

Consumer Views Regarding Ad Blocking Technology

March 2016



Table of Contents

Purpose/Research Objectives/ Approach/Reporting Notes	3
Executive Summary	4
General Views Toward Online Ads	8
Protecting Oneself Online	13
Ad Blocking Software	20
Additional Online Protection	30
General Views Toward Advertising	36
Appendix	39

Purpose, Research Objectives, Approach, Reporting Notes

Purpose

- Better understand consumers' general online and privacy habits among Ad Blocker users.

Research Objectives

- Better understand consumers' views of advertising and online targeted advertising.
- Better understand what motivates consumers to protect themselves online and the actions to do so.
- Examine attitudes and motivations of using Ad Blocker software.
- Examine what a web site may be able to do to improve visitors' trust in their collection, management, and use of personal data.

Approach

- Participants were recruited via email from the comScore Online Research Panel.
- A one-day (24-hour) FocusSite discussions were held February 23, 2016.
- A FocusSite is a threaded online discussion which allows participants to engage in a moderated discussion over the course of the day.
- 57 people participated in the discussion.
- All participants were 18+, own a PC and mobile device, are frequent internet users, and took action to protect themselves online including using an Ad Blocker.
- Participants committed to participate at least 90 minutes over the course of the day, returning to the discussion as new questions, probes, and other participant comments were added throughout the day.
- All participants reside in the USA and received \$50 as an incentive for participation.

Reporting Notes

- Throughout this report, participants' comments are presented verbatim.
- Please consider this information qualitative and directional only.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

1. Participants' expectations of the ad experience were different in an online environment than in other ad-serving environments.

- Ads that impede an online experience were generally viewed as more annoying than print and TV ads.
- Pop-ups, large ads, un-skippable video ads, ads that unexpectedly play with sound, ads that delay content from loading and excessively repeated ads can negatively impact visitors' perceptions of the site and/or ad sponsor.

2. Participants were not well educated about why companies track their online behavior, but have a negative perception of tracking.

- Many people did not understand why and how deeply their online behavior is tracked, but feel that it is an intrusion of their privacy.
- While targeted ads seemed “creepy” to some, many prefer ads tailored to their interests.

Executive Summary

3. Participants did not use or understand all of the tools available to them.

- In addition to Ad Blocking, participants took a variety of steps to control personal data online including:
 1. Regularly clearing cookie and browser history
 2. Creating throw away email accounts
 3. Using strong passwords
 4. Running malware and antivirus programs
 5. Avoiding suspicious sites or emails
- Privacy and security capabilities were not major considerations when selecting browsers and search engines.
- There was generally little interest in browsers' private viewing and Do Not Track settings.
- Few were worried about blocking ads on mobile devices. Barriers to use include using valuable memory, slowing down a device and possible battery drain.
- There was much confusion as to what benefits some protective steps actually provide:
 - Ad Blocking software was seen as doing more than just preventing ads, but also guarding against malware and viruses while enhancing browser speed.
 - Regular cookie and history cleaning was thought to improve general computer performance and free up memory.

Executive Summary

4. Barriers seen to using Ad Blocking software included decreased computer performance, cost, missing possible ads of interest, not supporting a site that depends on ad revenue and being denied access to content on a few sites.

5. Participants want reassurance that their personal information is safe, but have little faith in “seals” to provide that reassurance.

- To build visitor trust, participants felt that sites must be transparent with what is being collected and why, and avoid sharing personal information collected from users.
- A third party “seal” indicating that a site meets specific data collection and personal data use standards would be ignored or discounted by most participants

General Views Toward Online Ads

Ads that impeded a visit often negatively impacted visitors' perceptions of a site and/or ad sponsor.

Most Annoying Ad Types

- Pop-up ads
- Ads that take up the whole screen
- Ads you can't skip
- Ads that slow down the overall speed of the webpage
- Ads that play audio unexpectedly
- Seeing the same ads over and over again

Findings	Supporting Quotes
Annoying ads have negative effects on both the advertised brand and site owners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The site owner most likely gave permission so If I do not like the ad I can thank the owner for allowing it to be posted.- I would most probably be annoyed with the site owner because in my view, the site owner has ultimate responsibility with the content of his or her site. The company sponsoring the ad is just trying to get as much exposure as possible for the product or service being presented.- The majority of my irritation would be directed at the company sponsoring the ad, but the site owner put the ad up there!- I would more likely be mad at the company sponsoring the ad because the said website is just using ads so they can keep their web address free.

An excessive amount of ads or intrusive ads may discourage site visitation unless the content is unavailable elsewhere.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
Most participants exit or avoid sites that have an overwhelming amount of ads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I don't play the click through ad garbage. In this day and age I can get the information I'm looking for in several locations and I will find the path of least resistance to get it.- My time is valuable and I am not going to jump through hoops to view a website. I would give up, close the page and probably not come back to it.- I would probably just avoid the website in the future, there are many website in the web that offer the same or a better experience without having to go through a bunch of ads.- I would try reloading it if it was slow as a result and if it took too long I would probably just give up, close the page and never bother trying to visit the site again.
Some participants choose to click through ads when seeking specific content available only on that page.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ...if the site contained important information that I needed for some special purpose, I would most likely wait for the page to load and click through any ads- If the content that I am trying to reach is enticing or interesting enough (an article, coupon, or video I really wanted to access) I would wait for the page to load and click through the ads.- I dont avoid any website loaded with ads as long as it provides a good or service i like or find useful.

