

Abstract It is not uncommon for advertisers to present required product disclaimers quickly at the end of advertisements. We show that fast disclaimers greatly reduce consumer comprehension of product risks and benefits, creating implications for social responsibility. In addition, across two studies, we found that disclaimer speed and brand familiarity interact to predict brand trust and purchase intention, and that brand trust mediated the interactive effect of brand familiarity and disclaimer speed on purchase intention. Our results indicate that fast disclaimers actually reduce brand trust and purchase intention for unfamiliar brands, suggesting that there are both economic and social responsibility reasons to use less rapid disclaimers for unfamiliar brands. Conversely, disclaimer speed had no negative effects on brand trust and purchase intention for highly familiar brands, presenting ethical tensions between economic interests (e.g., an efficient use of advertisement time) and social responsibility. We discuss the implications of our framework for advertising ethics, for corporate social performance, and for corporate social responsibility.

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