

Digital Content Next

Rapid Survey: Publishers' Ad Blocking Practices

Survey Findings

March 2016

Survey Objective

- Digital Content Next conducted a survey among our members to provide guidance on the impact of ad blocking on our members and how their organizations are responding to it.
- An online survey was sent to 74 member companies in February 2016.
- 29 members completed the survey -- a response rate of 39%.
- Results are aggregated to provide individual company confidentiality.

Key Findings

Ad blocking software usage is growing and more than three-quarter of respondents believe ad blocking problem will be even greater in next six months.

- Impacts more traffic than 6 months ago:
 - Four in 10 of respondents report 12% or more of their traffic is impacted -- 14% growth on average vs. six months ago.
- Growing on mobile

Almost one-third of respondents report a top company priority is to reduce ad blocking usage.

- Three top strategies in practice or planning to practice:
 - #1 transitioning to Google AMP.
 - # 2 (tie) messaging consumers to turn off ad blocker to access content; limiting advertising download time.
 - #3 (tie) better creative practices; limiting the number of ads per page.

Key Findings (*continued*)

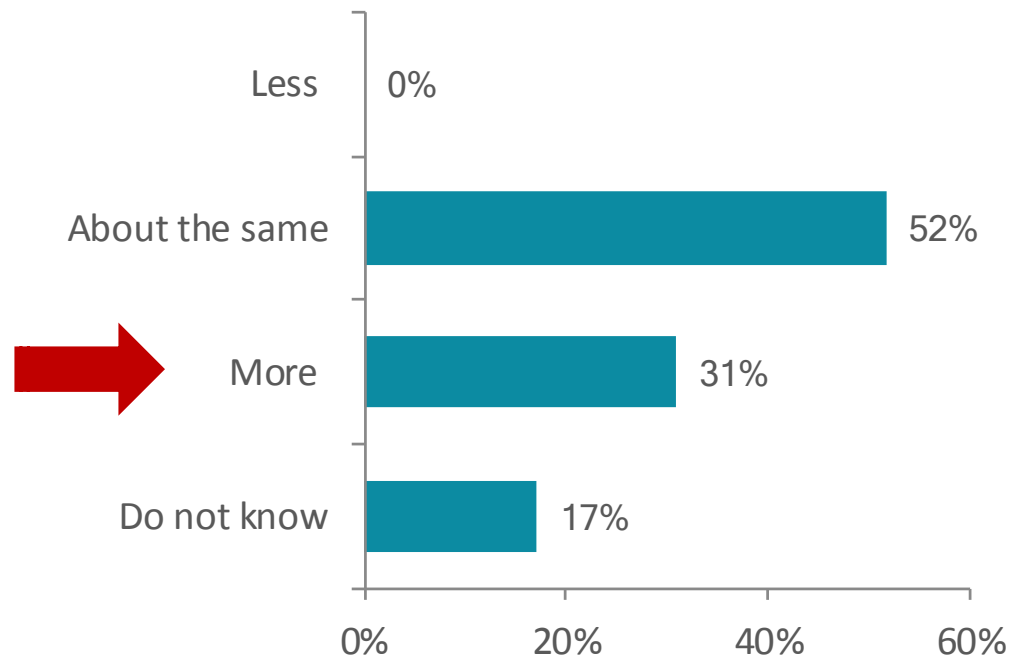
Industry initiative to mitigate consumer adoption of ad blocking

- Premium publishers need to self-govern ad inventory, third party relationships, and creative standards.

Traffic impacted by ad blocking usage is growing

Ad blocking's effect on traffic grew on average by 14% compared to six months ago

Compared to six months ago, is there more, less or about the same percent of traffic impacted by ad blocking usage?



