Dissertation

Social media advertising: An exploration of marketing technique and tools to combat ad-blocking and ad-avoidance

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates "the motivation of ad-blocking on social media" and also concerns with "the exploration of marketing techniques or tools to combat ad-blocking and ad-avoidance" with the utilization of ad-avoidance theories/models. So far very few studies have turned their attention which towards the behaviours of mobile ad-blocking. Hence, this dissertation also attempts to explore "the differences of ad-blocking behaviour between mobile computing device (smartphones and tablets) compared with traditional computing device (desktop and laptop)".

In order to provide a better understanding of the research questions, this research employs a semi-structured interview research strategy and is the best described as a simple qualitative research method. The interview consists of twelve participants and classified into two groups in different perspective section; consumer perspective and marketing perspective. The interview is conducted with open-ended questions with the support of prior relevant literature with the prospect to gain concealing real feelings and profound insight from consumers and digital marketers. Data was collected from ten consumers and two digital marketers and analysed.

The present research found that the motivation of ad-avoidance on the internet is different from the motivation of ad-blocking on social media, consumers on social media tend to more concern about 'data privacy' (RO1). Furthermore, from the marketing perspective, participants in the interview suggest various strategies potentially to combat ad-blocking or may reduce consumers' willingness to ad-block on social media (RO2). Due to the small sample size of the interview, the research incapable to show the differences of ad-blocking behaviour between mobile computing device compared with traditional computing device (RO3).

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Chapter 1 – Introduction to The Subject Area and Thesis

1.1 Background

In the early 21st century, following advances in technology, social media platforms have been creating major opportunities and challenges for businesses leading to a new channel for companies or organizations to interact with their audiences (Swid, 2017). In turn, social media advertising (SMA) has become one of the most important tools available to marketers (Paquette, 2013). This is a result of a revolution in advertising, whereby in just two decades, from the early 1990s to 2018, a vast amount of advertising efforts, messages and resources have been migrating away from traditional advertising channels (e.g. television, radio, newspapers) into a new generation of social media advertising (SMA) channels (Smith, 2009). For example, in Ireland, between 2014-2016, the Central Statistics Office (2016) discovered that the use of social media by enterprises has increased by 7%. In terms of the use of social media by enterprises, Ireland ranks second among European Union countries (Central Statistics Office, 2016). According to IAB Ireland, Irish companies spent €123 million on social media advertisements in 2017, up from €114 million in 2016, representing a growth of 8% (IAB Ireland, 2018).

This shift in focus to digital channels is not unique to advertising. Other marketing activities have also found social media and digital channels as presenting possibilities for effective and efficient outcomes for both businesses and consumers. In 2016, research shows that 65% of Irish enterprises used Facebook as a social media channel to connect with their audience (Central Statistics Office 2016). The interaction is not limited to business-consumer interaction. Social media has proved to be an extremely useful platform for consumers to spread word-of-mouth to other consumers about products and advertising (Naidoo, 2011).

However, researcher (Nevin and Torres 2012) highlight that social media advertising and marketing is still in the preliminary stage of development. In the fast-paced developing social media marketing space, there are still a lot of unclear areas for researchers to discover and explain. Given the consistent growth in popularity of digital marketing, the present study investigates this phenomenon from the perspective of how businesses can use digital

marketing and advertising tools most effectively, as will be further explained in the next section.

1.2 Justification for Research

As explained in section 1.1, organizations in Ireland are spending a tremendous amount of funds on social media advertising each year. The second highest business users of social media in the EU in 2016 are Irish companies (Central Statistics Office, 2016). As with many business ventures, this is assumed to be with the goal of a return on investment, or, in the least, reaching a target audience. It is possible that a social media marketing campaign may not lead to a return on investment, and the reasons for this are varied, complex, and impossible to fully capture in a single research study (Nithyanand et al 2016; Despotakis et al 2017; Ravi and Srinivasan 2017). Furthermore, the rapid growth on social media over a short period of time, academic researches on social media has endeavored to keep up the step, especially in the area of ad-avoidance and ad-blocking (Boyd and Ellison 2007; Kelly et al 2010; Krishnamurthy and Dou 2008). One potential contributory factor is ad-blocking.

This study explores one of the potential issues or factors which may obstruct social media advertising from reaching their target audience effectively; ad-blocking. Ad-Blocking is a generic term which describes a category of computer software, such as "Ad Block Plus," which is designed to block ads on a website including social media advertising and prevent tracking by the third-parties (Schaller, 2017). Besides that, the study of ad-blocking on mobile devices receive little to no attention. Thus, this study also explores potentially differences between ad-blocking behavior on mobile computing devices (Smartphones and Tablets) compare with traditional computing devices (Desktops and Laptops).

Ad-blocker can be described as the same threat as when Digital Video Recorder (DVR) technology launched, which had an impact on TV advertising because viewers were enabled to skip ads while watching TV (Bellman et al 2010; Henderson 2015; Wilbur 2008). The PageFair 2017 Global Ad-Block report demonstrated the rising number of ad-blocking users, which has caused an economic impact amongst online publishers (Cortland, 2017). Due to ad-blocking, the report estimates the loss of global revenue was 21.8 billion during 2015 and the number of ad-blocking users grew by 41% year over year (PageFair, 2015).

Henderson (2015) describes ad-blocking as the hot topic in this technology era. However, there is little research investigating what motivates consumers to ad-block on social media or how advertisers can overcome the challenge of ad-blocking. It is for this reason that the present study attempts to contribute to filling this research gap, exploring the issue of ad-blocking to achieve the following research objectives.

1.3 Research Objectives

RO1: To understand what motivates consumers to ad-block on social media.

RO2: To explore how digital advertisers may overcome the ad-blocking issue in the future in order to successfully communicate with their audience(s).

RO3: To understand the differences between ad-blocking behavior on traditional computing devices (desktop and laptop computers) compared with mobile computing devices (tablets and smartphones).

These objectives are achieved by answering the following research questions.

1.4 Research Questions

RQ1: What motivates consumers to ad-block on social media?

RQ2: How can digital advertisers overcome the ad-block issue on social media platforms?

RQ3: Are there differences between ad-blocking behavior on traditional computing devices (desktop and laptop computers) compared with mobile computing devices (tablets and smartphones)?

1.5 Summary of The Structure of The Thesis

Chapter 2 reviews literature surrounding the topic summarising extant research findings regarding consumers' motivations and behaviour with regard to ad-blocking and ad-avoidance. Chapter 2 also summarises several marketing techniques and tools to combat the severity of ad-blocking and ad-avoidance on social media channels.

Chapter 3 explains the methods used in this primary marketing research study; interviews for data collection; qualitative data analysis and purposive sampling.

Chapter 4 details the main findings of this primary research providing perspectives on ad-blocking from both an industry perspective (following interviews with two businesspeople) and a consumer perspective (following interviews with ten consumers).

Chapter 5 compares the findings of this study's primary research with extant secondary research for similarities and differences for the purposes of creating a discussion around the topic of ad-blocking.

Chapter 6 summarizes the main conclusions and recommendations of this thesis.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Introduction

In recent years, along with advertisers and marketers shifting from traditional advertising channels to a new generation of social media advertising channels, consumers have concurrently been adopting new technological tools such as those that enable ad-blocking. Thus, digital and social media advertising presents new advertising opportunities but also challenges for marketers. Hence, ad-blocking is becoming a focal point of discussion for marketing practitioners and marketing researchers. It is interesting to note that during 2017, at the research proposal stage of this study, the amount of published research on this topic was under-developed, yet this has been changing dramatically into 2018, demonstrating the topicality of this research conversation in the marketing discipline. This chapter will summarize the research field to-date covering the following main headings, which represent themes located within the literature reviewed:

- Social media and web 2.0
- The effectiveness of social media advertising (SMA)
- Ad-blocking and ad-avoidance behavior
- Motivations for ad-blocking and ad-avoidance behavior
- Cho and Cheon's Model of Advertising Avoidance on the Internet
- Schultz's Push-Pull Model of Marketing Communication
- Marketing strategies and tools to overcome ad-blocking and ad-avoidance

Through reviewing the literature on this topic, it has been apparent that much of the research into ad-blocking and ad-avoidance tends to investigate and theorise the behavior and the motivations for it as inter-connected and thus they are described in an inseparable manner. Therefore, this chapter will intersperse extant literature findings that cover both. This chapter begins with an explanation of what social media is, according to marketing research literature.

2.2 Social Media and Web 2.0

Social media is a platform also known as a virtual community such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and etc, that enable users to create and share content on social media. Internet users can upload images or videos on social media to share and exchange information with each

other (Siddiqui and Singh, 2016). In the past decade, social media has growth expedite worldwide. Based on the data shows that between 2010 to 2018 the number of social media users had growth from 970 million to 2620 million users (Statista, 2018). The reasons why social media has grown rapidly in a decade is because internet users can via particular social media to connect with each other, crossing geographical boundaries.

In this new era of technology, social media plays an important role in consumers' daily life and has transformed people's lifestyle e.g. e-shopping, education and approach to new launch products and brands (Siddiqui and Singh, 2016). Moreover, social media has become part of the business tools to brings the connection between organizations and consumers (Hajli, 2014; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). In fact, Facebook considers as one of the biggest advertising platforms in the world (eMarketer,2015).

In the next section will be more in-depth explained the advertising on social media.

2.3 The Effectiveness of Social Media Advertising (SMA)
In this section is to understand the effectiveness of social media advertising (SMA), whether the SMA is sufficient to reach the consumer on social media.

Along with the growth of social media and gain more important, to understand the effectiveness of SMA has become more interesting for marketing practitioners and marketing researcher (Luo and Jiang, 2012). A number of researchers have recognized that SMA has a significant impact on the contemporary time (LaPointe 2012; Rambe and Retumetse 2017). Due to the rising cost of traditional media and the limited budget can be spent on advertising, many advertisers have shifted from traditional media to digital media such as social media (Chao et al 2012; eMarketer 2015). Between 2013 to 2017, the share of social media advertising expenditure as percentage of global digital advertising spending had up from 23.2% to 34.5% (Statista, 2018). SMA differs from traditional advertising which is more effective to reach the wider range of audiences (across the geographical boundaries) and at a lower cost (Ohajionu and Matthews, 2015). Besides, the online environment provides sophisticated tools such as web cookie that helps digital advertisers to target consumers with the

personalize advertising on social media; personalized to the consumer's online behaviours (Johnson 2013; Seyedghorban et al 2016).

Nowadays, due to competitive advertising and a large number of ads on social media (Kumar et al. 2017). Several studies argued that consumers had seen numerous advertising on each day include SMA (Cho and Cheon 2004; Elliott and Speck 1997; Ouyang 2015). CBS News (2006) estimate a person has been exposed to 5,000 advertising per day; perceive as ad clutter. Perceived ad clutter on particular media could lead to reduce the advertising recall and recognition for a particular brand (Ha and McCann 2008; Nelson-Field et al 2013) and motivate consumers to ad-avoidance and ad-blocking (Bang and Lee 2016; Cho and Cheon 2004; Kelly et al 2010; Seyedghorban et al 2016). Ad-avoidance and ad-blocking may interrupt the SMA messages to reach the consumers. In the following section will be further explain ad-blocking and ad-avoidance.

2.4 Ad-blocking and Ad-avoidance

Ad-avoidance refers to consumers being exposed to but still ignoring the advertising on the internet and ad-blocking is using specific software or tools to block all the advertising on the internet include the advertising on social media (Cho and Cheon 2004; Ferreira et al 2017; Kelly et al 2010). Ad-blocking on social media results in the doubt about the effectiveness of SMA. Kumar et al (2017) highlighted the academic understanding of the effectiveness of social media is limited. Therefore, one of the objectives of the study is to attempt reveal the impact of ad-blocking on SMA and explore the motivation of ad-blocking on social media.

Growing research evidence is finding that ad-blocking has become one of the biggest challenges for digital marketer in recent years (Jung et al 2016; Van den Broeck et al 2018). At the same time, social media advertising is growing incessantly (Chao et al 2012; Neti 2011; Statista 2018). Central Statistics Office (2016) discovered between 2014-2016, the use of social media by enterprises has increased 7% in Ireland. According to IAB Ireland, in 2016, Irish companies spent €114 million on SMA alone and spent €123 million on SMA in the following year, representing a growth of 8% (IAB Ireland, 2018).

The concurrent growth in social media advertising spend by marketers and consumers' adoption of ad-blocking technologies presents a notable challenge. According to PageFair (2017), between 2010 to 2017, the number of ad-blocking users increased from 21 million to 236 million users worldwide, over a 1000% increase in just seven years. Furthermore, Independent.ie revealed in early 2018, internet users in Ireland are now displaying the highest levels of ad-blocking software usage in Europe (Weckler, 2018). The same report finds that 40% of Irish internet users now block ads on their computers and laptops (Weckler, 2018).

This rise of ad-blocking users could potentially be leading to a negative impact on organisations' revenue, or at least their ability to target their advertising audience effectively. Adobe estimates ad-blockers globally cost advertisers 22 billion in revenue during 2015. The Irish Time (2017) announced ad-blocking tools hit web revenue and traffic with their reports showing the number of visitors using ad-blocking tools increasing rapidly with the impact leading to traffic to small and medium-sized websites declining sharply over a 35 months period, between April 2013 to Jun 2016.

In order to provide a better understanding for readers about the background of ad-avoidance and ad-blocking, the present study will further explain the antecedent ad-avoidance (traditional ad-avoidance) and digital ad-blocking (ad-blocking on social media environement) in the following section.

2.4.1 Traditional Ad-avoidance

According to Ferreira et al (2017), antecedent ad-avoidance can be fall into three categories:

➢ Physical Avoidance

➢ Mechanical Avoidance

➢ Cognitive Avoidance

Abernethy (1991) classified ad-avoidance into two different categories, which is physical avoidance and mechanical avoidance. Physical avoidance defines as the consumer physically skip the advertising on offline media such as leaving the room, thus there is no audience in front of the television. However, mechanical avoidance refers to the consumers switching to the different channel or fast-forwarding ads to avoid advertising (Abernethy, 1991). And also

include the use of DVR and other mechanisms to filter out, block or skip ads (Kelly et al 2010; Pashkevich et al 2012). Additional research had explored the cognitive avoidance, which refers to the act of disregard and not viewing advertising. For example, consumers can remove a radio commercial, television commercial or newspapers ads from their attention by ignoring it (Speck and Elliott, 1997).

2.4.2 Ad-blocking on Social Media: The Behavior and Motivations for it

With the growth in adoption of digital marketing, various studies apply the antecedent ad-avoidance model into the online environment (Cho and Cheon 2004; Van den Broeck et al 2018). Van den Broeck et al (2018) defines physical avoidance as ignoring the ads or action to close the ads. Mechanical avoidance refers to the use of a particular software or tool to block entire advertising contents expose on the internet e.g. ad-blocker. And cognitive avoidance is defined as to disregard the advertising such as sidebar ads on social media. For example, by ignoring the posts with "sponsored" label.

