THE PROXIMITY EFFECT

Quantifying the impact of misaligned content in the wild west of video
BRAND SUITABILITY

REQUIRES MORE THAN BRAND SAFETY
BRAND SUITABILITY
CAN BE COMPLICATED

BRAND SAFETY
Content that isn’t suitable for any brand (offensive, hateful, violent, etc.)

UNsuitable CONTENT
Content that may or may not be suitable for certain brands by being misaligned with brand values (gross, curse words, etc.)

VIDEO FORMATS
Type of video environment (pre-roll, video cards, etc.)

PROXIMITY TO CONTENT
How close is the video ad to the content? And does it appear before or after the content?
CRITICAL QUESTIONS

1. VIDEO ENVIRONMENT
   What do brands need to know about misaligned content in different video environments?

2. PROXIMITY TO CONTENT
   What role does proximity to misaligned content play?
THE METHOD

Controlled Testing on Mobile

Total n=2,701
Recruited mobile users of popular video apps, offering different video environments

Users spend time on the platform as they typically would:

Pre-roll

Video Card

Experimental Design

Users randomized into groups, which determines:

Which ad is served:

CONTROL

TEST

Ad slot in relation to misaligned content

AD

AD

AD

AD
THE CONTENT

Misaligned Content
Content not aligned with brand values. In this case, content that commonly produces visceral reactions in people
• Skin Conditions (e.g. pimple popping)
• ASMR (videos inducing autonomous sensory meridian response)
• Mukbang (video host consumes various quantities of food)

Standard Content
General interest content of a variety of different topics that typically appears on each platform, unrelated to the advertising brands
THE METRICS

Traditional Branding

Both those who received the control and test ad in each type of content answer brand lift questions & responses are compared.

- Awareness (ad recall, etc.)
- Brand Perceptions
- Purchase Intent
- Ad Feedback

Organic Engagement

- Ad skipping via skip button or swipe
- Content skipping via swipe
- Ad completion rates
- Viewability (time in view & % in view)
THE BRANDS

Each randomly served within each type of content
THE FLIPSIDE OF THE CONTENT HALO EFFECT
WE TESTED ADS THAT WORK HARD

ADS IN STANDARD CONTENT
Impact on All Tested Ads - Delta (Exposed – Control)

- Purchase Intent: +9%
- Brand I respect: +7%
- Brand I trust: +5%
- Brand is high quality: +7%

All ads in standard content (control n=276; exposed n=270)
▲ = statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >90% confidence
MISALIGNMENT CONTENT ERODES IMPACT OF HARDWORKING ADS

Impact on All Tested Ads - Delta (Exposed – Control)

- Ads in Standard Content
- Ads in Misaligned Content

Purchase Intent

Brand I Respect

Brand is High Quality

Brand I Trust

Impact on purchase intent diminishes when the ad appears next to misaligned content

All Ads in standard content (control n=276; exposed n=270); all ads in misaligned content (control n=539; exposed n=1,616)

▲ = statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence
WHILE PEOPLE DON’T FORGET ADS IN MISALIGNED CONTENT…

Impact of All Tested Ads - Delta (Exposed – Control)
- Ads in Standard Content
- Ads in Misaligned Content

All Ads in standard content (control n=276; exposed n=270); all ads in misaligned content (control n=539; exposed n=1,616)
▲ = Statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence
...PEOPLE REMEMBER THE AD FOR THE WRONG REASONS

Impact of All Tested Ads - Delta (Exposed – Control)

- Ads in Standard Content
- Ads in Misaligned Content

Brand is Thoughtful

+9%▲

-1%

Brand Cares About Its Customers

+7%▲

0%

All Ads in standard content (control n=276; exposed n=270); all ads in misaligned content (control n=539; exposed n=1,616)
▲ = Statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence
UNDER THE HOOD OF MISALIGNMENT
CONTENT APPROPRIATE FOR GENERAL CONSUMPTION MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR BRANDS

Say misaligned content was “appropriate” in general

65%

Say misaligned content was “appropriate” for the brand

41%

CONTENT APPROPRIATE FOR GENERAL CONSUMPTION MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR BRANDS

Perceptions of Misaligned Content Among Those Who Watched All or Most - % Strongly / Somewhat Agree
IT’S CLEAR CUT FOR CONSUMERS - BRANDS SHOULDN’T BE ALIGNED WITH CERTAIN TYPES OF CONTENT

You mentioned that the video was inappropriate for [brand name] to appear next to. Why is that?

