

Annoyed Users: Ads and Ad-Block Usage in the Wild

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ASIA PACIFIC

Obama to Announce Halt of U.S. Troop Withdrawal in Afghanistan

By MATTHEW ROSENBERG OCT. 15, 2015



American Army soldiers at a base in the Khostani district of Afghanistan in August. World Khostan/Agence France Presse — Getty Images

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WASHINGTON — The United States will halt its military withdrawal from Afghanistan and instead keep thousands of troops in the country through the end of President Obama's term in 2017. Mr. Obama will announce on Thursday, prolonging the American role in a war that has now stretched on for 14 years.

The current American force in Afghanistan of 9,800 troops will remain in place through most of 2016 under the Obama administration's revised plans, before dropping to about 5,500 at the end of next year or in early 2017, senior administration officials said.

Some of the troops will continue to train and advise Afghan forces, while others will carry on the search for Qaeda fighters and militants from the Islamic State and other groups who have found a haven in Afghanistan, they said.

In abandoning his ambition to bring home almost all American troops before leaving office, Mr. Obama appears to be acknowledging that Afghan security forces are still not near ready to hold off the Taliban on their own.



Taliban Presence in Afghanistan

Yet even before Kanduz fell to the Taliban, the administration had been under growing pressure from the military and others in Washington, including Congress, to abandon plans that would have cut by about half the number of troops in Afghanistan next year, and then drop the American force to about 1,000 troops based only at the embassy in Kabul by the start of 2017.

Now, instead of falling back to the embassy — a heavily fortified compound in the center of Kabul — the administration officials said on Wednesday that the military would be able to maintain its operations at Bagram Air Field to the north of Kabul, the main American hub in Afghanistan, and at



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All three bases are crucial for counterterrorism operations and for flying drones that are used by the military and the C.I.A., which had also argued for keeping troops in Afghanistan to help protect its own assets.

There was no set date for the military to decrease the number of troops in Afghanistan to 5,500, said the administration officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they did not want to pre-empt Mr. Obama's announcement. The pace of that troop reduction would be determined largely by commanders on the ground, and the timing would also most likely provide flexibility to whoever succeeds Mr. Obama.

President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan had also pressed for Mr. Obama to keep more troops, and many in Washington who have worked closely with the Afghans over the past several years were leath for the United States to pull back just when it had an Afghan leader who has proved to be a willing partner, unlike his predecessor, Hamid Karzai.

Mr. Ghani is acutely aware of his country's need for help from the United States and its NATO allies. The American military has repeatedly stepped in this year to aid Afghan forces battling the Taliban, launching airstrikes and at times sending Special Operations troops to join the fight, despite Mr. Obama's declaration that the American war in Afghanistan had ended.



American Army soldiers at a base in the Khostani district of Afghanistan in August. World Khostan/Agence France Presse — Getty Images

