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# Beat ad blocking with a better ecosystem now, before it's too late

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Moves to make ad formats more acceptable to consumers won't reduce ad blocking unless we also get the content right, says Deirdre McGlashan.

I have travelled in short order from Germany's Dmexco to New York's Advertising Week, and now I'm at Internet & Mobile World in Romania. And I'm being followed by a single issue: ad blocking.

Cologne saw the launch of the [Coalition for Better Ads](#) as well as Adblock Plus's attempts to monetise its role in that process. Ad blocking was an issue that all three of Dmexco's future prophets flagged up as a major topic for the industry.

During NY Ad Week it featured in a number of sessions. And I'm here in Bucharest now

and looking at the agenda, ad blocking features on both the Main Stage and Marketing Innovation Stage.

We may not like it but ad blocking is big news for our industry and demands that we change.

What this all highlights to me is how critical it is to get the connection right. We have to recognise that too many ad formats create clutter, too many data heavy ads annoy consumers (and cost them actual money when they don't have all-you-can-eat data) and too much advertising slows their journey to the content they want to reach.

Let's take an example. Consumers have long told us that interstitials are often the most irritating format they see. So when mobile became a mass platform, what format did we bring with us? Interstitials. And now consumers are telling us that interstitials are irritating again.

All too often, we are still using the same formats that we built in the late 1990s, without thinking about what might be possible with the technology that actually exists today.

## **Content matters too**

But while the ad format is important, the content matters too. The best connection in the world won't succeed if the content is irrelevant or boring. Content needs to not only be appropriately targeted but also designed with the format in mind.

We've all seen the Geico ad. Time and again I see it at conferences and media people – probably the most jaded consumers of advertising – will watch right to the end. Because it's funny. Because it tells the story in a way that is made for the skippable ad format and that format only by fast-forwarding straight to the ending but then continuing the story beyond that moment – outtakes within the real take if you will.

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We focus on this at MediaCom, making sure our clients’ content is both feed ready and feed relevant. That means that is designed with the destination in mind, so a Tumblr message looks and feels like it ought to be on Tumblr. A Facebook video is the right length for in-feed and works with the sound off too.

The effectiveness of this can be seen from recent campaigns for Bose and Dell, both of which have delivered brilliant business results as well as winning multiple awards, where we’ve adapted the content for a wide range of platforms.

The future of advertising is more permission based and more targeted – and hence relevant – and it looks a lot less like advertising as we know it today. If we can deliver on that then the threat of ad blocking will recede dramatically.

However, we need act before ad blocking becomes an established habit – we need to address standards for the units with the Coalition for Better Ads as well as what’s in the unit with content designed for each format.

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OPINION