In the research literature, the online environment is usually perceived as a goal-oriented medium where consumers become the editors of information and more involved in achieving hedonic goals with the stronger sense of freedom on the internet (Cho and Cheon 2004; Gritten 2007; Redondo and Aznar 2018). Empowered by technology, ad-blocking allows consumers to block advertising content on the internet including social media (Belanche et al 2017; Pashkevich et al 2012). This differs from the offline media due to the limited editorial freedom consumers have. Consumers as television viewers were traditionally forced to see the unsolicited advertising on a TV channel, or engage in ad-avoidance by ignoring the advertising e.g. leaving the room (Abernethy 1991; Speck and Elliott 1997).

Some research into digital advertising argues that the intrusive ads, such as pop-up ads, would result in positive effects such as increased memory for the ad message or particular brands (Edwards et al. 2002). The argument is that through forced exposure it is possible to elicit a consumer's involuntary attention and increase in recall and awareness for the particular object e.g. advertising (Edwards et al. 2002). However, even if intrusive ads may enhance recall, in some cases they may also result in negative attitude formation (Ha, 1996). Redondo and Aznar (2018) explain that forced, unsolicited advertising on the online environment may

be perceived by consumers as interrupting the tasks they are undertaking to achieve individual goals that may not include consideration for anything contained in the advertisements in question. In exploring the impact of unsolicited adverts in the online domain compared with traditional media such as television, Kim and Seo (2017) highlight the incidence of ad-avoidance by the consumers on the internet (YouTube) is higher than any offline media (Television).

In the following section will further explain the factor that motivates consumers to engage in ad-blocking and ad-avoidance behaviour, with specific consideration for mobile advertising.

2.5 Mobile Ad-Blocking: The Behaviour and Motivations for it

Recently, mobile ad-blocking behaviour is surging and overtaking desktop computer-based ad-blocking behaviour. According to PageFair (2017), between 2015 to 2016, mobile ad-blocking usage exceeded desktop ad-blocking usage. Mobile ad-block behaviour grew by 108 million and reached 308 million active devices globally. However, desktop ad-blocking behaviour, while it grew by 34 million to reach 236 million active devices globally, it is now below the total figure for mobile ad-blocking, as presented below:
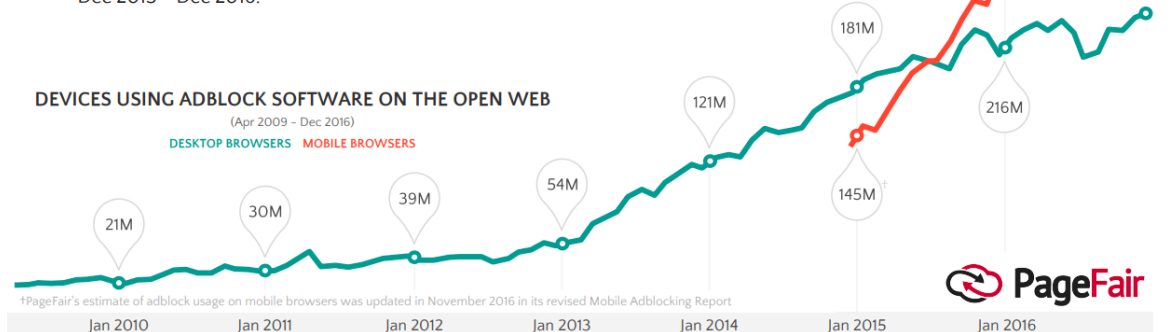
Figure 1: Mobile ad-block usage vs Desktop ad-block usage *(Sources: PageFair, 2017)*

Ikram and Kaafar (2017) investigated a dataset of 1.5 million Android apps on Google Play identifying 97 Ad-blocking apps. Rudneva (2017) argues the reason for ad-block's success is that consumers are not happy with the amount of advertising and usually perceive as ad clutter. According to the research, the majority of the respondents dislike the ads on their mobile phones and the majority of respondents claim that clicking on ads was not with a purpose, but it rather was a mistake or accidentally (Hubspot, 2016). White et al (2008) show that the major cause of ad-blocking spread is the privacy issue, mobile users feel uncomfortable being constantly watched. Ikram and Kaafar (2017) argue that the mobile ad-blocker perceives a high risk that advertisers will reveal the consumers' personal data to third-parties. Although, ad-blocking apps claim to helps the consumer to block ads and prevent tracking and potential privacy problems. However, Ikram and Kaafar (2017) show that 68% of the ad-blocking apps still embed third-party tracking and potentially leak personal information to third-parties.

Ad-blocking behaviour online is engaged in by the majority of the consumers because they perceive the advertising as irritation, annoying, hindrance, waste of time and irrelevant to them (Baek and Morimoto 2012; Bang and Lee 2016; Cho and Cheon 2004; Speck and Elliott 1997; Li et al 2002). Research on traditional advertising media claims that advertising is a significant source of what consumers perceive as 'noise' (Speck and Elliott 1997). Ferreira et al (2017) specify the antecedents of ad-avoidance are similar to digital ad-blocking.

Cho and Cheon's (2004) model of advertising avoidance on the internet focuses on ad-avoidance behaviour on the Internet, before mobile ad-blocking existed. That model is detailed in the next section.

2.5.1 Cho and Cheon's (2004) Model of Advertising Avoidance on the Internet
Please see Figure 2 for a diagrammatic illustration of Cho and Cheon's (2004) Model of Advertising Avoidance on the Internet.
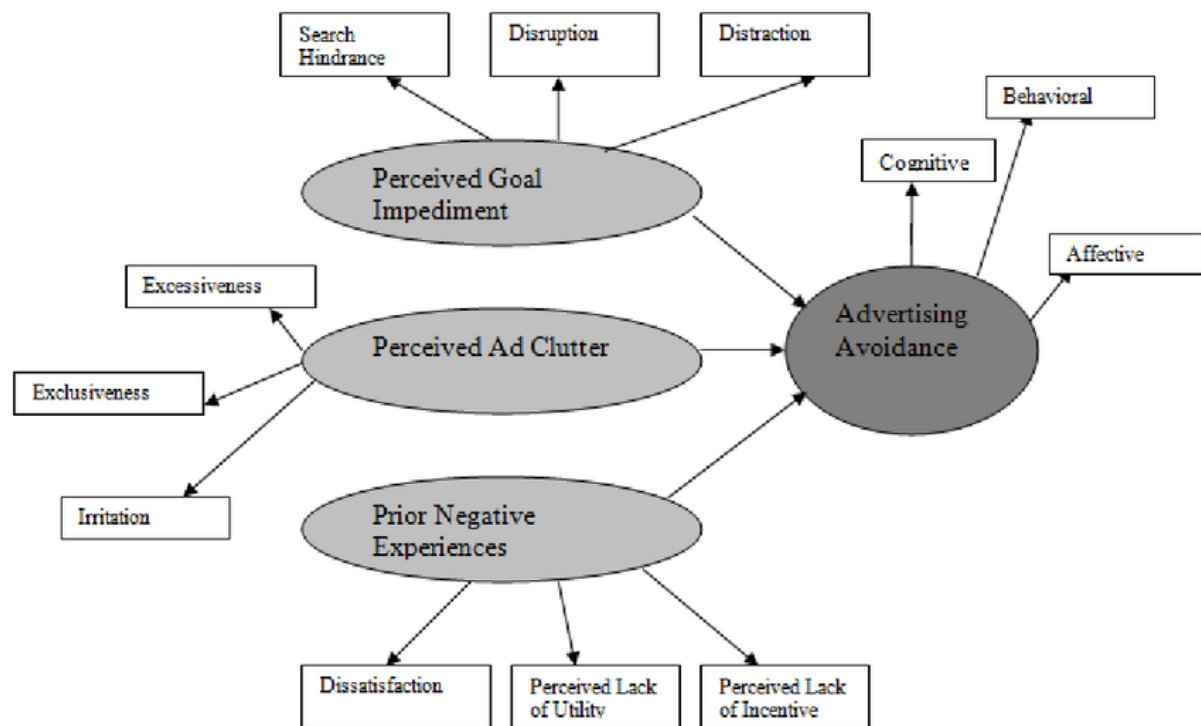
Figure 2: The Model of Advertising Avoidance on the Internet (Sources: Cho and Cheon, 2004)

Cho and Cheon's (2004) model takes account of various studies that focus on ad-avoidance, theorising that it consists of cognitive, affective, and behavioural components (Abernethy 1991; Cho and Cheon 2004; Speck and Elliott 1997; Kelly et al 2010; Van den Broeck et al 2018; Seyedghorban et al 2016).

Cognitive ad-avoidance refers to consumers' thoughts about the ads (Cho and Cheon 2004). It is the psychological defence component that refers to a person intentionally ignoring the ads they are exposed to on a medium (Prendergast et al 2014; Seyedghorban et al 2016). Cognitive ad-avoidance component also consists of consumers' belief(s) about ads on the internet; the more negative beliefs associated with the ads on the internet, the more negative the outcome is presumed to be (Cho and Cheon, 2004).

Affective ad-avoidance involves negative feelings and the expression of emotional reactions toward an advertisement (Cho and Cheon, 2004).

The behavioural ad-avoidance component consists of consumer actions that seek to block the advertising such as installing an ad-blocker or avoiding advertising through e.g. leaving the

room (Cho and Cheon, 2004), which is comparable with physical avoidance (Abernethy 1991; Van den Broeck et al 2018).

2.5.2 Perceive Ad Clutter on Social Media

A number of studies describe 'perceived ad clutter' as a term that refers to a perceived excessive amount of advertising on a particular medium (Cho and Cheon 2004; Kelly et al 2010; Speck and Elliott 1997). Ha and McCann (2008) argue that when the quantity of advertising content on a particular medium exceeds consumers' acceptance level, consumers experience what they perceive as ad clutter.

While social media originated as virtual communities that act as platforms for consumers to share their pictures, videos, audiovisual entertainment and daily life with each other (Belanche et al. 2017), over time social media have been slowly transforming into commercial platforms with increasing amounts of advertising. In fact, social media have become some of the biggest advertising platforms (eMarketer, 2015). Between 2009 to 2011, the number of marketers using social media platforms to advertise increased 7% from 23% to 31% (Neti, 2011). Research indicates that consumers are now exposed to approximately 5,000 advertising messages every day and this is increasing due to SMA (CBS News 2006; Kelly et al 2010). Some argue that this is resulting in consumers perceiving SMA as ad clutter (Kumar et al. 2017). Ad clutter could potentially interrupt consumers' efforts towards achieving their goals and thereby affect overall consumer experience on social media (Ferreira et al. 2017). This perceived ad clutter has a negative effect on consumer attitudes towards advertising (Redondo and Aznar, 2018). This leads to the motivation among consumers to ad-block (Cho and Cheon, 2004).

2.5.2.1 Ha's (1996) The Three Dimensions of Clutter

The early research proposed the three dimensions of ad clutter consists of quantity, intrusiveness, and competitiveness (Ha, 1996). This definition was later modified to an integrated model of ad clutter to accommodate online and offline media (Ha and McCann, 2008). The three dimensions of ad clutter, as presented as below:

- *Competitiveness*: refer to the degree of similarity of the advertised products or advertising messages and causing confusion to the consumers, can also define as the advertising messages from different brands, but in the same product category (Ha and McCann, 2008). The studies described a large number of competitive ads on the particular mediums may potentially reduce the recognition for a specific brand (Nelson-Field et al 2013; Li and Lo 2015). And smaller brands were more likely to be ignored compared with multinational brands such as Nike (Nelson-Field et al. 2013).

- *Quantity*: defined as the proportion of advertisement on a particular medium and a large number of ads on traditional media and digital media; perceive as ad clutter. The study identifies increasing the number of ads could lead to reduce recall the advertising contents and affect the effectiveness of advertising (Ha and McCann, 2008). In order to prevent perceive ad clutter on particular medium, the largest radio group in the United State (Clear Channel) had set an upper limit on the quantity of advertising accepted. In order to control the negative effect of ad clutter of the quantity dimension(Ha and McCann, 2008)

- *Intrusiveness*: define as the degree the advertisements interrupt the flow of an editorial media content unit. Along with the advances in the technology of advertising, intrusiveness has been more commonly for the academic practitioner to research. (Cho and Cheon 2004; Kelly et al 2010).

In the following section will further explain the intrusiveness on social media and result in perceive as goal interruption.

2.5.3 Perceive Goal Interruption on Social Media

Previous studies explained the internet ads interrupt consumers efforts to achieve a particular goal; perceive goal interruption (Cho and Cheon 2004; Jung et al 2015; Li et al 2002; Van den Broeck et al 2017). Cho and Cheon (2004) proposed goal interruption is one of motivation that motivates consumers ad-avoidance on the internet. In the context of social media, when consumers perceive SMA as an object that may hinder and interrupt them to achieve their goals such as socialising, watching videos and etc. Consumers could potentially

tend to more likely to ad-block and ad-avoid (Baek and Morimoto 2012; Ferreira et al 2017; Kelly et al 2010; Seyedghorban et al 2016).

There are two factors that should be concern as the motivation of ad-blocking, which is the 'sense of freedom on the social media' and 'time urgency'.

2.5.3.1 Social Media: Goal-oriented Medium with the Stronger Sense of Freedom/Control

Aforementioned, the study found that the behaviour of ad-avoidance on the online media e.g. social media is different from the traditional media (see Section 2.5.2). In the research literature, consumers are more likely to achieve a goal without any intrusive, interfere or impediment on the online environment compare with traditional media (Cho and Cheon 2004; Gritten 2007; Li et al 2002; Redondo and Aznar 2018). Social media consider as a goal-oriented medium which is more involved in achieving hedonic goals with the stronger sense of freedom (Kelly et al. 2010). Therefore, when the intrusive ads hindering a consumer achieve a goal, it may lead to unfavourable results such as consumers getting the frustration, aggravating and negative attitude toward advertisement and result in ad-avoidance (Cho and Cheon, 2004). Indeed, social media embedded a large amount of In-stream ads in the videos such as pre-roll ads on YouTube, consumers are forcing to see the ads for at least 5 seconds before playing a video (Campbell et al. 2017).

Kelly et al (2010) highlighted goal interruption not only raises consumers annoyance but also motivate consumers online ad-avoidance. The studies examine consumers are more likely to avoid or block any source of annoyance, that interrupts them to achieving a particular goal on the internet (Baek and Morimoto 2012; Seyedghorban et al 2016). And usually perceive the intrusive ads on social media as interruption (Belanche et al 2012; Burns and Lutz 2006; Seyedghorban et al 2016).

