure the brand is always maximizing access to the largest pool of brand safe.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROCESS

MMA GLOBAL'S BRAND SAFETY AND SUITABILITY STRATEGY GUIDE

Prepare for an incident before it hits.

Brand safety incidents are inevitable, but proactive brands have protocols in place. It is important to learn how to deploy an action plan and process to minimise your brand's exposure to potential fallout.

A brand safety incident is inevitable. It can result from any number of things—a series of tragic events in the news, cultural bias, religious or political extremism, verbal missteps, proximity to offensive content, or taint by association. Association is equating a brand to the context in which they are placed. This may create positive or negative connotations for the brand.

To maintain a healthy brand reputation, your brand safety and suitability strategy needs a robust incident management process.

Blueprint for incident communication

First, before triggering an incident response, be sure the issue in question is actually a valid incident that impacts your brand. If it is, determine its severity. In some cases, you may not need to escalate and trigger the entire process.

If you determine it is a valid incident, adhere to a rapid response model by giving one team the autonomy to make decisions after an incident occurs.

Probe what the implications for brand and business health would be of pausing the media plan. Brief the CMO's leadership team, the legal, risk, compliance, analytics, and social media teams.

Below are the steps in the brand safety incident management process:

Step 1: Put Out the Fire

If it's determined that the issue is something that may put your brand(s) at risk, work with the team(s) running your media to pause any/all activity that could have caused it.

If the specific source is not known, pause any media that may be causing the issue.

Step 2: Internal and External Communications

After pausing the media, reach out to internal and external stakeholders. Internal messaging should explain that the offending media was paused. External messaging to publishers should indicate that any media deemed at risk was temporarily paused while a mutually agreeable solution is pursued.

Maintain close coordination between key stakeholders to probe into and understand the cause of the issue and develop future precautions.

Step 3: Understand the Source of the Problem

If the source of the offending media is not immediately clear:

- Reactivate any "safe" media that was turned off.

- Identify media partner(s) with unsafe content.

- Ensure brand safeguards (negative keywords) are functioning properly.

- Work with your media buying team(s) and publisher partners to understand how the incident happened and what safeguards can be initiated to prevent reoccurrence.

Step 4: Identify the Potential Impact

Evaluate the fallout from negative press and consumer distress over the incident. Ask the following key questions:

- What is the impact on the health of the brand if the media remains active?

- What is the business impact of pausing the media?

Step 5: Determine an Action Plan

While your action plan is unique to your company, a best practice for balancing brand health and business impact is to ask the following question:

How much risk are you willing to accept if you think the media has benefits for the business?

Ask the following key questions:

- What steps can my media buyers take to ensure this never happens again?

- What steps can the publisher take to ensure risk mitigation?

- Is any partner uniquely critical to my brand's success?

Step 6: Internal and External Communications: Part II

You will have a better understanding of the situation after working with media buyers, publishers, and communications team members. Align on internal messaging to offer a detailed explanation of what happened and the cause.

If the media has been reactivated, clarify the steps that were taken to ensure brand safety. If the media remains paused, outline the existing process and what's needed prior to reactivation.

GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

MMA GLOBAL'S BRAND SAFETY AND SUITABILITY STRATEGY GUIDE

You have KPIs and processes in place to measure your marketing effectiveness— and you also need them for your brand safety and suitability strategy. This chapter addresses the role and importance of governance and performance management protocols. You will learn how to establish a performance management protocol for ongoing oversight and monitoring.

You will also understand stakeholder responsibilities and best practices for holding agency partners accountable for ongoing performance and maintenance.

Why establish a process for management?

You've built a case for why brand safety and suitability matter and are aligned on who is responsible for ensuring your company is protected.

So where do you go from here?

Ongoing analysis of the industry, news, and events will ensure your strategy remains up to date, while quarterly scorecard assessments will keep agency partners accountable and attuned to your brand safety requirements.

Key stakeholders: ongoing roles & responsibilities

Once you have established who the stakeholders are by department (i.e., Media, Social, PR, Corporate Communications, Security & Privacy, Legal, etc.), formalise this committee.

Clarify their responsibilities to accomplish the following five things:

1. Align on their respective piece of brand safety and suitability and the metrics they are responsible for monitoring

2. Establish and maintain KPIs and hold people accountable to them, the thresholds, exclusion lists and inclusion lists , etc. as well as documenting and sharing the KPIs with the company at large.

3. Selection of brand safety and suitability monitoring partner.
4. Work with legal counsel to embed brand safety and suitability guidelines into partner contracts.

5. Ongoing check-ins with vendors/partners.

6. Through monthly/bi-monthly committee meetings to review performance, discuss industry insights, internal developments, and case studies for future reference and consideration, this group will be responsible for summarizing these insights and recommended optimisations, as well as inserting them into C-Suite reports (Quarterly Business Reviews, Marketing Meetings, etc.)

MMA INDIA BRAND SAFETY REPORT FEEDBACK SURVEY

Please spend a few minutes sharing your thoughts with us.

Click here to fill out the MMA India brand safety report Feedback Survey.

Take the survey!

INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES ON BRAND SAFETY

HOW SAFE IS YOUR BRAND?

JAHID AHMED
VICE PRESIDENT AND HEAD- DIGITAL,
CONTENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA,
MARKETING, HDFC BANK

For a moment, assume you are a marketer for an airline.

Now imagine, a potential customer is browsing through her favourite news website, and she is reading an article about a tragic plane crash. And there, smack in the middle of the article, is an advertisement for your airline.

How Did That Happen?

Such unfortunate adjacencies (a term to describe situations where your brand message is unwittingly placed adjacent to inappropriate content) are not uncommon. As brands embrace platform-based and programmatic advertising to push their message to thousands of websites simultaneously, it is becoming increasingly imperative for them to manage and eliminate inappropriate exposure.

Not surprisingly, brand safety is emerging as a key talking point among savvy digital marketers.

Inappropriate adjacencies are only one aspect – brand safety covers a wider range of risks, including click fraud, invalid traffic (IVT), brand infringement, privacy, and consent.

How Can You Keep Your Brand Safe?

In a study by GumGum and Digiday Media, 75% of brands reported at least one brand-unsafe exposure.The question then is: How can you mitigate the risk to your brand even as you expand your digital footprint?

Many platforms provide broad category- and keyword-based filters.

For example, while setting up a campaign, you could choose not to advertise on websites promoting Adult, Gambling, or Terrorism. Similarly, you can identify a set of keywords that you do not want to be associated with (for example, hate keywords, Sexual content, Death& Injury, Pandemic, etc.

Several advertisers use whitelists (sites where they would like to advertise on) and blacklists (sites they would like to avoid) to mitigate brand-unsafe exposure.

But these brand safety measures have limitations. Category-based filtering can limit your reach, while keyword-based filters are prone to contextual errors. Blacklists and whitelists tackle only a sliver of the universe and can constrain performance. Moreover, a reputed news website may feature on your whitelist but may still report content that could be unsafe for your brand, and which may slip through your negative keyword filter.

