



Topic: Platform Investments  
 Working Group(s): CMO & Media Forums  
 Date at: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020  
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## INTRODUCTION

### Background

This benchmark was run in the context of calls for advertisers to pull ads from certain online platforms. WFA’s public position ([here](#)) is that platforms need to do more. Right now, the best way to achieve lasting change is to work together through the [Global Alliance for Responsible Media \(GARM\)](#). However, many members asked for more information, so we’ve worked with our competition lawyers to produce a short survey. This exercise is merely designed to give respondent companies a general sense of how others are thinking, and is not in any way intended to influence or guide members’ actions. Of course, members remain free to handle the situation as they see fit.

### Member questions

Members were asked:

1. Regarding social media platforms and their current policies on hate speech, what is your organisation’s position regarding your advertising spend?
2. What other actions have you taken or considered?
3. For any additional thoughts or considerations to raise with WFA.

The above questions were posed to a representative sample of WFA members, **76** of them provided feedback.

## SUMMARY

No consensus on withholding spend from platforms.

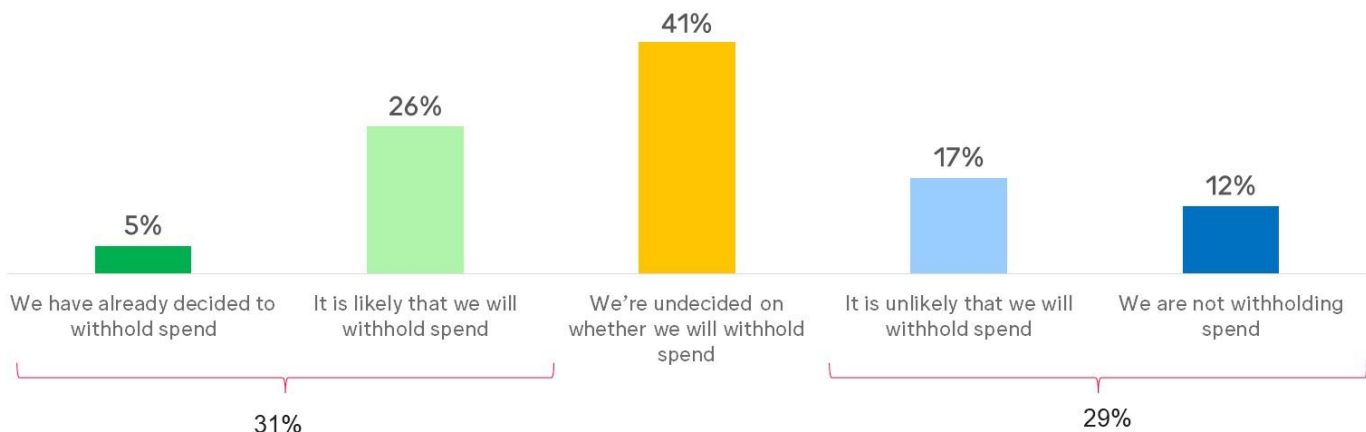
- The largest share of our 76 responding companies (41%) remain undecided.
- 26% say they are likely to with another 5% saying they have decided to
- 17% say they are unlikely to with a further 12% having decided not to

The majority (53%) have spoken directly to platforms about hate speech.

48% are relying on industry bodies such as GARM

The full responses can be found below.

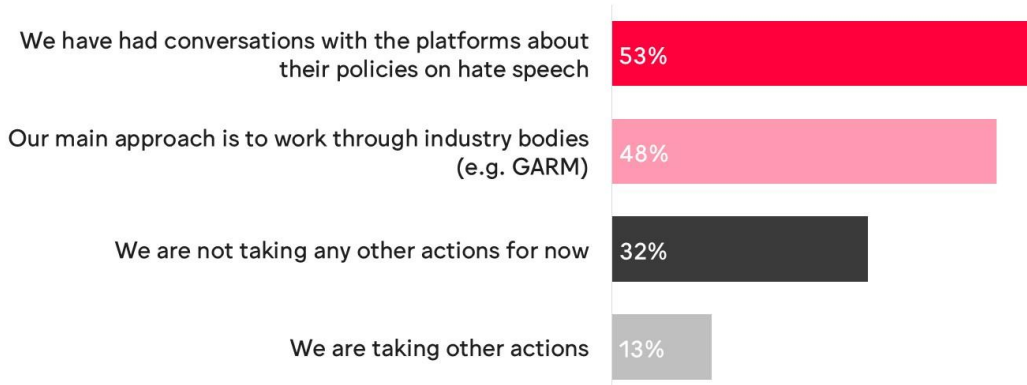
1. Regarding social media platforms and their current policies on hate speech, what is your organisation’s position regarding your advertising spend?