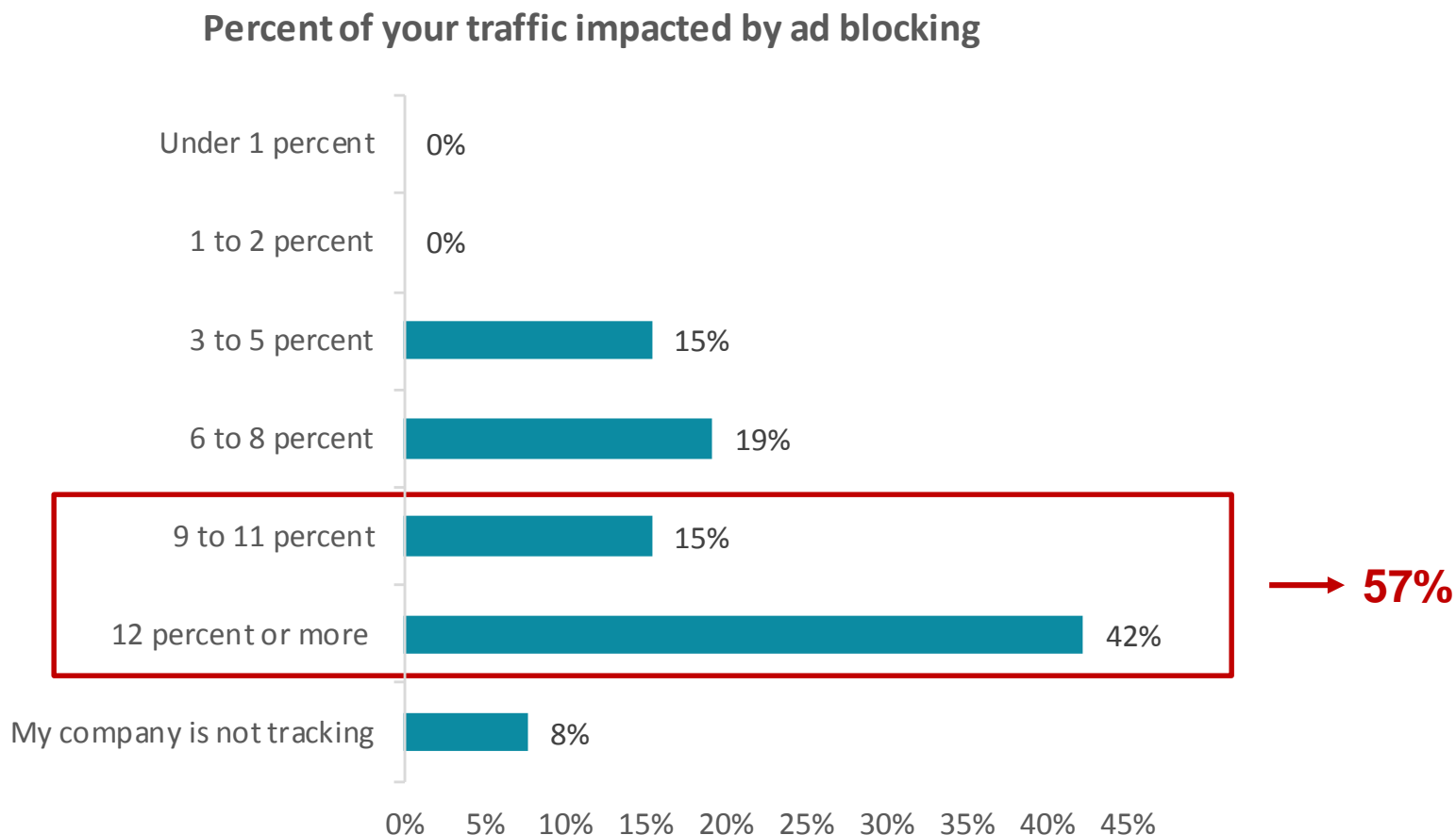
Q Compared to six months ago, is there more, less or about the same percent of traffic impacted by ad blocking usage?

Q. Please complete the statement below by typing a number in the box to best reflect the growth of ad blocking software usage on your site(s).

Compared to six months ago, traffic impacted by ad blocking usage grew by ____ percent on my site(s).

More than half of respondents report 9 percent or more of their traffic is impacted by ad blocking usage

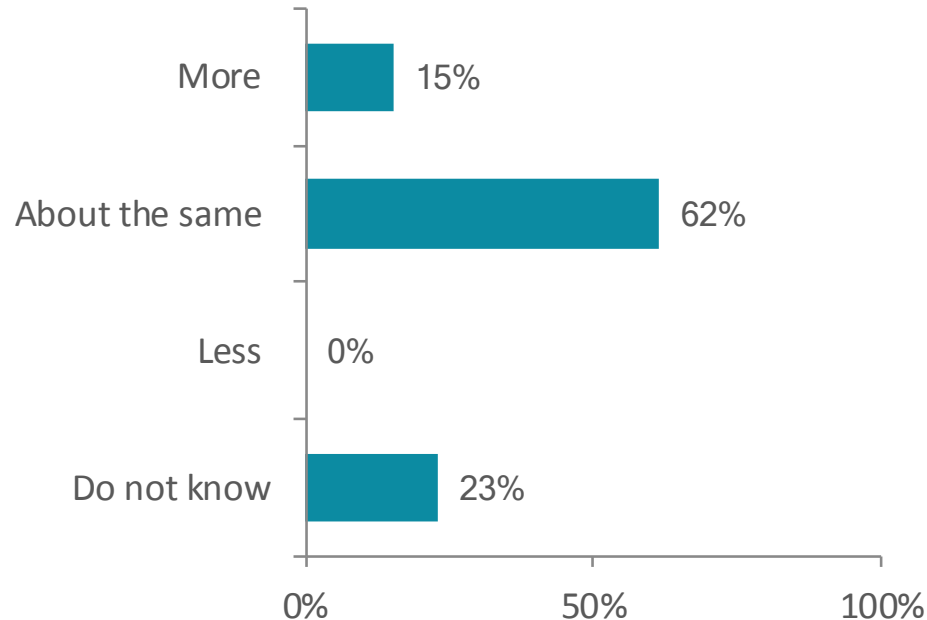
Four in 10 respondents report traffic impacted by ad blocking usage at 12 percent or more



Q What percent of your traffic is impacted by ad blocking usage?