Brand safety is often a balancing act, a classical risk vs return conundrum: if you go for reach, you are multiplying risk; if you want to rein in risk, you must shorten your reach.

Emerging Brand Safety Practices

Savvy brands are embracing a range of neutral, third-party solutions to monitor unsafe exposure in real-time. These solutions typically deep scan the internet and alert brands to any deviances that could be unsafe. Most of these technologies add to acquisition costs but help minimize fallout.

Inventory audit

Brands can ensure inventory quality through a rigorous auditing process by setting up a dedicated team of human reviewers.

Third-party partnership

Partnering with third-party vendors to integrate customised solutions tuned to the brands' needs can go a long way in establishing brand safety.

Real-time tracking

By leveraging advanced and automated viewability algorithms, brands can optimize bid management while enabling buyers to layer multi-level goals and in-view definitions.

Many marketers are also using AI-based image recognition technologies to identify inappropriate imagery and minimise brand associations with such imagery.

From Brand Safety to Suitability

Increasingly, marketers are moving away from broad-brush brand safety measures to more brand-personalised approaches. What may be perceived as risky for one brand may not be so for another brand. Instead of block listing sites, marketers are taking a more contextual approach to brand safety. The advancements in natural language technologies that can glean context from unstructured content, beyond just keywords, can help advertisers take a more nuanced approach to brand suitability.

A SAFER META IS BETTER FOR EVERYONE

NEHA MARKANDA
HEAD, BUSINESS MARKETING,
FACEBOOK INDIA

Brand safety refers to keeping a brand's reputation safe when featured online, especially when advertising. There is an ever increasing focus from brands around not only how and where their brand may be present, but also who they may be associated with by their target audience.

When we think about building trust with users, advertisers, agencies and industry bodies, there are a number of different areas that can span together with brand safety. Meta looks at brand safety with a multi-faceted approach that falls into the below key categories:

1. Create a safe and welcoming community

2. Maintain a high quality ecosystem of content, publishers and ads

3. Proactive collaboration with industry

At Meta, our platforms are designed to give people the power to build communities and bring the world closer together. **Creating a safe and welcoming community** for people thus falls at the center of this mission. We employ a robust system that determines what is, and what isn't appropriate across our platforms. This system is surrounded by guardrails of Community Standards and Guidelines. These guidelines are based on the following values:

• Freedom of expression

• Privacy of personal information

• Safety for all

• Authenticity of identity

• Dignity for all

To uphold these values, our Community Standards and Guidelines ensure coverage of:

• Violence & criminal behaviour such as direct threats, violent groups, fraud

• Individual safety such as bullying and harassment or sexual exploitation

• Integrity & authenticity such as hacked or fake accounts and manipulated media

• Objectionable content such as hate speech, graphic violence and nudity

How we review content to keep our standards in-place includes the working of approximately 40,000 human reviewers and AI together. The AI is utilized for proactive detection of harmful content even before users see it. The use of AI for content, allows the human reviewers to address any potential violation that needs a more nuanced review. This is done with a prioritization mind-set rather than chronological order of reporting, where critical content is reviewed before the most recent request. To track our progress and to make Meta safe and inclusive, we routinely release the Community Standards Enforcement Report.

The other aspect of keeping Meta platforms safe for brands and users involves maintaining a high quality ecosystem of content, publishers and ads. To understand this, we must look at the two kinds of placements of content (including ads) on Meta platforms:

1. Ads that are independent from publisher content

2. Ads that appear within publisher content.

For the ads featuring within publisher content, we have our Partner Monetization policies that regulate publishers, creators, and cover behaviours, pages and payment terms. These policies apply to all content, pages and groups on Meta platforms. However, content appropriate for Meta platforms in general is not necessarily appropriate for monetisation. This content has to follow our Content Monetization Policies, which include:

• Prohibited formats such as static videos, videos with embedded ads

- Prohibited Behaviours such as engagement bait or solicitation for engagement of any kind

- Restricted categories like explicit content, tragedy or conflict, strong language

- Prohibited categories including misinformation and misleading medical information

This means that not all content on the platform is monetizable. When it comes to advertising on our platforms, we know one size does not fit all. Risk lies on a spectrum, and is grounded in the user experience where ads are served.

While on one end you have extreme content that no advertiser wants to be associated with or appear near, such as graphic nudity, hate speech, or terrorism. This is the type of content that we prohibit through our Community Standards, and that has no place on our platforms. All content that falls within this category, we've called Safety.

We then have another category called Suitability. This further has two main types of content. First, content that is permitted on our platforms (such as debatable social issues or news reporting on tragedy and conflict) but where different brands' exposure preferences may exist. Under Safety, we provide tools so brands can opt in or out of appearing adjacent to this content. Second, content that for the vast majority of brands poses no risk at all, but in relation to ads from a specific brand can become unsuitable or just a bad fit. Ex. processed foods appearing next to videos about obesity. That's why we are focused on giving brands more sophisticated tools, so that they can manage these concerns. These tools include:

- Placement opt-out

- Inventory filter that lets one control the sensitivity of the content featuring the ad

- Block lists that stop ads from appearing anywhere the advertiser doesn't consider safe

- Topic exclusions which let one exclude topics of video ad placement

- Content allow lists that let an advertiser work with Facebook Business Partners to review and customize a list of brand suitable videos for ad placement

Now that we have an understanding of Meta defined guidelines both for the user community and the advertising ecosystem, we must look at the final category that defines brand safety on Meta platforms, which is **proactively collaborating with Industry partners.** We believe that Meta should not make so many important decisions about expression and safety on its own. So on top of the guidelines for community and partners, we collaborate with industry partners to share knowledge, build consensus and work towards making all online platforms safer for businesses. Some of the partners we have worked with include:

The World Federation of Advertiser's Global Alliance for Responsible Media (GARM), to align on brand safety standards and definitions, scaling education, common tools and systems, and independent oversight for the industry. Our work together with GARM will continue as the industry collectively focuses on GARM's mission to create a more sustainable and responsible digital environment that protects the consumer, the media industry and society.

The Trustworthy Accountability Group (TAG), a global program in digital advertising, that recently, last year, announced Meta as one of the inaugural group of TAG Brand Safety Certified companies. With the recent completion of our 2020 audit with TAG, our certification now continues under the new TAG seal and is expanded from the UK only, to a global certification.

We have introduced and continue to hold sessions with industry bodies to provide further insight into how our teams work to review content and enforce our Community Standards. We recognize our responsibility to provide a safe environment for everyone using our platforms. And while we know there is still more to be done, we won't stop helping people and businesses use our platforms safely and successfully.

