

EYEO GmbH



eyeo
GmbH

[Eyeo](#)'s mission is to make the Internet a better place. Their starting point for accomplishing this is purging the web of bad ads. From a more fundamental level, the company takes a user-determined Internet not only as their mantra but as an irreversible fact. That is their philosophical cornerstone, and

from there they hope to create open source solutions that allow users to take (back) control of their online experience.

Currently, [34 people are employed by Eyeo](#). The responsibilities fall into two essential units: business and development. About three-quarters of them work in Cologne; the rest work from home. Eyeo's workers represent twelve nationalities, and English is the language they speak at work.

[Adblock Plus](#), their main product, has about 60 million active users. It has been downloaded well over 300 million times, a number that is increased by roughly 2 million every week. Adblock Plus is an open source solution that blocks annoying advertisements online. Adblock Plus is free and available for all main browsers (Firefox, Google Chrome, Opera, Internet Explorer, Safari), including on the Android operating system (but outside the Play Market, where it was [removed by Google](#) in [March 2013](#)).

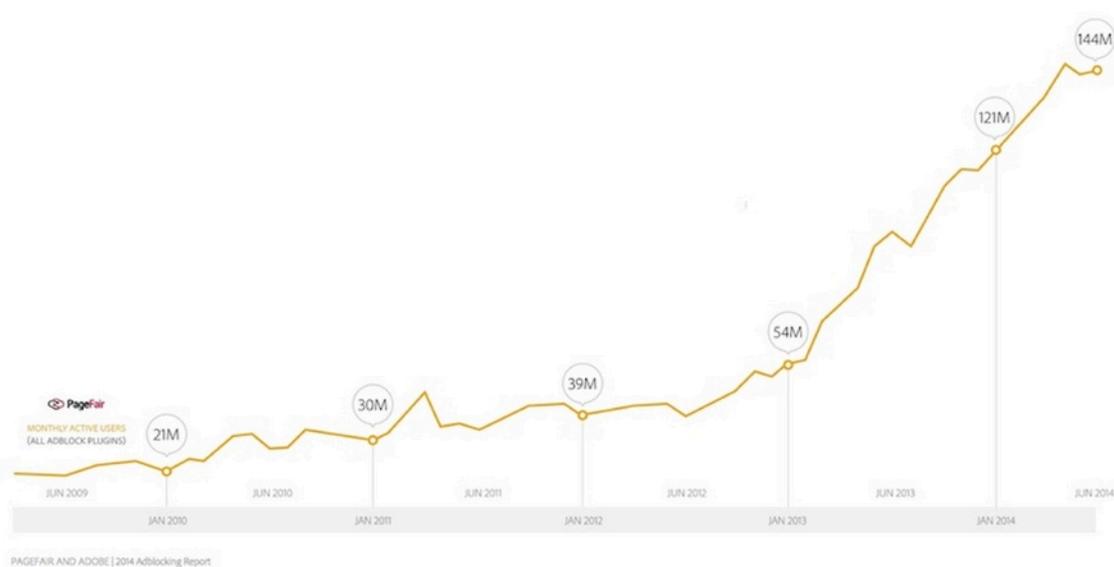


[Wladimir Palant](#) wrote the original Adblock Plus in 2006 and maintained it as a hobby. In 2011 he met Till Faida (see [interview Sep. 2012](#), 3 min.), and together they founded Eyeo GmbH to have a legal business entity for support of Adblock Plus as well as to develop additional products that give users control over their online experience.

Adblock Plus used to block all advertisements; however, because the free Internet depends on ads, its original creator, Wladimir Palant, teamed up with Till Faida in 2011 to create the [Acceptable Ads initiative](#). Their goal was a [compromise](#), and they felt, standing between users on the one hand and advertisers on the other, that they were in a unique position to broker one. After lengthy feedback from users regarding what would constitute an "acceptable" advertisement, criteria for said initiative were launched. Ads that meet these criteria can, after a certification process with Eyeo, get whitelisted and therefore be shown by default to Adblock Plus users.

Adblock Plus users can turn this feature off at any time if they so choose. For publishers and advertisers it is a chance to offer their ads to otherwise lost users, providing clear added value. For almost 90 percent of those on the whitelist it is completely free, but the largest companies on the list pay a fee for both the service of whitelisting and the added value it creates. This in turn keeps the initiative sustainable. As of writing, there are approximately 250 entities on the whitelist, in [this recent post](#) you can see some details on their experiences.

The initiative has been [criticized by some as being 'extortion'](#), whilst others take a [more sympathetic approach](#) or even state, like [Norm Johnston of Mindshare](#), a media-buying agency, that "you cannot annoy someone into liking you". A rumor even says that [French publishers are preparing a lawsuit against Eyeo](#). One way or another, the fact is that [ad-blocking is aggressively growing among users all over the world](#) (see [the report in pdf format](#)): usage grew by nearly 70% between June 2013 and June 2014 up to 144 million active users around the world. In some countries, nearly one quarter of the online population has it installed, driven by young internet users (41% of 18-29 year olds polled said they use ad-blocking extensions).



In the current scenario, the company would like your advice in the following issues:

- Briefly describe what do you think should be the characteristics of a successful ad campaign from a brand's perspective (finding the right balance between awareness and annoyance)
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of Adblock Plus?
- Imagine that you are working for a large advertiser, and your boss gets approached by Eyeo to convince her to sign up for the Acceptable Ads policy. Your boss has a meeting in two hours, and she asks you to advise her with a well informed decision. What would your advice be and why?

Feel free to answer the questions one by one, or to pool them all together in one essay. Please include any links you find relevant for your answer. As soon as you finish (max. 2 pages), please email a copy to enrique.dans@ie.edu from a clearly identifiable email account, and wait in class until you can confirm your name appearing in my inbox on the screen.