

TERM's Impact



Vital Strategies' Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM) is a real-time digital media monitoring system tracking tobacco marketing online on social media platforms and news sites. TERM is currently operating in India, Indonesia and Mexico. Details on our methodology can be found below.

Shaping Public Discourse Through Media

In just over a year TERM has brought the issue of digital tobacco marketing to mainstream media through over **200 media mentions**.

The launch of the [TERM website](#) and situation reports created noise in **40+ media outlets**. Our briefs "[Selling Death on Social Media](#)," about bidi marketing in India, and "[Vape Tricks in Indonesia](#)," on e-cigarette marketing in Indonesia, generated **140+ media mentions**, including a front-page feature in [The Telegraph](#) as well as stories in the [Times of India](#) and [Economic Times](#).

Op-eds on the need to strengthen monitoring of online tobacco and e-cigarette marketing have recently been published in [El Heraldo de México](#) and [The Jakarta Post](#) in Indonesia.

Growing Demand for Stronger Policies

IN INDONESIA TERM reports are now being used by the Indonesian Consumer Association to make the case for strengthening tobacco control provisions in consumer law. TERM data has also added momentum to Ministry of Health efforts, including potentially establishing a task force to monitor internet tobacco marketing.

IN INDIA the Central Consumer Protection Agency rolled out guidelines to protect consumers from misleading marketing. TERM is providing evidence on the scale and types of indirect marketing that are prevalent online.

Monitoring Tobacco Control Policy Enforcement

IN MEXICO partners are using TERM data to monitor a recently introduced national ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS). Our situation reports provided baseline evidence about the environment at crucial policy moments, right before the law banning all forms of tobacco and e-cigarette marketing went into effect. Future reports will monitor the progress of the law, identify gaps, and allow policymakers to respond more quickly.

IN INDONESIA TERM drew attention to the need for a TAPS ban. The National Agency for Food and Drug Control is using TERM reports as its internal reference for monitoring online marketing of e-cigarettes. TERM [situation reports](#) and the [e-cigarette marketing issue brief](#) are actively being used by the Ministry of Health in its inter-ministerial meetings.

IN INDIA TERM has called attention to the need to better monitor and enforce the country's TAPS ban.

Vital recently held initial conversations with Google Indonesia and Brazil to encourage them to monitor their platforms for tobacco marketing, in accordance with Google's community guidelines.

Generating Evidence That Fuels Campaigns

Vital Strategies recently joined forces with the Indonesian Consumer Association and SAFEnet—leading consumer and digital rights organizations—to build momentum for strengthening tobacco control policy using our [issue brief on e-cigarette marketing](#). The partnership engaged the media, the public and government stakeholders on the need for policy action in Indonesia through a campaign and a press launch in March 2021, where TERM situation reports were disseminated to policymakers.



The mayor of Bogor, Indonesia, Bima Arya Sugiarto, reads the TERM issue brief “Vape Tricks in Indonesia: How E-Cigarette Companies Use Social Media to Hook Youth.”

Background

WHAT IS TERM?

The [Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement \(TERM\)](#) is a media analysis system that offers rapid, qualitative insights into online tobacco marketing. Vital Strategies, Bloomberg Initiative Partners and other stakeholders use TERM information to support [MPOWER](#) efforts.

- TERM studies online media content, including both online news and social media. We treat social media as we would other media because of its known influence on knowledge, attitudes and behavior, particularly among youth.
- The system is rapid and inherently qualitative in design to enable quick response to industry marketing tactics online. It is not intended to serve as a comprehensive surveillance system.
- TERM works with local tobacco control experts in each country to best capture an essentially opaque and constantly evolving landscape of tobacco marketing and industry interference online.

Launched in 2021, TERM is currently operating in India, Indonesia and Mexico—three regionally influential countries with high rates of tobacco use and large youth populations online. TERM provides actionable information for governments, media, tobacco control civil society groups and researchers. See more in our [published BMJ commentary](#).

WHAT GAP DOES TERM FILL?

The tobacco industry is evolving its tactics to evade existing advertising regulations by turning to a less regulated space: the internet. Marketing is not only a means of promoting tobacco

products, but also one way the industry interferes in tobacco control policy development—deflecting the responsibility for use onto individuals and their “lifestyle choices.” The internet and social media present a low-cost, cross-border system for the tobacco industry to directly reach consumers with marketing strategies that facilitate sales, normalize product use and promote their brands as “socially responsible.” As digital media use increases, especially among youth, more people are at risk of being exposed to tobacco marketing online, stifling decades of progress in tobacco control.

Bans on tobacco advertising are under-implemented globally, even for traditional channels. Only half of countries reporting to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control have extended their bans to internet marketing. A lack of data on tobacco marketing, particularly continuous and real-time data, has limited advocates’ ability to counter tobacco misinformation, enforce existing laws and prevent industry interference.

HOW DOES TERM WORK?

A team of Vital Strategies research staff and local experts apply theory-based research methods to an AI-driven tool to generate insights about tobacco industry marketing. Using a multi-pronged approach, the team:

- 1. CAPTURES ONLINE CONTENT:** We use internet-search programs based on artificial intelligence and keyword-based queries to identify tobacco marketing content. In addition, we rely on crowdsourcing and expert partner inputs to identify other instances of tobacco marketing.
- 2. ANALYZES PATTERNS IN TOBACCO MARKETING:** Qualitative analysis software is first used for automated coding, then trained Vital Strategies researchers double-check the coding using a theory-driven codebook.
- 3. REPORTS FINDINGS:** We present our findings in short and actionable situation reports that provide data visuals and easy-to-understand summaries. When we identify trends that warrant deeper analysis, we produce special issue briefs. To date, these have included briefs on [bidi marketing in India](#) and [e-cigarette marketing in Indonesia](#). TERM has produced 20 situation reports, two issue briefs, and two op-eds across three countries.

WHAT’S NEXT FOR TERM?

TERM has generated significant interest and demand in a short time. In 2023, Vital will leverage TERM findings in our ongoing efforts to engage policymakers and media to advance tobacco control policies in the three countries. We will also continue to validate TERM methods to support comprehensive surveillance activities.