

## New IAS Report Uncovers How Misleading Content Impacts Digital Advertising

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*New research reveals the industry's lack of "clear guidelines" regarding advertising alongside misinformation*

NEW YORK, June 6, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- Integral Ad Science (Nasdaq: IAS), a global leader in digital media quality, today released its "Misinformation & Media Quality" report that uncovers how false information affects the digital advertising industry. The report of digital media experts explores the challenges that misleading content poses for media strategies, as well as what actions advertisers are taking to protect their campaigns against these growing threats.



"As we continue to classify sources of misinformation, our report illustrates the heightened need to focus on controlling advertisers' contextual adjacencies, including the implementation of suitability frameworks that specifically address false or misleading content," said Tony Marlow, CMO, IAS. "Coupled with our Global Disinformation Index (GDI) partnership, which provides advertisers with enhanced misinformation protection, this research reveals how industry leaders are grappling with misleading content and what actions they are, or aren't, taking to protect both current and future campaigns."

IAS, in partnership with YouGov, surveyed over 500 digital media experts from brands, agencies, publishers and adtech providers to examine perspectives surrounding misinformation, disinformation, and fake news. The research revealed the following trends:

### **A Vast Majority of Media Experts Agree Misinformation Should be Actively Avoided, But Few Say Their Organizations Have Clear Guidelines**

The majority of media experts (73%) "agree" or "strongly agree" that ad buyers and sellers must actively avoid misinformation, disinformation, and fake news. However, less than half (47%) of those media experts reported that their organizations have clear guidelines regarding advertising alongside misinformation.

Despite its impact in diminishing audience reach and advertising opportunities, broad blocking is most commonly used by industry experts to avoid misleading content. Nearly half of media experts (45%) plan to block entire content types, 43% will block specific topics, and 38% will block geographic locations where misinformation is common.

Context-based strategies, which allow ad buyers and sellers to avoid misinformation with minimal impact on reach, are underused. Less than one-third (32%) of respondents currently use or plan to use context-based avoidance and targeting methods, while less than one-fifth (18%) leverage pre or post-bid avoidance segments that avoid undesired placements in the bid stream.

### **Recent Global Events Have Fueled the Threat of Misinformation, Disinformation, and Fake News Content**

As ad spending continues to grow, total media ad spend is expected to approach [\\$350 billion in 2022](#), making media quality assurance ever-present as buyers and sellers seek to minimize known and emerging threats. The Global Disinformation Index (GDI) estimates that advertisers unwittingly provide at least [\\$235m](#) to global disinformation sites, on an annual basis.

The majority of experts agree that the spread of misinformation has been fueled by recent global developments. Media experts surveyed reported that the volume of misinformation has increased due to political polarization (76%), recent geopolitical developments (68%), and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (62%).

### **A Large Number of Industry Experts Report High Levels of Concern Regarding Media Threats**

As ad spending grows, media quality threats will remain top of mind, with 84% of experts reporting "high" or "very high" levels of concern about at least one threat. A majority of these industry experts flag content-spreading misinformation, disinformation, and fake news as the most concerning media quality threats, with 63% reporting "high" or "very high" levels of concern. In such an event, impact on company reputation and consumer distrust are of greater concern than campaign ROI. Around disinformation, 42% of experts conveyed concern about the impact on their company's reputation or consumer distrust in legitimate content and advertising, whereas 29% cited concern over reduced audience reach and only 22% around lost media budget/revenue.

Though digital media experts agree that the spread of misinformation is the most concerning media quality threat, apprehension persists around ad

fraud, adjacencies next to questionable content (i.e. brand risk), and low viewability for more than half of respondents, according to the report.

### **Marketers and Brands Prioritize Social Platforms Even Though They Consider the Environment Vulnerable to Misinformation**

The research shows that marketers are prioritizing social platforms. Almost half (42%) of respondents identified social platforms as a priority. However, more than half of respondents (60%) consider social platforms as the most likely environment to experience misinformation incidents, followed by mobile and audio.

### **About Integral Ad Science**

Integral Ad Science (IAS) is a global leader in digital media quality. IAS makes every impression count, ensuring that ads are viewable by real people, in safe and suitable environments, activating contextual targeting, and driving supply path optimization. Our mission is to be the global benchmark for trust and transparency in digital media quality for the world's leading brands, publishers, and platforms. We do this through data-driven technologies with actionable real-time signals and insight. Founded in 2009 and headquartered in New York, IAS works with thousands of top advertisers and premium publishers worldwide. For more information, visit [integralads.com](https://integralads.com).

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