

MARKETING

An open letter from the digital advertising community opposing Apple Safari changes

July 27, 2018



Apple tightens the screws on digital advertising appearing on Web sites accessed through its Safari browser

By STAFF REPORTS

An open letter from the digital advertising community

Apple recently announced a new set of changes to the default settings for its Safari browser that will further damage the consumer experience online and undercut the economic model that provides popular ad-supported content and services to millions of Americans.

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Apple already imposed a restrictive set of cookie controls in the Safari 11 browser last September that broke many of the traditional tools used for digital advertising. This new set of changes will further erode advertisers' ability to reach their customers with relevant advertising, chopping away at the economic model that subsidizes digital services and content for consumers. Moreover, Apple's changes reduce the effectiveness of established tools for consumer control by interfering with their functionality, and may also jeopardize the security tools used to stop criminals and fraud.

The undersigned organizations are leading trade associations for the digital advertising and marketing industries, collectively representing thousands of companies that responsibly participate in and shape today's digital landscape for the millions of consumers they serve, and we stand together in strong opposition to the arbitrary, corrosive, and unnecessary changes being imposed by Apple.

By weakening the economic model for the free Internet, Apple will further drive content into paid apps. Apple's intervention in the function of advertising raises costs and limits access to those same services and content to the small number of consumers who can afford them.

The changes announced by Apple will block tools used to support many online functions, including content personalization and advertising by forcing users to click through new popups to allow those tools to share their information. In doing so, Apple is adding to the pop-up blizzard that consumers rank as one of the most annoying online experiences, while depriving those websites of advertising revenue associated with those user visits.

Apple will also make it more difficult to identify users by the unique identifiers and configurations of their systems,

which will not only hurt advertisers' ability to reach the right consumers, but also limit the effectiveness of security systems and anti-fraud tools that use such identifiers. Even simple functionality such as frequency capping which limits the number of times a consumer sees an ad will be impaired by Apple's new tools.

Together with the changes announced last September, Apple's continuing drive to reduce the value and effectiveness of digital advertising poses a systemic threat to the economic foundation of consumer Internet services. Consumers will suffer in the short term from less relevant advertising and in the longer term from an Apple-mandated shift to paid content and services.

Signed,

American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's)

American Advertising Federation (AAF)

Association of National Advertisers (ANA)

Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB)

Network Advertising Initiative (NAI)

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