Google Pulls Gemini AI Olympics Commercial After Backlash



Almost three months after Apple apologized for its Crush! ad and pulled it from TV, Google is doing the same for its Dear Sydney Olympics commercial.

In Google's July 26 commercial, the ad shows a father describing how much his young daughter admires U.S. Olympic hurdler, Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone. He uses Google's AI overviews to answer "how to teach hurdle technique" and Google's Gemini AI to write a fan letter on his daughter's behalf using the prompt: "Help my daughter write a letter telling Sydney how inspiring she is and be sure to mention that my daughter plans on breaking her world record one day. (She says sorry, not sorry)."

Gemini came up with a draft letter and the ad ends there. On Friday, however, Google pulled the ad, which played during ad breaks from the Olympics, after a week of pushback from viewers.

[embedded content]

A Google spokesperson told The Hollywood Reporter Friday, “While the ad tested well before airing, given the feedback, we have decided to phase the ad out of our Olympics rotation.”

Shelly Palmer, professor of advanced media in residence at Syracuse University’s S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications wrote in a July 28 blog post that the ad is “one of the most disturbing commercials I’ve ever seen.”

“I flatly reject the future that Google is advertising,” he wrote. “I want to live in a culturally diverse world where billions of individuals use AI to amplify their human skills, not in a world where we are used by AI pretending to be human.”

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The media also bashed the ad.

TechCrunch noted that if the ad happened in reality, McLaughlin-Levrone would have received a pile of letters that sounded the same.

NPR pop culture correspondent Linda Holmes asked “Who wants an AI-written fan letter?” on social media. *The Washington Post*‘s Alexandra Petri said the ad made her want to “throw a sledgehammer into the television” when she saw it.

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