**AD BLOCK-ALYPSE!**

Hello readers,

Care to take a guess as to why it’s been a while since my last blog post? I point you to exhibit A:

<< INSERT PICTURE OF DIVISION STANDINGS >>

I rest my case.

Moving on, however, as part of an effort to be a better person and to keep improving myself, I’ve decided to set a goal at work to update this blog with some tech-related news once a week. That’s right folks. You’re going to be hearing from me often, regardless of how the Mets are doing.

For this week’s topic, I figure that I’d talk a bit about AD-BLOCKALYPSE. For those of you that haven’t heard, Google Chrome has just started blocking FLASH from running on the browser. It will be blocked by default as per the latest upgrade (chrome 45) and moving forward, Chrome and a bunch of other browsers are really pushing the HTML5 standard pretty hard. This sudden push for HTML5 and this sudden distaste for FLASH is a result of the massive security flaws that are unintentionally built into the FLASH platform. For those of you that aren’t sure what FLASH is, it’s a software platform that is used for graphics, animation, browser games, and basically anything that is considered “RICH MEDIA” when you’re browsing the web. Basically, it’s what made the web cool back in the 90’s and early 2000s.

Cool, right? This is the way of technological progress. Out with the old and in with the new! Who still watches homestarrunner.com anyway? And FLASH games on Newsgrounds? I feel like people have definitely moved on from that! Except for the fact that FLASH is still widely used in today’s web. Are you watching a video on the internets? There’s a good chance that it’s actually FLV-format (flash video). The other big hit that takes a hit in today’s “Modern” web are the numerous FLASH ads that you see on the website.

Ah, there we go. FLASH advertisements. You know, the annoying thingies that pop onto the screen and ruin your user experience? Google isn’t the only one that’s conspiring against putting an end to the FLASH advertisements that you see during your web browsing experience. Apple recently announced that with the latest iOS9 update, they plan to introduce ad-blocking features into their Safari browser, both desktop AND mobile.

For most technophiles, this is a GREAT victory for the everyday consumer of the web and a GREAT blow against the evil advertisers and corporations that are trying to pull another fast one on the masses! **I don’t think we should think of rise of ad blockers as a good thing.** I personally have mixed views about this whole situation. Although yes, blocking ads is a great way to say to the advertisers that you’re tired of the crappy user experience that is quickly becoming pervasive when you browse the web (yes, I’m looking at you *BuzzFeed* and similar sites), this impacts a lot of the smaller sites that are supposedly playing by the rules and not spamming your ads with irrelevant flash ads.

Yes, my views are very different from the regular techie. I guess you could say I’m a shill because I work in the ad tech industry so this decision to block FLASH does impact my personal wallet in some way. I get it. Ads are annoying. Blocking flash ads and using adblockers increase security (and tackle a lot of malware) and prevent 3rd party data companies from tracking your movements throughout the web. We want to have this semblance of privacy. This is MY data after all that is being used and abused by advertisers. At the end of the day however, you are hurting someone by choosing to block an ad. For a lot of small website owners, they will be impacted negatively. Ad money is revenue and to block off that revenue stream for a person that is following the rules means that a small site (or your favorite mom and pop site) could cease to operate.

“Great, find a new business model if you’re supported on ads so much!”…

Yeah, easier said than done. The only other viable strategy at the moment is to go full on subscription, similar to what the NY Times and a lot of other newspapers/magazines have been doing. This strategy may work for bigger companies but can you see how difficult it is for an owner of a small website to go about charging customers with a subscription fee, especially if they’re trying to get the website off the ground?

Another point that I’d like to bring up with the rise of ad blockers. These advertisers and various ad companies are going to find other ways to get the information they want to get. Whether it means switching completely to HTML5 (which they’re already doing) or by directly embedding their ads into the website (so they cannot be blocked), they will find a way.

Now I’m going to sound a bit like I’m ranting but I think that the real solution to this pervasive ad problem is simple. If you stumble upon a website that is using an obscene amount of ads (whether it’s an interstitial ad that takes over the entire screen or if you see bunches of banner ads at the bottom of the page that increase the load time of the page), rather than block the ad, **JUST STOP VISITING THE SITE**.

I feel like a lot of users of the internet are *entitled* and feel like everything on the web SHOULD BE FREE. I’m sorry. This isn’t how the world works. Some people here are trying to make a living. If people want their contributions to the web to be free, then they won’t put ads on their site. If they want to make some money off of their content, then they’ll put ads. Simple as that. If the consumer feels like the ads aren’t worth the content, don’t use an adblocker to take advantage of the content without “paying” for it. Just don’t go to the site. Users are not entitled to free content just because it’s there.

It’s a complicated issue to be honest. I feel like I’m coming off as a hardcore shill because sometimes I do like ads. But I agree with a lot of users that have had bad experiences. It just takes one bad website that installs malware that will get a user to start using adblock all the time. Maybe it’s a good thing that Google and Apple are taking steps to prevent FLASH and increase awareness of ad blockers, if only to encourage the bad publishers to shape up.

This is it for now. If you feel like I’m completely wrong on this subject, feel free to bring it up. I’m very open to other opinions and good conversation is a plus for EVERYONE involved.

Until next time, Let’s Go Mets, Magic Number 11, see ya in the world series DOYERS!

Recommended reading:

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2485827,00.asp>

<http://www.businessinsider.com/chrome-update-blocking-adobe-flash-ads-catches-out-brands-2015-9>