

Google is sick of the AdNauseam ad blocker, apparently

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Source: adnauseam.io

Google has welcomed 2017 with a blow to privacy on the Internet by kicking the AdNauseam ad blocker extension out of the Chrome store, and blocking users from manually installing it.

AdNauseam is an open-source ad blocker that has been around since 2014, but with a difference. In addition to blocking ads, it also hinders tracking by obfuscating the user-agent, blocking cookies and most importantly, clicking on every ad on the page to pollute users' data profiles with fake visits that renders tracking attempts futile.

Result: AdNauseam by default lets through the few clean ads that do not engage in any user tracking or identification.

The developers said that they have written to Google asking for an explanation and were told that AdNauseam had breached the Web Store's terms of service, which states: "An extension should have a single purpose that is clear to users..." However, Google provided no details as to how many purposes it thinks AdNauseam has that would cause it to run afoul of the rules.

A **statement** on the developer website said, "To be clear, AdNauseam has a single purpose which we believe to be readily apparent to users; namely to fight back against the mass surveillance conducted by advertising networks, of which Google is a prime example. We can certainly understand why Google would prefer users not to install AdNauseam, as it directly opposes their core business model, but the Web Store's Terms of Service do not (at least thus far) require extensions to endorse Google's business model. Moreover, this is not the justification cited for the software's removal."

More worrying, the statement said, is how Google can simply disable Chrome extensions it does not like, leaving users without any recourse of action.

"Google's grip over Chrome users is a forceful one," the statement concluded.

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