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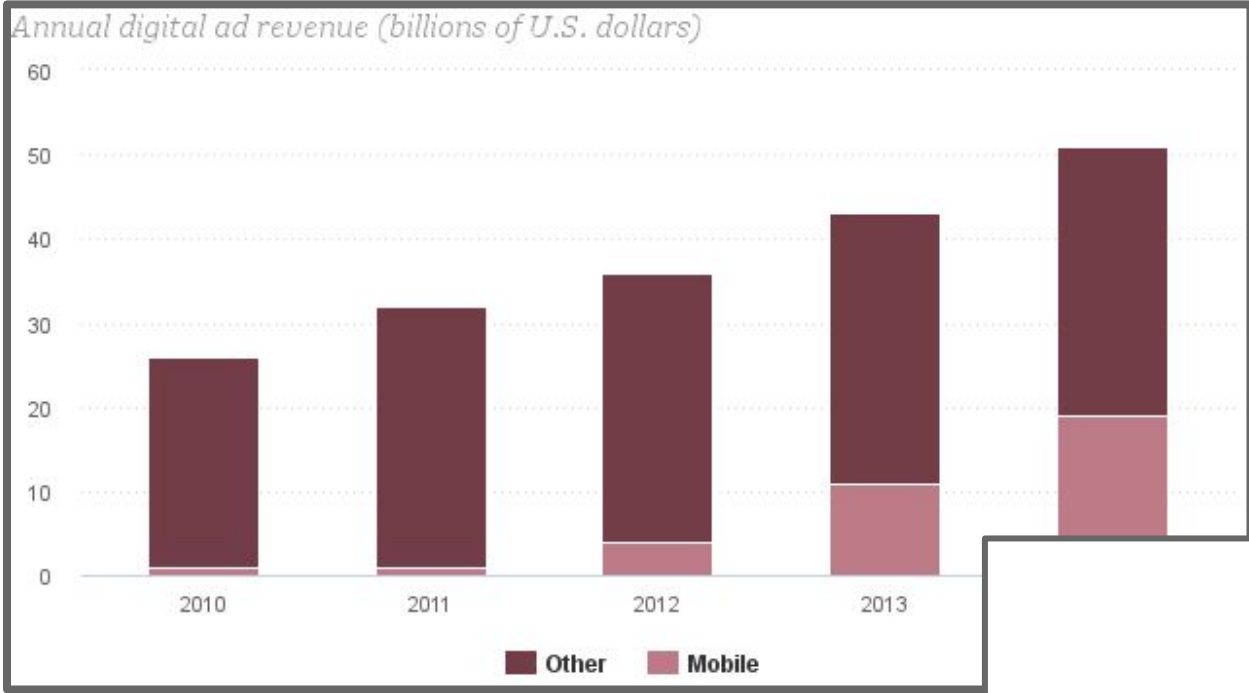
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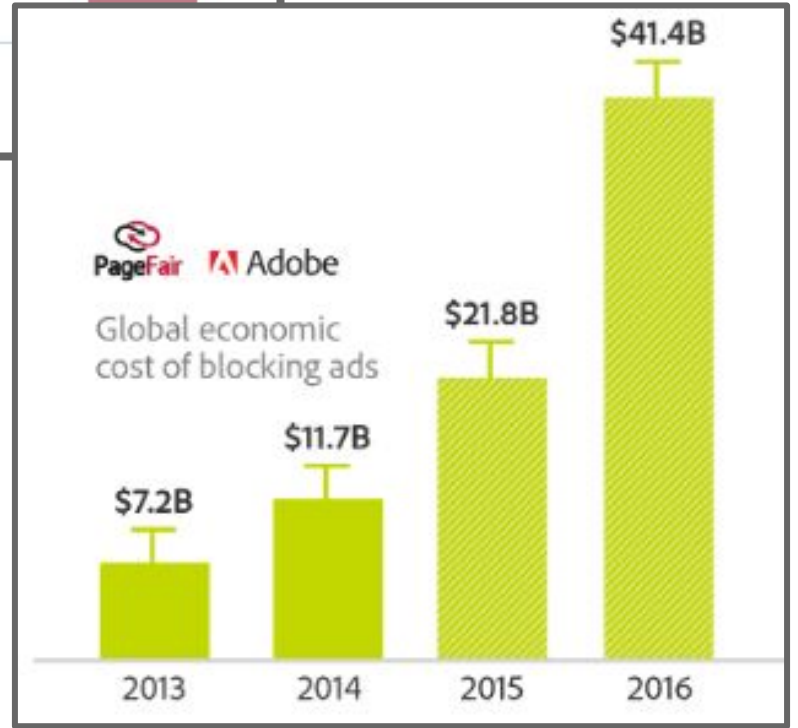
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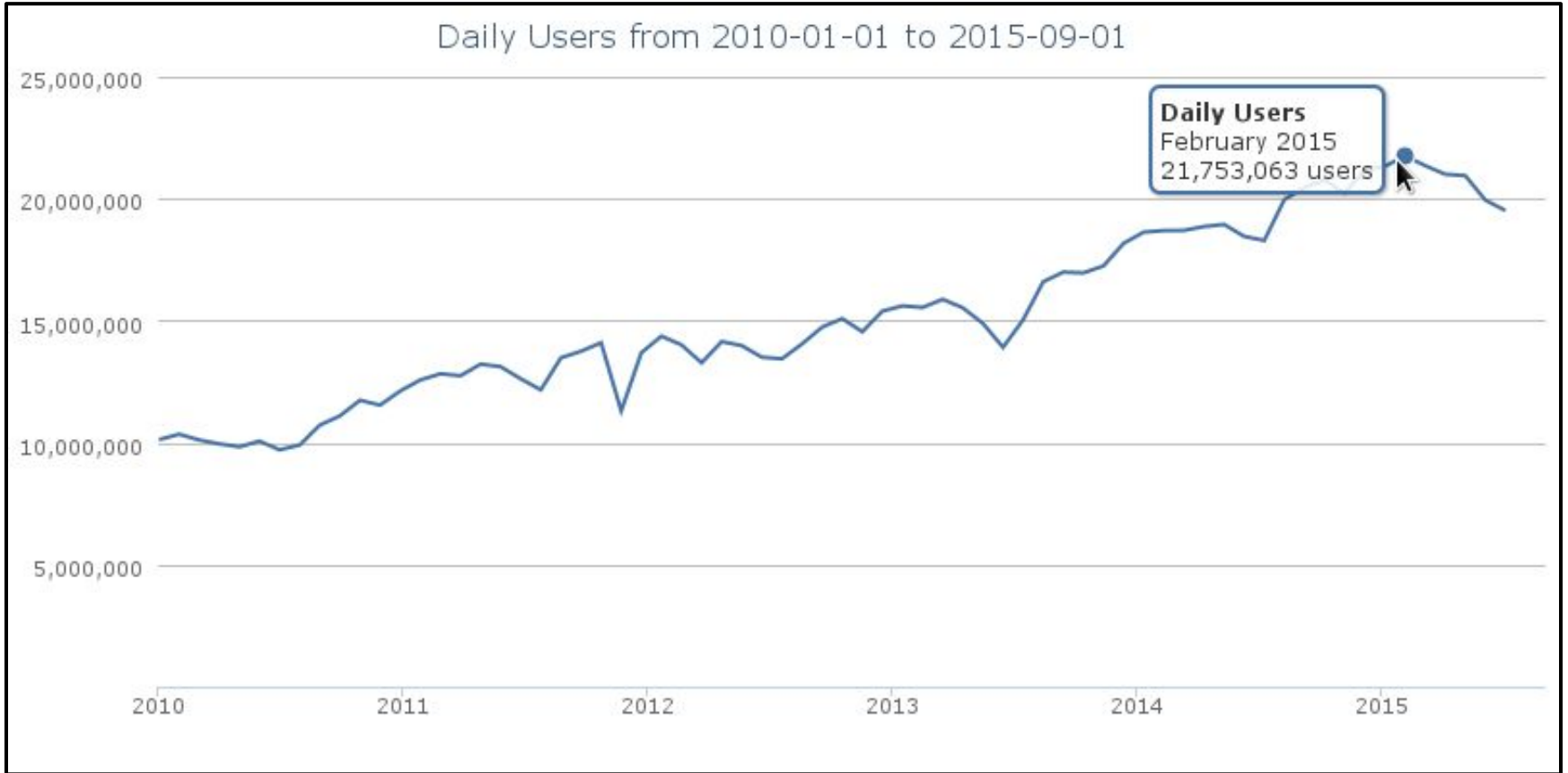
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Page Fair and Adobe report on Ad Blocking



