

CREATE WITH COMPLIANCE

Advertising law made simple—and surprisingly fun! Discover key regulations, real-world applications, and ready-to-use discussion prompts that bring compliance to life in the classroom and beyond.

A BOOK ABOUT MAKING ADVERTISING LAW CLEAR, ENGAGING, AND EASY TO TEACH.





Welcome

Understanding the regulations that shape advertising helps us create, deliver, and experience content more thoughtfully in the digital space. Today, digital inclusivity is essential – grounded in accessibility standards, human-centered design, and support for assistive technologies. Let's explore!

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TRUTH & TRANSPARENCY



Think of it as creative integrity with a legal seatbelt.

Honest advertising isn't just nice – it's the law. Make sure every claim is backed by evidence, and always disclose sponsorships or paid partnerships.

TRUTH-IN-ADVERTISING LAWS

Require honesty and clarity in ads, prohibiting false claims and hidden sponsorships. Enforced by agencies like the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC), these laws protect consumers by ensuring accurate information and fostering trust in the marketplace.

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Guidelines

In the United States, the FTC enforces truth-in-advertising laws in digital media, requiring that ads be clear, transparent, and not misleading. These guidelines affect how planners choose media channels that align with brand integrity and trustworthiness.

EU Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (UCPD)

Ensures that advertising practices in the EU are fair, transparent, and not misleading. It requires greater transparency and truthfulness in ad messaging, especially for claims related to pricing, product performance, or sustainability.

ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP TRANSPARENCY

Ensures that consumers are aware when content is sponsored or paid for. These regulations foster trust in marketers and prevent deceptive advertising practices.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Regulations (US)

The FCC requires clear disclosure of sponsored broadcast content, especially political or public-issue ads, so media planners using TV or radio must ensure all placements are properly labeled. These rules directly shape how planners choose channels for political or advocacy campaigns.

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Endorsement Guidelines (US)

The FTC requires transparency in advertising and endorsements, particularly in influencer marketing and sponsored content. Failure to disclose these relationships can lead to legal penalties and damage the credibility of the campaign.

European Union Advertising Rules

EU Advertising Rules regulate advertising to ensure it is truthful, non-deceptive, and respectful of consumer rights. These rules prohibit misleading claims, require clear disclosures, and protect vulnerable groups, such as children, to promote fair and responsible advertising practices across the EU.

Truth in Advertising Has Roots More Than 100 Years Old

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) was established in 1914 to prevent unfair competition and deceptive advertising – making it one of the oldest consumer protection agencies in the world!

Source: FTC History



POLITICAL ADVERTISING AND TRANSPARENCY

Ensure that political ads are truthful, clearly labeled, and disclose funding sources. These rules aim to prevent misleading or undisclosed political messaging, promote accountability, and ensure that voters can make informed decisions based on clear, honest campaign communications.



Honest Ads Act (US Proposed)

This proposed law would require greater transparency in online political advertising, mandating platforms to disclose who paid for political ads and how they are targeted. The law would also limit the ability of foreign entities to purchase political ads, which could reduce ad revenue during election periods.

Election Security Laws (US)

In the U.S. various laws and initiatives aim to protect elections from foreign interference, including misinformation campaigns on social media. Platforms are required to be more transparent about political ads, with laws that force them to disclose who pays for ads and restrict foreign entities from buying political ads.

Lobbying Disclosure Act (US)

Requires individuals and organizations that lobby federal officials to register and disclose their lobbying activities. For advertising, this means agencies or advertisers attempting to influence legislation must report their lobbying efforts, promoting transparency in their advocacy efforts.

European Union Political Advertising Regulations

In the EU, organizations that engage in lobbying or advocacy must register their activities with the EU Transparency Register. PR professionals in public affairs or government relations must follow these rules and be transparent about lobbying to maintain public trust and avoid legal risks.



European Union Transparency Register

The EU Transparency Register requires organizations, including advertising agencies, to disclose their lobbying activities and interactions with EU institutions. This promotes transparency by making public any efforts to influence EU policy, ensuring accountability in the advertising industry's advocacy practices.

Election Advertising Laws (Various Countries)

Different countries impose restrictions on political advertising, especially in the digital space. Media planners must account for these laws

when developing international campaigns, ensuring that ads are appropriately labeled and compliance with local election laws is maintained.



Political Advertising Disclosures Have Evolved

Social media platforms now require political ads to include “paid for by” disclaimers with verification to combat misinformation and increase transparency.

Source: Facebook Political Ad Transparency

TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

Radical transparency

Instead of pretending to persuade, Oatly admits it's "providing no reason at all why you should try it." The humor comes from breaking the traditional advertising rule – always give consumers a reason to buy – yet it feels refreshingly honest.

Legal and ethical Subtext

This is also a great compliance move – no deceptive claims, no exaggerated benefits, no risk of misleading consumers. It's truth in advertising to the extreme.



Meta Advertising

The ad is aware of itself as an ad. It acknowledges the formula of persuasion and then discards it. This self-referential approach builds trust through irony – it signals, "We know you're tired of being sold to."

Authenticity as currency

Modern audiences, especially Gen Z, value authenticity over polish. This ad exemplifies how brands can lean into truthful imperfection as a branding strategy.

ADVERTISING RESEARCH AND HEALTH CLAIMS

Focus on analyzing ads with health-related claims to ensure they are truthful and evidence-based. Regulations from agencies like the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) require that these claims are scientifically supported, protecting consumers from misleading promises.



Federal Drug Administration (FDA) Regulations on Health-Related Advertising (US)

The FDA's regulations ensure that advertisements for food, drugs, and medical devices are truthful, not misleading, and supported by scientific evidence. These regulations require clear disclosures of risks and benefits to protect consumers from deceptive health claims.

Japan's Food Labeling Law Impacts Ads

In Japan, health claims on food ads must be approved under strict regulations to prevent misleading consumers — even small claims require scientific backing. *Source: Japan's Consumer Affairs Agency*

CHILDREN'S MEDIA AND ADVERTISING REGULATIONS

Designed to protect young audiences from harmful or manipulative content. These regulations aim to ensure that advertising to children is ethical, safe, and does not exploit their vulnerabilities.