Brand safety at Meta is ensuring that brands feel safe when advertising on all platforms and placements across all our platforms by enforcing policies and offering relevant controls. We are committed to improving our policies and tools so that advertisers can continue to safely and confidently deliver ads across our platforms. While we have zero tolerance for harmful content on our platforms, we recognize that doesn't mean zero occurrence. It's why we are tackling this challenge across the company working with industry, enlisting expertise across subject matters, and continuing to invest in the technology, tools and advancements that advertisers require. A safer Meta is better for everyone, including for business, and it's what we keep working towards.

BRAND SAFETY IS ABOUT ASSURING CONSUMERS

ANURITA CHOPRA
CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER,
GSK CONSUMER HEALTHCARE, ISC

In this world of constant connect, where the lines are thin between genuine and fake news, where attracting attention & mind space is paramount, it becomes especially important for brands and marketers to remember one thing – what are your values?

And that one thing makes all the difference. What relationship do you want to have with the consumer? At what cost? To what extent will you go to either say the truth like it is, be backed with enough data & research to state your claim? It takes only one value – courage & honesty. Are you willing to stand by what you said? Do you believe in what you said? Would you and your family buy the product you're marketing? Therefore, do you genuinely care?

This of course goes back to the DNA of the organization, and whether you're here to create true value, which certainly will stand the test of time. Of course, shorter methods and quick wins are available, and not for a minute am I saying that responsible marketing doesn't mean being competitively agile and consumer relevant. In fact, quite the contrary. It's more the spirit of it, it's more a guiding light to help you decide what you will do, and what you will not do.

Brand safety is simply ensuring that the consumer is assured that you as a brand and a marketer are taking on the responsibility of doing the checks and crosses before you pen a claim.

As marketers, we have always maintained that the relationship that a consumer has with a brand is like that of a friend, an ally, a parent, a guide, a partner, whatever be the brand personality and reason to exist. So, isn't the onus on the brand to earn the trust that the consumer has bestowed on the brand, not just with her money, but also her faith that when

she uses the product or service, she will get what she paid for, it's safe to use for her and her family, and that she needn't worry about whether she made the right choice.

It's actually as simple as that. When time is less, and clutter is large, it's our responsibility to be responsible. To tell the consumer as it is. To not mislead and allow for misinterpretation, to keep it simple. Focus on the key aspects, and don't leave out the important. What should the consumer know, what should she base her decision on. This then leads to a lifelong relationship with the consumer, knowing that you as a brand mean well. That you will never do anything that is not in her best interest. This also paves the way for the future, because trust then percolates through generations. This also translates into R&D & innovation, knowing that you want to travel ahead with your consumer, and will continue to offer her the best in your chosen field. This therefore, drives your business strategy.

Of course, for lifestyle categories, it's important to build the wow. And for many others like banking, healthcare etc, it's important to build authenticity.

There's just one check that's the acid test – would you be fine with your family interpreting what they do from your campaign? If yes, then that's being responsible.

CONTEXT, CUSTOMISATION & CONVERSATIONS

PEEYUSH BACHLAUS
ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, MARKETING,
ADITYA BIRLA GRASIM – PAINTS DIVISION

These last two years of pandemic have witnessed the speeding up of many emerging paradigms: be it everything digital, health & wellness or increased focus on life at home. As businesses face newfound complexities involving fake news, disinformation, content ubiquity & social media trials of brands; brand safety will be of paramount importance across board rooms and is expected to move quickly from a governance topic to the one shaping strategy.

Marketers today are dealing with altered consumption habits brought about by the pandemic, more family time than ever before, fast emerging privacy-first era regulations, proliferation of new monetized channels like gaming & podcasts. These, coupled with the rise of issues such as deepfakes, identity theft and the need for audience measurement down to the segment of one present a never- before solved problem of media buying. For businesses to take advantage of emerging opportunities, mitigate risks and leverage brand safety as a true driver of strategy in the future, following implications would be crucial to understand:

1. Organisation culture

People's worlds (political, professional, personal, social, cultural, virtual & galactic) are colliding; the traditional moulds are unable to deliver societal leadership at scale, with capabilities that can navigate multiple concurrent issues. Globally, governing bodies have emerged unidimensional in approach to matters such as

fighting the environment challenge, geopolitical crises or people led movements from BLM to farmer protests; therefore people are inclined to turn towards businesses & brands to step in and help address controversial political, social and economic issues.

Increasingly, each employee will have to be treated as a brand touch point. Organisation culture will need to propel all employees to be brand-safety aware as consumer engagement continues to widen through issues, content forms & platforms, ad placements, social communities etc. Brands will need to acquire the requisite knowledge and expertise to speak on pressing societal issues.

2. Will of steel

Protecting the brand's position would mean having to stand by your values in the face of brute social backlash, public trials on platforms and employees singled out for brand directed arson. So, for businesses to grow and be relevant, issue-based stands would be an added line item to the investments they would need to make. (When it came to supporting a cause in a far-flung region, we returned to a set of villages for an unfinished task of equipping people with livelihood skills as part of a larger brand mission unfazed by local challenges.)

3. 360o view of ad placement

The future of brand safety is context, customisation & conversations.

Context: what a gaming brand would consider right to express, a kid's brand may deem as vulgar.

Brands would be rendered toothless using broad keywords-based measures either to build context or avoid misrepresentation and wrong ad placement.

They would need to deploy tools to sharpen placement not just online but across traditional mass mediums as well (I recall when the brand had to withstand critical scrutiny about our endorser choice and media channels in our media mix; a continuous monitoring of sentiments mapped to values pulled us through); so, a brand may not want to be present around news over covid related deaths etc. but would want to partner news on following of covid norms, vaccination etc. Google and Facebook Ads are increasingly allowing control over where the ads get placed and the surrounding content. The ability to track conversations about and surrounding the brand will bolster the business' ability to protect aspects such as brand communities, ROAS, brand trust and content resonance.

Brands are constantly looking for conversation drivers & with the action moving to multi devices, cord cutting becoming a GenZ norm & more than 650mn smartphone users, boundaries are blurring between personal and social; hence the need for multi-dimensional tools to analyse sentiment, curate content and manage response will continuously grow.

4. A standard classification

Proliferating engagement platforms and data privacy regulations will necessitate the development of a common standard to handle new opportunities such as audio, CTV, DOOH etc.; This helps the buy side to review transparency of ads served while balancing both first party data controls and third- party partnerships. The supply side will need to continuously evolve contextual solutions, programmatically or through deep thinking algo's that go beyond the traditional hot keywords and generic image & video scanning to weed out illegal content 24x7. Self-policing & regulation will give way to more structured initiatives such as GARM (global alliance for responsible media) with wider acceptance & application.

In sum, as more & more businesses accept that brand safety naturally resides in the lap of ensuring consumer safety, investing in the right tech to facilitate connect and relevance will be the way to go. This battle has the potential to transform into a collective effort not to outdo competition but this time, avoid outdoing ourselves & end up sacrificing context.

