["This Is AdBlock" video plays - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9iL8pGHgBjU]

We thought it would be cute to make you sit through an ad before we started.

My name is Gabriel Cubbage and I'm the CEO of AdBlock.

I'd like to thank Ján for having us here. He's a brave guy.

I know a lot of you think ad blockers should never have been invited to the party in the first place… and then he invited us to an actual party.

A little background.

I took over running AdBlock a few years ago on behalf of the creator of "AdBlock for Chrome", whose name is Michael Gundlach.

Today's AdBlock team itself consists of just four, full-time people, in four different locations… along with a large community of volunteer translators around the world.

Antoine Boegler is also with me today. Antoine, in addition to being our Team Manager… is also in charge of the secret, underground vault where we keep all of your ads.

Now, for anyone UNfamiliar with us, or how AdBlock works, I'd like to invite Antoine up to give you a brief demo, using an actual website.

[Antoine goes on stage to demo a few websites with AdBlock enabled and disabled]

So. That's how you block ads.

But ad blockers aren't the only browser extensions out there that programmatically change the content of the web page you're looking at.

In fact there are thousands.

If you want to right now, you can go install an extension that simply removes every mention of Kim Kardashian from every site you visit.

So far, she hasn't sued us.
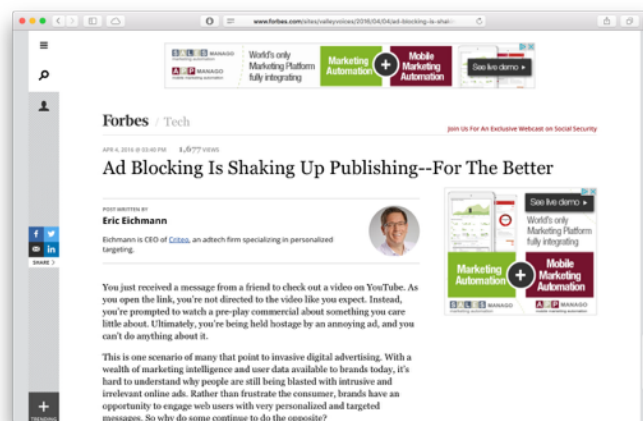
So here's a typical, ad-supported web page.

Now, to a website OWNER, this page looks something like this.

The hearts are the content written or curated by the website's owners. Typically something creative, something informative, or porn.

THIS is what the Web is "for".

The fact that users don't want to pay is one born of decades-long precedent…

But I think also a cynical assumption that THAT means they can't care.

The dollar signs are the ads. Without which, many websites would disappear. And the ones that aren't Buzzfeed might even be missed.

I was excited to come here today because I want you know: We know that, too. And we are trying to do better.

The problem is that to a lot of users, that page just feels like this.

And nobody wants to feel like that.

Web users, and consumers, like to feel in control.

At its heart, the Web is not a business.

The Web is a big, beautiful, ongoing conversation between people who make stuff, and people who think that stuff is really cool.

When advertisers tell Web users they are stealing content by using an ad blocker, the users just react the same way they always have:

They give you the middle finger, go on Pirate Bay, and download a whole season of Game of Thrones. WITHOUT SEEING THE ADS.

And when WEBSITES tell Web users they're stealing, they have an unfortunate habit of doing it like this.
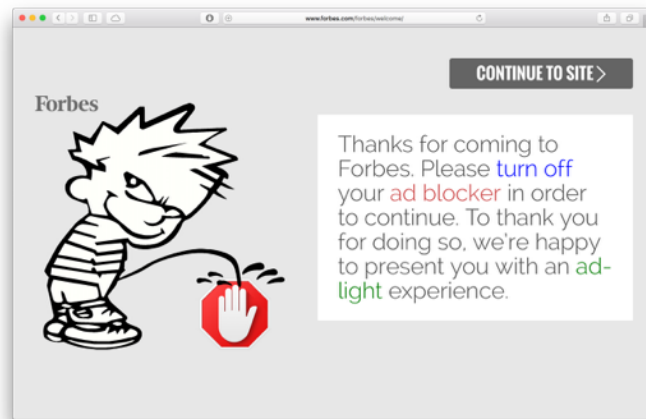
OK, admittedly, Forbes did not have Calvin on the page.
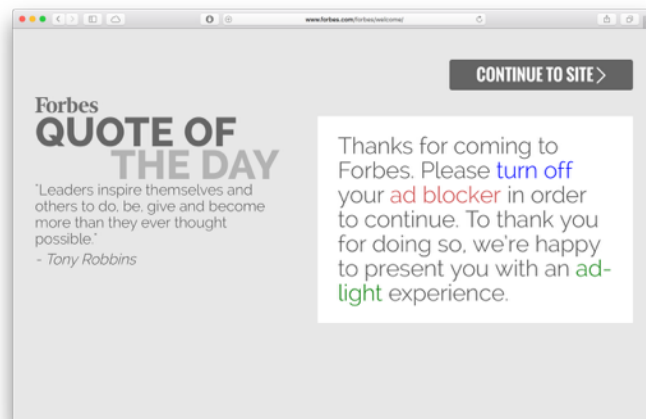
But still. When a massive army of your OWN users is telling tell you: "We want a drastically different experience"…

…you should be very, very careful about saying back to them. "OK. You get nothing. How does NOTHING work for you?"