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) (US)

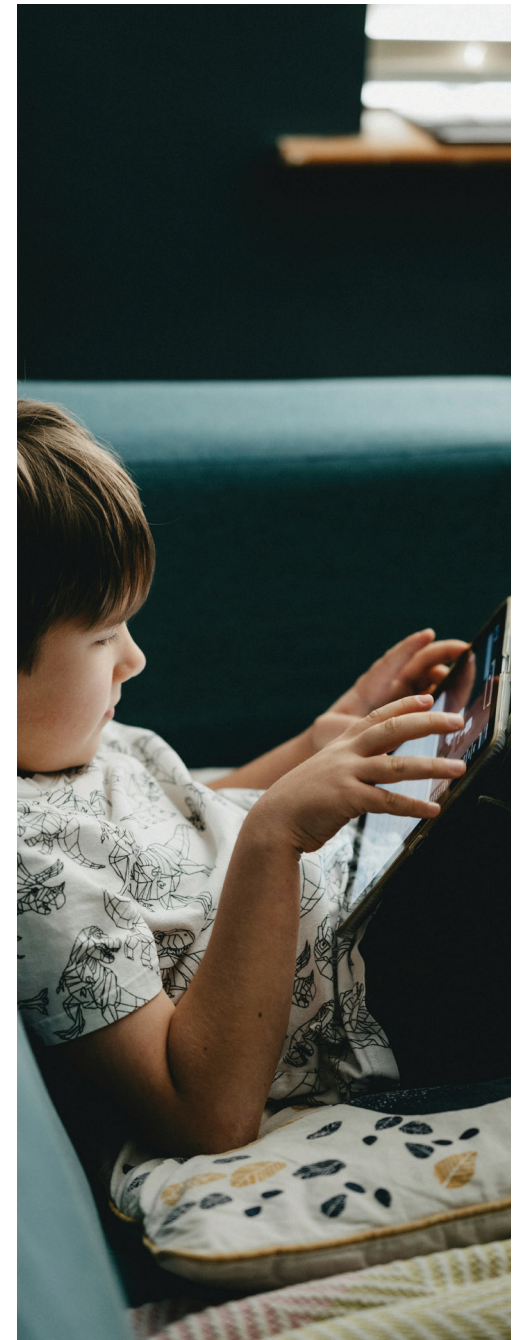
COPPA restricts the collection of personal data from children under 13 without parental consent, affecting media planners targeting family-friendly or children's content. This regulation impacts media choices, particularly on platforms or apps directed toward children.

The EARN IT Act (US Proposed)

This proposed legislation aims to hold online platforms more accountable for hosting material that exploits children. Critics argue that the bill could weaken encryption standards on platforms, while supporters argue it's necessary to improve child safety online.

Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) (EU)

This directive regulates media services across the EU, particularly concerning advertising targeting children. It limits certain types of ads, such as those for unhealthy food or toys, during children's programming.



Create with Compliance

ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSIVITY

Design for everyone, or risk designing for no one.

Disability rules and inclusive design aren't hurdles; they're invitations to reach a wider audience. Alt text, captions, color contrast, and thoughtful layouts make your work usable by everyone, and that's where brilliance meets responsibility.



NET NEUTRALITY AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

Requires internet providers to treat all online data equally, without blocking or prioritizing content. Protects fair access to digital platforms, ensuring that advertisers and content creators can reach audiences without interference.

Net Neutrality Laws (U.S. and Global)

In the United States, the Federal Communication Committee's repeal of net neutrality protections allows Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to prioritize certain types of traffic, potentially affecting the delivery of digital ads and media content. Globally, countries that maintain strong net neutrality laws ensure that all content is treated equally, impacting how advertisers plan and execute digital ad campaigns in those regions.

FEDERAL REGULATIONS OF DIGITAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE DESIGN

Federal regulations of digital equity and inclusive design ensure that digital technologies, content, and services are accessible and usable by all people, regardless of ability or background.



Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Requires state and local governments to ensure all services, programs, and activities—including those offered online or through apps—are accessible to people with disabilities.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Requires federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology (EIT) accessible to people with disabilities. The law applies to all federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology.

Closed Captions Are Now Mandatory for Many Ads

Broadcast and online video ads targeting U.S. audiences generally must include closed captions to be compliant with FCC rules, making ads accessible for the hearing impaired. *Source: FCC Closed Captioning*

Accessibility in Action

Accessibility isn't optional - it's usability

If someone can't navigate, see, or hear your content, your website isn't just inconvenient - it's inaccessible.

Design for inclusion from the start

Streaming platforms like Hulu remind us that accessibility touches everything - from video captions and keyboard navigation to color contrast and text legibility.

Accessibility goes beyond compliance

It's not just about meeting ADA standards - it's about creating digital spaces where everyone can engage equally.

The best interface is an inclusive one

When accessibility is built into design, creativity doesn't shrink - it expands the audience.

DATA PRIVACY & PROTECTION

Hands off their cookies (unless you have consent).

Whether it's GDPR, CCPA, or other frameworks, protecting personal data isn't optional – it's trust in action. Get consent, safeguard information, and be transparent about what you collect and why.



DATA PRIVACY AND PROTECTION LAWS

Safeguard individuals' personal information from unauthorized access or misuse. Key regulations like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union and California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in the U.S. give people control over their data, requiring companies to obtain consent, secure data, and maintain transparency.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

EU rules on collecting and using personal data, requiring global compliance from digital marketers and creatives.

State & National Privacy Laws

Include laws in more than 19 U.S. states laws, as well as Brazil and Canada.

US–EU Data Privacy Framework

Governs U.S.–EU personal data transfers, impacting international ad campaigns that rely on user data.

CROSS-BORDER DATA FLOWS

Refers to the transfer of data across international borders. These transfers must comply with data protection regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union, which restricts the movement of personal data to countries without adequate privacy protections.

Tariffs on Digital Goods and Services

Some countries have implemented tariffs on digital advertising services as part of broader trade disputes. These tariffs could affect the profitability of global ad campaigns and influence how multinational brands allocate their advertising budgets.

Trade Agreements Impacting Digital Advertising

Other countries have implemented privacy laws that impact how advertisers can use consumer data. These laws create challenges for global advertising sales by requiring compliance across multiple jurisdictions.

