

YouTube's new gaming policy will allow creators to produce more violent footage



A new YouTube policy taking effect today, December 2nd, will allow creators with a focus on gaming to upload videos that contain simulated violence without worrying about being automatically hit by age-restriction gates.

The company's new policy for gaming is already how YouTube treats other scripted entertainment formats, like television and movies. It will allow future gaming videos that include scripted or simulated violence to possibly be approved directly without an age-gate. That means those videos will be open to everyone, not just those with an account stating they're over the age of 18. If the violence is extreme and the sole focus of a video, like a finishing move in *Mortal Kombat*, the video may still be age-gated.

Overall, the policy means there "will be fewer restrictions for violence in gaming," but YouTube claims it will "still maintain our high bar to protect audiences from real-world

violence,” according to a product update.

The new policy doesn’t apply to advertisement guidelines, though. If a video is considered too violent for advertisers, even if it’s fine by YouTube’s standards, it still runs the risk of being demonetized. YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki knows this is an issue for creators, many of whom rely on YouTube’s AdSense program to earn a living. She addressed those concerns in a recent letter to creators.

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“We’re working to identify advertisers who are interested in edgier content, like a marketer looking to promote an R-rated movie, so we can match them with creators whose content fits their ads,” Wojcicki wrote. “In its first month, this program resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in ads on yellow icon videos [referring to an icon that appears to creators when their videos are demonetized].”

YouTubers have aired their frustrations with YouTube’s advertising system as it pertains to gaming content for years. Many gaming YouTubers have suggested that unless they’re playing something family-friendly – like *Minecraft* or *Fortnite* – their videos are unlikely to receive ads.

When moderator and well-known YouTube creator Matthew “MatPat” Patrick asked Wojcicki at a recent gaming summit about demonetization problems facing game-centric creators, she admitted that some advertisers are wary: “YouTube as a platform, we act on behalf of our advertisers,” Wojcicki told Patrick. “So I looked at what advertisers want to advertise on, they opt out of topics like sensitive subjects. Gaming is actually not high up on the list. Gaming is a relatively newer area for advertisers. We’ve actually been trying to invest in advertisers understanding why this is an important vertical.”

For now, it’s one step at a time.

<https://www.theverge.com/2019/12/2/20992607/youtube-gaming-policy-update-violence-advertising-monetization-matpat>