

YouTube plans to interrupt clips with adverts

By Ciar Byrne, Arts and Media Correspondent

Set up by friends as a way to share wedding videos, YouTube has rapidly expanded into a global phenomenon which allows people to watch everything from home videos to classic comedy clips online with no charge. But yesterday the shadow of commercialism fell upon the free-spirited creativity of the Google-owned website when it announced that it is to start showing ads during video clips.

Revenues from advertising could justify the \$1.65bn (£830m) that Google paid for YouTube in November 2006. Founded in 2005 by Chad Hurley and Steve Chen, YouTube is the world's most popular video-sharing website.

The ads, which are 80 per cent transparent, will appear at the bottom of the screen 15 seconds into a clip. If the user wants to remove the ad, they can do so, and after 10 seconds it will disappear automatically. They can also choose to view the ad by clicking on it, and the video they are watching will pause while the ad plays. Other methods of advertising were rejected after research showed they were unpopular. The methods included showing a brief commercial before the video clip started. The longer the ad lasted, the more people abandoned the site.

The service has been tested by a total of 20 advertisers on 200 videos, including a Warner Music Group commercial, which allowed users to browse through the company's latest CD collection, running on one of its own music videos and an ad for NewLine hairspray running on a video from Ford Models. Advertisers will pay \$20 for each 1,000 views of their ads.

At present, YouTube is only introducing advertising in the US with a select number of its commercial partners. But it plans to introduce advertising in the UK and elsewhere in the near future.

The Independent
23 August 2007