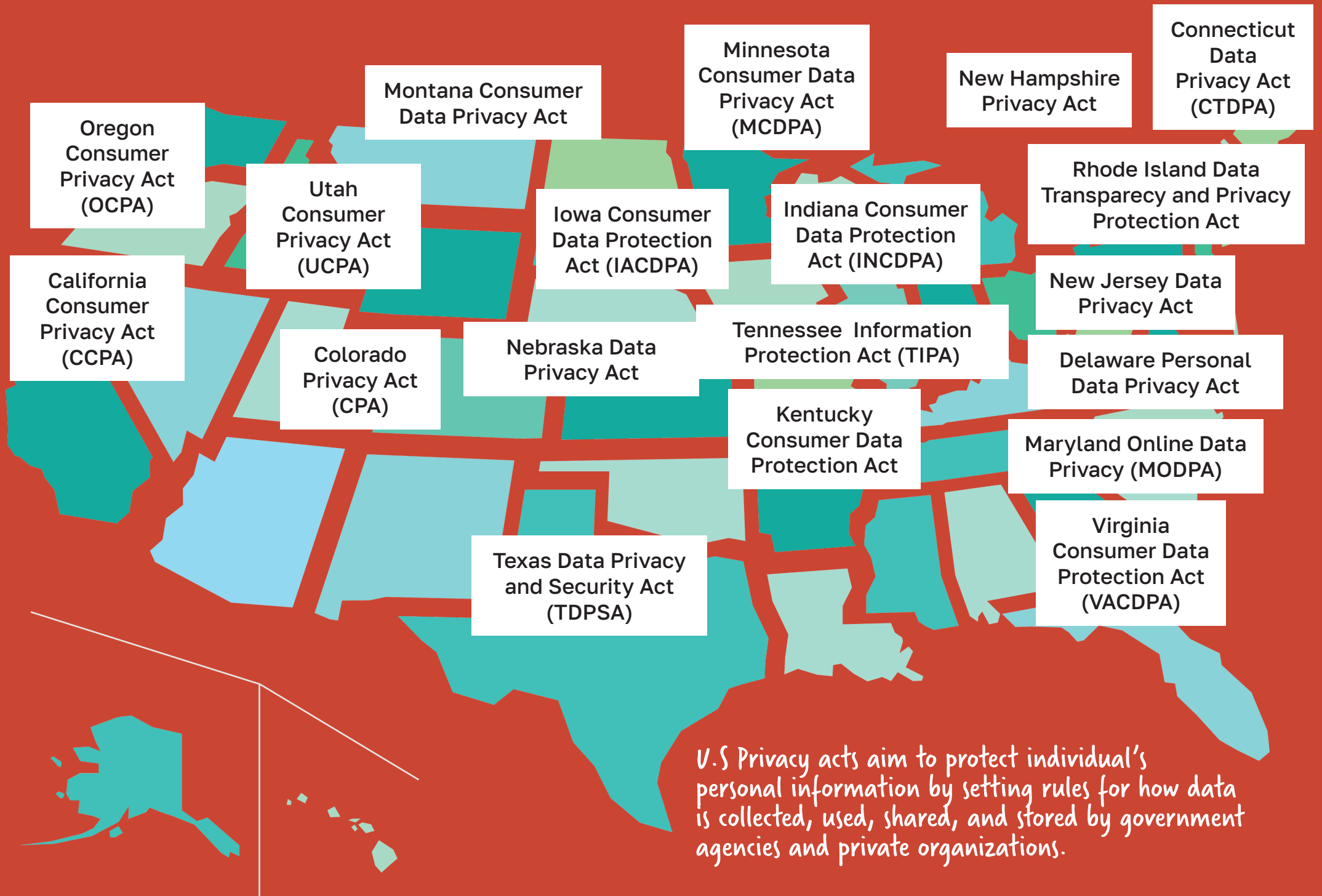
Retargeting Ads Must Respect Privacy

Digital retargeting (showing ads to users based on their browsing history) is heavily scrutinized under privacy laws. In California, the CCPA gives consumers rights to opt-out of data selling.

Source: CCPA Overview



United States Privacy Acts



U.S Privacy acts aim to protect individual's personal information by setting rules for how data is collected, used, shared, and stored by government agencies and private organizations.

Create with Compliance

PLATFORM & POLICY ALIGNMENT

Every platform has its own rulebook. From social networks to ad networks, staying aligned with policies keeps your campaigns visible, your metrics honest, and your reputation intact.

DIGITAL SERVICES AND PLATFORM REGULATIONS

Govern how online platforms handle content, user data, and marketplace practices. These regulations aim to create safer digital spaces, protect user rights, and promote fair competition by holding platforms accountable for their role in content distribution and data usage.



Digital Services Act (DSA) (EU)

Holds media companies accountable for illegal content with transparent moderation, stricter rules for large platforms, user protection, misinformation control, and increased marketplace accountability.

Digital Markets Act (DMA) (EU)

Limits control that these large platforms have over the distribution of content and advertising revenue. It promotes interoperability and prevents anti-competitive practices that could harm smaller content creators and platforms.

Communications Decency Act (CDA) Section 230 (US)

Section 230 of the CDA provides immunity to digital platforms for content posted by third parties. It allows platforms to moderate content without being held liable, which is critical for the growth of user-generated content and social media.



MISINFORMATION AND CONTENT REGULATION

Includes laws and guidelines that prevent the spread of false or harmful information online. The goal is to protect public discourse, reduce harm, and maintain credible information ecosystems, while balancing freedom of expression.

EU Code of Practice on Disinformation

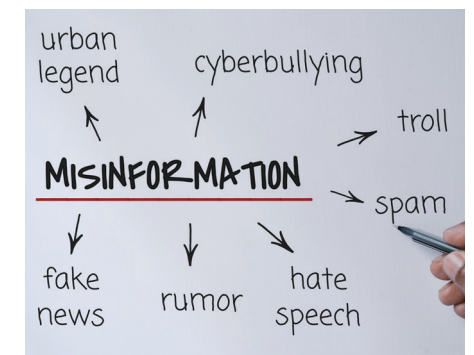
The European Union has a voluntary code that social media platforms have signed to curb the spread of disinformation. It requires platforms to take measures to reduce the dissemination of fake news, especially around sensitive issues like elections.