Mozilla Add-on statistics

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(Why can I not see BILD.de?)

Acceptable ads program (non-intrusive ads)



“We want to **make the Internet better** for everyone.
Purging bad ads is a good start.”

White-listing within AdBlockPlus (ABP)

Our work

Residential Broadband Network

Online advertising

Methodology based on AdblockPlus

Ad-blocker usage

Characterize ad traffic



Adblock Plus Options

Filter lists

Add your own filters

Whitelisted domains

General

Enable only the filter lists you need. Too many can make your browser unresponsive.

Out-of-date lists are updated periodically. [↻ Update now](#)

✘ Enabled [Adblock Warning Removal List](#) Last updated at 8:26:16 PM on 10/14/2015

✘ Enabled [EasyList](#) Last updated at 7:39:50 PM on 10/13/2015

[+ Add filter subscription](#)

Allow some non-intrusive advertising [View list](#) [Read more](#)

ABP Adblock Plus Options

Filter lists **Add your own filters** Whitelisted domains General

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Please choose a filter subscription from the list:

- EasyList (English)
- EasyList (English)
- ABPindo+EasyList (Bahasa Indonesia)
- Bulgarian list+EasyList (български)
- EasyList China+EasyList (中国)
- EasyList Czech and Slovak+EasyList (čeština, slovenčina)
- EasyList Dutch+EasyList (Nederlands)
- EasyList Germany+EasyList (Deutsch)
- EasyList Hebrew+EasyList (עברית)
- EasyList Italy+EasyList (italiano)
- EasyList Lithuania+EasyList (lietuvių kalba)
- Latvian List+EasyList (latviešu valoda)
- Liste AR+Liste FR+EasyList (العربية)
- Liste FR+EasyList (français)
- ROList+EasyList (românesc)
- RuAdList+EasyList (русский, українська)
- Add a different subscription...

Add

EasyPrivacy

EasyPrivacy is an optional supplementary subscription that completely removes all forms of tracking from the internet, including web bugs, tracking scripts and information collectors, thereby protecting your personal data.

[Add EasyPrivacy to Adblock Plus](#)

[View EasyPrivacy](#)

URL Content-Type Base URL

|| ads.example.com ^ \$ script, image, domain=bar.com



Is this information available in HTTP header traces?

