

A GUIDE TO

Brand Advertising During the 2024 Presidential Election



Many are ready for more precedented events, but like it or not, the 2024 United States presidential election is coming, with what looks so far like a lot of twists, turns and...unprecedented times. Adding to the confusion: this is the first Presidential election with AI tools that can produce fake images and videos, which has the potential to increase misinformation and deceptive content on social platforms from both organic and ads.

During the 2022 Midterm election, audiences were concerned about those issues: According to eMarketer, **6 in 10 respondents** report seeing misinformation on a platform is very or extremely impactful on their decision to interact with ads.

Keeping a close eye on the presidential election for advertising purposes may not be top of mind for all brands, but it's important for several reasons:

- We expect CPMs to rise on these platforms nearing election day and brands should brace themselves for increased costs to reach their audiences.
- Political advertising is not necessarily allowed on all social platforms, but brands should know that it is possible that their ads could appear around organic content regarding elections and individual POVs on topics hot at the polls.
- Many social platforms are implementing strict guidelines and safety guardrails, so it's important to be aware, and put a plan in place.

Navigating advertising on social and other platforms can be tricky during the election season, so we have outlined procedures that the social platforms have put in place to **further brand protection**, along with media adjustments to consider when it comes to **balancing brand safety and performance on your most heavily invested channels**.

2024 Key Election Dates

- **Debates:**
 - First: June 27, 2024
 - Second Presidential Debate: September 10, 2024
- **Voter Registration:** There is no national voter registration deadline. Some states require voters to register up to 30 days before an election, while others allow registration up to/on Election Day. <https://vote.gov/>
- **Voting Period:** Voting period varies by state and each state has different deadlines. <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/state-election-dates-and-deadlines>
- **Election Day:** November 5, 2024

META: FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM

No stranger to political advertising and elections, Meta has invested significantly in teams and technologies since 2016 and offer tools for [brand safety and suitability](#) to ensure ads align with advertisers' brand values and appear in appropriate contexts, bolstering trust and credibility.

More recently, Meta has added features such as third-party fact checking and political advertising verification options to help combat spread of misinformation and reduce prominence of political content. Furthermore, Meta is now implementing a blackout period for any **new** political, electoral and social issue ads for the week leading up to the election. Ads that fall under this category must be approved and launched prior to the period.

Brands who are advertising on Meta throughout the election period should rely on those tools in addition to keeping their own brand guidelines as a North Star. Brand values and guidelines should easily outline what advertisement or publisher placements could be risks.

What Brands Can Do:

- Maintain current strategy and monitor sentiment and performance daily.
- Consider using tools like the Limited Inventory Filter as well as Brand Safety and Suitability controls to help ensure that the ads align with brand values. Also review and update publisher lists to keep ads from showing up near any risks. Note, we may see increases in cost metrics due to narrowing down our inventory list, but recommend implementing this measure temporarily from a brand safety perspective.
- If using AI-generated content in ads, comply with Meta's requirements for disclosure and labeling. This promotes transparency and builds trust with your audience. This also applies to organic content.

X (FORMERLY TWITTER)

X has faced a variety of brand safety challenges due to leadership changes and compliance issues. While political advertising is permitted, brands must adhere to strict [guidelines](#), including restrictions on false or misleading content. Additionally, in order to run political ads, political advertisers must obtain pre-approval and are restricted from promoting false or misleading content regarding how to participate in an election, information intended to intimidate or dissuade people's participation, or information intending to undermine public confidence.

What Brands Can Do:

- Be prepared to adjust your strategy based on emerging trends and platform updates during the election cycle.
- Focus your ads on demographics that align with your campaign goals to reduce exposure to contentious topics.
- Apply keyword and contextual filters to prevent association with sensitive political debates and misinformation. Use exclusion lists to avoid topics and handles related to polarizing discussions.
- Choose from Standard, Conservative, or IAS Pre-Bid settings for vertical video. The Conservative setting is recommended to minimize risks by avoiding sensitive or polarizing content.

