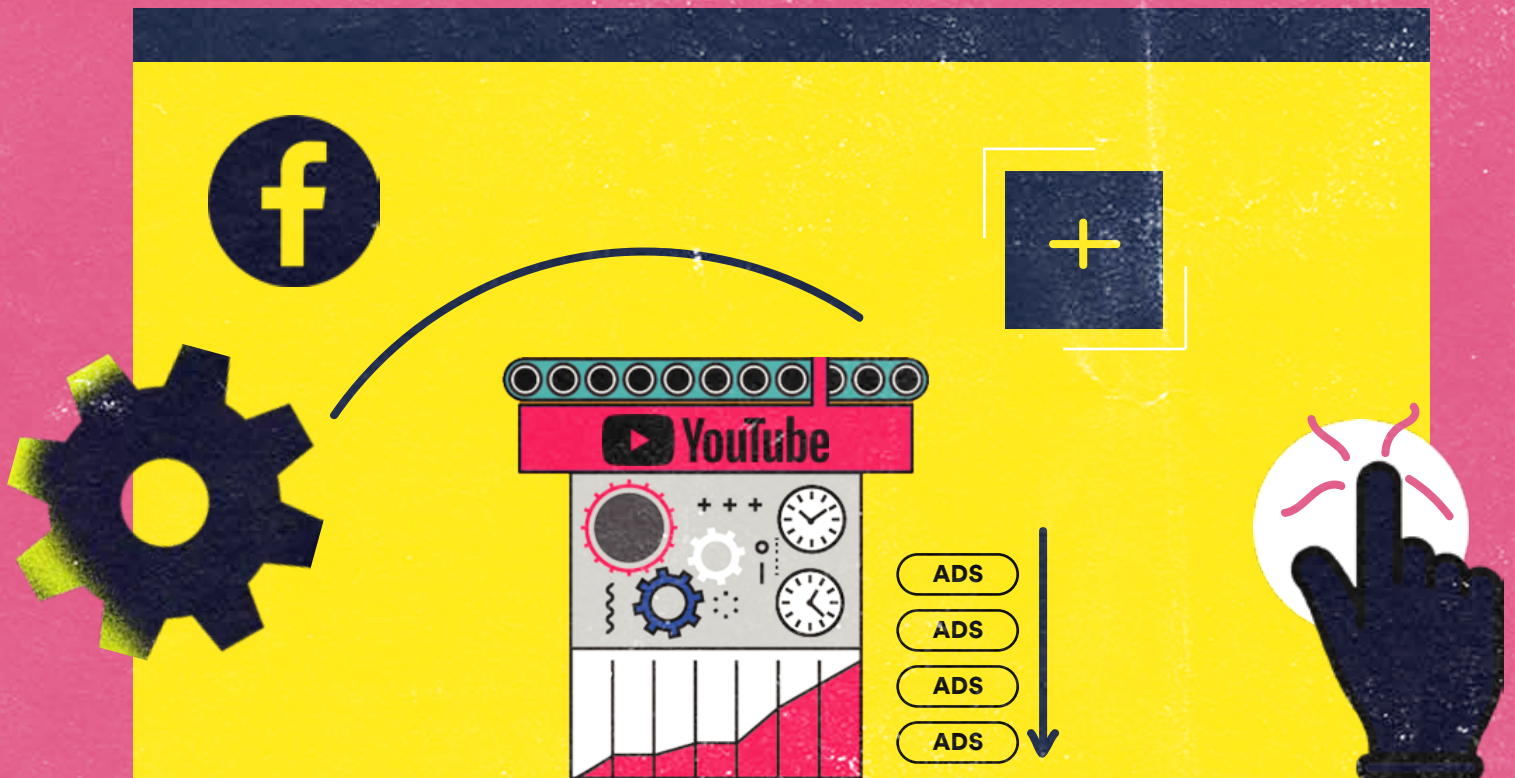


Why Integrating Brand Safety In Your Video Advertising Strategy Is A Must

The state of brand safety in video advertising, and how
AI and computer vision can power the next-gen tech.



