

In Germany, Use of Ad Blockers Driven by Security, Privacy Concerns

Article



Germany registers higher levels of ad blocking than any other country in Western Europe. Most residents dislike digital ads to some degree. That has combined with

concern about personal privacy and security, leading to the widespread use of software that blocks ads or limits tracking of online behavior.

In 2018, an estimated 21.4 million web users in Germany will block ads on a digital device at least monthly—equivalent to 32.0% of internet users and 26.2% of the population. More than one-third of web users in Germany will use an ad blocker in 2019.

Ad Blocking Users and Penetration in Germany, 2015-2019					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Ad blocking users (millions)	15.2	17.1	19.6	21.4	22.8
—% change	18.1%	12.7%	14.5%	9.4%	6.2%
—% of internet users	23.9%	26.3%	29.6%	32.0%	33.8%
—% of population	18.7%	21.0%	24.0%	26.2%	27.8%
<i>Note: internet users of any age who access the internet at least once per month via any device (including a mobile device) with an ad blocker enabled</i>					
<i>Source: eMarketer, Aug 2018</i>					
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While the market is approaching maturity, there’s still potential for growth, as ad blocking spreads beyond early-adopter cohorts to teens and seniors. Younger adults continue to lead the ad blocking charge in Germany, with 49.5% of 18- to 24-year-olds and 48.0% of internet users in Germany ages 25 to 34 using ad blockers in 2018.

Beyond finding digital ads disruptive and a waste of time, many web users in Germany dislike the idea of their personal information being gathered and shared by publishers and advertisers. A majority also think there should be better safeguards surrounding the data that individuals reveal online.

A 2018 AudienceProject study found that 49% of internet users in Germany were annoyed by ads on websites; just 9% of respondents viewed them positively. An even higher share—68%—disliked ads in online video clips.

Moreover, web users in Germany typically disapproved of digital ads for several reasons. Of those surveyed, 59% said sites were more manageable without banners, 46% of respondents disliked ads containing irrelevant or offensive material, and 28% of internet users in Germany said websites with ads took longer to load. Concern about behavioral tracking allied to advertising is widespread, too. According to AudienceProject, 45% of web users in Germany said they didn’t want their online activities to be tracked.

eMarketer's latest report, "Ad Blocking in Germany: Sizing Up Europe's Largest, Most Privacy-Conscious Market," breaks out digital users in Germany who use ad blockers by demographic and device.

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eMarketer analysts discuss where we are with ad blocking. How many people are blocking ads in Europe and the US? What would make them less likely to block ads? How have the new GDPR rules effected the ad blocking movement? And where does ad blocking go from here?

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