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WORKSTREAM 5

Commitment Letter for Climate Information Integrity in Digital Advertising

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Commitment letter

for Climate Information Integrity in Digital Advertising

The spread of false and distorted information about the climate emergency – whether out of ignorance or strategic intent – has been undermining public understanding of the real risks of the environmental crisis and the advancement of public policies, while also obstructing compliance with the international climate targets agreed under the 2015 Paris Agreement, which seeks to limit global warming and mitigate its impacts.

Central actors in the contemporary information ecosystem, digital platforms today operate policies with significant implications for consumer rights and public interest. Supported by artificial intelligence systems, these companies have intensified the massive collection of data to analyze individual behavior and microtarget content to their users. The analysis of digital traces sustains the automated personalization of consumption, enabling persuasive ads and large-scale experimentation.

By anticipating and inducing desires, this process creates significant risks to individual autonomy and to conscious decision-making. And advertisers and programmatic advertising companies are not absent from it: they must act in accordance with their ethical, legal, and social responsibilities in the digital environment.

Advertising in digital environments that spread socio-environmental and climate disinformation runs counter to basic human rights principles, since disinformation threatens the collective right to reliable information and to civic participation in democratic societies. Moreover, by funding this type of content, brands reinforce practices that undermine legal certainty, erode institutions, and harm the communities directly affected by climate change. This association compromises corporate social responsibility and causes serious reputational damage.

Companies, as agents of social transformation, need to ensure that their advertising investments are guided by transparency, sustainability, and respect for human rights – a civilizational advance that demands affirmation and protection. Directing ads to unsafe environments, such as those that spread socio-environmental and climate disinformation, undermines consumer trust, drives away investors, weakens the brand's legitimacy in the eyes of society, and can depreciate one of its greatest assets: its reputation.

Systematically, however, the digital ecosystem has been instrumentalized for public opinion manipulation operations and financial fraud practices, including the dissemination of disinformation campaigns through paid and boosted content. These dynamics have found room to consolidate largely because of the lack of transparency, the absence of specific regulation of the digital environment, and the shortage of effective mechanisms for overseeing and holding accountable the actors involved in these processes.

Since advertising has unique reach and force of impact—not only influencing consumption decisions but also helping to shape social perceptions, narratives, and behaviors – curbing the reach of the ads and boosted content that amplify denial of the climate emergency, and the profitability of the platforms that benefit economically from disinformation, is a task that cannot be postponed.

Equally important is promoting the circulation of trustworthy information on digital platforms – which involves going beyond the fight against disinformation to include the adoption of mechanisms that promote scientific and journalistic information on climate change.

Aware of this responsibility, the advertisers, programmatic advertising companies, and digital platforms listed below commit to adopting practices that use digital advertising as a mechanism to encourage the integrity of information on climate change and to promote public trust in the environmental agenda.

These are our commitments:

▶ ADVERTISERS

Commit to the integrity of information on climate change in their businesses, guaranteeing it in the ads they run and neither producing nor disseminating disinformative content on the subject;

1. Avoid greenwashing practices and misleading sustainability claims, strengthening advertising credibility by ensuring clarity, robust evidence, no inducement to error, and no relevant omission in climate-related ads;
2. Develop campaigns on the theme of the integrity of information on climate change, promoting messages and content aligned with the scientific consensus on climate;
3. Refrain from advertising on webpages that promote disinformation about climate change, moving beyond a sole focus on reach and audience and adopting inclusion lists (rather than exclusion lists) of publisher and outlet domains recognized for their credibility, built on objective criteria, and reviewed on a recurring basis;
4. Avoid monetizing environments that spread disinformation about climate change, blocking sites created solely to generate advertising revenue;
5. Establish direct contracts with ad verification partners that make it possible to monitor and reduce interactions with ads that do not originate from real, intentional users but rather from fraudulent or automated traffic, strengthening the transparency and security of campaigns;
6. Comply with all legal and regulatory requirements concerning the environmental impacts of communication;
7. Support initiatives that promote literacy and the population's right to access trusted information about climate change, including consumer interaction channels that make it possible to answer questions and provide additional verified information on climate data;
8. Support journalistic initiatives providing trustworthy coverage of climate change, investing in the training of reporters and editorial desks, and directing investments to trusted outlets;
9. Regularly request detailed information on the performance of their campaigns and on the places where their ads were served, enabling full audits of advertising campaigns and the realignment of their placement. Further, require from platforms transparency standards that allow end-to-end validation of the advertising supply chain; and
10. Publish periodic reports on the impact of the measures adopted to foster the integrity of climate information.

ADVERTISING COMPANIES

1. Commit to the integrity of information on climate change, guaranteeing that all advertising content they produce and intermediate contains no disinformation about climate change, respecting scientific consensus and regulatory guidelines;
2. Avoid greenwashing practices, ensuring that campaigns with environmental claims are clear, evidence-based, and free of relevant omissions, promoting transparency and credibility;
3. Promote creative responsibility, supporting campaigns that strengthen the integrity of climate information and helping to expand public knowledge in an accessible, responsible, and ethical way;
4. Guide advertisers by recommending investments in trusted outlets, not funding, and avoiding the monetization of environments that spread disinformation, to guarantee campaigns aligned with best practices;
5. Support climate literacy and encourage education and awareness initiatives on climate change, through content and formats that broaden access to reliable information;
6. Support the development of good practices within the advertising-company sector that reinforce the integrity of climate advertising in the digital environment;
7. Fully comply with the legal and regulatory requirements concerning communication about environmental impacts;
8. Regularly request detailed information on the performance of their campaigns and on the places where their ads were served, enabling full audits of advertising campaigns and the realignment of their placement. Further, require from platforms transparency standards that allow end-to-end validation of the advertising supply chain; and
9. Publish periodic reports on the impact of the measures adopted to foster the integrity of climate information.

DIGITAL PLATFORMS and PROGRAMMATIC ADVERTISING SERVICES

1. Include the protection of information integrity in their terms of use and community policies;
2. Increase transparency toward the advertising market, ensuring that companies direct their ads ethically and responsibly, giving visibility to content monetization flows and clearly disclosing advertising policies;
3. Prevent the distribution/serving of ads and of paid/boosted content of a disinformative nature, as well as the monetization of content that is deliberately false or that contradicts scientific consensus on the subject;
4. Develop prebunking techniques aimed at warning users in advance about potentially false or misleading content;
5. Label paid/boosted content about the environment and climate, to help users exercise critical judgment about the degree of reliability of the information they consume;
6. Improve content moderation and recommendation systems with a view to promoting information integrity on their platforms;
7. Develop studies on climate-change-related disinformation techniques used by digital influencers, to curb their circulation;
8. Expand agreements with fact-checking organizations to confront disinformation about climate change within their structures;
9. Adopt measures to encourage the circulation of scientific and journalistic content about climate change within their structures; and
10. Make data on paid and boosted content available for scientific research purposes.

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