

UPDATE: on May 20th, 2020, the 4A's Advertiser Protection Bureau (APB) released the revised & updated Brand Safety Floor and Brand Suitability Framework, representing the culmination of a six-month collaboration with the World Federation of Advertisers' (WFA) Global Alliance for Responsible Media (GARM). This collaboration was undertaken with the goal of clarifying the Floor and Framework and adapting both to an ever-changing media and brand-safety landscape, thereby facilitating brand-safety and suitability evaluations for advertisers and publishers alike.

"The bar for greater accountability and transparency in our industry was set very high in 2018 with the release of the 4A's APB's original Brand Safety Floor and Suitability Framework," said Yale Cohen, EVP, Global Activation Standards for Publicis Media Exchange. "Now, with greater adoption of these standards by platforms, tech partners, and with the endorsement of the Global Alliance for Responsible Media (GARM), these revised documents empower our industry to learn and collaborate further on creating an even safer ecosystem for consumers and advertisers."

Updates to the 2018 Floor & Framework include:

- Floor:
 - Moved "Targeted harassment of individuals and groups" and "self-harm/animal cruelty" from "Sensitive Social Issues" to "Crime and Harmful Acts"
 - "Death or Injury" and "Military Conflict" categories were combined
 - "Obscenity & Profanity" was updated to include "language, gestures, and explicitly gory, graphic or repulsive content intended to shock and disgust"
 - "Illegal Drugs" and "Tobacco/e-Cigarettes/Vaping" were combined
 - "Sensitive Social Issues/Violations of Human Rights" was changed to "Debated Sensitive Social Issues" and revised to include "Insensitive, irresponsible and harmful treatment of debated social issues and related acts intended to demean a particular group or incite greater conflict"
- Framework:
 - All occurrences of "Topical/current events news coverage" changed to "Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage"
 - "Crime & Harmful Acts" Medium and Low Risk expanded to include human rights violations
 - "Online Piracy" and "Spam or Malware" (formerly "Spam or Harmful Content") expanded to include Low, Medium, and High definitions

- “Hate Speech & Acts of Aggression” High Risk revised to “Insensitive and irresponsible treatment or depiction of harm or insult from hateful speech/acts”
- “Sensitive Social Issues” changed to “Debated Social Issues” and High Risk changed from “Depiction of sensitive social/harmful acts in negative context” to “Depiction or discussion of debated social issues and related acts in negative or partisan context”; Medium Risk changed from “Topical/current events news coverage of sensitive social issues” to “Breaking News or Op-Ed coverage of partisan advocacy of a position on debated sensitive social issues”

“The revised 4A’s Brand Safety Floor & Brand Suitability Framework is a huge step towards a single taxonomy for defining and eliminating harmful content,” said Joe Barone, Managing Partner Brand Safety Americas at GroupM. “It also will unlock greater opportunity for clients to align their Brand Values with suitable and safe editorial environments. Many thanks to GARM and the WFA for validating the work we’ve been doing since 2018”

It is the hope and belief of the APB that these changes will better reflect the brand-safety needs and characterizations of publishers and advertisers during these challenging times.