Many participants did not understand why and how their online behavior is tracked, but felt that it was an intrusion of their privacy.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
There was common curiosity about how and why internet users are being tracked.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What's the reason behind it, why do they need that information? I feel like I'm being spied on.- But I wish companies would be more open about the hows and whys of tracking.- I would have to know the why and more about them, but it might still cause me to be wary
Many participants simply did not like the idea of having their online behavior monitored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I don't like the word tracking, because we all know what that means. Someone is watching us. I would have to say on the websites I trust I don't mind it otherwise I don't like that someone is tracking me- we are already tracked enough I shouldn't have to worry about the sites I visit tracking my activities.- I do mind those sites that track you as I never know what the result is or how deeply involved they get in tracking you.

Mixed opinions of targeted ads; some felt they were “intrusive” or “creepy,” while others preferred them over general ads.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
Some participants disliked ads that reminded them of being tracked.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I find it creepy and invasive, and proof that my information is being sold. I don't like targeted ads at all.- I don't like the fact that they can track my previous searches and purchases- The ones that seem targeted directly to me are very creepy and intrusive. And I have literally never bought anything from an ad like that, so I don't see any benefits to them
Some participants had mixed feelings, wanting privacy yet also voicing a preference for targeted ads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I think ads targeted directly at me are a little creepy, knowing they are watching your every move. But at the same time I'd rather see ads that interest me than ads I don't care about at all.- I prefer ones geared toward what I like but it's creepy because clearly what I do is being watched if they can tell what I like- Targeted ads are more relevant, I'm more likely to notice them... I hate that they are tracking my searches. It feels very invasive- Those ads that are based directly to me are the ones that are tracking my browsing and what sites i go to. it's very unbecoming and does nothing but create irritation and frustration... Though i do prefer these ads compared to the more general ads. general ads have no advantage to me while targeted ads have about 5% advantage for me
Some others enjoyed the benefits of targeted ads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I look at targeted advertising as the silver lining of a dark cloud. I don't like ads in general, but if I'm forced to see them at least make it something that might interest me- You're being watched anyway, so now you just get the benefit of the ads towards your purpose- I prefer ads that appear to be targeted directly to me because they generally contain some type of information about a service or product that is pertinent to some aspect of my life based on previous search histories. In many instances, I am exposed to new information that is generally helpful in some way- I do prefer the ads that are targeted directly to me. I like the fact that they are showing me relevant stuff that I am interested in at that particular moment

Protecting Oneself Online

Participants took multiple approaches to protecting their privacy and personal data online.

What do you currently do to protect and control your personal data online?

"I have **anti spyware**, and **anti virus**, and **ad blocks**. i **clear my cookies** and **clean up my computer with free software everyday.**"

"I have several "**throw away**" **email addresses** I use just for sites that require that info for access which I don't plan to visit again. "

"I always use a **secured page** when I do any transaction and have **security software** that alerts me when any questionable sites appear"

"I use **strong passwords**, and **keep my anti-virus/malware/firewall current.**"

"I have a **blocker** and **anti viruses** program that protects me from tracking software."

"I use Norton **antivirus** and **security software**. I use **private windows** when using financial sites. And I **don't open emails from anyone I dont' know**"

"I only give my personal information to **sites I know are reputable.**"

"**Adblock** , **Kaspersky Internet Security** and **do not track** options"

"I try to make my **passwords as secure as possible.**"

"I frequently **clear the browser cookies and cache.**"

"I have **virus protection** and always try to **avoid fishy sites** and do a **monthly maintenance.**"

"I have an **ad blocker** and a **fire wall** and **don't visit unsafe sites.**"

Many participants regularly clear their cookies and browser history for perceived performance and privacy benefits.

Clearing cookies and history speeds up their computers

"It keeps my computers running smoothly and helps websites load up faster and increases my download/upload speeds."

"I try to clear my cookies often because it seems to speed up my web browsing. "

"I clear my cookies and browser history about once a month because my system seems to run slower when there are so many saved."

"It makes my computer load quicker."

"Things just seem to run better when you clear things out periodically."

"I clear cookies maybe once every couple of weeks. I clear browser history every few days. I just feel like it keeps things running smoother and faster"

Clearing cookies and history helps with privacy concerns

"I clear browser history that way no one in my household could see my history of course."

"Tracking cookies can be used to gather info about my browsing habits that's then shared between other websites."

"I don't like the thought of companies making money off of spying what I'm doing online."

Clearing cookies and history frees up space

"I have a large hard drive but I have found that lean is mean and I get rid of anything that I consider junk"

"I clear my browsing history every week or two to keep the size of my browser as small as possible which speeds up the loading of pages."

Browser selection was not based on privacy and tracking considerations.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
<p>Most participant chose a browser based on speed and functionality rather than the tracking settings or controls.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I have never chosen a browser based on those settings ... I have always relied on external programs to protect my online activities.- I choose browsers based on speed and ease . I use Chrome because of friends referred me to it and its fast and easy to use , but i dont know to much on my tracking settings in chrome.- I personally use Chrome because it is the fastest and allows you to have better add-ons than IE. Firefox is fairly similar when it comes to add-ons as far as I know. I personally use ad-blocker to keep from seeing a ton of ads.