“If you want to be taken seriously don’t place ads anyway near these creepy a$$ videos”

“A kid eating isn’t really good for business”

“A brand would not want to associate itself with such a disgusting act. Leaves a bad memory attached to the brand.”

“I wouldn’t want my ad to come on after something like that in fear of what people will reference my ad with.”

“Because it’s too weird to associate with”

“Because it only disgusted me”

“Because [brand name] has manners”

“I can’t see a big company like [brand name] being next to this”

“Because it isn’t the caliber video I would expect [brand name] to associate with.”

“I don't know if inappropriate is the right word exactly, but I think they should pick a higher quality video to appear next to. This one was just really bad.”
MISALIGNED CONTENT CAN FEEL “ICKY”

Not only does misaligned content under-index on “premium,” but most of all it isn’t safe for work and feels “embarrassing”

Perceptions of Video Content – Among Those Who Watched All or Most of Video, Indexed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE CONTENT WAS...</th>
<th>ABove</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Premium</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Guilty Pleasure</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triggering</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Safe For Work</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassing</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Misaligned Content Indexed to Average (100)

Watched all or most of misaligned or standard content n=2,315
BUT PEOPLE STILL WATCH MISALIGNED CONTENT & ENJOY IT

WATCHED ALL OR MOST OF VIDEO
Video Content Completion - % Agree

64%
STANDARD CONTENT

61%
MISALIGNED CONTENT

68%
“VIDEO WAS ENTERTAINING”

Perceptions of Misaligned Content
Among Those Who Watched All or Most of Video
% Strongly / Somewhat Agree

Watched all or most of misaligned or standard content n=2,315
HIGHEST RATED MISALIGNED CONTENT CAN HAVE THE BIGGEST NEGATIVE IMPACT FOR BRANDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More Positive Opinions of Skin Content (compared to misaligned average)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More Negative Impact for Brands Next to Skin Content (compared to misaligned average)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-4x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-6x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-8x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-10x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SKIN CONDITION VIDEOS VS. AVERAGE FOR MISALIGNED CONTENT

Ads in skin condition videos n=700
All deltas statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence
THE ROLE OF PROXIMITY IN A PRE-ROLL ENVIRONMENT
WHEN VIDEO IS COUPLED WITH MISALIGNED CONTENT

The pre-roll environment
BRANDS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE CONTENT

Perceived Brand Endorsement of Misaligned Content - % Strongly/Somewhat Agree

Pre-roll: 41%  
Video card: 28%  

Pre-roll n=1,398; video card n=1,303
**RISK EXTENDS BEYOND LOSS OF IMPACT**

Decline in brand perceptions result from appearing around misaligned content

- In Standard Content
- In Misaligned Content

---

**Impact Of Ads In Pre-roll Environment - Delta (Exposed – Control)**

- **Purchase intent**
  - Standard Content: -1%
  - Misaligned Content: +8%

- **Brand favorability**
  - Standard Content: -2%
  - Misaligned Content: +7%

- **Cares about its customers**
  - Standard Content: 4%
  - Misaligned Content: +8%

- **Brand I respect**
  - Standard Content: 4%
  - Misaligned Content: +5%

- **Would recommend**
  - Standard Content: 4%
  - Misaligned Content: +7%

---

Pre-roll standard content (control n=146; exposed n=140); pre-roll misaligned content (control n=272; exposed n=841)

▲ = Statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence
**PRE-ROLL ENVIRONMENT**

