



2 1 9 , 8 9 0 , 7 1 3 , 0 3 4

protected impressions



1 , 2 4 8 , 7 6 1 , 9 5 7

bad ads detected



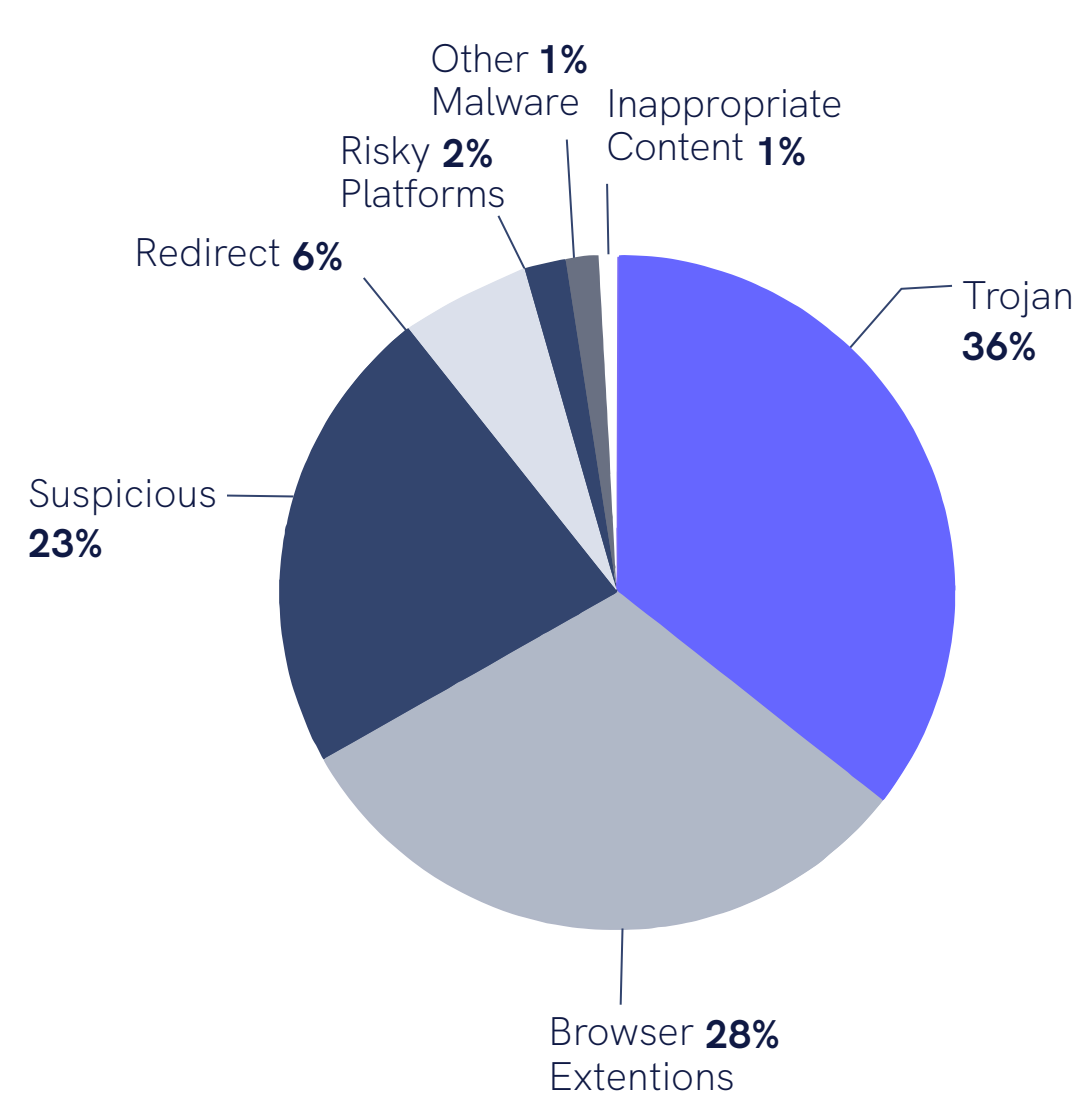
1 9 9 , 2 8 8

domains covered

## Malware, Redirects & Unwanted Ads

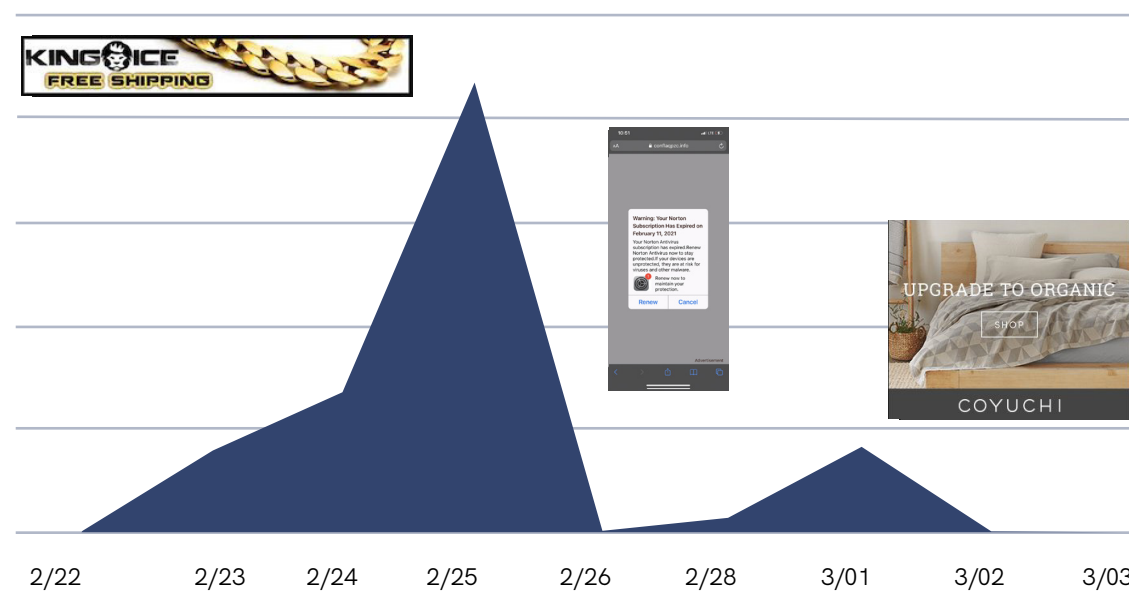
Nefarious campaigns continue to plague the advertising ecosystem. ADL observed a nearly 10% increase in malicious ads from Q4 2020 to Q1 2021.

- Suspicious URLs:** The quarter over quarter increase was partly driven by an increase in ads containing malicious destination/landing pages. One large campaign in particular contained a phishing scam to collect user information via a fake checkout workflow.
- Redirects:** The 5 largest redirect campaigns spanned 3,500 domains and were delivered by 5 major SSPs for a total of 1.5M blocks.
- Trojans:** We observed a sustained increase in Trojan ads throughout Q1. Trojan ads prompt users to download browser extensions that are known to initiate unwanted, possibly malicious, behavior like ad stuffing, changing default search engines and altering requests. [Here's a recent example of suspicious behavior.](#)



## Deep dive into a Redirect Campaign:

Fraudulent campaigns often follow similar patterns where there is a slow ramp, a spike and then often a secondary spike using a related but different malicious pattern. Here's an example of a signature that appeared in late Feb.



