

WEBINAR

Mitigating Harms of Digital Food Marketing to Children: Evidence and Policy Recommendations

Thursday, January 30

2:00-3:00 PM EST

Healthy
Eating
Research

Moderated By:



Jennifer Harris

University of Connecticut Rudd
Center for Food Policy and Health



Lori Dorfman

Berkeley Media
Studies Group



Omni Cassidy

NYU Grossman
School of Medicine



Josh Golin

Fairplay



Lindsey Reed

Healthy Eating Research

Logistics

Participants will be automatically muted when joining

Ask any tech or logistics questions for the host in the chat bar

30 minutes of audience Q&A at the end of the session – ask questions for the presenters in the Q&A bar



Today's webinar

Presentations (25 minutes)

- **Jennifer L. Harris, PhD, MBA**
University of Connecticut Rudd Center for Food Policy
- **Lori Dorfman, DrPH, MPH**
Berkeley Media Studies Group

Panel discussion and Q&A (30 minutes)

- *Facilitated by* **Lindsey Reed, MPH**
Healthy Eating Research
- Joined by **Omni Cassidy, PhD** and **Josh Golin, MA**



HER Expert Panel Recommendations on Digital Food Marketing to Children

Jennifer Harris
Lori Dorfman
January 30, 2025

Objective

Develop **evidence-based** recommendations for actions to **mitigate harms** from digital food marketing to children **ages 2-17**

- Policy (government and industry)
- Research
- Practice

Expert Panel

Panel Chair

- Jennifer L. Harris PhD, MBA

HER and project staff

- Mary Story PhD, RD
- Lindsey Reed MPH
- Senthil Ananthan MPH, MBA
- Megan Lott MPH
- Sara Maksi PhD

Panel members

- Marie A. Bragg PhD
- Omni Cassidy PhD
- Lori Dorfman DrPH, MPH
- Frances Fleming-Milici PhD
- Nicholas Freudenberg DrPH, MPH
- Josh Golin MA
- Travis Masterson PhD, MS
- Kathryn C. Montgomery PhD, MA
- Jenny Radesky MD
- Thomas N. Robinson MD, MPH
- Mimi Tatlow-Golden PhD
- Xavier Morales PhD, MRP

Researchers, advocates and practitioners

Expertise: Digital and food marketing, racial and ethnic disparities, children's privacy, community engagement, children's media usage, communications, psychology, pediatrics, and digital technology

Process

- Develop a framework for evaluation
- Compile the evidence
 - Literature review
 - Evaluate existing and proposed policy actions
 - Interviews with key thought leaders
- Recommendations for key actors
- Potential government policies (US-based)
 - Short-term
 - New and innovative approaches

Panel
consensus

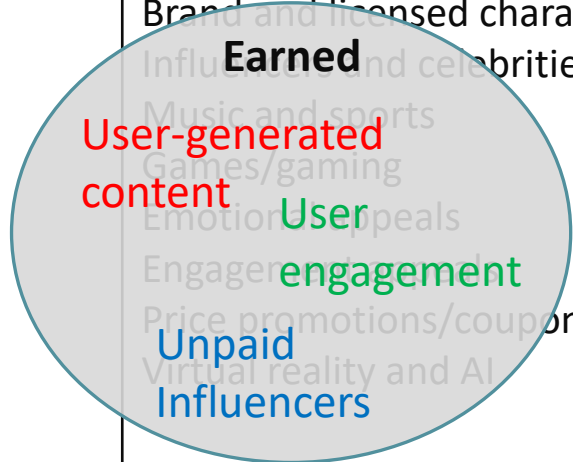
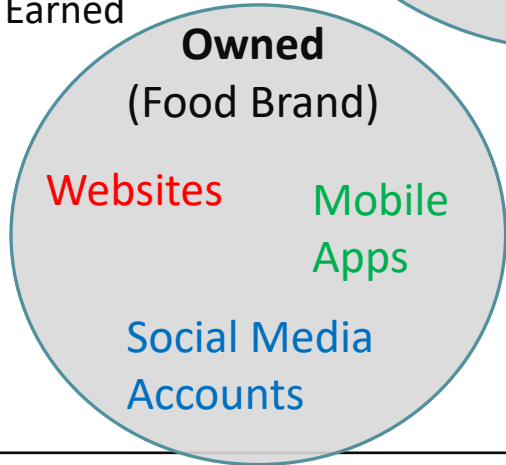
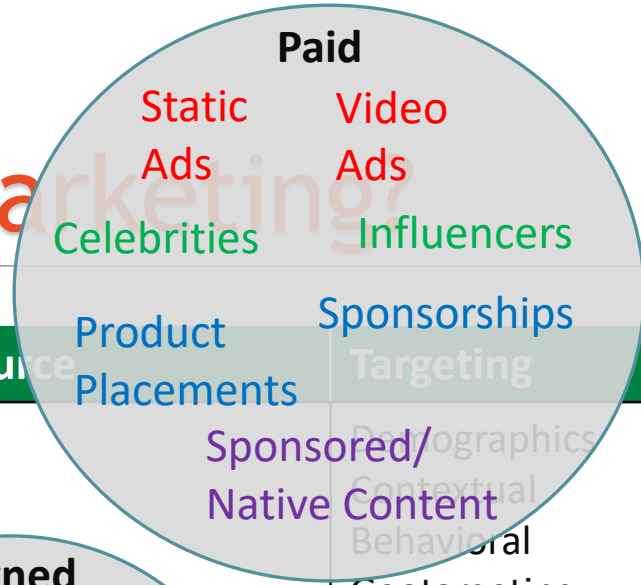
Panel
consensus