Platform-Specific Policies on Misinformation

Social media platforms have introduced stricter guidelines on content moderation and misinformation. Posts related to sensitive topics (e.g., public health, elections, environmental issues) may face restrictions or content removal.

Online Falsehoods & Manipulation Acts

Countries like Singapore have passed legislation to combat online misinformation through acts like the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA). These policies require social media platforms to remove or correct false information and give governments more power to issue take-down orders.





HATE SPEECH AND HARMFUL CONTENT REGULATIONS

Prevent the spread of offensive, discriminatory, or harmful content to create safer online spaces by holding platforms accountable, while balancing freedom of expression with the protection of individuals from harm.

Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG)

Germany's NetzDG requires social media platforms with over 2 million users to remove hate speech, illegal content, and disinformation within 24 hours of receiving a complaint or face significant fines. This law is one of the strictest in the world and has inspired similar regulations in other countries.

The Online Safety Bill (UK)

The United Kingdom's Online Safety Bill requires social platforms to tighten moderation and protect users from illegal and harmful content.

Freedom of Speech vs. Hate Speech is a Legal Balance

Many countries balance protecting freedom of speech with restricting hate speech. Advertisers must be cautious not to cross the line between provocative messaging and illegal hate content.

Source: Human Rights Watch

TAXATION OF DIGITAL MEDIA

Applies taxes to digital services, products, and advertising revenues. These taxes ensure large tech platforms contribute fairly to the economy, requiring digital media companies and advertisers to comply with evolving tax laws.

Digital Services Taxes (DSTs)

Several countries – including the UK, France, and India – have introduced digital services taxes on major tech companies, covering revenue from digital services like online ads and streaming.

OECD Global Minimum Tax

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is working on a global tax agreement that would ensure multinational companies, including those in digital media, pay a minimum tax rate



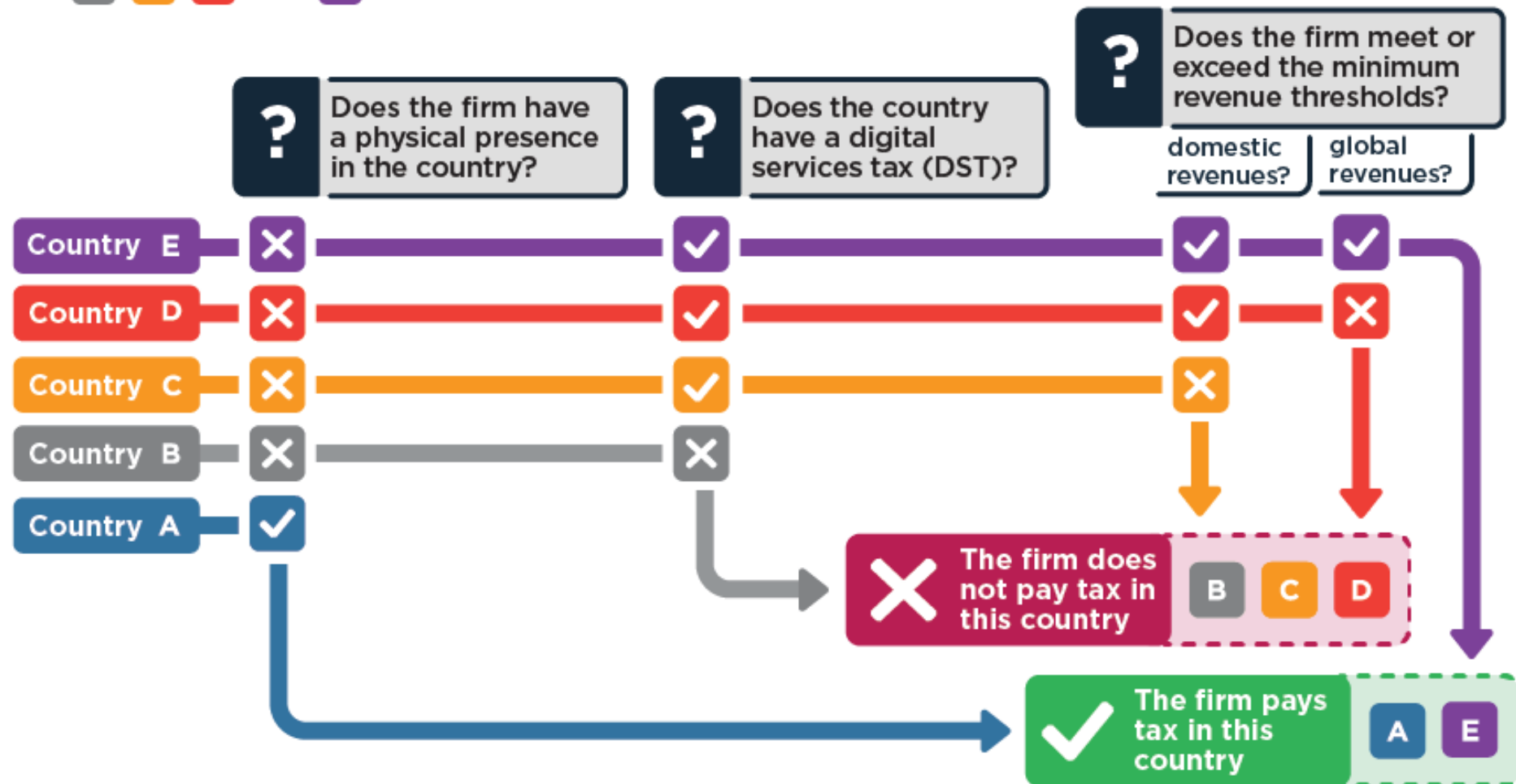
Digital Services Taxes (DSTs) Are Growing Worldwide

More than 40 countries have introduced Digital Services Taxes, targeting revenues from companies like Google, Amazon, and Facebook to ensure they pay taxes where their users are, not just where they're headquartered.

Source: OECD Digital Tax Report

How do digital services taxes work?

A large multinational technology firm headquartered in **Country A** sells digital services to clients abroad in four countries: **B**, **C**, **D**, and **E**.