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## Threat Spotlight

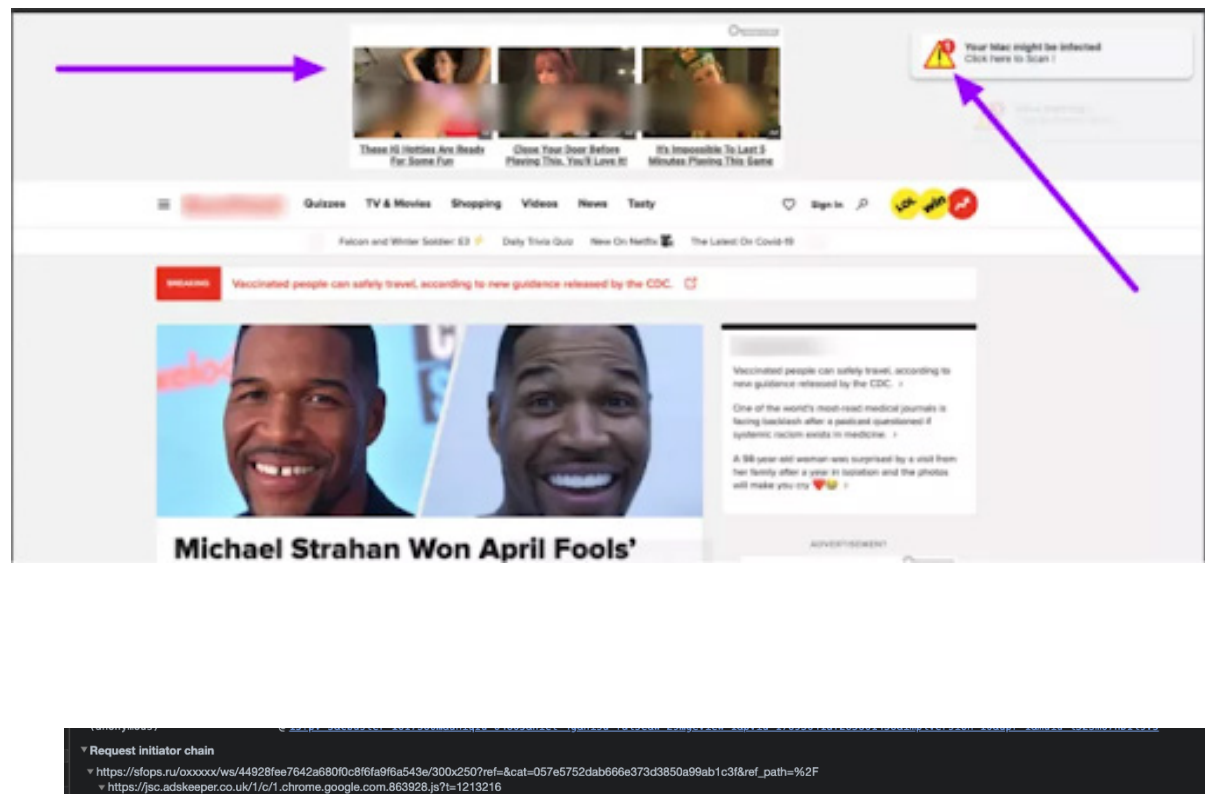
Malicious Browser Extensions (MBE) continue to be problematic for publishers. Their readers, knowingly, or oftentimes unknowingly, download extensions onto their computers. If these extensions contain malware, they have the ability to hijack ANY ads that display on a publisher's site and replace them with unwanted content and behaviors. In this particular case, we detected this pattern on more than 25 domains in our network. An unwanted script injected via an MBE was used to hijack regular ad slots, load an Adskeeper unit and then display graphic "adult" content across the entire site.

In action:

Initial script: <https://tropif.ru/ddemo?gtm=59K2DRC>

Loads the following: [https://lapuso.ru/chk\\_ya2.js](https://lapuso.ru/chk_ya2.js)

Eventually a script from: [sfops.ru](https://sfops.ru) is loaded which in turn loads the [adskeeper.co.uk](https://adskeeper.co.uk) JS

