

Unilever threatens to pull ads from 'divisive platforms'

THE HAGUE, Netherlands - Anglo-Dutch consumer giant Unilever, one of the world's largest advertisers, threatened on Monday to snub digital platforms that fail to protect children or help "create division" in society.



[AFP/ John Thys](#)

Denouncing what it called "toxic online content," the Rotterdam-based Unilever weighed in on growing concerns about fake news and extremist posts on such networks as Facebook and Google.

"Unilever will not invest in platforms or environments that do not protect our children or which create division in society, and promote anger and hate," its chief marketing officer Keith Weed said.

In a speech to be delivered later Monday, of which AFP has been given extracts, Weed added that "fake news, sexism, terrorists that spread messages of hate, toxic content directed at children ... is a million miles from where we thought this would take us."

Unilever "will prioritise investing only in responsible platforms that are committed to creating a positive impact on society," Weed said in his keynote address to be given at a conference in Palm Desert, California.

Weed said he had met Unilever's digital partners, including Facebook, Google and Twitter at the global Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in early January, where he "repeated one point to each and every one of them".

"It is critical that our brands remain not only in a safe environment, but a suitable one."

"Unilever, as a trusted advertiser, do not want to advertise on platforms which do not make a positive contribution to society," Weed said.

Unilever last year spent €7.7 billion on marketing and advertising and is the world's second-largest advertiser after US-based consumer goods company Procter & Gamble.

Unilever chief financial officer Graeme Pitkethly said in November that some 30% of that total goes to digital advertising.

The company employs some 169,000 people around the world and owns more than 400 household brands including Dove beauty products, Knorr soups, Lipton teas, Magnum ice cream and Marmite.

Here's some the conversation that's happening on Twitter:

“ The consumer goods multinational [#Unilever](#) is threatening to withdraw its [#advertising](#) from online platforms such as [#Facebook](#) and [#Google](#) if they fail to protect children, promote hate or create division in society. <https://t.co/ZJzqhvg8zB>— David Head (@DavidHeadViews) [February 12, 2018](#) ”

“ Coming from [#Unilever](#) whose #1 goal it is to erode self esteem for profit, objectify both women & men in their ads & have little to no [#diversity](#) across 90% of their ads which have only diversified in the past 10 years due to the social pressure they experience on these platforms— Kate Duckworth (@katieduck1) [February 12, 2018](#) ”

“ With news that [@Unilever](#) is calling on tech platforms to work harder to police their content, here's [@keithweed](#) at [#CannesLions](#) 2017 talking about the issue.

The [#Unilever](#) CMO will be back at the 2018 festival as part of the Communication track <https://t.co/n2RMFE5XJQ> [pic.twitter.com/IQaFooAv2g](https://t.co/n2RMFE5XJQ)— Cannes Lions (@Cannes_Lions) [February 12, 2018](#) ”

“ [#Unilever](#) want to divest from platforms which spread [#FakeNews](#) & have extremist content. After 1 Google search I have found they are previously guilty of Mercury poisoning, Deforestation and Child Labour. The moral high ground is on shaky ground....lol!— Liam Hanlon (@lphanlon84) [February 12, 2018](#) ”

Source: AFP

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