What is Digital Marketing?

Media Platforms	Message Source	Targeting	Creative Strategies/ Tactics
Websites Mobile apps Social media Video sharing Gaming platforms Livestream gaming Streaming TV	Paid ads Owned Earned	Demographics Contextual Behavioral Geotargeting	Brand and licensed characters Influencers and celebrities Music and sports Games/gaming Emotional appeals Engagement appeals Price promotions/coupons Virtual reality and AI
Integrated, consistent, brand-focused, data-driven			

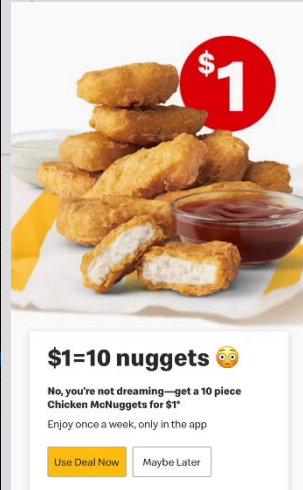
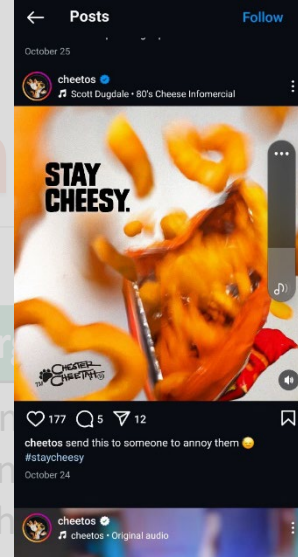
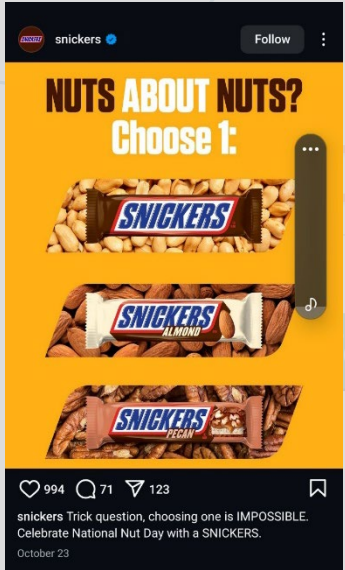
What is Digital Marketing?

