

Action brief

How AI technology is helping to fight Code violators in Viet Nam

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Country: Viet Nam
Topics: Information systems
Sub-topics: Technologically advanced systems

Date: 2023



Overview



VIVID, short for Virtual Violations Detector, is a virtual assistant that scans websites, social media channels and shopping platforms to identify advertisements that violate the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (BMS) and regulations regarding tobacco and alcoholic beverages. Using key text and image recognition, the platform can identify posts that may be violations and match those to specific provisions of the code.

All potential violations that have been automatically detected are then confirmed by a human adviser, who gathers additional information and shares it with the ministry responsible for prosecution, as needed.

Viet Nam enacted Decree No. 70 on Digital Advertising in July 2021 in response to the rapid growth of online advertisements and the global increase of code violations on online platforms. These online platforms now are



SDGs

2 ZERO HUNGER



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



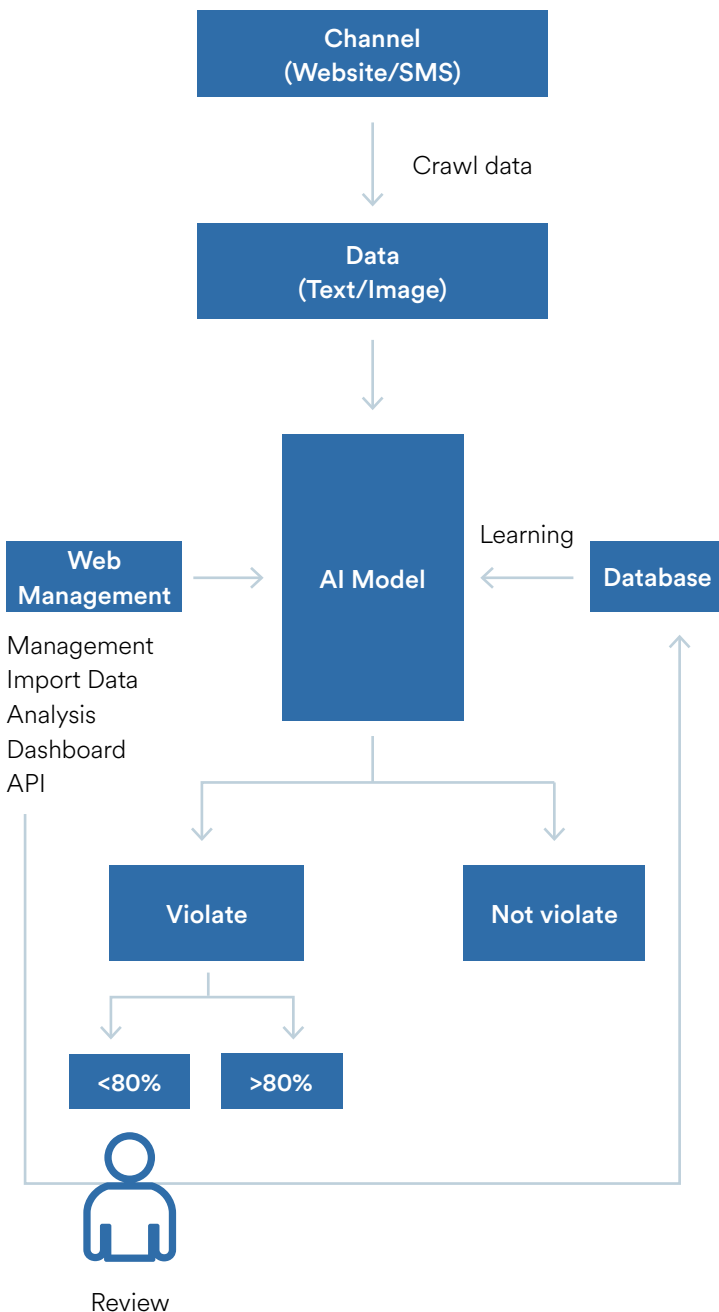


responsible for reporting annually on advertising violations and removing violations within 24 hours upon request from the Ministry of Information and Communications.

Nearly half of mothers (46 per cent) in Viet Nam, which is among the top countries in the world for smartphone penetration, reported having seen breast milk substitutes marketed on the internet, in a 2016

report from Westat. Another 22 per cent reported seeing ads on social media, according to the report. The network's mission is to promote the contribution and involvement of the private sector in the national effort to improve nutrition – including, among other things, by raising awareness among private stakeholders on food fortification standards

VIVID is a virtual assistant for health inspectors that uses supervised machine learning and artificial intelligence



Objectives of the action brief

This action brief aims to explain the usage of artificial intelligence to detect violations and unhealthy advertisements and to show how artificial intelligence can be used in nutrition.



