

A February 2017 e-Marketer report projects US desktop ad blocking at just over 28% with mobile penetration reaching nearly 12% by year end. The Digital Ad Industry, including the IAB, GroupM and the cross industry Coalition For Better Ads, of which we are charter members, believes there are a number of steps we can take to reverse the cycle of intrusive, annoying ads that drive consumers to install ad blockers, making them harder to reach with relevant, engaging messages.

The Coalition For Better Ads reached out directly to US and EU consumers, surveying over 25,000 web users to ask them what kinds of ads drive them to consider or adopt ad blockers. The results of the survey led to the recent publishing of the Better Ads Standards; 12 common formats like Auto-play Video with Sound, Large Sticky Ads, and Full Page Interstitials have been identified as falling below the algorithmic cutoff for fostering the will to install ad blockers among surveyed consumers. This research was released just weeks ago, GroupM is evaluating our use of these formats and will be developing a formal policy soon. The IAB is incorporating the Better Ads Standards into their LEAN scoring model, which will apply a quality score to publishers based on their adherence to the LEAN guidelines.

In addition publishers have begun to employ the IAB's DEAL program which endeavors to explain to ad blocker users that the free internet only works if its ad supported, and goes on to offer users an opportunity to subscribe to support their favorite publishers and rewards them with ad-lite experiences. Groupm is also working with the IAB and other media holding companies to institute new LEAN ad guidelines designed to load faster, respect data privacy, avoid covering content or holding it hostage with countdown clocks, and generally stop substituting annoyance for engagement.

Recent news reports have indicated that Google is planning to add an ad blocking feature to Chrome, the world's most popular web browser. While Google has yet to formally announce their plans, it is our belief that Chrome will be upgraded to detect and give the user an option to block just such annoying, intrusive ads as those identified by the Better Ads Coalition, of which Google is a member.

Premium publishers like the members of Digital Content Next are expected to benefit from the reduction in availability of low value, low cost highly intrusive long tail inventory that undercuts their value proposition and drives away their audience. Clients relying on digital media to generate meaningful, relevant engagement with customers and prospects will also benefit from the continued availability of key audience segments. This will be especially true in the growing mobile space where ad blocking rates are much lower and device turnover rate higher, providing the opportunity to recoup maximum reach with engaging, respectful advertising.