



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UN warns AI adoption in advertising is deepening global information integrity crisis as brands face growing business risk

New issue brief urges policymakers to strengthen transparency and accountability in digital advertising ecosystem; advertisers to use spending power to introduce guardrails on AI and protect trust, media quality and long-term effectiveness.

United Nations, New York, 29 April – A new issue brief from the United Nations Department of Global Communications, co-authored with the Conscious Advertising Network (CAN), warns that unchecked adoption of artificial intelligence in advertising risks accelerating a global crisis in information integrity, with major consequences for societies, media and brands.

Strengthening Information Integrity: Advertising, Artificial Intelligence and the Global Information Crisis argues that the advertising industry sits at the centre of the digital information ecosystem, holding a critical lever to shape how AI develops.

AI is intensifying systemic risks to information integrity including mis- and disinformation, declining trust and media fragmentation, at the same time as advertisers face mounting commercial pressure to adopt the technology at speed. It highlights an ever-increasing disconnect between rapid AI adoption and the lack of governance frameworks to manage its impact:

- AI is accelerating the spread of information risks including disinformation, hate and polarising echo chambers at scale.
- Advertising revenue continues to fund content regardless of potential harm, risk, quality, accuracy or effectiveness.
- Increasing opacity in AI-driven media buying risks worsening fraud and inefficiency.
- The rise of AI-generated content threatens the viability of independent and pluralistic journalism.

Additionally, the issue brief underscores that this is not just a societal issue, but a direct commercial risk for brands.

Audiences engage with advertising in environments they trust and as trust declines, so does campaign effectiveness.

However, advertisers are uniquely positioned to influence the future of AI through their media investment decisions. With global advertising spend exceeding 1 trillion US dollars annually, brands can demand higher standards from platforms, AI developers and media partners.

Key **recommendations for policymakers** include:

- Align governance and policy on AI and advertising with the recommendations of the **UN Global Principles for Information Integrity**.
- Collaborate with civil society and the advertising industry to **strengthen transparency and accountability** across the digital advertising ecosystem.
- Support the **Belém Declaration on Information Integrity on Climate Change** and the Global Initiative for Information Integrity on Climate Change as vehicles for translating commitments into practice.

Key **recommendations for advertisers** include:

- **Demand transparency** across AI and advertising supply chains.
- **Prioritise quality media environments** and journalism.
- **Set clear standards** for where and how ads appear in AI-generated content.
- **Use commercial leverage** to require stronger safeguards from platforms.

Evidence cited in the issue brief suggests that improving transparency and control in media buying can deliver double-digit improvements in return on advertising spend, reinforcing that responsible practices align with business performance.

The brief comes at a pivotal moment. AI governance is under active discussion in multilateral fora, while major AI platforms explore advertising-based monetization models, increasing the influence advertisers have over how these systems are designed and deployed. Ultimately, it warns that failure to act now could result in:

- Increased regulatory pressure for advertisers.
- Reputational risk for brands.
- Reduced advertising effectiveness.
- Further erosion of the open web and pluralistic media.

Charlotte Scaddan, UN Senior Adviser on Information Integrity, said: *“Advertising funds the systems that help shape what people see, trust and believe. Without swift action and guardrails, AI risks accelerating the breakdown of information ecosystem integrity. Advertisers have the power to help fix it.”*

Harriet Kingaby, Conscious Advertising Network (CAN), said: *“Brands are under pressure to move fast on AI, but doing so without guardrails risks undermining the very environments their marketing depends on. This is not about slowing innovation - it’s*

about making sure it works for business and society. This is a defining moment. Advertisers can either fund the problem or help build a more transparent, trustworthy and effective digital ecosystem.”

Notes to editors:

- *Advertising, Artificial Intelligence and the Global Information Crisis* is published by the United Nations and Conscious Advertising Network (CAN).
- The report aligns with and builds on the [UN Global Principles for Information Integrity \(2024\)](#).
- Launch event: 29 April 2026 at Adwanted's *Future of Brands*
- *The issue brief is available at: <https://www.un.org/en/information-integrity>*

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United Nations Department of Global Communications

The Information Integrity Team in UN Global Communications works at the intersection of policy, research and communications to uphold and strengthen information integrity, a key foundation for UN thematic priorities and operational mandates. This work contributes to emerging normative frameworks for information integrity, actionable initiatives, coalition-building, strategic communications and tools to help policymakers and practitioners find effective solutions to address evolving risks across information landscapes.

CAN (Conscious Advertising Network)

The Conscious Advertising Network is a network of over 200 members challenging outdated norms and taking bold steps to ensure effective advertising works for everyone. Advertising should inspire, innovate, and drive real results - but not at the expense of our rights and freedoms. By tackling waste and fraud, safeguarding society and the environment, and championing supply chain transparency, we unlock new opportunities for growth and innovation.