



# Conscious Advertising Network (CAN)

## Annual Report 2023

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Empowering ethical advertising:  
Our progress, impact, and the path forward

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# Hear from our Co-Founders

**In a year that has relentlessly tested our resolve and creativity, we at CAN have redoubled our efforts in the battle against unethical advertising. With the increase of misinformation in our society, our steadfast commitment to breaking the financial support for content that harms society has never been more critical.**



## Global Partnerships & Policy Influence

This year has been marked by significant milestones and strong partnerships. Our collaboration with the UN, especially on combating greenwashing and climate misinformation, has been a testament to our dedication. We're proud to have contributed to 'Our Common Agenda - Policy Brief 8 - Information Integrity on Digital Platforms' as part of our advisory role to the UN Secretary General's team. This involvement underscores our influence in shaping global information integrity policies.

### Expanding Global Influence: 180 Members, 84% of UK's Advertising Spend

We're pleased to announce that CAN now spearheads a global conversation about climate disinformation in the advertising industry, encompassing 180 members and commanding 84% of the UK's advertising spend. This network has now expanded to include 180 global members, with a new chapter growing in the USA. This expansion is a clear indicator of our increasing impact and reach.

## Overcoming Challenges & Building Resilience

Despite facing external challenges, including a coordinated smear campaign, we have not only remained committed to our mission but have used these adversities to bolster our organisational resilience. Our efforts in lobbying, crisis management, and proactive PR have been significantly strengthened.

## Growing Our Internal Team

Thanks to the funding received from QCF and other supporting organisations we have been able to maintain and expand our team, which has further contributed to the continuous growth and impact of our organisation. The 2023 strategy has also been a key component in our continued success in the areas of: Advocacy, Membership & Engagement, Ways of Working, Door Opening & Measurement & Training.

## The Role of Advertising in Political Discourse

As we navigate through these times, we believe it is imperative to examine the role of advertising in political discourse, especially with the upcoming elections and the politicisation of the Net Zero transition. Our unique position in the advertising world, combined with our 'big tent, insider' perspective, uniquely equips us to tackle these challenges.

## Looking Ahead to 2024

Our journey this year has been both challenging and rewarding. As you explore this 2023 annual report, we hope it not only informs but also inspires you to join us in our relentless pursuit of a world where advertising is a force for good, empowering and uniting rather than dividing.

### Jake Dubbins and Harriet Kingaby

Co-founders of Conscious Advertising Network (CAN)



# About CAN

**CAN is a UK-based international coalition of over 180 advertisers, agencies, tech providers and civil society groups.**

**The Conscious Advertising Network (CAN) is a UK-based international coalition of over 180 advertisers, agencies, tech providers and civil society groups.**

We're breaking the economic link between advertising and the harmful content that divides communities, excludes diverse voices, exploits children, and undermines scientific consensus. Our [7 manifestos](#) guide our mission to ensure advertising integrity and to encourage systemic changes within the industry.

CAN is proudly supported by the Quadrature Climate Foundation, European Climate Foundation and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation.

Our members include Virgin Media O2, British Gas, and Innocent Drinks; network media agencies Group M, Havas Media, VCCP, dentsu, and Omnicom Media Group; plus, leading civil society groups, including Antisemitism Policy Trust, End Violence Against Women and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Together, we stand for conscious choices in advertising – because **#TogetherWeCAN** make a difference.

## Our mission

To promote a healthy media ecosystem by breaking the economic link between advertising and the harmful content that divides communities, excludes diverse voices, exploits children and undermines scientific consensus, and promoting advertiser investment in quality, diverse media and creative.



## Our vision

To create a safe, inclusive and commercially viable information ecosystem for advertisers and society that supports quality journalism and content, diversity of media and scientific consensus.



# CAN's 7 manifestos

**Our aim is to see every client and brand adopt CAN's seven manifestos in their agency briefs and RFPs.**

We're dedicated to fostering a secure and inclusive environment that benefits both advertisers and society. This involves supporting high-quality journalism, diverse media, and scientific consensus, all rooted in the principles of our manifestos.



