

YouTube tests users' tolerance for increased ad loads

Article

The news: YouTube is trying to figure out exactly how many ads its users will tolerate before heading elsewhere.

- Some social media users in recent weeks have complained about seeing eight or even 10 consecutive unskippable pre-roll ads; before a video begins, YouTube typically will display two pre-roll ads.

- It's not just pre-roll: Ad interruptions in larger videos might occur every few minutes, according to several Reddit postings. Recent tweets and Reddit threads reveal ad breaks with up to 10 consecutive, non-skippable advertisements.
- These longer interruptions seem to be happening more frequently lately, though users seem to be experiencing ad breaks of about five ads more commonly than breaks featuring 10.

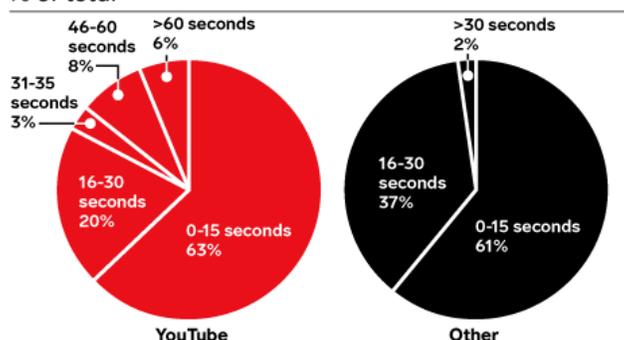
The fallout: While it's hard to know how big this experiment was, there's some noticeable outcry online.

- Several users have already commented that by broadcasting so many advertisements throughout the video clips, YouTube runs the risk of emulating cable TV.
- Some viewers are promoting the use of ad blockers, which remain a major threat to YouTube's stream. Earlier this year, YouTube Vanced, a third-party app that allowed users to access YouTube Premium features and watch YouTube ad-free, [shut down](#) after legal threats from Google.

Analyst insight: From a user experience standpoint, 60 seconds is a long time for an interruption, and these ads typically pop up at odd times in the content, explains principal analyst **Patty Soltis**. "Most likely, users will be annoyed by the interruption, creating a negative reaction to the advertiser," she said. Soltis also points out that most users will simply not retain 10 ads in 60 seconds.

US Digital Video Ad Duration, by Ad Channel, Q1 2022

% of total



Source: MediaRadar as cited in press release, June 22, 2022

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The big takeaway: While YouTube has said this user experiment is over, uncertainty exists around the platform's potential future increase in the unskippable ad rate. But the reality is

that if users will tolerate more ads, platforms will run more ads.

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