#PIECharts

Learn more at [piie.com/research/piie-charts](https://www.piie.com/research/piie-charts)



Note: Digital services taxes apply to covered services that are consumed by clients or users with a device internet protocol (IP) address or other geolocation tag located within the jurisdiction. The digital services covered varies depending on the jurisdiction.

Design by
Nia Kitchin
and Oliver Ward

Source: Adapted from Gary Clyde Hufbauer and Megan Hogan's blog, "Canada's digital services tax threatens global effort to curb tax havens," and Policy Brief, *The European Union renews its offensive against US technology firms*.

Create with Compliance

RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION

Let AI assist, not mislead.

Misinformation, bias, and harmful messaging aren't just mistakes – they're legal and ethical landmines. Whether it's AI generated copy, political ads, or sustainability claims, check for accuracy, fairness, and transparency before hitting publish.



ALGORITHM REGULATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN ADVERTISING

Involve business practices that positively impact society and the environment. These efforts, including ethical labor practices and eco-friendly operations, help companies build trust and meet expectations from consumers and regulators.

AI Act (EU)

This proposed law will regulate the use of artificial intelligence in various industries, including advertising. Advertisers will need to ensure that their AI tools comply with transparency and ethical standards, possibly leading to more cautious use of AI in decision-making processes and ad placement.

AI and Copyright

This proposed U.S. law would require companies to assess the impact of algorithms, including those used in advertising research for targeted marketing.



Regulation of AI in Europe

The European Union is working on AI regulation, including ensuring transparency and accountability in AI systems, which could affect how AI tools are used in creative industries, especially in advertising, media, and art.

Algorithmic Accountability Act (Proposed in the US)

Globally, there are ongoing discussions about how artificial intelligence-generated works are treated under copyright law. These debates impact creative industries that rely on or are experimenting with AI-generated content.

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL GOVERNANCE (ESG) ADVERTISING

Emphasizes a brand's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) efforts, ensuring accurate communication that fosters transparency and helps consumers make informed choices about eco-friendly products.



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Develop guidelines to ensure AI-driven advertising is ethical, transparent, and fair, promoting trust while preventing harm such as discrimination or privacy violations.

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards

GRI sets global standards for sustainability and corporate social responsibility reporting. Companies that align with GRI standards are seen as more credible, which influences public perceptions and media relations.



ANTITRUST AND COMPETITION LAWS

Promote fair competition and prevent monopolistic practices that could harm consumers or stifle innovation. These laws prohibit anti-competitive behavior such as price fixing, market manipulation, and monopolies.

Antitrust Investigations and Lawsuits (US & EU)

US and EU governments are scrutinizing major digital platforms' dominance, and ongoing antitrust investigations may reshape how digital advertising is bought and sold.

Antitrust Investigations (US & EU)

The US and EU are investigating major social media platforms like Meta for reportedly stifling competition through acquisitions or unfair data practices.

Sustainability Disclosure Regulations

Companies in the European Union and the United States are held to higher standards for sustainability disclosures. Messages about a company's environmental impact must align with regulatory expectations. Failure to do so can lead to reputational damage or regulatory penalties.

ESG Reporting Requirements

Governments and regulatory bodies are increasingly requiring companies to disclose their environmental, social, and governance practices. Policies such as the European Union Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD) require companies to report on their sustainability efforts, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and other ESG-related activities.

FTC Green Guides (US)

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) provides guidelines for environmental marketing claims, ensuring that advertisers do not overstate or mislead consumers about a product's environmental benefits.

EU Sustainability Advertising Regulations

Companies in the European Union and the United States are held to higher standards for sustainability disclosures or risk reputational and regulatory consequences.

Investors Use ESG Data to Judge Brand Trustworthiness

- Investors now use ESG scores to guide investments, encouraging companies to market honestly and sustainably. *Source: MSCI ESG Research*

CONTENT OWNERSHIP

Give credit, share the love.

Creative work deserves respect. Only use licensed or original material, give credit where it's due, and don't assume "free online" means free to use. Protecting IP protects your credibility and keeps campaigns free of litigation.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP) AND COPYRIGHT LAWS

Protects creative works like inventions, designs, music, and digital content. These laws give creators exclusive rights, preventing unauthorized use and ensuring control over their intellectual property in media and advertising.

Copyright Law

In the U.S., the Copyright Act protects creative works such as literature, music, art, and software from unauthorized use. Globally, the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works sets standards for copyright protection.

Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA)

This U.S. law impacts how digital works are distributed and protects against copyright infringement in online spaces. It also addresses the liability of digital platforms hosting user-generated content.

Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement

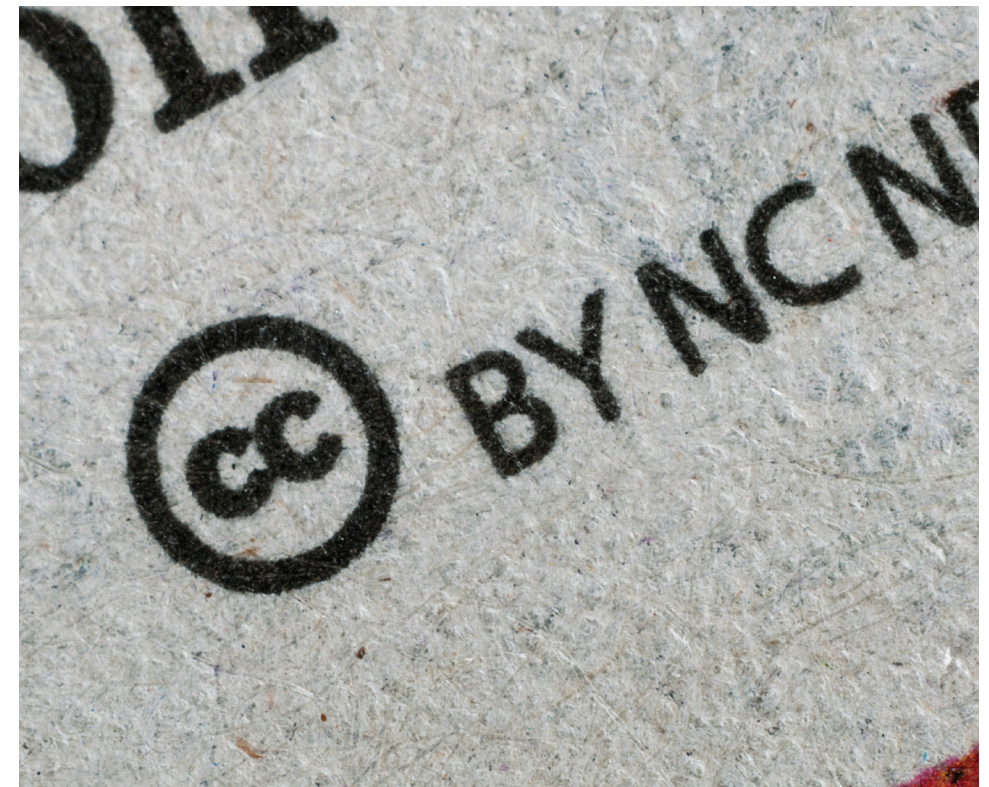
Sets minimum standards for IP protection, affecting creators worldwide. It establishes global standards for protecting trademarks, copyrights, and patents in advertisements.

