

Canadian Media Directors' Council announces partnership with NewsGuard to support responsible news media in Canada

New partnership reinforces the importance of advertising responsibly on news, protecting clients from supporting misinformation, using credibility ratings from experienced journalists

Toronto, April 27th, **2022 –** The Canadian Media Directors' Council announced at the association's annual media leadership summit today a partnership with NewsGuard - to highlight the importance of a responsible media practice, brand safety and to help achieve the goals set out by the Canadian Media Manifesto.

The Canadian Media Directors' Council (CMDC), is an association of Canadian media agencies that accounts for 96% of total annual advertising investment in Canada. This partnership with NewsGuard will elevate advertiser support for responsible news media in Canada and protect brands from unintentionally funding misinformation sources that fall below their brand safety standards while supporting legitimate news publishers, including those serving local markets and Black, Indigenous, Asian, or LGBTQ+ communities.

Through the partnership, brands represented by CMDC members will be able to leverage NewsGuard's credibility ratings for news outlets, which are conducted by a team of experienced journalists using nine basic, apolitical criteria, to target ads to credible Canadian news sources while avoiding ad placements on misinformation and unreliable news.

CMDC members will be able to opt-in fully to integrate NewsGuard's Responsible Advertising for News Segments (RANS) — inclusion and exclusion lists for advertisers based on NewsGuard's credibility ratings — at preferential rates intended to encourage widespread usage.

For example, brands may choose to buy ads from trustworthy local Canadian news outlets vetted by NewsGuard's journalists or to invest specifically in news outlets serving underrepresented groups, such as members of the Black, Indigenous, Asian, or LGBTQ+ communities. At the same time, brands can opt to avoid ad placements on outlets that might not meet their brand's safety or suitability standards, such as websites with a history of publishing false claims or websites with unknown ownership—ensuring advertising revenue is instead directed to credible outlets.

As part of the partnership, NewsGuard also will conduct a free Responsible Advertising for News audit for any interested CMDC members or brands represented by CMDC members, in which NewsGuard will review the brand or agency's inclusion list, exclusion list, or both and provide an analysis quantifying the overall quality of news sources on the list, the degree of risk from misinformation or unreliable news sources, and the opportunity to improve performance by investing more in high-quality Canadian news sources. Advertisers or agencies interested in an audit can request one here.

The partnership reflects a growing commitment among Canadian advertisers to supporting quality news sources in the Canadian media landscape.

"Local news is part of the fabric of so many communities across Canada," said Shannon Lewis, President of the CMDC. "Through this partnership with NewsGuard, our members will be able to invest in quality Canadian journalism, with a strong focus on diversity and responsible advertising. A healthy Canadian media ecosystem supports the economy, fosters responsible media, and gives our clients more opportunity to connect with engaged and diverse Canadian audiences."

The partnership comes as momentum grows across the industry for the <u>Canadian Media Manifesto</u>—a pledge to support local media in Canada signed by hundreds of Canadian organizations, executives, and thought leaders. The manifesto praises local Canadian media outlets for "providing information and resources that ensure transparency, promote accountability and support our economy" and calls on the industry to acknowledge it has "a critical role to play in building an infrastructure that allows Canadian media to thrive."

"It starts by committing to support Canadian media," the pledge reads.

The partnership between CMDC and NewsGuard aims to do just that, according to NewsGuard Co-CEO Gordon Crovitz. "This partnership is particularly exciting because we just <u>launched</u> our ratings service in Canada in January, and this Canadian initiative is the first time we've had such a large portion of a country's advertising market aligned with the idea of supporting quality news in this way," Crovitz said. "We're thrilled to be able to offer Canadian advertisers a way to support quality news without the risk inherent in programmatic advertising of unintentionally supporting misinformation or unreliable news."

NewsGuard and Comscore reported last year that that every year, an estimated US\$2.6 billion in programmatic advertising is placed programmatically on websites that get a Red rating from NewsGuard for being untrustworthy. A NewsGuard analysis found ads from more than 4,000 brands on COVID-19 misinformation sites, for example, and tracks advertising still supporting websites publishing Russian disinformation about Ukraine.

Data has shown that advertising on trusted news sites not only helps support legitimate journalism but also provides financial benefits to advertisers. A <u>study</u> conducted by IPG

Mediabrands using NewsGuard's ratings found that, by expanding inclusion lists to cover more high-quality news outlets, brands can reduce the costs per click by 9% for programmatic ad buys while also increasing click-through-rates substantially.

"It's the classic case of doing well by doing good," said NewsGuard Co-CEO Steven Brill. "Not only can advertisers support quality Canadian journalism and build goodwill with customers—they can do it while seeing lower costs and better ad performance."

CMDC members interested in using NewsGuard's data through the partnership can **contact NewsGuard here**.

About NewsGuard

Launched in March 2018 by media entrepreneur and award-winning journalist Steven Brill and former Wall Street Journal publisher Gordon Crovitz, NewsGuard provides credibility ratings and detailed "Nutrition Labels" for thousands of news and information sources. NewsGuard rates all the news and information sources that account for 95% of online engagement across the US, UK, Canada, Germany, France, and Italy.

NewsGuard's ratings are conducted by trained journalists using nine apolitical criteria of journalistic practice, including whether a news source repeatedly publishes false content, whether it regularly corrects or clarifies errors, and whether it avoids deceptive headlines. Based on the criteria, each source receives an overall trust rating, a trust score of 0-100, a score on each of the nine criteria, and a detailed "Nutrition Label" explaining the rating and providing examples of the site's editorial practices. Advertisers, advertising agencies and advertising tech companies license NewsGuard's ratings to direct their programmatic advertising toward legitimate journalism and avoid misinformation. For more information, including to download the browser extension and review the ratings process, visit newsguardtech.com.

About CMDC

The Canadian Media Directors' Council is an association that plays a proactive role in the media communications industry as advocates, leaders and advisors, to ensure a fair and progressive marketplace on behalf of our clients, our agencies and our media partners. We operate as a collective, influential voice, promoting the advertising sector as a driver of growth. It is essential that we share our voice in the significant decisions that will directly affect our industry.

Engage with us:

- Canadian Media Manifesto
- Instagram @cmdccanada

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