

Fast Facts



What you need to know about new & emerging trends, platforms or technology

VAB Investigation:

Did YouTube allow for targeted campaigns to be served on “Made for Kids” channels?



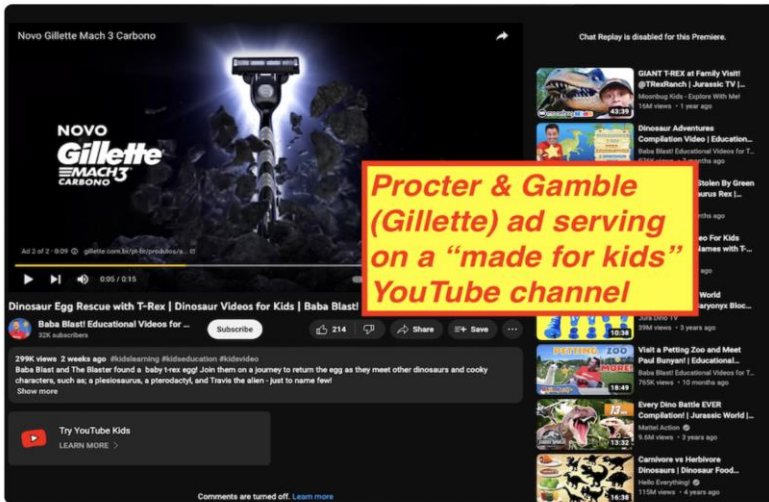
Adalytics Claps Back With Evidence Of Behaviorally Targeted Ads Served In Kids Content On YouTube

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

YouTube faces fresh complaint over its children’s privacy practices



Is there evidence of behaviorally targeted / “personalized” ads serving on “made for kids” YouTube channels?



In the wake of the Adalytics report highlighting YouTube’s serving of targeted ads to children, the VAB conducted an independent test campaign to investigate.

This report illustrates the step-by-step details of a real YouTube ad campaign utilizing audience targeting and the results that followed.

The VAB created a YouTube channel with neutral, brand safe content to conduct our experiment

Test Campaign Details

Campaign Spend: \$10

Campaign Flight: 2 days

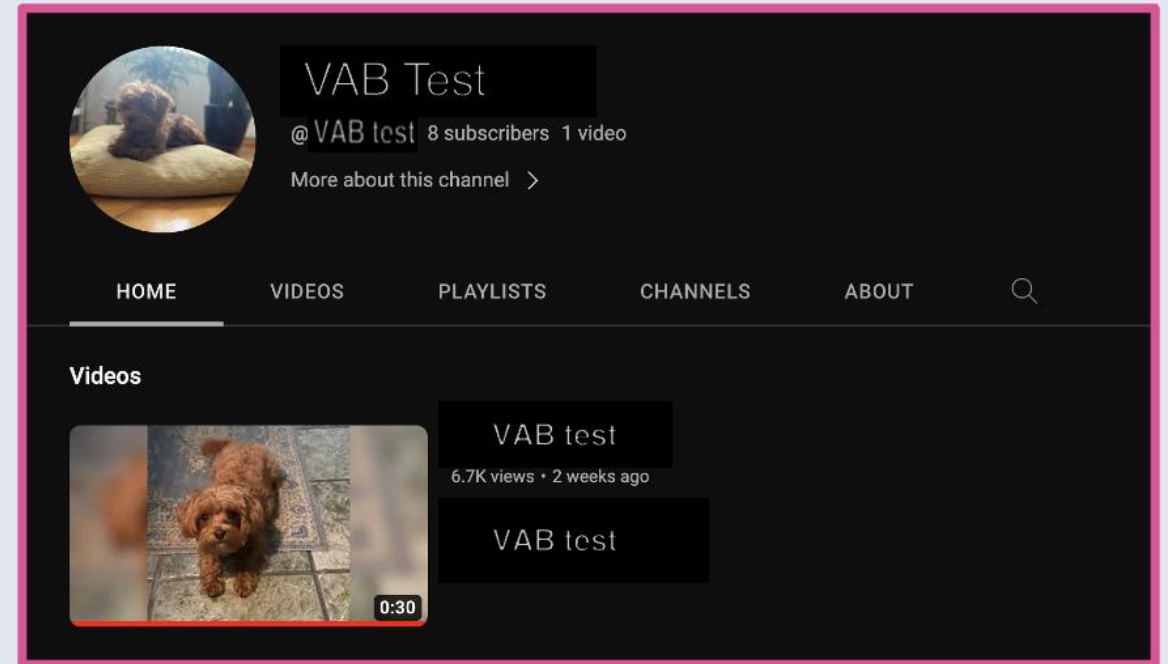
Networks: YouTube Only (Video Partners on Google Display Network deselected)

Demographics: Demographics: Parental Status Not a Parent or Unknown, (Parent deselected)

Audience: 24 audience targets selected (see step 6 for details)

Video Ad Format: Skippable In-stream Ad

Sample of YouTube channel utilized



The following is a 7-step guide for how we conducted our buy (*and how you can too*)



1









Campaign Set-up

Select the Campaign Objective of your Choosing

What's your campaign objective?