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The brand safety crisis

Where it all began

March 2017 marked the first major brand safety catastrophe in the video advertising world. Guardian, the British daily newspaper, blacklisted YouTube when it found its ads running alongside hate speech and extremist content. Subsequently, household brands like Toyota, Proctor & Gamble, AT&T, Verizon pulled out millions of dollars' worth of ad spend from YouTube.

For the first time, YouTube was dealing not only with reputation damage but also revenue damage. And it wouldn't be the last time - YouTube was continued to be blamed for hurtful brand exposure, despite introducing corrective measures throughout 2017, 2018 and 2019. YouTube is not the only platform dealing with the crisis – video advertisers on Facebook and Twitter continue to face similar brand safety issues.



Why is brand safety in video important?

What brand safety means

Over the years brand safety has been used to describe various digital advertising issues ranging from ad fraud, viewability, to ads placement in unsuitable environments. In this paper we defer to what brand safety means in its true essence - reputational and about consumer's perception of a brand, kept separate from ROI.

Definition of brand safety

The term “Brand Safety” describes the controls that companies in the digital advertising supply chain employ to protect brands against negative impacts to the brand's consumer reputation associated with specific types of content, criminal activity, and/or related loss of return on investment.

Trustworthy Accountability Group's (TAG)

Most advertisers today are facing ad placement against unsuitable and potentially harmful context in the following categories that the global digital advertising industry refers to as the “Dirty Dozen” categories to avoid.



Military conflict	Spam/Harmful Sites	Obscenity
Smoking	Drugs	Adult
Crime	Death/Injury	Online Piracy
Terrorism	Arms	Hate speech

Importance of brand safety in the world of user generated content

It takes years and significant resources for a brand to build a reputation in the minds of consumers. Not just the product or service, the consumers also connect with the brands values and principals. Even a single, less than desired association, can tarnish brand reputation and consumers' trust.

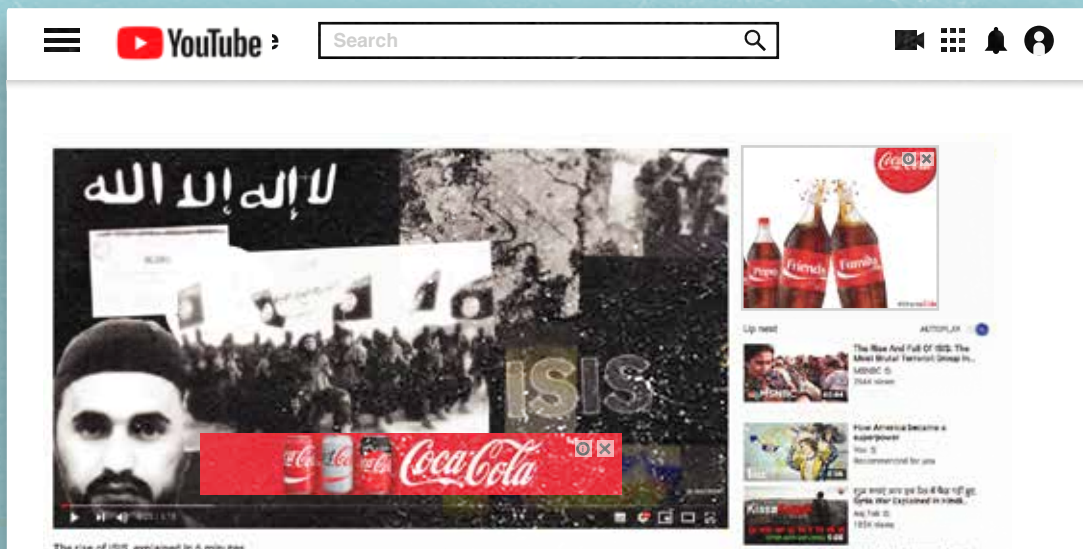
1 in 10 ad placements are against harmful content

80% consumers will stop or reduce buying products advertised against extreme or violent content.