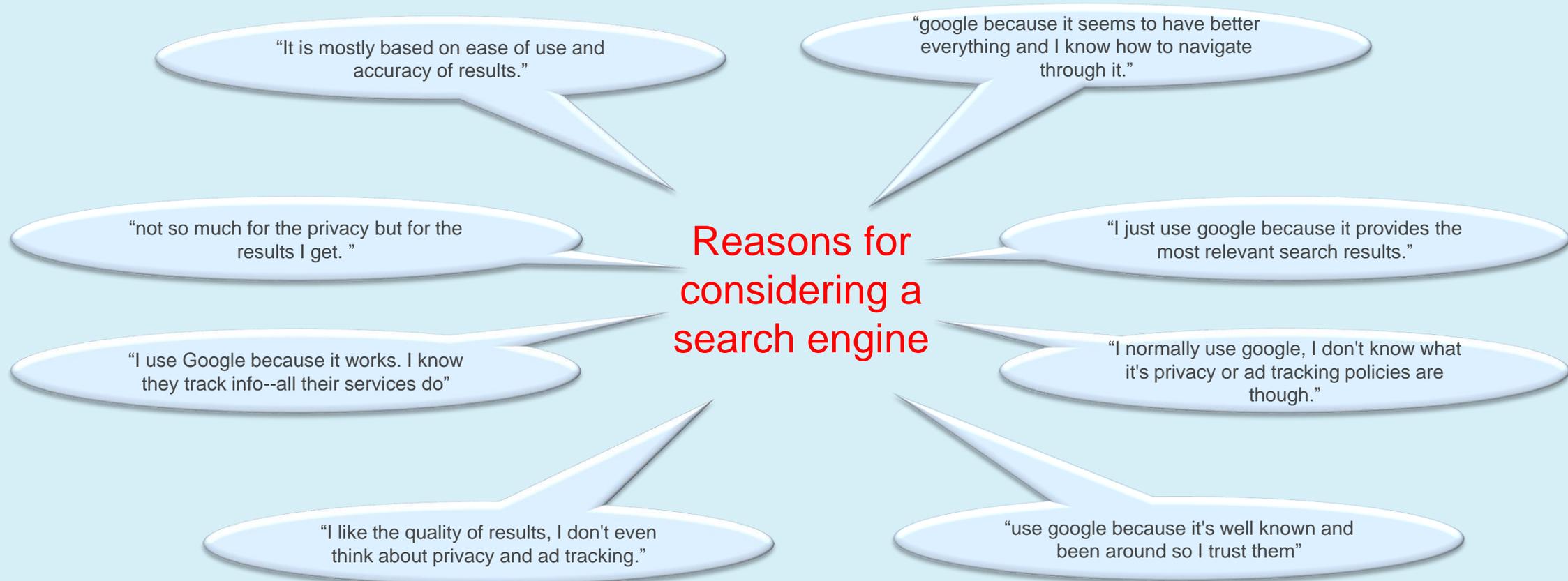
Participants were split between those aware and those unaware of browser private viewing settings, with few actively utilizing this feature.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
Many participants were unaware of private viewing settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I have never used these setting as I didn't know until you posted it. I will find out about them now.- No, I've never heard of this, but it sounds quite appealing.- I would have to research the advantages of it but I am really not computer literate to know the ins and outs of certain features.
Most participants who knew of private viewing settings had little use for them, but some liked the convenience and privacy provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I rarely use the private browsing ability. I'm just not that paranoid about about sites tracking my online activity.- I use this to watch adult content or to go to sites where i don't need prying eyes.- Yes im aware of the incognito option , I have used it because then you dont have to go back and delete you browser history- I have used it before but I don't use it frequently, I guess I don't use it much because I am a tiny bit unclear as to what the benefits of it are

Most participants were unaware of, or had little interest in, the Do Not Track feature. Those with experience questioned its effectiveness.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
Most had not heard of or have not used Do Not Track.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I have never heard of this. I would think if you turned it on no one could see what you were looking at- I have never heard of this. Judging by the name, I would guess it would provide similar benefits to the "Incognito" modes of web browsers. Namely, that it would keep you hidden from 3rd party trackers.- I do not think I have heard of the do not track feature... I would think it would not show my browsing history.- I've never heard of this feature. I guess it prevents your browser from tracking what you're doing on the internet- I have not heard of the 'Do Not Track' feature. I think this feature is similar to the private browsing mode where the browser usage is not tracked (like your IP address is not used, and/or browser cookies are not used).
Those with experience tended to question its effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I tried it before but I think it's pretty useless. It tells the website you visit you don't want to be tracked, but how often do you suppose websites listen to that?- I have heard of it and I do use it, but websites don't actually have to adhere to it. So it's pretty useless.- I have used this feature, but I am not really sure that it helps. Supposedly the browser sends a do not track request to a website when you visit it. There is a disclaimer on it though that it might not help, and I don't really think it does.
Use appeared to be tied to Firefox use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I have Mozilla (Firefox) and use the Do Not Track feature, but I still have quite a few cookies.....- I have it enabled in Firefox, and I think it's pretty much useless.- Yes, I use this feature in Firefox. Not sure how effective it really is, though.- I think I've heard that Mozilla has it. But I have never looked into it.

Participants did not consider privacy and ad tracking when selecting a search engine, primarily focusing on ease of use and accuracy.