Choose your objective

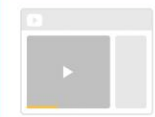
Select an objective to tailor your experience to the goals and settings that will work best for your campaign

 Sales Drive sales online, in app, by phone, or in store	 Leads Get leads and other conversions by encouraging customers to take action	 Website traffic Get the right people to visit your website	 Product and brand consideration Encourage people to explore your products or services
 Brand awareness and reach Reach a broad audience and build awareness	 App promotion Get more installs, engagement and pre-registration for your app	 Local store visits and promotions Drive visits to local stores, including restaurants and dealerships.	 Create a campaign without a goal's guidance Choose a campaign type first, without a recommendation based on your objective.

2

Campaign Set-up Select Video Campaign Type

Select a campaign type



Video
Reach viewers on YouTube and get conversions

Select a campaign subtype

Get views
Get views and influence consideration of your products or brand with skippable in-stream ads and in-feed video ads. [Learn more](#)

Ad sequence
Tell your story by showing ads in a particular sequence to individual viewers with skippable in-stream ads, non-skippable in-stream ads, bumper ads, or a mix. [Learn more](#)

Cancel **Continue**

3

Campaign Set-up

Input Campaign Name, Budget & Campaign Dates

Campaign name ^

VAB Test Campaign #1

Bid strategy Maximum CPV ∨

Budget and dates ^

Enter budget type and amount

Campaign total

Campaign total budget represents your total spend for the duration of the campaign. You must schedule an end date for the campaign. [Learn more](#)

Start date

End date

Ends in

4

Campaign Set-up

Deselect Video Partners on Google Display Network to ensure campaign runs on YouTube only

Networks

YouTube
Ads can appear on YouTube videos and channels, YouTube home, and in YouTube search results

Video partners on the Google Display Network ⓘ
Ads can appear on a collection of sites and apps outside of YouTube and Google

Locations

Select locations to target ⓘ

All countries and territories

United States and Canada

United States

Enter another location

Languages

Select the languages your customers speak. ⓘ

5

Campaign Set-up Parental Status: Not a parent, Unknown


To remove the possibility of parental co-viewing from the test, the VAB deselected 'Parent' as a campaign demographic target.

People: who you want to reach
Define your **Audience segments**, **Demographic**, or both

Demographics

Select your demographic targeting ?

Gender	Age	Parental status	Household income
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Female	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18 - 24	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not a parent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Top 10%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 25 - 34	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11 - 20%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown ?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 35 - 44	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown ?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 21 - 30%
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 45 - 54		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 31 - 40%
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 55 - 64		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 41 - 50%
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 65+		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lower 50%
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown ?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown ?

 Note: Household income targeting is only available in select countries. [Learn more](#)

6

Campaign Details Select Audience Segment Targets

Sampling of behavioral targeting segments
highly unlikely to be related to children selected

Type	Audience segment
In-market segment	Home Appliances
In-market segment	Climate Control & Air Quality
Life event	Recently Purchased a Home
Life event	Recently Added Dog to Household
Affinity segment	Business Travelers
In-market segment	Bedroom
Affinity segment	High-End Computer Aficionados
Affinity segment	Avid Investors
Life event	Recently Renovated Home
Affinity segment	Outdoor Enthusiasts
Life event	Renovating Home Soon
In-market segment	Household Cleaning Supplies
Life event	Adding Cat to Household Soon
Affinity segment	Frequently Attends Live Events
Life event	Purchasing a Home Soon
Affinity segment	Cloud Services Power Users
In-market segment	Fireplaces
In-market segment	Lights & Fixtures
Affinity segment	Motorcycle Enthusiasts

Audience segments

Select audience segments to define who should see your ads. You can create new segments in [Audience Manager](#).

Search Browse

fans

What they are actively researching or planning (22)

In-market: other Fans

In-market: other Industrial Fans

In-market: other Ceiling Fans and Installation

In-market: other Industrial Fans and Blowers

In-market: other

Custom segment
Can't find what you want? Create a custom audience.

