

Twitch bans stream sponsor overlays, and “I’ve never seen creators so pissed”

Enlarge / Visual examples of the kinds of “burned in” sponsorships that Twitch’s new guidelines won’t allow.

reader comments

69 with

A recent update to Twitch’s guidelines restricts many kinds of overlaid ads that streamers can sell and insert on top of their own content. And while Twitch now says it “missed the mark with... policy language” that was “overly broad,” many major streamers are still up in arms over a policy they say could severely affect their ability to make money from content on the popular Amazon-owned streaming platform.

In a June 6 update to its Branded Content Policy guidelines (that Twitch says it will start enforcing on July 1), the platform said that so-called “burned in” videos, display banners, or audio ads are not permitted on the platform. These ad formats are popular with many major streamers, who sell a portion of their screen real estate as part of overall branded stream sponsorship deals.

While basic sponsor logos will still be allowed to be shown on these streams, those sponsorships “are limited to 3% of screen size” under the new guidelines. That could be a problem for some disabled streamers because, as blind streamer Steve Saylor pointed out, that size “isn’t accessible for low vision users as it is too small for overlays and even smaller on

mobile.”

Featuring sponsored products “in the background” of streams is still allowed under the new guidelines, prompting some streamers to create cheeky examples of streaming rooms absolutely packed with branded merchandise or featuring large projector screens with huge logos that aren’t technically “burned in” to the stream. Other forms of “branded content,” such as playing a sponsored game, discussing sponsored products, or including links to sponsored sites in chat, are still allowed under the new guidelines.

Advertisement

I’m not allowed to put logos directly in OBS that are over 3% of the screen size but I AM allowed to showcase products in the back of my setup.

Welcome to the future of streaming. How many @LogitechG products can you spot? pic.twitter.com/rT9fRbldJh

– Anne Munition (@AnneMunition) June 6, 2023

The kinds of “burned in” ad deals Twitch prohibits are distinct from Twitch’s standard interstitial ads, which the platform inserts into streams at timed intervals. They’re also separate from the kinds of stream subscriptions that viewers can buy for certain platform benefits.

That’s an important distinction because Twitch generally takes a 50/50 split of all revenue from those “official” platform-level sponsorships. The kind of branding deals that use “burned in” ads, on the other hand, generally pay money directly to the streamer without Twitch getting a cut.

An instant backlash

Popular MMO streamer Asmongold exemplified the strong reaction to the news among many major Twitch streamers. “This is a

legitimate situation where streamers should consider boycotting Twitch or moving to other platforms,” he said on Twitter.

I don't say it lightly but I think this is a legitimate situation where streamers should consider boycotting Twitch or moving to other platforms

Making common and harmless forms of advertisement literally against ToS so Twitch can monopolize more of streamers income
<https://t.co/LgofvJKnWo>

– Zack (@Asmongold) June 6, 2023

“There is no reason for Twitch to do this other than to monetize, monopolize and take advantage of smaller streamers,” Asmongold continued in a streamed message Tuesday. “This is fucking everybody over in a way that does not need to happen. So yes, I will move to another platform non-exclusively... if this goes through. I will actively start pursuing a deal.”

<https://arstechnica.com/?p=1946111>