



## Safeguard Online Advertising

It's all over the news: Big-name companies and organizations — AT&T, McDonald's, *The Guardian*, Verizon and Johnson & Johnson are among them, in addition to the U.K. government — are shunning Google-owned YouTube and other assets, as some ads have been displayed alongside extremist-related videos, hate speech and other offensive materials.

An investigation led by *The New York Times* has found that ads placed by British newspaper *The Guardian* via Google's Ad Exchange — a service for managing multiple monetization sources of online display

advertising inventory — on YouTube were being displayed alongside extremist-related, terrorism-backed, offensive and/or violent videos. The newspaper quickly pulled its ads upon this discovery, urging others to follow suit.

Financial analysts expect that Google and its parent company Alphabet Inc. could lose about \$750 million this year, according to a report by business news service Fortune. YouTube alone could see a 7.5 percent drop in revenue (its earnings have been estimated to reach about \$10 billion in 2017), in addition to costs associated with fixing the problem.

In the fourth quarter of 2016, Google's ad business took in just over \$22 billion, representing about 85 percent of Alphabet Inc.'s total revenue for that period. A large part of total income includes Google search advertising; *The New York Times* report notes that the boycott does not include search ads.

Google is now addressing the problem

of erroneous ad placement, starting with an extensive review of its advertising policies, the company told *The New York Times*, and is making "a public commitment to put in place changes that give brands more control over where their ads appear."

### Put the reins on content

The internet is a vast worldwide arena that is growing every minute, and the Google/YouTube boycott storm proves just how difficult it is to control. So what does all of this mean for advertisers? Leverage, potentially, says Recode, an online business news service. Given the controversy and revenue losses, advertisers could be in a position to negotiate with Google to meet their needs and demands, which include more direct control over things like ad tracking and ad placement.

## What's Inside

- 2 From the Vice President
- 3 Protect Your Ads, Protect Your Brands
- 4 Bookstore and Media Press

Continued on Page 2

Smaller advertising outlets like Photonics Media don't have that problem. They don't have to worry about examining millions of videos and other uploaded materials every day the way Google does, which reduces concerns about potentially offensive or violent content slipping through the cracks.

With such concerns out of the way, advertisers can get to know their audiences well and more intimately. This ultimately builds a trusting relationship, which, in turn, can lead to successful ad campaigns and outcomes. The smaller outlets are also in direct control of the content they receive, as well as what is shared and posted to their websites.

Smaller web outlets can better moderate their content and audiences, too. Photonics Media's larger publications — *Photonics*

*Spectra* and *BioPhotonics* — are audited by a third party to assure every reader is qualified. The audience for its other print and online publications are already vetted, too, as individuals seek out information on photonics.

Part of the overarching ad placement issue right now is that larger web outlets such as Google don't typically have much direct control over uploaded content, given the immense volume of websites and internet users they deal with — automation, rather than humans, places the majority of ads online, making it difficult to always know exactly which ads will be near which videos and other content.

With smaller outlets such as Photonics Media, advertisers can control where their content is placed in specific publications and

on websites, because the outlet itself also has control.

As Google reexamines its services, policies and procedures, it continues its scouring of videos and multimedia materials that pour in to check for potentially offensive or violent content. Google plans to ultimately develop a comprehensive and trusted solution to the problem of erroneous ad placement, but admits that given the vast amount of content online, it won't happen overnight.

With smaller web advertising outlets, such problems are not a concern.

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## From the Vice President

### Smaller Ad Networks Offer Big Outcomes

Some big companies and organizations are boycotting YouTube and other Google-owned assets because ads have been featured alongside terrorism-related videos, as well as hate speech and other offensive materials. It's been in the news nonstop recently, and since we're publishers, we can't help but get involved and discuss the topic with our clients.

The B2C marketing communities have a big problem on their hands now when it comes to advertising with YouTube and other major web channels. With increasing ad revenue and strategies devoted to Google AdWords and YouTube, advertisers now have to re-examine how to handle their brands and what avenues can best reach potential buyers.

There's no arguing that Google has the largest pool of potential buyers in the world, but with that size comes difficulty in monitoring content, which hinders the ability to choose the right niche for marketers. Millions of videos on YouTube are watched every day — from cats playing the piano to potentially derogatory messaging; that's a lot of eyes. Given the size, it's going to take a while to get an expansive, trusted system in place that can scrutinize material to an advertiser's standards.

Fortunately, Photonics Media has never had that problem. With an audience a fraction of the size of the Google-verse, we have the ability to qualify every single one of our members who read *Photonics Spectra* and our other print and online publications. We also have relevant, industry focused editorial coverage in our magazines and on our website, year after year.

The B2B world hasn't quite felt the effects of this advertising backlash when it comes to advertising with questionable content. Photonics Media has been part of the solution, not the problem. We have a quality audience made up of your buyers, and we ensure vetted material. It's the perfect formula for broadcasting your message.



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# Protect Your Ads, Protect Your Brand

The internet is a seemingly infinite sea of information and entertainment ... and advertising, too. Online marketing has become particularly advantageous, given the vast number of people it can reach around the world. But now, there is cause for concern. A *New York Times* investigation has prompted many big name companies and organizations to boycott advertising with Google-owned assets, as numerous ads have been placed alongside terrorist-related videos and other offensive materials.

*Knowing where ads are placed can be crucial to your reputation.*

Advertiser control over ad tracking and placement is now at center stage — Google doesn't currently offer them much direct control. And in certain areas, Google itself lacks control, particularly with content uploaded to YouTube.

The company's policies prohibit ads on video content deemed to incite violence or promote illegal behavior. It uses software to scour YouTube titles and images to flag potentially inappropriate content. However, *The New York Times* reports that Google admits this practice is not perfect. Now the company has pledged to fix the problem.

## Google's solutions

The company has developed a three-pronged approach to alleviating the issue of erroneous ad placement, hoping to put an end to the boycott as soon as possible, says Seeking Alpha, a platform for financial investment research.

1. Strengthen community guidelines and "where ads display" policies.
2. Give advertisers more tactical control over where their ads appear.
3. Provide increased insight and review options for advertisers.

Seeking Alpha noted that Google also plans to focus on protecting the platform of legitimate video and other content creators, as well as combat hate speech. Google says it's looking at hiring additional staff for more comprehensive review of videos, and is also developing a software program that could identify and block offensive materials and videos.

Resolving the problems won't be an overnight task. So, in the meantime, there are things that can be done to protect brands online.

## What can advertisers do?

Knowing where ads are showing up and controlling where they run is crucial for any brand, according to Brite Content, a video marketing platform. And in the midst of the boycott storm, it's crucial to find and stay on top of this information.

Knowing where your ads are is the first step, Brite Content says. Google AdWords allows advertisers to identify which campaign to examine. Information about video targeting for that campaign is available, and so is ad placement. Advertisers are able to see the number of views the ads have received, and can even see a listing of videos those ads have been placed with. Some of those videos may not have anything to do with the ad's content, Brite Content notes, but it's important to keep in mind that "with audience targeting, you are actually targeting the user and not what the user is watching."

Advertising Age, publisher of marketing news, presents several potential solutions for advertisers to protect their brands, including creating a "whitelist" of higher-quality, more respectable websites to work with. This puts the brand in a more trusted group. By the same token, it could be helpful to also create a "blacklist" of sites that should not be used at all.

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