



SURVEILLANCE DISGUISED AS ADVERTISING

In 2010, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that a visit to Dictionary(.).com resulted in them installing 234 tracking files on your computer – 223 of them were from third party tracking companies whose businesses are built on re-selling your information.

That was six years ago. God only knows what's going on today.

Meanwhile, the tech industry is playing a double game. They pretend they are the guardians of our privacy when the government wants information about us, but sell it to the highest bidder when their corporate pals want it.

In a couple of terrific pieces recently ([here](#) and [here](#)) Doc Searls (*Author of The Intention Economy, co-author of The Cluetrain Manifesto, alumnus Fellow of the Berkman Center at Harvard*) describes how the web's original intent and purposes have been subverted by tracking and what we should do about it.

Tracking is just a pleasanter word for surveillance. When the government does it it's surveillance. When the ad industry does it it's tracking.

Every time we click a link, open an ad, or visit a site there is a very high likelihood that our actions are being carefully archived.

Tracking is being enabled by a blackbox industry known generally as "adtech."

Adtech is hundreds of companies that have inserted themselves between the buyers and sellers of online advertising – and have also made online surveillance the *de facto* "value proposition" of online advertising.

Or as Doc says, online advertising is mostly "tracking-aimed junk mail that only look(s) like ads."

The many problems of online advertising (particularly the increase in ad blocking) are [discussed every week](#) at some conference or other. The ad industry is willing to entertain any solution except the only one that will work – the end of adtech.

If online publishers would sell advertising the way all other media sell it, the problem of 200 million people installing ad blockers would quickly evaporate.

Sadly, it's going the other way. Coming soon to a TV set-top box near you – Adtech.

Facebook Discovers Online Ad Fraud

Last week, [Facebook announced](#) they were shutting down a new

programmatic online ad buying platform they have been testing because they "were amazed by the volume of valueless inventory." They characterized and astounding 75% of what they were selling as "bad inventory." You have to wonder where these guys have been for the last 5 years.



Can't Keep My Mouth Shut

Really enjoyed speaking to Comcast SportsNet group in San Francisco last week. Looking forward to speaking to Cox Media Group leadership conference in Orlando this week.

Speaking calendar for 2016 is filling up. I have a few weeks open in October and November if anyone out there in newsletter-land is interested.

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