Media Platforms	Message Source	Targeting	Creative Strategies/ Tactics
Websites Mobile apps Social media Video sharing Gaming platforms Livestream gaming Streaming TV	Paid ads Owned Earned Owned (Food Brand) Websites Mobile Apps Social Media Accounts	Product Placements Sponsorships Sponsored/ Native Content Demographics Contextual Behavioral Geotargeting	Brand and licensed characters Earned Influencers and celebrities Music and sports Games/gaming Emotional appeals User-generated content User engagement Price promotions/coupons Unpaid Influencers Virtual reality and AI



Framework

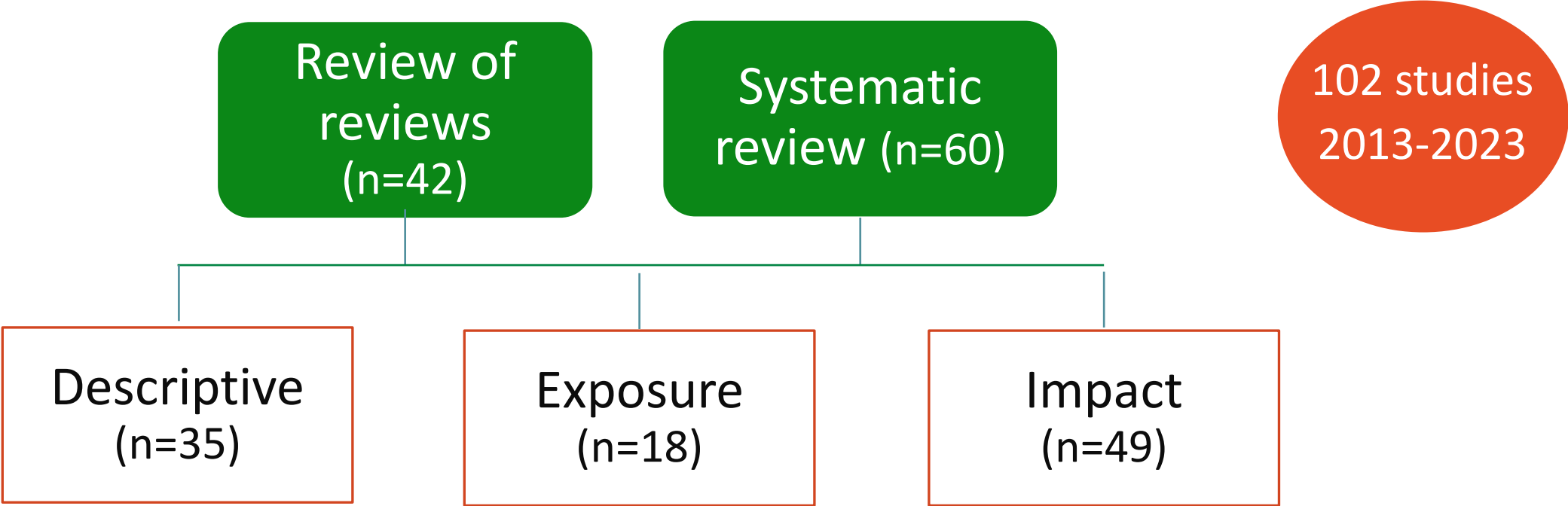
Creative Strategies



Creative Strategies/ Tactics

- Brand and licensed characters
- Influencers and celebrities
- Music and sports
- Emotional appeals
- Price promotions/coupons
- Games/gaming
- Engagement appeals
- Virtual reality and AI

Literature Review Methodology



Inclusion: Peer-reviewed studies regarding digital food marketing to children

How Food Marketing Affects Kids

Diet-related Effects (Hierarchy of Effects Model)	
Behavioral outcomes	Intermediate outcomes
Brand/category choice Requests to parents Purchase Acute (immediate) intake Longer-term diet quality/category consumption	Brand/product awareness Ad awareness/recognition Ad attitudes (liking) Brand/product attitudes Taste preferences Intent to request/purchase
Broader outcomes	
Health disparities Threat to children's rights - Privacy, freedom from manipulation	Peer/family relationships Social norms/culture

What We Know About Digital Food Marketing

- Many similarities with traditional food marketing
 - Almost exclusively promotes unhealthy products
 - Exposure affects the same diet-related outcomes
- But digital marketing is less recognizable
- Adolescents and younger children are affected
- Commonly proposed solutions do not reduce effects
 - Ad disclosures and media literacy
 - Promotion of healthy food

Research Gaps/Recommendations

- Impact on health disparities
 - Other broader outcomes
- Common forms of digital food marketing not well-documented
 - Gaming, mobile apps, esports
- Impact of unfair/deceptive practices
 - Branded food content embedded in entertainment content
 - Misuse of children's data and privacy
 - Deceptive, coercive design features
- Exposure across multiple platforms
- Cumulative and synergistic impact
 - Cross-platform and longitudinal studies

