

Social Media Age Restriction

Audit Scope

The ABAC Responsible Alcohol Marketing Code introduced placement rules in 2017 that require alcohol, producers, distributors and retailers to activate available age restriction controls to prevent their marketing being visible to minors.

JWS Research was engaged to undertake an independent audit of ABAC signatory Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter brand assets to evaluate whether available age restriction controls had been activated for those assets.

The objective was to understand levels of compliance across various platforms and any impediments to full compliance to aid education initiatives and the development of useful resources.

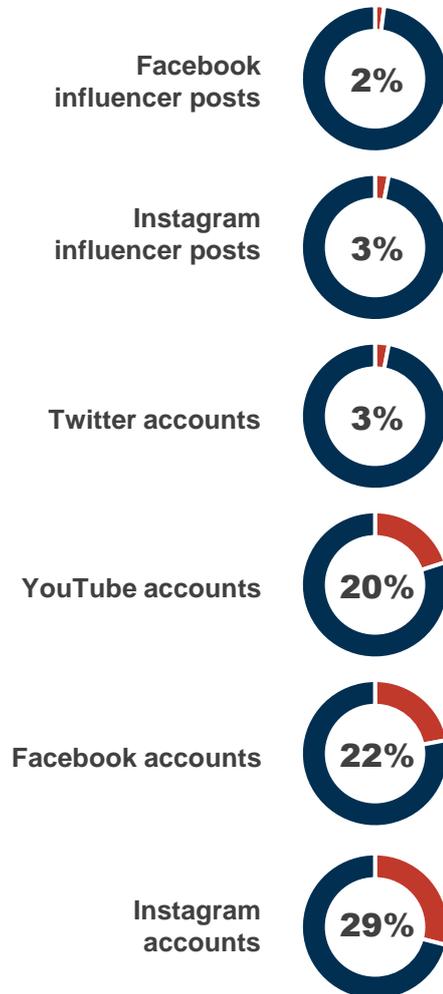
Key Findings

More than 300 randomly selected brands were audited between March and May 2022, showing the following insights:

- Larger companies were far more likely to have age restrictions in place.
- Smaller companies often had mixed businesses, i.e., accommodation, food.
- Some accounts were inactive due to lost administrator access.
- While there are many instances of individuals referencing an alcohol brand on social media, very few of those examples were due to engagement or reward by the brand owner.
- Some companies believed they had activated age restrictions.
- Twitter age restriction appeared to be limited and only available to paid advertisers.
- Social media platforms all have different age restriction mechanisms, and their settings and processes periodically change. Non-compliance was often due to:
 - limited awareness of options available;
 - confusion on how to implement the options; and
 - lack of in-house technical expertise.

Non-Compliance

Percentage of instances of non-compliance among the more than 300 brands audited



Action Taken by ABAC

In response to these findings, ABAC has advised that the following actions are underway:

- Compliance checklists that provide links to step-by-step instructions have been developed.
- Education initiatives have commenced.
- Periodic self-audit of age restriction settings is being encouraged.
- An access register for social media accounts is encouraged to enable ongoing management.
- Engagement to further improvements in age restriction capabilities across social media.
- A commitment to periodic monitoring.