Ad Blocking

Let's face it: ad blocking was the last thing publishers needed. The digital advertising landscape was already complex and challenging enough without users giving publishers, and advertisers, a "full frontal" exposing what we have all known for a long time: most digital ads leave a lot to be desired.

Quite simply, in the race to reap digital dollars to replace the quickly diminishing print dollars, we as an industry let our guard down. We knowingly allowed bloated ads to run amok on news sites, packed with enough tracking software to annoy readers to ad nauseam (no pun intended). All to the point where we are today: borderline crisis mode.

Essentially, we cannot afford to run the risk of losing a grip on publishers' most precious asset: the trust and goodwill of their audience.

While much of the publicity surrounding the topic has emanated from Europe, especially in Germany, let's be clear: this is a global issue. Just check the headlines from a couple of weeks ago about US publishers fighting with Brave. In China and other parts of Asia, ad blockers will be ubiquitous in mobile browsers.

But amid any crisis lies an opportunity. The threat of ad blocking offers publishers a great chance to redefine how advertising works. And publishers, not platforms, must take the lead.

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