

Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation  
Redbubble Inc.  
Annual Transparency Report  
1 January 2023 - 31 December 2023

## Summary

Redbubble is a global artist marketplace dedicated to giving independent artists a meaningful way to sell their creations. Redbubble hosts user-generated content uploaded by artists and provides them with online tools to upload their art and to design and sell products printed with their art to their customers worldwide.

Redbubble recognises the harm that arises from the spread of misinformation and disinformation and is committed to preventing, detecting and removing such harmful information from its marketplace. In doing so, Redbubble strives to balance the fostering of artistic freedom with the goal of preventing the spread of disinformation and misinformation through its platform.

By deploying a global content moderation team as well as scalable technologies like duplicate detection, image matching, keyword and text-in-image detection, as well as machine learning and AI, Redbubble is well positioned to efficiently tackle problematic content on its platform.

This report provides transparency into the measures that Redbubble takes to prevent, detect and remove disinformation and misinformation on its marketplace.

## Commitments under the Code

<b>Outcome 1a: Reducing harm by adopting scalable measures</b>	Opt In
<b>Outcome 1b: Inform users about what content is targeted</b>	Opt In
<b>Outcome 1c: Users can easily report offending content</b>	Opt In
<b>Outcome 1d: Information about reported content available</b>	Opt In
<b>Outcome 1e: Information about recommender engines</b>	Opt In

<b>Objective 2: Disrupt advertising and monetisation incentives for disinformation</b>	Opt In
<b>Objective 3: Work to ensure the integrity and security of services and products delivered by digital platforms</b>	Opt In
<b>Objective 4: Empower consumers to make better informed choices of digital content.</b>	Opt In
<b>Objective 5: Improve public awareness of the source of political advertising carried on digital platforms</b>	Opt Out
<b>Objective 6: Strengthen public understanding of Disinformation and Misinformation through support of strategic research</b>	Opt In
<b>Objective 7: Signatories will publicise the measures they take to combat Disinformation</b>	Opt In

**Reporting against commitments**

**Outcome 1a: Reducing harm by adopting scalable measures**

Redbubble prohibits users from uploading harmful disinformation and misinformation to the marketplace in the Redbubble User Agreement, published at <https://www.redbubble.com/agreement>, and the Redbubble Community and Content Guidelines at: <https://help.redbubble.com/hc/en-us/articles/202270929>.

Every image uploaded and keyword generated on the Redbubble platform must pass through one or more scalable detection technologies. Continuous improvements to tooling allow Redbubble to more accurately and efficiently detect and remove harmful misinformation and disinformation from its marketplace. Current scalable technologies include:

- Duplicate detection identifies previously moderated images that users may try to re-upload
- Image matching detects content similar to images known for disinformation or misinformation
- Keyword detection in text-based user-generated fields, like titles, tags, and descriptions to catch keywords linked to disinformation and misinformation

- Text-in-image matching spots text-based misinformation and disinformation within images
- Machine learning pinpoints user accounts linked to networks known for violating Redbubble policies
- Artificial intelligence recognizes users' keyword tagging patterns associated with disinformation and misinformation

The Redbubble Content Safety Team proactively screens the marketplace on a daily basis for potential misinformation and disinformation detected by Redbubble's tools, and the team removes content that it determines violates our User Agreement and Community Guidelines.

When the Content Safety Team makes decisions relating to content that potentially includes misinformation or disinformation, the team considers Redbubble policies, past decisions (to ensure consistency of approach and decision-making) and further research particularly in relation to new or emerging topics. The Content Safety Team's framework for content review is built on clear criteria and a repeatable and scalable workflow. This allows the team to make moderation decisions in an unbiased and consistent manner. Furthermore, policies and decision-making frameworks undergo continuous review and refinement to ensure their ongoing effectiveness.

Redbubble proactively monitors and screens for over 350 different content safety topics on its platform, spanning issues like incitement of violence, racism, disinformation and misinformation.

The following are examples of misinformation and disinformation topics that Redbubble screens for:

- Medical misinformation, such as anti-vaccine propaganda that may encourage the spread of communicable disease;
- Denials of real-world catastrophes, such as the Holocaust; and
- Political misinformation, such as false political conspiracy theories that are linked to real-world harm.