70% believe advertiser and the agency are most responsible for a brand's ad placements.

- Trustworthy Accountability Group & Brand Safety Institute (2019)

When your brand is associated with hurtful content



What creates an 'unsafe' environment

Millions of dollars' worth of video ad spend primarily finds home on social video platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and more. Ads are placed against user generated content, where the objective is to leverage fast churning content that users relate with. However, with 500 hours of videos uploaded to YouTube alone each minute, it is a challenge to limit ad placement to only content that can be deemed suitable.



"Though today's dynamic advertising environments offer avenues to reach the target audience like never before, these also bring along huge challenges in terms of control and transparency, especially when brands are not willing to compromise on advertising ROI and performance to meet brand safety expectations".

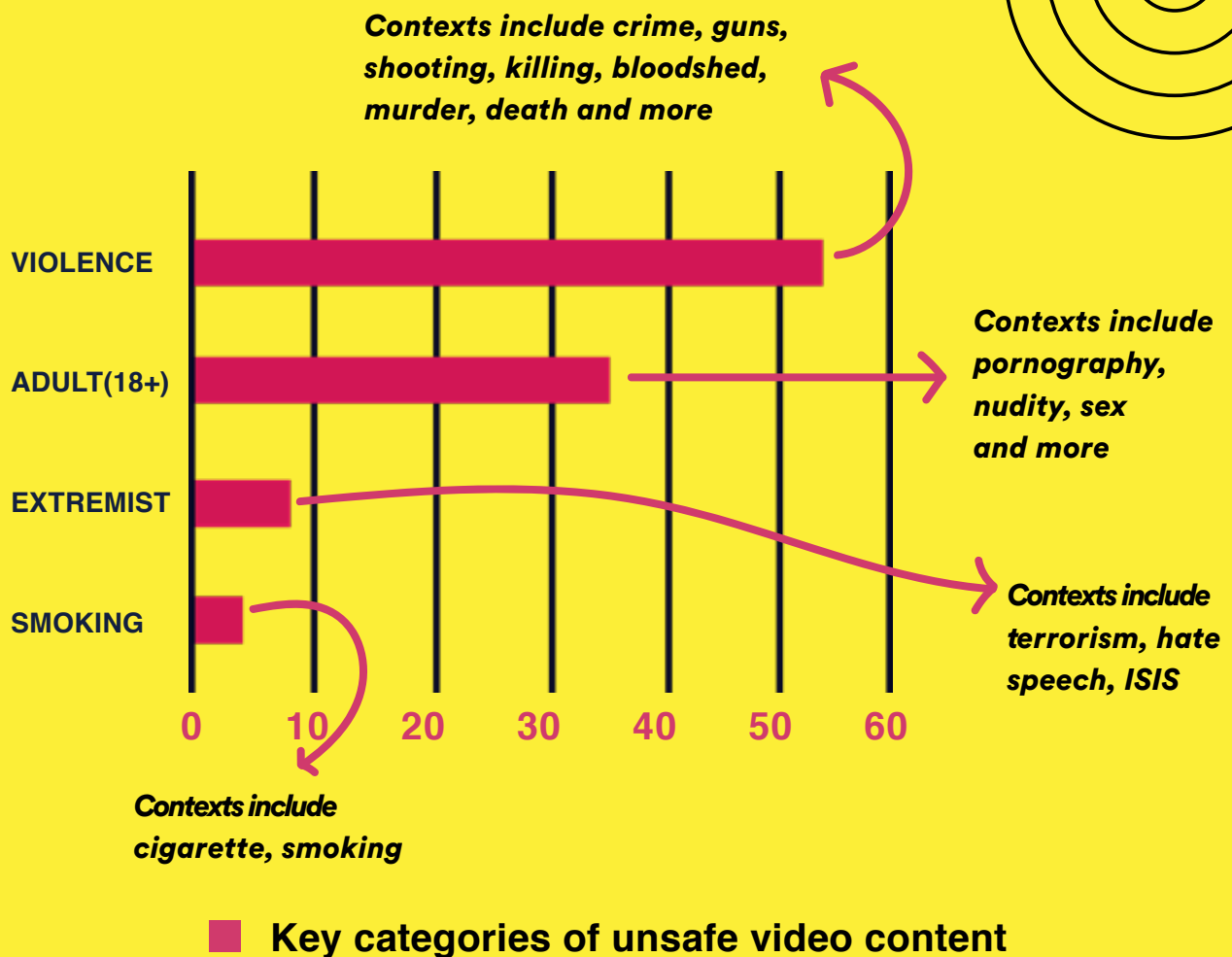
**Vineeth Dhruvan, General Manager
Starcom Vietnam**

