



Media Release

ADVERTISING STANDARDS CANADA RELEASES *ASC AdChoices Accountability Program: 2015 Compliance Report*

TORONTO, December 16, 2015 -- Advertising Standards Canada (ASC) today released its first compliance report under the *ASC AdChoices Accountability Program*. The *2015 Compliance Report* highlights the progress made by the companies participating in the Digital Advertising Alliance of Canada (DAAC) AdChoices Program (DAAC Program) over the past year.

ASC is responsible for the accountability component of the DAAC Program. For its first review, ASC assessed the websites of companies participating in the DAAC Program (Participants) to determine whether the structures were in place to ensure Canadians are aware of, and have control over, the use of their browsing activity for online interest-based advertising (IBA). Specifically, ASC's primary focus was to ensure Participant websites had the requisite mechanisms in place to provide consumers with transparency and control with respect to IBA. ASC's review encompassed over 200 websites, representing almost 80% of the DAAC Program's Participants.

Key Findings

- All Participants have begun to implement the DAAC Program.
- Because many Participants previously implemented the requirements of similar programs in the United States and Europe, most needed to make adjustments to their websites to achieve compliance with Canadian-specific requirements for:
 - 'Above the fold' notice (notice that is clear, visible, and prominent when a user enters a website) when data is collected or used for IBA purposes; and
 - The availability of an 'opt-out' mechanism from all parties collecting or using data for IBA purposes.
- A majority (72%) of website operators, such as publisher and brand websites, employed the distinctive AdChoices icon to communicate their use of IBA. While Participant use of the icon is optional, ASC views it as an important consumer education and communication tool, and is encouraging all Participants to use it.
- Participants often provided links to IBA self-regulatory programs where consumers can find additional information about IBA. Among all Participants, 58% included a link to the IBA self-regulatory program in the United States or Europe, but not to the Canadian DAAC Program's website. While this link is not required, for those Participants wishing to provide additional information, ASC is requesting the link lead to the DAAC website.

Upon completion of its review, ASC provided Participants with detailed findings identifying areas requiring corrective action, and requesting a response by a specified date. "ASC's recommendations have been very well received," commented Linda Nagel, President and CEO,

Advertising Standards Canada. “We have been gratified by the high level of cooperation among Participants. They are committed to the DAAC Program’s underlying principles of providing consumers with transparency and control regarding online interest-based advertising.”

As part of its compliance mandate, ASC also accepts and adjudicates consumer complaints about IBA. From January through November 2015, ASC received 115 consumer complaints for review under its IBA Compliance Procedure. In total, 20 complaints (or 17%) were determined to raise potential IBA concerns and involved allegations that an “IBA Opt-Out” did not work. In almost all of these cases, consumers incorrectly believed that they would not receive any advertising at all after opting out of IBA. “While consumer awareness of the DAAC Program has grown, industry has work to do to build consumer knowledge and awareness of this program and the meaning of the AdChoices icon,” added Nagel.

For more information about the report findings, read the [ASC AdChoices Accountability Program: 2015 Compliance Report](#), available on ASC’s website at adstandards.com.

The ASC AdChoices Accountability Program

Advertising Standards Canada (ASC), the independent national advertising self-regulatory body, is responsible for developing and managing the compliance mechanisms for the Digital Advertising Alliance of Canada (DAAC) AdChoices Program. ASC’s compliance efforts help to ensure participating companies achieve the requirements set out in the DAAC Self-Regulatory Principles for Online Behavioural Advertising. Details about ASC’s AdChoices Accountability Program can be found online at [ASC Online Behavioural Advertising Compliance Procedure](#) webpage.

Many Program Participants have already implemented the requirements for similar programs in the United States and Europe.

For more information, contact:

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