TIKTOK

TikTok is familiar with making headlines in U.S. politics, so this election season they're [heavily investing in measures in an effort to ensure it remains a creative, safe, and civil space during the election](#). TikTok collaborates with 17 global fact-checking organizations, now supporting over 50 languages, and employs enhanced tools and specialized moderators to combat misinformation. This is further supported by localized insights and training, and TikTok empowers users with media literacy initiatives to foster informed engagement.

TikTok's [Synthetic and Manipulated Media policy](#) mandates the disclosure of AI-generated content and prohibits deceptive uses, requiring creators to clearly label realistic depictions. Additionally, the platform prohibits paid political content, focusing on genuine user interactions. Strict account policies for governments, politicians, and political parties are in place to uphold community interests and maintain platform integrity, as outlined in TikTok's Community Guidelines and Transparency Center.

What Brands Can Do:

- Maintain your current advertising strategy considering political ads are prohibited, but monitor performance and sentiment closely, adjusting as needed based on real-time data.
- Consider disabling user comments in the week leading up to the election and following the announcement of results to avoid potential negative engagement ([comment management instructions here](#)).
- Avoid using "news and entertainment" related parameters in campaigns during the election period, as these cannot be excluded.
- Opt for "[Limited](#)" inventory settings to ensure your ads are not placed next to ensure your brand does not show up next to content around "mature" themes. Similar to Meta, we may see increases in cost metrics due to narrowing down our inventory list, but recommend implementing this measure temporarily from a brand safety perspective.

SNAPCHAT

Snapchat moderates content before it can be amplified to a large audience to ensure they're featuring news from trusted media partners around the world. Further, their [Community Guidelines](#), which apply equally to all Snapchat accounts prohibits the spread of misinformation and purposefully misleading content, like deepfakes – including content that undermines the integrity of elections.

To ensure [stringent measures for political ads](#), Snapchat uses human review and independent fact-checking. Political advertisers must ensure their political ads meet transparency standards, with clear disclosure of sponsors, to maintain credibility and compliance with Snapchat's [transparency and accuracy](#) policies. Additionally, all political ads must include a "paid for by" message followed by the name of the paying person or entity.

What Brands Can Do:

- Edit placements to omit running near any content within the News category in the week leading up to and following the election result announcement.
- Additionally, advertisers have the option to select "limited inventory" as an extra layer of safety which prevents ads from showing adjacent to brand unsafe content within Creator Stories. Note, we may see increases in cost metrics due to narrowing down our inventory list, but recommend implementing this measure temporarily from a brand safety perspective.

LINKEDIN

You won't find many opportunities for advertising during the election season here: LinkedIn strictly prohibits political ads, including those advocating for or against a specific candidate, party, or ballot proposition. This also includes ads aimed at influencing election outcomes, fundraising for political entities, or exploiting sensitive political issues, even if the advertiser has no explicit political agenda. Guidelines can be reviewed [here](#). Additionally, LinkedIn partners with leading brand safety providers like Pixalate, Integral Ad Science (IAS), and DoubleVerify to enhance fraud protection and contextual safety.

On LinkedIn's [Brand Safety hub](#), advertisers can download and review the list of publishers that make up the Audience Network. Brands should lean heavily on this list alongside their own brand guidelines to ensure publishers align with their brand values. You can also create custom allowlists and blocklists, which enable you to prioritize the publishers that meet your brand safety guidelines.

What Brands Can Do:

- Maintain current strategy as political advertising is prohibited on the platform. Continue to monitor.
- Deploy safety measures within your campaigns to prevent unwanted ad placements. Set up and regularly update your custom block and allow lists based on IAB categories and your specific brand safety criteria to maintain control over where your ads appear.
- Advertisers can set up category-level blocking based on IAB categories or upload custom block lists and allow lists to better control where their ads are displayed. This customization is available at the campaign level, offering more precise control over brand safety.

REDDIT

Political ads are permitted on Reddit in the US, but they come with specific [restrictions](#) and requirements to ensure transparency and integrity. Political advertisers must be certified and work directly with Reddit Sales and have their candidate participate in a live AMA. Further, the ads must be placed in appropriate communities, follow Reddit's content guidelines, as well as disclose any AI-generated content clearly.

