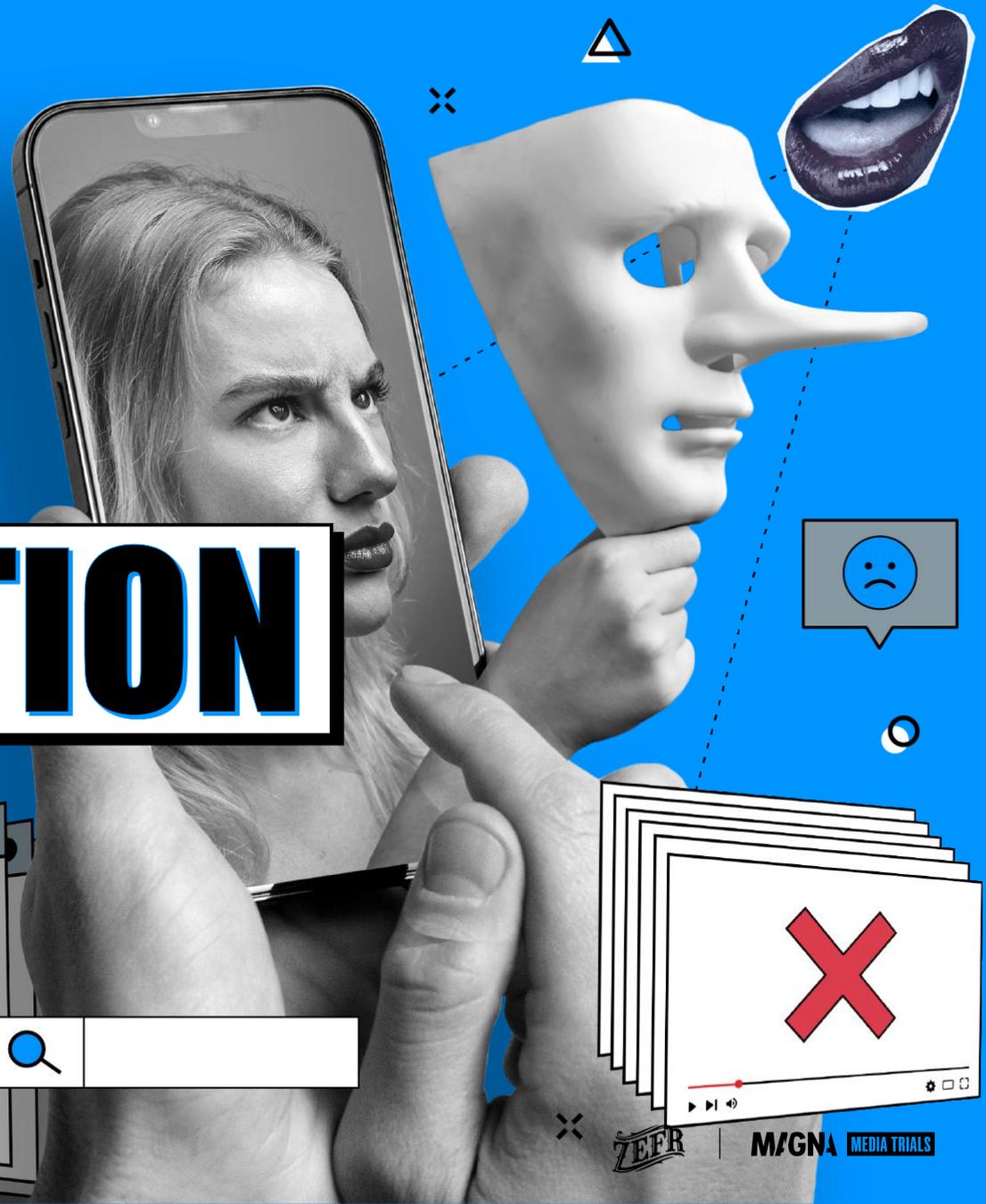


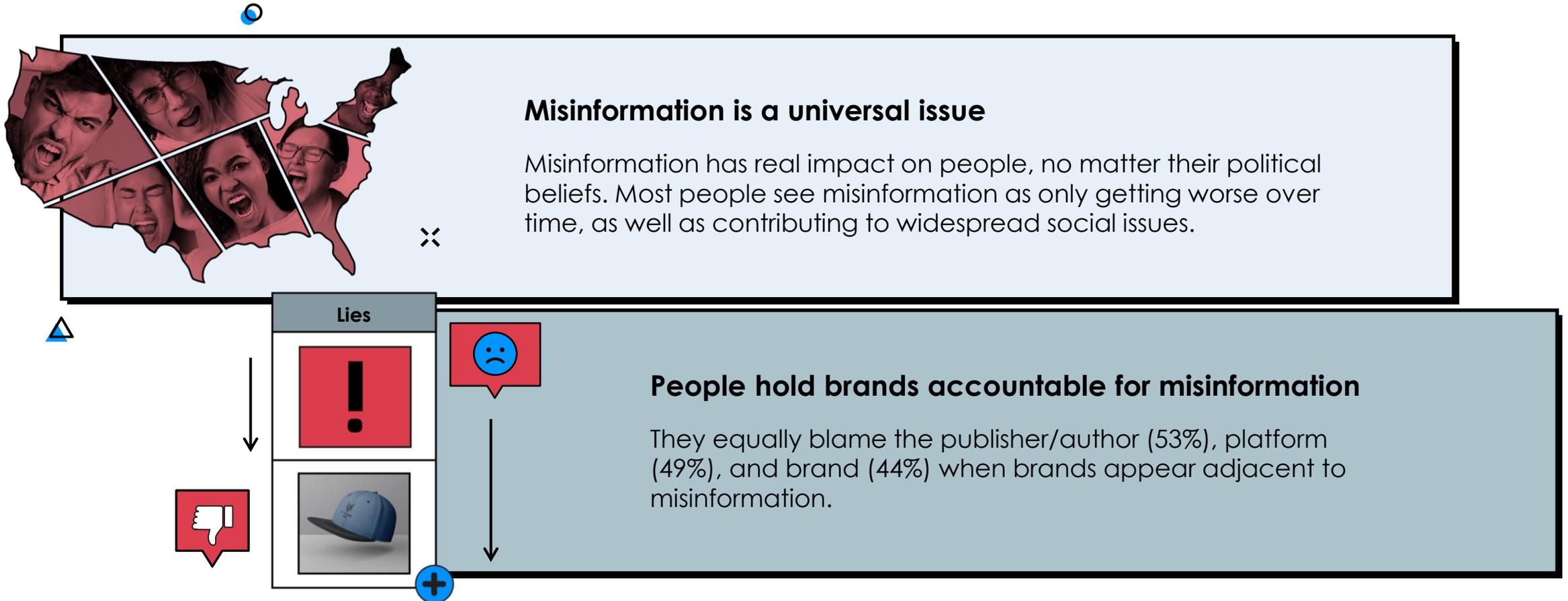
# ADS IN MISINFORMATION

An Ad Effectiveness Experiment



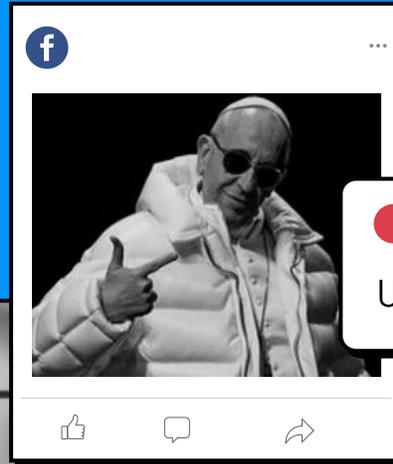
From our previous research...

# WE KNOW THAT MISINFORMATION IS A REAL ISSUE FOR BRANDS



**GIVEN THE RECENT PANDEMIC,  
GLOBAL CONFLICTS, AND THE  
UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL  
ELECTIONS, MISINFORMATION  
IS A PROMINENT CONCERN  
FOR EVERYONE.**

# WE CONDUCTED A FOLLOW-UP TEST ...



**HoaxesHype**   
US Presidents Play Pokémon Fire Red



# TO UNCOVER THE TRUE IMPACT OF ADS NEXT TO MISINFORMATION.

OUR METHOD:

# AD EFFECTIVENESS TEST

1

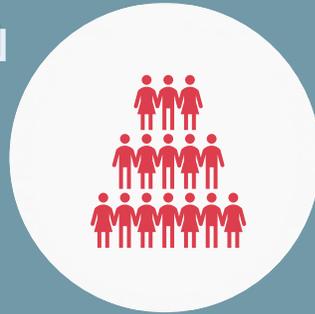


## RECRUITMENT

Nationally representative  
online panel.

Total n=2,036

2



## SAMPLE DEFINITION

Regular users of a popular social  
media platform.

