

DIGITAL ADWISE PARENT PACK

Helping your child to identify and understand the adverts and commercial material that they encounter in the online world



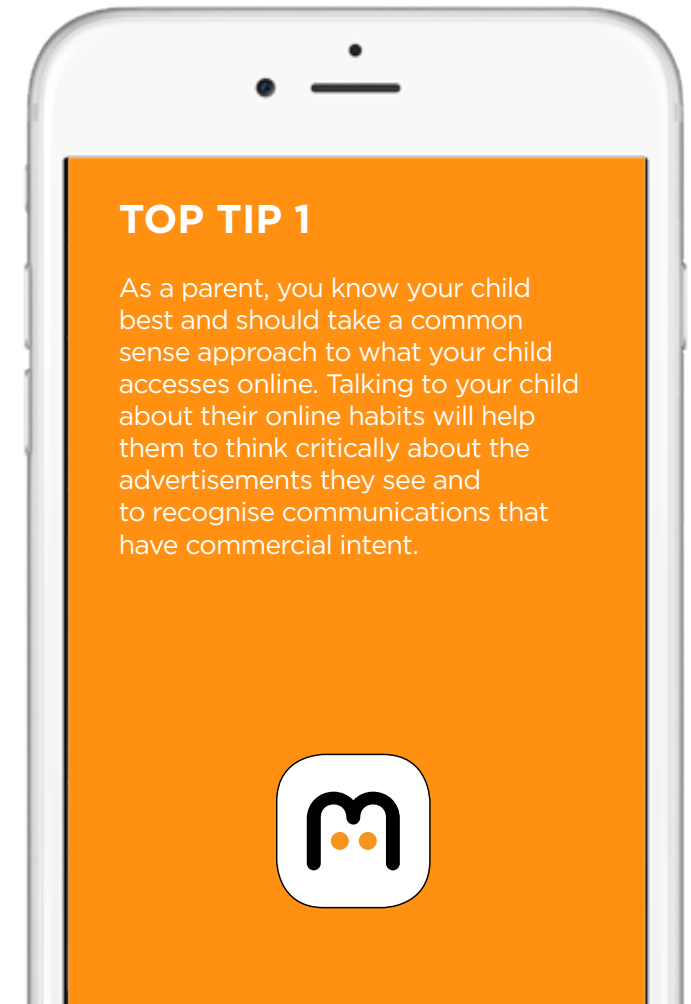
WHO WE ARE

Media Smart is a not-for-profit media literacy programme for primary and secondary school children funded by the advertising industry. We aim to increase children's awareness of media and advertising to help them think critically about it in the context of their daily lives.

This pack has been developed in conjunction with the advertising industry to provide a useful guide to digital advertising for parents.

INTRODUCTION

Children are growing up using, surrounded by, and accustomed to, an increasingly digital world. But their familiarity and competence with new technology doesn't necessarily mean they are fully aware or equipped to handle the commercial elements that fund the digital world. A recent government report 'Letting Children be Children', found that parents are increasingly concerned about the commercial pressures that children are under and don't feel in a position to talk to their children about new forms of advertising. This pack is intended to help you understand the different instances in which your child will encounter commercial messages as they engage with digital content and services. It also aims to offer guidance on how to approach discussions with children about commercial content online.



FORMS OF DIGITAL ADVERTISING AND WHERE IT APPEARS

We can now get online more easily than ever, through many different devices, in and away from the home. Examples of these devices include:

- Desktop computers;
- Laptops and netbooks;
- Mobiles and smartphones;
- Tablets (eg iPad);
- Internet TVs;
- Games consoles (eg Xbox).

Advertising helps to pay for content and services making it available to people at little or no cost. Search engines (eg Google), social networking sites (eg Facebook) and entertainment sites (eg YouTube) are all ad-funded businesses. Your child is therefore likely to encounter advertising in many different formats across many different devices, and services.

Different types of digital advertising include:

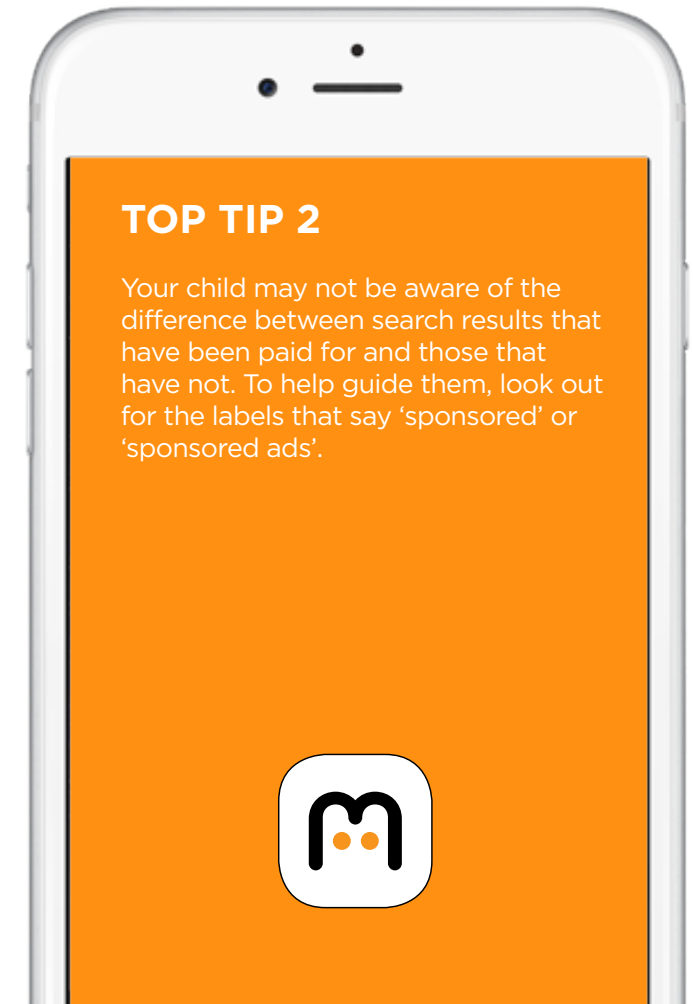
- Adverts in search engine results (e.g. when you're looking for content using Google or Bing);
- Display advertising (e.g. the banners you see on websites and on some social networking sites);
- Adverts in online games and on games consoles (e.g. billboard ads around a track in a racing car game);
- Adverts on mobile phones in apps and in text messages;
- Adverts in and around online videos (e.g. before watching football match highlights).

SEARCH ENGINE ADVERTISING



You will encounter search advertising when you use a search engine like Google or Bing. This advertising takes the form of sponsored results, often in a prominent position at the top and down the side of the results page. These results are distinguished clearly from the natural results and they are there because companies pay the search engine to feature their websites or products. An advertiser will bid on 'key words' to have their ad in the sponsored section and will 'win' the auction based on the amount they are willing to pay and how relevant the website is to the key word. These sponsored results are aimed at being relevant to what you are searching for.

Ultimately sponsored advertising helps the search engine to offer the service to you at no cost.



DISPLAY ADVERTISING

Many web pages will carry display advertising. These are usually placed around the content of the web page you are visiting. They appear in various shapes and sizes and can feature still or moving images. They can also be found on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, including within apps, and on any device with a web browser (e.g. Internet Explorer / Firefox), such as internet-enabled TVs and games consoles.

Most display advertising allows you to click through to the advertiser's own website for more information. Some display adverts are more interactive – letting you discover more within the advert itself. Display advertising can also be video content, similar to the adverts that we see on television.

The advert may be contextual (e.g. lawnmower ads on a gardening site), or may be based on demographics (e.g. based on the likely age or gender of visitors to a site). Ads can also be based upon previous web browsing behaviour (e.g. a car ad delivered because you were looking for a new car in a previous web browsing session). This involves the collection and use of anonymous information to gauge likely interests. There are rules in place preventing companies from specifically targeting under-13s with advertising in this way.

ADVERTISING IN ONLINE GAMES – 'ADVERGAMES'



There are different ways that advertising is associated with games.

An 'advergame' is an interactive game provided by a company to promote a product or a brand. They are most commonly found on a company's own website, but can also be found on external sites, in mobile applications or within an advert itself.

Advertising can also be found in the video games that your child may be playing on a games console or computer. Common examples involve placing adverts in game environments such as on the billboards around a football pitch, like you would see when you attend a football match in real life. This adds a sense of realism mirroring what we see in the outside world.

Whilst many children may appreciate the increased realism that adverts can bring to a game, you may want to explain that they are there because a company purchased the advertising space in the same way they would advertise on a billboard in real life.

TOP TIP 3

You may want to discuss with your child the fact that these games, whilst entertaining, also have a commercial purpose, which is to engage users with the brand. For example games may use branded characters to create a positive association between the brand and the fun of playing the game.



PEER-TO-PEER ADVERTISING

Some companies will work with their customers to promote products and services to their friends and families. These techniques rely on the strength of 'word-of-mouth' to deliver trusted recommendations.

Previously, some peer-to-peer marketing campaigns rewarded children by paying, or otherwise incentivising them to promote brands or products to their friendship groups. These practices have been criticised for potentially commercialising children's relationships, and the advertising industry has developed some Best Practice¹ to discourage companies from promoting products with under-16s in this way.

MOBILE ADVERTISING

More people use mobile technology, such as smartphones or tablets, to access the internet than ever before.