Reddit has a dedicated Safety team and utilizes various tools to uphold [safety standards](#) and address any issues promptly. Similar to other platforms, they have partnered with DoubleVerify to offer reporting on the Brand Safety and Brand Suitability of our ads delivery. Brands are given flexibility and access to tools to help control the type of content and engagement surrounding their ads. This includes turning off comments, keyword exclusions, and community exclusions. There are also inventory types that can be selected that include expanded inventory, standard, and limited.

Reddit's moderation extends to both the platform level and individual communities. This dual-layer approach helps maintain a safe and respectful environment for users and advertisers alike.

What Brands Can Do:

- Monitor your ad placements to ensure they are featured in communities where moderation aligns with your brand's values and standards.
- Engage with specific communities (subreddits) relevant to your brand to foster genuine connections and ensure your message resonates with an engaged and trusted audience.
- Consider turning off comments, adding negative keywords and community exclusions. Advertisers can also adjust from the default expanded inventory to a more moderate or limited approach, being mindful this could result in slight cost increases.

All Networks: Our Recommendations

Whether ads are permitted or not, there are lots of tools at your disposal or only a few, there are some strategic tasks brands should pay close attention to. Our Social Strategists recommend:

- Regularly monitor ad performance and sentiment on all platforms. Use the analytics and reporting tools available to track how your ads are performing and adjust strategies as necessary. Stay informed about changes in platform policies and features and adjust your strategies accordingly.
- Utilize the Limited Inventory filters across platforms like Meta, TikTok, Snapchat, and Reddit.
- Within Meta and LinkedIn use the custom block lists features to ensure that your brand only shows up in the most suitable placements. Please work with your Code3 account lead(s) to pull together a block list that aligns with your brand safety measures.
- Within Reddit and X, implement keyword filters and contextual filters to avoid association with sensitive or misleading content.
- Consider toggling off comment sections on Reddit, Meta, and TikTok as needed.

THE TRADE DESK

The Trade Desk allows political advertising, but has a number of safeguards in place to maintain transparency and limit misinformation.

Verification

- All political advertisers must be verified according to the following guidelines:
- For US federal elections, a valid Federal Election Commission ID (FEC ID).
- For US state or local elections, a valid Employer Identification Number (EIN).
- The advertiser's address, which must match the address used in the FEC or EIN submission.
- Such other information that The Trade Desk may deem necessary and sufficient for Advertiser verification.
- Any client wishing to serve US political ads must be based in the US.

Targeting

- The Trade Desk prohibits microtargeting for Political Ads. Specifically, the size of an advertiser's final audience, after applying all targeting qualifiers and refinements, must be larger than 1,500 targeted users for all ad groups.
- For Political Ad Campaigns, The Trade Desk also prohibits the use of Dynamic Creative Optimization (DCO), a tactic where an ad creative is customized based on data available at the time of ad serving, or similar creative swapping techniques.
- Political Ads must abide by the guidelines of our inventory partners. In addition, our inventory partners may have discretion regarding what ads run on their sites, apps, and channels.

Transparency

- Political Ads should always contain a disclosure (ex: Paid for by the XYZ PAC, www.XYZ.org) that identifies who paid for the ad where required by applicable law or self-regulatory guidelines. Advertisers are responsible for including a “Paid for by” disclosure directly in all Political Ads, regardless of the ad format, along with any other disclosures required by law.
- The Trade Desk follows the self-regulatory guidelines of the DAA, including its Self-Regulatory Principles for Political Advertising. The Trade Desk facilitates the ability to place the DAA’s political icon on candidate political advertising creatives. This icon links to a disclosure page where the following information will be made available for public viewing:
 - Name of the paying entity (the advertiser).
 - Advertiser contact information.
 - Name of the executive designated by the advertiser.
 - Link to the DAA website page with access to state government and FEC databases.
 - Any other information required by applicable federal or state law to be included in a disclaimer notice.
 - The Trade Desk will also include links to fact-checking organizations on the disclosure page to give users the opportunity to research any claims made in the ad.
- Artificial Intelligence: The Trade desk requires that any creative content (visual, audio, or otherwise) that is generated using artificial intelligence (AI) must clearly and conspicuously feature a notice and disclosure to users explicitly indicating that AI was used to generate the creative content. This requirement does not apply to portions of the creative unrelated to the core imagery or claims asserted by the creative itself (including, but not limited to edits to backgrounds that do not modify the messaging of the creative or alter the depiction of actual events), nor does this requirement apply if AI is leveraged for editing purposes, including for image resizing, cropping, brightening corrections or defect corrections (e.g. removal of “red eye”).