2.5.3.2 Time Urgency

Goal interruption could potentially perceive as procrastinating or delaying the consumers to achieve a particular goal or task on social media. The recent study shows that time urgency is crucial to determine ad-blocking behaviours (Belanche et al. 2017). In the context of social media, the study explained the inserted ads on social media are usually perceived as annoying

and procrastinate (Dehghani et al. 2016). Hence, in 2010 YouTube introduced skippable ads (TrueView ads) that allow consumers to skip the pre-roll ads that are embedded in videos, to reduces negative consumer's experience and thus mitigate negative effects on consumers' perceptions of ads (Titcomb, 2013).

Besides that, the studies found that consumers who have the limited amount may have different reasons (e.g., time pressure or irrelevant) motivate to ad-blocking compare with the consumers who use the internet for pure entertainment purpose (Cho and Cheon 2004; Fuchs 2014). Seyedghorban et al. (2016) classified the behaviour of consumers on the internet into two different categories which are highly goal-oriented and low goal-oriented. High-oriented consumer refers to those consumers who are mostly involved in online searching and shopping (Seyedghorban et al. 2016). In contrast, low goal-oriented consumers are those consumers mostly surf and communicate on the internet (Seyedghorban et al. 2016). Therefore, high goal-oriented consumers with the limited of time may have the stronger motivation of ad-blocking compare with the consumers who use the internet for pure entertainment purpose; low oriented goal.

2.5.4 Negative Past Experience

Negative past experience refers to consumers have a negative expectation or aspects of advertising on the internet (Cho and Cheon, 2004). Negative past experience is considered as the independent variable which is based on the consumer's previous experience and perspective toward the Internet ads (Cho and Cheon 2004; Li and Huang 2016). In addition, the researches found that a negative perception attitude toward the advertising may motivate cognitive and behavioural avoidance directly (Li et al 2002; Li and Huang 2016).

Recent study shows that if the ads are delaying consumers to perform a particular goal on particular medium, this result may generate negative feelings and the expression of emotional reactions toward an advertisement; affective ad-avoidance (Belanche et al 2017; Cho and Cheon 2004), especially the consumers with limited of time (Fuchs, 2014). Moreover, consumers may have negative attitudes toward the advertising on the internet, when the consumers perceive the advertising as rich media ads which include video, audio or other elements that may slow down the speed of data access and retrieval (Cho and Cheon, 2004) and could potentially affect the user experience on social media.

Li and Huang (2016) described consumers tend to avoid and block the sources that had generate negative experiences to them such as spamming ads, malware ads, and scamming ads, which is related to the data privacy issues.

2.5.4.1 Data Privacy Issues

Furthermore, privacy is a key concern for consumers (Hann et al. 2008). Grant (2005) described consumers have limited trust in digital advertising compared with the traditional media. Consumers have the negative past experiences of giving too much information online and did not find the advertising trustworthy (Moore and Rodgers, 2005). Engaging with the online ads, consumers usually concern about the viruses such as malware ads, that could potentially reveal the consumers' personal data to third-parties, especially on the medium with lack of credibility (Kelly, 2014).

In the context of social media, cookies are a tool to shows the personalize ads and it based on the consumers' online behaviour. Recent research shows that the majority of the consumers consider personal information and their online behaviour could potentially reveal to third-parties via cookies (Hubspot, 2016). In early 2018, The Economist (2018) reported the founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg was testifying in the Congress regarding the issues of the third-party (Cambridge Analytica) obtained the personal detailed data about some 50 million Facebook users. The scandal affects the credibility and reliability of social media platforms and subsequently motivate to ad-blocking on the internet. Hence, the ad-blocking software provides the privacy and security feature attempt to prevent consumers' data reveal to and tracking by third-parties (see Appendix E)

2.5.4.1 Summary

In summary, Vratonjic et al (2013) indicated ads are more likely to avoid or skip by the consumers if they hold the expectation of a negative experience. For example, spamming ads on the internet (pop-up ads, banner ads), goal interruption (intrusive ads), perceive ads as procrastinate to achieve one's goal (rich media ads) and privacy issues on the internet (Belanche et al 2017; Cho and Cheon 2004; Kelly et al 2010; Li and Huang 2016). These previous experiences result in consumers have the negative belief (cognitive and affective

component) about ads and subsequently motivate consumers to ad-avoidance ad-blocking on social media (behavioural component).

The present study will further explore the motivation of ad-blocking, according to Schultz's Push-Pull Model of marketing communication, as will be further explained in the following section.

2.6 Schultz's Push-Pull Model of Marketing Communication
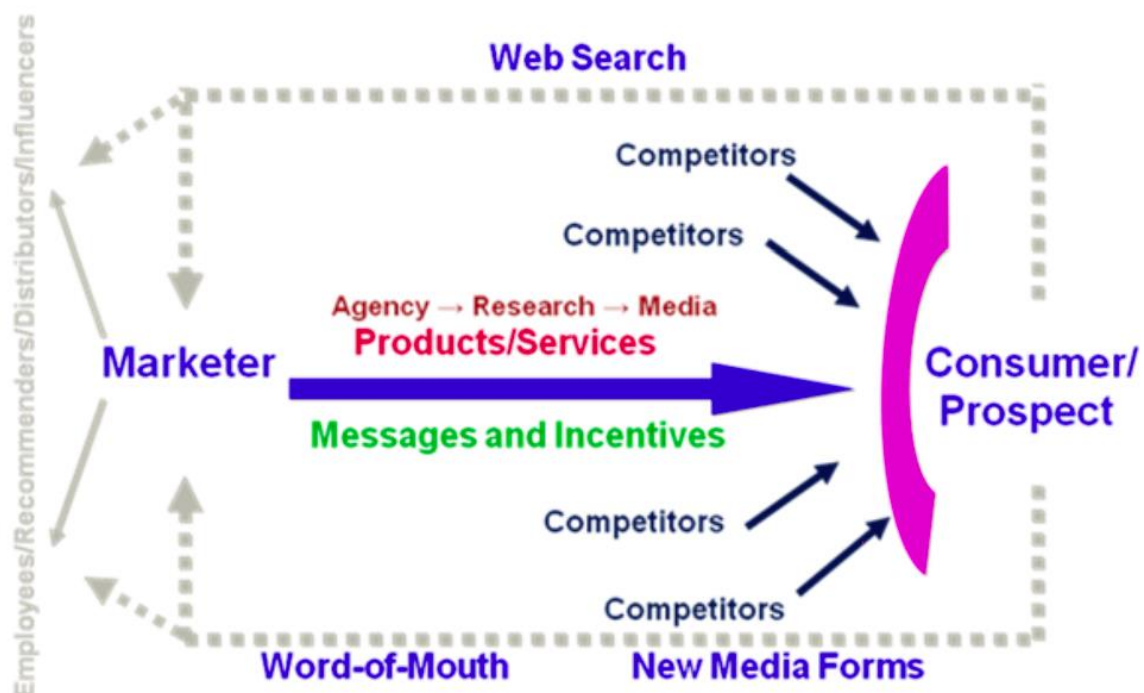
Figure 3: Schultz's (2008) Push-Pull Model of Marketing Communication

The Pull-Push Model of marketing communication (see Figure 3) shows that consumers control the information flow, making their attitude toward advertising a critical factor in determining whether a shield is erected and when a message is received (Schultz, 2008). The model described the consumers' reaction and prospect to the overexpose of advertising contents on the particular medium (Schultz, 2008).

Aforementioned, when the advertising contents on particular medium that exceed a consumer's level of acceptance represent as ad clutter, and the numerous of similarity competitive ads causing confusion to the consumers (Ha and McCann, 2008). And also could

lead to lower recognition for a particular brand and the smaller brand was more likely to be ignored (Nelson-Field et al 2013; Li and Lo 2015). Therefore, consumers stand shields to turn back the "push" of the advertising contents from advertisers and marketers (Schultz, 2006). In the same time, to "pull" the information or content that they desire from the media vehicle. For example, consumers will select particular ads, which is related to their favourite brands or interest, and ignore the rest of competitive ads.

Refer to figure 3, the model shows that consumers more likely to believe in "web searching" or "word-of-mouth" rather than believe the ads on the internet. Research shows that consumers tend to believe the reviews, recommendation from other consumers instead of the advertising (Bleoju et al. 2016). Customer reviews generating great value for both consumers and organizations (Nambisan, 2002). For example, consumers may rate a product/service on social media based on their previous experience and from that the organization able to comprehend about the issues and make an improvement in the future. Furthermore, a positive review will lead to influence other consumer's perception toward particular products and services and these activities will generate electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on social media (Pan and Chiou, 2011).

In order to combat or reduce consumers' willingness to ad-block on social media, as will further explain in the next section.

2.7 Marketing Strategies and Tools to Overcome Ad-Blocking and Ad-Avoidance

According to prior studies investigated the factors motivate consumers to ad-avoidance and in traditional media (Abernethy 1991; Speck and Elliott 1997), online environment (Cho and Cheon 2004; Redondo and Aznar 2018; Seyedghorban et al 2016) and social networking sites (Ferreira et al. 2017). However, there have been little explorations on how to combat ad-blocking specifically on social media environment. Thus, this study is to explore potentially marketing techniques or tools to combat ad-blocking on social media and potentially reduce consumers' willingness to ad-block on social media. Accordingly, combat ad-blocking has become a significant solution to solve the ad-blocking issues. In order to explore a solution to

reduce the number of ad-avoidance and ad-blocking has always been a challenge (Speck and Elliott 1997; Van den Broeck et al 2017).

2.7.1 Strategies to Combat Ad-avoidance on Traditional Media.

Early stage, when DVR technology launched, it brought immensely impacts on TV advertising (Bellman et al 2010; Henderson 2015; Wilbur 2008). Marketers were using various strategies to overcome the ad-avoidance issues, such as interactive program-loyalty banners to reduce ad-avoidance and retain consumers (Despotakis 2017; Dix et al 2010). The research shows that the interactive banner reduced almost 40% of channel changes during the advertising break on TV (Dix et al. 2010). For example, Sky Broadcast, using the interactive TV formats that allow consumers to use their remote controls via press buttons to receive offers of samples or participate in particular competitions.

2.7.2 Combat Ad-blocking on Social Media

The studies described ad-blocking as the same threat when DVR technology launched and brought a huge impact on the advertising industry (Henderson 2015; Wilbur 2008). Empowered by the technology, consumers can simply install an ad-blocking software on the internet and this result causing the number of ad-blocking users are increasing rapidly. According to PageFair (2017) between 2014 to 2016, the number of ad-blocking users had increased from 26 million to 50 million and causing the web traffic decline from 70% to 54% in the United State. Ad-blocking issues bring a huge impact on the digital advertising industry, especially social media. According to Business Insider reported, Spotify reveals that 2 million free users, which is 1.3 % of its total user base were skipping ads via using unauthorized apps such as ad-blocking apps (Spangler, 2018). As a result, Spotify reduced its monthly active users count as of the end of 2017, from 159 million to 157 million total, that includes 71 million paying premium subscribers (Spangler, 2018).

In order to combat ad-blocking on the internet, advertising companies claimed that skipping features is damaged to the copyright of the original content and believe blocking ads is illegal (Despotakis et al. 2017). However, BetaNews reported a court in Hamburg, Germany ruled that Ad-blocker (e.g. AdBlock Plus) proves it is entirely legal and described ad-blocking software is well within its rights to provide an option for the consumers to either to let the

ads expose or hide on the internet (Wycislik-Wilson, 2015). Several studies suggested numbers of marketing techniques and tools to reduce ad-blocking and ad-avoidance on the internet (Despotakis 2017; Gritckevich et al 2018; Van den Broeck et al 2017; Zhu et al 2018). Van den Broeck et al (2017) explored the effect of ad placement on ad-avoidance, by determining the placement of the ads on social media, where the consumers perceive the ads to be fit in nature and appropriate e.g. native ads. Besides, Despotakis et al (2017) proposed a simple model of combat ad-blocking on the internet, this model consists of three different strategies which are ban strategy, fee strategy and allows strategy.

The present study used Despotakis et al (2017) model as a starting point and to potentially explore marketing techniques and tools to combat ad-blocking on social media. The following section will further explain each of the strategies.

2.7.3 Ban Strategy

This strategy is using 'Ad-block Wall' to stop the consumers who use ad-blocker to access a particular website e.g. Forbes. Ad-block Wall helps a particular website to detect whether the consumer is using any ad-blocking software or tools and if so, refuse to give access to the consumer unless the consumer switches off the ad-blockers (see Figure 4). Ad-block Wall seemed like the easiest option to combat ad-blocking. However, the research shows that 74% of ad-block users choose to leave the website when they encounter such as ad-block wall, while the rest of the ad-block users disable ad-blocker to visit the website (PageFair, 2017).

2.7.4 Fee Strategy

Fee strategy refers to provides an option for consumers to choose either disable ad-blocker(s) or pay for "subscribe to premium accounts" or purchase an "ad-removal pass" to remove displaying ads on a particular medium (see Figure 5). For instance, consumers need to buy the ad-removal pass to remove ads on the website (see figure 6), in order to provide better surfing experience for the consumers on the internet.
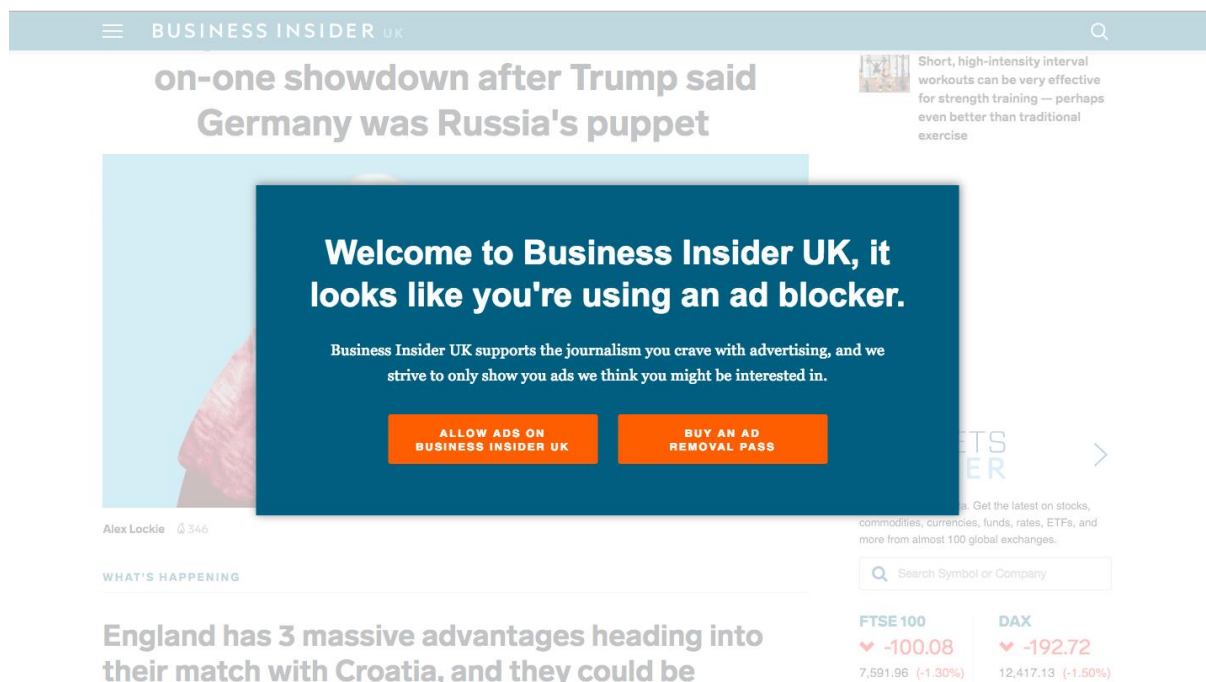