Ages 18+

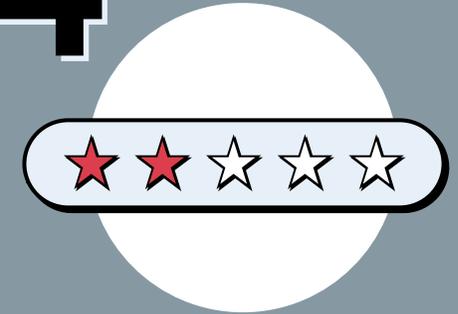
3



## EXPERIENCE

Participants driven to a  
controlled mobile version of an  
infeed social media platform to  
browse, where they received  
either a test or control ad based  
on randomization.

4

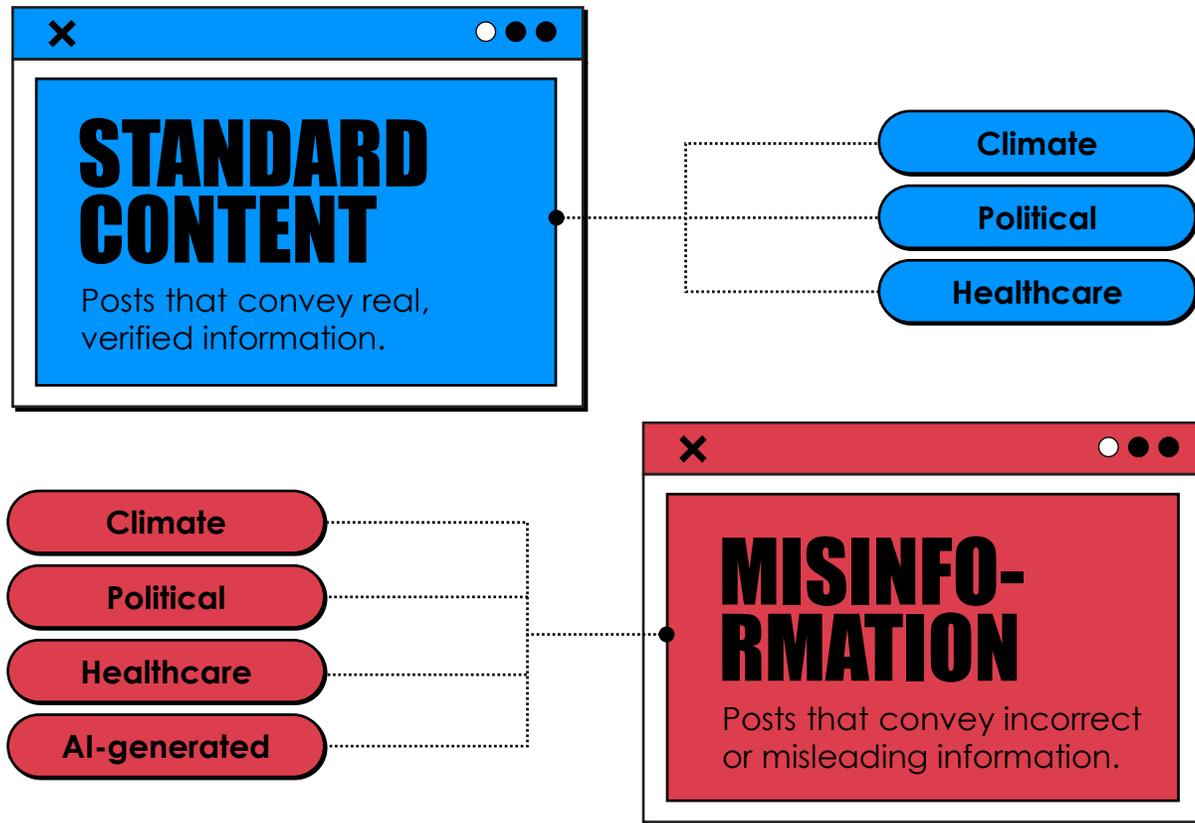


## BRAND KPI MEASUREMENT

Post-exposure survey to measure  
impact on brand KPIs and  
collect feedback on ad  
adjacency to different types of  
content.

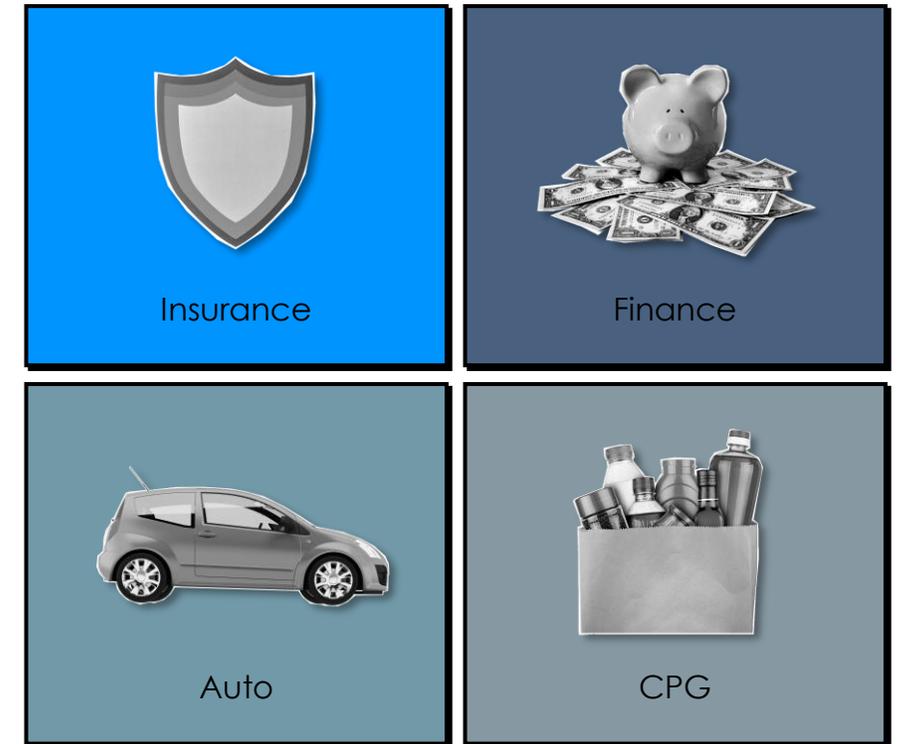
# OUR VARIABLES

To assess the impact of misinformation on brands, we tested 5 different types of content.



## 4 Verticals:

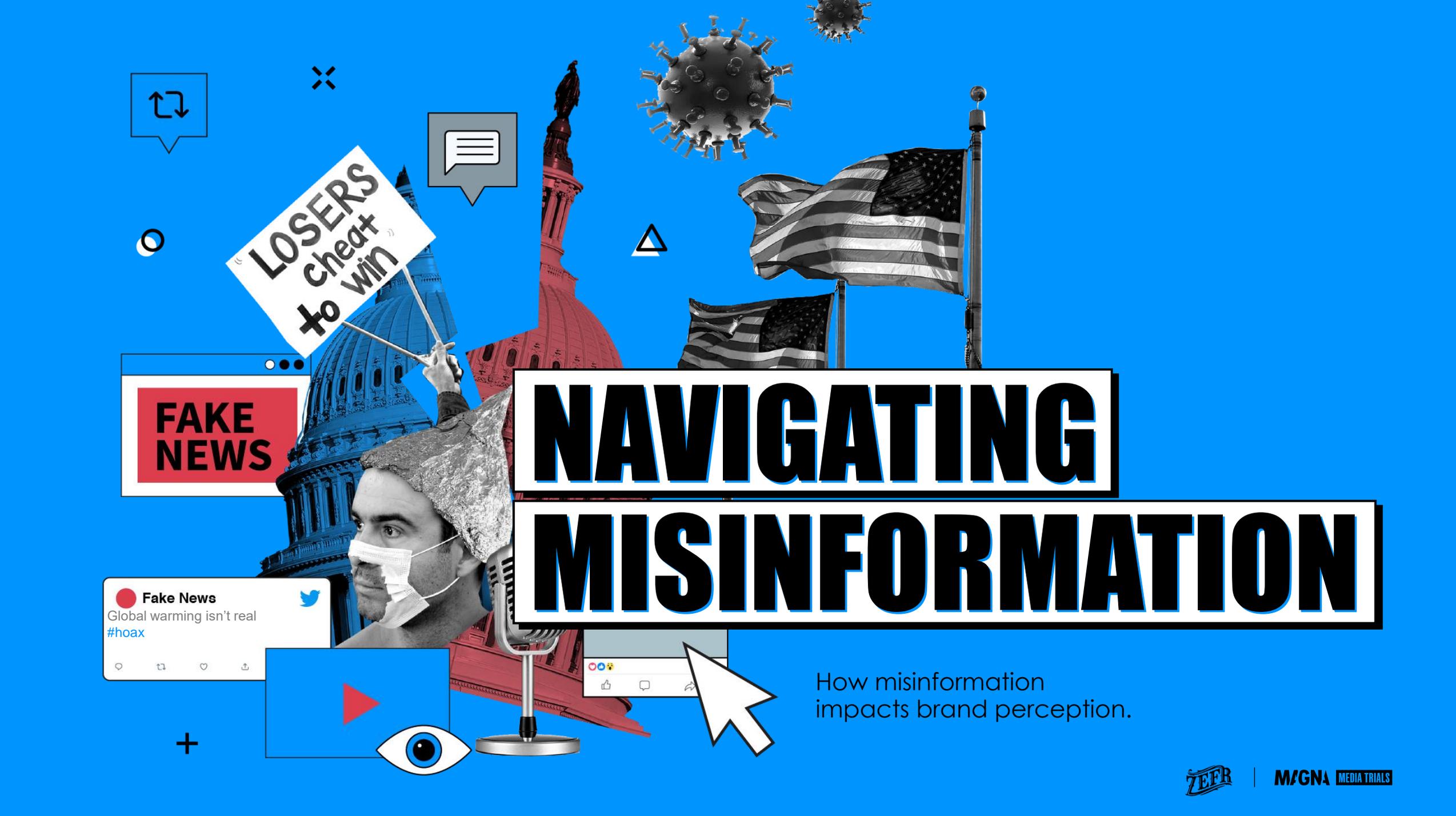
Tested ads from an array of different verticals.