`||ads.example.com ^ $ script, image, domain=foo.com`

`||ads.example.com ^ $ script, image, domain=foo.com`



HTTP logs
Bro IDS

`||ads.example.com ^ $ script, image, domain=foo.com`

HTTP logs
Bro IDS

Map Web Pages
ReferrerMap

`||ads.example.com ^ $ script, image, domain=foo.com`

HTTP logs
Bro IDS

Map Web Pages
ReferrerMap

Classify requests
libadblockplus + filter lists

Limitations

HTTP logs



HTTPS traffic
Content-Type

Referrer Map



Web page

Classification



Hidden ads (CSS)
List sanity

Ad-blocker usage indicators

Any ad-blocker

AdBlock Plus

Low ratio of ad requests

Easylist updates

Caveat: ad-free content

Caveat: HTTPS + NATs

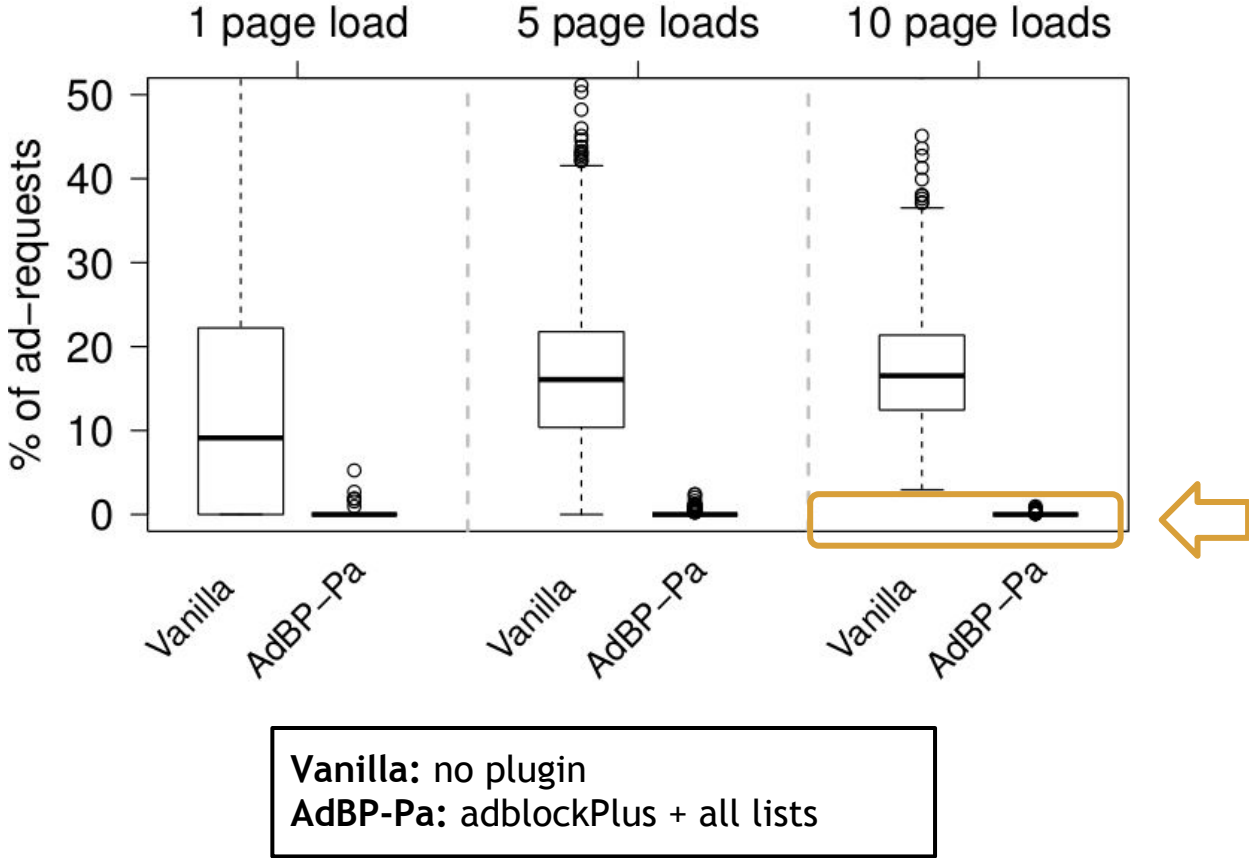
How to find a suitable threshold?

Active measurements

Browser Mode	#HTTP	ad-requests ratio
Vanilla	57.8K	16 %
Adblock Plus + all lists	48.5K	<0.1 %

Values for the complete set of Alexa top 1K

When can we apply ad-ratio indicator?

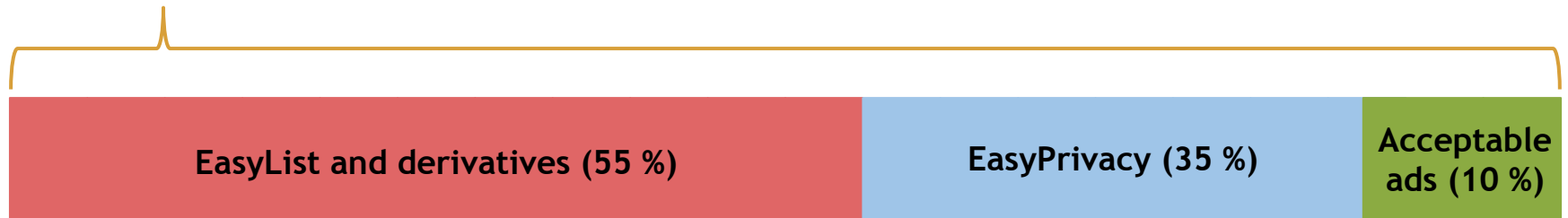


At least 1K requests. Set threshold to 5%

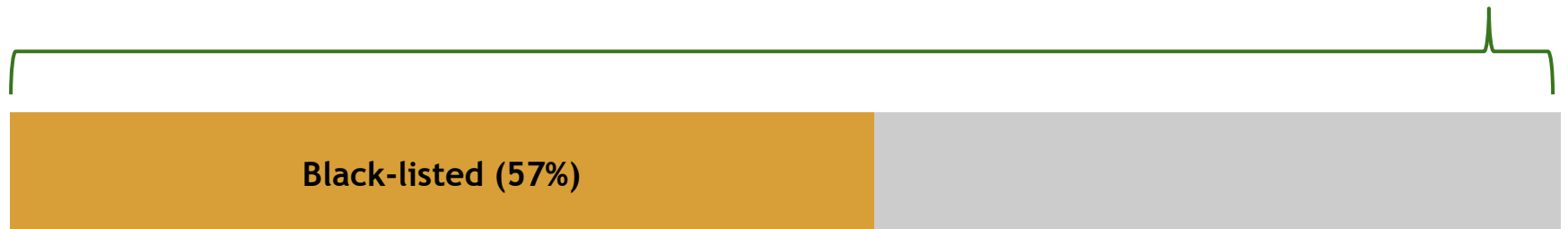
Data sets

Trace	RBN-1	RBN-2
Duration	4 days	15 and ½ hours
Subscribers	7.5 K	19.7 K
HTTP _{bytes}	18.8 TB	11.4 TB
HTTP _{requests}	131.95 M	85.09 M
	Characterize ad traffic	Assess ad-blocker prevalence

How much ad-related traffic?