Figure 5: Ad-block wall detected ad-blocking software on the website *(Sources: Business Insider UK)*
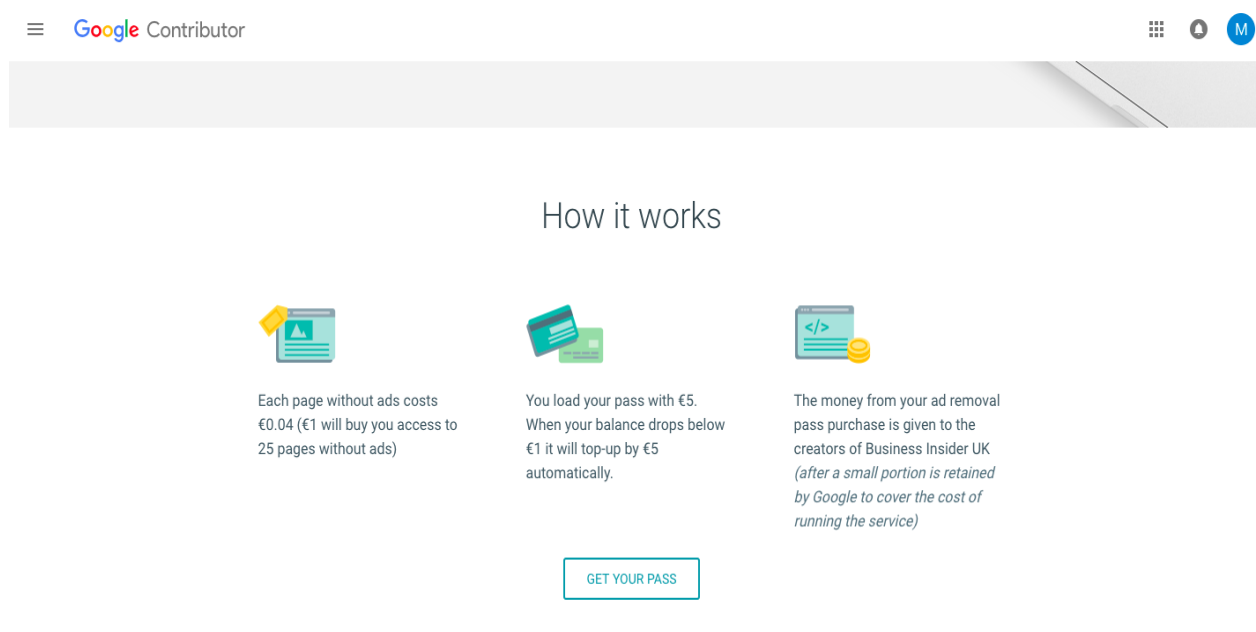
Figure 6: Ad-removal Pass: particular website such as Business Insider is partnering with Google Contributor *(Sources: Google Contributor)*

In the context of social media, consumers can pay a fee for an ad-free version of the sites. For example, The Irish Times (2018) reported YouTube launches new streaming music service in Ireland; "YouTube Premium"(O'Brien, 2018). The premium version offers consumers to access on YouTube without seeing any ads and also provide background listening feature (O'Brien, 2018).

2.7.5 Allow Strategy

This strategy allows consumers to access the website using ad-blocking software and also allow to block all the displaying advertisement on the internet. In fact, the majority of the website on the internet and social media are following this simple strategy of doing nothing on combat ad-blocker and just simply allowing the consumer to use ad-blocking access the website (Despotakis et al. 2017).

2.8 Chapter Summary

From different studies shows that the optimal way to reduce ad-blocking is to comprehend the motivation and behavior of ad-blocking (Nithyanand et al 2016; Zhao et al 2017). Some studies argued combat ad-blocking by restricting or limited consumers' control on the internet e.g. ban strategy, may only lead to lose visitors and affect the effectiveness of advertising. (Despotakis et al 2017; Shiller et al 2018; Zhao et al 2017).

Furthermore, Van den Broeck et al (2017) suggest re-structure the placement of the ads that consumers will accept and perceive the ads to be appropriate on social media, could potentially reduce the consumers' willingness to ad-block. Although, YouTube introduced the skippable ads with the purpose of enhancing consumer's experience on social media and mitigate the negative perceptions toward SMA (Belanche et al. 2018). However, the number of ad-blocking users are growing constantly from 21 million to 236 million users worldwide over a 1000% increase in just seven years (PageFair, 2017). Therefore, some of the websites such as Forbes and Business Insider UK are applying combat ad-blocking strategies such as fee strategy and ban strategy, to reduce ad-blocking users.

In order to attempt explore marketing techniques or tools to combat ad-blocking on social media. In the next chapter will be justified and clarify the research methodologies that being adopted and to show the way of research being carry out.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter seeks to justify and clarify the research methodology that has been chosen for the present study. This study attempts to contribute to filling the research gaps identified in section 2.5 by applying Cho and Cheon's (2004) model of ad-avoidance on the internet into social media platforms and in order to explore marketing techniques or tools to combat ad-blocking and ad-avoidance on social media.

This chapter details the methods of primary research being carried out by explaining the research philosophy, research design, sampling techniques, research ethics considerations, data collection protocols and data analysis techniques adopted.

3.2 Research Philosophy: Interpretivism

The study will follow an interpretivist philosophy through qualitative methods of study, to explore potentially consumers' motivation to ad-block and the effective marketing techniques or tools to overcome ad-blocking.

There are a few core questions such as "how to research", "what to research" and "why research" that need to be considered before carrying out research (Remenyi et al. 2000). The different research philosophies provide contrasting views and sets of assumptions concerning ontology and epistemology. Epistemologically, a subjectivist or objectivist approach to research considers understandings and explanations of the world differently. A subjectivist epistemology would follow an interpretivist position, while an objectivist epistemology follows positivism (Hirschman, 1986).

Positivism and interpretivist are the two broadly recognised philosophical research frameworks the social sciences. Positivist researchers use scientific quantitative methods, while interpretivists prefer humanistic qualitative methods and tend to follow subjectivist assumptions regarding knowledge (Saunders et al. 2012). Therefore, the present research is under the interpretivist research philosophy in order to explore more in-depth perspective from the natural surroundings.

3.3 Quantitative or Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative or quantitative research methods for collecting data for empirical studies both provide alternative benefits and drawbacks, and the selection to utilise one approach over the other depends on the specific objectives of the research study in question (Anderson 2013; Rubin and Babbie 2016).

Cassel and Symon's (2004) Six Differences Model identifies the six differences between qualitative and quantitative research approaches as stated below:

i.) Quantitative research involves the use of numerical data and pursues quantification of data and findings in testing hypotheses, sometimes in social science and business research via surveys, to evaluate results then abstract generalized conclusions to a targeted larger population (Saunders et al. 2012). Qualitative research involves the use of non-numerical data, tends to be interpretative and with the purpose to understand a phenomenon in its context in a deeper, more specific, less generalizable way than quantitative research (Morrow, 2007).

ii.) Quantitative research pursues objective findings (less researcher bias), whereas Qualitative research pursues, to some degree, the subjective (allows for researcher and research participant subjectivity to some degree on the assumption that researchers' and research participants' understandings of the world are usually somewhat or largely, if not entirely, subjective)

iii.) Quantitative research is more rule-driven and attempts to minimize errors before they occur using tried and tested research designs and techniques of data collection and analysis (Saunders et al. 2012). The data collection and analysis techniques are the instruments of research. Qualitative research allows room for flexibility in research design, allowing the primary researcher(s) to alter their data collection, sampling, or data analysis techniques in response to unpredictable results or scenarios, and potentially provide research conclusions that are somewhat distant from the initial expectations or assumptions (Levitt et al. 2017). In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument of research; their experience, skills, and adaptability define the quality of research findings.

iv.) Quantitative research focuses on predicting outcomes, therefore pursuing causal explanations for phenomena, which can be generalised (Waters, 2008). Qualitative research concentrates on understanding the organizational processes or meanings of a behaviour, event, or phenomenon, without the specific goal of prediction or locating causality or generalisability.

v.) Quantitative research is deductive (theory testing). Inversely, qualitative research is inductive (generates new theories or explores new methods/techniques or new topics or research sites).

vi.) Qualitative research is more in-depth, focusing on achieving richer, more specific or subjective explanations for phenomena (e.g. behaviours) thereby allowing for research findings that are potentially quite context specific. Quantitative research focuses on using large sample sizes, sacrificing, potentially to some degree, depth of data collected from one part or member of the population, with the goal of collecting less in-depth data but from a greater sample size, thereby increasing the chances of generalisability of findings across contexts (Waters, 2008).

Quantitative research involves creating statistics through collecting numeric data to quantify some phenomenon using methods such as surveys (Bryman and Bell 2015). A survey provides quantitative description of a studied population in order to explain *what* is happening in a setting (Pinsonneault and Kraemer 1993). Therefore, such a quantitative approach, surveys, will not provide the data with the required depth to answer the present study's research questions. This is because the present study attempts to explain motivations, or *why* people behave in a particular way, because prior literature has already identified the existence of ad-blocking behaviour but without a full exploration of why, as explained in Chapter 1 and 2.

Regarding the motivations for ad-avoidance with regard to traditional non-Internet ads and ad-blocking behaviour online, several studies identify antecedents of digital ad-avoidance consisting of cognitive, affective, and behavioural components (Abernethy 1991; Cho and Cheon 2004; Speck and Elliott 1997; Kelly et al 2010; Van den Broeck et al 2018; Seyedghorban et al 2016). The studies indicate consumers' cognitive involvement with technology such as ad-blocking on the internet, which generally relates to the quality of their experience (Lalmas et al 2014; Miroglio et al 2018). These studies tend to be quantitative however. Different

studies typically applying qualitative research methods to study consumer behaviour online typically study levels of consumer engagement (O'Brien and Toms, 2008). Hyde (2002) states the qualitative research approach provides deeper understandings or complex insights into the reasons for a phenomenon such as motivations for human behaviour, as per RQ1.

Research Question 1: What motivates consumers to ad-block when online?

Due to RQ1 of the present study requiring an exploration of the consumer motivations for ad-blocking behaviour, the primary researcher selects qualitative methods in order to gather in-depth explanations for the motivations for this behaviour, which are considered to be potentially complex and may vary from individual to individual.

As outlined in the literature review in section 2.5, existing literature identifies three potential factors that motivate consumers to ad-block on the internet in the Cho and Cheon (2004) model; perceived ad clutter, goal interruption and negative prior experience. However, that model is not specific to ad-blocking behaviour by social media users, which may or may not present different motivations, something that has not been clearly identified in the existing literature. Therefore, the present study involves exploring in-depth whether or not similar motivations may arise among social media users. However, while the Cho and Cheon (2004) model and other literature are considered during data collection and analysis, the present study seeks openness to new explanations rather than testing any single theory, given the ever-changing nature of social media and of social media user behaviour. Thus, qualitative research approaches are more appropriate to apply in this study to collect rich data regarding consumer attitudes toward SMA and explore what motivates them to ad-block on social media.

RQ2 may also be most effectively answered using qualitative methods.

Research Question 2: How can digital advertisers overcome the ad-block issue on social media platforms?
RQ2 seeks to explore potential marketing techniques and tools to combat ad-blocking on social media. While potential solutions may already exist, as identified in section 2.7 of the

literature review, the success of these solutions is open to question given the prevalence of ad-blocking, also identified in section 2.7. Therefore, the identification of potential new or alternative solutions requires a more qualitative inductive research approach. This search is open to the potential for existing suggested solutions (as per the literature) to emerge as effective options for marketing practitioners, or for potential alterations or modifications to these suggested solutions. Exploring the potential for new solutions involves exploratory research. Qualitative research is typically used in exploratory inquiries. This type of research allows the researcher to investigate the beliefs and perspectives of the participants with a goal to identify subjective similarities and differences through qualitative analysis of the data (Cavana et al. 2001). Moreover, qualitative studies may encourage more thoughtful responses and potentially better research findings. Stoke and Bergin (2006) explain that qualitative research gives the chances for participants to express themselves and be candid about their opinions on a particular topic. The result brings a large amount of rich data about the research topic (Stokes and Bergin, 2006). Not only that, this research method allows room for flexibility in research participant responses enabling unpredictable research findings (Levitt et al. 2017), which may point towards alternative solutions to the ad-blocking problem, not already identified in extant literature. Qualitative research participants frequently appreciate the feeling of empowerment from having their opinion sought in an open-ended manner, which can improve the quality of the data collected, encouraging research participants to expand on and discuss the research issues in much greater detail and in-depth (Davis, 2000). This characteristic of qualitative research methods also encourages the primary researcher to use qualitative approaches, given their potential effectiveness to answer RQ3.

Research Question 3: Are there differences between ad-blocking behavior on traditional computing devices (desktop and laptop computers) compared with mobile computing devices (tablets and smartphones)?

As explained in the literature review, there has been little investigation to explore the differences between behavior on traditional computing devices compared with mobile computing devices (see Section 2.5). Therefore, this study uses qualitative research methods to attempt to explore consumers' reflections on their potentially differing ad-blocking

behavior in using these different types devices, a new and emerging research topic, given the relatively new invention of mobile computing devices.

3.4 Data Collection: Qualitative Research Interviews

To answer these research questions, the qualitative research approach is selected as it reflects the requirement of gathering in-depth and rich data about consumers' subjective motivations (Quinlan et al. 2011). The qualitative approach allows for greater consideration of subjective human perceptions of their experience and opinions about their motivations for their behaviour rather than manipulating pre-identified variables like in an experiment (Lietz and Zayas, 2010). A commonly used approach to data collection in qualitative research is the interviewing technique (Saunders et al. 2012).

All interview durations ranged from thirty to forty-five minutes and the interviews were conducted in several ways including face-to-face (four interviews), over the phone (six interviews), and using electronic media Facebook Messenger video calling (two interviews). The original objective was to carry out all interviews in person, but time and location difficulties led to the decision to use multiple means for data collection as a practical, while not ideal, solution.