Copyright Directive (EU)

The Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market modernizes EU copyright laws for the digital age. Article 17 makes online platforms responsible for users' copyright infringements.

OPEN ACCESS AND FAIR USE

Makes research and publications freely available online without paywalls, broadening public access to knowledge. Allows limited use of copyrighted material without permission for purposes like commentary, criticism, or education, balancing creators' rights with public interest but requiring specific legal criteria to be met.



Creative Commons

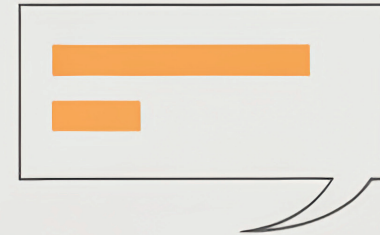
A global initiative that provides flexible, easy-to-understand licenses enabling creators to share their work freely while retaining some rights. These licenses guide content sharing and remixing, promoting global creative collaboration and innovation.

Fair Use Doctrine

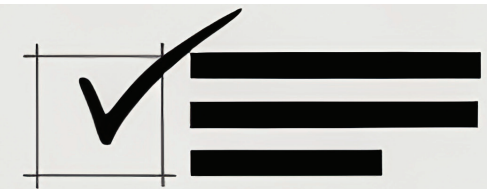
In the US, fair use allows limited use of copyrighted works for criticism, teaching, and research, balancing creators' rights with public interest and enabling transformative, educational uses in journalism, education, and the arts.

Creative work deserves respect. Only use licensed or original material. Give credit where it's due.

Use only licensed or original images, music, and designs.



Protecting IP protects your credibility



Credit creators when using Creative Commons or open source materials.

Case Studies in Action: When Compliance Meets Creativity

Every rule has a story – and in advertising, those stories are often what separate a viral success from a PR nightmare. These case studies show how brands, agencies, and creators navigate the fine print to build campaigns that are smart, inclusive, and future-proof. Each section highlights a real-world regulation, a creative challenge, and the a-ha moment when “compliance” turns into a creative edge.

Truth & Transparency: When Honesty Sells

The Big Idea

Truth isn't just good ethics – it's a great strategy. Regulations like the FTC's Truth-in-Advertising laws and the EU's Green Claims Directive keep brands accountable and believable.

Case Sparks

#Ad or Nah? A beauty brand revamps influencer content after an FTC warning, turning transparency into part of its brand voice.

Green, but Make It Real. A European outdoor company transforms vague “eco” claims into measurable sustainability wins.

Case Study: #Ad or Nah? – Turning Transparency into a Brand Asset

The Regulation at Play

FTC Endorsement Guides (US)

Influencers and brands must clearly disclose paid partnerships or gifted products using visible language like “#ad” or “#sponsored.” Disclosures must be easy to find, not buried in a caption or hidden among hashtags.



Overview

A beauty brand faces an FTC warning over influencer posts that lacked clear sponsorship disclosure.

Challenge

How can the brand and its influencers disclose paid partnerships clearly without losing authenticity or engagement? What balance should be struck between legal requirements and creative storytelling?

Key Decision Questions

How explicit should influencer disclosures be to satisfy FTC guidelines while still feeling natural?

Should the brand rely on platform tools (like “Paid Partnership” tags) or create custom messaging?

Who is responsible for ensuring compliance – the brand, agency, or influencer?

Outcome

The brand revamped its influencer content, making transparency a core part of its voice. Clear disclosures were woven into captions with creative flair, transforming compliance into a brand strength and restoring consumer trust.

Case Study: Green, but Make It Real – When Sustainability Claims Meet the FTC

The Regulation at Play

FTC Green Guides (US)

Require brands to avoid misleading or unsubstantiated environmental claims like “eco-friendly,” “green,” or “sustainable” unless they can prove them.



Overview

An apparel brand launched a “Conscious Collection” with claims of sustainability and zero waste. However, it can’t provide sufficient proof when challenged, risking FTC action and consumer backlash.

Challenge

How much evidence is needed to support environmental claims? How can vague language be replaced with verifiable facts? how can the brand balance honest marketing with consumer expectations?

Key Decision Questions

What specific proof should back claims like “eco-friendly” or “sustainable”?

Is it better to delay marketing until all claims are fully verified or share progress transparently?

How can creative storytelling incorporate verified sustainability without clichés?

Outcome

The brand paused the campaign to gather data and redesigned its messaging to highlight verifiable facts. Using interactive certified data links, it rebuilt credibility and avoided regulatory penalties.

Accessibility & Inclusivity: Design for Everyone

The Big Idea

The ADA and Section 508 aren’t just rules – they’re invitations to create work everyone can actually experience.

Case Sparks

The Caption Comeback. A public health PSA becomes a viral success after adding captions, audio descriptions, and readable text layouts.

Style Meets Access. A lifestyle brand redefines “inclusive design” by spotlighting models with visible and invisible disabilities.

Case Study: The Caption Comeback – Designing for Accessibility and Empathy

The Regulation at Play

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) + Section 508.

Require public-facing digital content to be accessible, including captions, alt text, and navigable interfaces.

Overview

A streaming service’s youth campaign went viral – but its lack of captions and alt text excluded deaf and hard-of-hearing users, triggering backlash and a campaign pause.