BRAND SAFETY: AN INTEGRAL PART OF YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY

ADITYA SHAH
SVP, COMMUNICATIONS, TATA PLAY LTD

Very simply put, brand safety is about keeping a brand's reputation safe while advertising online.

Imagine buying inventories programmatically and one of your ads is showing on a site that is promoting fake news or worse on a completely fake site, the kind of impact it can have on your Brand scores, image and equity can be devastating.

The aspect of getting to quickly measure the impact of your digital spends and continuous pressure of optimizing the cost of reach/sale is leading marketeers to look at new published through programmatic or affiliate marketing and while you see all the KPIs looking healthy , the fact is that some of these KPIs could be completely generated by BOTs via fraudulent clicks, leads or even traffic to your site.. If estimates are to be believed then the cost of digital fraud would cross $40 billion by the end of 2022.

Implementing Brand Safety:

Having established the fact that Brand safety is not just a reputation risk but an equally bigger financial risk , the fact is that there is not much being done to proactively prevent it. When I first learnt about the term ad fraud, I also considered it some gimmicky tech which is trying to make money but as I dived deep into it was clear that Brand safety needs to be an integral part of your digital marketing strategy and here are some points on how to go about it :

1. Define brand safety for your organisation

It is important to take this first step. Like in our case, we always had the basic reputation aspects in place where we defined categories of sites we never want to advertise on – like porn, specific news sites, gambling sites etc . So make a list of what all do you consider as unsafe or risky for your Brands reputation and then it will lead you to find solutions for each of these.

2. Create a not to advertise list for your Brand

Basis the above definition , define what categories of sites or keywords you would never want to advertise on and follow that list with your media agency as well as use channels which allow you to work on that list as much as possible in the form of negative list/campaign exclusions. Some of these channels would therefore charge a premium but that would be worth the investment in the long term.

3. Explore ad fraud tools :

When I warmed up to the issue and the size of ad fraud which Brand face , I decided to look at the available tools and technology which can help prevent the same. This led to us looking at various tools and doing a POC to check if the claims made were true. And at the end of the POC, we were clear that we need to implement the ad fraud prevention tool as it would help us save 20% of our spends or get more out of the same spends. So please ask the ad fraud prevention companies to pitch and showcase what they can provide. Of course the proof of the pudding is in trying it out. This helps in getting real time insights and blocking fraudulent traffic to your app/website.

4. Governance and Review

Brand safety measures are ongoing and just like other Brand measures, it should be analysed and looked at regularly to course correct wherever needed. Digital world is ever changing and so are BOTS and sites trying to misuse the digital monies out there.

As responsible marketeers, we should not fund any fake or inappropriate site and ensure that we are getting actual returns from our ad campaigns. Brand Safety should therefore become a part of your overall marketing strategy.

EVOLVING BRAND SAFETY TO BRAND SUITABILITY: HOW DO MARKETERS FIND SUITABLE SPACES?
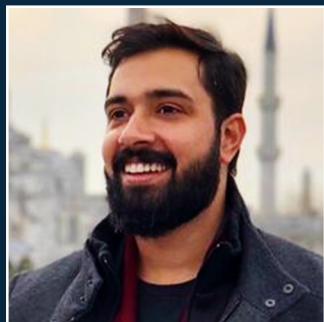
SAURABH KHATTAR
INDIA COMMERCIAL LEAD,
INTEGRAL AD SCIENCE (IAS)

Aiding Brand Reputation

Stakes are high when we talk about keeping a brand-safe. A given brand's image may have been carefully crafted over the years, only to be destroyed for a consumer in the milliseconds it takes for a display ad to render next to the 'wrong' content. This damage can spread further in the time it takes to snap a screen grab and post it. So, what happens next? The digital version of guilt by association—your brand now appears to represent something that it probably does not. The ongoing crisis in the world is forcing brands to think long and hard about where is and isn't acceptable for their ads to show up. Advertisers are worried about appearing next to distressing information, which includes but is not limited to news as well as misinformation and propaganda. However, it's important that brands are thoughtful in their safety and suitability strategies and support quality publishers at a time when their journalism is needed more than ever.
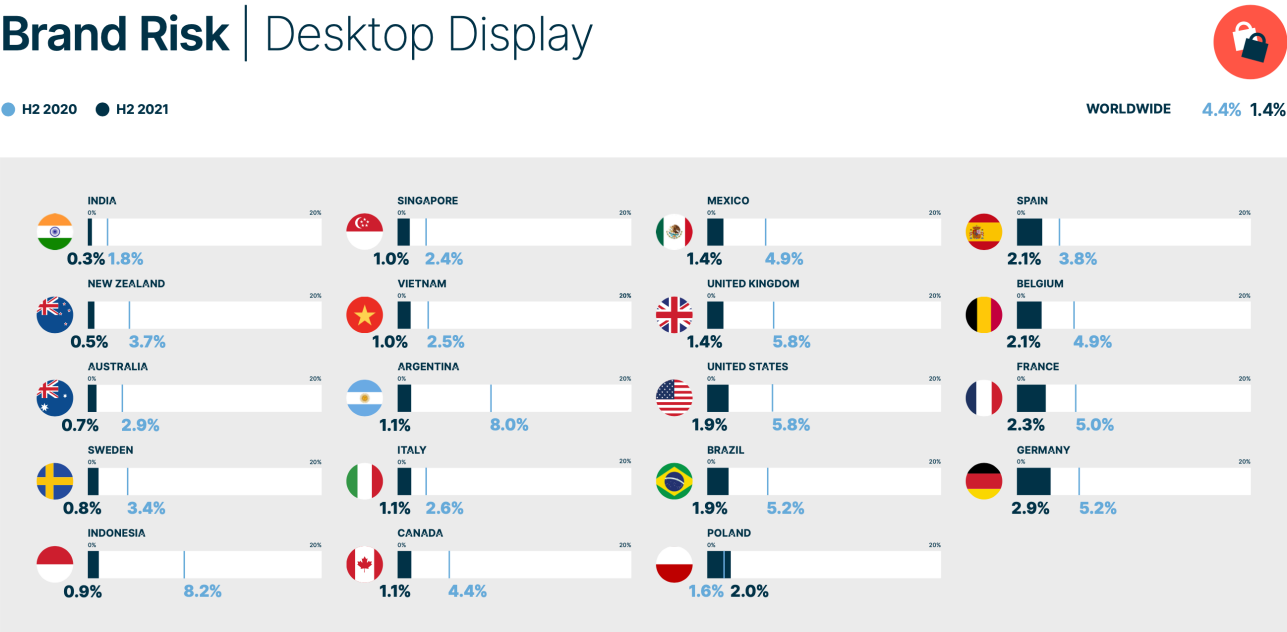
State of brand safety risks in India

According to the **IAS Media Quality H2 2021 report**, brand risk rates dipped to historically low levels in H2 2021, indicating brands' increased efforts to optimise ad placements toward contextually relevant content. Display formats in India were the safest for advertisers worldwide, with brand risk levels on desktop display at 0.3%, down by 1.5 percentage points (pp) year-on-year (YoY). While mobile web display brand risk fell to 0.6% in H2 2021, down by 2.1 pp, the worldwide average was 2.0%. Programmatically transacted display ads showed higher brand risk in India than publisher direct inventory at 0.6% on desktop and 0.9% on mobile web environments. This data suggests that the market is actively using solutions to protect brand reputation and place ads in suitable environments.

