

Five Charts: Why Users Are Fed Up With Digital Ads

People are annoyed by the state of advertising

ARTICLE | **OCTOBER 15, 2018**

Ross Benes

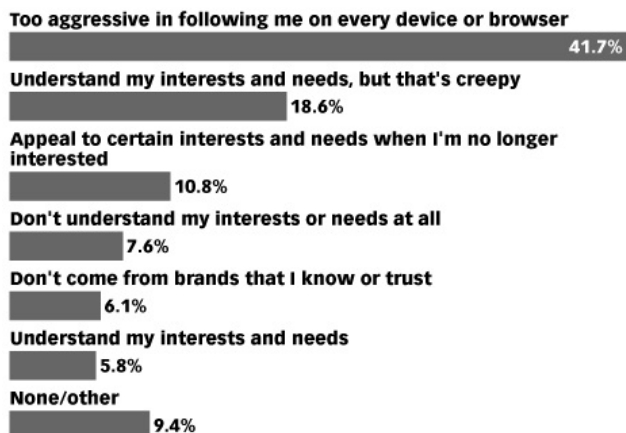
While many people understand that advertising is a necessary burden that comes with viewing free content, the current state of digital advertising is still annoying a lot of folks, according to several studies.

In an August survey of 1,079 adult US internet users conducted by [Janrain](#), the most popular response given when respondents were asked which statement about online ads they agreed with most was that ads are too aggressive. Nearly one-fifth of respondents acknowledged that online ads are effective in appealing to their interests and needs, but found the phenomenon creepy nonetheless.

“The vanity key performance indicators (KPIs) like viewability have made it more important to load ads over content, even for good publishers,” said Trust Metrics CEO Marc Goldberg. “The good publishers try and keep up because they are getting optimized off plans due to low viewability.”

What Is US Internet Users' Main Opinion on Digital Ads?

% of respondents, Aug 2018



Note: n=1,079 ages 18+

Source: Janrain, "Data Privacy Consumer Survey," Oct 10, 2018

242236

www.eMarketer.com

Other research shows that people believe ads are too intrusive. In a survey of 1,001 US internet users by [Kantar Millward Brown](#), 71% of respondents said that ads are more intrusive now than they were three years ago. A similar number indicated they're seeing more ads overall, and even more agreed that ads are now appearing in more places.

"To avoid alienating consumers, it's critical for marketers to look beyond metrics and instead focus on the ultimate experience they are providing to consumers, while respecting and maintaining their trust," said Elaine Chen, vice president of marketing communications at Kantar Media.

US Internet Users' Attitudes Toward Ads Today*, Nov 2017

% of respondents

	Agree	Disagree
Ads are appearing in more places now	79%	4%
I see more ads now	74%	5%
Ads are more intrusive now	71%	7%
Ads now fit together better across different ad formats	47%	14%
Ads tell better stories now	41%	24%
Ads are now more confusing	33%	28%

Note: n=1,001; "no opinion" responses omitted; *vs. 3 years ago

Source: Kantar Millward Brown, "AdReaction: The Art of Integration, U.S. Report," Jan 16, 2018

236392

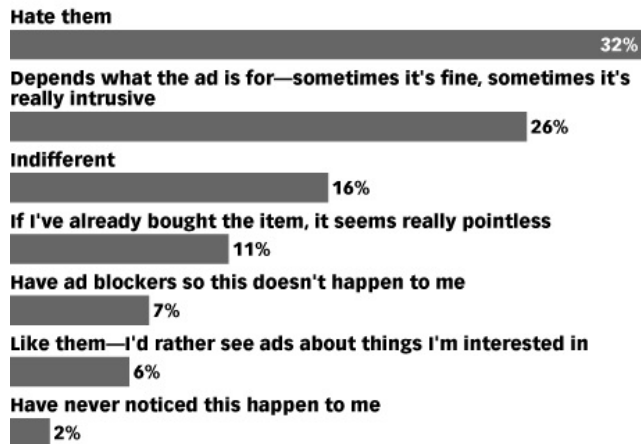
www.eMarketer.com

Meanwhile, an April 2017 survey of 1,111 UK internet users by [Mumsnet and Saatchi & Saatchi](#) found that people were particularly

irritated by retargeted ads. Just 6% of respondents said they liked them. In contrast, about a third said they didn't.