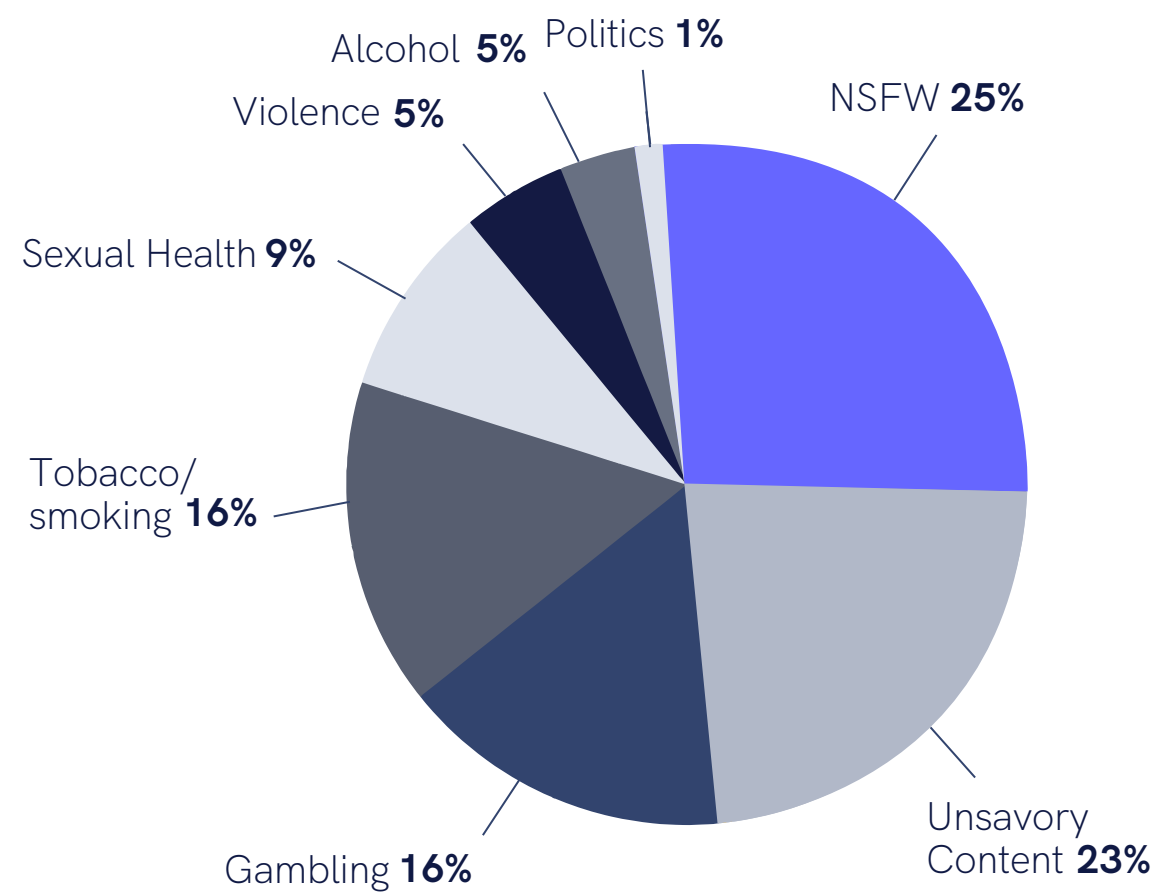


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## Compliance, Content & Sensitive Categories

As a result of new industry standards & increasingly more vocal audiences, awareness of other ad quality concerns like compliance & ad content continues to grow. Adoption of category blocks [has increased by over 50%](#) across the ADL footprint over the past few months.

- Over 60% of all ads blocked in Q1 were attributed to custom & category blocks.
- Aligning with national events, ads containing violent content exploded in Q1, with a 45X increase in block volume over Q4.
- Almost one-year after Chrome launched its heavy ad initiative, almost 20% of scanned ads in Q1 2021 are still larger than the 4MB limit. That's almost a 50% increase from this time last year!