Internet browsing on these devices is very similar to that of a computer, as is the advertising used, so the same precautions are necessary.

On mobiles, some applications (apps) are available for free and are fully funded by the advertisers who develop them, whereas others offer premium ad-free versions that you can opt to pay for. These apps may send notifications about new products or promotions to your mobile device. You will be able to adjust the notification settings for each app on a device and you can encourage your child to tailor the notifications they receive.

A growing number of devices have GPS (positioning technology) built into them and this allows your browser and many of the applications on your mobile device to provide you with a service (e.g. local weather reports) as well as make marketing recommendations to you based on your location. For example: a coffee brand may send you an offer for a 10% discount at the store you are in. Individual apps will allow you to adjust their settings so that they don't use your location. Your device's settings will allow you to turn off all location services if you so choose.



TOP TIP 4

If you would like to prevent your child from using your mobile devices unsupervised, try adding an unlock code. This will make the device unusable until the code is entered, just ensure it is something that your child won't be able to guess.



¹ best practice guidance - available at www.adassoc.org.uk

SOCIAL MEDIA



Most websites today have a social interaction element. However, dedicated social networking and blogging sites are increasingly popular.

You are likely to be familiar with sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Each operates in a different way and some of these platforms have a minimum registration age of 13 years or above. Many social media sites will also contain adverts, such as the display adverts discussed previously. They are likely to be based on the preferences a registered user has expressed. There are also social networking sites that are designed specifically for children, which may or may not carry advertising.

Many social media sites restrict content on their social media pages until a person has shown their interest through “liking” a brand’s page. For example, on Facebook, once a child “likes” an organisation’s or brand’s page, their account’s newsfeed will pick up on all its updates. Products for adults, such as alcoholic beverages, have age restrictions in place so that users registered as under 18 cannot see these ads or social media activity around the brand.

A number of social media sites will include promoted content in a similar way to the sponsored search results mentioned earlier in this pack. For example, Twitter offers suggestions on individuals you could “follow” based on the other types of profiles that you follow. However, the first recommendation is usually a promoted profile, which means that the user has paid to be promoted. Again, these will have the term ‘promoted’ next to the profile to signify that they have paid. Similarly you may see promoted tweets, where a tweet in your timeline has been paid for.

Video and photo social media such as YouTube and Flickr also carry advertising.

TOP TIP 5

It is really important that parents make sure that children register their real age on social networking sites. This will ensure that ads for age-restricted products, such as alcoholic beverages and gambling products are not visible to them.



ACTING YOUR AGE

It is important to understand the implications of a child entering a false date of birth when registering online, as social media sites will treat them as older users. If they have stated their age as over 18, they will be able to see content that is appropriate for an adult audience, including adverts for age-restricted products such as alcohol and gambling.

A lot of websites, including social media, will use your given date of birth to adjust adverts accordingly. Therefore, if you are logged in as a user with an age of 15, advertising for alcohol or other adult content would not appear around the site.

Encouraging your children to be truthful when inputting their date of birth so that they only see content that is suitable to their age is one way to combat this.

SHARING INFORMATION

PARENTAL CONSENT & ONLINE REGISTRATION

Some websites require registration in order to use their services. Your child may sign up to websites that require them to enter an email address.

Depending on the preferences given when signing up to join a site, some sites will send promotional content via various media (via email, text or through the post). A website can send its own materials to try and increase their sales and they can also send promotions from other companies that have paid them for the opportunity to contact their registered users.

Organisations must seek parental consent where children under 16 might be involved in marketing communications.

SAFEGUARDING PRIVACY

The internet uses tools designed to improve and enhance how you and your family interact with it. The sites we visit, content we access, services we use and advertising we see is often customised to our preferences and needs. For example: the things we select to buy are remembered in a 'shopping basket' or a site retains specific settings, such as the language, for when we visit it again. Non-identifiable information is collected and used to make this happen. Small text files - known as 'cookies' - and sometimes other technologies are placed on your computer or device to enable this.

TOP TIP 6

Encourage your child to be careful when registering with websites and to tell you if they have received any communications that they did not want and/or were inappropriate. You can turn off these communications at any time. Emails sent to you should have a link allowing you to unsubscribe and you can report any instances where that option is not available to the Information Commissioners Office.

www.ico.org.uk



SHARING INFORMATION

Many sites will work together with other third party businesses to ensure you get the best experience. You have control over this. A website or application will need to provide you with clear and prominent information on this and seek your consent. You may see a small notice on most sites or within applications seeking this permission. You can also manage your privacy within the settings of the web browser or application that you are using. Most web browsers also have a 'private browsing' mode if you want to keep everything private.

