AN INSIGHTS STUDY FROM PIXABILITY

WHAT EVERY AGENCY SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BRAND SAFETY, BRAND SUITABILITY, & PERFORMANCE ON YOUTUBE

In Collaboration with the Global Alliance for Responsible Media (GARM)





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METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this report is to use data to illustrate the relationship between brand safety, brand suitability, and performance on YouTube. Pixability is the only company certified by Google's YouTube Measurement Program (YTMP) for both Brand Suitability/Contextual Targeting and YouTube Content

Insights, so is able to use campaign data and content insights to form an analysis of trends on YouTube. This report is based on the following data sources from Pixability and the Global Alliance for Responsible Media (GARM), and leveraged brand safety measurement from DoubleVerify.

Data Sources and Measurement



PIXABILITY YOUTUBE CAMPAIGN DATA

YouTube Campaigns run through PixabilityONE from: January-June 2021

Number of Campaigns: 22,783



PIXABILITY'S YOUTUBE & CONNECTED TV MEDIA AGENCY SURVEY

Online survey conducted with U.S. Media Agencies: February 2021

Number of Agencies: 177

Link to report.



GARM AGGREGATED MEASUREMENT REPORT

The first Global Alliance for Responsible Media (GARM) report tracking performance on brand safety across seven platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Released April 2021

Link to report.



DOUBLEVERIFY BRAND SAFETY MEASUREMENT

Some of the analysis in this report was done on campaigns that used DoubleVerify's brand safety measurement solution.

DoubleVerify is certified in Brand Safety Reporting by the YouTube Measurement Program.



INTRODUCTION

The Importance of YouTube Brand Safety, Ad Performance, & Brand Suitability To Media Agencies

In 2021, media agencies see brand safety and ad performance as the two most important aspects of YouTube advertising. These two elements are also what they most value when they look to third party partners. Interestingly, while brand suitability is still seen as important, it is not yet seen as important as safety and performance. Agencies often don't fully understand the difference between safety and suitability, or how either relates to performance. The goal of this report is to give agencies a framework for understanding how safety, suitability, and performance are three different but interrelated priorities for YouTube advertising.

Average Rating Of Benefits On A Scale Of 1 To 5 With 5 Being Most Important



Q. On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being not at all important, and 5 being very important, how important is it that your 3rd party YouTube managed service company provides you with eacl of the following benefits?

SOURCE: Pixability YouTube & Connected TV Media Agency Survey, February 2021



SECTION 01

BRAND SAFETY ON YOUTUBE:

YOUTUBE IS NOW OVER 99% BRAND SAFE

Definition Of Brand Safety

Most advertisers have a general understanding that brand safety is about avoiding content areas that are unsafe for <u>any</u> advertisers. GARM has established a great <u>framework</u> for safety and suitability which outlines the eleven harmful topics that all advertisers should strive to avoid. These topics are sometimes referred to as the "Evil 11."



BRAND SAFETY: UNSAFE FOR ANY ADVERTISER

The following Evil 11 content categories are below GARM's brand safety floor:

1. Adult/Sexual

- 7. Obscenity/Profanity
- 2. Arms/Ammunition
- 8. Illegal Drugs
- 3. Crime/Harmful Acts
- 9. Spam
- 4. Death/Military Conflict
- 10. Terrorism

5. Online Piracy

11. Sensitive Social Issue

6. Hate Speech

YouTube Has Made Huge Strides In Recent Years To Ensure Advertiser Safety

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021









Expanded content review, fusing machine learning and human review Introduced 3 inventory modes to suit advertiser goals

30+ policy changes including improvements to hate/ harassment policies GARM's Brand Safety Floor introduced aligning with Google's efforts YouTube received industry's first Content Level Brand Safety Accreditation from the Media Rating Council



YouTube's Current Level Of Brand Safety: GARM Aggregated Measurement Report

The April 2021 report from GARM revealed data on the advertiser safety error rate on YouTube, which is defined as "the total impressions on content that is violative of YouTube's monetization policies — which align with the GARM industry standards — for in-stream content." What this report showed is that Google's efforts have made YouTube over 99% safe for advertisers. What these numbers don't address is suitability, which we'll explore in the next section.

Advertiser Takeaway: Advertisers don't need to take any actions to maintain 99%+ safety on YouTube. However, as we'll show in the next section, they do need to deploy certain tactics to achieve suitability.