# MISINFORMATION TESTED

## EXAMPLE HEADLINES:

CLIMATE	POLITICS	HEALTHCARE	AI-GENERATED
<p>Climate change is baloney! <i>Complex phrases like "carbon capture", "... simply refer to carbon dioxide, which is essentially just food for plants!</i></p> <p>200X increase in earthquakes predicted due to climate change.</p>	<p>This new Biden corruption evidence is pretty damning 🙄. He used FAKE NEWS.</p> <p>Former president Donal Trump arrested for DWI.</p>	<p>FDA vaccine advisor warns against #COVID boosters for healthy young people - NTD good morning.</p> <p>Disheveled swollen trump pushes new COVID lockdown possibility.</p>	<p>US Presidents Play Pokémon Fire Red (FINALE).</p> <p>Pope Francis walking for Balenciaga.</p>



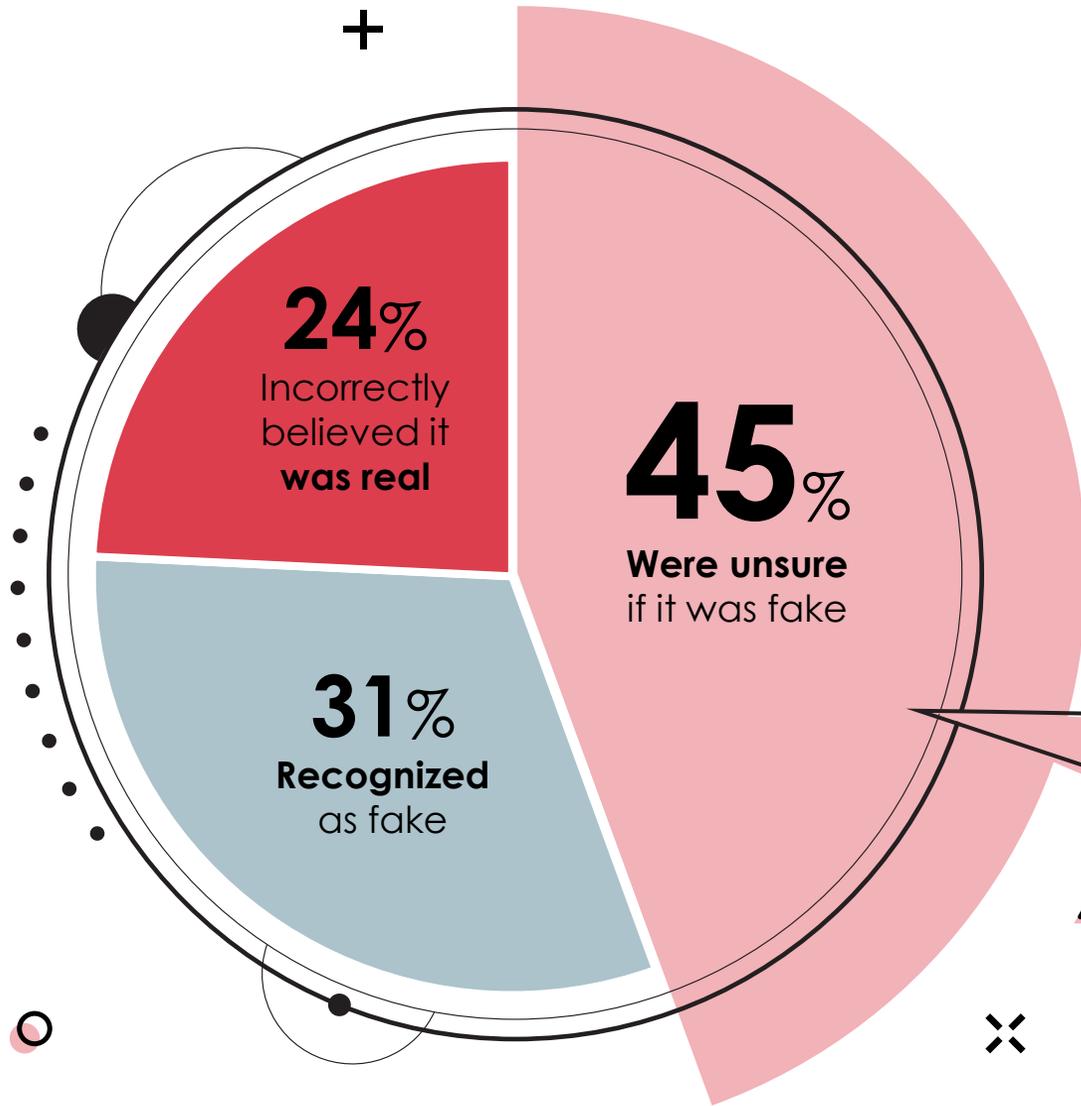
“LOSERS  
cheat  
to win”

**FAKE  
NEWS**

**Fake News**  
Global warming isn't real  
#hoax

# NAVIGATING MISINFORMATION

How misinformation  
impacts brand perception.



# SPOTTING MISINFORMATION CAN BE TRICKY; ALMOST HALF ARE UNCERTAIN

Correctly identifying misinformation

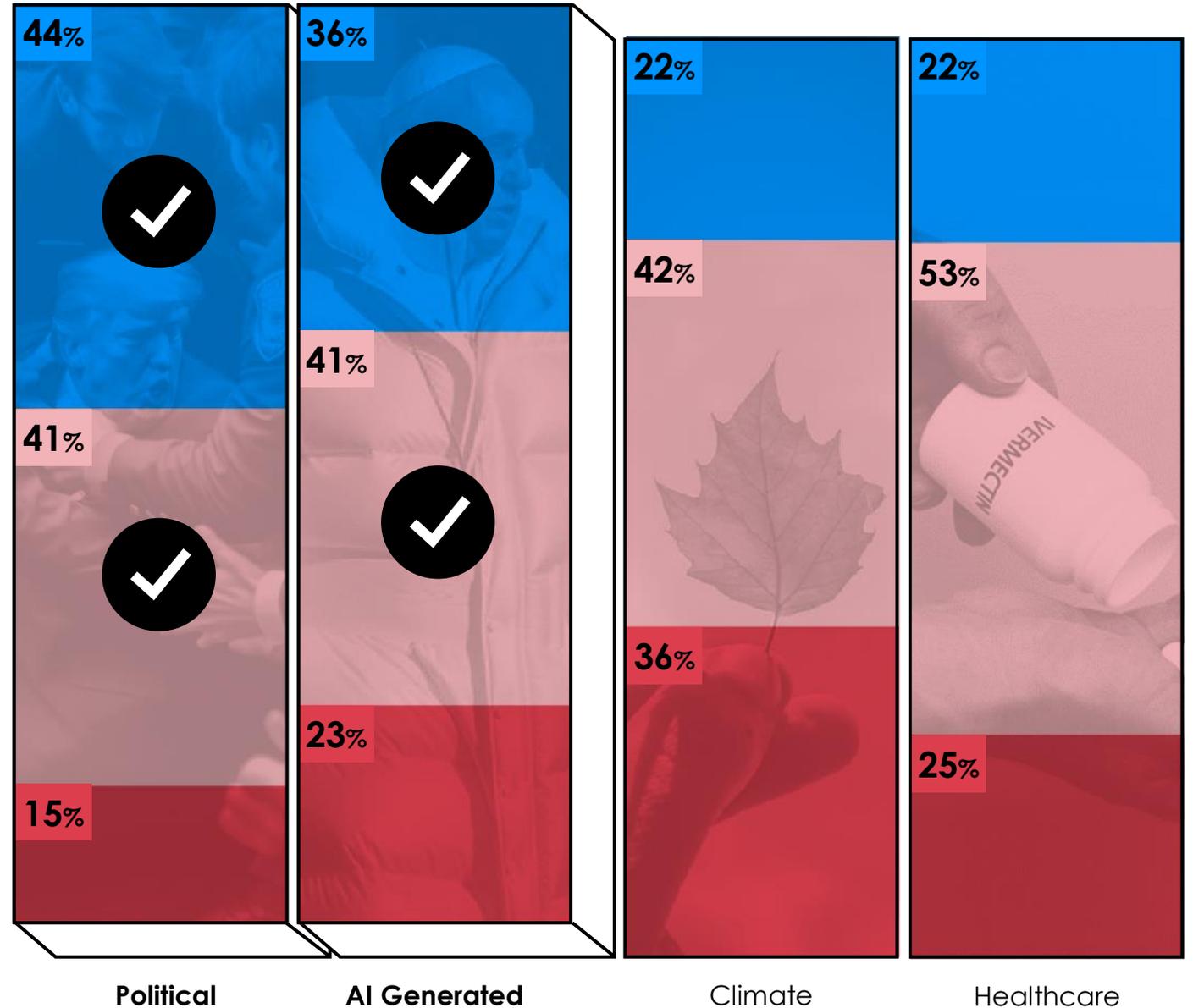
**I DON'T KNOW!**



# POLITICAL MISINFORMATION IS THE EASIEST TO IDENTIFY AS FAKE, FOLLOWED BY AI

## Correctly identifying misinformation

- Recognized misinformation as fake
- Were unsure if misinformation was fake
- Incorrectly believed misinformation was real