Violence

- Political Ads often involve the advocacy of one point-of-view, or policy position, over another. Candidates frequently produce Political Ads that express disdain of or disagreement with the opponent’s policies or opinions. In doing so, those ads may include violent images or videos in an effort to make a point to voters about important issues like policy, public safety, or change. While such heated debates and imagery are part of an open democracy, the following restrictions apply:
 - Ads may not incite, threaten, advocate, or call for acts of violence.
 - Ads may not promote or glorify acts of violence.
 - No imagery of weapons being fired or being pointed at a person or animal.
 - No imagery of an individual being beaten, punched, kicked, or attacked.
 - No imagery of gratuitous human suffering.

Voter Suppression

- Political Ads often represent the opinion of a certain candidate or party. As a politically neutral technology platform, The Trade Desk does not aim to determine the accuracy of the opinions and claims made by politicians or groups in these Political Ads. We do provide links to several independent fact-checking organizations directly to voters so they can verify these claims for themselves. The Trade Desk does, however, prohibit ads that are aimed primarily at suppressing voters or voting activity, or delegitimizing the election process.

Election Language

- The Trade Desk does not allow any ad content that questions the legitimacy of any undecided US election, nor does it allow declaration of premature victory when results are contested.

What brands can do

Like on social media and other networks, brands should be looking closely at specific placements and keeping their own brand guidelines top of mind. Limit exposure of risky placements by blocking news websites, channels, and apps from overall strategy. However, if this is too restrictive and your typical strategy includes these channels, keep in mind that The Trade Desk works with various Brand Safety partners and has its own native methodology to automatically curate higher quality placements. However, keeping a close eye on placements, performance, overall brand sentiment and all feedback is critical during election season, especially in the weeks leading up to the election itself.

AMAZON DSP & SEARCH

Amazon takes a more stringent approach, and prohibits political ads and products with political references for DSP and Amazon Ads. Per their guidelines: “political, such as campaigns for or against a politician or political party, or related to an election, or content related to political issues of public debate. During an election year we prohibit media products about a specific political party, issue, or candidate.”

GOOGLE PAID SEARCH

Election-related impacts on Google Search are minimal since it functions as a “hand-raising” channel, not typically used for political ads. However, YouTube, Display, and campaign types like Performance Max and Demand Gen that tap into video and display inventory, will see the election significantly influencing inventory and costs.

Brands advertising on these platforms should leverage Google’s brand safety features and plan ahead to secure coveted inventory. Implement exclusion lists and content filters to avoid association with sensitive political content. Monitor campaign performance closely and be prepared to adjust targeting and bids as needed to mitigate cost impacts and maintain effectiveness.

What Brands Can Do:

- **Plan and Secure Inventory Early:** For YouTube, Display, and Performance Max campaigns, book ad placements ahead of time to avoid high costs and limited availability as the election approaches.
- **Utilize Brand Safety Tools:** Apply exclusion lists and content filters to prevent ads from appearing near contentious political content.
- **Monitor and Adjust Campaigns:** Track performance and sentiment daily, and be ready to modify targeting, budgets, and bids based on real-time data.
- **Leverage AI-Powered Formats:** Use AI-driven campaign types like Performance Max and Demand Gen to ensure efficient targeting and reach, while maintaining flexibility to shift budgets and test ad formats.
- **Stay Neutral in Messaging:** Ensure ad content remains neutral and avoids political affiliations to prevent potential risks and maintain broad appeal.

MICROSOFT ADS PAID SEARCH

Similar to Google Search, Microsoft Search experiences minimal impact from election-related advertising since it also primarily serves as a “hand-raising” channel. However, advertising on the Microsoft Audience Network, which includes placements on MSN, Outlook, and other Microsoft properties, will see heightened competition and potential cost increases.