GARM Metric: Adverti	sing Safety Error Rate
Q1 2020	<1%
Q2 2020	<1%
Q3 2020	<1%
Q4 2020	<1%

SOURCE: GARM Aggregated Measurement Report, April 202



YouTube's Current Level Of Brand Safety: H1 Campaign Data

In H1, Pixability's insights team analyzed how using different tactics on YouTube might affect levels of brand safety as measured by DoubleVerify. What it found was that when an advertiser does not use any third party suitability tactics, but only leverages YouTube's 3 tiers of ad-eligible inventory, a campaign can still be over 99% brand safe. It also showed that campaigns that use third party suitability targeting tactics or inclusion lists can bring the campaign to 100% brand safety. This data corroborates the data from the GARM Aggregated Measurement Report shown on the previous page.

Advertiser Takeaway: YouTube advertising is over 99% brand safe without using any tactics outside of YouTube's tiers. Certain third party tactics may make a campaign more likely to reach 100% brand safety.

Tactic	Unsafe Rate
YouTube's 3 Tiers of Ad-Eligible Inventory (No Third Party Measures)	<1%
Third Party Suitability Targeting Tactics	0%
Third Party Inclusion List	0%

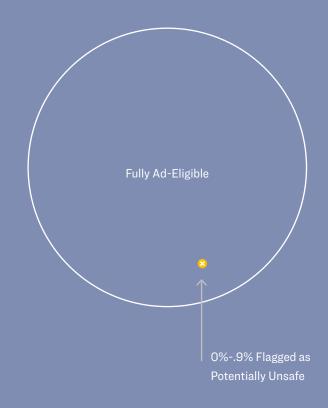
SOLIBOE: Pivability VouTube Analysis August 2021

What About The <1% That May Be Flagged As Unsafe?

By the time a video makes it to Ad-Eligible status, it has gone through many hoops:

- 1. The channel has enough subscribers (1K+) and viewing hours (4K+ in past 12 months) to be ad-eligible
- 2. Google removed anything that is unsafe that their tech or human teams found
- 3. It may also have had a pass by a third party

So why may there still be something flagged as unsafe? As we'll see in the next section, it can often be something that is indeed safe, but may fall somewhere on the GARM suitability scale, so will be suitable for some advertisers and not others.



SECTION 02

BRAND SUITABILITY ON YOUTUBE:

BRAND SAFE VIDEOS ARE NOT ALWAYS SUITABLE

How Brand Suitability Is Different Than Brand Safety

While brand safety is about avoiding content that no advertiser would want adjacent to their ad, suitability is a very brand-specific measure. A luxury watch brand may find certain content not suitable for their brand, while a video game brand may find that same content perfectly suitable.

GARM has set up <u>guidelines</u> for suitability that allows for content to be related to the Evil 11, but still potentially brand safe. It can be categorized as low, medium or high risk, and every advertiser can decide which level of risk they are comfortable with. But this is just one way to look at brand suitability. As we'll see in the following pages, there are other more nuanced considerations for advertisers.



RRAND SAFFTY



VS) BRAND SUITABILITY

nsafe for any advertiser

Contains Evil 11 Content that is below the Safety Floor:

- Adult/Sexual
- Arms/Ammunition
- Crime/Harmful Acts
- Death/Military Conflic
- Online Pirac
- Hate Speech
- Obscenity/Profanity
- Illegal Drugs
- Span
- Terrorism
- Sensitive Social Issue

Not suitable for a specific advertiser

GARM Framework:
Fits a specific brand's tolerance
level for risk with content related
to Evil 11 (GARM):

- High Risk
- Medium Risk
- Low Risk

Important Additional Consideration (Smart Suitability): Aligns with brand's values by supporting the right creators, and drives audience engagement and performance

How Does The New Definition of Brand Suitability Change The Way We Look At The <1% Of Impressions Flagged As Not Brand Safe?

Third parties that are set up to determine the safety of YouTube videos have generally taken a conservative approach and erred on the side of flagging videos that may be borderline as "not safe." So a video may, for example, have only one swear and get flagged "unsafe." Some advertisers may be perfectly fine with one swear, so by definition this is no longer unsafe for all, but just perhaps unsuitable for some.