Click on each to read more



## Anti Ad-Fraud

Promoting accountability in digital ads by reducing ad-fraud in all trading relationships



## Diversity

Ensuring agency content reflects societal diversity from initial research to media strategy and placement



## Children's Wellbeing

Protecting children's rights in advertising, addressing the broad impact of technology on their lives, both online and offline



## Mis/Disinformation

Preventing the funding and spread of intentional mis/disinformation in advertising content and online media



## Informed Consent

Empowering users as active participants controlling their online experience and personal data usage



## Hate Speech

Committing to remove hate speech from advertising spends, supporting positive and inclusive media



## Sustainability

Advocating for sustainable advertising content and processes, avoiding funding climate misinformation

# Our members



# Our impact: 2023 big wins

**This year, CAN has seen a series of "Big Wins" that have solidified our impact, alongside our partners, in the advertising industry and in society at large.**

From guiding TikTok's climate misinformation policy to becoming an official 'Trusted Flagger' on YouTube, our manifestos aren't just being heard — they're being enacted.



## **TikTok Climate Misinformation Policy Advisory**

Guided TikTok in crafting a Climate Misinformation policy, setting a precedent for social media giants to take accountability for the content on their platforms, with members of the Climate Action Against Disinformation Coalition. This advisory role signifies CAN's leadership in steering policy decisions towards greater transparency and responsibility.

**March**



## April

### New Staff Members Joined CAN

Welcoming Nafissa Norris as the Membership & Engagement Account Director, Yeo Joung Suh as the Policy and Campaign Officer (Children's Wellbeing), and Kate Affleck as the Investigations Officer strengthened our team, bringing fresh perspectives to our advocacy and campaign strategies.

### YouTube Trusted Flagger Status

Elevated to a 'Trusted Flagger' by YouTube, CAN is amplifying the impact of our civil society members in highlighting monetised disinformation from platforms.

### New Global Memberships: IPG Media Brands & dentsu

IPG Media Brands and dentsu joined CAN, bolstering our global network with almost all of the holding groups as members. Their membership underscores the growing recognition and adoption of ethical advertising practices among leading industry players.

### Digital Hate and Tech Justice Steering Committees

CAN's appointment to the steering committees of the Global Alliance Against Digital Hate and Extremism GAADHE and the Global Coalition for Tech Justice GCTJ solidified our position as a key player in the global discourse against digital hate and for tech justice, particularly in advance of a pivotal election year globally.

### Google Hate Speech Forum

CAN's forum with Google targeted hate speech, driving a review of policy language and enforcement across Google's products and services. This forum emphasised CAN's proactive stance on eradicating hate speech in online advertising.

## May



### UN Information Integrity Policy Brief Release

CAN influenced the UN's 'Our Common Agenda' policy brief, focusing on digital information integrity. Released in June, it addresses misinformation challenges, highlighting the need for truthful digital communication.

This work will continue into 2024 as we advise on the UN's Code of Conduct on Information Integrity on Digital Platforms.

June

July

### CAN contributed to CAAD's Climate Action Against Disinformation Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Submission

CAAD submission to the FTC, including survey results and definitions supported by our members, advocated for regulatory action against greenwashing, climate disinformation and hate speech, aligning with our stance on informed public perception.

### UN Climate Ambition Summit Panel

During the Climate Ambition Summit, part of the official program at United Nations Headquarters, CAN addressed the urgent challenge of climate misinformation. Our involvement in this significant forum emphasised the need for truthful climate communication and ethical advertising practices.

### New Membership Additions: World Media Group and The Barber Shop

The addition of World Media Group and The Barber Shop to CAN underscored the increasing diversity and strength of our network, enhancing our collective capabilities in promoting ethical advertising.

September

### Children's Wellbeing Manifesto Consultation

In November, CAN initiated a comprehensive consultation into the Children's Wellbeing manifesto, addressing the digital impact on children and their rights. This crucial initiative aims to guide the advertising industry to ensure they're respecting the unique needs of young audiences, both online and offline.

### Conscious Thinking Live: Reflecting and Acting

The Conscious Thinking Live event, held by CAN, spotlighted key issues like children's wellbeing and the rise of transphobia. Discussions included the importance of the Online Safety Act and strategies for the advertising industry to combat these challenges effectively.

### Propeller Group Partnership

Our evolving partnership with Propeller Group (PR) is set to boost our communication reach and influence, supporting our public relations efforts in the ethical advertising domain. This collaboration marks an exciting chapter for CAN's visibility and impact.

### UN Business and Human Rights Forum Participation in Geneva

As part of the UN Forum for Business and Human Rights official program, CAN led discussions on advertising's role in upholding human rights, contributing to a global narrative on ethical advertising.