Ad Blocking Software

Ad Block software was often seen as doing more than just preventing ads, but also guarding against malware and viruses while enhancing ones browser speed.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
<p>Many thought Ad Blocking software should block intrusive ads and pop-ups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- An ad blocking software should do exactly that, block ads from web pages.....- Ad blocking software removes or filters some ads. It will stop things like pop-ups. It should allow you to block certain things, like popups or ads with pictures or videos.....- Ad blocking software prevents ads from popping up on sites that I'm browsing. It also prevents ads from popping up when I'm watching youtube videos- Ad blocking software is supposed to prevent ads from popping up in your browser. My understanding is that it looks for specific urls and blocks them.- Block you from seeing ads but not sure it would block you being tracked.
<p>Many thought Ad Blocking software would also provide protection from viruses/malware.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- An ad blocking software would prevent you from getting viruses and Trojans.- I do believe that the ad blockers help because some of the ads may have malware or virus and by blocking these, the computer won't be exposed to them.- Not all ads are bad, but some come with Trojans/viruses- I do believe they can prevent malware and viruses but I do not believe any one blocker can be 100% complete- I think it would block software and ads that would give virus to your computers

Participants noted using a wide array of Ad Blocker programs, with many choosing Adblock Plus.

Many participants also used free browser add-ons.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
Many participants used Adblock Plus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I have used Adblock Plus and uBlock, because I got sick of ads absolutely EVERYWHERE, and once people started reporting problems with malware from flash ads, I decided to start using one to protect my computer.- I use ad blocker plus because it prevents ads from playing before I watch youtube videos- I use adblock plus because some sites have many ads that will slow down or crash my browser, which is really annoying.- I use an adblocker mainly to help protect me from ads that may contain viruses. I use Adblock plus
Many participants utilized browser add-ons for protection. Only a couple of participants responded that they have used Ghostery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I use the one that comes with Chrome.- I use Chrome's adblocking software. I've also used Firefox's as well.....- I use the free one that came with the Chrome browser, it works really well for me.- Firefox has a built in ad blocker. I appreciate it very much for unwanted disturbances.- I use in IE the Google toolbar pop-up blocker. In Firefox I use an Add-on, not sure which and on my phone I use one for my Android device Adblock Fast- I use Ghostery.....I actually like it. It's interesting to know exactly what's going on when it comes to the sites I visit.

There was no clear cut top motivator for using an Ad Blocker.

It is unclear whether the low rating for statement C is due to some participants interpreting that statement as referencing the negative impact of Ad Blocker software on battery power and not the intended context of the negative impact ads may have on ones battery power.

Mean Ranking	Statement
2.7	D. I am concerned about malware
2.9	B. They make the page(s) too slow to load
3.1	A. They are annoying and I just don't want to see them
3.3	E. I am concerned about tracking of my on-line activities
3.6	F. I am concerned about companies whose sites I visit sharing or selling my on-line behavior with other companies
5.4	C. They use up the battery of my laptop or mobile device too quickly

Malware concerns, loading speed and general annoyance with ads were often noted as the most important factors when selecting an Ad Blocker. However, some others viewed these as much less important in relation to other benefits.

Mean Ranking	Statement	Importance Rank (# of participants selecting each rank)					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
2.7	D. I am concerned about malware	16	9	9	12	3	3
2.9	B. They make the page(s) too slow to load	12	10	9	12	9	0
3.1	A. They are annoying and I just don't want to see them	15	8	6	7	10	6
3.3	E. I am concerned about tracking of my on-line activities	5	16	8	9	11	3
3.6	F. I am concerned about companies whose sites I visit sharing or selling my on-line behavior with other companies	4	9	15	9	8	7
5.4	C. They use up the battery of my laptop or mobile device too quickly	0	0	5	3	11	33

Protection against malware and viruses was the most important benefit of Ad Blockers to many participants.

Mean Rating:
2.7

D. I am concerned about malware

Findings

Select Verbatim

Many participants believed that Ad Blockers provide more protection than they actually do.

- Protects you from malware, and makes online browsing a LOT more pleasant in my opinion.
- more security and a reduced risk of some malware from installing itself and adobe and divx updates.
- I am not subjected to annoying pop ups that may lead to potential viruses or bugs.
- Well just like with virus protection software the advantage is simple you get to use your device and explore the internet with out fear that something is going to happen to you if you go to a "bad" site ie somewhere that has a virus or add tracking software to your pc without you knowing it.
- less chance of virus or hacking
- The biggest advantage to me is not having the risk of a virus/malware that may be brought to me through an ad.
- The biggest advantage would be improved computer security. Additionally, it also allows you opportunity to navigate through the web like maybe one wouldn't when fearing viruses.

Many felt that the main advantage of Ad Blockers is in boosting computer performance and blocking ads.

Mean Rating:
2.9

B. They make the page(s) too slow to load

Users believed they get various speed benefits from Ad Blocker use.

- Web pages load faster and the only content I see on a site is the content that I want to see.
- Speed of page loading is the only and main reason for me
- I go with option 1..... pages without ads do load faster and are consistent.
- Faster load time = more efficient.
- I believe a computer would run much smoother and faster when it doesn't have something popping up all the time.

Mean Rating:
3.1

A. They are annoying and I just don't want to see them

Some other users noted the primary intended purpose of Ad Blockers was the simple fact that they blocked ads.