Exposed only; Misinformation Content n=1,625

Q: How would you rate the information in the post on the following? – The post shared fake information; Agreement Scale

Q: In general, what did you think of the information shared in the post?

Image sources: Trump arrested by Elliot Higgins; Balenciaga Pope by Pablo Xavier.

# IDENTIFYING SCIENCE-RELATED MISINFORMATION IS THE TRICKIEST, WITH SOME FEARING AND FEELING INTIMIDATED BY IT

"I think it's unfortunate and quite scary really."



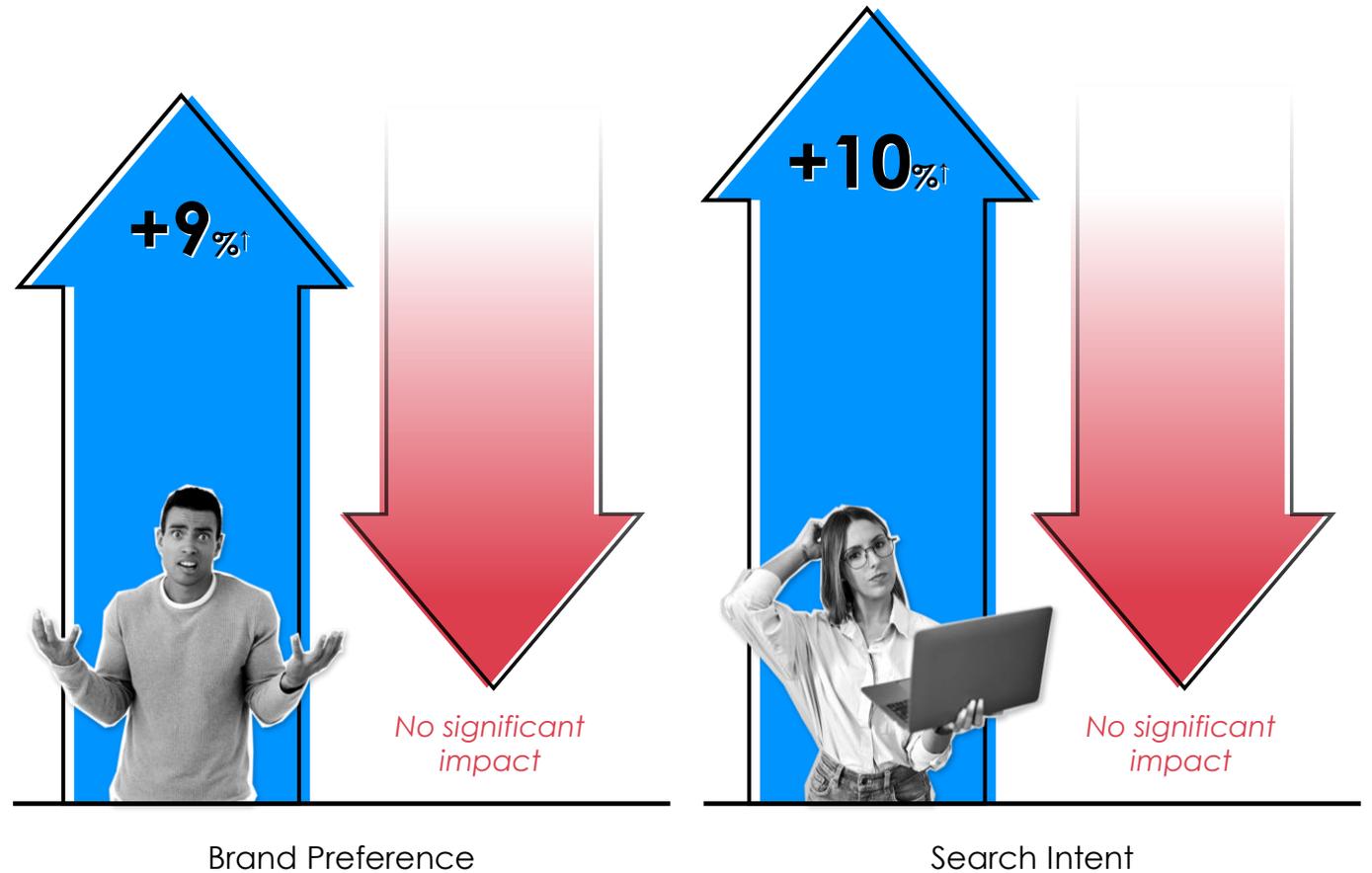
"I am terrified of what climate change is going to bring on us. Earthquakes are just one catastrophic outcome of not acting sooner. I totally noticed this post."

# WHEN PEOPLE ARE UNSURE IF MISINFORMATION IS FAKE, ADS LOSE IMPACT

## Impact on Brand

Delta (Exposed – Control)

- Standard Content
- Misinformation Content amongst those unsure if it was fake



Among those who were unsure if misinformation was fake | Misinformation Content, Exposed n=722, Control n=1,625; Standard Content, Exposed n=411, Control n=411

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about [brand]? – Is a brand I prefer over other brands – Agreement scale

Q: How inclined are you to search for information about the following? – Agreement scale

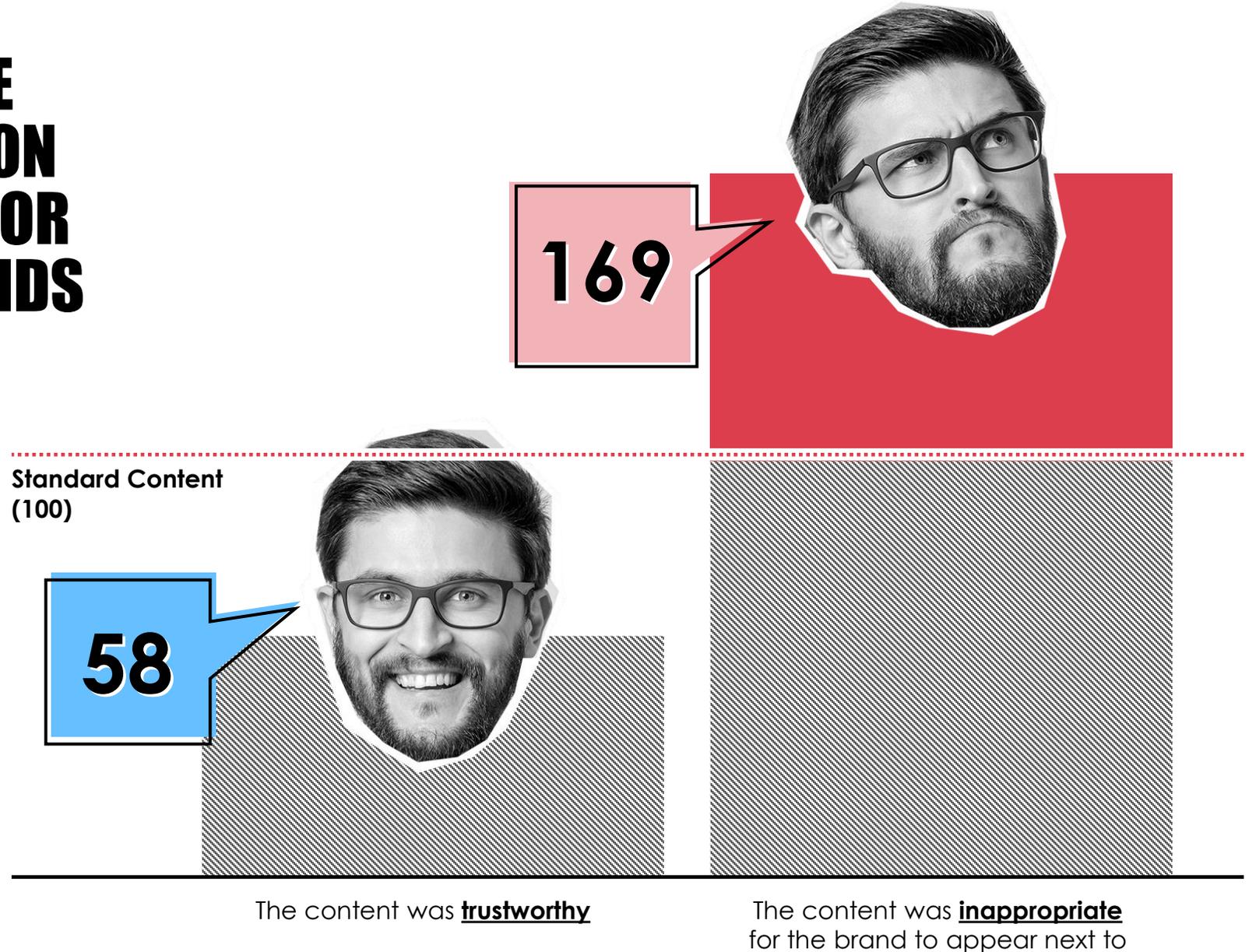
†: Significant different between groups at >=90% confidence