GARM's new framework for suitability shows us that content can relate to the Evil 11 but still be "safe" if it is low risk or medium risk. Examples in the "Crime" category could include a dramatic depiction of a crime in a TV show (medium risk), or an educational depiction in a documentary (low risk). For this reason, advertisers may still see content flagged as unsafe that is actually low or medium risk, which may be OK for them.

Current Conservative Approach to Brand Safety Flagging



Content contains any level of Evil 11



Evolving Approach to Brand Safety Flagging



Content contains any level of Evil 11



Advertiser Takeaway: Videos that are still ad-eligible but get flagged for safety are often ones that could be recategorized as "Medium" Risk.

Here's How A Video Can Be Flagged As Unsafe, But May Be "Medium Risk"

For example, a video that was initially flagged as unsafe, but that may in fact be safe, is a music video by the Beastie Boys, which contained harsh language (specifically the word "mother f-er"). This video was considered ad-eligible because there was nothing in it that was blatantly unsafe, but it was flagged by third parties because it had content related to the Evil 11 (Obscenity/Profanity). With our new GARM definition of brand suitability, we can reclassify this as "Brand Safe, but Medium Risk," on GARM's scale of suitability.

This will give advertisers a much more flexible and open approach to inventory where they can choose their own risk tolerance, rather than blocking any content that "may" be unsafe.



Advertiser Takeaway: Each brand should assess its own safety tolerance and decide whether "Medium Risk" and "Low Risk" content is suitable for their ads.

5 Common Ways A Video Can Be Safe But Not Suitable

A video can be 100% brand safe based on GARM's framework, but still not be suitable for a specific advertiser. To the right are five common ways a video can be brand safe but not align with a certain brand's values.

To illustrate examples of this "safe, but not suitable" concept, Pixability did an analysis of ad-eligible, brand safe videos (based on DoubleVerify measurement) to find out how these otherwise safe videos could be unsuitable for certain advertisers. The following pages show actual examples of reasons #2-#5 to the right (the Beastie Boys video on Page 12 was a great example of Reason #1: Misaligned Risk).



1. Misaligned Risk Level

GARM's suitability framework shows a video can be low, medium, or high risk in terms of suitability. A medium risk video like the Beastie Boys video mentioned could be suitable for one advertiser and not for another.



2. Controversial Influencer

The creator of a video, whether an individual or organization, may be controversial in some way. So even if the video itself is 100% brand safe, an advertiser may not want to be supporting that channel's content.



3. Misaligned Tone Or Subtopic

Sometimes a video can be on a topic that the advertiser wants to be aligned with, but the way the topic is approached is not aligned with the brand's values or image.



4. Brand Mention

A video that mentions that advertiser itself or its competitors may be unsuitable for some advertisers because it may negatively reflect on the brand. This a very straightforward way a brand safe video may not be suitable for a specific advertiser.



5. Made For Kids Content

Certain advertisers want to avoid "made for kids" content. For example, a video made by PBS for children may be 100% brand safe, but not suitable for an alcohol brand.

Brand Safe But Not Suitable: Controversial Influencer

An influencer can be 100% brand safe, but also promote views that certain brands would find unsuitable. A great example of this is Amanda Ensing, who has a very popular YouTube channel about beauty, but who made controversial political statements after the insurrection at the Capitol in January 2021 that would motivate many advertisers to avoid her YouTube channel.

Advertiser Takeaway: A YouTube channel can be safe but not suitable when the influencer makes controversial comments. This needs to be monitored daily.





Amanda Ensing YouTube Beauty Influencer

1.4M Subscribers, Brand safe and ad-eligible

Pre-Jan 6

Jan 6

Jan 7

Jan 29

Jan 29 Evening

Late Evening

Ensing is a "Brand Safe" YouTube Fashion & Beauty Influencer

Ensing posts controversial tweets in support of Capitol Insurrection

Ensing's channel added to Pixability's BrandShield exclusion list

Sephora-sponsored YouTube video appears on Ensing's channel

#BoycottSephora starts trending on Twitter

Sephora pulls sponsorship

SOURCE: Pixability YouTube Analysis, August 2021

Brand Safe But Not Suitable: Tone/Subtopic Misaligned

A YouTube video can be 100% brand safe, but just not a good fit for some specific brands based on tone or subtopic. For example, a fast food or beef company may want to advertise on "Food & Drink" content, but may want to avoid vegan content because it may not align with their story. Similarly, some auto content about tow trucks may be 100% brand safe, but not aligned with the tone that Mercedes wants to express.

