

**CONTEXT FOR THIS SOLUTION**

The Global Alliance for Responsible Media (GARM) is an industry first effort that unites marketers, media agencies, media platforms, industry associations, and advertising technology solutions providers to safeguard the potential of digital media by reducing the availability and monetization of harmful content online. These steps are essential to create a safer digital media environment that enriches society through content, communications, and commerce. Harmful content and its creators threaten the potential for digital media and disrupt the connections everyone seeks. Our first step in safeguarding the positive potential for digital is to provide platforms, agencies, and marketers with the framework with which to define safe and harmful content online.

Our position is that you cannot address the challenge of harmful online content if you are unable to describe it using consistent and understandable language.

The GARM has developed and will adopt common definitions to ensure that the advertising industry is categorizing harmful content in the same way across the board. These eleven key categories have been identified in consultation with experts from GARM’s NGO Consultative Group. Establishing these standards is the essential foundation needed to stop harmful content from being monetised through advertising. Individual GARM members will adopt these shared principles in their operations, whether they are a marketer, agency, or media platform.

We fundamentally believe that, together, these definitions are the cornerstone for us to find balance between supporting responsible speech, bolstering public safety, and providing for responsible marketing practices. With this framework of consistent categories in place, we will be able to improve transparency in the availability, monetization, and inclusion of content within advertising campaigns. This is essential to help platforms, agencies, and advertisers make decisions essential to the advertising industry.

In November 2019, the GARM initiated work towards this challenge under a working group focused on advancing shared language and standards for advertising & media (as seen in our GARM Charter [here](#)). The output of this work is the following:

1. A common understanding of what harmful and sensitive content is via content categories
2. A common understanding of where ads should not appear, as expressed in a Brand Safety Floor
3. A common way of delineating different risk levels for sensitive content, as expressed in a Brand Suitability Framework

The output of the work is a framework of Shared Definitions that sets the limits for monetization of harmful content in agreed upon categories. This work, the GARM Brand Safety Floor + Suitability Framework was first published in September 2020.

In June 2021, we began work to update the framework to include Misinformation as an additional harmful content category. This important addition builds upon individual GARM member work, GARM member collaboration with regulatory and NGO bodies, and more recently GARM collaboration with the European Commission on the Code of Practice on Misinformation.

**GOALS FOR SOLUTION**

This shared framework, which is activated by the IAB TechLab’s industry-wide taxonomy, will provide individual GARM participants with:

A Consistent Categorization	Ensuring that there’s a common way to categorize sensitive content
Transparency	Creating transparency for industry participants on where sensitive content may be present in the interest of consumer safety and responsible marketing
Clarity in Exceptions	Establishing a method for platforms to report on special exception cases in the interest of responsible speech and public interest

**HOW THIS SOLUTION WILL BE USED**

- Platforms will adopt, operationalize and continue to enforce monetization policies with a clear mapping to GARM brand suitability framework

- Platforms will leverage their community standards and monetization policies to uphold the GARM brand safety floor
- Advertising technology providers will adopt and integrate GARM definitions into targeting and reporting services via clear mapping or overt integration
- Agencies will leverage the framework to guide how they invest with platforms at the agency-wide level and at the individual campaign level
- Marketers will use the definitions to set brand risk and suitability standards for corporate, brand and campaign levels

CONTENT CATEGORY	BRAND SAFETY FLOOR – Content not appropriate for any advertising support
Adult & Explicit Sexual Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illegal sale, distribution, and consumption of child pornography</li> <li>• Explicit or gratuitous depiction of sexual acts, and/or display of genitals, real or animated</li> </ul>
Arms & Ammunition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion and advocacy of Sales of illegal arms, rifles, and handguns</li> <li>• Instructive content on how to obtain, make, distribute, or use illegal arms</li> <li>• Glamorization of illegal arms for the purpose of harm to others</li> <li>• Use of illegal arms in unregulated environments</li> </ul>
Crime & Harmful acts to individuals and Society, Human Right Violations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphic promotion, advocacy, and depiction of willful harm and actual unlawful criminal activity – Explicit violations/demeaning offenses of Human Rights (e.g. human trafficking, slavery, self-harm, animal cruelty etc.),</li> <li>• Harassment or bullying of individuals and groups</li> </ul>
Death, Injury or Military Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion, incitement or advocacy of violence, death or injury</li> <li>• Murder or Willful bodily harm to others</li> <li>• Graphic depictions of willful harm to others</li> <li>• Incendiary content provoking, enticing, or evoking military aggression</li> <li>• Live action footage/photos of military actions &amp; genocide or other war crimes</li> </ul>
Online piracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pirating, Copyright infringement, &amp; Counterfeiting</li> </ul>
Hate speech & acts of aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavior or content that incites hatred, promotes violence, vilifies, or dehumanizes groups or individuals based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, nationality, religion, caste, victims and survivors of violent acts and their kin, immigration status, or serious disease sufferers.</li> </ul>
Obscenity and Profanity, including language, gestures, and explicitly gory, graphic or repulsive content intended to shock and disgust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive use of profane language or gestures and other repulsive actions that shock, offend, or insult.</li> </ul>
Illegal Drugs/Tobacco/e-cigarettes/Vaping/Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion or sale of illegal drug use – including abuse of prescription drugs. Federal jurisdiction applies, but allowable where legal local jurisdiction can be effectively managed</li> <li>• Promotion and advocacy of Tobacco and e-cigarette (Vaping) &amp; Alcohol use to minors</li> </ul>
Spam or Harmful Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malware/Phishing</li> </ul>
Terrorism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion and advocacy of graphic terrorist activity involving defamation, physical and/or emotional harm of individuals, communities, and society</li> </ul>
Debated Sensitive Social Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insensitive, irresponsible and harmful treatment of debated social issues and related acts that demean a particular group or incite greater conflict;</li> </ul>
Misinformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misinformation is defined as the presence of verifiably false or willfully misleading content that is directly connected to user or societal harm</li> </ul>