What are you up against?

Sourced from churning 8 million video IDs using Mirrors on YouTube (Mirrors is a in-video context detection platform by SilverPush, that places ads against the most context relevant videos and filters out harmful video content).

10% of all content on YouTube is brand unsafe

Top unsafe categories on YouTube



The state of brand safety on social platforms

After a two-year ban, AT&T, one of the biggest advertising spenders in US, finally resumed advertising on YouTube in January 2019. And, once again pulled budgets within a month in the light of another major brand safety violation which hit nearly 300 brands. Here is a view into how the biggest video advertising platforms have fared in creating a brand safe environment for advertisers over the last few years.

The Rise and Rise of YouTube's Brand Safety Crisis – A Timeline

2017

Mar

YouTube Faces massive brand pull for ad placements against extreme content

Guardian, Havas, AT&T, Verizon, Johnson & Johnson, GSK, Toyota, McDonald's Starbucks, Walmart, PepsiCo, GM, Volkswagen pull ad spend worth millions of dollars

Faces a predicted loss of \$750 Million

Apr – Oct

Google takes steps for brand safety controls. Allows 3rd party brand safety tools

Apr – Oct

Brand safety woes resurface. Amazon, HP, Mars, Deutsche Bank, Adidas pull out

2018

Jan

Releases 100% human-verified Google Preferred ad product. Plans hiring 10,000 people for human vetting

Partners with 3rd party brand safety tools

March

Opens up to Jicwebs brand safety certification

Apr

Brand safety woes resurface, a 300 brands affects.

Google says YouTube might never be 100% brand-safe

Jun-Jul

Rolls out a 3 tiered inventory structure for to align with individual brands' risk tolerance profiles.

Aug

Lands in hot water again as Mars departs over brand safety concerns

Sep

Adopts MRC accreditation for brand safety

Oct

Advertiser boycott appears to be over

Google's estimated loss owing to brand safety concerns reaches \$1 Billion.

2019

Jan

AT&T resumes advertising after nearly 2 years

Feb

Brand safety woes resurface. AT&T pulls ads from YouTube within a month

McDonald's, Nestlé and many more exit.

These brands were spending 70% less on the platform than a year ago.

Jun

Supports advertisers pulling spend amid brand safety concerns. Advises advertisers should pull spend from YouTube if it means they can "do the right thing".

Sep

Another wave of brand safety concerns; Samsung and Heinz affected

Facebook & Twitter face similar Issues

Facebook and Twitter made a greater play for video advertising through 2017 to 2019. Both platforms leveraged YouTube's fails, by making brand safety a central theme to promote their video ads business. Despite this, both platforms experienced massive issues ranging from unsafe brand exposure to data privacy violations.

During this time, Tik Tok's clout and virality grew in the world of user generated video content. However, besides the hype and rapidly growing user base, one of Tik Tok's biggest claim to fame has been a multi-million dollar fine for violating children's privacy law in 2019.

2019

Facebook

Develops a 3rd party API To block publishers and Video creators from ad Campaigns.

Launches brand safety updates Amid advertiser pressure

Announces new brand safety Certification for marketing partners

Enrol's new 3rd party vendors as brand safety partners.