Only 15% of respondents reported that mobile ad blocking is more prevalent, far from aggressive forecast

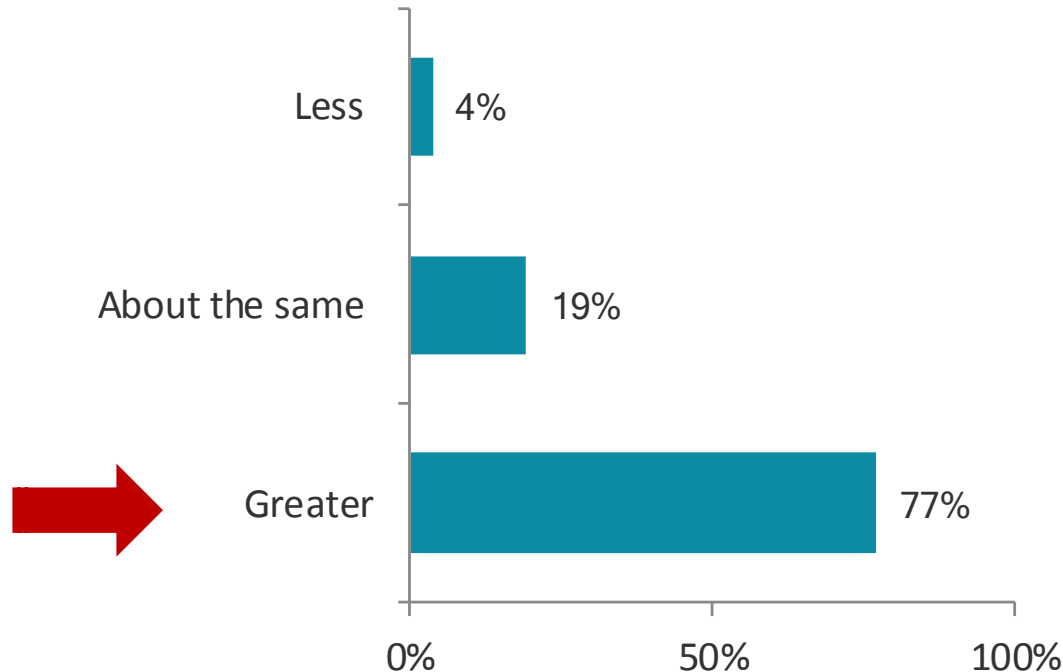
Compared to six months ago, would you say that the use of mobile ad blocking software on your site(s) is becoming more prevalent, less prevalent or about the same?



Q As many sites are reaching a mobile inflection point (more mobile than desktop users), would you say that the use of mobile ad blocking software on your site(s) is becoming more prevalent, less prevalent or about the same?

Three in four respondents think the ad blocking problem will be greater in the next six months

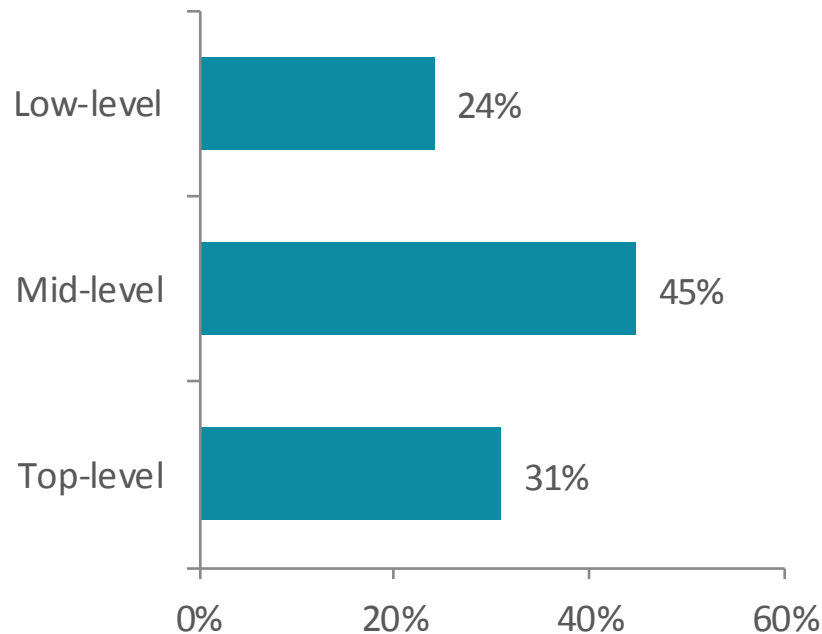
Thinking ahead 6 months, do you think the ad blocking software usage problem will be greater, less or about the same?