Criteria for Effective Policy

Policy goal:

Reduce children's exposure to and/or the impact of unhealthy digital food marketing

Protect children of all ages (up to 18)

Science-based nutrition criteria

Reduce risk of migration to other marketing

Eliminate unfair and deceptive practices

Independent monitoring and evaluation



**Digital food marketing
reaches kids
anytime, anywhere**

Digital food marketing reaches kids anytime, anywhere

FOOD COMPANIES

1

Food companies create their own content and buy ads that attract kids

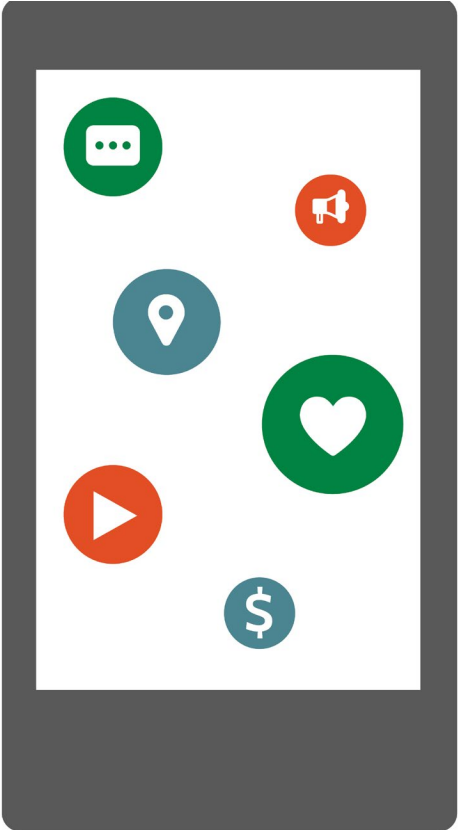
Games, promotions, and cartoon characters on food brand websites

Engaging posts on food brands' social media and video sharing accounts

Food brand messages placed within other online entertainment content

Banner and video ads on websites

Apps from food brands with deals to get people to buy more



Digital food marketing reaches kids anytime, anywhere

2

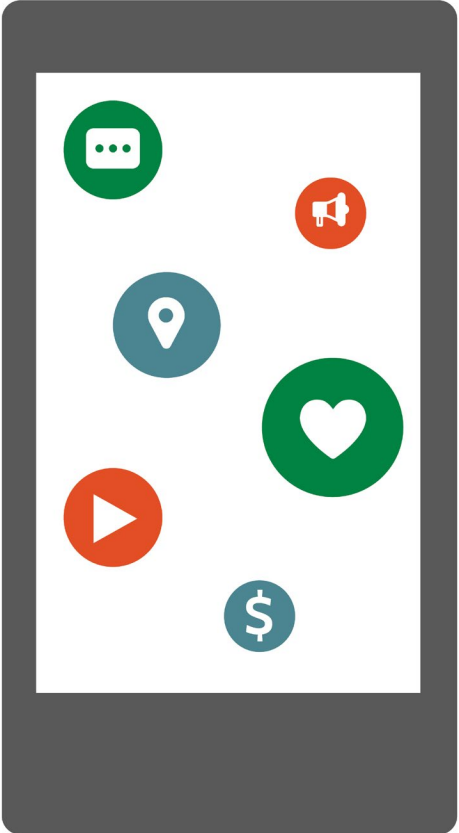
Digital marketing links kids' devices to their physical environment