**No consensus on withholding platform spend. Largest share yet to decide.** Nearly one third (**31%**) of all respondents are considering or already decided to withhold their spend on certain platforms, while a similar number of brand owners (**41%**) are still yet to make a decision. The remaining number of respondents (**29%**), which account for nearly one third, are not withholding spend or consider that such a decision is unlikely.

## 2. What other actions have you taken or considered? (Multiple answer)



**Half of the advertisers** are looking towards industry bodies (such as GARM) and a majority (**53%**) have already had direct conversations with the platforms about their policies on hate speech.

Other actions being taken included:

- “We continue to monitor via WFA and our Media Holdings, internally we will step up cross functional discussions to develop a company stance.”
- “Considering a positive investment in minority owned and focused titles as well/instead”
- “Engaging directly with our industry peers to discuss their position and get additional points of view”
- “Working with our media agency and communicating with peers.”
- “We have created a robust pledge program to drive action and accountability.”
- “Evaluating next steps internally”
- “Ongoing monitoring, assessing of platforms.”
- “Process to manage decision forward is in discussion as we speak.”
- “Reviewing the role of social media platforms in the media mix.”

## 3. Any other thoughts or considerations you would like to raise with WFA.

- “It’s simply depressing [the platforms] still fall short. If they don’t adjust based on calls from consumers and stakeholders, we would appreciate support with identifying viable alternatives for investments so our markets can have a clear choice of media owners that can secure business outcomes. Perhaps competition is the only way to get [them] in particular to change.”
- “Agencies and platforms are not open or policing enough, or not aware of severity, hence need WFA to raise the issue because WFA does carry the Global regulatory weight.”
- “We want to have a longer-term plan, non-reactive, to sustainable and transparent Media supply chain. Is no sense to take money off temporarily, if we can’t break the wall gardens and the Social media platform have not a strategic confrontation with the advertisers.”
- “Is [withholding spend] the right way?”
- “Neither platform is perfect, nor advertisers and the marketers behind them. Advertisers may pull out from these platforms but most of the consumers will not.”
- “I think there’s an overall message the WFA could come out with which side steps the [negative perspective] and focuses on the fact that marketers can invest in good things.”
- “Strongly believe that taking a constructive approach is the right thing to do but sending a signal to [the platforms] leadership is probably needed to create a stronger sense of urgency”



### 3. For more information

Relating to GARM, contact [R.Rakowitz@wfanet.org](mailto:R.Rakowitz@wfanet.org)

Relating to this benchmark [r.dreblow@wfanet.org](mailto:r.dreblow@wfanet.org)

Hogan  
Lovells

#### WFA Competition law compliance policy

The purpose of the WFA is to represent the interests of advertisers and to act as a forum for legitimate contacts between members of the advertising industry. It is obviously the policy of the WFA that it will not be used by any company to further any anti-competitive or collusive conduct, or to engage in other activities that could violate any antitrust or competition law, regulation, rule or directives of any country or otherwise impair full and fair competition. The WFA carries out regular checks to make sure that this policy is being strictly adhered to.

As a condition of membership, members of the WFA acknowledge that their membership of the WFA is subject to the competition law rules and they agree to comply fully with those laws. Members agree that they will not use the WFA, directly or indirectly, (a) to reach or attempt to reach agreements or understandings with one or more of their competitors, (b) to obtain or attempt to obtain, or exchange or attempt to exchange, confidential or proprietary information regarding any other company other than in the context of a bona fide business or (c) to further any anti-competitive or collusive conduct, or to engage in other activities that could violate any antitrust or competition law, regulation, rule or directives of any country or otherwise impair full and fair competition