24 selected Clear all

Travel Business Travelers

Banking & Finance Avid Investors

In-market: other

Dyson Fans

Love Your Pet Day

Custom Motorcycles

Vintage Motorcycles


Audience expansion

Reach more people who are similar to your selected audiences. [Learn more](#)

7

Campaign Details Skippable in-stream ads

Your YouTube Video



VAB Test
by VAB • 6,741 views
VAB Test Campaign

Select a video ad format. This will be used for the rest of the ads in your ad group

Skippable in-stream ad [?](#)

In-feed video ad [?](#)

The following ad formats aren't available in this campaign: [bumper ad](#), [non-skippable in-stream ad](#), [audio ad](#)

Final URL [?](#)

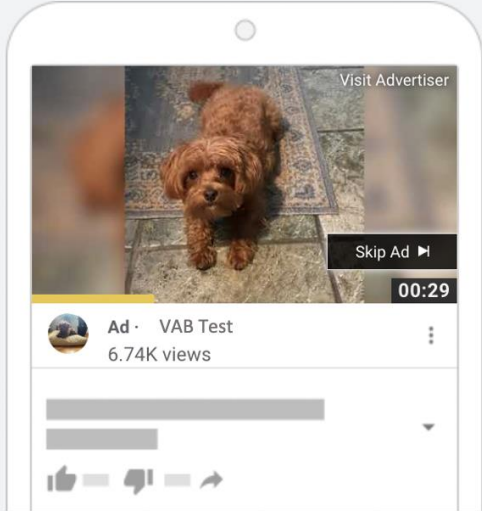
Display URL [?](#)

55 / 255

Call-to-action

YouTube Google video partners

Example of your skippable in-stream ad on YouTube



Visit Advertiser

Skip Ad ▶

00:29

Ad · VAB Test
6.74K views

Preview ad on YouTube [?](#) Copy link [?](#)

Campaign Findings



In our analysis of the ‘Campaign Placement Report’ more than 25 placements to “Made for Kid’s” channels were observed in campaign designed not to reach kids

5 examples of placements on “Made for Kid’s” channels being served behaviorally targeted ads



One of the channels included is “Peekaboo Kidz”, which describes itself as “Specially designed for kids as they explore the World of Kids Educational Videos”

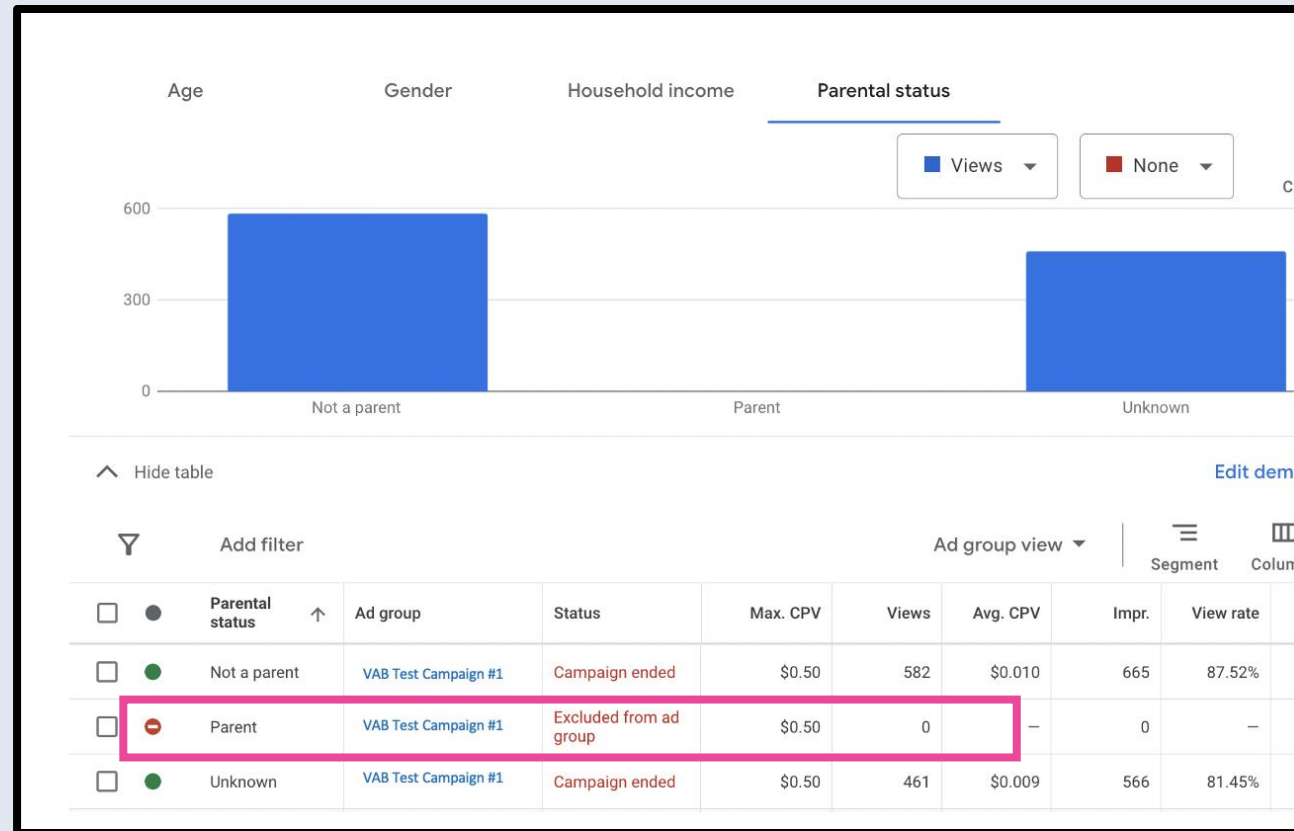
- [Link](#)
- [Link](#)
- [Link](#)
- [Link](#)
- [Link](#)