Selection of the semi-structured interview approach requires consideration of the pros and cons of this data collection approach with consideration to the effectiveness of the method for answering the present study's research questions specifically. A benefit includes the researcher being able to observe the participants' non-verbal reactions to questions (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005) and had the well-structured questions to discussed with the interviewees (Fisher, 2007). Face-to-face interviews were carried out in a suitable and quiet environment, a quiet coffee shop in Dublin; a location chosen due to its central convenient location and in the hope that its comfortable seating and layout would make interviewees feel more relaxed and willing to engage in a natural conversation. Qualitative semi-structured interviews are also useful for exploratory studies such as this one, enabling the researcher to "find out what is happening and seek to new insight" in exploratory research (Golding 2005; Robson 2002). Another benefit and potential drawback relate to one tool used for data collection; an audio recording device (smartphone). Audio recording is beneficial as it allows

the researcher to focus on the interviewee and their answers fully during the interview, rather than the interviewer having to take extensive notes, which may distract the interviewer and/or the interviewee. However, the audio recording device may also make the interviewee feel uncomfortable or like they are being watched obtrusively, potentially reducing their willingness to talk about or expand in-depth on certain issues naturally (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Thus, the researcher was careful to assure all interviewees that their names or audio recordings will not be shared or revealed in the study report (Saunders et al. 2012). Thankfully, all interviewees consented to being recorded.

The present study selected ten consumers and two digital marketers/advertisers to take part in the interviews, which is further explained in next section (Sampling; section 3.5). Two interview question guides are used during interviews; "consumers interview questions" (please see Appendix B) and "interview questions for marketing practitioners or companies" (please see Appendix C). These question lists were developed by the researcher and reviewed by the supervisor.

The sample of interviewees was selected using the techniques explained in the following section.

3.5 Sampling

Behavioural studies commonly use purposive sampling (Golding 2005; Welman & Kruger 2001). Purposive sampling enables the researcher to select participants most relevant to the research questions.

In this study, the sample of participants can be classified into two groups; consumers and digital marketers who advertise on social media. This sample is chosen on the basis of the research questions. The selection of consumers as research participants enables the findings to provide both consumer perspective and marketing perspective on ad-blocking as a phenomenon, consumers' motivations for ad-blocking, and potential solutions to it as a potential problem for marketing practitioners.

The selection of twelve interviewees follows consideration of methodology literature guidelines on qualitative interpretive study sample sizes. The literature does not provide a

single answer to this question, but there are general rules of thumb. Boyd (2001) suggests that two to ten participants are sufficient, while Creswell (2012) prescribes a maximum of ten participants. This justifies the use of two marketing practitioners and ten consumers to form the present study's research sample.

For a consumer perspective, the ten participants are aged between 18 to 34 years old. The decision to select consumers below the age of 35 results from the assumption that they are more likely to be social media users, which is a requirement to collect data relevant to the research questions. This assumption is based on the findings of a report from PageFair (2017), which shows this age group have the highest average rates for ad-blocking and ad-avoidance on the internet compared to other age groups. This age group is also the generation that has grown up using social media (McCrindle, 2012). The two marketing practitioners are selected based on the criteria that they are marketing practitioners who engage in social media advertising. The next section details the data analysis techniques used.

3.6 Data Analysis: Qualitative Data Analysis

In order to analyse the data collected from the interviews, a transcript-based style of analysis was undertaken in this study. Interviews are transcribed and subsequently analysed and interpreted in conjunction with notes taken by the interviewer after each interview. Interview transcripts and notes were read through multiple times and coded, so that thematic issues and similarities and differences between interviewee's perspectives were identified (Braun and Clarke 2006; Holloway 1997; Saunders et al 2012).

However, the experiences of the primary researcher in the present study match the observations of qualitative methodology literature. Kvale (1996) suggests that the process of analysing qualitative data begins as the same time as collecting these data. Due to the large amount of data collected, approximately thirty pages of notes and transcriptions and seven hours of interview audio recordings, the researcher was reanalysing the collected data of each of the interviews within 24 hours to ensure that the data analysis is being done when the interview is fresh in the memory of the researcher, maximising the researcher's ability to remember interviewee responses and expressions. All the recordings were listened to numerous times to gain an iteratively deeper understanding of the participant's experience

and to mark down further key information provided by the participants that may have been missed or not fully understood during the interview or during initial listening to the recordings (Holloway, 1997).

3.7 Research Ethics Considerations

3.7.1 Informed Consent
Kumar (2014) indicates it is unethical to collect data from or about research subjects without their informed consent. Following methodology literature recommendations, all interviewees, whether in person or not, completed an informed consent sheet (Saunders et al. 2012). See Appendix A for an example of a blank informed consent sheet. A blank consent sheet is provided to protect the identity and anonymity of the interviewees.

Also, the researcher explained to all research participants that they have the option to withdraw from the research if they feel uncomfortable, at any time (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

3.7.2 Privacy and Anonymity of Participants
Following methodology literature recommendations the present study respects and protects participants confidentiality, privacy and anonymity (Collis and Hussey, 2009). The research report does not reveal the participants' name, gender, age or companies' name. Pseudonyms are used to identify interviewees anonymously when quoting or referring to them e.g. participant A.

Guaranteeing marketing practitioner companies' anonymity was essential because these companies did not want to share any identifying commercially sensitive information with their competitors.

Identifying information has not been shared with other people (e.g. research supervisor) during this research project.

Also, in order to ensure the privacy and anonymity of participants, all the recorded and transcribed data will be deleted after analysis, and data coding is completed with categorization of several themes

Chapter 4 – Finding and Analysis

4.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter is to expose the key findings that emerged from the interviews and their analysis. It is with an attempt to discover the main motivational elements for consumers to use ad-blocking on social media (consumer perception) and to explore marketing techniques and tools to combat ad-blocking (marketer perception). The investigation in this study will categories into the following sections, shows as below:

i.) Demographics

ii.) Perceive ads on social media

iii.) Ad-blocking

iv.) The motivation for ad-blocking on social media

v.) Impact of ad-blocking on social media

vi.) How to combat ad-blocking on social media

Along with the flow, researcher brings the participants from understanding the background of social media and discuss the advertising on social media, then move to the ad-blocking issues on social media and explore the motivation of ad-blocking. Lastly, participants had suggested various techniques and strategies to combat/reduce ad-blocking.

4.2 Demographics

The interview in this study consists of twelve participants and classified into two groups which are ten consumers and two marketers. In order to protect the privacy and anonymity of participants, the present study will not disclose the participant's information and will be given a coded name for each of the participants (Consumers) as participant A to J, while the marketing practitioner (Marketers) will be given a coded name as participant A1 and participant A2 in this study. All participants in the interview are social media users for at least three years and two marketing practitioners have received some sort of professional training in their career with relevant qualification in digital marketing such as social media marketing. The additional information on the participants, as present as below:

Participant	Does SMA attract and drive the participant to a particular website?	Did the participant buy a product or service on the particular website	About Ad-blocking	Using Ad-blocking on which computing devices (traditional or mobile)
A	Yes	No, just browsing	Yes, I'm using	Traditional
B	No	No	Yes, I'm using	Traditional
C	Yes	No, just browsing	Yes, I'm using	Traditional
D	Yes	Yes	Never heard before	n/a
E	Yes	No, just Browsing	Yes, I'm using	Traditional
F	Yes	Yes	No, I was using	Traditional
G	No	No	Yes, I'm using	Traditional and Mobile
H	No	No	Yes, I'm using	Traditional
I	Yes	No, just browsing	No, I was using	Traditional
J	Yes	No, just browsing	Yes, I'm using	Traditional

Table 1: Information on the participants (Consumers) of the study

Participant	Using social media as the advertising platform	About Ad-blocking	Does ad-blocking affect the effectiveness of SMA?
A1	Yes	No, I was using	No, so far
A2	Yes	No, I was using	No, may impact the digital advertising field in the future

Table 2: Information on the marketing practitioners of the study

4.3 Perceive Ads on Social Media

The first section is to identify how a consumer perceives the ads on social media. The interview questions in this section are with the purpose of understanding how participants perceive the ads on social media based on their prior experience. At the beginning of this section is to let the participants understand the background of SMA, which will help participants have a better understanding about the research questions and helps to explore in the following section.

4.3.1 Consumer Perception: Consumers Dislike Social Media Advertising

According to the analysis from the interview, most of the participants highlighted that they dislike SMA, especially the ads on YouTube. Few participants described they are not paying

attention to the ads on social media. But in some case, they were attracted by the ads that relevance and interested them. Participant F expressed his prior experience:

> Most of the time, I was ignoring the sidebar ads or any ads that expose forcibly on social media. However, I was attracted by the promotion ads that relevance to me. For example, the ads relevant to specific brands and the products that I'm using or planning to buy soon. (Participant F)

4.3.1.1 Consumers Agree that SMA Make Them Feel Interested in Buying a New Product or Service

According to the interview result (see table 2), seven out of ten participants in the interview were clicked the ads link on social media. While, five participants visited the website for browsing only, without purchase any products or services.

However, two participants mentioned they were attracted by the SMA and bought a product or service on the internet. Participants D and F were bought a product or service via SMA. Participant F was agreed sometime SMA make him feel more interested in buying a new product or trying a new service, explained as below:

> Yes, I agree, sometimes the ads on social media make me feel more interested in buying a new product, especially in promotion. For example, I was saw the Spotify ads on Facebook, the advertising content is regarding to 'student promotion: upgrade your Spotify to the premium account to enjoy unlimited playlist in a lower price'. The ads make me feel to try with the new service. (Participant F)

4.3.1.2 Ads Damage User experience on Social Media Platforms

In this subsection was request the participants to choose a social media platform that gave he/she a bad user's experience (see Table 3). This result helps to understand which social media platform motivate most of the consumers to ad-block, as presented as below:

Social Media Platform	Participants
YouTube	7
Facebook	2
Instagram	1

Table 3: The social media gave a bad user's experience to the participant.

Interestingly, seven participants agreed on YouTube consists of larger amounts of ads compared with other social media platforms. Some participants described the pre-roll ads on YouTube are procrastinate them to achieve their goal. And the rest of the participant highlighted the mid-roll ads reduce their user experience on Facebook and Instagram.

Surprisingly, one of the findings from the interview is the majority of the participants perceive social media as a 'leisure platform' and the intrusive ads was giving consumers a bad user experience, Participant E described:

> I perceive the YouTube as a leisure platform to watch videos and playing music. But the intrusive ads affect my user experience on YouTube. This is because the intrusive ads were kept interrupt the process of music playing, especially the non-skippable ads gave me the worst user experience on YouTube. (Participant E)

4.3.2 Marketer Perceptions Regarding the Effectiveness of Social Media Advertising

In contrast, this subsection is based on the marketer perception perceive SMA. Marketers perceive SMA as one of the most common digital advertising strategies, and described SMA as a rich media consists of video, audio, graphics and other elements that easier to attract consumers to interact and engage with the content of the ads.

Based on the marketing experience, participant A1 explain the effectiveness of SMA is depending on the creative point of the advertising and the selected target groups, these factors could lead to different outcomes. While participant A2 believe SMA can help to increase consumers' interest to purchase a product or service and able to target on a specific group of consumers. He explained that:

SMA able to reach wide and large amounts of consumers from different countries or regions; without a geographical barrier. And can be select the target customers, according to the targeted demography such as age, gender, region and etc. (Participant A2)

Meanwhile, two marketing practitioners agreed to the marketing campaign and SMA able to bring sales to a business and also help to increase brand awareness. Participant A2 explained

Remarketing on social media is a key factor to increase sales for our company, it increases the chances to bring back the consumer. This strategy allows us to position targeted ads in front of a defined consumer that had previously visited our website. (Participant A2)

4.4 Ad-blocking

Along with the flow, this section as the introduction of ad-blocking to bring the participants to enter the research issue. This section is regarding to identify how the participants experienced in using ad-blocking on social media and the understanding about ad-blocking.

4.4.1 Consumers Perspective toward Ad-Blocking

Refer to table 1, most of the participants were used or using ad-blocking on the internet, via laptop and smartphone. However, there is only one participant never heard about ad-blocking software. While the rest of the participants described the ad-blocking is a software that allows them to filter or block the ads appear on the internet include social media and also helps to block the tracking from third-parties.

In the interview, seven participants are using ad-blocking and two participants stop using ad-blocking software. Participant F and I stop using ad-blocking software is because they perceive skippable ads on social media are less annoying compared with the pop-up ads and they don't want to let slip of good ads that related to them, as participant F commented:

For me, some time watching the ads on the internet is quite interesting and hedonic, can be perceived as part of the entertainment if the ads are funny, creative and innovative. (Participant F)

While further discussed 'what types of ad-blocking software they are using and how often they used'. Most of the participants are using Ad-block Plus software attach to their web browsers such as Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox, and the ad-blocking software is active all the time.

The ad-blocking software embedded in the web browser on my laptop. Therefore, no matter I'm browsing on social media or non-social media sites, the ad-blocking software will help me to filter and block the ads on the internet most of the time. (Participant A)

4.4.1.1 Consumer Perception: Mobile Computing Device Ad-blocking vs Traditional Computing Device Ad-blocking

Surprisingly, most of the participants in the interview never used mobile ad-blocking, they are mostly using desktop or laptop to ad-block (see Table 1), and only Participant G is using ad-blocking on his smartphone, as explained as below:

In the first place, I was using the ad-blocking software on my laptop and then I was tried to search the ad-blocking apps to install on my smartphone. Because I don't want to see any ads. (Participant G)

On the other hand, few participants deemed that the mobile device ad-blocking is more complicated compared with the computing device such as laptop, and perceive the ad-blocking apps on the smartphone are not effective as the laptop version, participant A represented:

I was installed several mobile ad-blocking apps on my smartphone, it is complicated for me to set up the ad-blocking apps, as the mobile apps is an independent form such

as the Facebook app, Instagram app, which different from laptop and most of the ads are still appear on my mobile device. (Participant A)

From the different opinion, some participants tend to willing to watch or wait for the ads on mobile devices compared with laptop devices. They perceive the ads on mobile devices are fit in more naturally compared with the laptop. Participant C explained his opinion and reason why not using ad-blocking on his mobile devices:

I'm using the ad-blocking software on my laptop only, because of I willing to see the ads on my smartphone, in order to update any latest products from a particular brand or any new launch product. Furthermore, most of the time I was using the laptop for working purpose. Whereas, the smartphone as entertainment. (Participant C)

4.4.2 Marketer Perception Regarding Ad-Blocking

According to the data analysis from the interview, two marketing practitioners heard about ad-blocking software, and they described ad-blocking is a software to help online users to filter or block all the ads on the internet. Two marketing practitioners were used ad-blocking on their laptop. While participant A2 clarified he was using ad-blocking as a trial in a short period.