[▶ rewatch panel](#)

November

## December

### New Membership Additions: The Digital Voice and Mave Social Limited

By joining CAN as supporter members, The Digital Voice and Mave Social Ltd are dedicated to maintaining organisational focus on problem-solving, bringing essential expertise in human rights and sustainability, and playing an important role in defining the issues that CAN exists to address in the advertising industry.

### COP28 Event Participation

Collaborating with CAAD (Climate Action Against Disinformation), we emphasised the urgency of climate misinformation in various discussions, including panels on information integrity and creative advertising for climate action.

[▶ rewatch panel](#)

### UN Human Rights Paper Progression

Advanced significant work on a pivotal paper with the UN, addressing the intersection of advertising and human rights. This collaboration highlights CAN's ongoing commitment to human rights advocacy within international advertising standards.

### UN Information Integrity Policy Briefing

Influenced the drafting of the UN's Policy Briefing for Information Integrity on Digital Platforms. This briefing sets the stage for the forthcoming Code of Conduct, demonstrating CAN's role in shaping global digital policy.

## Ongoing

# CAN Advocacy Spotlight

**In 2023, CAN has played a significant role in breaking the economic link between advertising and harms.**

Our advocacy efforts have been focused on influencing the UN's work on information integrity, establishing benchmarks for digital platforms and promoting responsible advertising practices aligned with the principles of CAN's manifestos.

## Code of Conduct on Information Integrity

CAN is a lead advisor with the UN's Senior Advisor on Information Integrity, culminating in the publication of "Our Common Agenda - Policy Brief 8 - Information Integrity on Digital Platforms". The policy brief asks member states to align with the asks that we have co-authored as part of the CAAD coalition. This work is significant because it is helping to establish a global standard for principles around tech platforms. CAN's work is ensuring that advertising, which overwhelmingly funds the internet, is a key component of any findings and recommendations. With the UN's Digital integrity work, the UK's Online Safety Act and the EU's Digital Services Act all coming together at the

same time this is helping to hold the platforms and media owners to account on the platforms to demonstrate their processes and enforcement in relation to online harm. This work will be continued as the UN finalises a Code of Conduct on Information Integrity on Digital Platforms as part of the Summit of the Future in 2024.

CAN's continued support and engagement with the UN has also led to the organisation acting as key advisers to the UN Secretary General's Climate Action Team, UN Department of Global Communications, UNFCCC and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for human rights on the subjects of misinformation, hate speech and advertising.

COP28 UAE



DUBAI 2023





# 2023 Investigation Spotlight: Monetised Misogyny in Women's Football

CAN's investigation into the Women's World Cup delved into the monetised misogyny present in online spaces, highlighting the need for more conscientious advertising in the women's sports sector.

Here are our findings:

01

## Rampant Misogyny Online

Identified rampant misogyny within unmoderated comment sections, often positioned alongside major brand advertisements, revealing a need for responsible ad placements.

02

## Transphobia and Homophobia

Detected troubling patterns of transphobia and homophobia in discussions related to trans athletes and the sexuality of players in the tournament.

03

## Positive Coverage vs. Negative Comments

While media coverage by certain media outlets was free of misogynistic language, their user comments displayed a stark contrast.

04

## Brand Activism through Advertising

Overall, we noted a large amount of media coverage in a range of publications, the vast majority of which were positive. We also saw strong brand activism through brand advertising, with a range of impactful campaigns running throughout the competition.

# CAN in the media

Throughout the year, CAN's initiatives and insights have captivated media attention, with mentions in over 40 publications, spanning industry journals, mainstream news outlets, and thought leadership platforms.

Our work has sparked discussions on everything from sustainable advertising to tackling climate misinformation. This media presence not only highlights our influence, but also underscores the importance of our mission in shaping a more ethical advertising industry.



CAN is proud to be featured in a range of media, from trade journals to mainstream news.

Our presence in top publications like The Guardian, Campaign, Forbes, PR Week, and others highlights our impactful advocacy in ethical advertising, demonstrating our broadening influence and commitment to industry transformation.

The  
Guardian

Forbes

PRWeek

NewDigitalAge

campaign

The  
Media Leader\_

AdAge



Click to read our featured articles in top publications

# Looking back at CAN events in 2023

As part of our mission to promote conscious principles in advertising worldwide, CAN has been at the forefront of several pivotal events this year. From the global discussions at COP28 to thought-provoking sessions at our Conscious Thinking Annual Event, we've driven the conversation on sustainability and ethical practices. UN Climate Week saw us further influencing the international dialogue on climate action.