# NEVERTHELESS, PEOPLE AGREE MISINFORMATION IS NEITHER RELIABLE NOR ACCEPTABLE FOR BRANDS

## Opinion of content

Misinformation Content indexed to Standard Content

Standard Content (100)



Exposed only; Misinformation Content n=1,217; Standard Content n=411

Note: Significant different between groups at >=90% confidence

Q: How would you rate the information in the post on the following? – The post was trustworthy; The post was appropriate for [brand] to appear next to – Agreement Scale

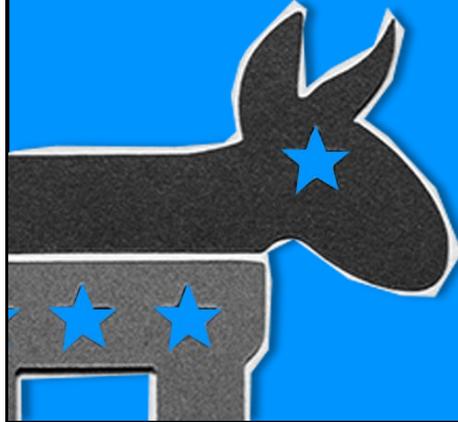
Note: Misinformation content excludes AI generated misinformation

# IRRESPECTIVE OF ONE'S POLITICAL STANCE, MISINFORMATION ABOUT POLITICS WAS DEEMED INAPPROPRIATE

Opinion of political misinformation tested by political belief

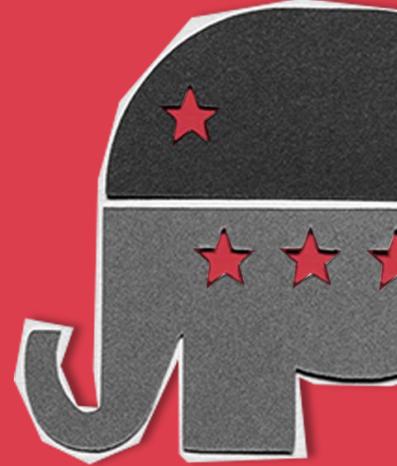
% who deemed political misinformation as inappropriate

## Left leaning



**83%**  
say the political misinformation was not appropriate

## Right leaning



**76%**  
say the political misinformation was not appropriate

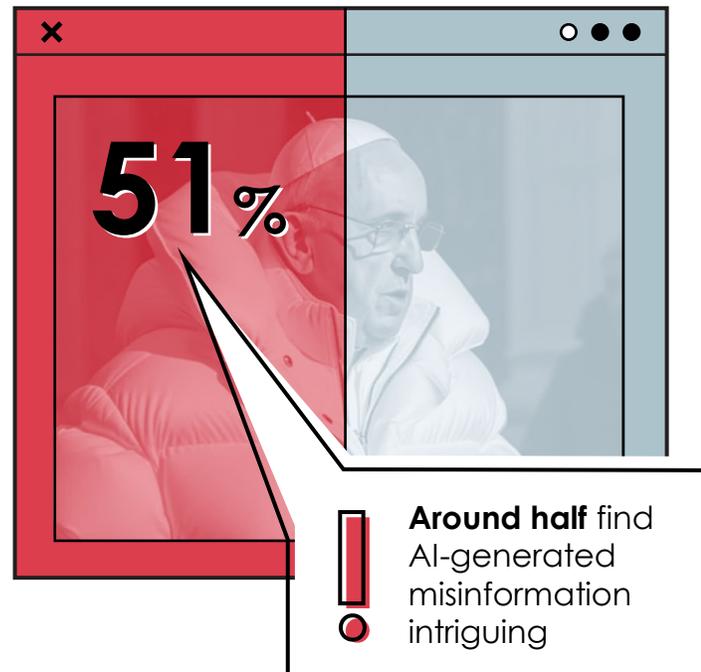
**74%**  
say the political misinformation was not appropriate

## Somewhere in the middle

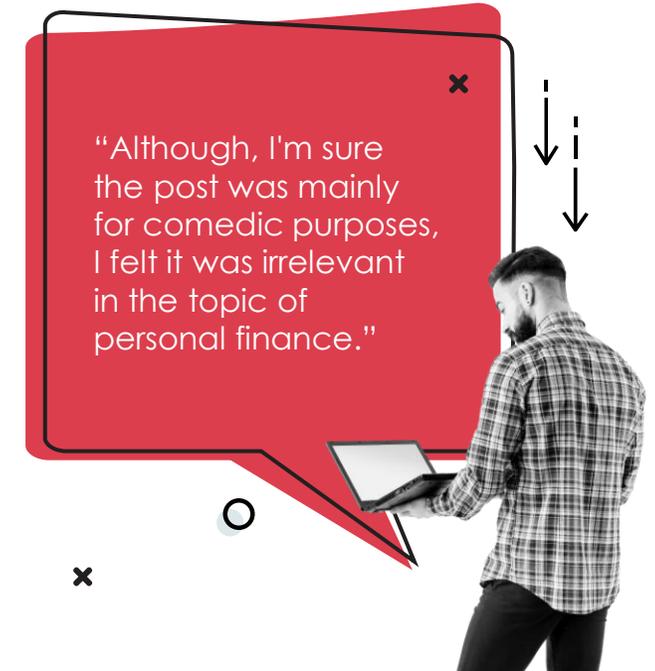
Exposed only; Political Misinformation Content n=406  
Q: How would you rate the information in the post on the following? –The post was appropriate for [brand] to appear next to – Agreement Scale

# THOUGH FASCINATING, AI-GENERATED MISINFORMATION MAY STILL BE SEEN AS INAPPROPRIATE FOR BRANDS

Those who find AI-Generated misinformation intriguing



Those who think it's appropriate for brands to appear next to



Exposed only; AI-generated Misinformation Content n=408

Q: How would you rate the information in the post on the following? –The post was intriguing; The post was appropriate for [brand] to appear next to – Agreement Scale

Q: In general, what did you think of the information shared in the post?

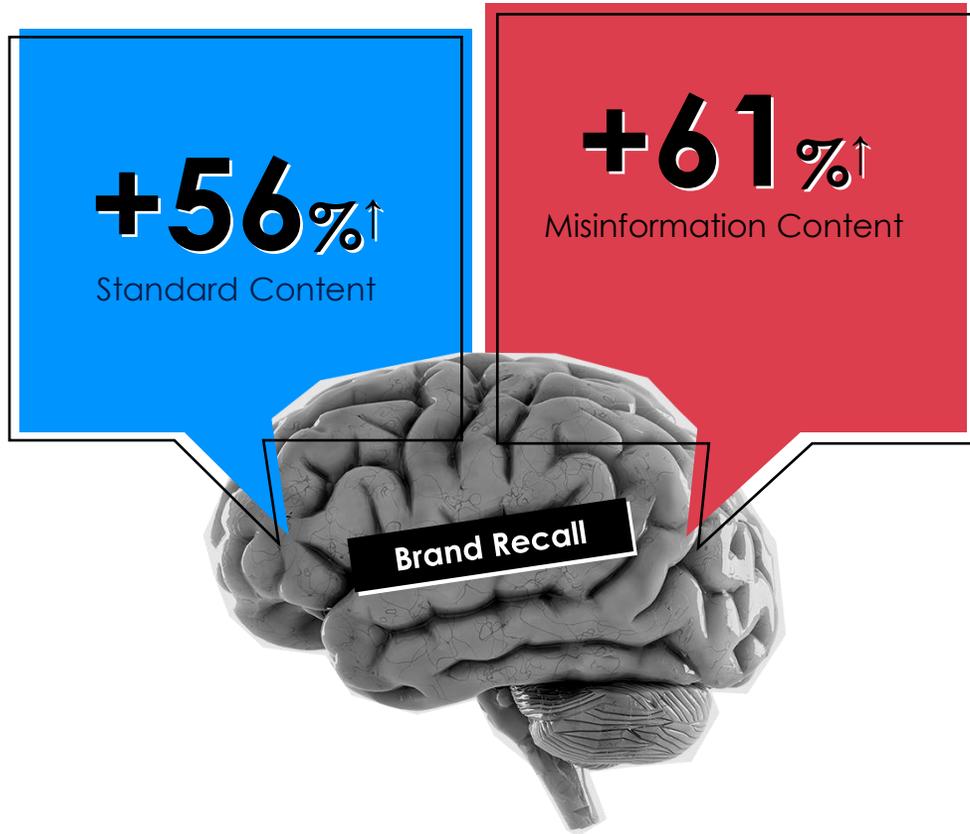
Image sources: Balenciaga Pope by Pablo Xavier.