Indian marketers need to continue to be vigilant when it comes to brand risks, investing in quality inventory from reputable sources, and monitoring and optimizing with verification partners.

The following recommendations can help them focus on making quality impressions:

• Prioritising Brand Reputation- consumers have become discerning about the context where they consume advertisements and the IAS Ripple Effect study showed that more than 80% of respondents said it is important for online ads to appear in high-quality environments; close to 90% described ads appearing alongside low-quality content as "annoying"; and nearly 70% are inclined to hold advertisers solely responsible for poor placements.

Brand Risk | Desktop Display

H2 2020 ● H2 2021 ●   WORLDWIDE 4.4% **1.4%**

Country	H2 2021	H2 2020
INDIA	0.3%	1.8%
SINGAPORE	1.0%	2.4%
MEXICO	1.4%	4.9%
SPAIN	2.1%	3.8%
NEW ZEALAND	0.5%	3.7%
VIETNAM	1.0%	2.5%
UNITED KINGDOM	1.4%	5.8%
BELGIUM	2.1%	4.9%
AUSTRALIA	0.7%	2.9%
ARGENTINA	1.1%	8.0%
UNITED STATES	1.9%	5.8%
FRANCE	2.3%	5.0%
SWEDEN	0.8%	3.4%
ITALY	1.1%	2.6%
BRAZIL	1.9%	5.2%
GERMANY	2.9%	5.2%
INDONESIA	0.9%	8.2%
CANADA	1.1%	4.4%
POLAND	1.6%	2.0%

● H2 2020   ● H2 2021

WORLDWIDE   5.8% 2.0%

INDIA 0.6% 2.8%	**INDONESIA** 1.3% 16.0%	**ARGENTINA** 1.9% 8.7%	**BELGIUM** 3.0% 7.7%
NEW ZEALAND 1.0% 5.9%	**SINGAPORE** 1.3% 3.5%	**SPAIN** 2.1% 5.2%	**POLAND** 2.5% 3.5%
AUSTRALIA 1.0% 4.2%	**ITALY** 1.6% 3.5%	**MEXICO** 2.3% 7.4%	**FRANCE** 3.6% 7.7%
SWEDEN 1.1% 5.0%	**CANADA** 1.6% 5.8%	**BRAZIL** 2.5% 7.0%	**GERMANY** 4.3% 7.0%
VIETNAM 1.2% 3.0%	**UNITED KINGDOM** 1.8% 6.0%	**UNITED STATES** 2.7% 8.2%	

- Advanced technology and solutions- are available today to allow for full-page contextual analysis, which means understanding the true meaning of the page by accounting for nuances in context, language, semantics, sentiment, and emotional impact of the content. When the technology enables you to scan the story in detail, keeping into consideration the sentiments and emotions in context, you'll be better able to differentiate a story that's talking about something like the risk of increased death, versus a story about frontline medical workers and the sacrifices they're making; the URL or the headline alone won't tell the full picture. Our responsibility is to give our customers the ability to make that distinction and align against the content that they feel is right for their particular brand.

Contextual targeting is replacing third-party cookies. As behavioral analysis is phased out as a targeting methodology, there's a growing industry appreciation of contextual intelligence's power to produce highly efficient results thanks to its ability to place relevant, compelling content and other assets in front of interested eyeballs. Contextual targeting has become a top strategy to accurately target ads at scale, and the industry is already planning ahead for the deprecation of cookies by leaning into contextual approaches

While brands test, learn and innovate they continue to maximize their digital investments by focusing on the basics:

- Ensuring a baseline consistency by investing in quality impressions: Quality impressions ensure that a marketer's digital investment has the opportunity to be effective and not waste media dollars.

- Maximizing time in front of consumers in an effective environment and at an effective cost: With the decreasing availability of third-party data, content and context play a key role in identifying audiences and driving relevancy. In addition, maximizing time in front of audiences in a cost-effective way delivers on both performance and efficiency.

We are in the midst of a data privacy revolution. High-profile data breaches and a lack of transparency have left consumers wanting more control over how their data is collected and used. Data privacy must evolve, and quickly. And as it does, so does the marketing strategy that has oft relied so heavily on user targeting and CPC optimisation in the market, ignoring not only context but even brand safety and ad fraud, which are commonly seen as table stakes in digital ad markets around the world. Brand safety and consumer privacy go hand in hand.

THE FUTURE OF BRAND SAFETY: KEY TRENDS

KARTHIK SHANKAR
HEAD OF DIGITAL TRADING, GROUPM

The advertising industry is one of the world's most dynamic, ever-changing, and vibrant industries. It is always striving to find better ways to engage with users through new channels and media, in addition to new solutions to connect with consumers through technology. That requires brand safety to evolve equally as fast.

As such, it is GroupM's privilege to work in concert with our clients to navigate these risks in order to make advertising work better for people. Traditionally, brand safety risk was limited to digital—programmatic, and social. Now, with established media digitizing and reinventing themselves, opportunities to improve brand safety practices are appearing across new avenues. Combined, these factors yield new challenges for established media and old challenges for new media. But there is an opportunity to be found with every obstacle. Brand safety is a complex, nuanced matter and will continue to evolve in the years ahead.

In this chapter, we aim to look at what the future may hold. We begin with an overview of political, social, and technological shifts impacting brand safety at a high level. We then look at specific challenges into the categories currently undergoing a rapid transformation: Connected TV, Digital Out-of-Home, Location Data, Audio, and Gaming.

1. **POLICY SHIFTS** such as GDPR and CCPA, among many others around the world, have created a seismic ripple throughout the industry, the full effects of which are yet to be felt. As old measurement methodologies such as third-party cookies fall away, the industry has an opportunity to collectively create better standards.

2. **FAKE NEWS** and technologies that create deepfake videos are growing more sophisticated and threaten to further erode institutional trust. Brands must be more proactive than ever in preserving their core assets and demand transparency in all transactions.

3. **CONNECTED TV** promises to command a larger share of the budget in the coming years. However, measurement is fragmented across devices and publishers. Brands should demand greater transparency and interoperability among key players.

4. **PRECISE LOCATION DATA** is a sensitive issue that will require additional due diligence. The development of location verification services and aggregate learnings could mitigate some risk unless personal data becomes less available.

