

# Offensive Content on Platforms Turns Off Consumers, Tarnishes Ads

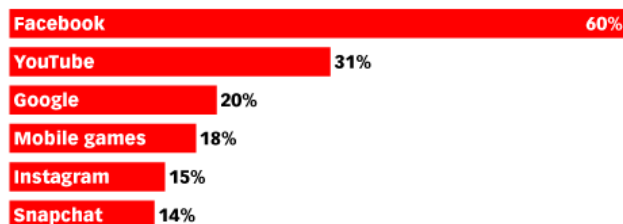
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**B**rand safety remains a concern, and one wrong move by marketers can tarnish consumer sentiment. So what do the negative perceptions caused by consumers encountering offensive content mean for brands and the platforms that carry their advertising?

According to an April 2019 report from mobile video ad network [AdColony](#), three in five consumers worldwide encounter offensive content on Facebook, and nearly one-third noted the same was true of YouTube. Inappropriate content appearing on Google, in mobile games, or on platforms like Instagram and Snapchat was less likely, but still apparent.

**On Which Select Platforms Have Mobile Users Worldwide Encountered Undesirable Content\*?**  
% of respondents, 2018



Note: n=931; \*defined as hateful, inappropriate or offensive content  
Source: AdColony, "The AdColony Brand Safety Survey," April 12, 2019

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Marketers must be aware of their ad's environment. When consumers see offensive content, it has the potential to shift their perceptions of the platform on which it appears and of the brands whose ads are displayed nearby.

In the AdColony survey, nearly half of respondents said their view of an advertiser is negatively impacted when an ad appears alongside undesirable content. Sixty percent said offensive content negatively impacts the way they view the platform it appears on. Similarly, ads that appear near negative content decrease consumer intent to associate with a brand by 2.8 times, per an October 2018 report from brand safety company [Cheq](#).

But these findings should be taken with a grain of salt. Results from both surveys were self-reported—and still, 39% of AdColony's respondents said ad placements next to undesirable content had no impact on their opinions of advertisers.

“Marketers obviously have incentive to keep their ads away from controversial content, but it’s worth recognizing that people who launch boycotts in the name of brand safety are atypical,” eMarketer analyst Ross Benes said. “In fact, [some studies](#) indicate that most people react with indifference when they see ads next to offensive content.”

While [60% of US ad industry professionals regard brand safety as a serious concern](#), many marketers continue buying ad spots on platforms like YouTube and Facebook. According to a November 2018 survey from [GumGum](#) and [Digiday](#), YouTube was the most likely platform to be rated fair/poor at 25.6%, yet we forecast that its US ad revenues will grow 16.0% this year to \$5.34 billion.

## How Do US Ad Industry Professionals\* Rate the Efforts of Select Platforms to Improve Brand Safety?

% of respondents, Nov 2018

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Instagram	7.6%	36.3%	38.2%	16.4%	1.5%
Publisher sites	6.1%	21.8%	49.2%	16.0%	6.9%
Snapchat	5.0%	24.4%	46.6%	22.1%	1.9%
Search	4.6%	34.4%	40.5%	19.5%	1.2%
LinkedIn	3.4%	34.0%	42.0%	17.6%	3.1%
Facebook	3.4%	14.9%	66.0%	14.5%	1.2%
Ad tech vendors	3.1%	25.6%	46.6%	24.4%	0.4%
Twitter	2.3%	34.0%	50.8%	12.2%	0.8%
YouTube	0.8%	20.6%	53.1%	19.1%	6.5%

Note: n=262; over the past 12 months; \*from agencies, brands, online publishers and technology providers  
Source: GumGum and Digiday, "Time for a check-up: The brand safety crisis one year later," Feb 12, 2019

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US ad industry professionals think Facebook has done a slightly better job of improving brand safety, with just 15.7% rating its efforts fair/poor. According to our estimates, Facebook's US ad revenues will reach \$28.52 billion in 2019, up 20.6% year over year.