# PRICE BRANDS PAY

How misinformation impacts brand KPIs



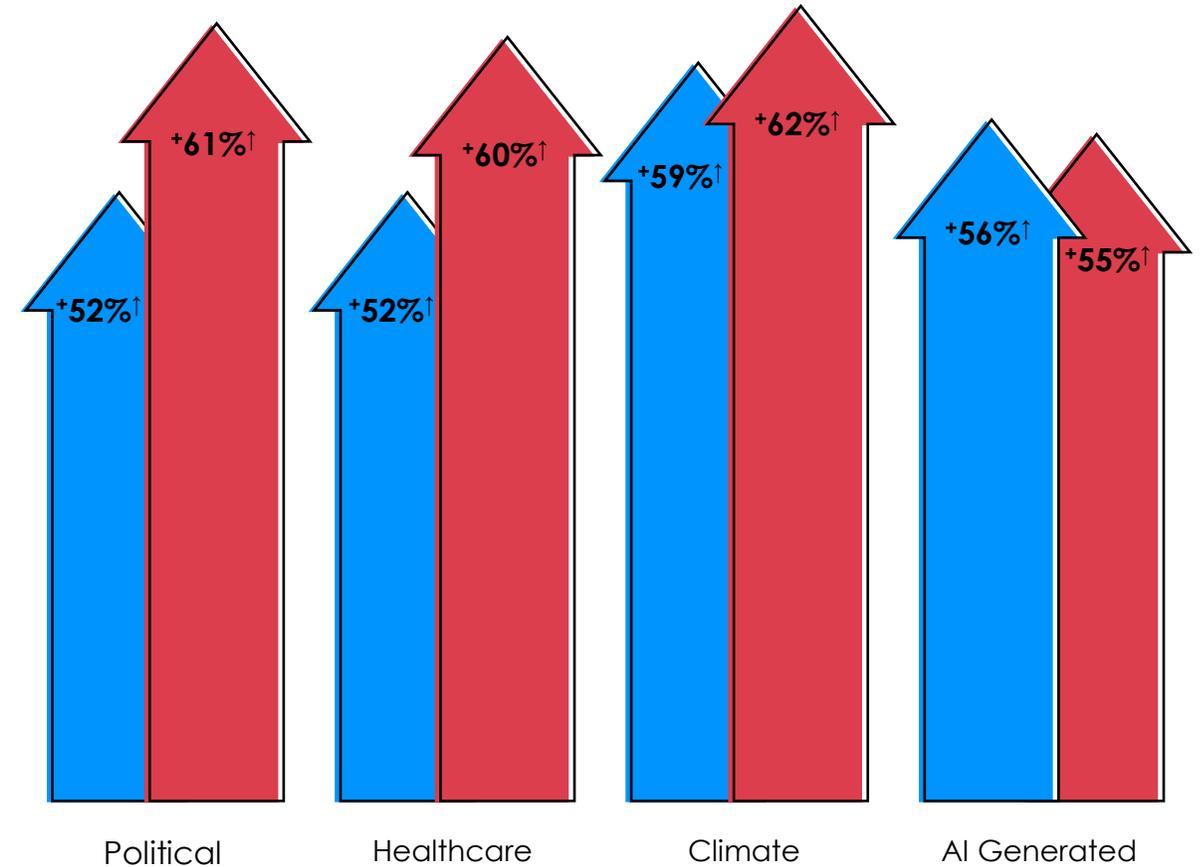
# BRANDS GET REMEMBERED NEXT TO MISINFORMATION



## Unaided Brand Recall – Content

Delta (Exposed – Control)

● Standard Content ● Misinformation Content

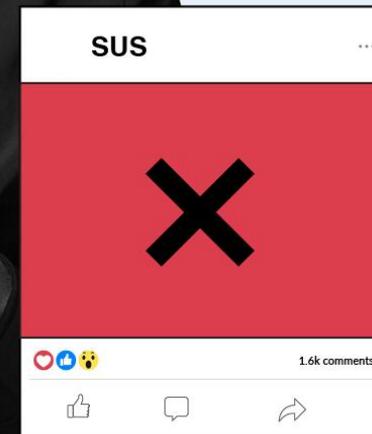


Overall, Misinformation Content, Exposed n=1625, Control n=1625; Standard Content, Exposed n=411, Control n=411  
 Political, Misinformation Content, Exposed n=406, Control n=406; Standard Content, Exposed n=202, Control n=202  
 Healthcare, Misinformation Content, Exposed n=409, Control n=409; Standard Content, Exposed n=202, Control n=202  
 Climate, Misinformation Content, Exposed n=402, Control n=402; Standard Content, Exposed n=209, Control n=209  
 AI Generated, Misinformation Content, Exposed n=408, Control n=408; Standard Content, Exposed n=411, Control n=411

Q: Thinking back to your session today, did you happen to notice any brands being mentioned or shown? If so, kindly mention the brand(s) below.

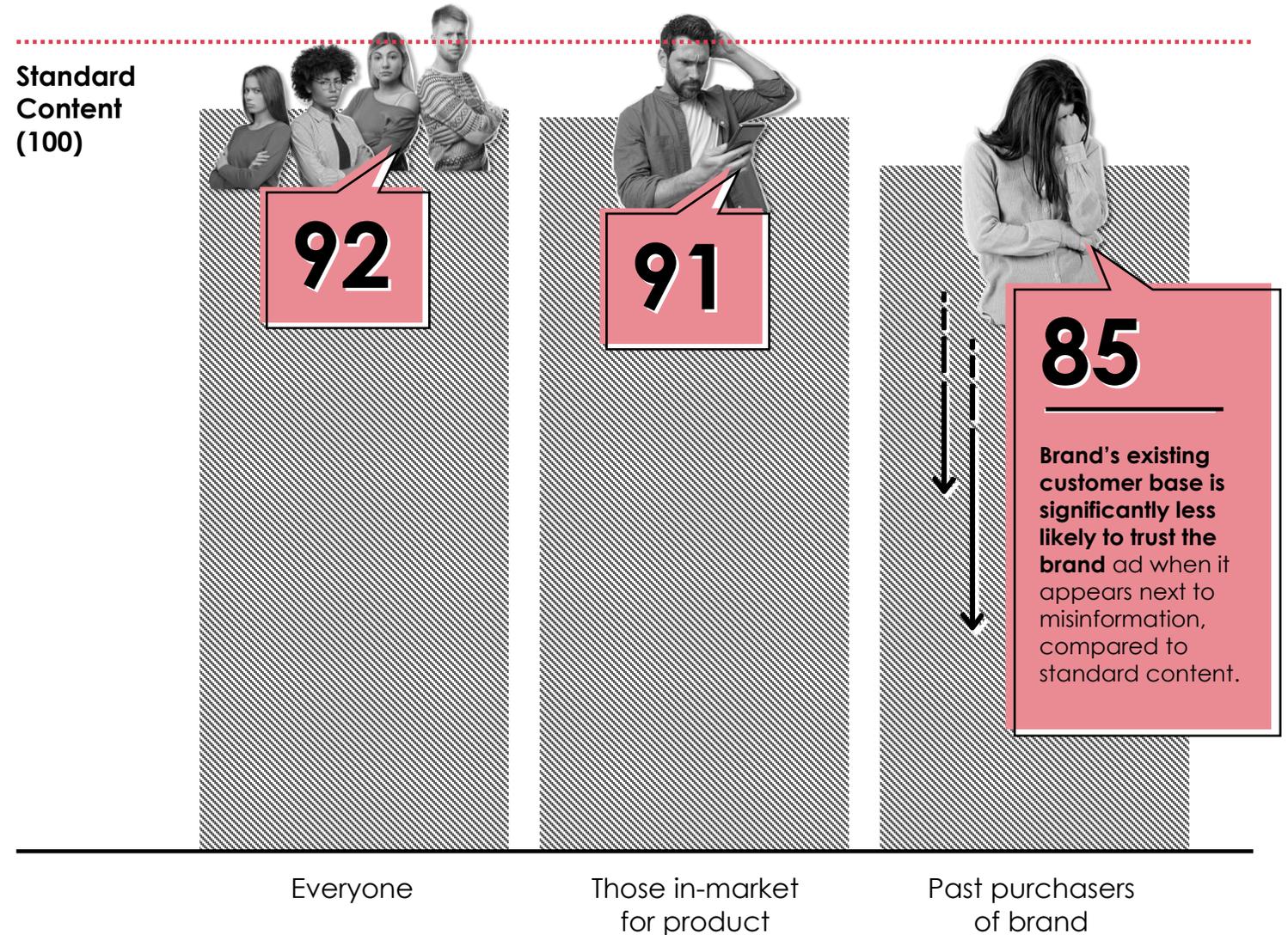
↑: Significant difference between exposed and control groups at >=90% confidence

