Intelligent Flash pause in Chrome update will improve battery life

June 5 2015, by Nancy Owano

Aw, snap. Amsterdam-based reporter Owen Williams last month wrote "Why I'm breaking up with Google Chrome," citing his reasons.

"Most Chrome users can relate to this: you have a bunch of important

tabs open, your laptop's fans start to sound like a rocket taking off, your computer slows to a crawl, and finally it crashes, losing everything." In the past few years, he said in *The Next Web*, he stuck with Chrome but said "it became a memory hog, unstable and a major drain on battery life ." He said his major "bugbear" was "Chrome's energy usage."

Change is coming. Better battery life for your laptop—that is what the Google Chrome group has been working on, and on Thursday posted news of an update to Chrome that can do just that.

The update is all about Adobe Flash. The latter allows pages to show rich content but may put a squeeze on the battery. Tommy Li, software engineer and power conservationist, said they have been working with Adobe on the goal of improved power efficiency. Result: If you are on a page that runs Flash, said Li, "we'll intelligently pause content (like Flash animations) that aren't central to the webpage, while keeping central content (like a video) playing without interruption." Intelligently? What if they pause something you were really interested in? Then "you can just click it to resume playback," Li said.

The update significantly reduces power consumption, he stated.

"It will also stop annoying auto-playing videos from starting in the background and startling me," commented Frederic Lardinois in *TechCrunch*. He said the feature worked as in his brief tests and blocked a number of Flash ads on article pages from running in the background. Given that a lot of this Flash content comes in the form of ads, he said, "this is definitely an interesting decision on Google's part."

Sebastian Anthony in *Ars Technica UK* also reported on Friday that in their brief testing, "the 'important plug-in content' feature seemed to do a good job of blocking Flash ads."

The feature was enabled by default starting Thursday on the Chrome Beta channel release and will be rolled to everyone else on Chrome desktop soon. Blair Hanley Frank of the IDG News Service said the "soon" could happen as soon as September. An AdWords posting on Thursday said, "As soon as September this setting will be turned on by default so Chrome users can enjoy faster performance and view more content before charging their batteries."

Li provided a link where you can go to manually enable it, to select "Detect and run important plugin content."

 More information: chrome.blogspot.com/2015/06/be … for-your-laptop.html

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