## Climate Action at COP28: Amplifying the Truth

CAN played a critical role at COP28, pushing for a unified definition of climate misinformation alongside CAAD. Our co-founders spoke at key events, igniting discourse on information integrity and the need for accurate climate messaging.

## Championing Digital Rights at the UN

At the UN Business and Human Rights Forum, CAN championed human rights in digital advertising, contributing to discussions on ethical standards and the fight against online harm, emphasising the sector's role in upholding global human dignity.

## Conscious Thinking Live: Advocating for Change

CAN's Conscious Thinking event brought together industry leaders to tackle the Online Safety Act, rising transphobia, and advertising's influence on democracy and UN's SDGs, fostering robust dialogue and actionable insights for a safer, more inclusive future.

## Leading Voices at UN Climate Week

During UN Climate Week, CAN highlighted the urgency of combating climate misinformation, contributing to a code of conduct for information integrity and participating in discussions on the intersection of advertising and climate truth.

# What's to come in 2024

The journey continues as we gear up for a series of events and activities in the new year. Engaging our members, we're focused on amplifying our impact and spreading our message of ethical advertising through insightful webinars, interactive forums, and our annual member survey.

## Keep up with CAN's latest news

Sign up for our monthly newsletters for our latest updates, survey announcements, event invitations, recommended reads, and more.



Sign me up

### Your Voice Matters: Join Our Annual Member Survey

Participate in CAN's Annual Member Survey to voice your perspectives, influencing our path towards ethical advertising. Your feedback is crucial in shaping our initiatives for a responsible advertising future in 2024.

*Launching mid-January 2024*

### Stay Tuned for CAN Webinars & Events

Anticipate a series of enlightening webinars and events from CAN throughout the year. Join us as we explore, discuss, and devise solutions to the pressing ethical challenges in the advertising world.

### Listen to Season 2 of the Conscious Thinking Podcast

Check out the latest episodes of our podcast, where CAN and dentsu Creative navigate tough industry challenges, with host Ete Davies leading vital conversations from climate action to digital ethics.

### UN Digital Compact

The UN is developing a Global Digital Compact which is expected to outline shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all. CAN will continue to work closely with the UN, members and other stakeholders to ensure this groundbreaking project will help develop a pathway towards breaking the economic link between advertising and the harmful content.



# 2023 CAN membership overview



## Six members joined our coalition in 2023 – Including two of the world's largest advertising agencies – dentsu and IPG Mediabrands!

In 2023, CAN was delighted to welcome new members across Full, Supporter, and Associate categories, including World Media Group and The Barber Shop. These additions enhance our coalition, highlighting our growing commitment to diverse, ethical advertising practices.

- Full Member
- ◐ Supporter Member

### dentsu ●

One of the largest global advertising and public relations networks

### IPG MEDIABRANDS ●

A global media holding company that oversees marketing investment management

### The Barber Shop ●

A creative agency that focuses on combining creativity with commercial effectiveness



◐ A digital marketing agency specialising in social media strategy and targeted advertising campaigns



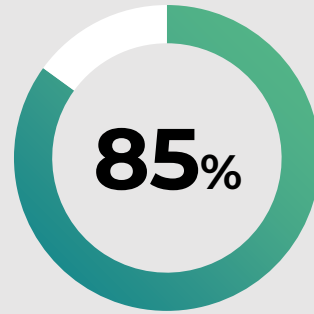
◐ A dynamic PR and digital marketing agency specialising in the tech and digital sectors



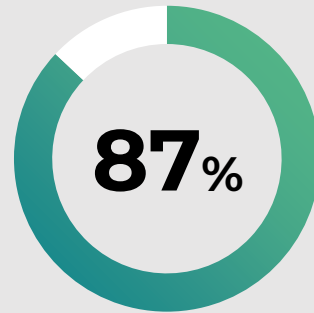
◐ A strategic alliance of the world's leading media brands

# 2022/3 Member Survey Insights

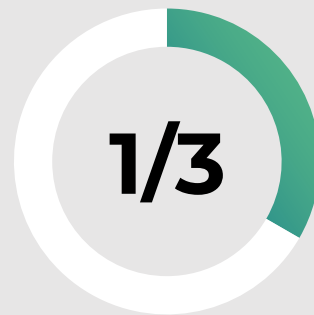
The 2022/3 CAN Member Survey unveiled critical insights, showcasing a year of ethical strides and highlighting areas for growth. It provided a roadmap for our ongoing mission to transform the advertising industry.



**reported improved ethical frameworks**, signalling deeper integration of conscious principles within agency operations.