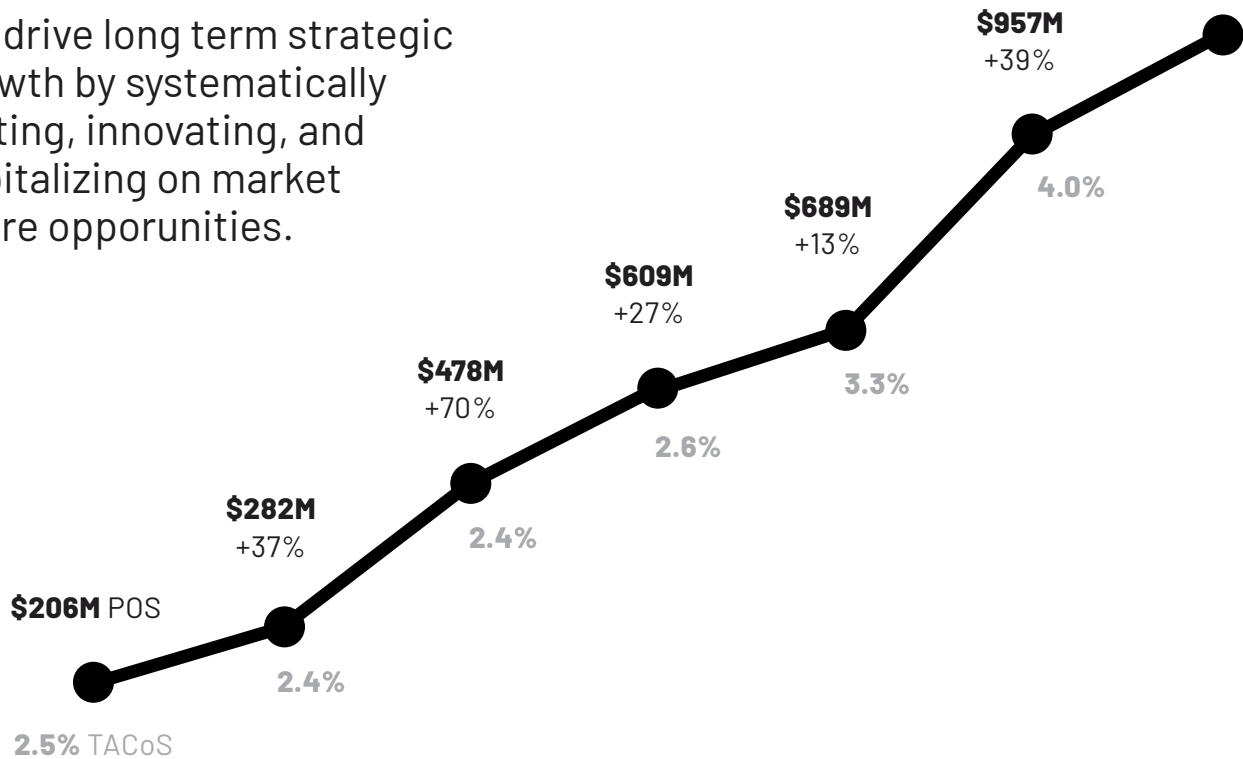
Brands advertising on Microsoft platforms during the election period should focus on utilizing Microsoft’s brand safety features and proactive planning to manage inventory and costs. Implementing exclusion lists and content filters will help avoid association with sensitive political content. Close monitoring of campaign performance and flexibility in adjusting strategies will be crucial to navigating this dynamic environment.

What Brands Can Do:

- **Plan and Secure Inventory Early:** For the Microsoft Audience Network, secure ad placements ahead of time to avoid high costs and limited availability as the election approaches.
- **Utilize Brand Safety Tools:** Apply exclusion lists and content filters to prevent ads from appearing near contentious political content, ensuring alignment with brand values.
- **Monitor and Adjust Campaigns:** Keep a daily watch on performance and sentiment, and be prepared to modify targeting, budgets, and bids based on real-time data.
- **Leverage AI and Automation:** Use Microsoft’s automated bidding and targeting solutions to efficiently manage campaign performance while maintaining flexibility to shift strategies as needed.
- **Stay Neutral in Messaging:** Craft ad content that remains neutral and avoids political affiliations to minimize risks and maintain broad appeal.

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