Advertiser Takeaway: Third party partners are developing deeper categorizations so instead of just knowing whether a video is "food" or "auto" content, advertisers can understand second-level or sub-topic information. Advertisers can also use a combination of IAB category targeting plus keyword exclusions.

FOOD & DRINK:

Vegan food videos may not be suitable for a fast food or beef company.



AUTO:

Tow truck videos may not be suitable for a luxury automaker.



Brand Safe But Not Suitable: Brand Mention

A very common way a video may not be suitable for a specific brand is if it mentions that brand or its competitors in the video. For example, Costco may want to be aligned with a positive video about Costco, but avoid a critical video. Knowing positive/negative sentiment is difficult, so advertisers often just use keyword exclusions for certain brand names to play it safe.

Advertiser Takeaway: For advertisers that don't want to risk being on negative content about their brand, or positive content about their competitors, keyword exclusions can be an important tool.

BUSINESS:

A video about Costco may not be suitable for Costco competitors, unless it's bashing Costco.



FASHION:

A video about watch brands may not be suitable for those brands or its competitors.





Brand Safe But Not Suitable: Kids Content

Some brands may want or need to avoid advertising on content geared to children — for example, alcohol brands. Advertisers can avoid any content that is tagged as "made for kids," but since it's up to the channel to self-tag their own content, it doesn't always happen. Therefore, whether tagged as kids content or not, this is an example of content that could be 100% brand safe, but just not suitable for certain advertisers.

Advertiser Takeaway: If you're trying to avoid "made for kids" content, make sure to exclude content that is tagged as such, but also work with a third party that has its own way to find videos that appear to be "made for kids" but aren't tagged as such.

TAGGED AS "MADE FOR KIDS":

Peppa Pig has hugely popular "made for kids" content that is tagged as such.



NOT TAGGED AS
"MADE FOR KIDS":
This Ben 10 video is
an example of an adeligible video that is
not tagged as "made
for kids."





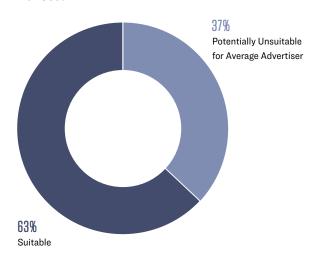


Brand Safe Impressions That May Not Be Suitable: Agency Survey Data

As shown earlier, GARM's Aggregated Measurement Report shows that YouTube is 99%+ brand safe without advertisers having to take any measures. In our survey we wanted to find out how media agency executives thought about the risk of unsuitable impressions on YouTube.

Overall, these executives estimated that for YouTube campaigns executed without brand suitability measures, roughly 37% of impressions would not be aligned with the brand in terms of suitability. But answers varied widely across respondents — agencies that represent risk-averse brands believed the percent of unsuitable impressions would be much higher.

Agency Estimate of Unsuitable Impressions:
Percentage Of Campaign Impressions That Respondents
Estimated Would Be On Content That Didn't Specifically Align
With The Brand's Values If Brand Suitability Measures Were
Not Used



Q. If an advertiser were to run a campaign on YouTube WITHOUT using any brand suitability measures (exclusions, inclusions, or other methods), what percentage of the campaign impressions do you think would run on inventory that was NOT perfectly brand suitable for the advertiser?

SOURCE: Pixability YouTube & Connected TV Media Agency Survey, February 2021



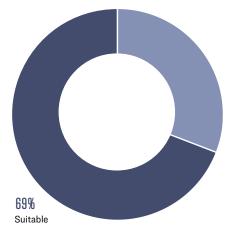


Brand Safe Impressions That May Not Be Suitable: YouTube Campaign Data

When Pixability analyzed a random sampling of YouTube videos that are ad-eligible and brand safe according to DoubleVerify, we found 31% of "safe" videos would be potentially unsuitable to the average advertiser — almost matching the numbers agencies themselves estimated.

Some advertisers may look at this chart and think the only way to have 100% suitability is to block all the potentially unsuitable impressions. While some third party partners take this approach, it's not a best practice as it negatively impacts scale and performance.

Unsuitable Impressions Based On YouTube Video Analysis



31% Potentially Unsuitable for Average Advertiser

But blocking all potentially unsuitable impressions will negatively impact scale and performance — a smarter approach is needed.

