

Shutdown of third party YouTube app 'Vanced' raises questions about ad blockers

Article

The news: YouTube Vanced, a third-party app that allowed users to access YouTube Premium features and watch YouTube ad-free, announced it is shutting down after an implied

cease and desist from **Google**, [per](#) 9to5Google, revitalizing discussion around the use of internet ad blockers.

How it works: The popular app allowed users to customize their experience on YouTube, offering them access to features that YouTube locks behind its Premium subscription. But what likely landed it in the most hot water was that it allowed users to have an ad-free YouTube experience.

- Most popular ad blockers bar YouTube ads by default already, but Vanced's ad blocking went a step further. Users could block info cards, ending screens, watermarks, and even natively implemented ad reads within the videos themselves—the kind that allow companies to advertise even through regular ad blockers.
- Vanced users could also customize their YouTube homepage experience, allowing them to disable promotions and tabs that showed movies available for purchase. Users could also customize their ad experience on a channel-by-channel basis by creating “allow lists” for advertisements.

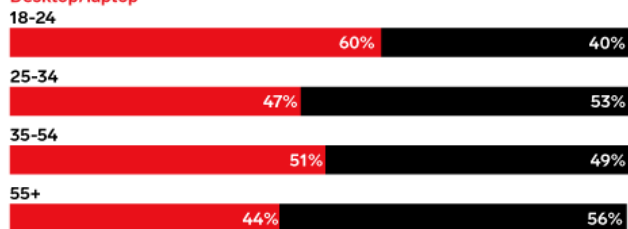
The prominence of ad blockers: Ordering Vanced to be shut down is a logical step from Google, as advertising forms the basis of its business. But the news of the shutdown—and the app's popularity—are a reminder of just how popular and widely used ad blockers are across web browsers.

- Ad blockers are a core part of the internet experience for a majority of internet users. According to BlockThrough, **51%** of male internet users and **30%** of female internet users in the US across age groups use an ad blocker. The use of ad blockers is more prominent on desktops and laptops than on phones: Just **over 50% of US adults 18 and up** use an ad blocker on computers, with younger people using them more prominently, [per](#) CivicScience.
- The [most popular ad blocker](#) on Google Chrome claims to have **over 60 million users**. That's a lot of people using ad blockers that have a heavy influence in shaping internet behaviors. A 2021 [survey](#) from BlockThrough found that 68% of ad blocker users will exit a site if it asks them to suspend their ad blocker before accessing it. **Eighty-one percent of ad blocker users** say they want to [avoid](#) “annoying” and “interruptive” ad experiences.

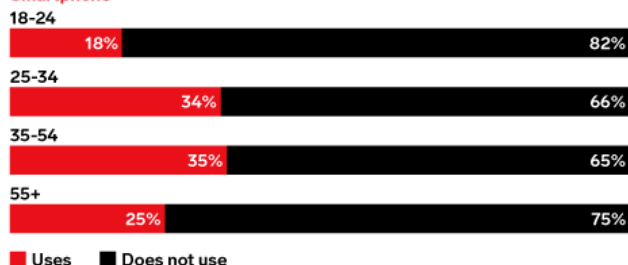
Use of Ad Blockers by US Adults, by Device and Age, March 2021

% of respondents in each group

Desktop/laptop



Smartphone



Source: CivicScience as cited in company blog, March 17, 2021

264595

eMarketer | InsiderIntelligence.com

The takeaway: Ad blockers are incredibly popular across browsers and age groups, and are often not taken into account when discussing the [post-cookie future](#) that will soon come to Google Chrome.

- Their popularity and the language suggests that the current internet ad experience is fundamentally at odds with the desires of most consumers. But that doesn't mean there isn't a middle ground for platforms and advertisers.
- A BlockThrough [survey](#) found that **63% of ad blocker users would support** “light” and “non-intrusive” advertising for publishers. The rise of the creator economy also shows that users are willing to give time and money to support creators if the direct impact of an advertisement is made clear to them.