

Fake news and brand safety addressed at IAB SA's roundtable discussion

Marc du Plessis, head of the Publisher Council for IAB SA hosted a round table discussion on Wednesday, 4 October 2017, with other members of the IAB and local publishers to flesh out the issues that the South African publishing industry faces with regards to fake news and brand safety.



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Several major players in the industry shared ideas, opinions and insights in addressing key questions mooted prior to the round table discussion.

Issues surrounding brand safety

Do South African advertisers understand the issue, how are they dealing with it and how do we propose a way forward to create a brand safe environment?

It was agreed that the industry as a whole, needs more education on this challenge.

There is a common understanding that brand safety is an issue locally from a commercial and an editorial perspective. However, companies are working in silos to combat and protect brands in their own respective way. What is required is one voice - a repository of information on the IAB SA website of the experiences and the perceptions that can be referenced to monitor brand safety. A place brands and advertisers can access and share examples on the IAB website as a neutral independent body representing the publishing industry's stance on brand safety

Brands and advertisers need to start putting more emphasis on the combination of the environment where their brands are displayed as well as the quality of the click, not just focusing on the click. The IAB can become a credible resource and neutral body to further educate and drive this agenda, on behalf of all members – publishers, agencies and brands.

How to address fake news locally

How to address the issue locally and what verification process could be implemented to circumvent the problem?

IAB publisher members are under a tremendous amount of pressure to secure digital budgets, in order to remain firstly sustainable, and secondly profitable. Advertisers are starting to spend significant digital budgets with major global players. Without giving handouts, brands and agencies need to consider the value and ROI that IAB Publishers can give them, and make a conscious effort to engaging these publishers before making default decisions to invest so heavily into global players. There is a lot to say for localisation, customisation and aligning brands with strong IAB publisher brands.

In order for brands to support local publishers it is crucial that publishers ensure they are credible sources of information. To achieve this the industry, once again, needs to pull together and have a single-minded message, with IAB as the neutral industry body providing the requirements and criteria that the publishers need to meet in order to be deemed **credible**, trusted content and information resources i.e. A safe digital environment for brands to align with.

It is imperative that we educate corporates on the situation and the impact on the industry and the economy if IAB member publishers are not supported.

The answer is to develop firm criteria for evaluating trusted publishers and educate and drive awareness through members of the IAB, publishing partners and the media.

An update on the proposed way forward will be shared and we encourage any input or feedback you may have regarding this topic, by sending us an email at hello@iabsa.net.

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