



Institute for Advertising Ethics Issues Updated Principles Governing Advertising Practices in the AI Era

Revisions Establish Clear Standards on Manipulation, Transparency, and Accountability Across AI-Driven Advertising Systems

NEW YORK — January 22, 2026 — The Institute for Advertising Ethics (IAE) today announced the release and immediate deployment of its revised IAE Principles, updated to address the ethical realities of modern advertising shaped by artificial intelligence, advanced data targeting, automation, and the creator economy.

The revised Principles respond to growing concern over manipulation, dark patterns, and system-level practices that can impair informed choice. They provide clearer, operational guidance to help safeguard consumers while reinforcing professional responsibility and trust across advertising.

“Advertising has always depended on trust, but the scale and speed of today’s influence systems raise new and legitimate concerns,” said **Andrew Susman**, President of the Institute for Advertising Ethics. “These updated Principles are not about restricting innovation. They clarify what responsible advertising looks like when design and system-level choices can amplify consequences quickly and invisibly. Our goal is to move beyond abstract ethics toward shared standards that protect consumers, strengthen brands, and sustain confidence in the marketplace.”

A New Standard for the AI Era: Key Updates

The revised IAE Principles elevate long-standing ethical foundations into clearer governance standards for contemporary advertising practices. Key updates include:

- **Affirmation of the consumer’s right to recognize when content is advertising**, including in AI-mediated and creator-driven environments
- **Explicit prohibition of manipulative practices**, with stronger standards for truthfulness and substantiation
- **Clearer disclosure and transparency** that cannot be undermined by design or format
- **Modernized privacy expectations** that extend beyond notice and consent
- **Stronger governance and accountability**, including ethical voice, conflict management beyond disclosure, and reinforced self-regulation

Developed Through a Multi-Stakeholder Review Process

The revised Principles were developed through a rigorous multi-stakeholder process guided by a steering committee of senior leaders spanning industry, law, academia, government, and civil society. Participants included **Carlos De Jesus** (Group President, North America, Kenvue), **Chris Degenars** (Global Digital Experience Leader, Giant Group), **Tom Denford** (CEO, ID Comms), **Jeffrey A. Greenbaum** (Managing Partner, Frankfurt Kurnit), **Dr. Anna McAlister** (Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Institute for Advertising Ethics), **Dr. Juan Mundel** (Editor, *Journal of Advertising Education*), **Dr. Jef Richards** (Fellow, American Advertising Academy; Michigan State University), **David Shonka** (Former Acting General Counsel, FTC), **JoAnn Stonier** (Executive Advisor, Cantellus), and **Professor Cass Sunstein** (Robert Walmsley University Professor at Harvard Law School).

Their involvement ensured the revised Principles reflect real-world applicability, legal and regulatory insight, and durable standards shaped by diverse perspectives.

Why These Principles Matter

Originally developed in collaboration with the American Advertising Federation and the University of Missouri, the IAE Principles & Practices have long articulated shared expectations for ethical advertising. The 2026 revisions reflect a shift from message-level guidance toward governing the design and deployment of advertising systems that shape consumer choice at scale.

While core ethical commitments remain intact, the updated Principles place greater emphasis on foreseeable effects, proportional responsibility, and institutional accountability recognizing that risk and vulnerability are not evenly distributed across audiences.

Paired with IAE certification programs and the Ethics Connect platform, the revised Principles function as a practical framework for identifying risk, reinforcing professional norms, and sustaining trust with consumers, regulators, and society.

Governance and Availability

The IAE Principles & Practices are maintained as a living public standards framework, stewarded through an ongoing multistakeholder process and published at IAEthics.org. The Principles are periodically reviewed and updated to reflect advances in technology, evolving market practices, and emerging ethical risks. While developed in the United States, they are designed to be interoperable and additive across markets and with existing legal, regulatory, and self-regulatory systems.

Availability: The revised IAE Principles will be published in January at IAEthics.org and presented during Michigan State University's Ethics Week (February 16–20), including a national academic town hall on February 17.

Jeffrey A. Greenbaum (Managing Partner, Frankfurt Kurnit)

“IAE’s updated Practices & Principles are an important tool for marketers to help them not only comply with the law, but to incorporate ethical standards into the creative development process. AI and other emerging technology requires marketers to think differently, and these Practices &

Principles will help them do what while keeping the best interests of the consumer in mind.

Dr. Juan Mundel (Editor, Journal of Advertising Education)

“Universities increasingly have a responsibility not only to teach media and marketing, but to help students understand their impact on society. That requires equipping future professionals with the tools to make thoughtful, responsible choices as technology changes how influence operates.

Chris Degenaars (Global Digital Experience Leader, Giant Group & Founder of the American Advertising Federation Los Angeles Chapter)

“Consumers are more informed than ever and are holding brands to higher standards, as they should. We have a responsibility to engage with consumers transparently and with integrity. The most important thing we can do for the future of the industry is take that responsibility seriously

and ensure those working in the industry understand what’s expected for ethical advertising. Emerging technologies and the rapid scale of the creator economy pose significant opportunities and risks, which must be weighed carefully against consumer experiences and trust.”