SOURCE: Pixability YouTube Analysis, August 202

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SECTION 03

AD PERFORMANCE ON YOUTUBE:

HOW CERTAIN BRAND SUITABILITY TACTICS CAN HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT

AD PERFORMANCE ON YOUTURE

Brand Safety And Suitability Measures That Can Negatively Affect Ad Performance

YouTube advertisers want campaigns that are not only safe and suitable, but that also perform. But often the measures they're taking for safety and suitability are so restrictive that they can block good content along with bad, negatively affecting both scale and ad performance. It's like the old proverb, "do not use a cannon to kill a mosquito." Here are three common ways an advertiser can be overly cautious and end up with compromised results:

- I. Excessive Keyword Blocking
- 2. Blocking Whole Content Categories
- 3. Contextual Targeting to Only Certain Content Categories







AD PERFORMANCE ON YOUTUBE

1. Excessive Keyword Blocking

Keyword blocking on YouTube is a brand safety/suitability practice that has been used for years to avoid certain types of content. We often see advertisers going overboard on this practice, blocking any words that may be remotely related to content they want to avoid. Four such keywords we've seen used are "knife," "Trump," "shot," and "coronavirus." Use of such terms can often block very high quality content where an advertiser would have potentially engaged with their audience.

Advertiser Takeaway: We've shown that YouTube is over 99% safe, so advertisers should not overshoot on their use of keyword blocking, as they may miss out on some very high quality content.



Blocking "knife" would block 112 videos and 8.7M views on Food Network alone.



Blocking "shot"
would block 736 videos and
172M views on ESPN alone.



Blocking "Trump"
would block 1,267 videos and
1.78 views on Jimmy Kimmel alone.



Blocking "coronavirus" would block 49 videos and 41M views on NYT alone.







AD PERFORMANCE ON YOUTURE

2. Blocking Whole Content Categories

Many advertisers block whole content categories because they believe them to have a higher concentration of content that may be unsuitable. Music & Audio and News content are both often blocked completely. When looking at ad performance for over 22K campaigns run on YouTube in H1 2021, we see that among the 20 most common IAB content categories, Music & Audio and News performed near the top in certain metrics (However, Music & Audio VCR may skew higher as some people may let the ad and video play as they can listen to music while doing something else). The lesson here is to find ways to avoid certain types of content within categories vs. blocking the whole category entirely.

Advertiser Takeaway: Advertisers should be comfortable advertising in safe/suitable content in any category where their target audience is engaged.

VCR (View-To-Comp Performance By Con H1 2021	,	CTR (Click-Through Rate) Performance by Content Category in H1 2021						
YouTube Content Category	VCR performance against INDEX	YouTube Content Category	CTR performance against INDEX					
Music & Audio	+42%	Food & Drink	+36%					
TV	+8%	News						
Tech	+8%	Family	+26%					
Pop Culture	+8%	TV	+20%					
Travel	+4%	Pop Culture	+20%					
Sports	+4%	Hobbies	+20%					
Pets	+4%	Tech	+15%					
Science	+4%	Movies	+15%					
Movies	+2%	Healthy Living	+15%					
Food & Drink	+2%	Pets	+5%					
Video Gaming	+0%	Music & Audio	+0%					
Family	-2%	Video Gaming	-6%					
Hobbies	-4%	Style & Fashion	-6%					
Auto	-8%	Business & Finance	-11%					
Healthy Living	-10%	Auto	-14%					
Business & Finance	-10%	Sports	-27%					
News	-11%	Home & Garden	-27%					
Events & Activities	-11%	Science	-27%					
Style & Fashion	-15%	Travel	-37%					
Home & Garden	-15%	Events & Activities	-48%					

SOURCE: Pixability YouTube Campaign Data, Jan-June 202





Category vs.

+68%

+36%

+36%

+21%

+17%

+12%

+1%

+0% -3% -21% -22%

-24%

-27% -31% -33% -38%

AD PERFORMANCE ON YOUTURE

3. Contextual Targeting To Only Certain Content Categories: Auto Advertisers Example

Pixability looked at all campaigns run on YouTube in H1 2021 by advertisers in 10 vertical industry categories to see if there was a correlation between the advertiser's industry and the content category that drove the best ad performance. We found that in all 10 verticals, the content category you may have predicted would perform best, didn't — as seen on the right, auto content performed below average for auto advertisers.