2018

Facebook

Embroided in one of the biggest Data privacy scandals, exposes Data from 50 million accounts

Instagram's new TV service Recommends videos of Potential child abuse

Adds new placement controls for video ads

Launches a premium video inventory

Twitter

Makes in-stream, pre-roll video Ads available globally, including for self-serve ads.

Brand safety concerns come to Twitter as ads run on profiles Selling illegal drugs

Purges millions of fake accounts in a bid to provide a brand safe nvironment

2017

Facebook

Forays in video ads with watch

Pitches brand safety ahead of Video ad push

Twitter

Makes a play to run In-stream video ads at scale. Brand safety a central message to promote video ads

Tik Tok

Owner ByteDance gathers 1Bn Monthly active users across apps

Platform's brand safety status Under threat after fails to Eject online predators

Pays multi-million dollar fine to US Federal Trade Commissions for Violating children's privacy law

Why brand safety is still elusive on social platforms?

Social platforms have always claimed to offer apt controls and transparency, assuring safe environments for advertisers. From use of keywords, blacklists and whitelisted channels to 100% human vetted premium inventory; the tools are all here.

Over the years these tools and controls have been refined, made more stringent, and have even required social platforms to take a hit on ad revenues in favour of safer environments. Still, brand safety flair-ups have been a constant across these platforms. Here are a few reasons why that might be.

Brand safety is not one size fits all Brand control is the key

Excluding the 'Dirty Dozen' categories, though a guiding factor in defining a brand safety strategy, is not an absolute rule.

Each brand must define its own guidelines for inappropriate and damaging context in accordance with its specific needs, values and brand image. And brand safety measures and tools should be able to provide required controls to amplify

or lower restrictions to allow a highly customized approach, versus blanket restrictions irrespective of specific needs. That said, some areas are considered wholly unsafe, including pornography, illegal activities, and violence. As with the considerations themselves, the balance between blanket and selective restrictions will vary.

What is unsafe content for one brand, can be the exact context that can help another brand reach their most relevant audience.

Keyword blacklists are killing reach and monetization

Advertisers, eager to mitigate brand safety risk, turned to keyword blacklists as the primary solution. Lists can range from 2,000 to 4000 unsafe keywords, used as a filtration mechanism to detect and block harmful video content. However, keyword blacklists cannot guarantee complete protection, and often fail to understand the complex undertones and various contexts a single word can be used for.

Keywords are often ambiguous.

Shoot, Dead, Kill, Crash, Attack, and Explosion, and Gun, some of the most commonly blocked words, can easily be used within perfectly safe contexts (like movies and songs).

Only using keyword blacklists can effectively prevent monetization and significantly limit campaign reach.

Whitelisted channels – lacking authenticity



Whitelisted channels are more expensive and highly monitored; they feature carefully curated content and even monitor comments. Which gives advertiser content that mimic regulated, brand-safe, broadcast network TV channels.

This limits the true essence of a social platform, and might not really be enabling the reach to the right audience. The cost of running ads using these channels is significantly higher, not producing a ROI commensurate with the investment.

The problematic programmatic pipes

With a global projected programmatic ad spend of \$85 billion, it is safe to say that majority of video advertising is bought and sold via programmatic. However, Programmatic ad placement also gives way to a very uncomfortable fact: that most brands don't really know where their online advertising is running.

Machines are trained using complex algorithms that places a message against perceived right content at a perceived right time, for the cheapest possible price. Past viewing behaviour, affinities, demographics or influencer affiliation play a deciding role in this placement. However, clarity on what factors really contributed, remain shrouded and obscure.

Moreover, recommendation engines such as YouTube's have recently come under fire for leading viewers down a rabbit hole towards racier, edgy and outright disturbing content. How much of this automated, learned behaviour can be kept separate from programmatic ad placements? When the programmatic pipes are specifically built to follow the target audience as they progressively consume content on a given platform.



