

COLUMNS

Advocates and opponents of the in-app ad blocker-pocalypse

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By A LUXURY DAILY COLUMNIST

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The mobile application ad blocking-pocalypse has been a hot topic of discussion lately, only emphasized by Apple's approval, and then dismissal of ad blocking app Been Choice. This ongoing dialogue regarding the usage of ad blockers in the mobile app ecosystem is only intensifying and with good reason: there are more than 150 billion monthly app downloads in the Apple App Store and Google Play app store in a market that boasts 3-plus million apps. In fact, Nielsen's recent study found that time spent in apps has increased 63 percent over the past two years.

Here is a breakdown of who supports such apps, and those who would rather keep them at arm's length.

Advocates

Your phone provider. Mobile Internet providers, a.k.a., phone companies, are bearing the rising costs of Internet infrastructure due to the rising bandwidth consumers are demanding. This is partially because advertisements are using increasing amounts of said bandwidth when users browse the Internet.

Throw in in-app advertisements and you have unhappy phone companies that are not getting a piece of the mobile advertising pie.

This frustration has acted as the catalyst to providers, such as Digicel, offering ad blockers for their customers to improve their Internet experience. These ad blockers work on both mobile Web and within apps.

Unanswered questions. However, it is yet to be seen how these providers will bring in revenue from such tools. Will they charge a fee for using their ad blockers? Will the ad block software they offer pay "ransom" and become unblocked? Will industry regulators (governments) allow these providers to add their own ads?

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Taking a bite sort of. In addition to phone companies, are ad blocking companies that promise a cleaner user experience. As previously mentioned, Apple has found itself in the middle of this debate and not just with their app store drama.

Apple's new iOS 9 update enables ad blocking, albeit only for content on a Web browser. This move suggests that the

company is nudging Web site publishers to develop relevant apps for iTunes which will eventually strengthen the iOS apps ecosystem and bring more content to iTunes.

Though Apple has not made up its mind to fully support or condemn ad blocking in general, the company's aforementioned decisions highlight them shying away from such software when it comes to apps specifically.

Opponents

The fighters. Challengers of the in-app ad blocking fight are obvious: app developers.

Advertisements have, and continue to be, the main source of income for this party and surely in-app ad blockers will damage their bottom line. This, in turn, will result in less app developers willing to create new apps based on a decrease in earning potential.

At the end of the day, welcoming in-app ad blocking software will mean less income for app developers, likely resulting in less apps developed. If in-app ad blocking becomes widely accepted, the ecosystem will be forced to develop new business strategies or flounder.

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