# ...BUT ARE THEY REMEMBERED FOR THE RIGHT REASONS?



# THE EXACT SAME AD IS SEEN AS LESS TRUSTWORTHY WHEN IT APPEARS NEXT TO MISINFORMATION

Ad conveyed information I trust  
 Misinformation Content  
 indexed to Standard Content



Exposed only; Everyone, Misinformation content n=1,217; Standard Content n=411;  
 Those in-market, Misinformation Content n=782; Standard Content n=205; Past-purchasers, Misinformation Content n=605; Standard Content n=202  
 Note: Significant different between groups at >=90% confidence  
 Q: How would you rate the ad on the following? – The ad conveyed information I trust – Agreement Scale  
 Note: Misinformation content excludes AI-generated misinformation

# BRANDS ARE WASTING AD DOLLARS BY APPEARING NEXT TO MISINFORMATION

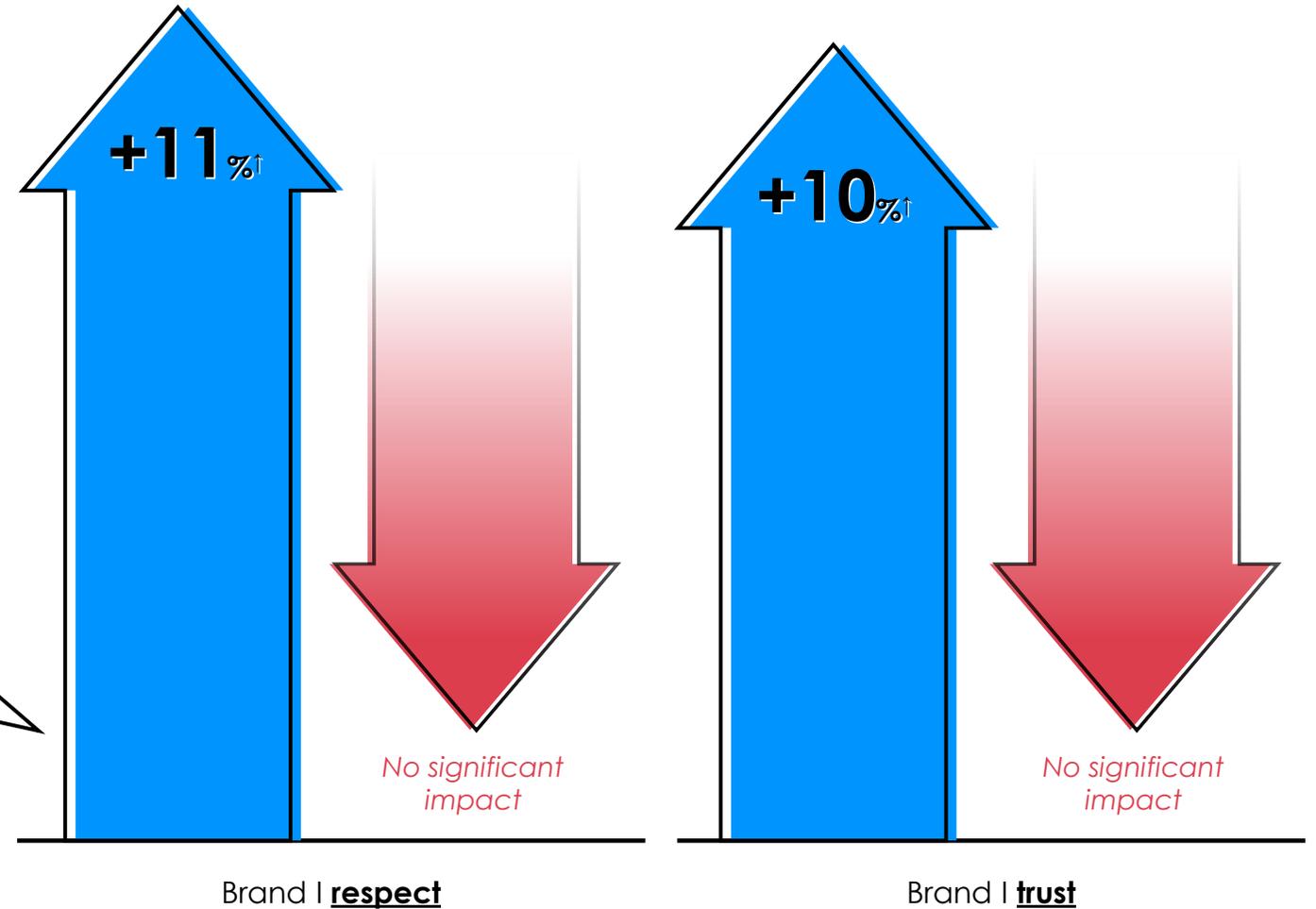
Brands lose impact on respect & trust among their most relevant consumers

Brands lose respect across different forms of misinformation spanning climate, politics, and healthcare.



Impact on Brand | Among those in-market for the product  
Delta (Exposed – Control)

● Standard Content ● Misinformation Content



Those in-market, Misinformation Content, Exposed n=782, Control n=730; Standard Content, Exposed n=250, Control n=239

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about [brand]? – Is a brand I respect; Is a brand I trust – Agreement scale

In-market: Those who are likely to look for a new car or insurance in the next 6 – 11 months, buy mouthwash once a month, are likely to visit a personal finance website/app

<sup>†</sup>: Significant difference between exposed and control groups at >=90% confidence

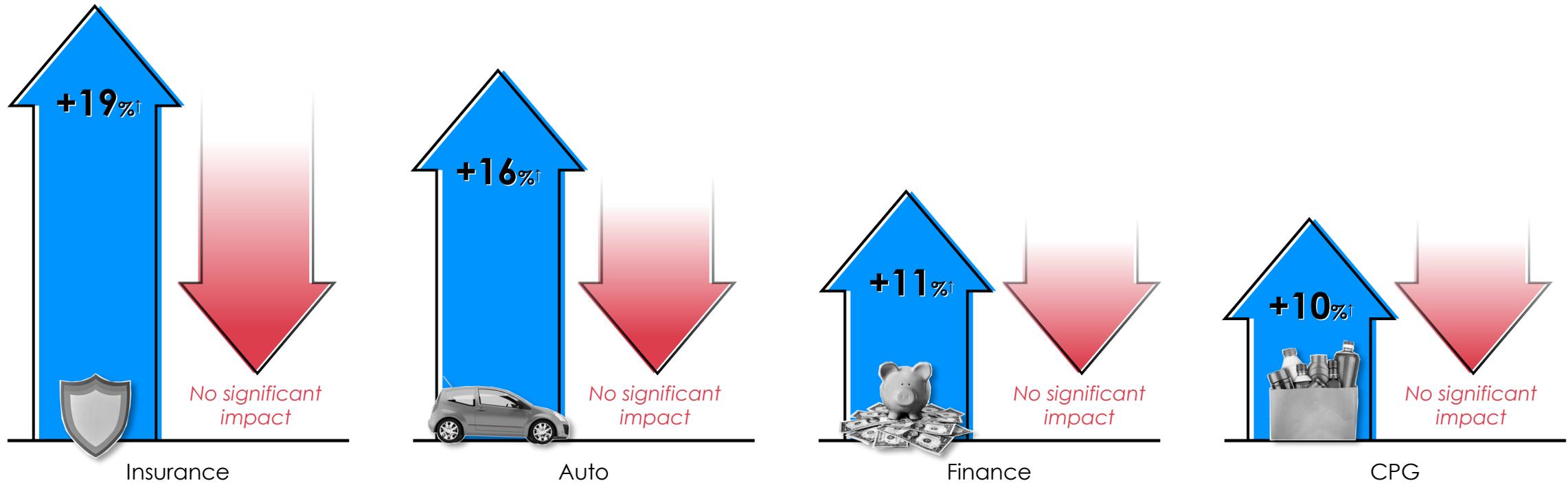
Note: Misinformation content excludes AI-generated misinformation

# BRANDS ACROSS VARIOUS VERTICALS LOSE RESPECT AMONG THOSE IN-MARKET

Impact on Brand | Among those in-market for the product

Delta (Exposed – Control)    ● Standard Content    ● Misinformation Content

Is a brand I **respect**:



Those in-market, Misinformation Content, Exposed n=782, Control n=730; Standard Content, Exposed n=250, Control n=239

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about [brand]? – Is a brand I respect – Agreement scale