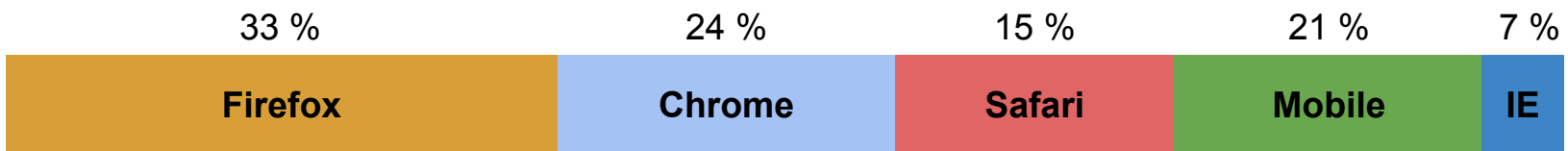
“Loose filters” @@ | |gstatic.com^\$document

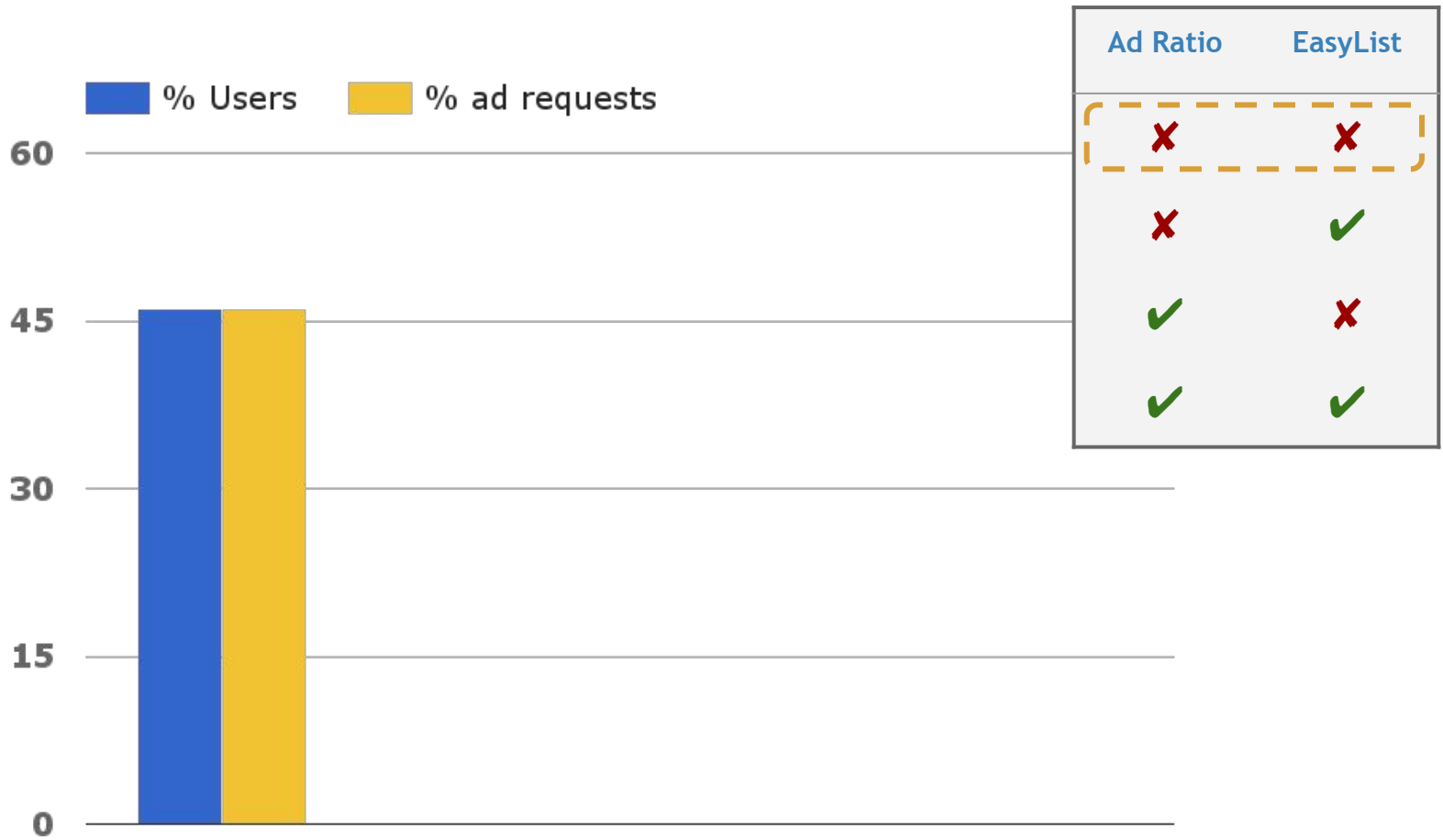


How many ABP-capable browsers?

