

Factsheet: Minimising the risk of advertising misplacement

Q. Is there an issue with advertising misplacement in digital?

A. Digital advertising helps to fund much of the content and many of the services and applications that we all enjoy and use, making them widely available at little or no cost. However, there have been cases where digital display advertising has appeared on sites and next to content that an advertiser may consider inappropriate, and that could jeopardise its brand. In some instances, the sites involved have come under media and political scrutiny, particularly if they are involved in activity that undermines the business model of legitimate content producers. The IAB seeks to address this issue, working closely with its ad partners across the UK trading environment.

Q. How does the ad industry seek to address the problem of advertising misplacement in today's market?

A. The IAB is committed to tackling advertising misplacement through an industry body called the Digital Trading Standards Group ([DTSG](#)). The DTSG was set up in 2012 as cross-industry initiative to develop guidelines aimed at:

- reducing the risk of misplacement of digital display advertising
- upholding brand safety
- protecting the integrity of digital advertising

The DTSG has published [good practice](#) for all business models involved in buying, selling and facilitating digital display advertising. The initiative is overseen and governed by the Joint Industry Committee for Web Standards ([JICWEBS](#)) whose Board members include the IAB, ISBA, the IPA and the AOP.

In signing up to the DTSG's [Good Practice Principles](#), businesses are committing to minimise the risk of advertising misplacement and therefore injecting greater transparency into the market for advertisers when purchasing digital display advertising. In doing so, these committed businesses are differentiating themselves in the market, showing buyers and sellers what tools are in place as well as standardising agreements and policies to achieve the goal.

Q. What are the Good Practice Principles?

A. The DTSG [Good Practice Principles](#) outline six commitments for those involved in buying, selling or facilitating digital display advertising¹ that aim to significantly **reduce the risk of display advertising misplacement**. For example: the Principles commit a buyer and seller to agreeing where they intend the advertising to appear, or not appear, and by what means this will be managed. This can be through an independently-verified Content Verification (CV) tool² and/or Appropriate/Inappropriate Schedules. Under the principles, buyers and sellers should ensure that their contractual agreements cover the substantive points regarding the methods for minimising ad misplacement.

¹ Defined as the display of visual files including images, Flash and video provided by Buyers to Sellers on a digital media property.

² Four CV tool providers have been independently [certified](#) by the UK industry-owned auditor ABC to [JICWEBS standards](#) (as at February 2017).

Q. Is there a verification process for businesses that sign up to the Principles?

- A. The DTSG Principles commit each signatory business to have their advertising misplacement minimisation policies [verified](#) by a JICWEBS-approved independent third party. Businesses that JICWEBS agrees are compliant, after reviewing the verification provider's report, will receive a seal to show to the market that they are meeting the agreed standard.



Q. How is the DTSG structured? Who sits on it?

- A. As the DTSG makes decisions that affect the way that digital display advertising is traded, it is important that the entire market is reflected in its composition. Good practice needs the buy-in of the 'buy' side as well as the 'sell' side. At present the DTSG is comprised of representatives from advertisers, agencies, agency trading desks, demand side platforms, advertising exchanges, sales houses, advertising networks, supply side platforms and publishers.

Q. Can any business commit to the Good Practice Principles?

- A. The [Principles](#) cover commitments for all businesses involved in the buying, selling or facilitating of digital display advertising. You can see which companies are currently DTSG-certified [here](#). To find out more about the DTSG and how to sign up, contact the IAB team: steve@iabuk.net or dee@iabuk.net, or contact JICWEBS directly: info@jicwebs.org.

Q. I'm an advertiser. What can I do?

- A. We recommend that when buying media, brands work with partners that offer choice and control, like the signatories of the DTSG do, to reduce the risk of their ad being seen alongside inappropriate content. Brands should agree with their advertising partners where they do and don't want their ads to appear, and sellers should be able to explain what measures and controls they have in place to manage this.

Q. The market will continually change. Won't the DTSG become out of date?

- A. The DTSG intends to evolve its membership (and therefore the Principles) in line with technology and evolving market practices. The DTSG [Principles](#) have been purposely written in a technology-neutral way and with this flexibility in mind. It is also important that the Principles allow for innovation within the digital ad trading market. To reflect the evolution of the market, the IAB sits on the DTSG, and monitors developments through its own [Display Trading Council](#).

Q. Is the DTSG just an UK initiative?

- A. Yes, although many of the committed businesses operate at scale and will therefore apply the good practice at a global level and in line with other similar initiatives, such as in the US. The DTSG [Principles](#) apply to business with UK presence targeting UK audiences/users.