In-market: Those who are likely to look for a new car or insurance in the next 6 – 11 months, buy mouthwash once a month, are likely to visit a personal finance website/app

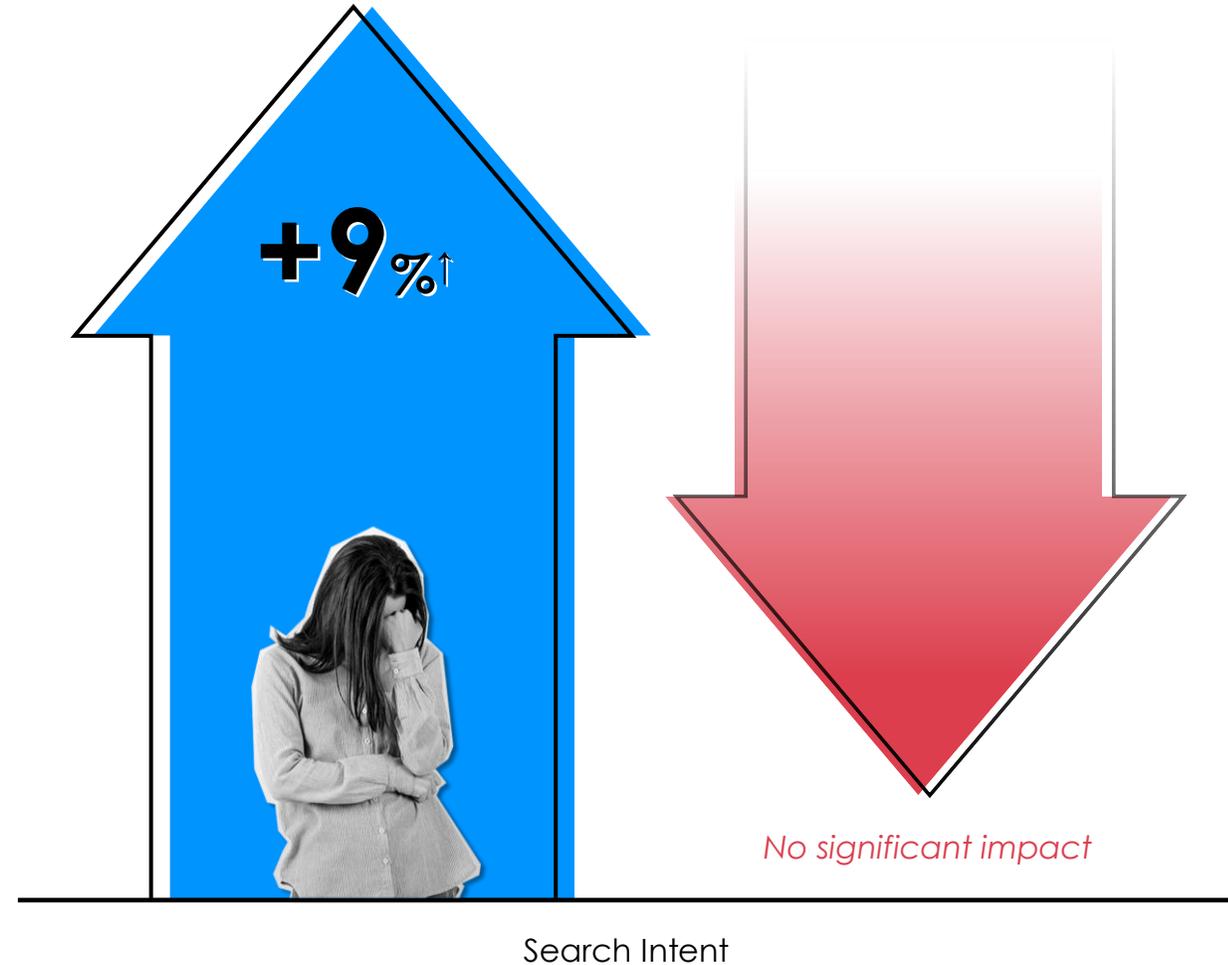
<sup>†</sup>: Significant difference between exposed and control groups at >=90% confidence

Note: Misinformation content excludes AI-generated misinformation

# BRANDS ALSO LOSE INTEREST AMONG THEIR CURRENT CUSTOMER BASE

Impact on Brand | Among past purchasers of brand  
Delta (Exposed – Control)

● Standard Content ● Misinformation Content



Past brand purchasers, Misinformation Content, Exposed n=605, Control n=472; Standard Content, Exposed n=202, Control n=145  
Q: How inclined are you to search for information about the following? – Agreement scale  
Past purchasers: people who currently or have in the past owned brand's product  
↑: Significant difference between exposed and control groups at >=90% confidence  
Note: Misinformation content excludes AI-generated misinformation

# OVERALL, MISINFORMATION ERODES BRAND INTEGRITY

Opinion of brand when appearing next to misinformation



Why people thought it was inappropriate for brands to appear next to misinformation  
Open-ended responses

"[Brand] is a brand to be trusted, having it appear next to an ad that provides false information can illegitimize [brand] as being trustworthy itself.."

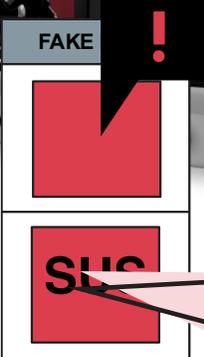


"Because I feel like it gives [brand] a bad name."

SKIP



"It is a fake story. Makes brand look fake too."



"Because [brand] is a good company and it was going to be following behind a company that was telling lies."



Everyone, n= 2,036

Q: Let's say you see an ad for a brand appear after a post that you deemed as riddled with misinformation. How would it make you feel about the brand? - Agreement Scale

Q: You suggested the post was not appropriate for to appear next to. Why is that?

# GREEN BRANDS LOSE CREDIBILITY WHEN LINKED TO ENVIRONMENTAL MISINFORMATION

Opinion if an eco-friendly brand is seen alongside misinformation about the environment

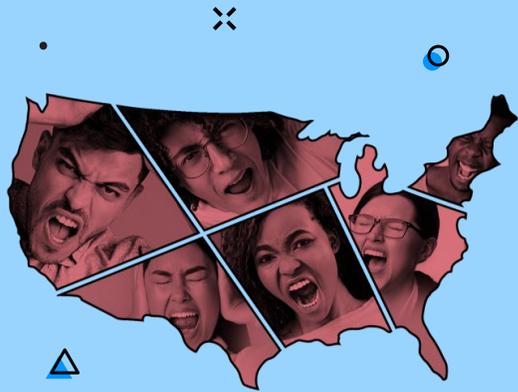
% Agree

The screenshot shows a website titled 'FAKENEWS INC' with a navigation bar including Home, US, News, Politics, Media, Business, Entertainment, and Weather. The main headline reads 'Climate change is baloney!' above a video player showing a storm. Below the video, the author is listed as 'Aaron "The Liar" Smith'. To the right of the video is a sponsored advertisement for 'FREE SPIRIT' cheese, featuring a hand holding a slice of cheese and a stack of three different cheese wheels. The ad text includes 'SPONSORED CONTENT', 'Consciously Clean Ingredients', and 'Want healthy and good-looking hair and skin? But it doesn't have to come at the cost of hurting the environment.' Below the ad is a 'LEARN MORE' button and a 'Report this ad' link.

44%

Would question the brand's sustainability efforts.

# IMPLICATIONS



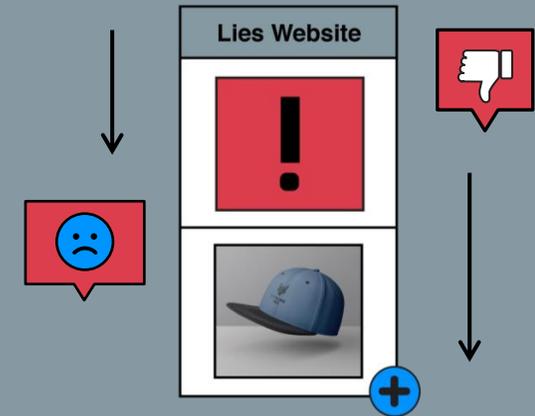
## Brand perception is negatively impacted by adjacency to misinformation

Advertisers should be mindful of the content surrounding their ads, as association with misinformation can erode the perceived integrity and trustworthiness of their brand.



## Political and AI misinformation is easily spotted as fake, but science-related misinformation is often missed

Advertisers should pick ad placements carefully because people find it harder to spot misinformation about science topics like climate change and healthcare.



## Adjacency to misinformation leads to lost impact, resulting in wasted ad spend

Advertisers should consider investing in tools and strategies that ensure their ads are placed in reliable and trustworthy environments to maximize the effectiveness of their ad spend.



**THANK  
YOU**

**For more info, contact:**

[kara.manatt@magnaglobal.com](mailto:kara.manatt@magnaglobal.com)

[measurement@zefr.com](mailto:measurement@zefr.com)

**MAGNA** **MEDIA TRIALS**

**ZEFR**