Human vetting can only go so far

Repeated brand safety flare-ups have led to massive human vetting. Google has hired nearly 10,000 people to whet content across its ad networks, and this a key brand safety measure for both Facebook and Twitter.

But, with so much content uploaded hour on hour, human vetting is another crack through which unsafe ad placements often slip. Even the Google Preferred Program, that allows running ads against the YouTube's top 5% premium content, has been found to publish problematic videos.

Brand safety or ad performance – a false choice

Existing blanket approaches like keyword blacklists and whitelisted channels limit advertising reach.

A key factor why brands are often forced to switch off controls in favour of ROI, even staking brand equity and reputation which takes years to build.



Source: shorturl.at/emrHJ

Source: shorturl.at/amrs1

***Brand safety and performance
are often a one or other scenario,
forcing advertisers to switch off
controls in favour of reach***



Artificial intelligence to the rescue?

One of the key challenges with traditional brand safety tools is the inability to identify the right context. Be it key-words targeting, blacklists, or dealing with unsafe programmatic video ad placements. Emerging AI powered solutions are increasingly focussing on context detection, and are fast becoming an answer to brand safety woes. AI enables processing of large volumes of data at speed, with better context, at higher scale and improved targeting efficiencies.

However, most of these solutions still depend on use of NLP and semantic analysis, not truly understanding the sub-text, nuanced contexts, and complex relationship words have in written or spoken language. Which is especially true in case of a video: a 10-minute video might have significant frames featuring smoking or nudity, but this will most likely be missing from how it is described. Here, in-video context detection can play a significant role.

Context is important, in-video context is everything



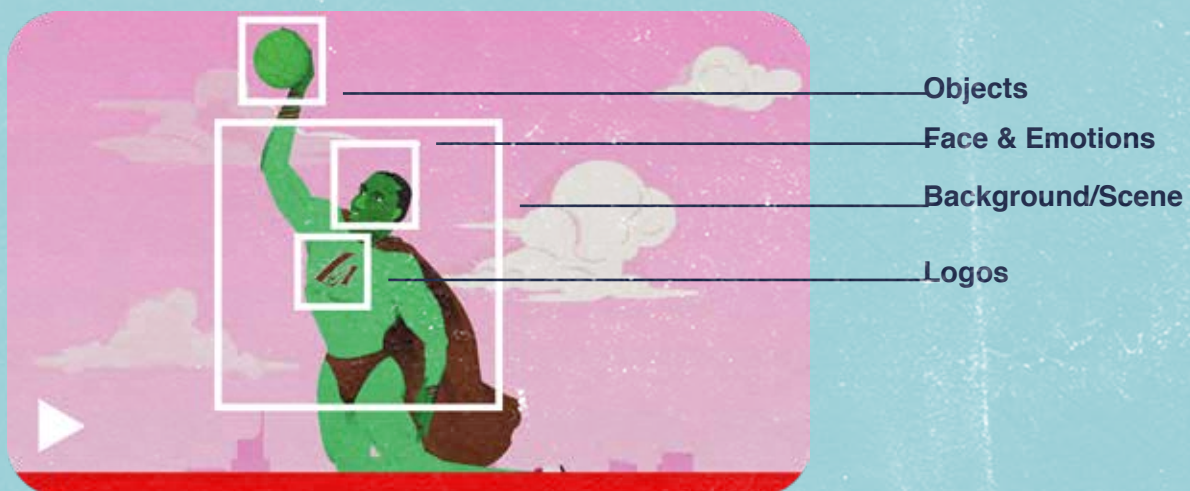
AI powered solutions such as computer vision are increasingly making it possible to detect in-video context with great accuracy, offering unparalleled insight for advertisers to place context-relevant video ads in a highly structured manner, and at the scale programmatic has traditionally offered.

What is computer vision?

Computer vision is an AI powered technology that imbibes the complexity of the human vision system, enabling computers to 'see' i.e. identify and process objects in visual content including images and streaming videos. Owing to AI advancements, computer vision has even surpassed humans in detecting certain objects.