IN THEIR COMMUNITY

Ads on **digital billboards**

Digital ads around schools are timed so kids see them when going to/from school

Mobile apps send deals to people nearby



AT SCHOOL

Digital ads on educational websites

Food marketing and location tracking on both school and personal devices

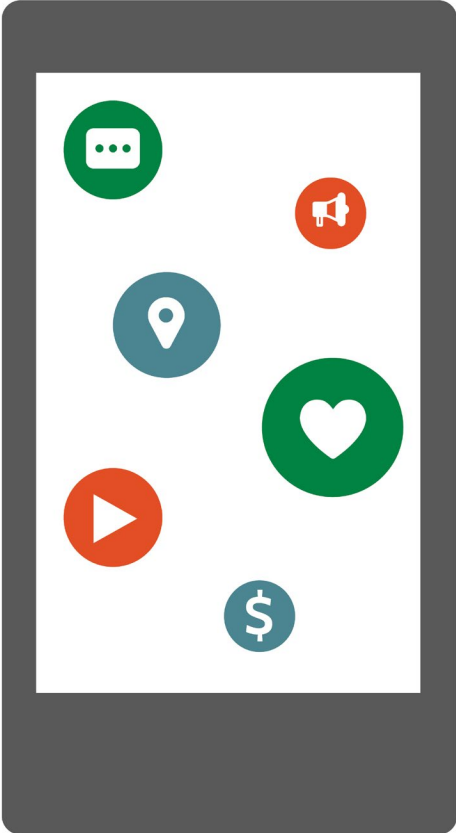
Digital food marketing reaches kids anytime, anywhere

3

Food companies' messages reach kids' social lives

INFLUENCERS & CELEBRITIES

- Influencers make videos showing themselves eating or promoting food
- Livestream gamers promote and eat food while gaming
- Influencers and celebrities post ads on social media



FRIENDS/ PEERS

- Talking about brands in livestream chats
- Joining in viral marketing challenges
- Liking and sharing food branded posts and videos

Digital food marketing reaches kids anytime, anywhere

FOOD COMPANIES

Games, promotions, and cartoon characters on **food brand websites**

Engaging posts on food brands' **social media** and **video sharing** accounts

Food brand messages placed within other online **entertainment content**

Banner and video ads on websites

Apps from food brands with deals to get people to buy more

1

Food companies create their own content and buy ads that attract kids

2

Digital marketing links kids' devices to their physical environment

3

Food companies' messages reach kids' social lives

IN THEIR COMMUNITY

Ads on **digital billboards**

Digital ads around schools are timed so kids see them when going to/from school

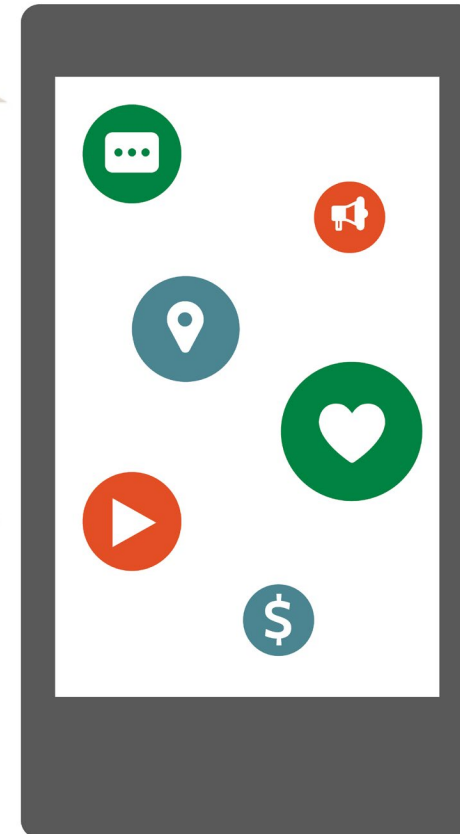
Mobile apps send deals to people nearby

INFLUENCERS & CELEBRITIES

Influencers make videos showing themselves eating or promoting food

Livestream gamers promote and eat food while gaming

Influencers and celebrities **post ads** on social media



AT SCHOOL

Digital ads on educational websites

Food marketing and location tracking on both school and personal devices

FRIENDS/ PEERS

Talking about brands in **livestream chats**

Joining in **viral marketing challenges**

Liking and sharing food branded posts and videos

Policy Recommendations

Industry (Food and Digital Media)

- Effectively limit exposure:
 - Cover all children (up to age 18)
 - Cover all forms of paid and owned marketing, including brand marketing
 - Cover all marketing to which children are exposed (regardless of audience composition and targeting method)
 - Apply nutrition criteria that adhere to Interagency Working Group (IWG) nutrition principles – or restrict all foods
 - Release data for independent evaluation
 - Prevent further contribution to racial, ethnic, and other inequities
 - Examine and disclose business models and practices
 - Implement actions to ensure that marketing practices do not contribute to health disparities
-

Policy Recommendations

Industry (cont'd)