- Advantages are not being bombarded with ads! Sometimes pop up ads can mess up your webpage, and if they are stopped this will help you have a smoother online experience
- The biggest advantage is not being distracted by ads that would constantly intrude on serious work or research.
- Massive reduction of Ads and the annoying ones. The reduction of drive by fly by ads that pop up.....
- The advantages is that they can be used to block popups. You aren't as annoyed when there are no pop up windows. You don't have to close them. They provide a more seamless and clean-lined streaming options.
- I think blocking pop ups that block the content you are trying to view is the biggest advantage.
- Being able to see the content i want to see. Not an ad covering my screen.....

Disadvantages of using Ad Blocking software included decreased computer performance, cost, missing possible ads of interest, not supporting a site that depends on ad revenue and being denied access to content on a few sites.

Slows down the computer

"slows computer down; might mask other things going on in the background."

"I think it is just a little slower in performance with the extra checking overhead, but it is worth for the safety and security."

"slowing down the device in order to block ads"

"Memory hog and slows things down to a snail's pace."

"The reduction in speed in loading is annoying and I get weary of dumping the cookies because of all this jazz I am not interested in seeing in the first place."

Have to pay

"Sometimes you have to pay. The free ones are ok, but not as good as the paid ones"

"Paying money for the service"

"having to pay for an ad blocker software is the only disadvantage."

"Sometimes the blocking software is a bit overzealous and actually blocks the content you came to see. Sometime the website detects the blocker and won't allow you to see the content until you unblock"

Being denied site access

Doesn't support the site owners

"If a small website I love is ad-supported and I'm blocking the ads, it can hurt their revenue."

"you don't get to support websites or smaller companies that rely on ads to generate revenue."

"The only disadvantage would be to not get a look at something one might be interested in....."

"You may miss out on seeing an ad for a product that could be useful to you."

Miss ads of interest

Some participants would turn off their blocking to access a site that limits or disallows access or to support a small site.

May turn off Ad Blocking to access content

“ I also can't use any of my shopping rewards portals without turning off ad blocker”

“I have, yes. It's usually for youtube vloggers that I love - they get paid from the commercial that plays before their video, which I can totally put up with watching if it ensues they keep making videos. :)”

“I have. Sometimes I will turn the ad blocker off for the site but it still thinks the blocker is on. I usually lose patience at that point and look for content elsewhere.”

“Yes. I frequently visit a website that has user forums for modifying and customizing golf carts. The site is supported by 4 or 5 vendors of golf cart parts and accessories. I feel that since they are providing financial support to keep the site up the least I can do is look at their ads.”

May turn off Ad Blocking to support a small site

“I have turned it off a few times to support smaller company websites.”

Many participants simply have not thought about using an Ad Blocker on their mobile device. Concerns included taking valuable storage space, slowing down a device and possible battery drain.

Memory

"I did not know there were ad blockers for mobile devices. I might look into it but if it takes up too much memory on my phone I won't download it."

"The amount of memory it takes would definitely matter."

"I have not really thought about it but on my phone and tablet space is limited so if an ad blocker took up a lot of space I probably would not use it."

"The amount of memory that an ad blocker app takes up would definitely be an issue on deciding whether or not to use it. It would have to work really well for me to consider using my precious phone space to keep it"

Run slower/cause issues

"I usually do not do this because when I did in the past, my phone seemed to run even slower."

"I have used an adblocker on my Nexus 7 tablet, but I uninstalled it. My browser would constantly freeze."

