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Ad-Blocking and Its Effects

The use of ad-blocking software has started to become more common to the internet users, specifically on their computers. These forms of software prevent the loading of automatically playing videos and different pop-ups and banners from loading. While it does allow some computers to load up websites and content faster, it can be harder for the advertisers to gain revenue from it that they paid in order to set up these links and videos. Some advertisements can be annoying or lead to malicious sites or programs, so it can be hard to decide when to use these ad-blockers or not.

While it would be nice to load advertisements faster, the use of them in most of its entirety is completely unethical. The point of an advertisement is to allow for the website's owner to gain financial support by allowing companies to post their products onto the site. As Rick Broida, known as the "Cheapskate" on CNET, had explained in his article, by removing the ads using these programs, you also restrict the amount of revenue they would get. Not all websites are owned by companies who gain money through other ways either, so advertisements being shown would vastly support those people. The only ethical option for the use of ad-blocking software would be for malvertising, advertising that has malicious software or uses malicious intent. However, users can never be certain whether an advertisement is malicious or not, making the use of the software pointless.

Advertisers should know which websites are receiving their ads. In an article written by Don Norman and Jakob Neilsen, they describe that website ads should be focused on helping the

user get to their goals, the reasons that they are using the Internet. The advertisements should also relate to the websites that they are on with the intent to potentially guide the user to something they may find interesting. However, some companies may be using ad-blockers in their favor, which led to Senator of Oregon Ron Wyden asking for an investigation on these ad-blocking industries. Makena Kelly of The Verge claims that "some of the largest tech firms," including Microsoft, Google, and Amazon, are paying companies who make this kind of software to remove the blocks from their websites (Kelly, The Verge). While websites should restrict and pay attention to what kinds of advertisements are put on them, advertisers should also be aware of what kind of sites they plan on advertising to and make their ads relate to that site.

In the end, ad-blocking software altogether should be removed in total. The people who use them are preventing financial support, and companies who bypass this software are gaining an unfair advantage in economic competition. As stated by Tim Challies, users and websites have an unwritten and unspoken agreement. The websites provide free content to the user and the user acknowledges the advertisements in the website for their financial benefit. Challies even quotes Matthew 7:12 in the Bible: "Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them." Essentially, the users should put themselves in the positions of the webpage owners. By seeing why they would need advertisements on the websites, the users would be less willing to use ad-blockers as it would hurt the owners. That is why these forms of software are unjust to the society we live in today.

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