

CGPWebinar recording-20250422_HK

Hello everyone and welcome to the introduction to the CAN Guiding Principles. These guiding principles underpin everything that the Conscious Advertising Network does, and everything that we ask our members to do as well.

My name is Harriet, I am one of the Co founders of CAN alongside Jake Dubbins of Media Bounty and I'll be explaining what the CAN guiding principles are and how to use them and what the next steps are.

But first I'd just like to kick off by saying a huge thank you to everyone who's played a part in shaping CAN's guiding principles and the updated guides.

We had an extensive consultation process. We spoke to people from the world of civil society, of academia, of advertising, We even got the UN involved. So thank you to everyone who was part of this consultation. Thank you to everyone who sent us feedback or asked questions around our guides and what we do over the last few years. And just to let you know that there was loads of great feedback that we've tried to incorporate into this version of the guiding principles.

You told us you wanted more consistency in the way the guides were presented and we've done that. You wanted us to simplify some of the tools and asks, make sure that we focused on how to make change happen, as well as asking you to make change, put some really strong business case in there. So those of you that are trying to convince more senior people to do this, to take up this work, could do so.

You wanted advice on championing transparency and how to deal with things in a world of AI? Well, you're in luck. We've got lots of that for you.

And those of you that from the creative side of things wanted to clear a pathway for creative agencies, all of which you'll find within this work.

So what we've done is we've taken kind of the big challenge of how we how we shape the advertising industry today, taking into account commercial differences and realities from that are very different to seven years ago when we started, as well as a different kind of state of the world, state of human rights, state of sustainability. So what we've done is we've taken some mega trends and some challenges and stitched them together to make this updated guide.

So the first one is around information integrity. This is a global concern. We are concerned that our that our information ecosystem needs to be healthy in order for our advertising to remain effective.

Civil society also have concerns around the quality of information that's available to the point that the United Nations have created documentation around it. So we'll talk about that in a minute, but that's in there.

We've seen this, this emergent trend of advertisers wanting to take more kind of oversight of where their advertising is going and there being a real shift towards log level transparency.

We also heard from loads of you that artificial intelligence was increasingly becoming a part of your

day-to-day role. Many of you wanted to know how you did it, how you embedded it ethically. Many of you wanted to know how to mitigate risks. That's also in there as well.

So essentially what we have is a document that advocates for conscious oversight and media placement, plus the use and impacts of emergent technologies across media, creative and operations.

And that's what's in the document today.

For those of you that are haven't seen the work around the global principles for information integrity, this is a piece of work that's been done all the way up at the UN. It's a global piece of work.

And it looks at essentially how we can make sure that our information ecosystems healthy, how we can make sure that they support pluralistic kind of debate and voices, and how we can bring more transparency into that system so that we can check, that things aren't working the way they're supposed to. And in a way that empowers the public, but also in a way that ensures that we as advertisers can advertise effectively, and meet our sustainability goals as well.

So Charlotte's Scaddan here is the UN senior advisor on information integrity, and she's been a kind of key advisor to some of the work that we've done as well. And if you're interested, I really advise you to have a dive into this document. It's nice and accessible and it's a really interesting read.

Now, why are we focusing on information integrity? Well, it's pretty much because it makes good business sense. There's been a really big drive towards investment in quality media over the last few years. We know that it when we appear on trusted news sites, it boosts article engagement, it boosts our attention. We know that actually when we appear next to misinformation, customers are less likely to buy from us. And frankly these, some of the fraudulent and not great quality sites have really, really high emissions as well, meaning that you know, it's not effective from a driving sales perspective. It's also not effective from a kind of reducing the kind of carbon of your media spend position as well.

So big thing here that we're trying to of kind of changing the culture around asking questions. Now many of you said to us that you were dealing with technologies that you didn't fully understand and that you were concerned that you were going to have to become an artificial intelligence expert as well as an advertising expert.

And that's just not the case.

What we really, really think from speaking to expert stakeholders is that actually we need to drive through a, a culture of asking questions. That means being curious when we're bringing on new vendors and partners, asking them for proof that their services meet things like the CAN principles and asking until we understand because even the most complicated things, kind of like have we can get to a point where we understand enough to be able to point out things that don't stack up and spot gaps.

We also, you know, really want, want our members to think about their supply chains. It's your money, you should know where it's being spent. And so getting that transparency data is really important to really getting a handle on how you can improve things.

So the result is our guiding principles. We've got 4 steps here, the first of which is around the fundamentals. So how do we put a team together? What feedback loops do we need to put in place all of these things to make sure that we're set up for success.

2A is about is a pathway through for our creative agencies. So if you're a creative agency, go straight there from step one. And it's looking at how we can make sure that we drive representation and sustainability through the way that we kind of for our team structure, the way that we do things. Conscious Media is all about supply chain transparency and accountability, reducing waste and fraud and all of that's going to make us make our advertising more effective.

Step 3 is looking at our themes, our thematic guides in more detail. So this is, you'll remember this from our manifesto days, you know, it's everything from ad fraud right through to children's rights and well-being, you know, inclusion, etcetera. All of that detailed guidance is there.

