

Who Cares About Brand Safety?

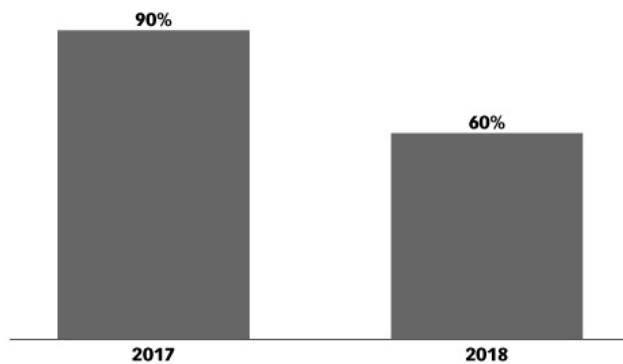
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Ross Benes

Brand safety is a serious concern for 60% of the ad industry professionals GumGum and Digiday surveyed in November 2018. But that's down from 90% in 2017.

US Industry Professionals* Who Say Brand Safety Is a Serious Problem for Their Marketing Efforts, 2017 & 2018

% of respondents



Note: *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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At first glance, this data point gives the impression that marketers' concerns over brand safety are waning. But that's not exactly true, according to Phil Schraeder, GumGum president and COO.

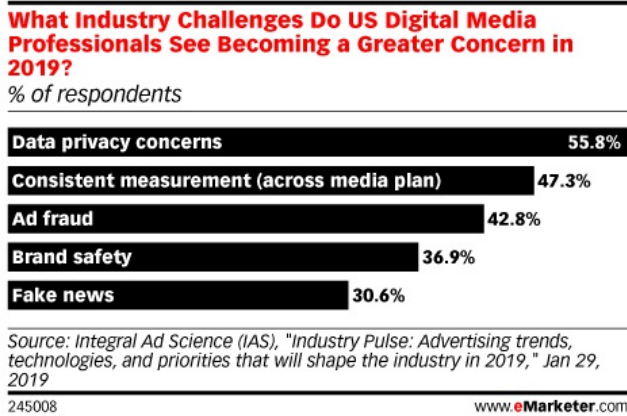
"Fewer marketers see brand safety as a serious problem because

everyone operating in the advertising ecosystem has taken steps to confront the issue," he said.

Multiple studies show advertisers remain concerned about brand safety. In a 2018 [poll of advertisers by Oath and Advertiser Perceptions](#), 99% of respondents said they were concerned about brand safety. Just over a third of the US digital media professionals surveyed by [Integral Ad Science](#) said that brand safety will become a greater concern this year.

"Marketers are more concerned about brand safety now than they were a year ago because they are finally paying attention," said Carly Carson, account supervisor for paid social at ad agency PMG.

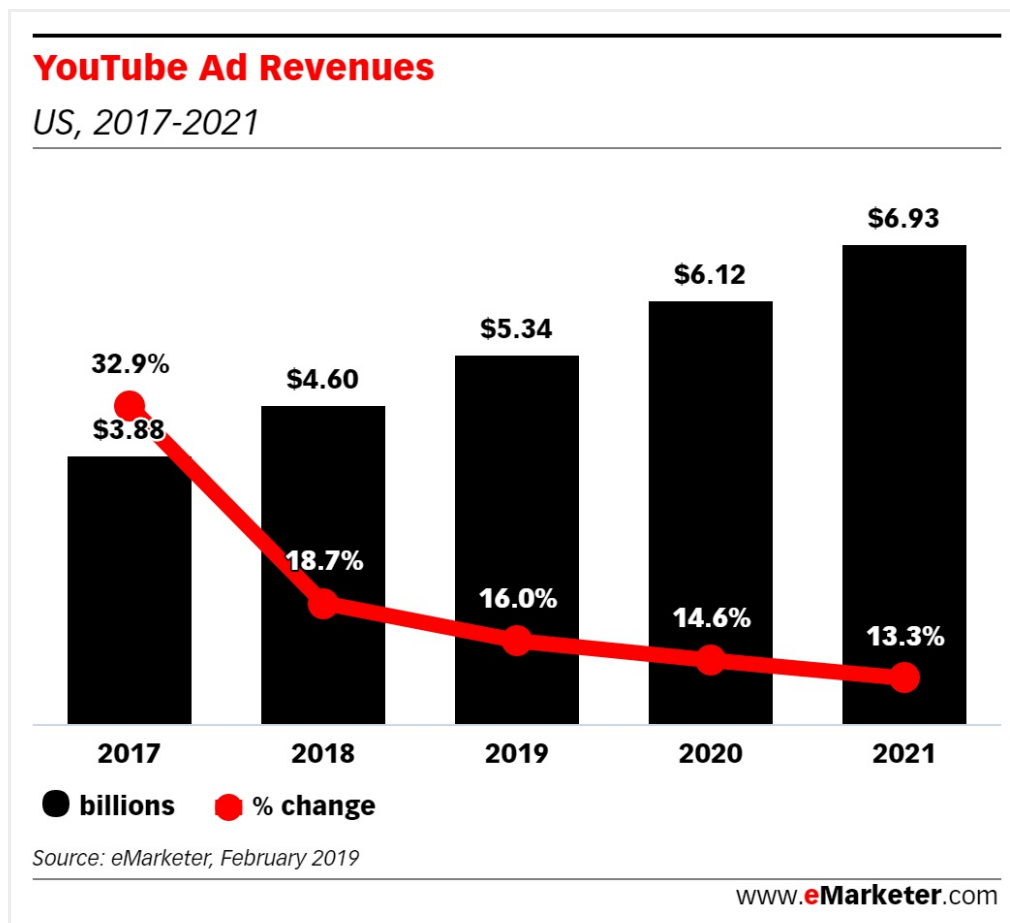
"Marketers are finally opting for a brand safe environment, rather than just scale or impressions."



To confront brand safety and appease advertisers, social platforms have: [expanded third-party measurement](#), given advertisers [more information about the content](#) that their ads will appear against, and [cleaned up comment sections](#). For their part, more advertisers have [hired brand safety specialists](#).

"Undoubtedly advertisers perceive progress in terms of brand safety solutions," said Sarah Bolton, executive vice president of business intelligence at Advertiser Perceptions. "At the same time, advertisers know they can't afford to take their eye off the ball, and that all parties in the ecosystem bear some responsibility and need to play active roles in ensuring brand safety."

While the ad industry may be making some progress on brand safety, YouTube continues to be at the **center of brand safety controversies**. These issues with YouTube have prompted advertisers to boycott the platform and demand concessions, such as greater third-party measurements. But ultimately, most of the advertisers that pause their ad spend on YouTube **come back to the platform**. In fact, we forecast that YouTube's US ad revenues will grow 16% this year to \$5.34 billion.



“The scale, reach and engagement you can receive on YouTube is still extremely valuable,” Carson said. “However, it's important for marketers not to settle for subpar experiences. They must continue to push YouTube and other platforms to put in controls to keep the environment as safe as possible.”