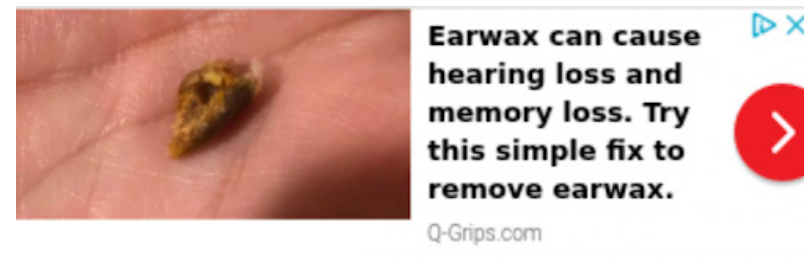
### Violence



### Trojan



### Unsavory

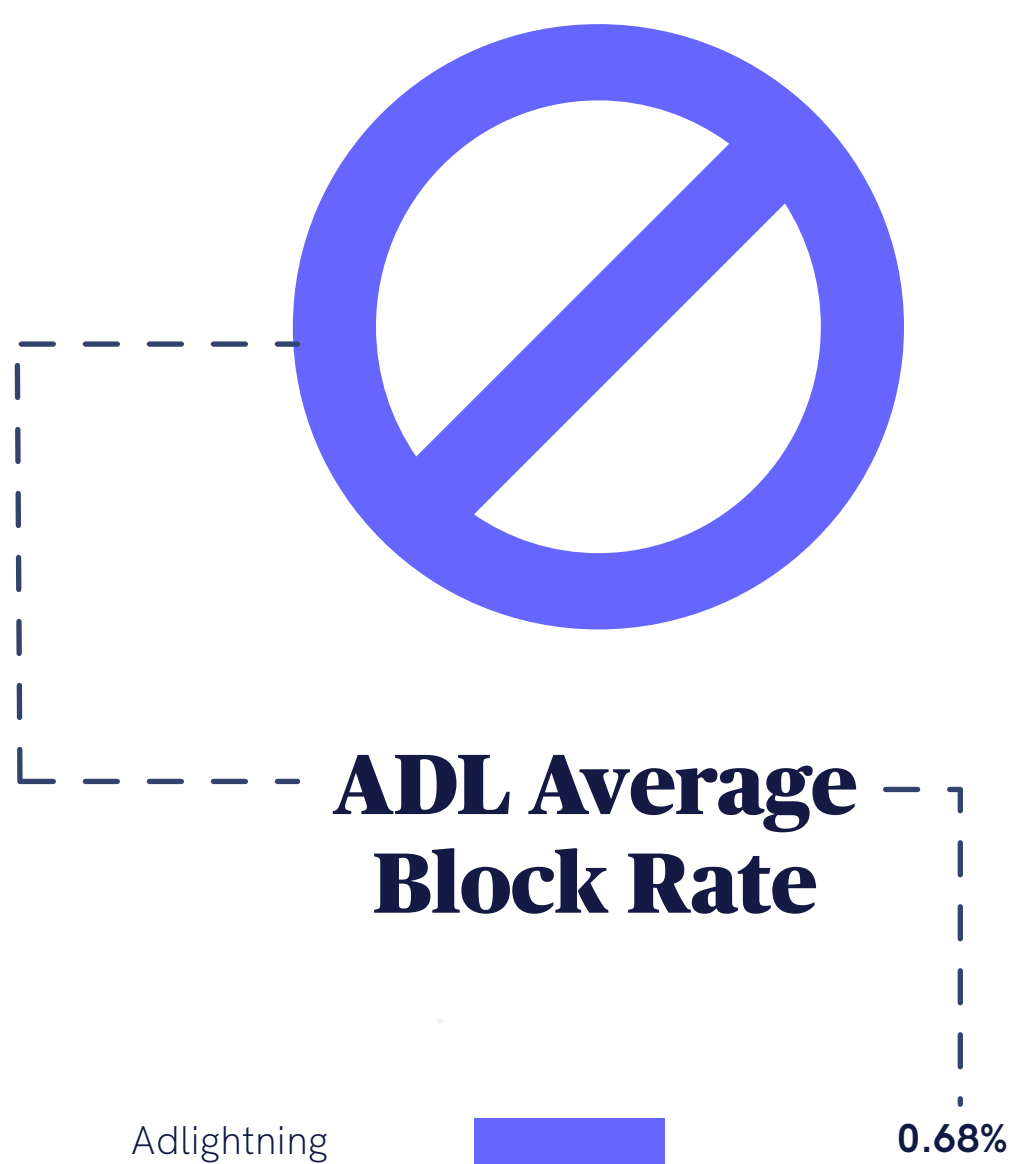


## Blocking Benchmarks

While block rates typically hover well below 1%, we are starting to see more fluctuation between partner types as a result of competitive and category blocking. This gives publishers more control over unwanted advertisers that aren't being enforced at the SSP level.

- Due to the sensitivity of their audiences and demand for their content, many educational & special interest sites have deployed robust blocking configurations and have block rates almost double other categories.
- Interestingly, it seems as though sites with lower block rates may have higher CPM floors and fewer competitive blocks than other category types.

- We don't see a significant difference in block rate when it comes to how our script is deployed either through outsourced monetization companies or directly on the pub site. Platforms however, and understandably, have a much lower block rate as they typically aren't actively blocking categories.



## Publisher Type

Social	0.35%
Home & Family	0.36%
eCommerce	0.37%
Other	0.41%
Sports & Gaming	0.71%
News	0.82%
Special Interest	0.88%
Popular Culture	0.94%
Education	0.95%

## ADL Client Type

Platform	0.25%
AdOps	0.73%
Publisher	0.74%

