

# EDITORIAL AUTHORITY IS A MOVING TARGET: ALGORITHMIC ADS, CONSUMER HEALTH, AND INFORMATION LITERACY

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# SOURCE AUTHORITY

## Authority Is Constructed and Contextual

“Information resources reflect their **creators’ expertise and credibility**, and are evaluated based on the information need and the context in which the information will be used. Authority is constructed in that various communities may recognize different types of authority. It is contextual in that the information need may help to determine the level of authority required.”

--ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher

Education

# CREATORS' CREDIBILITY

- Is the New York Times a “creator”? Is the New England Journal of Medicine?
- Not in any human sense. We see them as credible partly because we trust their editorial processes/standards.
- Those editorial processes don't apply equally to all parts of the newspaper (i.e., advertising), but we assume there's some kind of standard involved.



# CREATORS' CREDIBILITY

- We tend to expect this from websites as well as print sources.
- Online ads are harder to distinguish from content and at least sometimes are sold very differently from print ads.

Advertisers

Paid Post

ALLBIRDS

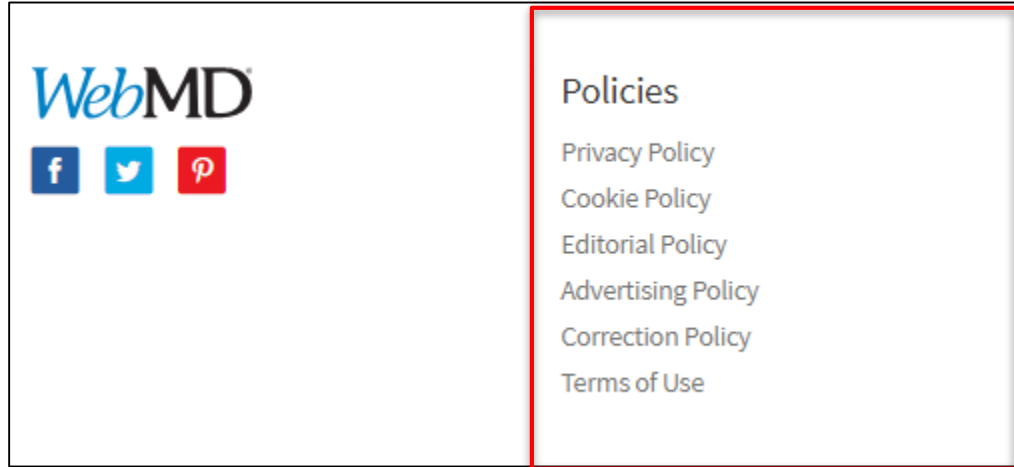
**The Remarkably Critical  
Connection Between Birds and  
the Environment**

Birds play a larger role in the Earth's ecosystem than you might realize.



R<sub>2</sub> DIGITAL  
LIBRARY

# CONSUMER HEALTH ONLINE: EDITORIAL POLICIES



# CONSUMER HEALTH ONLINE: EDITORIAL POLICIES

“There are certain categories of Advertisements that WebMD will not **knowingly permit** on the WebMD Network at any time. These categories include but are not limited to the following:”

- Illegal, 'objectionable', 'ineffective' and/or 'dangerous' products (WebMD reserves the right to determine what is 'objectionable', 'ineffective' and/or 'dangerous')
- fraudulent, deceptive, illicit, misleading or offensive material
- alcohol
- weapons, firearms, ammunition, or fireworks
- pornography or related themes
- tobacco use of any kind
- the simulation of news or an emergency

WebMD, [“Advertising Policy,”](#) Updated January 18, 2018.

# LIMITS OF EDITORIAL STANDARDS: ADS BY GOOGLE

- Ads Auction
- Advertisers choose sites based on content, demographic segments, geography, language on the website.
- Ad Rank
- Quality Score
- The ads are placed by “relevance” to site’s users.

## About Google ads

### About Google ads

As you browse the internet, use mobile apps, read your email, use Google products like Search, YouTube, and Gmail. Google's ads are shown on websites and apps. It is one of many ad networks that can

### In this article

- [Control Google ad personalization](#)
- [Google and advertising standards](#)
- [Leave feedback on the ad or website you just saw](#)

# EDITORIAL CONTROL OVER GOOGLE ADS

Site owners can:

- Block particular websites
- Block particular kinds of ads (i.e., apparel)
- Block ads from select ad networks (other than Google)
- Block “sensitive” topics such as religion or politics
- There’s a mechanism for reviewing and blocking individual ads, but only after they’ve been shown on your site.
- The kinds of editorial policies we’re used to (and that sites like WebMD use) are very hard to apply.



# GOOGLE'S EDITORIAL POLICIES

Some examples:

- Policies on advertising weapons or bombs
- Policies on advertising for alcohol
- Policies on advertising for medical products

# PROBLEMS POSED FOR EVALUATING ONLINE SOURCES

1. Even the ads that the site itself DOES have control over can be well integrated, and students may take them as content (for example, reliable recommendation of particular medicines) when they are not.
2. The sites themselves DON'T have control over many of the ads that they display. Google editorial standards may or may not match what you'd expect from the site, or what the policies of the site actually are.
3. You may not be aware of the kinds of ads students will see on a given site; they may be different than the ones you see.

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QUESTIONS?

# SOURCES

Google (2019) [Adsense Help: About the Ad Auction.](#)

Google (2019) [“Advertising Policies Help: Dangerous Products or Services.”](#)

Google (2019) [“Advertising Policies Help: Alcohol”](#)

Google (2019) [“Advertising Policies Help: “Healthcare and medicines.”](#)

WebMD, [“Advertising Policy,”](#) Updated January 18, 2018.