Primary Attitude Toward Retargeted Ads According to UK Parent* Internet Users, April 2017

% of respondents



Note: n=1,111; *respondents were Mumsnet users
Source: Mumsnet and Saatchi & Saatchi London, April 24, 2017

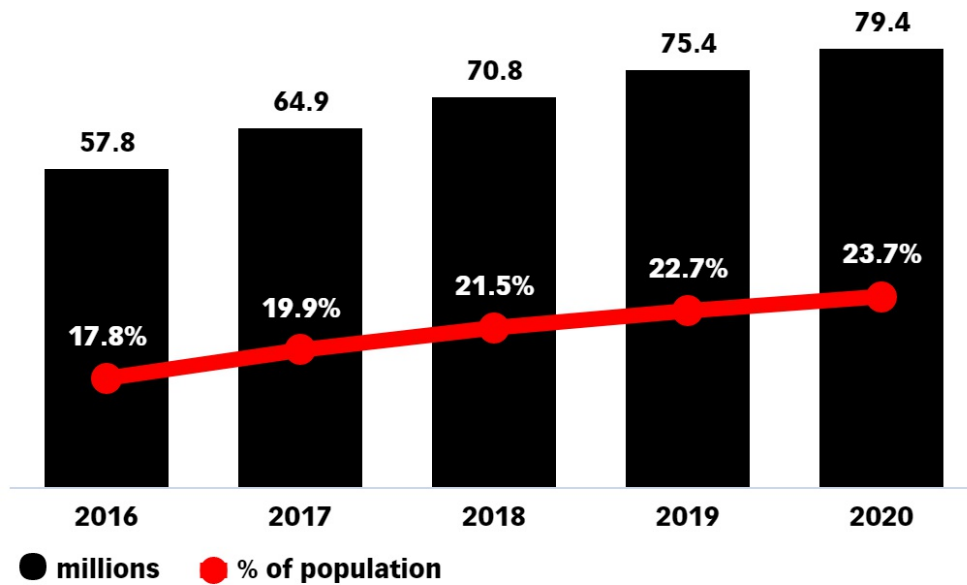
226202

www.eMarketer.com

Perhaps the biggest consequence of annoying ads is that they contribute to ad blocking. eMarketer estimates that about one-fifth of the US population will use an ad blocker 2018. According to an August survey of 103 North American ad agencies, publishers and marketers conducted by Pressboard, a similar proportion of **advertising professionals block ads**, too.

Ad Blocking Users

US, 2016-2020



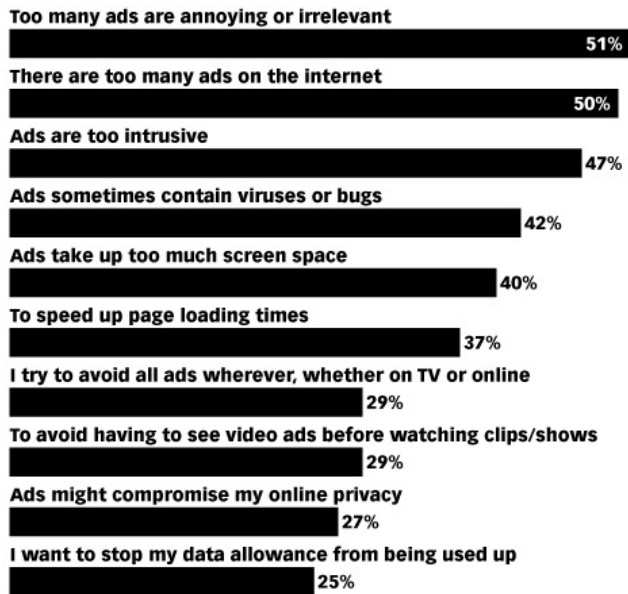
Source: eMarketer, August 2018

www.eMarketer.com

Advertisers' incentives to hit short-term KPIs often aren't aligned with user experience, and this disconnect contributes to ad blocking, according to Goldberg. About half of the 39,438 ad blocking users surveyed by [GlobalWebIndex](#) in Q3 2017 said one of the primary factors that led them to block ads was that they encountered too many annoying and irrelevant ads.

Reasons for Blocking Ads While Using the Internet According to Ad Blocking Users Worldwide, Q3 2017

% of respondents



Note: n=39,438 ages 16-64

Source: GlobalWebIndex as cited in company blog, Feb 12, 2018

235866

www.eMarketer.com

Interested in more on consumer attitudes towards ads? A report on the topic will be publishing next month for eMarketer PRO subscribers. Not sure if your company subscribes? [Check here.](#)