Challenge

How can accessibility be integrated into fast-paced, visually rich content without diluting creativity? Who owns accessibility in the creative process? How do legal requirements align with ethical storytelling?

Key Decision Questions

How to design captions and audio descriptions that fit the brand's tone and energy?

How to test accessibility features with diverse users to ensure effectiveness?

How to balance production timelines with inclusive design needs?

Outcome

The team re-released the campaign with engaging, brand-aligned captions and descriptions. It not only met accessibility standards but expanded audience reach and deepened emotional connection.

Case Study: Style Meets Access — When Design and Accessibility Share the Runway

The Regulation at Play

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) + Section 508 (US)

Require public-facing digital content to be accessible, including captions, alt text, and navigable interfaces.



Overview

A high-end fashion brand launches a sleek new digital lookbook filled with interactive visuals, bold motion graphics, and stylized typography. The campaign earns praise for its aesthetics but faces criticism when users with visual impairments report screen reader incompatibility and low color contrast. The brand must decide whether to strip down its design or find a way to make accessibility part of the look.

Challenge

How can a brand maintain visual sophistication while ensuring accessibility compliance and inclusive design principles?

Key Decision Questions

Should the design team prioritize visual impact or accessibility functionality?

How can typography, motion, and color be adapted without losing creative flair?

Can accessibility itself become part of the brand's identity and design philosophy?

Outcome

The brand embraces accessibility as a design feature, working with inclusive design consultants to develop a style guide that celebrates both form and function. The campaign relaunches as a model for "accessible luxury" proving that good design doesn't have to be exclusive.

Data Privacy & Protection: The Trust Equation

The Big Idea

Laws like GDPR and CCPA remind advertisers that personalization should feel helpful, not creepy.

Case Sparks

Popcorn with Permissions. A streaming service redesigns its data consent flow so users actually read it and like it.

Data Safe or Sorry. A retail brand crafts a friendly cookie banner that informs without annoying users.

Accessible Ads Boost Brand Reputation

Studies show that brands using accessible media and ads reach wider audiences and create positive brand perception among people with disabilities and allies — a smart compliance and marketing win-win.

Source: Accenture Disability Research

Case Study: Popcorn & Permissions – Popping Consent Right in Digital Ads

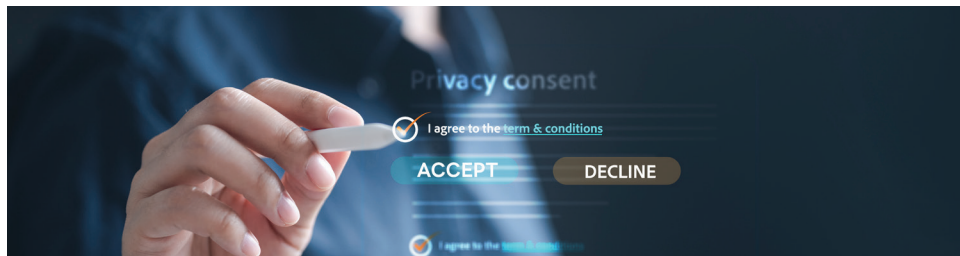
The Regulations at Play

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

Requires clear, informed consent for data collection in the EU.

CCPA (California Consumer Protect Act)

Requires Californians to know and control how businesses use their personal data.



Overview

A streaming service's original cookie consent was a confusing barrier, causing users to skip reading and mistrust the brand. The challenge was to redesign the consent flow to be clear, engaging, and fully compliant with data privacy laws.

Challenge

How can the service make privacy notices easy to understand and even enjoyable, encouraging users to make informed choices about their data?

Key Decision Questions

How to balance legal requirements with simple, friendly language and design?

What interactive elements could make consent feel less like a chore?

How to build trust while maintaining a seamless user experience?

Outcome

By using a playful, simple consent interface with clear options and brief explanations, the streaming service improved transparency and user satisfaction – turning consent into a welcome step.

Case Study: Data Safe or Sorry – Navigating Privacy in Personalized Ads

The Regulations at Play

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

Requires clear, informed consent for data collection in the EU.

CCPA (California Consumer Protect Act)

Requires Californians to know, delete, and control how businesses use their personal data.



Overview

A global e-commerce brand uses extensive customer data to hyper-target ads but faces scrutiny under GDPR and CCPA for inadequate consent management.

Challenge

How can the brand balance personalized advertising with stringent data privacy laws? What steps ensure transparency and respect user rights without losing marketing effectiveness?

Key Decision Questions

How to design clear, user-friendly consent prompts that don't disrupt experience?

What data minimization practices can maintain campaign effectiveness while complying with laws?

How to communicate privacy policies simply and build consumer trust?

Outcome

The brand implemented a layered consent model and enhanced transparency through easy-to-understand privacy dashboards. Compliance became a trust-builder that improved customer loyalty and campaign performance.

Platform & Policy Alignment: Play by the (Platform's) Rules

The Big Idea

From the EU's Digital Services Act to Section 230 in the US digital platforms are rewriting the rules of engagement – literally.

Case Sparks

Post with Purpose. A global campaign adjusts copy and ad placement strategies after a DSA transparency update.

The Flagged Feed. A political campaign learns the cost of ignoring misinformation policies mid-rollout.

Case Study: Post with Purpose – Navigating New Rules with Confidence

The Regulation at Play

Digital Services Act (DSA)

EU regulation enhancing transparency and accountability for online platforms and advertisers.

Overview

A multinational brand launched a digital campaign across European platforms but hit compliance snags when the EU's Digital Services Act (DSA) introduced stricter transparency requirements on ad disclosures and targeting.

Challenge

How can the campaign quickly adapt ad copy, disclosures, and placement to meet new DSA transparency rules without losing momentum or audience engagement?

Key Decision Questions

How to revise ad copy to clearly disclose sponsored content and targeting criteria?

What adjustments are needed in ad placement to avoid penalties or reduced reach?

How to maintain brand voice and creative appeal while ensuring regulatory alignment?

Outcome

The team added transparent disclaimers and moved placements to compliant channels, preserving audience trust and campaign performance while staying ahead of evolving EU rules.

Case Study: The Flagged Feed – The Price of Ignoring Misinformation Rules

The Regulation at Play

Platform-specific misinformation policies, reinforced by laws like the EU Digital Services Act and evolving US proposals.

