

IAB Australia Best Practice Guide

Managing Alcohol Advertising across Digital Audio (Publishers)

Overview

This guide supports digital audio publishers and content creators in ensuring alcohol advertising is only served to appropriate audiences, in line with **ABAC Responsible Alcohol Marketing Code** requirements in Australia.

Understand ABAC Regulations

ABAC outlines that alcohol marketing must:

- are age restricted/targeted to exclude under 18 year olds where possible
- are only placed where the audience is **reasonably expected to be at least 80% 18+**
- are not placed with programs or content primarily aimed at under 18s

Key ABAC principles to note:

- Avoid placement in content **primarily aimed at children or teens**.
 - Avoid using **cartoon characters, youth slang, or juvenile humour** in ads.
 - **Age-gating and targeting** are central tools to stay compliant.
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Audience Assessment and Content Classification

Follow these simply best practices to identify the audience make up of your digital audio content:

- **Classify all content** based on likely audience demographics.
 - Flag content as "**child-friendly**", "**general**", or "**18+ only**".
 - Use data analytics, audience surveys, or platform insights to understand audience age breakdowns.
 - Avoid the assumption that a general podcast or playlist doesn't appeal to minors just because it's not 'kids' content.
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Content Tagging and Metadata Hygiene

Based on your audience analysis of your content, ensure your content tagging is meets the minimum requirements below:

- Apply **detailed metadata** (tags) to all audio content to inform ad-serving systems. Use multiple tags as need to safeguard your content from reaching the wrong audience.

- Tag any content that might appeal to under-18s: e.g. **gaming, cartoons, popular teen influencers, content designed for early education etc**
 - Keep your **content library clean and up to date** and regularly review and reclassify if necessary.
 - Repeat this process for any new content produced on acquired before publishing.
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Campaign Targeting Controls

When setting up advertising campaigns ensure you use the correct setting to reduce the likelihood of your campaign reaching the incorrect audiences:

- Use first- or third-party **age targeting** to exclude underage audiences from the campaign.
 - Use **exclusion tags** (based on your content tagging) in your ad server and programmatic platforms to remove non-appropriate content from the inventory pool.
 - Implement **age verification or age gating** where appropriate.
 - Allow **brand safety tools** to exclude alcohol ads from content flagged for youth.
 - Set clear **blocklists** to prevent alcohol ads running on flagged content.
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Publisher/Advertiser Collaboration

Clear communication and transparency between seller & buyer ensure a brand safe campaign for advertiser and audiences alike:

- Communicate clearly with alcohol advertisers about your audience(s) and controls within your ad-server.
 - Provide **inventory transparency** and offer a 'Whitelist' to ensure the advertiser knows what content they may appear in.
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Monitoring, Reporting & Remediation

Technology can only do so much, so ensure there is human intervention across the campaign timings:

- Conduct **regular audits** of your campaigns ad placements to ensure compliance.
 - Have a clear **remediation process** for when alcohol ads are mistakenly served to inappropriate content.
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Influencer and Talent Guidelines

If creators or talent are involved in alcohol campaigns or promotions, ensure they fit the audience profile that you are trying to attract:

- Ensure influencers are **25+** and **not popular primarily with minors** across any of their platform or content distribution points.

- Ensure all endorsements or branded content **follow ABAC guidelines** and are clearly disclosed.
 - Make sure **both talent and advertiser have agreed to work with each other** on the campaign and both are clear on the delivery of the messaging.
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Useful Resources

- <https://www.abac.org.au/about/thecode/>