I was wondering how does the ad-blocking software works. Thereby, I have downloaded the ad-blocking software on my laptop and embedded on my web browser. Although the result is good, the software helps to block all the ads on the internet but at the same time, I was missing out some good ads. (Participant A2)

Participant A1 explained the similar as participant A2, two marketing practitioners agreed that using ad-blocking may let slip some of the good ads on the internet, especially on social media. Participant A1 expressed by referencing different ads on social media could inspire him. Hence, as a marketer, ad-blocking doesn't bring any benefit to him.

4.5 The Motivations for Ad-blocking on Social Media

This section is devoted to identifying what are the factors that motivate the participants (consumers perception only) to ad-block. The explanation is based on the participants' prior experience and their opinion about the benefit of ad-blocking bring it to them, as will be further explained in the following subsection.

4.5.1 Consumer Perception: Ad-blocking Software Brings Benefit for Consumers

Although ad-blocking software provides alternative benefits and drawbacks to the consumers. However, the majority of the participants agree the ad-blocking software does bring the benefit for them.

Participant G highlighted time urgency is one of the factors that motivate him to ad-block and also bring him to has a negative perception toward the ads.

> The intrusive ads were hindering and delaying me when I was searching particular contents which is important and urgent to me. I was felt annoying and infuriated while watching the non-skippable ads. (Participant G)

On the other hand, one of the factors that motivate participant to ad-block is data privacy concern, the participant was worried about their privacy will reveal to the third-parties. Participant B has explained the motivation of ad-blocking by data privacy concern.

> Although I was ignored and disagreed the cookies on the internet to prevent reveal my personal detail, information or online behavior to the third-parties. While I'm still receiving a lot of ads on my email and personalize ads on social media. Therefore, I have installed the ad-blocking software to filter all the cookies automatically. (Participant B)

4.5.1.1 How Participant Know About "Ad-blocking"

According to the data analysis from the interview, the result shows that majority of the participants were find out the ad-blocking on their own. While, participant C, H and J was known about ad-blocking software from their friends, participant C commented:

I complained to my friend about the ads on YouTube was hindering me to watch a video and I was never known about any ad-blocking tools or software before. My friends were recommended me to install the ad-blocking software which is free and able to help me to block all the intrusive ads on social media. (Participant C)

Most of the participants think that they will recommend ad-blocking software to their friends or family in the future. As they perceive ad-blocking helps them to time-saving and able to enhance their user experience on social media.

4.6 Impact of Ad-blocking on Social Media

In this section was identified the impact of ad-blocking on social media based on the participant's opinion. In fact, the vast majority of various social media companies' revenue comes from advertising on their platform.

4.6.1 Consumer Perception: Ad-blocking Will Become a Challenge for Digital Marketing Industry in the Future

All participants estimated the number of ad-blocking users will continue to increase and affect the social media companies' revenue in the future. The reason is because ad-blocking software is free to download, easy to install and helps users to filter or block all the unwanted ads on the internet including social media. Concurrently, the number of SMA is increasing constantly and this will result motivate more consumers/users to ad-block on social media in the future.

Along with the increase in the number of ad-blocking, most of the participants speculated the ad-blocking will become a challenge for digital marketers or advertisers.

In a consumer perception, I think ad-blocking brings benefit to me. However, in a marketing perception, If the marketer unable to convey the marketing message via social media to reach consumers and I guess the ad-blocking will become a challenge for digital marketers. (Participant F)

The rest of the participants speculated the digital marketer will find out solutions to overcome the ad-blocking problem in the future.

4.6.2 Marketer Perceive Ad-blocking is Not the Main Challenge at Present.
Surprisingly, two marketing practitioners highlighted ad-blocking on social media is not a main issue or challenge for the marketing company at present, and ad-blocking doesn't bring any impact for the marketing company so far. They deem the SMA is sufficiently bring revenue for the company and drive the consumer to online buying constantly. Participant A1 explained the marketing challenge.

> Due to intense competition in the market and industry, I'm more concern how to create interesting and creative ads to attract more consumers to bring sales for the company. However, ad-blocking doesn't bring any impact for the company so far. Perhaps our target customers are not ad-blocking users. (Participant A1)

4.6.2.1 Participants Agree Ad-blocking Will Become a Challenge in the Future
According to the participant's opinion, both participants estimated the ad-blocking users will continue to increase in the future. Participant A2 presumed ad-blocking software is easy to install, access and free, which is similar to the consumers' explanation.

Moreover, two marketing practitioners believe the ad-blocking will be a problem for digital marketers or advertisers in the future and this result may affect social media companies' revenue in the future. Participant A1 commented:

> Yes, if the number of ad-blocking users is increasing constantly will become a challenge for the marketers in the future. Advertising will change from active to passive, which mean the advertising unable to reach the consumers unless the consumers search the products or services by their own instead or disable ad-blocker. (Participant A1)

4.7 How to Combat Ad-blocking on Social Media
The last section that stood out of the data analysis was concern how to combat ad-blocking on social media.

4.7.1 Consumer Perception: Reduce the Numbers of Advertising on Social Media

Generally, participants deemed that YouTube consists of large amounts of ads include pre-roll ads which are the key factors motivate them to ad-block on social media. In order to identify marketing techniques or tools to reduce consumer's willingness to ad-block on social media. Some participants suggest to reduce the number of SMA or remove the pre-roll ads (skippable ads) on social media. Meanwhile, participant F presented the 'native ads' on Facebook considered less annoying compared with YouTube ads, and could improve to reduce consumer's willingness to ad-block. Participant F explained his prior experience as below:

> Despite, I have ignored the ads on social media most of the time. But somehow, Facebook ads (sidebar ads and native ads) were attracted me to buy a product or service on the internet. (Participant F)

4.7.1.1 Consumer Perception: (Ban, Fee and Allow) Strategies

Aforementioned in the literature review (See Section 2.7) regarding to the three different strategies to combat ad-blocking. Participants explained their opinion on each of the strategies, as demonstrated as below:

Strategies to combat ad-blocking on social media	Participant's opinion and argument
Ban Strategy	"... I guess this strategy is good for combat ad-blocking on social media..." "... Apply this strategy on social media, I may stop visiting particular social media unless all the social media platforms apply this strategy then I have no option..." "... I guess this strategy may lead to lost certain amount of social media users..." "... Users will keep visiting the social media since the social media has become part of their daily life..."
Fee Strategy	"... The concept of this strategy is similar to Spotify..." "... I think I will not pay for any fees on social media platform..." "... If the price is reasonable, I will pay it; depending on the price..."
Allow Strategy	"... As a consumer perception, I guess this is the best strategy compared with others..." "... This strategy giving me options to decide whether to ad-block or not..."

Table 4: Participant's opinion toward the strategies to combat ad-blocking on social media

4.7.2 Marketer Perception: Strategies to Combat Ad-blocking on Social Media

In this subsection is according to the marketer perception regarding how to reduce or combat ad-blocking on social media. In order to enhance the effectiveness of social media and to attempt reduce consumers' willingness to ad-block on social media.

Participant A1 considered social media consists of a large number of low-quality ads and lead to perceive as ad clutter. Therefore, he recommends to improve the quality of advertising and limiting the number of ads on social media.

> Nowadays, due to a large number of ads on social media, it results in consumers perceive social media as an advertising platform. In my opinion, reduce the number of SMA and enhance the quality of SMA could reduce consumers' willingness to ad-block on social media. (Participant A1)

Whereas, participant A2 suggest to restructure the placement of advertising on social media may reduce the behaviour of ad-blocking. If the ads interfere the consumers' sight on social media may generate a negative perception toward SMA and results in ad-blocking. Hence, participant A2 described ad placement could reduce consumers' willingness to block advertisements e.g. native ads.

4.7.2.1 Recommendation for Social Media Companies

Participant A1 recommend to set up a department to censor the quality of advertising on social media and control the number of ads expose on social media.

Participant A2 recommend to re-structure the placement of the advertising on social media where the consumers perceive SMA doesn't interfere with their browsing experience on social media.

4.7.2.2 Marketer Perception: Fee Strategy to Combat Ad-blocking on Social Media

Two marketing practitioners deem that fee strategy could increase revenue for social media companies and combat ad-blocking at the same time. Whereas, this strategy could affect the user experience on social media.

Fee strategy giving consumers option to ad-block by paying the fee monthly. This strategy could increase the social media companies' revenue by collecting from both consumers and business. (Participant A1)

However, participants mention fee strategy may not effective on social media if the social media platform didn't provide any extra features for the consumers and could potentially lead to a negative outcome. Therefore, the fee strategy has to lets the consumers think that they are buying the features on social media instead of buying an ad-blocking service.

4.8 Chapter Summary

In summary, the majority of the participants in the interview agree with 'goal interruption' and 'perceived as ad-clutter' as the factors that motivate them to ad-block on social media. Nowadays, due to consumers highly depend on social media and heavy use of social media. The present study found that consumers tend to more concern about data privacy on social media. Some of the participants deemed that social media companies are holding users' data such as personal information, online purchase behaviour.

Moreover, based on marketer perception, two marketing practitioners were contributed and suggested to censors the quality of ads and control the number of ads on social media, or re-arrange the ad placement on social media to reduce ads annoyingness, to attempt combat ad-blocking or reduce consumers' willingness to ad-block

At last, the majority of the participants include consumer and marketing practitioners were not motivated to use ad-blocking on their mobile devices. Because, some of the participants perceive the mobile ad-blocking apps are more complex, inefficient and lack of credibility compared with traditional computing device ad-blocking. In the next chapter will discover further by comparing the analysed data with existing theories and models which described in the literature review.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

5.1 Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to compare primary research findings (in the literature review show in Chapter 2) with secondary research (The analysed data from the interviews provided by the selected participants, show in Chapter 4). The key findings have been regrouped in three thematic heading. The following heading is according to the sequence of research questions, as presented as below:

5.2 Motivation to Ad-block on Social Media

The first section is to discuss 'what motivate consumers to ad-block on social media'. The present study sheds light on the motivation of ad-blocking on social media, the study found that consumers tend to more concern about their data privacy on social media compare with the general internet. The result shows the behaviour of ad-blocking on social media environment differs from the general internet environment. However, the majority of the participants of the study agree 'perceive ad clutter and goal interruption' that motivate them to ad-block on social media. In the following subsections will further explain each of the motivation of ad-blocking on social media.

5.2.1 Perceive Ad Clutter on Social Media

Ha and McCann (2008) described when the advertising contents that exceed consumer's acceptance level in a particular medium; perceive as ad clutter. Nowadays, due to the intense competition in the digital marketing industry, social media platforms have been slowly transforming into a commercial platform with the increase amounts of ads on social media (Belanche et al. 2017; eMarketer, 2015; Kumar et al. 2017) and lead to motivate consumers to ad-block on social media.

The study found that the majority of the participants in the interview agreed to perceive ad clutter is one of the factors that motivate them to ad-block on social media. Which is similar to the Cho and Cheon's (2004) model of ad-avoidance on the internet and Ha's (1996) the three dimensions of ad clutter.

The outcome of the study shows the different compared with the previous study. Participants perceive social media as a leisure platform for them to social, relax and audio-visual entertaining, which they don't want to interrupt by the ads on social media. However, Cho and Cheon (2004) described consumers who use the internet for pure entertainment purpose are less likely motivate to ad-avoidance. The result of the study shows that the pure entertainment purpose on social media may potentially motivate consumers to ad-block.

5.2.2 Goal Interruption on Social Media

According to the data analysis in the previous chapter (Section 4.3.1.2), most of the participants expressed YouTube consists of a larger number of intrusive ads than other social media platforms, which interfere consumers' user experience on social media and lead to motivate them to ad-block on social media. In fact, social media platforms have embedded numerous in-stream ads, especially on YouTube (Campbell et al. 2017). In the literature review, several studies highlighted consumers more likely to ad-blocking or ad-avoidance, when they perceive the ads are hindering their efforts to achieve a particular goal or task on the internet (Baek and Morimoto 2012; Cho and Cheon 2004; Kelly et al 2010; Seyedghorban et al 2016).

Kelly et al (2010) mentioned social media consider as a goal-oriented medium and more involved in achieving hedonic goals with the stronger sense of freedom. Therefore, the intrusive ads usually perceive hindering consumers to achieve a particular goal or task on social media. Although the study highlighted the inclusion of skippable ads could potentially reduce the negative perception toward SMA. However, participants (E) perceived the skippable ads on YouTube as the forcible ads that affect their user experience on social media and motivated them to ad-block.

5.2.3 Data Privacy Concern on Social Media

Surprisingly, 'data privacy concern' considered as one of the key factors that motivates consumers to ad-block on social media which is unfit to Cho and Cheon's Model of ad-avoidance on the general internet environment. The finding outcome of the study differs from Cho and Cheon's (2004) model which has never indicated about data privacy as the motivation of ad-avoidance or ad-blocking on the internet environment. However, in the

literature review section, there are several studies highlighted privacy is the key concern for consumers (Hann et al 2008; Kelly et al 2010; Kelly 2014; Moore and Rodgers 2005) (See Section 2.5.3). In the social media environment, consumers tend to more concern about their privacy and personal data (Kelly et al. 2010).

According to The Economist (2018), the third party (Cambridge Analytical) obtained about some 50 million Facebook users' personal detailed data. As a consequence, the data privacy scandal affects the trustworthiness and credibility of social media and result in "data privacy concern" as one of the factors potentially motivate consumers to ad-block on social media.

In the following section is to explore marketing techniques or tools to combat ad-block on social media.

5.3 Reduce Ad-avoidance and Combat Ad-blocking on Social Media

Interestingly, two marketing practitioners agreed to ad-blocking on social media is not a main issue or challenge for the marketing company at present, but they consider the ad-blocking issue may potentially become a challenge for digital marketer in the future. Ouyang (2015) indicates the phenomenon of ad-clutter (one of the motivations of ad-blocking) has not received enough attention from digital advertisers who care primarily about impressions, clicks and conversions on social media.

Thereby, marketing practitioner suggests and recommended various strategy to combat or reduce ad-blocking on social media.

5.3.1 Recommendation for Social Media Companies to Reduce Ad-blocking.

The finding from the previous chapter, participant A1 suggests to censor the quality of advertising and limiting the number of ads on social media. For example, set up a department on social media to censor the quality and control the number of ads.

Whereas, participant A2 proposes to restructure the placement of advertising on social media may reduce the behaviour of ad-blocking. Van den Broeck et al (2017) explored the effect of ad placement may reduce ad-avoidance on social media. Consumers will accept the ads on

social media, if the ads present that consumer perceives as appropriate and fit in naturally (Van den Broeck et al. 2017) e.g. native ads.

5.3.2 Fee Strategy to Combat Ad-blocking on Social Media

The previous study proposed three different strategies (Ban, Fee, and Allow) to combat ad-blocking (Despotakis, 2017). Participants suggest 'Fee strategy' could potentially reduce or combat ad-blocking on social media and explain fee strategy could combat ad-blocking and concurrent increase the revenue for social media companies.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of fee strategy, marketing practitioners recommend social media companies have to provide extra features for the consumers, to lets the consumers think that they are buying the features instead of buying an ad-blocking service on social media. Recently, YouTube is using the fee strategy and launched "YouTube Premium" that allow consumers to access an ad-free version and provide background listening feature (O'Brien, 2018).