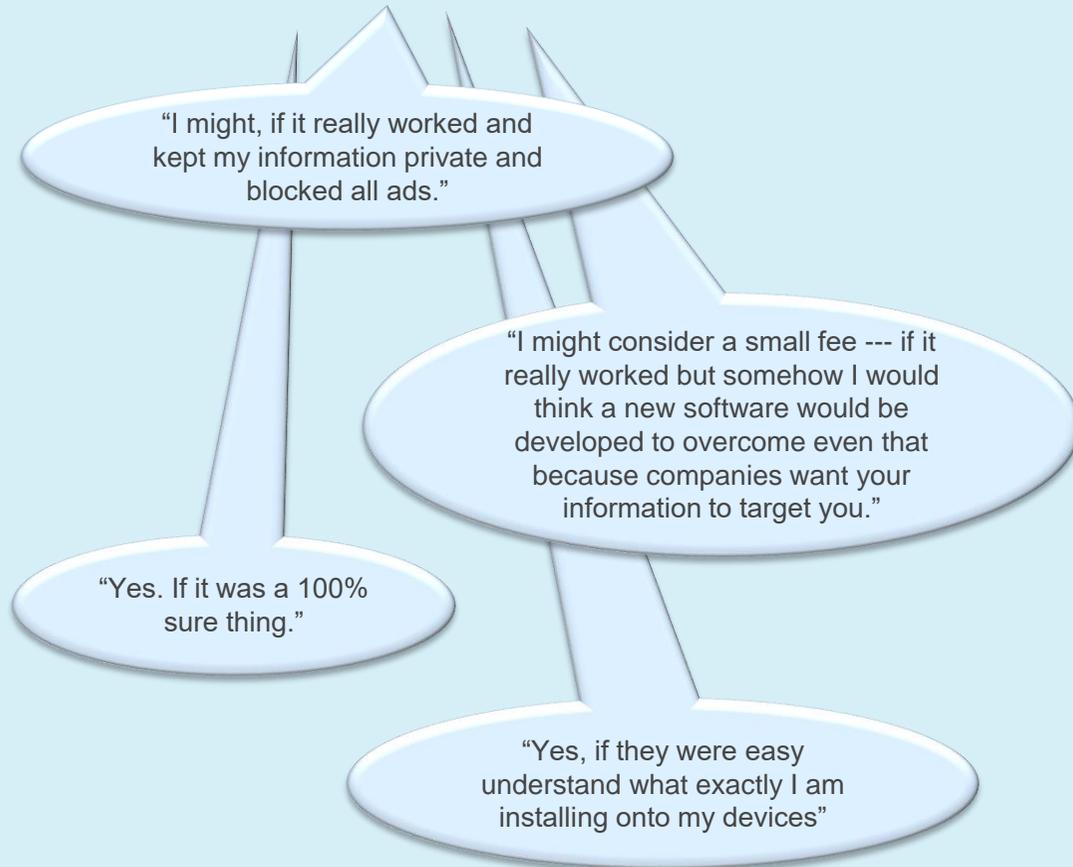
Battery

"I would love to use an ad blocker on my phone but I don't know of any. I worry about apps that I install draining my battery, so I have never tried one."

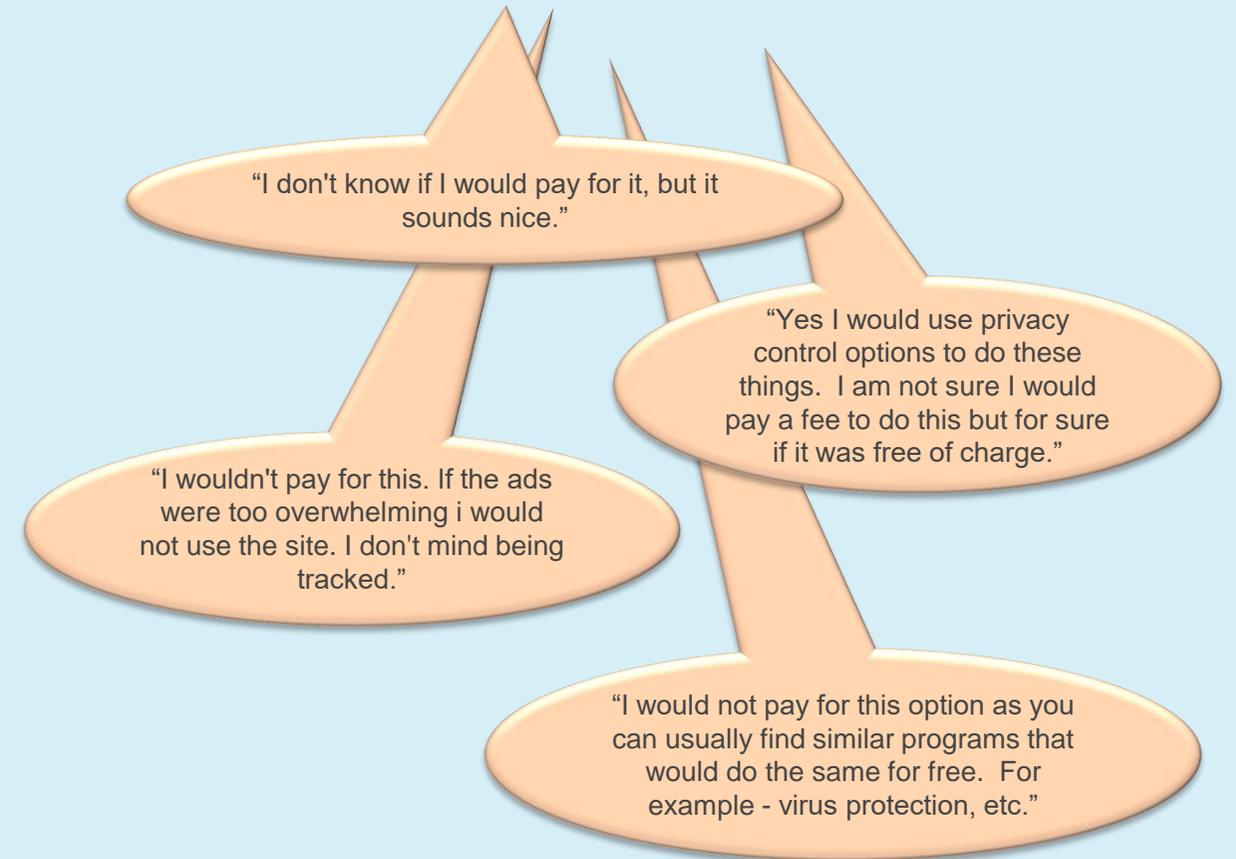
Additional Online Protection

Interest was high for additional privacy controls that could restrict ads, cookies, or browser histories from collecting online behavior, but participants were split in their willingness to pay for these benefits.

