

IBM, Delta Air Lines, WPP, 4A's, IAB, Ad Council And Other Industry Leaders Act To Mitigate Bias In Advertising Technology

IBM Delivers Open Source Toolkit to Identify and Mitigate Bias in Advertising Technology



CANNES, France, June 20, 2022 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Today, leading companies committed to improving fairness in marketing campaigns. The initiative, announced at the [Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity 2022](#), brought together agencies, brands, and other leaders to generate awareness and take action towards mitigating bias in advertising technology. Committing organizations include IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)), Delta Air Lines, WPP, Mindshare, 4A's, IAB and the Ad Council.

The action is the most recent effort by IBM to drive education and awareness around the impact of bias in advertising technology. In 2021, the company launched a research initiative to explore the hypothesis that bias can exist in ad technology, which [initial findings](#) confirmed. The research also showed that mitigating bias in ad technology was possible using AI tools and resources in marketing processes. More industry participation and data collection are needed to better understand the potential impact of bias on these campaigns, but several industry leaders are demonstrating early activism by raising awareness and taking action via [IBM's Advertising Fairness Pledge](#).

"While the risk of bias in advertising is well known, by making this commitment, these organizations are among the first in the industry to take action," said Bob Lord, IBM Senior Vice President of The Weather Company and Alliances. "Together, we are agreeing to educate ourselves and our companies and ask other industry leaders to join us in helping to mitigate bias in advertising."

Toward that effort, IBM also announced the release of its gratis [Advertising Toolkit for AI Fairness 360](#), an open-source solution deploying 75 fairness metrics and 13 state-of-the-art algorithms to help identify and mitigate biases in discrete data sets. A playbook and sample code are also made available for ease of use. Organizations utilizing the toolkit may gain a better understanding of the presence and impact of bias on their ad campaigns, as well as the makeup of their audiences.

"Used correctly, data can help brands personalize consumer engagement and identify the most relevant touchpoints. However, we know that bias can exist in algorithms or technology, and that's why we're helping our clients to evaluate how and when to use data in a meaningful way that will benefit the customer experience," said Mark Read, CEO of WPP. "Through WPP's GroupM, we've developed the Data Ethics Compass to help clients navigate the challenges of using datasets, while IBM's new Advertising Toolkit for AI Fairness 360 will help us to better understand the potential impact of bias. Consumers rightly expect brands to use their information in a fair way and for the industry to tackle data bias collectively, which can ultimately result in increased engagement and commercial outcomes."

Bias is often unintentional, a result of human assumptions and judgments encoded into algorithms that can result in unfair targeting, exclusion of certain groups, and marketing campaign failures. Organizations taking the pledge can contribute data to ongoing studies that seek to better explain the impact of bias. According to [Salesforce's 2022 State of the Connected Customer survey](#), nearly 62 percent of consumers surveyed reported they are concerned about bias in AI, up from just 54 percent two years prior, emphasizing the imperative for brands and agencies to better understand its impacts.

"As technology and data prevalence accelerates, the risk for bias in advertising compounds. It is our duty to address this head-on," said Adam Gerhart, Global CEO of Mindshare. "We believe the industry needs to take clear and intentional action, which is why we are committing to leverage the Advertising Toolkit for AI Fairness 360."

As the advertising industry continues to face issues related to privacy and transparency, many organizations believe that tackling bias in ad tech could be a next key area of focus for marketers. Nearly [\\$1 trillion](#) was spent on digital advertising globally in 2021, much of which flows through programmatic engines that segment and target specific audiences, sometimes missing large consumer groups in the process. With increasing consumer demand for transparency in how their data is used, marketers must look for new ways to remain effective. Tapping into alternative privacy-forward data sources, such as weather data, can be effective predictors of behavior that could also help rebuild trust with consumers.

"As a global brand, we know that every decision we make, whether it's about a supplier, an employee or an ad campaign, is a reflection of our values and the change we want to see in the world," said Emmakate Young, Delta's Managing Director of Brand Marketing. "We've long been focused on inclusive representation in our campaign creative, this effort allows us to go a step further to bring more inclusive representation to our campaign delivery."

To download the Advertising Toolkit for AI Fairness 360 and the associated playbook, to take the Advertising Fairness Pledge, and to learn more about how bias in advertising can negatively impact businesses and consumers, visit IBM's [Bias in Advertising microsite](#).

To learn more about IBM Watson Advertising solutions and services, visit [here](#).

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