5. **AUDIO** is growing as streaming music and podcasts become further entrenched in consumers' lives. Currently, advertiser controls are in their nascence, and brand suitability/adjacency remains a concern, particularly in the world of podcasts, where content standards remain loose across the board.

6. **GAMING** presents a huge opportunity in terms of audience, but brands must navigate a vast landscape of platforms, titles, player personalities, and publisher relationships. Esports continues to grow in popularity, but brands must be aware of adjacency risks (violence and language, particularly). If people continue to stay home in the aftermath of the coronavirus, gaming audiences will retain some of the recent, rapid growth.

7. **FUNDAMENTALS STILL MATTER.** As brand safety continues to shift and evolve with media and technology, brands must not lose sight of established best practices, which serve as a vital North Star in uncertain times.

Evolving Operational Key Trends:

Prebid goes Mainstream:

While in the current scheme of things Post Bid Firewall Tags for Monitoring & Blocking largely occupies the space, pre-bid is going to be the next big shift on BAV.

Market Learning:

- Current trend shows Advertisers achieving better results in terms of performance and better positioning of their brands with the help of these products in the Pre-Bid Phase

- Many advertisers globally have reaped the benefits of these products in terms of keeping their brands safe and targeting relevant customers, as it gives customized control and apart from the 400+ (Targeting) and 200+ (Avoidance) segments, we can curate customized ones as per the current market trends

- Advertisers are combining pre- and post-bid coverage to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in their media buys. Last year, 49% of APAC video impressions were bought programmatically. This year, that number rose to 62%

- Better measurement with CTV

Future Solutions & Implications:

- Implementation of Pre-Bid solutions guarantees you are bidding on only quality inventory and post-bid solutions guarantee you are optimizing the results to further improve the performance, thus ensuring overall coverage for your advertisers

- In 2022, we recommend leveraging one or most of these segments as per advertiser/ campaign objectives and we can try with a handful as tests to see the results and decide the way forward

- As the Programmatic spends go high due to changes in the industry landscape as well, we believe these segments will be quite critical in achieving client goals in terms of BAV parameters

- As mentioned above, with the spending going up for Programmatic, the risks related to BAV and Brand Image will also go high because of the lack of transparency. These unique in the market context control segments can give you customized safety and suitability coverage in terms of which impressions to bid on

- Another important change in the landscape will be the cookie deprecation phase and these Context Control Targeting segments will help future proof your solutions to mitigate any looming risk

Brand safety in Creator Economy

As brands continue to submerge themselves more into creating influence along with creators and platforms, it is important to work on the content guardrails.

The rapid growth of the creator economy, both with respect to content production and audience engagement, has amplified the need to verify the safety of highly fragmented, high-velocity digital environments.

AdTech companies are building on solutions leveraging natural language processing which has a high accuracy rate in the assessment of user-generated content.

NLP AI measures live environments, setting it apart from historical approaches that only measure static source material or that depend on keywords — which are inaccurate and lack needed context — to flag content.

Safety in Metaverse

As we move into the next generation of the internet in the form of Web 3, there is a clear opportunity to reset the status quo, ensuring that ethical online behaviors are built into the mega-platforms of tomorrow and that the division that has haunted Web 2 is banished to the history books.

So, it's critical to ponder around the risks inherent to Virtual worlds.

The metaverse currently exists in an unregulated state, outside the influence of the norms and rules that brands or agencies today work with. While the kinds of content that advertisements might appear alongside today is endlessly varied, in the metaverse brands will have to contend with that same variability in the actual platforms hosting the content as well.

To give users a perspective while running YT ads brands will still have a choice to select the content where they want to position or run their ads along. But for a video shown in a virtual world is a whole new dimension to consider in the form of the space itself. Not only that but there is also the behavior of the users to consider.

Now the important question arises, how can brands safely enter the metaverse?

While web 3 platforms are still in their early stages, existing web 2 platforms run extensive teams of human moderators alongside artificial intelligence detection capabilities to filter out bad content. Despite this, those acting in bad faith are still more than able to slip through the cracks. It seems the anonymity afforded by a virtual environment people can freely log in and out of will inevitably lead to undesirable behavior. When it comes to branded spaces, users have the potential to occupy or even vandalize those spaces and repurpose them to different means.

Ultimately, the unpredictability inherent to the space will mean brand managers have to be on their toes, but it may be riskier to just leave users to create unlicensed copies. Instead, brands should be leading from the front to ensure control of their message to head off users creating whole new associations for existing properties.

The Rules of Engagement

As we enter the Web 3 era, there are increasingly loud calls to build safety into the infrastructure of virtual worlds, before they take off. One such initiative comes from the OASIS Consortium, which has released a set of standards for ethical online behaviors in the metaverse prioritizing openness, accountability, security, innovation, and sustainability.

Conclusion

Brand Safety Reimagined: A toolkit for the modern marketer report is a bold, relentless attempt to redefine the status quo and reimagine brand safety in the new environment.

This is arguably true that while no one can guarantee with 100% certainty that all of your content is brand-safe, MMA India hopes that the brand safety reimagined: A toolkit for the modern marketer has offered you a good start for developing best practices for your organisation.

Concluding the efforts of the brand safety and suitability council members and several industry stakeholders; the report endeavours to help brands working in the external/uncontrolled environment by putting guidelines and procedures in place. Across chapters; the report has tried to talk about clear guidelines, tools and strategic improvements to manage crisis, governance & define stakeholder roles & responsibilities.

To bring the effort to life, MMA has created another industry first initiative powered by MFilterit: a self-evaluation tool that delivers a risk rating for both Brand Safety & AdFraud.

Access Marketer Digital Advertising Safety & Integrity Tool: An MMA initiative and powered by mFilterit here: https://questionaire. mfilterit.com/AdSafetyAndIntegrityTool

**BS council members- https://www.mmaglobal.com/programs/brand-safety-council

MMA INDIA BRAND SAFETY REPORT FEEDBACK SURVEY

Please spend a few minutes sharing your thoughts with us.

Click here to fill out the MMA India brand safety report Feedback Survey.

Take the survey!

