



02.11.15

ADNAUSEAM LETS YOUR METADATA FIND SAFETY IN NUMBERS

by DANIEL FRIES
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The trailer for AdNauseam is appropriately dramatic. It features fat little men in business suits, robot circulatory systems, and shady characters at switchboards. The music is exciting, the voice over is over-the-top, the style is tongue-in-cheek, but its goal—obfuscating advertising data in the name of user privacy—is real.

Instead of trying to block all the ads from being displayed, AdNauseam is a browser extension that clicks every single ad on the page. It is designed to fight the creation of some kind of profile tailored to you, and instead works to confuse advertising networks with a flood of unusable data. Look into it if you want to hide yourself and your unique and particular preferences in that deluge.

Dystopian novels have long covered our descent into screen-loving madness. They span he burned books of Fahrenheit 451, the listening TVs of 1984, and the 80s megacorps like Cyberdyne and Weyland Yutani, but have mostly given way to our fear of control and surveillance.

Last week, for example, we learned that Google, Amazon, and Microsoft—the benevolent dictators of our online lives—are paying to make it through Ad Block Plus’ filter. As ad block software and ad companies keep trying to out-do one another, Helen Nissenbaum, Daniel C. Howe, and Mushon Zer-Aviv are working in the opposite direction with AdNauseam.

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