

Tell HN: Facebook Messenger is testing in-call video ads

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A few minutes ago I was calling my family, and had a 15-second video ad after they picked up. According to them, they saw the ad too.

Do you think this is a case of A/B Testing, or are the ads here to say?

Picture for reference: <https://imgur.com/a/ddddPAm>



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Assuming this is true, who comes up with ideas like this?

If I was an advertiser do I really want to pay to have my ad (video nonetheless) shown to someone while they're actively trying to have a phone call? As a user, I'd just be pissed off at the advertiser plus im not looking at my screen when talking.

I guess technically this increases ad "views" metrics. But advertisers are just wasting their money. I hope the fact that Meta is testing changes like this causes advertisers to re-evaluate the risks of using FB advertising.

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I am certain the advertisers love this. All ads are intrusive, and generally the more intrusive the more expensive.

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Yes but intruding into private audio calls is something users would be heavily suspicious of. It's not hard to imagine a non technical users thinking "OMG they're showing me ads based on my calls".

Also its one thing to show an intrusive ad on a screen that the user is actively looking at (that might actually be effective), and another to show an ad on a screen that 95% of users are not looking at.

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Ads are often (if not always) shown to users who are actively trying to do something else. Like watching a video or reading an article. Why should this be different?

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> video or reading an article

Setting aside that people load their browsers up with ad blockers to avoid those too, they're also async experiences that have no real-time social dynamics involved with them. Video calls are interpersonal and interruptions are highly problematic.

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Yes, but in the cases you mentioned the user is interacting with the same pane of glass. In this case, the user's interaction is voice, not the screen.

Also not to mention that calls are very private. And the impression it gives to consumers that their call is being used for ads or even tracking.

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Look I get that people love to shit on Signal because its not perfect, but this is the main reason I use it to call and message my family. It's a viable alternative to insane shit like Messenger and you should consider having your family members install it. It's incredibly easy to use.

Cue someone below me talking about how they set up a Matrix or XMPP server for grandma and its 'so easy' once you get the presence handshake working and if you're using a specific set of clients that support the right features.

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This makes 0 sense to me. There's literally no lock in with FB messenger.

The second I get a video ad - that's it for FB video calls for me.

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We use fb for the family calls. This will add years to the project of being able to get grandma on a call without difficulty and I'm not sure she has that kind of time. I'm only half joking.

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This is interesting. It sounds like Facebook is potentially looking under the couches, so-to-speak, for spare change by doing this. I also wonder if other comms apps are going to be doing this too?

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Zoom has the audacity to show me (a paying Zoom subscriber) ads in the UI and at the end of calls. It's infuriating, even more so since it's ads for nothing I'd ever consider using.

In UI: <https://cs.joshstrange.com/zTpdIC>

End of call, always on top, popup: <https://cs.joshstrange.com/BizVwE>

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yakattak 11 minutes ago | [root](#) | [parent](#) | [next](#) [-]

This is annoying but advertisements tailored to the product you're using aren't nearly as offensive to just a random ad for some cheap wish.com product, interrupting your video call.

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First-party upsells aren't at all uncommon in paid products. That's very different than what Facebook is doing.

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that's amazing... there are people in a meeting room at facebook believing this will increase revenue and the product owner of fb messenger said yes. lol

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ergonaught 12 minutes ago | [parent](#) | [next](#) [-]

Because consumers have a stellar track record of rejecting user-hostile decisions?

May as well try it. People are swallowing everything else.

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I don't think that said PO said yes naturally, I think he said yes forcefully.

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If it's true, it's a hilariously bad decision

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Coming to Whatsapp soon

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And coming to Skype or Zoom or WebEx or some other competitor: a notification that "Unlike some of our competitors, we promise never to intrude into your calls"

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We will never merge data from WA and FB!

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Bonus points if the ad preceding your next conversation is uncannily relevant to what you were talking about last time.

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Interesting find. One might argue that ad-tech went too far on this one if they are tracking conversations to place the "right" ads. Some random thoughts: Would the ad be different for caller / recipient? Why would an advertiser place their ad there while there are "safer" places on Amazon, Apple, Netflix, Disney, etc? Are ad-tech business models at the end of the innovation cycle? What's coming next?

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Its a win-win. Less bandwidth costs -> cost reduction. Higher revenue. More, more money.

Sounds like someone deserves a promotion. Just look at the right numbers for your arguments.

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I need to say, that I would probably lost my marbles if video call application would do anything like that.

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That's a f no from me dawg. They can add this to every video service out there and I'll happily set up a SIP PBX. Not happening.

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Wait, what? On a *private* person to person call? Curious if this will be a thing on cell phone calls next. This seems like a great way to kill off a platform.

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Is it going to display ads based on the conversation of the call?

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Time to move the family chat to Telegram.

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I suspect this will be the final straw for many users, myself included.

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I bet this is some MBA's idea

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