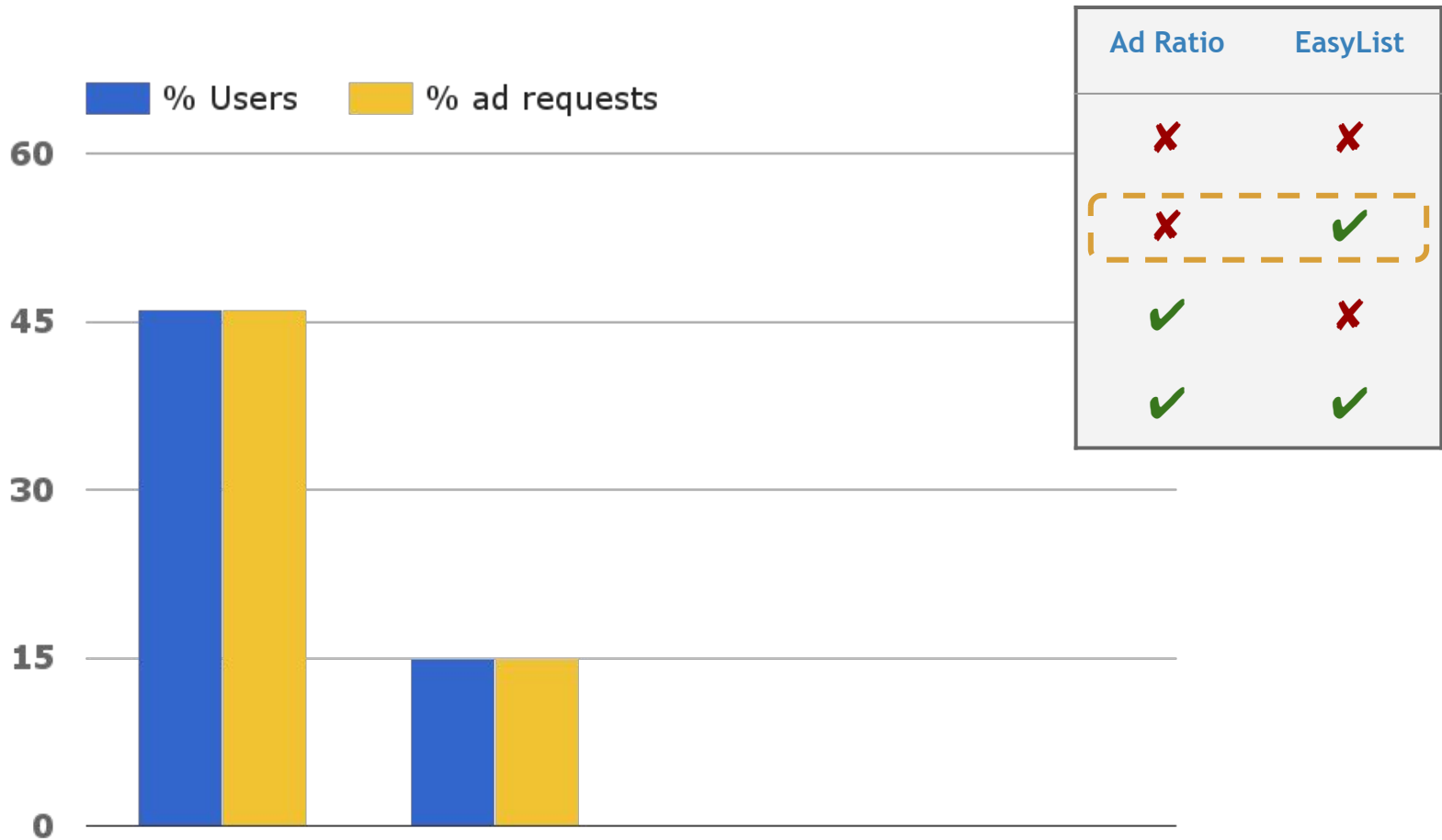


Requests: 50 % (all)
72 % (ads)



