

COLUMNS

Ad-blocking racket kills \$32B display advertising business?

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There is nothing new to the concept of ad blocking. The initial industry shock of 2013 has long become a banal daily obstacle that most of us have learned to accept.

Despite increased market penetration, ad blocking has failed to stop the growth of display marketing, which remains the fastest-growing marketing medium and accounts for \$32.17 billion in spend.

Shakedown

Advertising tactics of the early Internet have warranted some necessary consumer protection technologies remember pop-ups? But, is all advertising evil? Should the consumer be protected from any and all ads?

Of course, any individual has the right to avoid exposure to online advertising. Ad-free sites allowing for that option do exist, but aside from Wikipedia and public utility types, all of them are paid.

Yes, any one can avoid seeing ads on television just pay for premium channel subscription or simply turn it off. The same goes for radio. So what makes the Web different?

Unlike other channels, the Web is intelligent and able to deliver relevant information, capable of honoring personal choices both in frequencies and topics. It is the only medium advanced enough to listen to user choices and adapt.

But the issue, however, is not with personal user choices. The issue is plain and simple extortion.

Setting standards

A code of standards is by all means necessary. But who should define the standard?

Consumers should have ability to define what is acceptable to them, based on a clear rating system.

Alongside with many others, we firmly support the Interactive Advertising Bureau in its relentless effort to regulate the industry. We completely agree: the only way to keep the ecosystem intact is to give consumers and publishers ability to chose the type of content they want to receive and promote.

Publishers and ad networks should not be held hostage by ad-blocking companies and support this racket. Consumers are losing out on content, their favorite Web sites are in jeopardy, and the industry is bleeding from it.

The spread of unregulated ad blocking escalates aggressive advertising. The competition for the remaining

inventory grows exponentially, and so publishers and ad networks will do everything they can to win the attention of the user.

This behavior means more aggressive ad technologies and unethical delivery methods.

As a result, the tendency to decrease disruptive ads, a trend over the past couple years, is now endangered.

BY ITS VERY definition, native advertising is relevant. Based on carefully evaluated user affinities, it provides engaging, seamless non-disruptive experience.

The only beneficiaries of blocking relevant content are ad-blocking companies holding information-delivery hostage to extort payment from the market at the expense of consumers.

The industry needs to stand with the IAB in its effort towards a sustainable, fair and clearly regulated advertising ecosystem.

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