The Redbubble Content Safety team makes use of credible and trusted news sources in determining the boundaries of Disinformation and Misinformation, including review of independent, non-partisan fact checking sites, including:

- *Medical Misinformation*: Redbubble consults reports from a range of leading global authorities that are guided by scientific research to advise on everything from 'Plandemic' misinformation to false claims about Hydroxychloroquine. Sources include:
  - US Food & Drug Administration (FDA): <https://www.fda.gov>
  - Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov>
  - World Health Organization (WHO): <https://www.who.int>

- *Harmful Political Misinformation:* Redbubble consults non-partisan research centers and independent nonprofits run by professional researchers to guide decisions on political messaging that may cause real world harm. Sources include:
  - [FactCheck.org](https://factcheck.org)
  - Snopes: <https://www.snopes.com>
  - Sunlight Foundation: <https://sunlightfoundation.com>

To create screening guidelines, the team uses the above sources to compile training content for content review teams and quality assurance of moderation decisions.

### **Content Removal Trends**

We continue to focus our efforts on content that may violate our Community Guidelines on Harmful Misinformation. We define this as any misleading or false information that harms or significantly threatens public health and safety, or where the intent is to cause fear and suspicion about a topic that can cause real-world harm. In 2023, we detected and removed 849 designs uploaded to the platform that contained harmful misinformation.

The most notable trend over the past few years is the increase and subsequent drop in instances of medical misinformation being uploaded to the platform. There was a sharp increase of such content in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a gradual decline in subsequent years.

Subject matters such as election integrity, harmful misinformation about voting procedures and uploads condoning and perpetuating election-related real-world violence may increase again in the 2024 U.S. election cycle.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of designs moderated for containing harmful misinformation</b>
2021	10,811
2022	3,961
2023	849

### **Outcome 1b: Inform users about what content is targeted**

The communication to users of what constitutes misinformation and disinformation is important in stopping its spread. To this end, Redbubble publishes content rules in its Community Guidelines and in various Redbubble Help Centre articles. In the Redbubble User Agreement, users are required to adhere to the Community Guidelines and represent and warrant that the products they sell are free from misinformation and disinformation. The User Agreement states that Redbubble reserves the right to review and in its sole discretion remove any such content from the website and terminate user accounts.

The Community Guidelines detail Redbubble's rules regarding user behavior and content on its marketplace and are made public in the spirit of open communication with artists and their customers. The relevant prohibition under the Community Guidelines addresses misinformation and disinformation in the following terms:

“Harmful misinformation is not permitted. We define this as any misleading or false information that harms or significantly threatens public health and safety, or where the intent is to cause fear and suspicion about a topic that can cause real-world harm.”

The Community Guidelines are expressly noted to be adaptable and subject to refinement over time as the environment and circumstances change.

The Redbubble User Agreement provides further information to artists proposing to upload content to the marketplace. It provides that an artist uploading content represents and warrants that:

“The content does not contain material that is harmful, abusive, inflammatory or otherwise objectionable; and the content is not misleading and deceptive and does not offer or disseminate fraudulent schemes or promotions.”

Additional information for users is included in the Redbubble Help Centre's Community Guidelines FAQ located at: <https://help.redbubble.com/hc/en-us/sections/4404750122004-Community-Guidelines-FAQ>. The Content Safety team adds to this FAQ on a regular basis to provide helpful information in response to commonly asked questions regarding disinformation and misinformation and other content safety topics.

### **Outcome 1c: Users can easily report offending content**

Redbubble requests that all users of our marketplace flag behavior or content that contravenes the Community Guidelines through one of the reporting functions on our site. The User Agreement prompts users to report such content:

“Please help us by letting us know straight away about any inappropriate Content you see on the Marketplace. You can do this by clicking the "Inappropriate Content" link displayed on each Product listing page.”

Redbubble provides a simple and accessible reporting tool for users. On every product listing page created by sellers on the marketplace, a prominent “Report Content” link is provided.

This link directs users to a web form (shown below) where they can quickly and easily report content that they believe falls outside of Redbubble’s policies, including works that may contain disinformation or misinformation.

**Inappropriate Content**

Note: **Your information will *not* be relayed to the author**, you will remain anonymous.

If you'd like to report [redacted] by [redacted] as inappropriate, please complete this form and we'll make sure the review team takes a look.