IF YOU NEED HELP, FURTHER INFORMATION OR HAVE A QUERY, CONTACT ONE OF THE BELOW:

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)
www.asa.org.uk

The ASA is an independent organisation responsible for dealing with complaints about advertising. It is recognised by the Government, the courts and other regulators such as the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) and Ofcom.

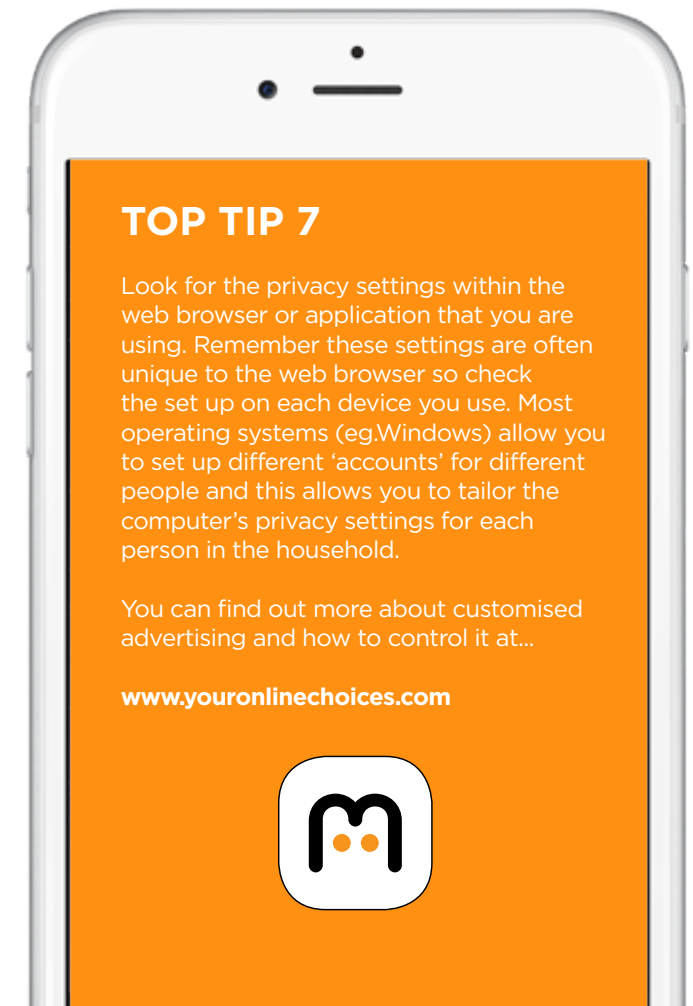
Their remit covers all aspects of advertising including digital and they have a range of resources available on their website. There is also a specific page for parents.

ParentPort
www.parentport.org.uk

ParentPort is run by the UK's media regulators, including the ASA, and is dedicated to setting and enforcing standards across the media to protect children from inappropriate material.

Information Commissioner's office
www.ico.org.uk

If you have seen something in the media that was inappropriate for your child, or children in general, you can visit their website and they will direct you to the correct regulator for dealing with your complaint. The Information Commissioner's Office is the UK's independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.



INFORMATION ON INTERNET SECURITY

UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)
www.dcsf.gov.uk/ukccis

UKCCIS is a voluntary organisation that brings together over 200 organisations and individuals from government, industry, law enforcement, academia, charities and parenting groups.

Their website provides a number of helpful links to useful organisations including:

- Get Safe Online www.getsafeonline.org;
- The Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre www.ceop.police.uk;
- Childnet www.childnet-int.org;
- Beat bullying's Cybermentors www.cybermentors.org.uk

If you would like know more information about the different types of digital advertising visit the website of the Internet Advertising Bureau.
www.iabuk.net

Online advertising often uses technical language. You may find the Internet Advertising Bureau's Jargon Buster helpful.
www.iabuk.net/resources/jargon-buster

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Media Smart would like to thank the following people for their support and guidance in the development of this resource:

Advertising Association
ISBA (The Voice of British Advertisers)
Internet Advertising Bureau
Reg Bailey, Mothers Union
Prof. Agnes Nairn, EM-Lyon Business School
Family and Parenting Institute

Media Smart is a not-for-profit media literacy programme for 7 to 16 year-olds, focusing initially on advertising. Media Smart develops and provides free of charge, educational materials to primary and secondary schools that teach children to think critically about advertising in the context of their daily lives.

Media Smart is supported by: Advertising Association, BTHA, Carat, Channel 4, Facebook, Ferrero, Generation Media, Google, Hasbro, IAB, IPA, ISBA, ITV, Lego, Mattel, McCann, McDonald's, SKY, SuperAwesome, Viacom.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.mediasmart.uk.com

FOLLOW US

Facebook: Media Smart
Twitter: @MediaSmartUK