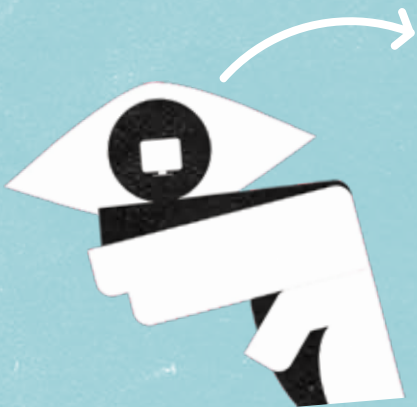
Most computer vision algorithms can just detect objects, mostly within static images. But more advanced algorithms have been able to accurately identify people, facial expressions, activities, scenes, and even emotions, not only in static images but also in streaming video content.

Computer vision powered video advertising



Computer vision has several use cases ranging from surveillance to manufacturing process improvement. It has now found a meaningful role in the dynamic world of advertising. With its potential for highly relevant contextual ad targeting. It is touted as a game changer for the industry.

It further holds the potential to engage consumers right when they are engaging with their interests, saving advertisers from infringing on consumer's personal data for past viewing behaviour and affinities, especially now, when data privacy is imperative in the consumer's mind.



Computer vision enables a high degree of context relevance that surpasses all limitations of traditional keyword and affinity-based targeting.

Where does brand safety fit in?

Computer vision's AI powered in-video context detection can block ad placements against unwanted, unsuitable, irrelevant and harmful content. These solutions can provide the highest accuracy to not let a single damaging ad placement pass through, by using frame by frame parsing of video content.

Every brand is different and so are specific brand safety needs. Computer vision offers a tailored approach, offering absolute brand control: unlike keyword blacklists and whitelisted channels, that most likely also block perfectly safe content.



The capabilities that make computer vision a great fit for effective advertising, also keeps brands safe from unwanted exposure.

Unparalleled brand safety, with higher and more relevant reach

In-video context detection opens a whole new set of audience to improve reach, with unparalleled brand safety. The ad has a higher probability to match its environment in terms of context and messaging. It runs on the principal that users are engaging with their interests while consuming certain content, and engaging at the right moment can augment this experience and gain interest and trust.

*With **brand safety** as a key consideration, an advertisement when served in a context that matches the content, is more likely to achieve increased clicks, views, and completed views.*



“The industry has been moving towards mitigating brand risk, but present in the market haven’t evolved enough to protect brands’ reach. The way forward can be AI-driven solutions which can help customize brand-safety controls and ensure they effectively block without over blocking and losing scale”

- Premnath Unnikrishnan,
Head of Digital, Havas Media Malaysia

How do you get to try in-video context detection for yourself?

Mirrors, by SilverPush, is the world's first in-video context detection platform for context relevant video ad placement targeting. Trained to draw insights from millions of pieces of visual content, Mirrors uses computer vision and deep learning to identify faces, objects, actions, scenarios, logos and emotions in a streaming video to contextually filter video content.

Mirrors maximizes performance through strategically placing in-stream ads at the moment when the targeted context is being viewed. Helping brands engage with the target audience, while they are engaging with their interests, without collecting reams of personal data.

Mirrors' AI powered in-video context targeting not only targets context relevant video content but it also filters out unsafe, irrelevant and unsuitable content through Mirrors Safe, giving you absolute control and transparency to run your video campaigns in a relevant and safe environment.

For brand safety, it's absolute brand control

Go to context for the most suitable video advertising environment with Mirrors Safe.

In-video context detection

Our deeply trained proprietary AI models detect custom defined unsafe contexts in a streaming video, identified under multiple layers of video content.

Ad placement control

Mirrors Safe predicts and controls every video ad placement, before an impression is served, ensuring complete brand safety and control for in-flight campaigns.

Ad placement control

Get an accurate post campaign analysis. Predetermined parameters can be viewed in your dashboard with Mirrors Safe's excellent sequence depth charts for visual details.

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