**SIMILAR CONSEQUENCES FOR APPEARING BEFORE AND AFTER MISALIGNED CONTENT**

Impact Of Ads In Pre-roll Environment - Significant Declines From % Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRAND IS...</th>
<th>AD IMMEDIATELY BEFORE MISALIGNED CONTENT</th>
<th>AD IMMEDIATELY AFTER MISALIGNED CONTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Quality</td>
<td>-5%▲</td>
<td>-9%▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Brand I Want To Associate Myself With</td>
<td>-5%▲</td>
<td>-4%▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Brand I Would Recommend</td>
<td>-7%▲</td>
<td>-11%▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>-4%▲</td>
<td>-7%▲</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-roll misaligned content (control n=272; exposed immediately before n=413, exposed immediately after n=148)
▲ = Statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence
THE ROLE OF PROXIMITY IN A VIDEO CARD ENVIRONMENT
WHEN VIDEO IS STAND-ALONE

The video card environment

@SkinConditions
pooping the zits, ridding the acne
#webbopping #Skinpurge #facepimple
MISALIGNED CONTENT GIVES TRENDINESS A BOOST AT THE COST OF PURCHASE INTENT & RESPECT

Impact of Video Card Ads By Content Type - Delta (Exposed – Control)

- In Standard Content
- In Misaligned Content

### VIDEO CARD ENVIRONMENT

**Purchase Intent**
- +9%▲
- +3%

**Brand I Respect**
- +8%▲
- +1%

**Brand is Trendy**
- +9%▲
- +1%

*Video card standard content (control n=130; exposed n=130); video card misaligned content (control n=268; exposed n=775)
▲ = Statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence*
Perceived Brand Endorsement of Misaligned Content by Proximity

- % Strongly/Somewhat Agree

33% of people believe the brand supports the content

23% of people believe the brand supports the content

Video card: immediately next to misaligned n= 643; 2 videos away from misaligned content n=132
IMMEDIATE PROXIMITY TO MISALIGNED CONTENT HINDERS AD EFFECTIVENESS

Impact of Video Card Ads By Content Type - Delta (Exposed – Control)

- Purchase Intent
  - 3% increase
  - 9% increase

- Brand I Respect
  - 2% increase
  - 8% increase

Video card (control n=292; immediately next to n=643; 2 videos away n=132)
▲ = Statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence
MORE SPECIFICALLY, APPEARING IMMEDIATELY BEFORE SHOULD BE THE BIGGEST CONCERN

Impact of Video Card Ads - Delta (Exposed – Control)

- Brand Favorability: +4% ▲ +8%
- Brand is High Quality: +1% ▲ +8%
- Brand I Would Recommend: -1% ▲ +10%
- Brand Cares About Its Customers: +1% ▲ +7%

Impact of +10% lost when ads appear immediately before misaligned content

Video card: misaligned content (control n=268; exposed immediately before n=130; exposed immediately after n=382)
▲ = Statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence
HOWEVER, APPEARING AFTER MISALIGNED CONTENT HAS ITS DOWNSIDES AS WELL

PEOPLE ARE 9% MORE LIKELY TO SKIP THE AD WHEN IT APPEARS DIRECTLY AFTER MISALIGNED CONTENT

Video card: standard content n=130; ad immediately after misaligned n=513
Difference statistically significant at >=90% confidence
**IMPLICATIONS**

Ad Effectiveness is only as good as the content it's running in.

Brands need to be equally proactive about content misaligned with brand values as they are unsafe content, to avoid diminishing the effectiveness of otherwise powerful ads.
IMPLICATIONS

Have your team dialed in to #Trends

Keep an eye on popular, trending content to ensure the appropriate steps can be taken to avoid unfortunate brand + content alignments.
Be a future thinker and push to elevate ad tech and content thresholds

The Industry should continue to learn about the effects of misaligned content and build technologies accordingly to ensure appropriate and alignment placements regardless of the video environment.
THANK YOU