- Prevent unfair and deceptive practices
 - Restrict branded food content (paid or not) embedded in entertainment content
 - Comply with privacy by design and default practices (children's data and privacy)
 - Comply with age-appropriate design features
 - Require human subjects protections for research with children
 - Disclose all studies on health, psychological, purchasing practices, other effects of marketing
-

School-based

- Utilize robust ad blocking technology and filters
 - Enact student privacy policies that restrict collection and sale of student data
 - Restrict marketing within digital instructional materials in School Wellness Policies
 - Require edtech companies to provide ad blocking and filters and privacy by design and default
-

Policy Recommendations

Other physical food environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Retailers, restaurants, and food ordering services (Uber Eats, DoorDash) with apps and/or websites comply with age-appropriate design features❑ Do not utilize geo-location data, push notifications, sales promotions
Social environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Influencers, celebrities, and licensed characters must not promote unhealthy food brands to children online<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Whether or not they are directly compensated by the brand❑ Brand characters must not be used to promote unhealthy food brands
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Mandate that industry reduce children’s exposure to and/or the power of unhealthy digital food marketing❑ Current US and state policies are important first steps<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Protect children’s data/privacy, require age-appropriate design features○ Much more is required

Government Policies: Short-term

<p>Existing regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Publish and update IWG nutrition principles for foods marketed to children❑ FTC actions<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ “Review of Food Marketing to Children and Adolescents” updates○ Section 5 of FTC Act (prohibit unfair or deceptive commercial practices)○ Anti-trust actions against large digital platforms❑ USDA Local School Wellness Policies
<p>Congress allocate resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Designate a responsible agency❑ Fund dedicated FTC personnel for enforcement of existing laws❑ Expand federal research capacity❑ Develop and test state/local solutions
<p>State and local governments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ AG claims under state unfair and deceptive acts and practices<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Require companies to release data for independent evaluations of practices❑ School district requirements<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ “Screen Use in Schools” policies, mandate ad blocking/filters, student data privacy

New and Innovative Approaches

<p>Mandatory comprehensive government policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ One government entity responsible for children’s health and well-being□ Comprehensive legislation that incorporates all panel requirements□ Transparency, monitoring and enforcement to hold food marketers and digital providers responsible
<p>Attractive commercial-free alternatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Content created by non-commercial entities to support children’s well-being□ Independent (not corporate) funding
<p>Advocacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Well-funded media campaign and outreach□ Convincing narrative□ Resources to reach educators, healthcare providers, parents□ Research to inform effective policy actions and increase awareness/concern□ Forum for researchers, advocates and policymakers
<p>Funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Tax advertisers and digital platforms□ Penalties for violating regulations, unfair and deceptive practices

More Information

<https://healthyeatingresearch.org/research/digital-marketing-recommendations/>



Evidence-Based Recommendations to Mitigate Harms from Digital Food Marketing to Children Ages 2-17

Executive Summary, October 2024

Thank you!

DIGITAL FOOD MARKETING:
What parents and caregivers
need to know

Q&A





**MAKE YOUR
OWN MUSIC AT
SPRITE.COM**





pepsi  • [Follow](#)



pepsi  Two   First time together on stage...on the world's biggest stage. Welcome @jlo and @shakira to #PepsiHalftime #SBLIV @rocnation @nfl

78w



jdstrobist   



45w Reply



belleza_bikini   



41w Reply



taliah_wolf Shakira Shakira  



40,239 likes

SEPTEMBER 26, 2019



Add a comment...

Post



sprite



sprite Growth happens when you step out of your comfort zone. On episode three of @Uproxx "Next Success," @stolengfsclub meets up with stylist @velvetclouds, who helps them with their biggest photoshoot yet for their unisex clothing brand Pretty Major.

Click the link in bio to watch their dream shoot unfold.

57w



dwrichard_ 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥

46w Reply



609 likes

JANUARY 25, 2022



Add a comment...