A big thank you to all our esteemed contributors to Brand Safety Reimagined toolkit

CHINTAN SONI
Vice President, Madison Digital - Products, Madison

MADISON WORLD

DHIRAJ GUPTA
CTO and Founder, mFIlterit

mFilterIt
Adding Trust to Digital

FAISAL KAWOOSA
Founder, techarc

techarc

GEETANJALI BHATTACHARJI
Executive Director, Africa, India & Middle East | Advisory Services , EY

EY

JAHID AHMED
Vice President and Head - Digital, Content and Social Media Marketing, HDFC Bank

HDFC BANK
We understand your world

KARTHIK SHANKAR
Head of Digital Trading, GroupM

groupm

LOU PASKALIS
President & Chief Operating Officer, MMA Global

MMA

MONEKA KHURANA
Country Head and Board Member, India, MMA India

MMA

NACHIKET DEOLE
Head of Sales, India, DoubleVerify

DV
DoubleVerify

NEHA MARKANDA
Head, Business Marketing, Facebook India

∞ Meta

SAURABH KHATTAR
India Commercial Lead, Integral Ad Science

IAS
Integral Ad Science

LLOYD PEREIRA
Director-Strategic Alliances & Programming - MMA India, MMA Global

MMA

A big thank you to all our esteemed contributors to Brand Safety Reimagined toolkit

VISHWAS DASS
Senior Manager, Strategic Communication & Content, MMA India

SALONI JAIN
Manager, Research & Analytics, techarc

ADITYA SHAH
SVP, Communications, Tata Play Ltd

ANURITA CHOPRA
Chief Marketing Officer, GSK Consumer Healthcare, ISC

NITIN GUPTA
CEO, Xapads Media

PEEYUSH BACHLAUS
Assistant Vice President, Marketing, Aditya Birla Grasim – Paints Division

A preview of our brand safety & suitability council members for their support

ARVIND R P
MMA India Board Member; Director of Marketing and Communications, McDonald's India

ABHISHEK JOSHI
Head Marketing & Business Partnerships, MX Player

RAJNISH KUMAR
Head of Digital Strategy, ITC Limited

MAHIP DWIVEDI
Head - Mobile App Marketing and SEO Growth, Flipkart

JAYESH ULLATTIL
VP & GM, InMobi

AMIT GUPTA
Managing Director, Httpool

ARUP BANSAL
Head of Ads Strategy, Hotstar

DOLLY JHA
MA India Board Member; Country Head - Nielsen Media , South Asia, Nielsen India Pvt Ltd

JAGANATHAN CHELLIAH
Director of Marketing, India, Western Digital

PRASHANT SINGH
Country Manager, India, RTB House

NIKHIL KUMAR
VP India & SEA, mediasmart

VANDANA CHAMARIA
Head of Ads, Brand & Reputation Marketing, Google India

A preview of our brand safety & suitability council members for their support

TEJAS APTE
General Manager,
Media- South Asia,
Unilever

Unilever

AMITABH PANDE
Chief Consumer Strategy,
Planning and Digital Officer,
Diageo India

UNITED SPIRITS
A DIAGEO Group Company

ABOUT MMA GLOBAL

Comprised of over 800-member companies globally and 15 regional offices, the MMA is the only marketing trade association that brings together the full ecosystem of marketers, tech providers and sellers working collaboratively to architect the future of marketing, while relentlessly delivering growth today. Led by CMOs, the MMA helps marketers lead the imperative for marketing change —in ways that enable future breakthroughs while optimising current activities. The MMA is committed to science and questioning and believes that creating marketing impact is steeped in constructively challenging the status quo, encouraging business leaders to aggressively adopt proven, peer-driven and scientific best practices, without compromise. The MMA invests millions of dollars in rigorous research to enable marketers with unassailable truth and actionable tools. By enlightening, empowering, and enabling marketers, the MMA shapes the future of modern marketing propelling business growth. Anchoring the MMA's mission are four core pillars; to cultivate inspiration by driving innovation for the Chief Marketing Officer; to build marketing capabilities for marketing organizations through fostering know-how and confidence; to champion the effectiveness and impact through research providing tangible ROI measurement; and advocacy.

MMA India Board Members

Local Council Leadership

AMIT JAIN
MMA India Board Chair;
Managing Director
L'Oréal India

L'ORÉAL
INDIA

PRASHANT KUMAR
MMA India Co-Chair;
Chief Executive Officer,
South Asia, GroupM

group*m*

PRIYA NAIR
MMA India Chair Emeritus;
Executive Director, Beauty &
Personal Care
Hindustan Unilever Ltd

Hindustan Unilever Limited

Advisory Board

MANISH AGGARWAL
MMA India Board
Member; Head, Growth
& Monetization
Sony Pictures Networks
India Pvt. Ltd

SONY
PICTURES
NETWORKS

VINEET R. AHUJA
Managing Director - Strategy
& Consulting
Accenture India

accenture

**SANDEEP
BHUSHAN**
Director, Meta Business Group,
Meta India
MMA India Board Member

∞ Meta

SAPNA CHADHA
MMA India Board
Member; Vice President,
Marketing - India,
Southeast Asia and
South Asia
Google Asia Pacific

Google

NAKUL CHOPRA
MMA India Board
Member; Chief Execu-
tive Officer
BARC India

B A
R C
BROADCAST
AUDIENCE
RESEARCH
COUNCIL
INDIA

ROHIT DADWAL
MMA Board Member and
Managing Director APAC
MMA APAC

MMA

DOLLY JHA
MMA India Board Member;
Country Head - Nielsen Media ,
South Asia
Nielsen India Pvt Ltd

Nielsen

AJAY KAKAR
MMA India Board
Member; Chief
Marketing Officer
Aditya Birla Capital
Limited

ADITYA BIRLA GROUP

MMA India Board Members

Advisory Board

MONEKA KHURANA
Country Head & Board
Member India
MMA Global - India

VIPUL MATHUR
MMA India Board Member;
Vice President, Ecom and
Modern Trade
Hindustan Unilever Ltd

SANKALP MEHROTRA
MMA India Board Member;
Vice President of Monetization
Flipkart

AVINASH PANDEY
MMA India Board
Member; CEO, ANN
ABP Network Pvt. Ltd.

RAJESH RAMAKRISHNAN
MMA India Board Member;
Managing Director
Perfetti Van Melle India

PREETI REDDY
MMA India Board Member;
Chairwoman - Insights
Division, South Asia
Kantar

ARVIND R P
MMA India Board Member;
Director of Marketing and
Communications
McDonald's India

SIDHARTH SHAKDHER
MMA India Board
Member; CMO & Growth
Head
Disney + Hotstar

GULSHAN VERMA
MMA India Board
Member; CEO
JioAds

SUKHLEEN ANEJA
MMA India Board Member;
Chief Executive Officer
The Good Glamm Group

MMA AMMP COMMUNITY

The MMA AMMP Community is a credible industry resource centre for everything one needs to know about modern marketing.

