



# Hate Speech & Digital Ads: The Impact of Harmful Content on Brands

Many leading digital services maintain trust & safety practices and brand suitability tools to protect users, advertisers, and brands from harmful content. Current “must-carry” policies proposed in Florida & Texas would require websites & apps to host all legal user-generated content to avoid perceived “censorship”, with proponents arguing that all content – even hate speech – adds value for the hosting digital service. But what does the research say?

In a new CCIA Research Center study, data from two independently-administered surveys demonstrates significant likely damage to both websites and advertisers from harmful content like hate speech, suggesting that must-carry policies could derail important aspects of the digital economy.

## Key Findings:

- Hate speech on social media is associated with a decline in consumer sentiment toward the service.

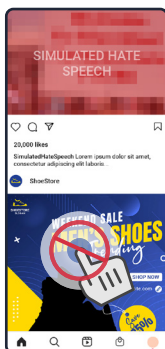


Average number of respondents *liked the social media service less* after viewing simulated hate speech content.

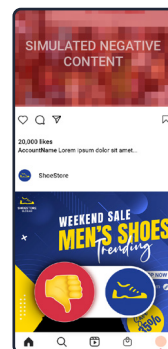


After being shown negative content on Instagram, *net favorability dropped from 27% to 2%*.

- Hate speech may also have negative implications for brands that advertise online.



*fewer respondents* indicated they would be likely to click on an ad after viewing simulated hate speech.



of respondents reported they *liked an advertiser less* after viewing simulated negative content.

- Real world results would be larger in magnitude.

The simulated hate speech used as negative content in the survey experiments was mild relative to most hate speech removed under digital services’ Digital Trust & Safety Policies such as Community Standards. ***It is likely that real world results would be larger in magnitude than the experimental findings if must-carry policies were applied to digital services.***