Yes, may pay



No, would not pay



Participants want transparency about data practices and are skeptical of some types of data sharing.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
Participants wanted to know what was happening with their personal information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Transparency is key! I feel better about you tracking me if I know about it and can find what you do with my information. I assume all collect info, so be upfront.- Transparency is always a good thing. But how do you know for sure that they are only using your info as they say they are?- Transparency up front would at least give the visitor the option to either continue on or bypass the site depending on their comfort level of having their information used.....- yes, transparent is important. I don't want to have to scope out and read the fine print. Just be upfront and honest with me.- Transparency is key. It needs to be a trusted and honorable site. If not --- my laptop will not even allow you to move on to surf the site.
Participants expected that any personally identifiable information would be kept safe and confidential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I don't think there is a way to use my info and me trust them I places always say they don't sell your info or use it for other purpose but I still get unsolicited junk mail email and phone calls- nothing the reality is they sell your personal information to the highest bidder and even if they went as far as to tell you what was sold and to who it doesn't change the fact that the place that bought it isn't going to have that same level of communication.....- If it was guaranteed that they wouldn't sell any of my information that they collected on me- Keep my information safe, that is my biggest concern, not selling my information to third parties.

A third party “seal” indicating that a site met specific data collection and use standards is ignored by many participants.

If the seal was from a well known and trusted third party some may find it helpful, but others would still wonder if the site had authorization to use the seal or if the requirements to earn the seal were too lax.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
<p>Some participants are wary of “third party seals” in general.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seals don't really do anything for me its like when you go to the super market and you see all these seals on various products the seals are a way of selling the product plain and simple they are purchased and created for that purpose and another site could so the same thing these seals don't give me confidence that a site is safe just like a seal wouldn't get me to buy a product at the store. Plain and simple just a marketing tool - I'm always leery of any "third party" involvement.
<p>Being from a known trusted third party would have a positive impact on some visitors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It would certainly lend more credence to their claim they are not collecting data for advertising purposes. Depending on who the third party is that giving the "seal of approval" - I trust the BBB.....if a site has it on i tend to check it out with the BBB - Yes, if I could verify that the "seal" was authentic and the trusted third part was operating independently of any of the commercial interests that they were monitoring
<p>Some others would question the legitimacy or value if standards for use are set too low.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No. There are a lot of "seals" out there that are not legit. Even some that are legit are from organizations that get paid by the producers of products and services, so the verification is basically worthless in my opinion. - The seal could be fake. A lot of sites use the BBB on the page and it's not even an approved seal for the site from the BBB - I wouldn't trust any. I think they are given out way to easily, not really trusted or tested - a seal really can be used by anyone. Not impressed by it - For all we know they paid somebody off for that seal

Participants were generally unfamiliar with the Adchoices icon.



Findings	Supporting Quotes
Only a few participants knew this icon represented Adchoices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Adchoices. You can actually set advertising preferences in ads with that icon. I don't, though. I don't see many ads using an adblocker- this is ad choice and i have spent hours trying to get this stuff off my PC, once it installs and believe me it does it without your consent now you see ads from websites you been to, i remember downloading malwear bites just to get rid of this. Alot of big sites use this my AOL email uses this hard to avoid and believe me i try- It's the Ad Choices icon. My ad blocker hides everything with it on there, so I never see it much less interact with it- Adchoices.. hmmm. Still not interested. I am on the internet for a specific reason - and sometimes wasting time on facebook and pinterest. But, I have no desire to look at ads or click on an icon to get more information
Guesses as to what this icon means were varied, sometimes with a negative connotation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I'm guessing that something is at risk.- I believe this is a warning sign usually the color red- I believe it's an icon telling you that you're being tracked and your online behavior is targeted- I'm not sure whether it's good or bad, so I don't know whether I would avoid it or not- Isn't that the logo for an online ad agency?- I could guess i stands for internet?- I thought that was the fast forward button!!

Given the wide array of free online content sources, very few participants were willing to pay for newspaper articles online.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
Free sources are generally available, negating the need for paid subscriptions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- do not pay for any website as most of the information is available in other ways - such as the actual paper delivery. I don't think I would pay for any of these services.- I don't currently subscribe to any websites that require payment. I doubt I would pay for extra content, since I can find so much content I need on the internet for free, so I just don't see a need to pay for it.- No I do not subscribe to any of them. I would never consider paying because there will always be some place to get information for free.- No I don't, and I probably wouldn't ever pay to read their content when I can probably browse around the internet and find the same information free.
Only a few participants indicated willingness to pay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I would only if that was the only place to get that particular content, and I wanted it bad enough.- I don't currently subscribe to any, but I might somewhere down the line.

Views Toward Advertising Generally

Participants may enjoy some humorous or catchy ads, but often avoid them by using Ad Blocking programs or recording TV shows.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
<p>Most participants enjoyed ads that were humorous and visually appealing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I enjoy advertising that includes humor and a twist or beautiful cinematography.- There are some with catchy songs or that are funny, that draw my attention.- ...sometimes they can be very entertaining and informative.- Advertising is generally annoying unless the content is actually funny or different
<p>Many participants agreed that online ads, particularly pop-up ads, were intrusive to their experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pop up ads are the worst because it will slow down my computer and hinder what I am trying to accomplish.- online ads tend to also pop-up at annoying times and block the content i am trying to view.- I am weary of clicking on pop up adds because I have gotten trojans in the past from doing so- some of these ads are really intrusive, some can't be clicked away, some try installing things.- ...pop ups are inexcusable and I consciously avoid returning to sites that use them-- especially mobile sites. Equally annoying are video ads with sound that hold up the loading of content
<p>DVRs were coveted for many reasons, including the ability to skip over the advertisements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- We use our DVR to be able to record shows and watch them at a different time. Being able to skip past the commercials is a huge added perk!- I mostly DVR shows for later viewing and fast forward through the commercials.- I can see the commercial while I am forwarding the dvr when I see something that interests me I will stop. But mostly to skip commercials.

