Google AdSense Reminds Publishers that Free Speech has Limits by @martinibuster

Google's AdSense YouTube channel released a new video reminding publishers about their dangerous and derogatory content policy. This policy affects all AdSense publishers but it may be felt most acutely by those who publish user generated content.

Is User Generated Content Targeted by AdSense?

No, user generated content is not being singled out by Google AdSense. However, because people tend to feel free to express themselves, websites like forum communities should take note and take action to avoid having their AdSense accounts suspended or revoked.

What Kind of Content is Prohibited by AdSense

Google's video and the AdSense help page list this kind of content as prohibited:

- *Threatens or advocates for harm on oneself or others;*
- *Harasses, intimidates or bullies an individual or group of individuals;*
- *Incites hatred against, promotes discrimination of, or disparages an individual or group on the basis of their race or ethnic origin, religion, disability, age,*

> *nationality, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or other characteristic that is associated with systemic discrimination or marginalization.*

How to Deal with Content Prohibited by AdSense?

Google lists a variety of content that is prohibited. Abiding by these rules are part of the contract agreed upon when joining the AdSense network.

Step 1. Create a Posting Policy

If you run a forum community you may wish create a posting policy that expressly prohibits the kind of content that Google's AdSense program prohibits. It's a good idea to warn users that posts that violate your posting policy will have their posts removed and continued violation of your posting policy may result in revocation of posting privileges.

A posting policy is generally a good idea. The limits of that policy is up to you. But if you are going to show AdSense ads, the bare minimum is to prohibit the kinds of content Google lists as prohibited.

I personally like to go beyond Google's policy and ask community members to be respectful of each other. Many of my community members appreciate a safe place to go discuss their hobbies.

But that is of course not for everyone. So it's up to you to make your policies as loose or restrictive as you feel is appropriate. The limit to free speech is what Google has specified, if you are showing Google AdSense on your forum community.

Step 2. Remove Objectionable Content

It’s not enough to have a posting policy. The posting policy must be enforced. It’s a good idea to be proactive about removing prohibited content.

I am a moderator of WebmasterWorld’s AdSense Forum and have seen cases where a member stated they have been suspended for objectionable content even though the content had existed on the site for years.

One approach to being proactive is to do a site:search of your site and try as best you can to find and remove objectionable content.

Google’s video stated:

“We are always working hard to create an advertising network where users can feel protected and advertisers can trust that their brands will not be associated with content that is hateful, threatening, or disparaging.

“…We believe in fostering an environment where users, advertisers, and publishers can all thrive in a healthy digital advertising ecosystem.”

Watch the video. Understanding Policy: Dangerous or Derogatory Content.

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