



It's not always easy to tell the real news from the fake news, but advertisers need to try | Photo source S. Hermann & F. Richter/Pixabay

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AD-SPEND ACTIVIST GROUP TRACKS CORONAVIRUS CONSPIRACIES

 ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Sleeping Giant is helping brands avoid placements next to fake coronavirus news

Spotted: Activist group Sleeping Giants began in 2016 as a way to notify brands when their ads were placed on hate-group websites. The movement began as an anonymous Twitter account that posted ads found next to offensive articles. Most of the ads were placed automatically, through a process called programmatic advertising, and brands had no knowledge that their ads were placed next to offensive material.

Over the past two years, Sleeping Giants has been instrumental in de-platforming neo-Nazi groups and other hatermongers. Once brands are aware their content has been placed on hate sites or hate-based TV programmes, they often cancel the ads. Now, the movement's co-founder, Matt Rivitz, is warning that companies need to take a common-sense approach to avoiding sites touting fake coronavirus news.

Rivitz cautions that some companies are eliminating placement on articles based on keywords like, 'coronavirus' or 'Trump' – which threatens to cut off revenues from legitimate news sites, as well as fake ones. He also points out that social network sites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, have not only failed to stem the fake-news tidal wave but have actually enabled allowed a huge amount of fake news to remain.

To avoid fake news, Rivitz suggests that advertisers have an opportunity now to build tools that can allow them to advertise safely “without killing journalism.” He asks: “Will we continue to allow our reputations to be sullied on sites that run counter to our corporate beliefs? Will we still pour good

money after bad into social platforms that don't seem to much care about the hate, harassment and disinformation that poison our discourse?"

Sleeping Giants is not the only group trying to help advertisers better navigate the rocky shores of social media during this time. At Springwise, we have recently covered a startup that is using AI to detect malicious online campaigns that can derail a brand's reputation and a [personalised ad](#) format that reaches shoppers directly.

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Website: twitter.com/slpng_giants

Takeaway:

The rapid spread of misinformation during the coronavirus pandemic has pointed out a number of serious issues in our social media spaces. All too often, the spread of hate and lies has been accelerated by social media sites that lack the ability and/or the will to stop it. Sleeping Giants has demonstrated that marketers need to conduct regular audits of where their money is going and who they are associating with. The questions now is whether brands will be able to use their advertising power to develop better brand safety tools.