Post



sprite



sprite Sprite Way artist @ryd.der is creating her own lane in the creative industry one visual story at a time ✨ This visionary has celebrated a number of milestone accomplishments over the last year, including being signed to the first-ever label for photographers: @collectivegllry 🔥 #WomensHistoryMonth

👤: @Sirdified

55w



dontaejackson1998 ❤️

38w Reply



mannoo_hun_yawr12211 @ch.junaid.waris_ Plzzzz check inbox 😭

40w Reply



alex.le0nn Coo f 😂

41w Reply



king_.of_.thanabhawan Love you sprite



Liked by hairby_queencece and others

MARCH 30, 2022

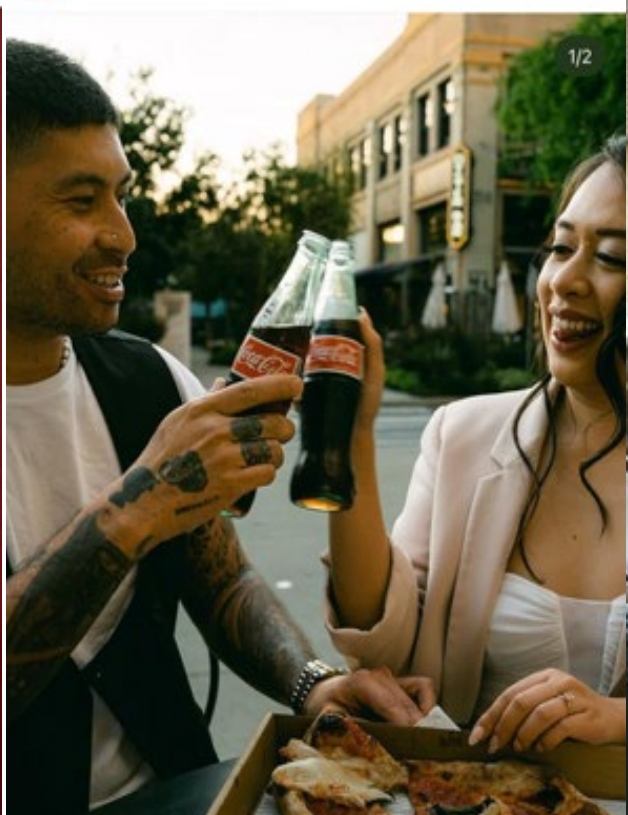


Add a comment...

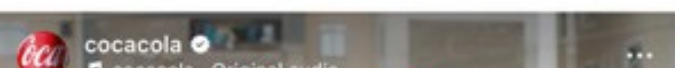
Post



8,826 440 413
cocacola Coca-Cola is the best accessory.
@vidaxstyleedit @that_boy_nife @ka_dittzy_
August 1, 2024



