

# Google takes aim at hated auto-play video ads

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It may come as a surprise that the video ads that pop up and yell at you when you visit many websites are not considered the most annoying form of online advertising.

But they run a very close second.

Now Google, whose rapacious domination of digital advertising has pushed desperate publishers into gathering revenue via ads people hate, is testing a feature that would allow users of its Chrome browser on desktops to mute these ads before they start shouting.

"This will give you more control about which [website](#) is allowed to throw sound at you automatically," Google's "Chrome Happiness Evangelist" Francois Beaufort wrote on Google+.

The Mountain View search giant is allowing the public and developers to join its testing of the feature through its experimental browser Chrome Canary, by turning on the "--enable-

features=SoundContentSetting" switch, Beaufort said.

To mute the ads, users adjust the settings for a particular website so the sound is shut down.

"Once you mute a website, it won't automatically play videos with sound again until you un-mute it," the Independent reported Aug. 28.

Whether Google, which is projected by eMarketer to gobble up 41 percent of U.S. digital ad revenues this year, will make this change for Chrome is uncertain. But doing so would no doubt please the masses: this type of ad is hated more than any other, except for the "modal" ads that serve up an advertisement as soon as you open a website, and bar access to the content until it's clicked off, according to a June report from user-experience research firm Nielsen Norman Group.

On a scale of one to seven, with seven representing the most disliked ads, the shouting videos came in at 5.79, just below the most-hated modals at 5.82, according to NNG's survey of 452 U.S. adults.

Here's some advice to online publishers from NNG: "Pro-tip: don't run these types of ads if you want people to like you."

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