**Brand Suitability Framework: Sensitive content appropriate for advertising supported by enhanced advertiser controls**

CONTENT CATEGORY	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
Adult & Explicit Sexual Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suggestive sexual situations requiring adult supervision/approval or warnings</li> <li>Full or liberal Nudity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dramatic depiction of sexual acts or Sexuality issues presented in the context of entertainment</li> <li>Artistic Nudity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational, Informative, Scientific treatment of sexual subjects or sexual relationships or sexuality</li> </ul>
Arms & Ammunition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glamorization /Gratuitous depiction of illegal sale or possession of Arms</li> <li>Depictions of sale/use/distribution of illegal arms for inappropriate uses/harmful acts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dramatic depiction of weapons use presented in the context of entertainment</li> <li>Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage of arms and ammunition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational, Informative, Scientific treatment of Arms use, possession or illegal sale</li> <li>News feature stories on the subject</li> </ul>
Crime & Harmful acts to individuals and Society, Human Right Violations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depictions of criminal/harmful acts or violation of human rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dramatic depiction of criminal activity or human rights violations presented in the context of entertainment</li> <li>Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage of criminal activity or human rights violations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational, Informative, Scientific treatment of crime or criminal acts or human rights violations</li> <li>News feature stories on the subject</li> </ul>
Death, Injury or Military Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depiction of death or Injury</li> <li>Insensitive and irresponsible treatment of military conflict, genocide, war crimes, or harm resulting in Death or Injury</li> <li>Depictions of military actions that glamorize harmful acts to others or society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dramatic depiction of death, injury, or military conflict presented in the context of entertainment</li> <li>Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage of death, injury or military conflict</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational, Informative, Scientific treatment of death or injury, or military conflict</li> <li>News feature stories on the subject</li> </ul>
Online piracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glamorization /Gratuitous depiction of Online Piracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dramatic depiction of Online Piracy presented in the context of entertainment</li> <li>Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage of Online Piracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational, Informative, Scientific treatment of Online Piracy</li> <li>News feature stories on the subject</li> </ul>
Hate speech & acts of aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depiction or portrayal of hateful, denigrating, or inciting content focused on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, nationality, religion, caste, victims and survivors of violent acts and their kin, immigration status or serious disease sufferers, in a non-educational, informational, or scientific context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dramatic depiction of hate speech/acts presented in the context of entertainment</li> <li>Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage of hate speech/acts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational, Informative, Scientific treatment of Hate Speech</li> <li>News features on the subject</li> </ul>
Obscenity and Profanity, including language, gestures, and explicitly gory, graphic or repulsive content intended to shock and disgust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glamorization /Gratuitous depiction of profanity and obscenity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dramatic depiction of profanity and obscenities presented in the context of entertainment by genre</li> <li>Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage of profanity and obscenities Genre based use of profanity, gestures, and other actions that may be strong, but might be expected as generally accepted language and behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational or Informative, treatment of Obscenity or Profanity</li> <li>News feature stories on the subject</li> </ul>
Illegal Drugs/Tobacco/e-cigarettes/Vaping/Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glamorization /Gratuitous depictions of illegal drugs/abuse of prescription drugs</li> <li>Insensitive and irresponsible content/treatment that encourages minors to use tobacco and vaping products &amp; Alcohol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dramatic depiction of illegal drug use/prescription abuse, tobacco, vaping or alcohol use presented in the context of entertainment</li> <li>Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage of illegal drug use/prescription abuse, tobacco, vaping or alcohol use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational, Informative, Scientific treatment of illegal drug use/prescription abuse, tobacco, vaping or alcohol</li> <li>News feature stories on the subject</li> </ul>
Spam or Harmful Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glamorization /Gratuitous depiction of Online Piracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dramatic depiction of Spam or Malware presented in the context of entertainment</li> <li>Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage of Spam or Malware</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational, Informative, Scientific treatment of Spam or Malware</li> <li>News feature stories on the subject</li> </ul>

CONTENT CATEGORY	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
Terrorism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depiction of terrorist actions that are disturbing, agitating or promotes harmful acts to others or society</li> <li>• Terrorist content requiring a viewer advisory</li> <li>• Insensitive and irresponsible treatment of terrorism/ related crimes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramatic depiction of terrorism presented in the context of entertainment</li> <li>• Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage of acts of terrorism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational, Informative, Scientific treatment of terrorism</li> <li>• News feature stories on the subject</li> </ul>
Debated Sensitive Social Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depiction or discussion of debated social issues and related acts in negative or partisan context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramatic depiction of debated social issues presented in the context of entertainment</li> <li>• Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage of partisan advocacy of a position on debated sensitive social issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational, Informative, Scientific treatment of debated sensitive social issues and related acts including misinformation</li> <li>• News feature stories on the subject</li> </ul>
Misinformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glamorization/Gratuitous depiction of misinformation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramatic depiction of misinformation presented in the context of entertainment</li> <li>• Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage of misinformation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational, Informative, Scientific treatment of misinformation.</li> <li>• News features describing various misinformation campaigns as such</li> </ul>