And Step 4 is, is that kind of cultural shift that I was talking about, making sure that we're asking the right questions and not being afraid to do so.

So Step 1A, the fundamentals are about getting ready, getting ready to make the change that you want to make. And you'll see throughout that we have examples and case studies from members that have done this. For example, here Fiona Cooper from VCCP talking about actually how they brought people together to make the change that they needed to make across the business.

So this was about forming cross functional teams, making sure that you've got champions in every level of the business from C-Suite down, that will help support your change, making sure that you've got the right people nominated, that people have responsibility for these actions, not only in their job descriptions, but also, you know, kind of in their objectives.

Starting your CAN tracker audit here. So for those of you that are already members, you'll be aware of the audit process that we ask potential members to go to. If you're, thinking about signing up, and you're an advertising agency or brand, this is where you need to kind of have a look at and audit the way you do things to bring them in line with can. Then using your commitment really to kind of spread the word and get people excited about it.

Step 1B is about embedding the change. So making sure that you've got process and documentation that embeds the change. For example, looking at making sure the CAN principles are specified in your request for proposals, the things you're asking vendors and partners to do so that you know they're enacted across your supply chain. Making sure you're managing these risks at C-Suite level and essentially kind of have the policies and processes to back up and change in line with CAN principles

Making sure that everyone from your team right through to your partners and vendors know about what you want them to do, how you want them to work, and then creating those monitoring and feedback loops that support you.

Now here's where your creative agencies kind of come in. So conscious creative is trustworthy. It includes, represents and safeguards everyone, including the places that we live. It's the most effective way to ensure your message has mass appeal and grow the audience of your business. And what this means in reality is it makes making sure that we represent all communities in the way that we select and create, build our teams in the insight strategy, creative casting and influencer selection.

It means ensuring accessibility so that as many people as possible can access your ads, can understand them, can respond to them, championing sustainable behaviours, challenging briefs where you think it's needed, and kind of sticking to high levels of truth and storytelling and respectful privacy focused ad formats. And then obviously we are a growing movement of people who are creating more effective advertising that works for more people. So we want you to create and share case studies with us. If you've got something you're really proud of that you've created, get in contact and we'll help you shout about it.

So if you're a media agency, you won't worry about step 2A, you'll go straight to step 2B. So conscious Media is effective, privacy conscious and transparently bought media purchased with safety, quality, sustainability and inclusion in mind. It includes privacy and safety by design. That means buying your media in a way that aligns with your brand values. It means using the right platform tools and setups. It means following the UN global principles and information integrity and the ANA programmatic transparency report.

The full document has a lot of background on what that means, but it essentially means, you know, kind of knowing where your ads going and minimising risk by reducing the amount of sites that you appear on. And it means communicating how you do things to everybody. So everyone across your supply chain is really, really clear on what you want to happen and when.

And a big part of that again, is this culture of conscious questioning. So it's asking about where your ads are going, how many websites you're on, making sure that you've got that log level data so you can make decisions about where you're at, the placement of your campaigns, making sure that you understand the platform creator revenue share programmes you might be part of, just so you know what you might be appearing next to. And here we've got Sam Griffith, Head of Digital at December19, talking about how ethical media planning actually really improves return on investment.

Once you've completed those stages, it's on to our 6 guides. As I said, these are kind of more in depth, they're thematic and they look at really key areas where we know that our members need support with these, as with their guiding principles, We want you to be asking partners and vendors to include them in the way that they do, in the way they do their work. You'll notice we've got we cover everything from anti ad fraud right through to inclusion. And we've also kind of combined what was previously misinformation and hate speech into one single document, as a lot of the advice for advertisers was the same thing. And we rebranded some of the work that we do, but we really highly advise you to go into those into depth.

And so finally, kind of in a nutshell, following these guiding principles successfully requires you to really, really embrace conscious thinking. We want to make sure that effective advertising works for everyone. And that means thinking about the commercial impact of what you're doing, but also thinking about the wider impacts. It means getting your partners and vendors involved. It means engaging across teams and making sure that everyone's super clear on what you want them to do and how. It means setting goals, assessing progress and refining your approaches in order to make this even better.

Assessing new vendors, asking questions, particularly if they involve emergent technologies and making sure that you're cognisant of harms and opportunities. Driving transparency through your supply chains so that you know where your advertising is going. And then basically helping us to kind of, you know, to build to build the case, to generate and share case studies and to really celebrate wins. And if we do that, the commercial gains will be huge, our advertising will be more effective, but

also we will be doing things in a way that allows us to deliver on our sustainability aspirations and allows us to feel better about ourselves as an industry.

And don't just take my word for it. In that document, there's a load of brilliant case studies from members who have done extraordinary things. Some of them were mentioned today, but there's lots more in there and have a look at how they've done things and what they've done.

And finally, if you liked what you saw today, if you're a prospective member, please get in touch. We're free to join. We're nice, we're helpful, and you know, we really would love to love you to be part of our movement. If you are a current member, please reach out. We'd love to hear your feedback and thoughts on what we've put together.

Thanks for joining today. I've been Harriet, and I hope to see you very, very soon.