Print and TV ads were generally thought of as less annoying than online ads.

Findings	Supporting Quotes
Compared to online ads, participants find print and television ads to be less annoying.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I notice that I pay more attention to ads in printed material ... maybe because I find them more honest and not thrown in my face.- Print media i can just look at and if not interested just turn the page, while on line slows my system down and takes my time as it is harder to get rid of.- I tend to enjoy ads in magazines, and if I don't like one I can just flip the page - I'm not forced to sit there and view it, you know?- The ads on tv are usually more interesting than the ads i see on my computer.- My comcast has ads on the cable channels and I am fine with that. They do not feel as intrusive as a website tracking me.
TV ads do not change the viewing behavior of most participants, as most choose to skip the ads with their DVR.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- I really don't take any steps to control it. It doesn't influence my TV provider decision at all.- The presence of ads have no effect when it comes to TV services I subscribe to. Ads don't affect me in the slightest when I view TV shows.- Commercials don't influence my TV choices. If I don't want to see them, I can always use my DVR to record a show then fast-forward through them.- The presence of ads really does not influence to any great extent what TV services I subscribe to because, at worst, the ads are a necessary evil to pay for the air time necessary to present the programming

Appendix

Appendix – Discussion Group Interface

The screenshot displays the COMSCORE Online Discussion interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Discussion', 'Project Setup', 'Users', and 'Reports'. The left sidebar lists discussion topics, with '5.3' highlighted. The main content area shows a discussion thread for '5.3' with the following posts:

- Moderator (Project Manager):** Would you give preference to sites that had a "seal" from a trusted third party for their collection and use of personal data for advertising purposes? (2/23/2016 2:42 PM)
- 2lark (Group 2):** No. There are a lot of "seals" out there that are not legit. Even some that are legit are from organizations that get paid by the producers of products and services, so the verification is basically worthless in my opinion. (2/23/2016 2:45 PM)
- Moderator (Moderator):** Thanks lark. Are there any "seals" that you would trust? What about the rest of you? (2/23/2016 3:20 PM)
- 2killdeer (Group 2):** I wouldn't trust any. I think they are given out way to easily, not really trusted or tested. (2/23/2016 3:24 PM)
- 2lark (Group 2):** No. (2/23/2016 3:49 PM)
- 2hen (Group 2):** Better Business Bureau (2/23/2016 3:54 PM)
- 2gnatwren (Group 2):** i agree bbb (2/23/2016 8:02 PM)
- 2greenlet (Group 2):** (2/23/2016 9:35 PM)

Annotations on the screenshot include:

- A red box at the top right: "Users are not able to see other responses until they answer the initial question in the discussion thread"
- A red box in the middle right: "Participants were assigned anonymous usernames of birds"
- A red box at the bottom left: "Discussion topics were posted as the group progressed"
- A red box in the middle: "Conversation"

Appendix - Participant Profile – Group 1

Username	Gender	Age	Employment Status
1anhinga	Female	55-64	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1ani	Female	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1antthrus	Female	35-44	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
1antwren	Female	35-44	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1aracari	Female	35-44	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1barbthro	Male	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1barnowl	Female	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1becard	Male	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1bellbird	Female	45-54	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1bittern	Male	45-54	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1bluejay	Female	45-54	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1cacique	Female	45-54	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
1caracara	Male	45-54	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
1cardinal	Female	55-64	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1catbird	Male	35-44	Desktop/Laptop adblocker

Username	Gender	Age	Employment Status
1chickade	Female	45-54	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1cormoran	Female	45-54	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1cotinga	Male	35-44	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
1crake	Female	25-34	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
1crow	Male	55-64	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1curlew	Male	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1dacnis	Male	45-54	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1dove	Male	35-44	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
1dunlin	Male	35-44	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1eagle	Female	18-24	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1egret	Male	18-24	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1elaenia	Male	35-44	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
1euphonia	Female	35-44	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
1falcon	Female	35-44	Desktop/Laptop adblocker

Appendix - Participant Profile – Group 2

Username	Gender	Age	Employment Status
2flamingo	Female	35-44	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2geese	Male	55-64	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
2gnatwren	Male	35-44	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
2grackle	Female	35-44	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2grassqui	Female	65+	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2grebe	Female	55-64	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2greenlet	Male	35-44	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2grosbeak	Male	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2gull	Male	45-54	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
2harrier	Male	45-54	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2hen	Male	45-54	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2heron	Male	45-54	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2ibis	Female	25-34	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
2jacamar	Male	18-24	Desktop/Laptop adblocker

Username	Gender	Age	Employment Status
2jacana	Female	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2jacobin	Male	18-24	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2jay	Male	55-64	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2killdeer	Female	25-34	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
2kingfish	Male	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2kiskadee	Female	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2kite	Female	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2kiwi	Female	45-54	Desktop/Laptop + Mobile adblocker
2lapwing	Male	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2lark	Female	35-44	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2linnet	Female	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2macaw	Female	25-34	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2mallard	Female	35-44	Desktop/Laptop adblocker
2manakin	Male	35-44	Desktop/Laptop adblocker