Advertiser Takeaway: Avoid over-reliance on contextual targeting and expand to other content areas (see page 27).

AUTO ADVERTISERS VCR (View-To-Completion Performance By Content C Avg. in H1 2021	AUTO ADVERTISERS CTR (Click-Through Rate) Performance By Content C Avg. in H1 2021	
Music & Audio	+23%	Healthy Living
Science	+19%	Pop Culture
Television	+11%	News & Politics
Technology & Computing	+9%	Food & Drink
Pop Culture	+8%	Music & Audio
Food & Drink	+5%	Business & Finance
Travel	+4%	Technology & Computing
News & Politics	+4%	Television
Pets	+1%	Family & Relationships
Sports	+1%	Hobbies & Interests
	-1%	Movies
Hobbies & Interests	-3%	Sports
Movies	-6%	Pets
Home & Garden	-6%	Automotive
Events & Attractions	-7%	Video Gaming
Business & Finance	-7%	Home & Garden
Healthy Living	-8%	Style & Fashion
Family & Relationships	-8%	Events & Attractions
Video Gaming	-13%	Science
Style & Fashion	-16%	Travel

SOURCE: Pixability YouTube Campaign Data, Jan-June 2021



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SECTION 04

ADVERTISER TAKEAWAYS

ADVERTISER TAKEAWAYS

9 Things Every Agency Should Understand When Managing YouTube Campaigns

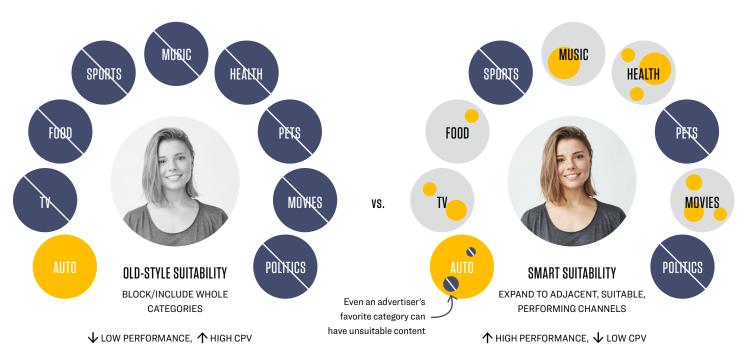
- YouTube is 99%+ safe even without using a third party partner
 but consider using third parties if you need help ensuring
 100% safety or measuring the safety level.
- 2. Understand your brand or client's tolerance for running on content that may not be suitable. If they're fine with it, no action is needed. Otherwise, the agency should be taking the following measures, or work with a third party that does.
- **3.** Monitor suitability of YouTube channels daily to avoid what happened to Sephora with Amanda Ensing.
- **4.** Consider avoiding subtopics of content that don't align with your strategy for example, a fast food advertiser wouldn't necessarily want to run on vegan content.

- **5.** Use Google's tools to avoid "made for kids" content, but work with a third party if you want to avoid children's content that's not correctly tagged as "made for kids."
- **6.** Don't use excessive keyword blocking or you'll block good content that could've boosted performance.
- Do use keywords to avoid content that mention the advertiser's brand or its competitors.
- 8. Don't block whole categories of content like "Music" and "News"

 instead, avoid pockets of unsuitable content within those categories with help from a third party.
- **9.** Don't believe the hype on contextual targeting on YouTube. Advertisers can find their audience in any content category by using Smart Suitability.

ADVERTISER TAKEAWAYS

Advertiser Takeaway: Avoid Over-Reliance On Contextual Targeting, And Expand To Adjacent, Suitable, High-Performing Content Areas



Want to Learn More?

We'd love to walk you through our approach to brand suitability, and share the full results of our YouTube Analysis that includes all verticals.

Let's Connect | info@pixability.com

About Pixability

Pixability is a technology and data company that empowers the world's largest brands and their agencies to maximize the value of video advertising on YouTube, Amazon Fire TV, Roku, and Hulu. We've run more YouTube campaigns than anybody, except for Google itself, and we're known as a leader in YouTube insights. Pixability is also one of seven companies worldwide that is certified by Google as a leader in brand suitability and contextual targeting and is the only one of these also certified in YouTube content insights.

YouTube Measurement Program Certifications





Awards



Global Winner: Most Innovative Partner in Video Advertising



