

# Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

Institute of Economic Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

<b>Student:</b>	<b>Samuel Havlíček</b>
<b>Advisor:</b>	<b>Mgr. Petr Polák, MSc., Ph.D.</b>
<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	<b>The use of ad blocking tools in the Czech Republic and their economic implications</b>

**OVERALL ASSESSMENT** (provided in English, Czech, or Slovak):

## Short summary

The author conducts a survey asking 206 respondents about their attitude towards online advertisements and tools that block them. The survey also collected some demographic information about the participants (age, gender, and education). Samuel then examines the responses and provides insights into how people feel about ads and ad-blocking.

## Contribution

While the thesis provides some interesting insights, I would have liked to see more analysis done with the results. For example, Section 3.3 is the only one that uses people's characteristics to analyze how various groups differ (based on gender). It would be interesting to see a similar analysis for age and education.

My main concern with the thesis is that the author has not applied much of his economic toolkit acquired during the Bachelor studies. Section 4, titled „Economic implications“, is the logical place to do so, but this section is very short and provides only a summary of the thesis (which largely repeats the introduction) and „prospects for the future“. The contribution of the thesis would have been much higher if the author tried to interpret some of the findings of the survey more thoroughly, or, for example, provide an economic model of decision-making around the usage of ad-blocking, or if we had run a regression analysis using some of the data collected in the survey.

## Methods

The method used in this thesis is an online survey. Surveys are a useful tool, but they also bring about important issues. For example, in footnote 6, the author points out that one person filled in 1 million CZK as their willingness to pay as a monthly fee to get rid of online ads. He states that the number was disregarded from the analysis because it is unrealistically high, without discussing this issue further anywhere in the thesis. This is, however, a classic issue with such surveys – people misstating their true preferences. How can we be sure that other people have not done the same? I would have liked to see a discussion of this issue and whether the author has done anything to prevent this from happening. For example, one common way of dealing with this is to measure the time spent on each question, and disregard survey respondents who spent an extremely small amount of time filling out the questionnaire. I would expect the author to at least talk about these issues, if not directly try to mitigate them.

## Literature

The author does a relatively decent job in reviewing the existing literature, although it seems that he has missed several important publications. While I am not an expert on this literature, a quick Google Scholar search on „ad-blocking“ finds relevant articles published in top journals which are not reviewed in this thesis. In my opinion, a thesis in the field of economics should not miss these. A few examples are:

- Gritckevich, A., Katona, Z., & Sarvary, M. (2022). Ad blocking. *Management Science*, 68(6), 4703-4724.
- Shiller, B., Waldfogel, J., & Ryan, J. (2018). The effect of ad blocking on website traffic and quality. *The RAND Journal of Economics*, 49(1), 43-63.

## Manuscript form

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The thesis is well-written and structured in a logical way. I enjoyed reading it. It is clear that the author has taken the time to carefully read and edit the text and to think about the presentation of his results.

## Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

I suggest to discuss (i) the issues of misstating preferences that arise with surveys and how these could be mitigated; and (ii) whether the author has any ideas on how to apply the collected data in an empirical analysis to answer any important research questions.

In my view, the thesis fulfills the requirements for a Bachelor thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, I recommend it for the defense and suggest a grade C.

The results of the Urkund analysis do not indicate significant text similarity with other available sources.

## **SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED** (for details, see below):

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
<i>Contribution</i> (max. 30 points)	23
<i>Methods</i> (max. 30 points)	15
<i>Literature</i> (max. 20 points)	17
<i>Manuscript Form</i> (max. 20 points)	20
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b> (max. 100 points)	<b>75</b>
<b>GRADE</b> (A – B – C – D – E – F)	<b>C</b>

**NAME OF THE REFEREE: PhDr. Miroslav Palanský, M.A., Ph.D.**

**DATE OF EVALUATION: 31.8.2022**

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**Referee Signature**

**EXPLANATION OF CATEGORIES AND SCALE:**

**CONTRIBUTION:** *The author presents original ideas on the topic demonstrating critical thinking and ability to draw conclusions based on the knowledge of relevant theory and empirics. There is a distinct value added of the thesis.*

**METHODS:** *The tools used are relevant to the research question being investigated, and adequate to the author's level of studies. The thesis topic is comprehensively analyzed.*

**LITERATURE REVIEW:** *The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and command of recent literature. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way.*

**MANUSCRIPT FORM:** *The thesis is well structured. The student uses appropriate language and style, including academic format for graphs and tables. The text effectively refers to graphs and tables and disposes with a complete bibliography.*

**Overall grading:**

TOTAL	GRADE
91 – 100	A
81 - 90	B
71 - 80	C
61 – 70	D
51 – 60	E
0 – 50	F