5.4 The Behavioural of Ad-blocking on Mobile Computing Devices vs Traditional Computing Devices

Due to the small sample size, the finding of the study is different from the research report, where the majority of the participants had never use or heard about mobile ad-blocking. Only one of the participants is using the mobile ad-blocking app. However, PageFair (2017) shows that between 2015 to 2016, the number of mobile ad-blocking usage exceeded desktop ad-blocking usage.

Furthermore, the study investigated the mobile ad-blocking apps could potentially leaking consumers' personal information to third-parties (Ikram and Kaafar, 2017). Which is similar to the finding of the study, some of the participants perceive the mobile ad-blocking apps are lack of credibility and more complex to use compare with the laptop.

5.5 Chapter Summary

In the summary, one of the key findings of the study is the motivation of ad-blocking on social media environment is slightly different from the general internet environment. Due to the heavy use of social media and provided a large amount of personal information on social

media. Social media users tend to more concern about data privacy which is never indicated on Cho and Cheon's (2004) model.

Interestingly, two marketing practitioners indicate the ad-blocking on social media is not the main issues or challenge for the marketing companies, but they agree that the ad-blocking issues will potentially become a challenge in the future.

At last but not least, Page Fair (2017) shows that between 2015 to 2016, the number of mobile ad-blocking usage exceeded desktop ad-blocking usage. However, the outcome of the study unfits to the research report. Majority of the participants in the interview only one participant is using mobile ad-blocking. Due to the small sample size of the interview and little literature research on mobile ad-blocking, the present study incapable to explore the differences behaviour between mobile ad-blocking and computer ad-blocking. Along with the increase of mobile ad-blocking, this research topic is gaining important and interesting for marketing practitioner and researcher. In order to explore and further understanding the difference behaviour, this research issues require for further study in the future, as will further explain in the last chapter; chapter 6 recommendations and conclusions.

Chapter 6 – Recommendation and Conclusion

6.1 Recommendations for Future Research

Several aspects of improvement could be considered for further research to acquire a better understanding of insight. The recommendation for future research are as below:

RO1: To understand what motivates consumers to ad-block on social media.

- Following the advance in technology, the motivation of ad-blocking on social media could potentially different and change, which is the present study incapable to explain and explore. Moreover, the drawback of the research could neglect some of the factors that potentially motivate consumers to ad-block on social media. Which has never been explored and will require to extend insight in the further research.

RO2: To explore how digital advertisers may overcome the ad-blocking issue in the future in order to successfully communicate with their audience(s).

- According to The Irish Time, YouTube launches a new service; YouTube premium, that allows consumers to remove ads and provide extra features for the users which is known as fee strategy. Several studies argue each of the strategies (Ban, Fee, Allow) consists of pros and cons. Despotakis (2017) examine allow strategy will be the most effective strategy to combat ad-blocking. However, two marketing practitioners suggest to apply 'Fee strategy' to combat ad-blocking on social media. The present study couldn't testify the fee strategy because this strategy is merely the early development stages within the marketing field and social media field. Therefore, fee strategy requires to further testify and explore in the future research. In order to provide a better understanding of the impact of fee strategy.

RO3: *To understand the differences between ad-blocking behavior on traditional computing devices (desktop and laptop computers) compared with mobile computing devices (tablets and smartphones).*

- On the other hand, there are quite less in the number of the research topics related to mobile ad-blocking and there is no existing research discuss the differences between ad-blocking behavior on traditional computing devices compared with mobile computing

devices. Along with the growth of mobile ad-blocking, understanding of mobile ad-blocking is gaining importance for marketing practitioner to explore and discover in the future, especially the difference ad-blocking behavior on social media.

6.2 Conclusions

The present study is with an objective to attempt explore the factors that motivate consumers to ad-block on social media. As mentioned previously in the literature review, the present study used "Cho and Cheon's (2004) model of ad-avoidance on the internet" as a starting point to explore potentially the motivation of ad-blocking on social media. The study found that consumers who motivated to ad-block on social media tend to more concern about their 'data privacy'

Furthermore, strategies to combat ad-blocking on social media is a topic that should not be neglect. Thereby, this study has sought for the advices and recommendations from digital marketers that could potentially combat ad-blocking on social media. Interestingly, each of the marketing practitioners have provided a different point of views and ideas to combat ad-blocking. One of the marketing practitioners (Participant A1) suggests to censor the quality of the advertising and control the number of advertising to reduce consumers' willingness to ad-block. As previously mentioned, consumers motivated to ad-block is because they perceive as ad clutter on social media, especially on YouTube and YouTube consists a large number of intrusive ads, which result in motivating consumers to ad-block. However, participant A2 recommend to re-structure the placement of advertising on social media to enhance consumers' user experience on social media and could mitigate the negative emotion toward SMA.

According to Despotakis (2017), the study found that "Fee Strategy" could be the most effective and optimal method to combat ad-blocking. However, this strategy provides both benefit and drawback. This strategy could potentially combat ad-blocking on social media and also bring revenue for social media companies. In contrast, consumers may perceive their editorial on the internet will be restricted.

In the same time, along with the growth of mobile ad-block, the research topic of understanding the behaviour of mobile ad-blocking is gaining importance for marketing researchers and practitioners. Therefore, this study to attempt explore the difference between the behaviour of mobile ad-blocking and traditional computing ad-blocking. The research found that consumers perceive mobile ad-blocking as more complex to use, inefficient and ad-blocking apps are lack of credibility compare with traditional computing devices. Surprisingly, one of the informants described that he perceives the ads on mobile phone are fit in more naturally compare with the ads on desktop. These reasons are the key to demotivate consumers to use mobile ad-blocking. However, due to the small sample size and there have been little research regarding to the mobile ad-blocking. The present study incapable to provide a better understanding between the behaviour of mobile ad-blocking and traditional computing ad-blocking.

6.3 Limitations

The drawback of the study is regarding the sample size and time limitations.

Aforementioned, due to lack of the literature research discuss mobile ad-blocking and the present research with a small sample size which is lack of participants using mobile ad-blocking. Hence, the present study incapable to achieve the RO3 in provide a better understanding of the differences between ad-blocking behaviour on particular device and require for further study.

Furthermore, due to the limited time, this study potentially overlooks some of the factors motivate consumers to ad-block on social media. Therefore, the further study is required to fill in the research gap by explore and extent insight of the motivation of ad-blocking on social media.

Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Sheet

National College of Ireland

INFORMED CONSENT SHEET

I hereby agree to give my consent for my responses to interview questions to be used and quoted *anonymously* in this student project (Master Thesis) at the National College of Ireland

Interviewer	Interviewee
Name:	Print Name:
Module:	Date:
Course:	Signature:
Year:	

Appendix B: Consumer Interview Questions

Consumer Interview Questions

Social Media Advertising
- What is your opinion about Social Media Advertising?
- Based on your past experience, do you believe SMA has led you to visit particular websites? For example, Amazon ads on Facebook or YouTube, which show you a link to products on the Amazon website.
- Do you believe that social media advertising (e.g. Facebook ads, or YouTube ads) sometimes make you feel more interested in buying a new product or trying a new service?
- List of the social media platform that gave you a bad user's experience.

Ad-blocking
- Have you heard about "Ad-blocking Software"?

IF THE INTERVIEWEE ANSWERS YES TO THE ABOVE QUESTION, ASK THE QUESTIONS BELOW:
- If so, what is your understanding of ad-blocking?
- Have you ever used ad-blocking software?

IF THE INTERVIEWEE ANSWERS YES TO THE ABOVE QUESTION, ASK THE QUESTIONS BELOW
- What type of ad-blocking software have you used?
- How often do you use ad-blocking software?
- Are you using ad-blocking software when using Social Media?

IF THE INTERVIEWEE ANSWERS YES TO THE ABOVE QUESTION, ASK THE QUESTIONS BELOW
- Do you use ad-blocking software when using a desktop computer or laptop to look at social media pages?
- Do you use ad-blocking software when using a tablet (like an iPad) to look at social media pages?
- Do you use ad-blocking software when using a mobile phone to look at social media pages?

IF THE INTERVIEWEE ANSWERS YES TO THE ABOVE QUESTION, ASK THE BELOW QUESTIONS

Reasons for using ad-blocking software on social media:

- What are the benefits of blocking social media ads in your opinion?
- How did you find out about "Ad-blocking"? (E.g. From your friend, family, advertisement, or search by your own?)
- Would you recommend Ad-blocking software to your friends or family? And why?
- Do you ever worry that blocking ads leads you to miss out on a good advert or a good product that you may be interested in?

Impact of ad-blocking on social media:

- What is your opinion on the fact that the vast majority of various social media companies' revenue comes from 'advertising' on their platforms (e.g. the majority of Facebook's income comes from advertising)?
- Do you think the number of ad-blocking users will continue to increase in the future? Based on your point of view/ estimation.
- Do you believe that ad-blocking will become a problem for marketers or advertisers in the future?

How to combat ad-blocking:

- How do you think advertisers can change or improve to reduce consumers' willingness to block advertisements?
- According to prior research, researchers have proposed 3 different strategies to combat ad-blocking (Ban strategy, Fee strategy, and Allow strategy). As a consumer, what is your opinion of each of these three strategies? I am more than happy to explain each of the three strategies if you wish?

Imagine that you are advertiser, what do you think will be more effectively to combat ad-blocking

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Marketing Practitioners/Companies

Interview Questions for Marketing Practitioners/Companies

Social Media Advertising
- What is your opinion about Social Media Advertising?
- Based on your experience, do you believe SMA has led to increased interest among consumers in your company or your products/services?
- Based on your experience, do you believe SMA has led to increased interest among consumers in your company web pages?
- Based on your experience, do you believe SMA has led to increased sales or revenue for your company?

Ad-blocking
- Have you heard about "Ad-blocking Software"?

IF THE INTERVIEWEE ANSWERS YES TO THE ABOVE QUESTION, ASK THE QUESTIONS BELOW:
- If so, what is your understanding of ad-blocking?
- Have you ever used ad-blocking software?

IF THE INTERVIEWEE ANSWERS YES TO THE ABOVE QUESTION, ASK THE QUESTIONS BELOW
- What type of ad-blocking software have you used?
- How often do you use ad-blocking software?
- Are you using ad-blocking software when using Social Media?

IF THE INTERVIEWEE ANSWERS YES TO THE ABOVE QUESTION, ASK THE QUESTIONS BELOW
- Do you use ad-blocking software when using a desktop computer or laptop to look at social media pages?
- Do you use ad-blocking software when using a tablet (like an iPad) to look at social media pages?
- Do you use ad-blocking software when using a mobile phone to look at social media pages?

IF THE INTERVIEWEE ANSWERS YES TO THE ABOVE QUESTION, ASK THE BELOW QUESTIONS

Reasons for using ad-blocking software on social media:

- What are the benefits of blocking social media ads in your opinion?
- How did you find out about "Ad-blocking"? (E.g. From your friend, family, advertisement, or search by your own?)
- Would you recommend Ad-blocking software to your friends or family? And why?
- Do you ever worry that blocking ads leads you to miss out on a good advert or a good product that you may be interested in?

Impact of ad-blocking on social media:

- Do you believe that ad-blocking is a problem for marketers or advertisers?
- What is the impact of ad-blocking on advertisers in your opinion?
- What is the impact of ad-blocking on your company?
- Do you think the number of ad-blocking users will continue to increase in the future? Based on your point of view/ estimation.
- What is your opinion on the fact that the vast majority of various social media companies' revenue comes from advertising on their platforms (e.g. the majority of Facebook's income comes from advertising)?

How to combat ad-blocking:

- How do you think advertisers can change or improve to reduce consumers' willingness to block advertisements?
- What strategies or methods do you think are the most suitable way to combat ad-blocking?
- What would you recommend for a social media organization such as Facebook or YouTube to do to effectively counter ad-blocking in the future?
- Is there anything your company can do in response to ad-blocking, in your opinion?
- According to prior research, researchers have proposed **3 different strategies** to combat ad-blocking (Ban strategy, Fee strategy, and Allow strategy). Which strategy do you think is the most effective to combat the ad-blocking issue. I am more than happy to explain each of the three strategies if you wish?

Appendix D: Example of Social Media Advertising (SMA)

- **Pre-roll ads** - a promotional video message that plays before the content the user has selected

- **TrueView ads/ Skippable ads -** a new video format allows users to skip ads after five seconds.
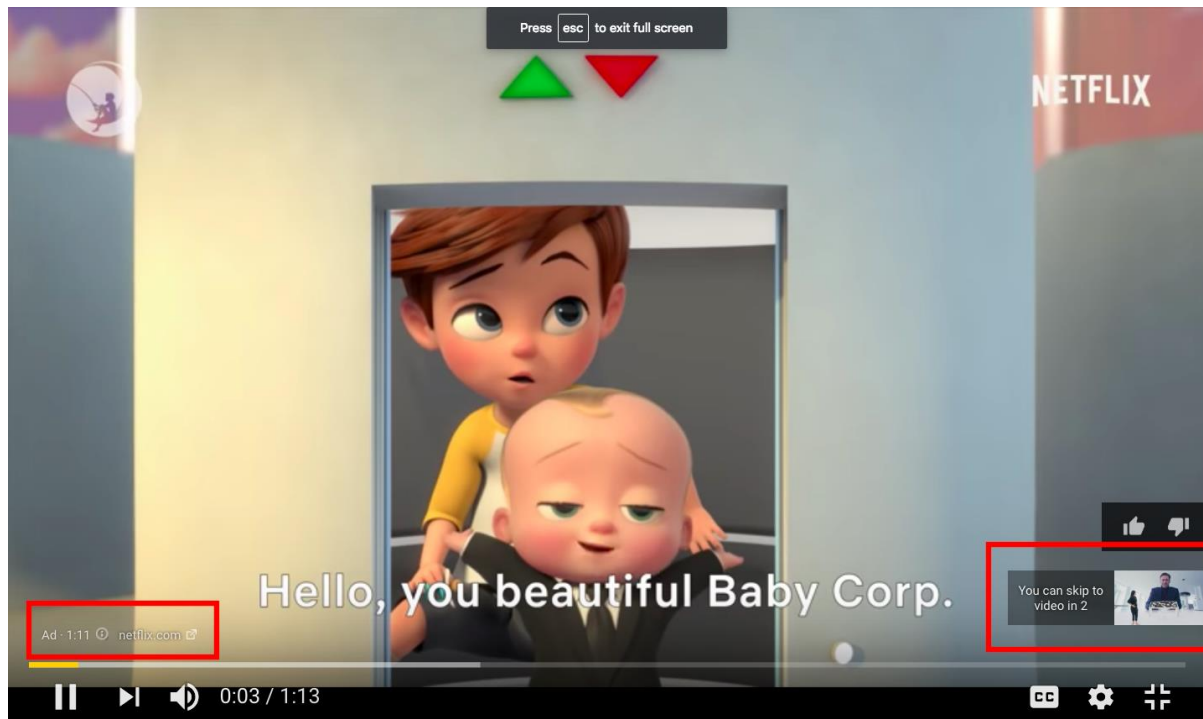
(Pre-roll ads on YouTube)

