

ASA System briefing note on our Active Ad Monitoring system

As a proactive regulator, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is taking a world-leading approach, using AI and machine learning, to deliver more effective online ad regulation.

The online advertising ecosystem is a vast, fast moving and evolving landscape. We've been investing in our data science capabilities to expand our visibility of online advertising and help us identify and tackle irresponsible ads more quickly.

A big part of that is our [Active Ad Monitoring system](#), which uses AI to proactively search at pace and scale for online ads that potentially break the rules.

In 2024, our system scanned **28 million ads**, with machine learning and, increasingly, large language models, finding the likely non-compliant ads we're interested in. That was a tenfold increase on 2023. We're on target to routinely **scan 50 million ads a year** by the end of 2025.

In the past, we would have relied on limited, labour-intensive manual searches and complaints from the public to stay on top of any non-compliant ads. Today, the Active Ad Monitoring system's ability to capture and sort through large volumes of ads, on a scale humans simply can't, delivers intelligence to our experts and frees them up to carry out investigations and enforcement work more quickly and efficiently.

The Active Ad Monitoring system is made up of three components:

- **Ad capture at scale** – The system captures ads from social media, search and display using a mix of public sources, our own internal monitoring tools and proprietary datasets
- **AI-based filtering** – Machine learning models are configured to spot the ads that are most likely to be relevant to a given issue, or to have specific compliance problems
- **Expert review** – Our experts can browse, and search content related to their work via a web interface that allows them to quickly assess issues, and identify problematic examples for action

Importantly, AI is assisting, rather than replacing, our people. Each week our experts across the ASA are presented with an organised list of any ads that the Active Ad Monitoring system has identified as likely to be of interest, with explanations of the potential issues found. This enables us to act quickly, taking follow-up action with advertisers to secure compliance, and working closely with platforms to take down ads where necessary.

The Active Ad Monitoring system is making an impact in high-priority areas, including alcohol, gambling, prescription-only medicines, influencer marketing, financial advertising, e-cigarettes, and cosmetic surgery clinics based outside the UK.

As part of our ongoing climate change and environment project, and following high-profile and precedent setting rulings, we're now seeing businesses adapting and evolving to make better evidenced, more precise green claims. Monthly monitoring sweeps using AI show high levels of compliance. For example, since our 2023 airline rulings on misleading 'sustainable' and 'eco-

friendly' claims, in follow up monitoring of circa [140,000 ads](#), we found just five that were clearly non-compliant.

We will continue to develop our data science capabilities to deliver effective proactive regulation which responds to the evolving online advertising landscape.

If you would like more information about how we are using AI and machine learning to effectively regulate online advertising, please contact: Matt – mattw@asa.org.uk Grace – gracec@asa.org.uk or Ella – ellac@asa.org.uk