8,401 2,552 477
cocacola Love at first cheers
October 2, 2023

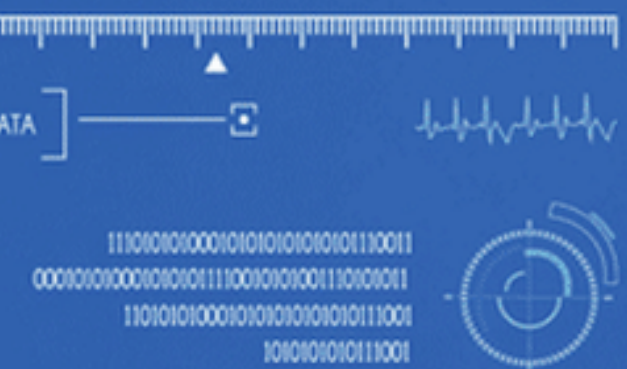
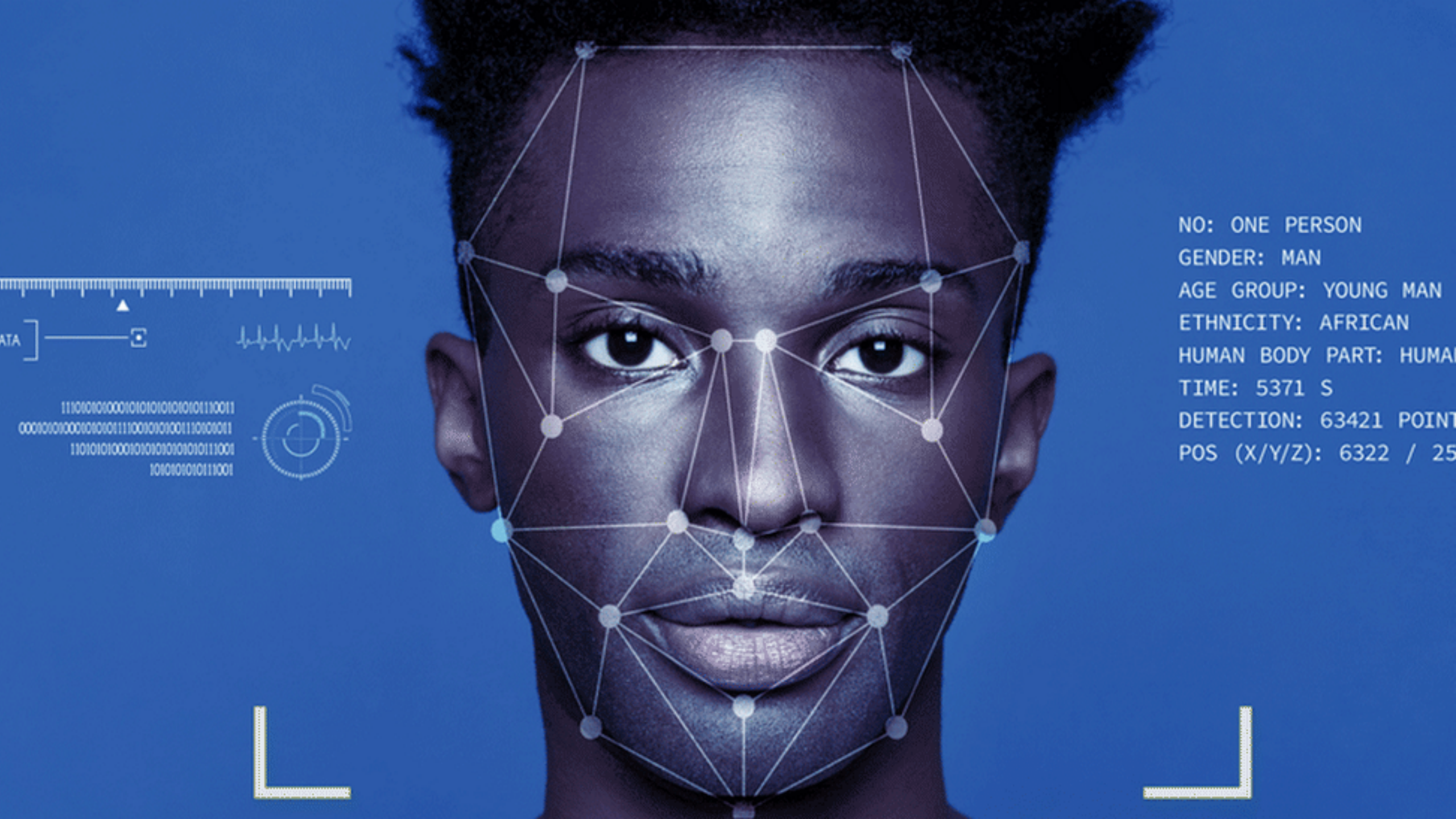


4,175 527 186



12.5K 547 698
cocacola Sip. Curl. Repeat.
September 15, 2023





NO: ONE PERSON
GENDER: MAN
AGE GROUP: YOUNG MAN
ETHNICITY: AFRICAN
HUMAN BODY PART: HUMAN
TIME: 5371 S
DETECTION: 63421 POINTS
POS (X/Y/Z): 6322 / 25





DESIGNING MORE EFFECTIVE NUTRITION POLICY RESEARCH FOR **impact**



FEBRUARY 25, 2025

[REGISTRATION LINK](#)

1:00-2:00PM EST

Many scientific committees and organizations such as the *Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee* and the *World Health Organization* rely on published nutrition policy research, but many publications are excluded from reviews/recommendations due to study design limitations. This webinar will discuss how researchers can **improve the design of their public health nutrition research to inform future policy recommendations.**



THE CENTER FOR HEALTH INCLUSION, RESEARCH, AND
PRACTICE (CHIRP) AT MERRIMACK COLLEGE

HEALTHY EATING RESEARCH (HER) OF THE ROBERT WOOD
JOHNSON FOUNDATION (RWJF)

Learn more about Healthy Eating Research and our work at:
<https://healthyeatingresearch.org/>

Thank you for attending!

THE RECORDING WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE IN THE
COMING DAYS.