Overview

During an election season, a political campaign's social media ads were flagged under stricter misinformation policies, reducing outreach and credibility.

Challenge

How can the campaign follow platform misinformation rules to prevent disruptions and still persuade voters?

Key Decision Questions

How to vet and fact-check content before posting to prevent policy violations?

What proactive measures can anticipate platform policy changes during sensitive periods?

How can rapid content changes be managed without confusing or alienating supporters?

Outcome

By adding real-time content review and working with platform compliance teams, the campaign reduced ad flags, regained control of its messaging, and restored voter engagement.

Content Responsibility & Emerging Tech: AI with Accountability

The Big Idea

AI can amplify creativity—but it also amplifies responsibility. The goal: innovate without crossing ethical lines.

Case Sparks

The Bot Wrote It (Kind Of). A brand publicly owns its AI-generated copy and earns audience respect for transparency.

Deepfake Dilemma. A campaign experiments with synthetic media, then introduces disclaimers to rebuild public trust.

Case Study: The Bot Wrote It (Kind Of) — Owning AI-Generated Creativity with Transparency

The Regulations at Play

AI Act (EU)

Sets standards for the ethical and transparent use of artificial intelligence, ensuring AI systems are safe, fair, and respect fundamental rights.

Truth-in-Advertising Guidelines (FTC)

Requires that advertising be truthful, not misleading, and backed by evidence, protecting consumers from deceptive marketing.



Overview

A brand used AI to craft ad copy but openly disclosed its AI involvement, sparking a fresh wave of audience trust and engagement.

Challenge

How to balance AI innovation with honesty so consumers feel informed, not deceived?

Key Decision Questions

How much to reveal about AI's role in content creation?

What messaging builds transparency without undermining brand credibility?

How to use AI ethically while maintaining creative flair?

Outcome:

By embracing transparency and labeling AI-generated copy clearly, the brand boosted authenticity and set a new standard for ethical AI use in advertising.

Case Study: Deepfake Dilemma — Testing Synthetic Media, Then Restoring Trust

The Regulations at Play

AI Act (EU)

Sets standards for the ethical and transparent use of artificial intelligence, ensuring AI systems are safe, fair, and respect fundamental rights.

Truth-in-Advertising Guidelines (FTC)

Requires that advertising be truthful, not misleading, and backed by evidence, protecting consumers from deceptive marketing.

Platform Misinformation Policies

Rules set by social media and digital platforms to detect, limit, and remove false or misleading content, aiming to protect users and maintain trustworthy online environments.

Overview

A campaign launched with synthetic deepfake videos faced backlash over authenticity concerns. To regain trust, disclaimers and clear disclosures were added.

Challenge

How to innovate with deepfake tech while safeguarding public trust and adhering to ethical standards?

Key Decision Questions

When and how to disclose synthetic content?

How to balance creativity with responsibility?

What safeguards prevent misinformation or manipulation?

Outcome

By adding upfront disclaimers and engaging audiences in dialogue about AI's role, the campaign restored credibility and pioneered responsible synthetic media use.

Intellectual Property & Copyright: Respect the Remix

The Big Idea:

Copyright laws and Creative Commons aren't creativity blockers – they're creativity blueprints.

Case Sparks:

The Borrowed Beat. A music dispute teaches an agency to license smarter (and faster).

Remix, Don't Rip Off. A youth campaign uses Creative Commons assets to encourage legal, crowd-sourced creativity.

Copyright Automatically Protects Your Work

In most countries, copyright protection starts as soon as you create an original work – no need to register or apply for it.

Source: U.S. Copyright Office

Case Study: The Borrowed Beat – How a Music Mishap Turned Licensing into a Power Move

The Regulations at Play

Copyright Laws (US)

Gives creators exclusive rights to reproduce, distribute, and display their original works like music, writing, and art, preventing unauthorized use.

Intellectual Property Rights:

Broad legal rights that protect creations of the mind – including inventions, designs, trademarks, and copyrights – ensuring creators control and benefit from their work.



Overview

An ad agency faced a costly legal dispute after using an unlicensed music track in a major campaign, highlighting the risks of unclear licensing agreements.

Challenge

How can the agency streamline music licensing processes to avoid legal issues without slowing down creative workflows?

Key Decision Questions

What checks should be in place to verify music rights quickly?

How to balance creative freedom with legal safeguards?

How to educate teams on proper licensing practices?

Outcome:

By adopting faster, more transparent licensing protocols and integrating rights management tools, the agency protected future campaigns and kept creativity flowing.

Case Study: Remix, Don't Rip Off - Why Creative Remixing Always Wins Over Copying

The Regulations at Play

Copyright Laws (US)

Gives creators exclusive rights to reproduce, distribute, and display their original works like music, writing, and art, preventing unauthorized use.

Creative Commons Licenses

A set of flexible copyright licenses that allow creators to easily share their work with others while specifying how it can be used, reused, or modified – encouraging legal sharing and collaboration.



Overview

A youth-focused social campaign embraced Creative Commons licensed music, images, and videos, empowering participants to legally remix and share content while respecting creators' rights.

Challenge

How to foster creative collaboration without infringing copyright or stifling originality?

Key Decision Questions

Which Creative Commons licenses allow remixing for commercial campaigns?

How to educate contributors on legal use and attribution?

What systems support user-generated, compliant content?

Outcome:

The campaign successfully built a vibrant, legal creative community by leveraging open licenses and clear guidelines, setting a model for ethical crowd-sourced advertising.

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Take your compliance game further with our full suite of creative, practical resources.

Create with Compliance Workbook

Dive into interactive exercises, real-world scenarios, and creative prompts designed to help you understand – and actually enjoy – building compliant content. It's hands-on, easy to use, and built for makers, marketers, and problem-solvers.

Packaging Compliance Playbook

Your go-to guide for packaging rules, retail readiness, labeling, sustainability claims, and more. Clear explanations, quick checklists, and clever reminders make it simple to design packaging that stands out and stays compliant.

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Find even more tools, templates, updates, and resources online. Whether you're searching for quick answers or deeper guidance, the website gives you everything you need to stay sharp, stay ethical, and stay ready.

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Keep creating confidently.

Keep creating with compliance.



Stay Creative, Confident & Compliant