Clearly, Forbes is just hoping users will forget to un-whitelist the site after the 30 "ad-lite" days are up.

And Forbes is not a publication that should want to be in the business of underestimating its readers' intelligence.

Do I think AdBlock PLUS' Acceptable Ads program fixes this problem?

No. I think Acceptable Ads is triage, at best.

There are whole, giant websites whose only purpose is get you to click on something you don't want to read, and buy something you're never going to want. And THAT should go away.

But ads aren't a bad thing.

Relevant, credible, sponsored content that doesn't try to scare you into buying something, or body shame you, or just insult your intelligence does have a place on the Web.

From a UX perspective, AdBlock is actually a very strange little piece of software.

WE'RE in the business of subtracting UI from other people's UX's.

But we're not trying to hurt you!

 and like I said, we're very small…
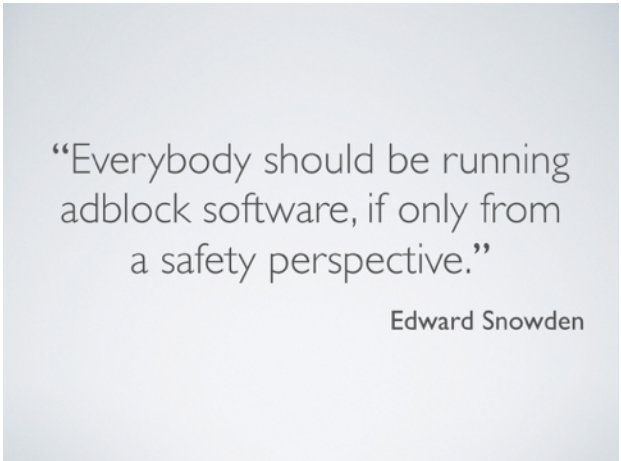
 … as a team. For now.

As the CEO of AdBlock, I have no interest in turning my company into "Ad Networks 2.0".

But that IS something the world needs, and somebody has to be there for the users along the way.

When users followed the instructions to disable AdBlock on the Forbes page, they didn't just get to read the articles.

They ALSO found their machines infected with malware, because of a security flaw in Forbes' advertising system.

And it's not the first time something like this has happened.

Edward Snowden actually said in an interview that EVERYONE should install an ad blocker, purely for SAFETY reasons.

Not because he was sick of being offered discount car insurance.

When Michael developed AdBlock, he did it off the corner of his desk at Google six years ago, so other "nerds" like HIM could have an ad blocker for Chrome.

But as ad blocking has gone mainstream, it's become a much more disruptive force than he ever expected.

The privacy and security landscape has changed around us as ad blockers, and like it or not, we're more crucial than ever now.

We did NOT innovate our way into this bigger, higher stakes position. And we know THAT, too.

But we're about to start.

Today, the fundamental problem with ads from a user experience point of view is that, whatever the purpose of nearly any given website, an AD FREE version of that experience is almost always going to be a better one.

Users like their favorite websites better with AdBlock installed.

We talk a lot at AdBlock about how we can evolve, and become less of a hammer, and more like a scalpel.

But one of the toughest challenges in doing that is changing user awareness of HOW the Web is actually paid for,

and… frankly, trying to give them any reason to trust the system ever again.

As long as the way online advertising works is simply carving holes in millions of websites, and loading third party scripts through those holes, to execute arbitrary code, and interact in unpredictable ways with that page, the user experience is going to suffer.

The ADS take longer to download than the pages now. You have to go down to the museum BASEMENT to see poor Mona Lisa today.

When Apple made it possible for us to release AdBlock for iPhone, they didn't do that to take ad money away from Google.

They did it to drastically speed up browsing on iPhone, and enhance security.

They invited us to the party so THEIR users would be happier and SAFER online.

And just two weeks ago… so did Microsoft.

AdBlock blocks ads, but we're not anti-advertising.

I think ad blockers in general are going through an uncertain, adolescent period.

And I'd like to bring the rest of them around to agreeing with me about that.

What I most want to see is a collaboration between content creators, users, advertisers, and a whole new breed of content filtering, that allows users to actually TRUST the PROMOTIONAL content they CHOOSE to be exposed to.

I know a lot of advertisers would prefer we just go away.
But that's not the road consumers are going to want to go down.

I think they're going to keep getting armed with INCREASINGLY sophisticated tools for filtering content, and CURATING their own experience of the world around them.

Once augmented reality hardware takes off, we're probably coming for your billboards, too.

But that doesn't mean we can't be friends.

There's tremendous opportunity for innovation and cooperation on both sides.

The better a job we do of getting our users onboard with managing their filtering preferences, and actually supporting content they enjoy, above all simply because they believe in the Web, and trust the sponsored content they see…

… the sooner the "ad blocking war" comes to an end.