In 2021, MMA brought together a high-powered ecosystem to 'Accelerate Modern Marketing Practices' (AMMP). The MMA AMMP Community is a specialized taskforce with elite leaders across the below five core councils:

E-Commerce
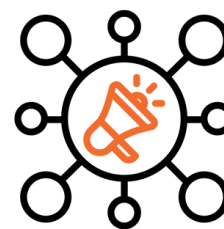
Martech & Data

Voice & Audio

Brand Safety & Suitability

Media Effectiveness

E-Commerce Council

The council has prioritised the following key areas to work on:

- Build overall understanding of the ecosystem and to address cluster-specific issues
- Capability building in Omni Channel Marketing
- Streamline ecosystem through building a common vocabulary and industry standards

Martech & Data Council

The council will seek to add value to marketers by helping them to assess and adopt the right MarTech stacks and enabling business transformation.
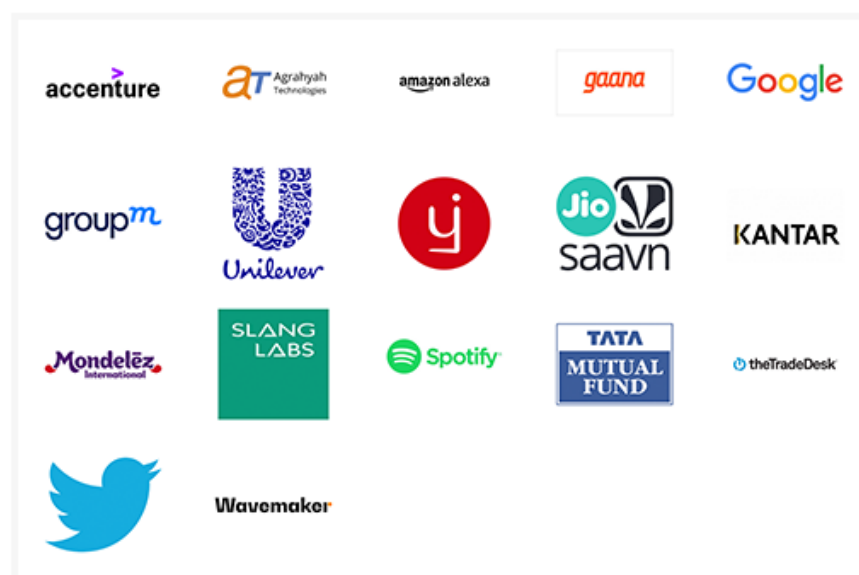
The Council will:

- Establish unbiased expertise in the domain
- Educate brands and marketers on practical usage and trends of MarTech
- Enable providers to understand the needs of marketers
- Create credible content on the MarTech lifecycle from evaluation to implementation

Voice & Audio Council

MMA's Voice & Audio council originated in 2020 where we saw a huge untapped opportunity to connect with new target audiences that may not have been possible before due to barriers created by education, exposure, language, and connectivity. The council will:

- Establish best practices on Voice & Audio marketing
- Enable brands to understand this new medium & discuss how adoption can be widened.
- Create knowledge resources like playbooks & whitepapers which will include use cases by brands nationally & globally.
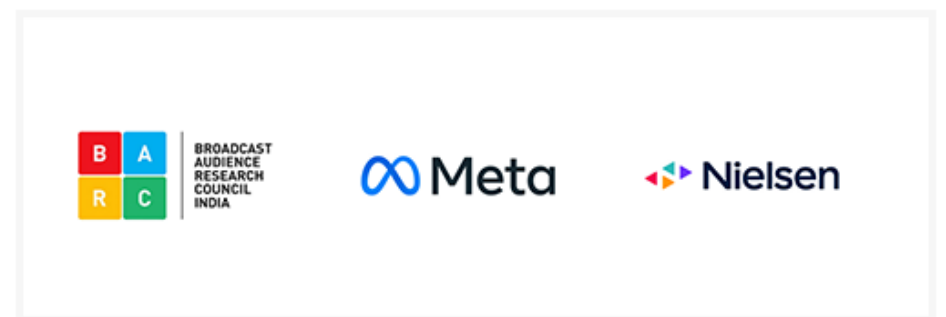
Brand Safety & Suitability Council

The Council's aim is to develop processes, programs, benchmarks, and measures to protect ones brand's reputation and marketing investment. The idea is to provide guidance and learnings to brands and performance marketers.

The council will create India specific Brand Safety framework for the digital advertising ecosystem that will **identify** and **measure** elements of an advertisement having high impact on the quality of **content, media,** and **engagement.**

Media Effectiveness Council

The council works extensively to enable POV on cross-media reach and effectiveness of mobile versus other media and assess the impact of new media on business outcomes.

RESOURCES

The Brand Safety and Suitability Strategy Guide
https://www.mmaglobal.com/documents/brand-safety-and-suitability-strategy-guide

Marketer Digital Advertising Safety & Integrity Tool: An MMA initiative powered by mFilterit:
https://questionaire.mfilterit.com/

What is brand safety and why does it matter to India?
https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/in/Documents/technology-media-telecommunications/in-tmt-rise-of-on-demand-content.pdf

https://www.statista.com/statistics/1242834/india-daily-time-spent-on-social-media-by-type/

Double Verify:
https://doubleverify.com/four-fundamental-shifts-in-media-and-advertising-during-2020/

https://www.emarketer.com/
forecasts/584b26021403070290f93a8c/585191880626310a2c1867c5

https://doubleverify.com/spotlight-news-insights/

https://doubleverify.com/newsroom/doubleverify-launches-brand-suitability-tiers-forging-alignment-between-advertisers-publishers/?news=1

EY-FICCI M&E Report 2022
https://assets.ey.com/content/dam/ey-sites/ey-com/en_in/topics/media-and-entertainment/2022/ey-ficci-m-and-e-report-tuning-into-consumer.pdf

Integral Ad Science
Digital Campaigns in India Deliver Strong Media Quality Results in H2 2021 According to the Latest Integral Ad Science Media Quality Report - Integral Ad Science

MMA India Brand Safety & Suitability council members
https://www.mmaglobal.com/india-local-council/working-councils

MMA AMMP Community
https://www.mmaglobal.com/india-local-council/working-councils

DISCLAIMER

The information contained in the Brand Safety Reimagined: A toolkit for the modern marketers ("Report") would serve as an educational tool for senior marketers and digital custodians to help marketers design a brand safety blueprint.

The information contained herein is purely for reference purposes only and we assert that no business or investment decisions be made solely based on the information presented in the Report. If any such decisions are made based on the contents of the Report, the same shall be entirely at the cost and consequences of the decision maker alone. The information provided herein is on "as is" basis and is based on data sourced from, or provided by, third parties or publicly available sources, for which prior express consents have been obtained. While reasonable endeavors have been made to present accurate data in the Report, no representation or warranty, express or implied, is made or claimed as to its accuracy, completeness, correctness or merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose.

Accordingly, MMA India including its directors, subsidiaries, associates, and employees shall not be in any way responsible for any loss or damage that may be caused to any person from any error in the information, views and opinions expressed in the Report. The logos, trademarks, and any other marks used in the Report belong to their respective owners and have been reproduced in this Report with their prior permission. The contents of this Report are confidential in nature and without prejudice. No part of the Report may be divulged to any third party, reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, photocopying, mechanical, recording or otherwise without our prior express written consent. Appropriate express written consent be sought from various publishers/individuals who have been quoted in the Report prior to borrowing/using/quoting their content. The views expressed in the Report are based on the information available to us as of the date of the Report and are subject to change from time to time without notice. We do not accept the responsibility to update this Report nor do we accept any liability arising from the use of this Report in any manner whatsoever.