- **Mid-roll ads-** ads during the middle of the video
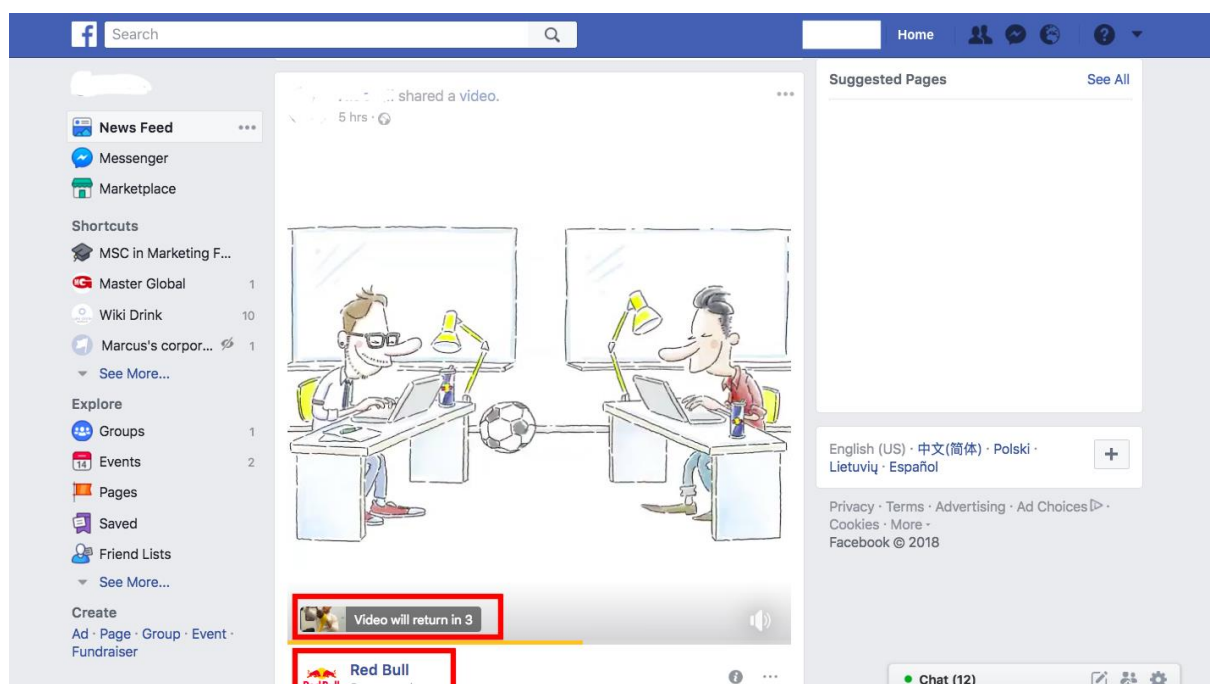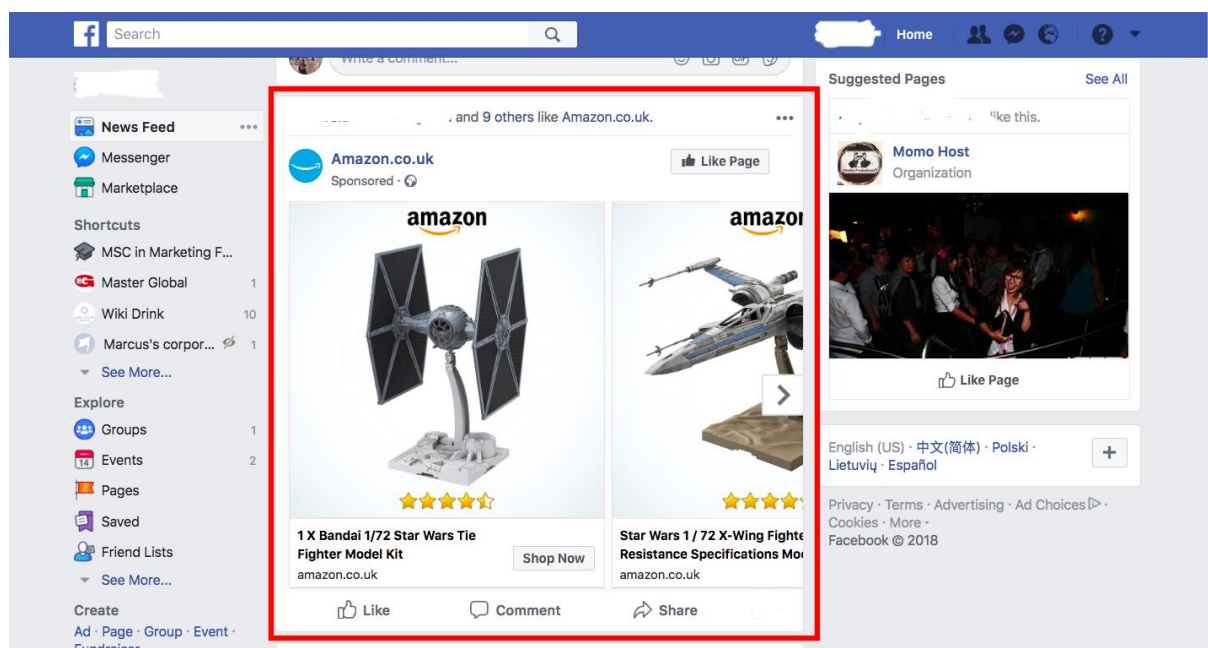
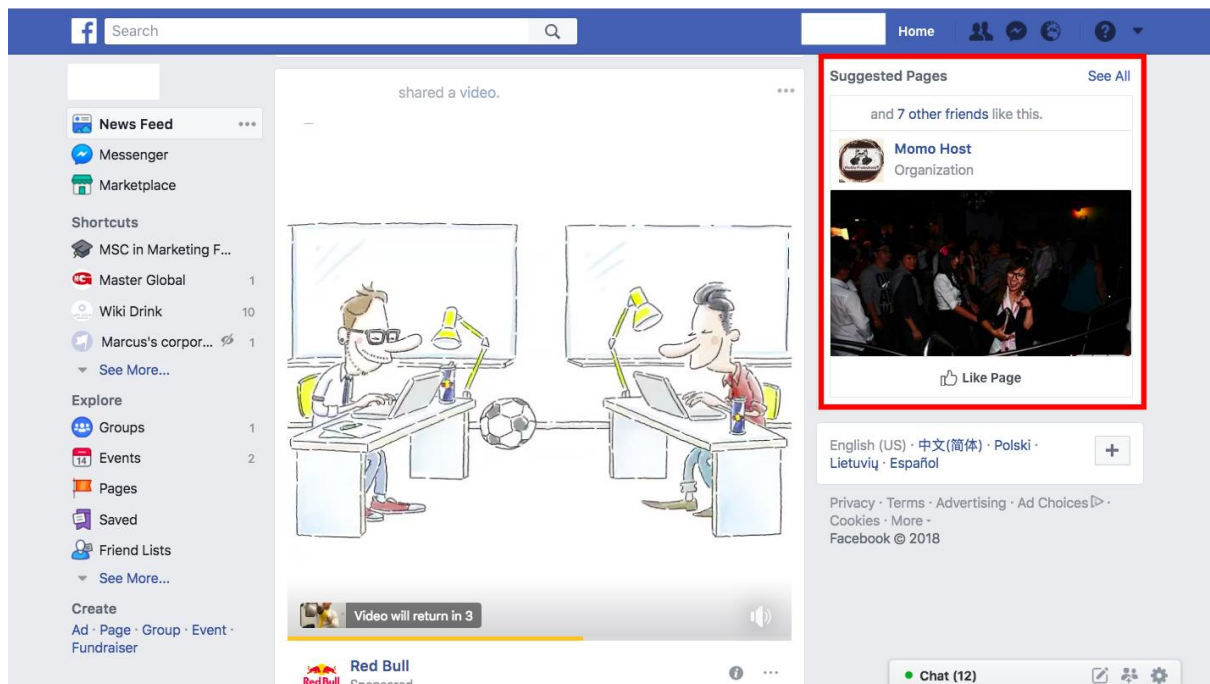- **In-video Overlaid ads** – ads that appears overlaid on the bottom of the YouTube video player

(*Sources:* http://adma.sk/socialmedia-sprievodca-kompletny-navod-na-youtube/companion-banner/)

- **Native ads** – is a type of advertising that matches the form and function of the platform upon which it appears

- **Sidebar ads-** mostly exposed at the corner, which is similar to banner ads

- **Cookies**

Appendix E: Example of Ad-blocking Software and Tools

• Desktop/Laptop Ad-Blocker

- Block additional tracking: to protect consumers' personal data by removing all forms of

tracking from the internet
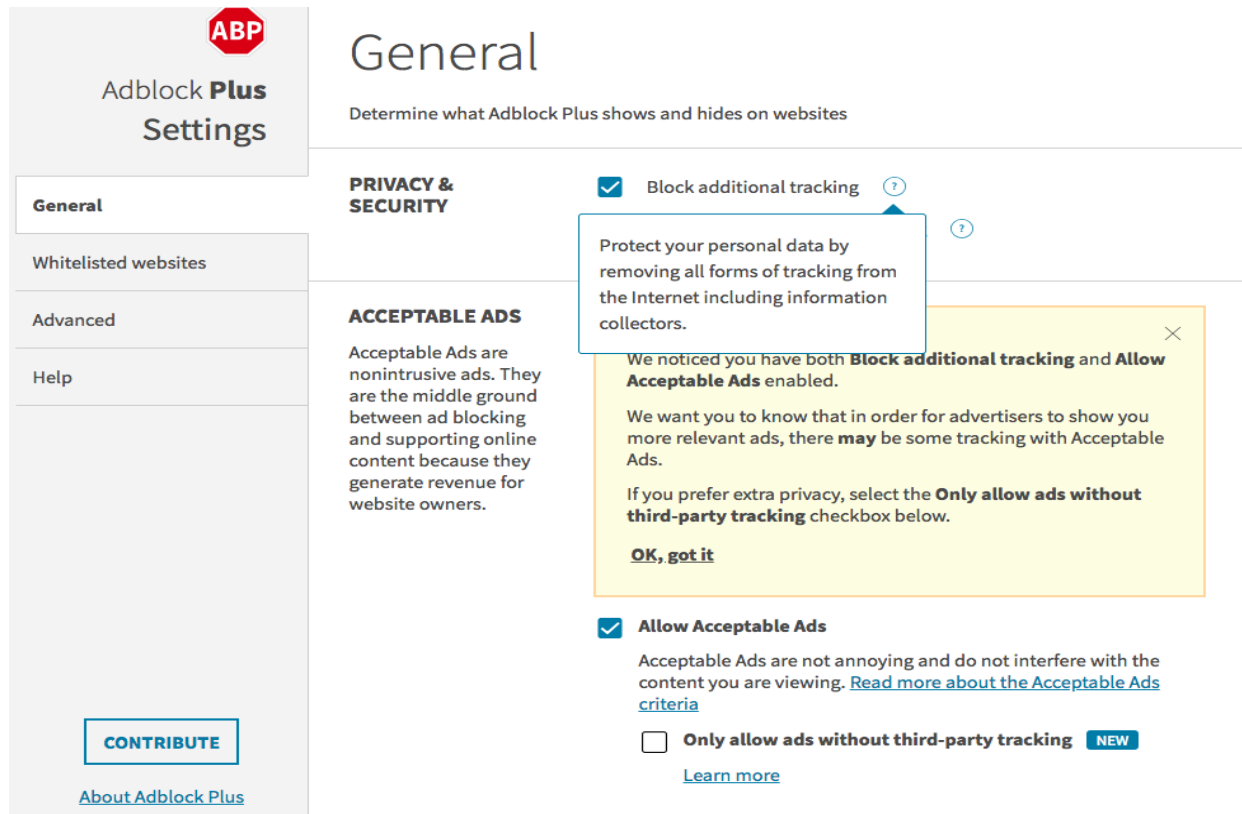
Block Social Media Icon Tracking

- **Mobile Computing Device Ad-blocker**

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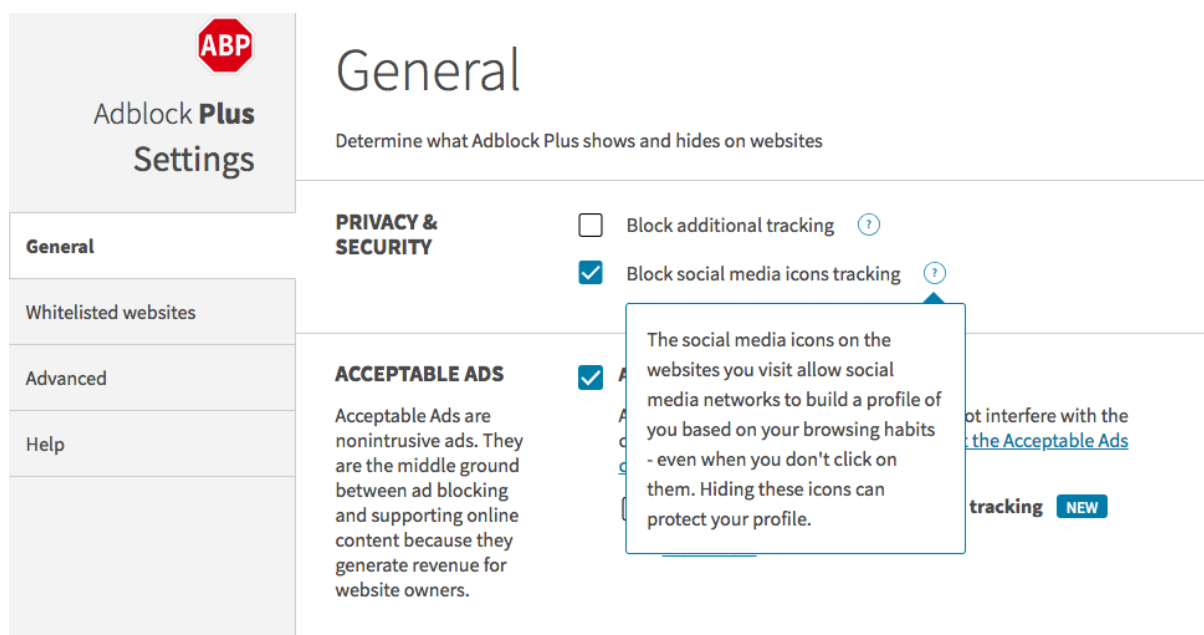
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