

**Christie Dennehy-Neil, Head of Policy & Regulatory Affairs, IAB UK**  
**Speaking at a Labour Digital Parliamentary event on Monday 16 December 2024**

Good evening. I'm Christie Dennehy-Neil, Head of Policy & Regulatory Affairs at IAB UK. For those of you who don't know the IAB, we're the trade body for digital advertising in the UK. We bring our members together from across the digital advertising supply chain - including publishers, social media platforms, ad tech companies, agencies and advertisers - to create a responsible ecosystem rooted in industry standards. Our overall mission is to build a better future for digital advertising, for the benefit of everyone.

This matters because digital advertising is essential to the daily lives of every single one of us in this room. That sounds like quite a big statement to make, but it's true.

The Government has made clear that raising living standards for working people is one of the key milestones to deliver change. That is exactly what digital advertising facilitates by keeping the internet that we all rely on free and open - meaning that you can access your local newspaper for free, use Google Maps for free, search for a new job for free, and stay in touch with loved ones for free. Our research shows that digital advertising saves UK consumers a total of £18bn per year by providing free access to online services and helping them finding cheaper products online. That's over £600 saved per household every year.

Digital advertising also supports businesses - both large and small - up and down the country. In fact, according to our [Digital Dividend](#) research, which we conducted with Public First, UK companies that invested in digital advertising in 2022 saw a combined sales uplift of £73bn as a result of their investment – and £26bn of that was among small businesses - the book shops, plumbers, restaurants and hairdressers that fuel our local communities and keep the UK's entrepreneurial culture thriving.

And digital advertising contributes a huge amount to the UK economy as a whole, generating a total of £129 billion in gross value added in 2022 and supporting 2 million jobs across the country. For every £1 invested in digital marketing, £4.80 is delivered back to the UK economy.

It's hard to put such big numbers into context, but it helps if you consider that the direct economic contribution of the industry is twice that of the country's agricultural sector and our employment footprint is 50% bigger than the automotive industry's. So digital advertising is a significant industry and crucial to the economic health of the UK.

We know that for the industry to continue to deliver value for businesses and the economy, and savings for consumers, we need to continue to ensure that we have a trusted and well-regulated ecosystem. One of the things I hear most often at events like this is – digital advertising isn't regulated, is it?

Actually, it is. The ads themselves are regulated by the ASA, just like offline ads. And there is a strong framework of industry-led technical tools and standards to regulate how ads are



bought, sold and delivered. We recognise companies that adhere to these standards through our [IAB UK Gold Standard](#) certification so that advertisers can choose to work with responsible partners.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Government, including through the Online Advertising Taskforce, to build on and drive adoption of these standards to ensure our world-leading digital ad industry continues to be a UK success story, fuelling economic growth and enabling a true digital democracy underpinned by free access to digital content and services.

I'm sure I and the IAB team, and our members, will speak to many of you this evening. But please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at IAB UK if you would like to discuss any of what I've touched on in more detail. We have a wealth of regional-specific data about how digital advertising is delivering for constituents in your area that we would love to share with you so please chat to one of the team if you're interested in finding out more.

Thank you all very much again for being here this evening, and thank you to Labour Digital for hosting us. Please enjoy your Christmas drinks!