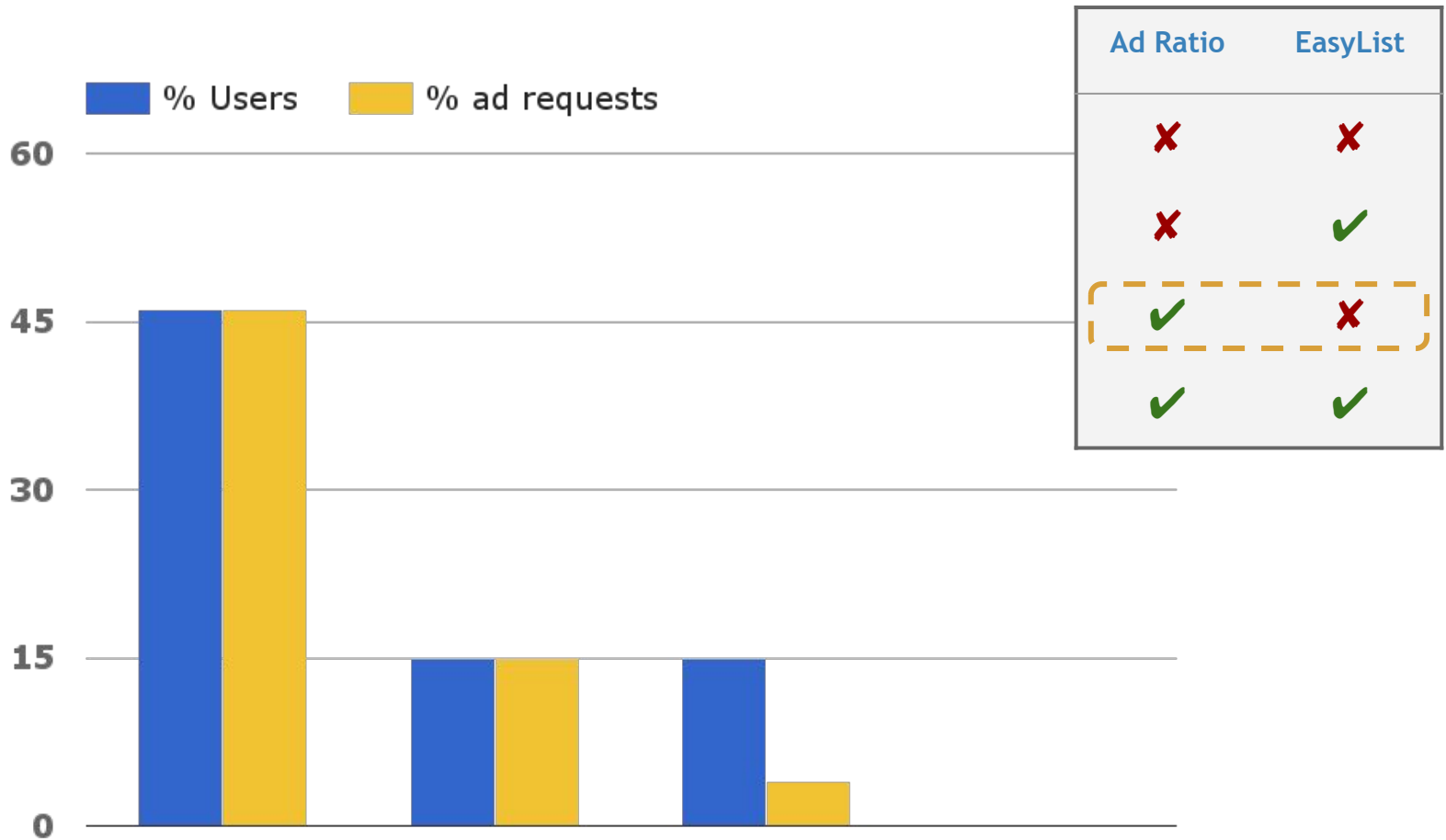


Browsers with no evidence of an adblocker:
46% of the ad traffic



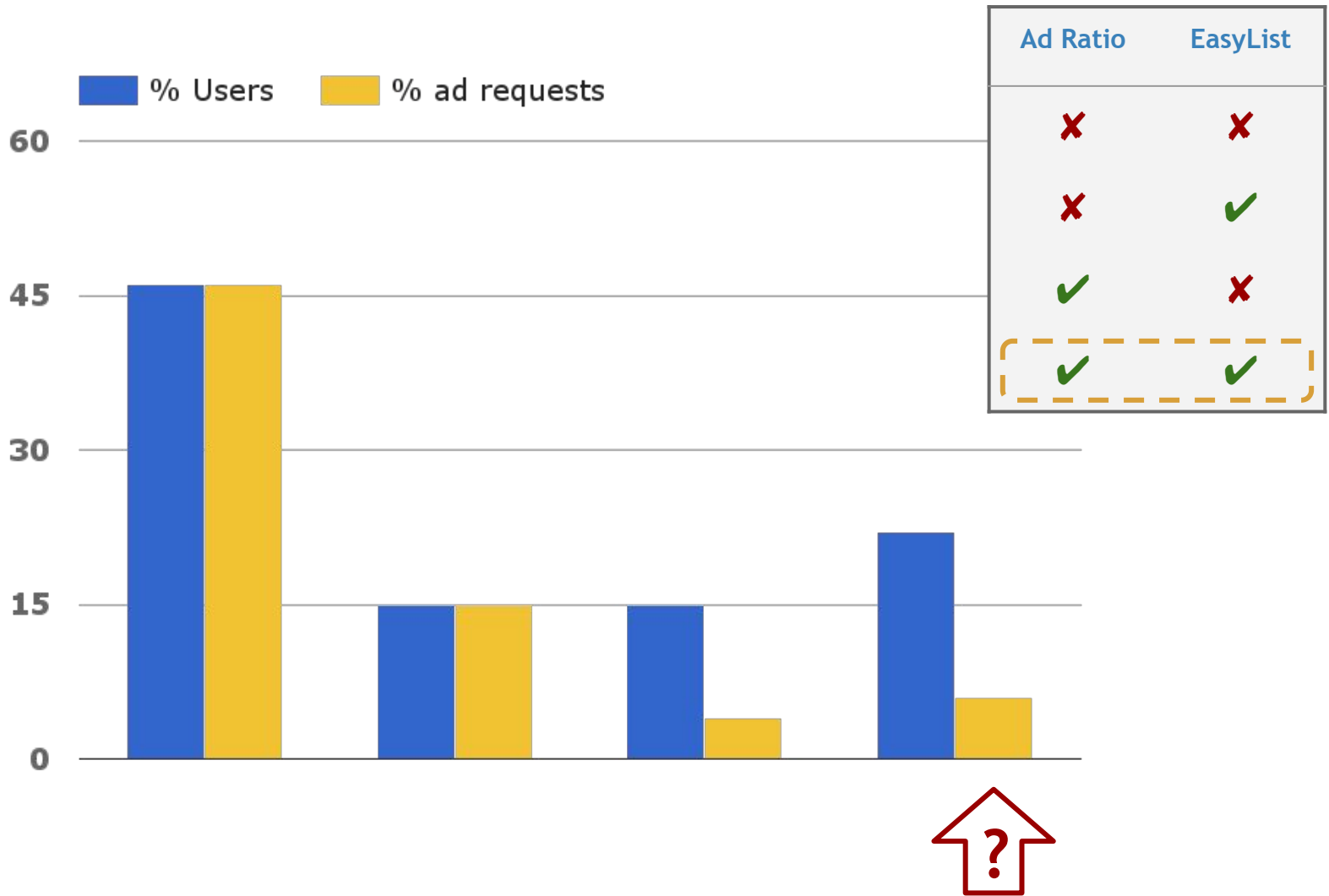
Inconsistent indicators

a) various users in the same household



Inconsistent indicators

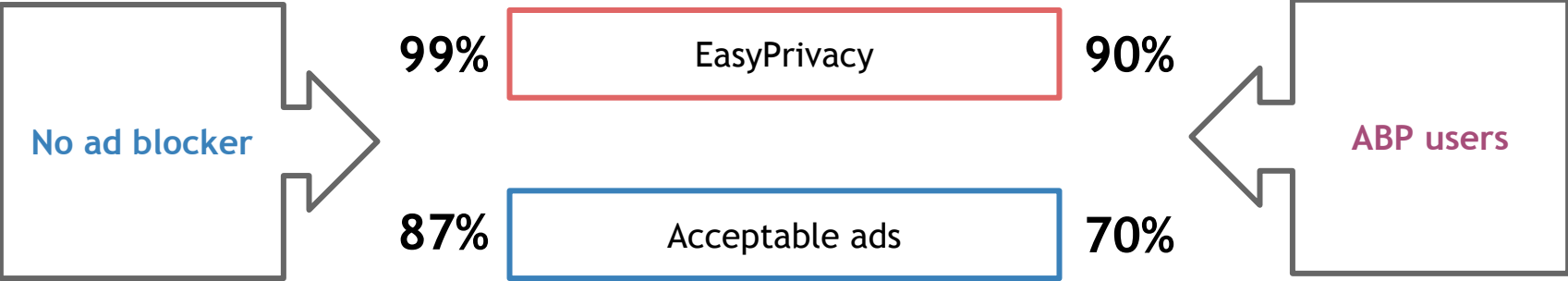
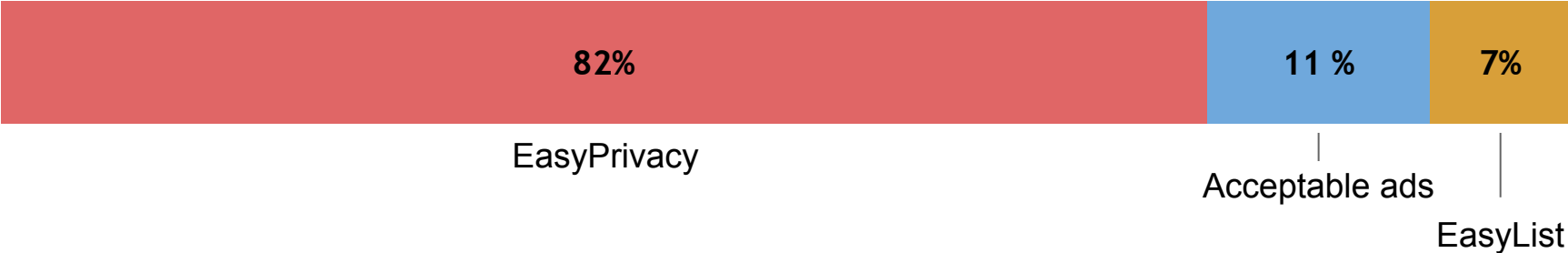
a) different plugin, or b) ad-free content



Evidence of Adblock Plus for 22% of the users
 Still generate ad traffic!

How do users configure ABP?

AGGREGATED



Most AdblockPlus users do not change default settings

Summary

Can we use existing functionality to classify ad traffic?

Yes, we can! (but limitations apply)

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Which traffic is potentially affected by Adblock Plus?

~18% requests and ~1% HTTP bytes

Google, CDNs, Cloud Providers and dedicated ASes

10% of the ad-related traffic is white listed

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10% of the ad-related traffic conforms Acceptable Ads

Can we measure how end users adopt ad-block plugins?

Yes, in our traces ~20% of users

Out-of-the-box i.e., acceptable ads / no EasyPrivacy

Thank you!

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