<input type="checkbox"/> Placement	Type	Ad group	↓ Views	Avg. CPV	Impr.	View rate
<input type="checkbox"/> Miraculous Ladybug	YouTube channel	VAB Test Campaign #1	3	\$0.008	3	100.00%
<input type="checkbox"/> Peekaboo Kidz	YouTube channel	VAB Test Campaign #1	1	\$0.014	1	100.00%
<input type="checkbox"/> LUCCAS NETO - LUCCAS TOON	YouTube channel	VAB Test Campaign #1	1	\$0.008	1	100.00%
<input type="checkbox"/> SWIRL	YouTube channel	VAB Test Campaign #1	1	\$0.005	1	100.00%
<input type="checkbox"/> Hudson's Playground	YouTube channel	VAB Test Campaign #1	1	\$0.009	1	100.00%

*763 total campaign placements

In our analysis of the 'Campaign Demographics Report' all 1,200+ impressions were delivered to 'Not Parents' or 'Unknown'

The absence of impressions served to 'Parents' confirms that co-viewing with children is not a viable reason for ads being served on "Made for Kids" channels



Why this Matters



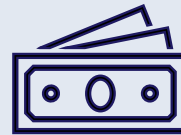
What is the potential impact of personalized campaigns targeted at adults – not kids – running on “Made for Kids” YouTube channels?



Federal Investigations

“United States senators sent a letter to the F.T.C., urging it to investigate whether Google and YouTube had violated COPPA.”

New York Times, "YouTube Ads May Have Led to Online Tracking of Children, Research Says", 8/17/23



Massive Fines

“Children’s privacy advocates are urging federal regulators to consider issuing a massive fine ‘upwards of tens of billions of dollars’... ”

Washington Post, "YouTube faces fresh complaint over its children’s privacy practices", 8/23/23



Ad Waste & Brand Risk

“It doesn’t just lead to **wasted ad investments**, but also inadvertent exposure to serious compliance and **brand reputation risks**...”

Ruben Schreurs, Chief Strategy Officer at Ebiquity

AdExchanger, "Adalytics Claps Back With Evidence Of Behaviorally Targeted Ads Served In Kids Content On YouTube", 8/23/23

What is the potential impact on children?



Privacy Abused

“They have created a conveyor belt that is scooping up the data of children”
Jeff Chester, Executive Director at the Center for Digital Democracy

New York Times, "YouTube Ads May Have Led to Online Tracking of Children, Research Says", 8/17/23



Exploitation

“There is no reasonable excuse for ads running on content intended primarily for kids other than to extort advertisers through a toddler-enabled click farm”
Sr. Advertising Executive who chose to remain anonymous

Adalytics, "Are YouTube Advertisers Inadvertently Harvesting Data From Millions of Children?", 8/21/23



Exposure to inappropriate content

“Some of these ads reportedly involved content inappropriate for children, such as car wrecks, medical injuries, and clips from TV-MA shows.”

The Verge, "Senators want YouTube investigated over showing targeted ads to kids, again", 8/18/23

Marketers should be aware or prepared for the business ramifications

1



**Financial
Risk**

2



**Brand
Reputational
& Corporate
Risk**

3



**Legal
Risk**

Discover more

Looking for more data, insights and takeaways?
Check out this related VAB content

Marketing Thought Leadership



Digital Ad-Tech Transparency Issues



The Value of Premium Video Platforms



VAB Members, brand marketers and agencies get free and immediate access to VAB's content library. Get access at theVAB.com

About VAB

VAB is an insights-driven organization that inspires marketers to reimagine their media strategies resulting in fully informed decisions.

Drawing on our marketing expertise, we **simplify** the complexities in our industry and **discover** new insights that **transform** the way marketers look at their media strategy.



We are committed to your business growth and proud to offer VAB members, brand marketers and agencies **complimentary access** to our continuously-growing Insights library. **Get immediate access at theVAB.com.**

Curious to learn more about VAB? Check out this [quick video](#) to see what we do and how we can help you develop business-driving marketing strategies.