Reducing ad blocking usage, as a priority, varies across members

Close to one-third (31%) of respondents see reducing ad blocking usage as a top priority.

Would you say reducing the number of consumers using ad blocking software on your site(s) is a top-level, a mid-level or a low-level priority?



On average respondents report using at least 5 different strategies to encourage consumers to disengage their ad blocking software

Ranking of top strategies in practice:

#1 Google AMP

#2 (tie) consumer messaging; limiting advertising download time

#3 (tie) better creative practices; limiting the number of ads per page

Strategy	% Response
Transitioning to Google AMP to simplify mobile web pages and their load time	62%
Messaging to consumers to turn off their ad blocking software to access our content	54%
Setting a limit on the ad load time	54% Tie
Establishing best practices for creative and branding execution in ad units	42%
Setting a limit on the number of ads and/or the type of ads per page	42% Tie
Programming more native advertising to be served in the sites' content management system	39%
Working with the IAB's L.E.A.N. (light, encrypted, ad choice supported, non-invasive ads) standards	35%
Setting a limit on the number of tags per ad unit	35%
Establishing a special team to work on the ad blocking problem	31%
Messaging to consumers to turn off their ad blocking software or they must pay to access our content	23%
Working on a server solution to circumvent ad blocking software	23%
Providing our consumers with more details about what data we collect and how it is being used	19%
Offering incentives to consumers to turn off their ad blocking software when visiting our site(s)	15%
Other (please specify)	8%
Paying Adblock Plus to whitelist ads on our site(s)	4%
None of the above	4%
Working with ad blocking software companies to whitelist ads on our site(s)	0%

What is most important industry action against ad blocking?

Based on respondents' open-ended statements* the most important and immediate action the industry can take to mitigate ad blocker adoption is to **remain consumer focused and commit to the best premium content and advertising experiences.**

- Includes self-governing ad inventory, third party relationships, and creative standards

* *see page 13 for verbatims*

Conclusions

Ad blocking usage is growing and appears to have strong potential for continued growth. Moving forward publishers should:

- Remain consumer focused.
- Monitor your site's content and ad experiences.
- Communicate the value of premium content to your audience.
- Closely oversee ad inventory and 3rd party relationships.
- Require better creative from marketers and agencies.

Appendix – verbatims:

What one action should the industry immediately take to mitigate consumer adoption of ad blocking software?

Improve the quality of the advertising experience for users.

Need to be careful not to agree on the Facebook/google view of digital or it will stifle creativity. Digital is a great platform but buying behavior from buyers needs to be investigated more and publishers need to self-govern better too - too many of us have different numbers of ads on the page. Finally, creative agencies need to be on board too - still too many ads that do not respect the r on which they are being broadcast. e.g. Why are nearly all pre-roll video ads 30" long? most short form video content is max of 2 mins long so asking readers to sit through 30" is crass. Rant over.

More adoption of LEAN ads.

Giving consumers choice. they currently have the power. give them a choice to pay, opt in providing 1st party data but there needs to be a clear value proposition for the consumer. You must offer something they can't get elsewhere for them to take either action.

Native.

Improve load times especially in mobile.

Measurement standards, within DCN sharing results of the various tests.

Google should control and monitor the speed of ad serving and third party tracking within DFP & DFA so that offending slow running ad servers and trackers would be disabled if they do not meet the standards. Within ads give consumers more clear and obvious control over how they can control their privacy.

Better "native" ads, faster loading sites.

Examine and commit to the best & premium content + advertising experience. Be upfront about defining what customers will see when they visit our products (both in terms of ad experience + tracking, etc.). I believe that much of the problem is that we've not committed or delivered a consistent experience, nor are we public about it. There is much to be said about "knowing what you're getting into" and in many instances, our customers simply do not. We need to engage them in the conversation, be upfront with them and consistently deliver for them (customer here is defined as the people who visit our websites and products).

Develop standards for ad experience, ad latency and third party tracking that respect the consumer.

Move toward changing ad technology and making it faster.

Discredit the ad blocking white list 3rd parties.

Sue the ad blockers.

Appendix - verbatims

Additional comment

And deny service for those that ad block but won't subscribe

I'm estimating my ad blocking percentage from 6 months ago. We have actual levels now. The percentage is much lower on mobile so as more traffic moves there, it could help the "lost opportunity" revenue, but it's still a losing game because mobile presents less revenue than desktop.

How can the DCN publishers join together and use our collective bargaining power to demand changes to the way Google can improve the platform tools that power the ad serving ecosystem.

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