Period covered

The SUN Civil Society Alliance in Viet Nam, led by [Alive & Thrive](#) and with help from FHI Solutions' [Innovation Incubator](#), began teaming up with artificial intelligence company Hekate in 2021.



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What action was taken?

Initially, there was strong political will towards e-government, with health and food safety inspectors in need of a “virtual assistant.” VIVID originally was used to detect violations of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and relevant national regulations. It was then expanded to tobacco and alcoholic beverages.

VIVID now can detect code-related violations in Viet Nam and other English-speaking countries, including Australia, Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of China), Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, the Philippines, Singapore, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

VIVID also provides data for policy advocacy, public campaigning and citizen activism by:

- Engaging the community of breastfeeding mothers to report violations
- Providing health inspectors and the media with real-time violation data, disaggregated by brand, to promote ethical marketing

- Providing health regulators with data regarding legal loopholes in Thai national regulations, in comparison with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and peer countries

In addition to features that allow personnel to review potential violations, VIVID has built-in tools to help track warnings and penalties. It also contains information on the specific legal measure(s) relevant to violations.

VIVID has been well received by the Ministry of Information and Communications and the Ministry of Health in Viet Nam. In 2022, VIVID scanned 35,790 posts and detected 3,922 International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes violations, 550 tobacco advertising violations and 298 alcoholic beverage advertising violations. VIVID is still learning, and through repeated use it should become even more efficient and effective in spotting violations.

As more and more marketing moves into the digital world, innovations such as VIVID can help level the playing field and assist in ending exploitative marketing practices and protecting a healthy and nutritious way of life.

VIVID detect alcoholic beverages and tobacco ads violations in Viet Nam



3922

BMS ads violations



298

alcoholic beverage ads violations



550

tobacco ads violations

... and can expand to sugar sweetened beverages, online gambling, wild animals trade.

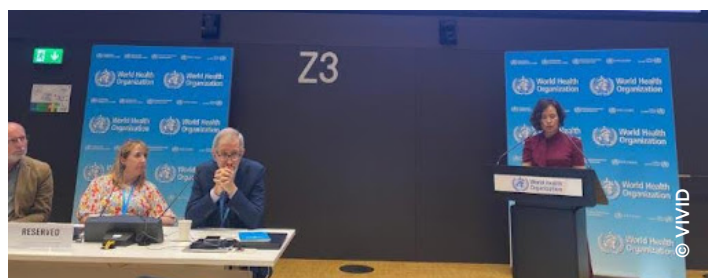




What would the country do differently?

Various challenges exist in using the VIVID system to detect violations:

- Often, platforms are set up to actively scan and ban suspected crawlers, recognizing them as harmful bots or cheaters. This prevents the VIVID system from working.
- Private groups and personal accounts often are unable to be scanned.
- There are limitations in scanning “hidden” sponsorships, such as in podcasts or talk shows.



Adaptation and applicability

Currently, VIVID has been replicated and modified to conduct Code monitoring at the global level.

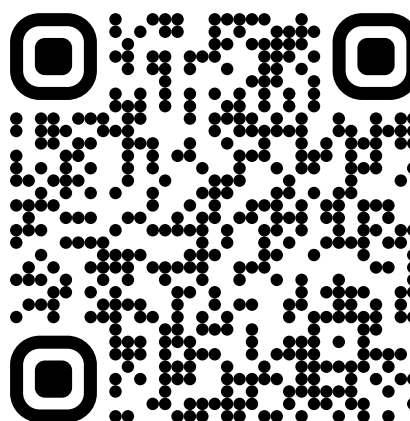
As VIVID is powered by artificial intelligence, some input resources are required to “teach” and supervise it, such as:

- **A list of 100 sample violations**
- **A list of 50 popular International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes online advertising websites and social media pages**
- **A panel of code experts and health experts to supervise VIVID detections**



Next steps

- The plan is for the SUN Civil Society Alliance Viet Nam to work with the Ministry of Information and Communications and the Ministry of Health to handle VIVID for sustainable impact.
- Plans also are in the works to expand VIVID’s usefulness to cover sugar-sweetened beverage marketing, online gambling and the wild animal trade.



Further information

Some images about VIVID can be found here.

- For a better understanding of how VIVID provides scanned results of potential violations, please visit <https://code.corporateaccountabilitytool.org/articles/auto-detection>.

This Good Practice was developed in collaboration with the SUN Civil Society Network (SUN CSN), Alive & Thrive and the Innovation Incubator at FHI 360 Global Nutrition. For more information about the SUN CSN, please visit their website: <https://www.suncivilsociety.com/>



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