**expressed eagerness to attend CAN events**, valuing face-to-face interaction and collective brainstorming.



**are unsure if RFPs and briefs include CAN principles**, indicating a need for better manifesto adoption.



**Children's wellbeing** is what member's feel is being addressed the least, prompting CAN to hire a dedicated policy officer for focus.



**Climate & sustainability** emerged as the most relevant manifestos, reflecting the urgency of environmental concerns.

# Member engagement

In 2023, CAN actively engaged members through eleven targeted briefings, reflecting a deepening commitment to ethical advertising principles. These briefings, addressing critical issues like LGBTQ+ hate, climate misinformation, COP28, and brand safety on X, played a key role in shaping advertiser behaviour and strengthening support within the industry.



**Influenced large advertisers and garnered industry-wide support**



**Provided information, data, and practical implementation advice for brands and agencies**



**In 2024, CAN will launch its Member's community on GUILD, enhancing collaboration and engagement following the success of our Conscious Thinking Live Event pilot**



CAN is also crafting specialised training programs in 2024, aimed at empowering members with the skills and knowledge for effective ethical advertising practices.

## Your participation in our January 2024 survey is crucial

The upcoming Annual Member Survey in January 2024 is key to shaping CAN's future.

In this crucial year of reviewing our organisational strategy, your feedback will directly inform our initiatives for responsible advertising. Participation is vital not only for strategic direction but also for maintaining membership status, ensuring every voice guides our ethical advertising journey.



**Sign up to our newsletter to stay updated**



# Meet CAN's team & advisory group

Behind every "Big Win" at the Conscious Advertising Network is a dedicated team of leaders, advocates, and changemakers. With diverse backgrounds and a united purpose, our team drives the mission of ethical advertising forward.

## Jake Dubbins Founder

Co-founder of CAN, and Managing Director at Media Bounty, Jake is on a mission to grow sustainable and ethical brands, advocating for conscious advertising and environmental volunteering.

 [Connect with Jake](#)

## Harriet Kingaby Founder

Co-founder of CAN, and Head of ACT Climate Labs, Harriet works at the intersection of advertising, climate change, and misinformation, and is a former Mozilla Fellow focused on the global impact of AI-enhanced advertising.

 [Connect with Harriet](#)

## Marsha Jackson Project Director

With over two decades in publishing, Marsha leads CAN through transformative business phases, aligning brand awareness with the network's ethical mission and overseeing diverse community projects.

 [Connect with Marsha](#)

## Alex Murray Head of Advocacy

Alex is an experienced campaigner, orchestrating national campaigns. At CAN, he fosters collaboration between civil and corporate members, spearheading solutions for the advertising industry's challenges.

 [Connect with Alex](#)

## Nafissa Norris Membership & Engagement Account Director

With a background in entertainment and production, Nafissa drives CAN's membership by connecting advertising to societal well-being through engaging community initiatives.

 [Connect with Nafissa](#)

## Eline Yara Jeanné Investigations Manager

Eline, uses her expertise in diversity, human rights, and counteracting hate speech to lead pivotal investigations that align with CAN's manifestos.

 [Connect with Eline](#)

## Yeo Joung Suh Policy and Campaign Officer

Yeo Joung, an experienced children's rights advocate, drives CAN's Children's Wellbeing campaign and collaborates on key policy issues like the Online Safety Bill.

 [Connect with Yeo Joung](#)

## Kate Affleck Investigations Officer

Kate leads crucial investigative projects into health misinformation while collaborating on investigations across all areas. She is an experienced investigator with a background in in-depth research and evidence gathering.

 [Connect with Kate](#)

## Tina Fegent Co-chair of CAN's Get Sh\*t Done Advisory Board

Marketing Procurement Consultant with 30 years of experience, Tina co-chairs CAN's GSD Advisory Board, applying her vast industry knowledge to ensure ethical advertising practices.

 [Connect with Tina](#)

## Dino Myers-Lampthey Co-chair of CAN's Get Sh\*t Done Advisory Board

Founder of The Barber Shop, Dino is a renowned strategist and creative thinker. He co-chairs the GSD Advisory Board at CAN, advocating for diversity and ethical advertising standards.

 [Connect with Dino](#)



# Keep in touch



**Learn more**

[www.consciousadnetwork.com](http://www.consciousadnetwork.com)



**Reach out**

[hello@consciousadnetwork.org](mailto:hello@consciousadnetwork.org)



**Stay updated**

[Sign me up](#)



**Stay connected**

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