**Why are you reporting this content as inappropriate?**  
Please Select... [dropdown]

**If the content does not meet these guidelines, please provide any additional comments or information and click "send".**

**SEND**

**How does this work?**

When you report a concern a notification is sent to the Redbubble objections team. We review the content and follow up in cases where the content falls outside Redbubble's guidelines. Due to the volume of emails the team receives, we cannot respond to every query regarding these reports but please rest assured we do check every single report carefully and we'll be in touch if we need any further information. If you would like more insight into the guidelines we apply, further information is available in our [community guidelines](#). Thanks again!

The Content Safety team regularly reviews all user reports to assess whether the content or uploading account should be subject to moderation or other actions. This reporting tool continues to be an important way to detect content that violates Redbubble policies, including disinformation and misinformation.

### **Outcome 1d: Information about reported content available**

In 2023, users submitted over 15,000 reports using the reporting functionality described in Outcome 1c, which includes but is not limited to reports of misinformation or disinformation.

### **Outcome 1e: Information about recommender engines**

Product recommendations to users of the Redbubble marketplace are primarily based on keyword-matching algorithms that connect the text-based title, tags and description generated by the artists with user search and navigation behavior, such as prior keywords the

user searched for and keyword similarities between content they clicked on and additional content that may interest them.

### **Objective 2: Disrupt advertising and monetisation incentives for disinformation.**

Redbubble reduces monetisation incentives from artist sales of products on the marketplace by swiftly detecting and removing accounts and content that violates Redbubble policies. These measures are described in more detail throughout this report. If a user violates the Redbubble User Agreement or Community Guidelines, their violative content will be removed and their accounts will be subject to account penalties, up to and including account termination. Networks of connected accounts will also be terminated.

Redbubble also disrupts incentives by using keyword blocking tools that prevent content tagged with terms related to misinformation and disinformation from appearing on offsite marketing platforms where artists promote their products and generate sales. This blocklist covers thousands of keywords related to content safety topics, including hundreds of terms related to misinformation and disinformation.

### **Objective 3: Work to ensure the integrity and security of services and products delivered by digital platforms.**

At the account-level, Redbubble uses third-party account abuse detection software that combines machine learning with a global network of data to detect users who are likely to violate the Redbubble User Agreement. This software uses data points that are customized to the Redbubble marketplace and allow room for adjustments based on emergent trends. This is an effective tool for maintaining content integrity on Redbubble and detecting users who are likely to upload content that perpetuates disinformation or misinformation. For example, this tool has helped detect users who use bots to create networks of multiple accounts and attempt to upload large amounts of images intending to sell products related to trending topics that may cause public harm. In 2023, over 350,000 accounts were blocked or removed by these measures.

### **Objective 4: Empower consumers to make better informed choices of digital content.**

The measures and tools discussed throughout this report summarize the ways that Redbubble detects and removes misinformation and disinformation, which mitigates the risk of harmful content and accounts that consumers could be exposed to on its marketplace.

Redbubble also puts artists front and center in its public communications, such as web copy and promotional materials, to ensure that consumers understand that images have been uploaded by independent artists and that the products offered on the marketplace are designed and sold by artists.

The Redbubble User Agreement makes it clear to users that artists are responsible for the content they upload, the products they offer for sale in their shops, and the titles, tags and descriptions they write to describe their products.

Email marketing materials contain the following statement: “All products on the Redbubble marketplace are designed and sold by independent artists”, and every product listing page created by artists contains the words “designed and sold by [artist’s username]”.

**Objective 5: Improve public awareness of the source of political advertising carried on digital platforms.**

Redbubble has opted out of Objective 5, because political advertising is not considered to apply to the Redbubble business, and Redbubble does not sell ad space to parties conducting political advertising.

**Objective 6: Strengthen public understanding of Disinformation and Misinformation through support of strategic research.**

Redbubble is open to supporting independent research that has the purpose of improving public understanding of disinformation and misinformation. At this time, Redbubble does not provide financial support to third-party strategic research in this area.

**Objective 7: Signatories will publicise the measures they take to combat Disinformation.**

Redbubble will continue to publish these transparency reports, which are accessible to the public on the DIGI website at [digi.org.au/disinformation](https://digi.org.au/disinformation).