Out of Site: Empowering a New Approach to Online Boycotts

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Consumer Boycotts

Sean Hannity's fans call for Keurig boycott after coffeemaker company pulls ads from his show

In-N-Out's Political Donation Attracts Boycott Calls, but Will It Matter?

An In-N-Out Burger in Hollywood. J. Emilio Flores for The New York Times
People are urging boycotts and criticizing Amazon's treatment of workers on its biggest day of sales.

Mary Hanbury  Jul 16, 2018, 6:20 PM

Many are speaking out against Amazon during its biggest sales event of the year. Getty/Chip Somodevilla
Boycotts - Political Consumption

Civic Engagement

Political Participation
Boycotts - Political Consumption

Civic Engagement

Political Participation

28%

Americans have participated in a form of political consumption

40% in Sweden
The cognitive load: memorizing and recalling a large list of targets (Carrigan, 2011)
The invisibility of impact: **Lack of immediate feedback of collective action**
(Klein et al. 2004)
Two challenges in consumer boycotts

the cognitive load

the invisibility of collective action
Motivation

Demo - Out of Site

Design Approach

User Studies

Discussion
Step 1: Install

Step 2: Grab Your Wallet

Intervention Strength

Low

High

Step 3: [Diagram with icons and bars]
Out of Site

Reduce the cognitive load

Make collective action visible
Out of Site

Reduce the cognitive load

Make collective action visible
Motivation

Demo - Out of Site

Design Approach

User Studies

Discussion
Browser extensions

Provide contextual information to reduce the cognitive load

(www.grabyourwallet.org)  (Munson et al. 2013)
Browser extensions

Provide contextual information to reduce the cognitive load

(www.grabyourwallet.org) (Munson et al. 2013)

Record individual behaviors to track the collective’s impact

(Kotaro et al. 2018) (McMahon et al. 2017)
Can an improved peer review process help the computing community take responsibility for the problems we have caused?

"The computing research community needs to work much harder to address the downsides of our innovations ... "

Mitigating the negative impacts of technology
Heuristic Prevention Design

We brainstormed several cases that Out of Site could be used with malicious intents and addressed them in our design process.
Filter bubble
Only commercial content is affected.

- Official websites
- Advertising
- Third-party promotions
Heuristic Prevention Design

Filter bubble

Automation over autonomy
What to Automate

Awareness  Action
What to Automate

Awareness | Action

Low
- Providing information

Medium
- Providing calls-to-action and information

High
- Filtering targeted information
Heuristic Prevention Design

Filter bubble

Automation over autonomy

Boycotting minority-led businesses

Undue harm
Motivation
Demo
Design Approach
User Studies
Discussion
Over 30 targets in this boycott.
Both proof-of-concept boycotts share similar low-level political ideologies. Our user studies’ result might not apply to other demographics.
Deployments

Phase I:
42 users, 6.7 days on average
7 interviews

Phase II:
45 users, 15.8 days on average
Data collection and analysis

Qualitative feedback
Pre- and post-surveys
Log data

A very small fraction of users’ browser histories is collected in an effort to protect users’ privacy.
Data collection and analysis

- Qualitative feedback
- Pre- and post- surveys
- Log data
- Affinity programming
- 4 themes
Reduce the cognitive load

Meaningful impact

What to automate
Meaningful Impact

Companies that TEST ON ANIMALS

#GRABYOURWALLET

99%
1%
Search engine results pages (SERPs) were the venue for the vast majority of the interventions.

Phase I: 539 of 655 pages
Phase II: 440 of 480 pages
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amazon</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macy’s</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walmart</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed Bath and Beyond</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papa John’s</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chewy.com</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6pm.com</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papa John’s</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diverted user clicks to competitors of targeted companies:

- “america's first civilization michael coe”: Barnes & Noble and abebooks.com
"I am a tinkerer. I used [the] ‘Medium’ setting to get familiar with what the extension does. I need some time to go on [the] ‘High’ setting."

- Participant 1
Choosing to automate awareness

Phase I:
26% users

Phase II:
37% users
Raising awareness of collective action
Raising awareness of collective action

“I like that information showing how many people joined you and how many products were hidden. It shows people are making progress.” - Participant 6
Raising awareness of collective action

“I like that information showing how many people joined you and how many products were hidden. It shows people are making progress.” - Participant 6

“The effects of economic boycotts aren’t often immediately visible. This could make the impact visible to large corporations.” - Participant 1
Non-conformance
Non-conformance

- Turn off
- Uninstall

#GrabYourWallet

#GrabYourWallet is a social media campaign against companies that have any connections to President Donald Trump. Targeted companies will be blocked, filtered, or highlighted with calls-to-action in your Google search results according to your preferences. (More info | Latest news)

78 participants joined this campaign
1971 links affected
138 contributed by me

Share my contribution to: 💬 🍁 🌐
Non-conformance

Whitelist companies, e.g. amazon, Walmart, bed bath and beyond, chewy.com

Targets
- 6pm Whitelist
- ABC Supply Whitelist
- Amazon Whitelist
- Bed Bath & Beyond Whitelist
- Belk Whitelist
- Bloomingdale's Whitelist
- Bluefly Whitelist
- Bon-Ton Whitelist
Motivations
Demo
Design Approach
User Studies
Discussion
SERPs are an Effective Site of Boycotts

Out of Site

Google
Allowing customization
Boycott Digital Services
(Vincent et al. 2018)

(McMahon et al. 2017)
Data Boycotts

(Vincent et al. 2018)

(McMahon et al. 2017)
Summary

A boycott-assisting technology - Out of Site

Customization should be supported

SERPs are an effective site of boycotts

A design approach - Heuristic Prevention Design
To our participants, anonymous reviewers, and Grouplens members, thank you.
A boycott-assisting technology - Out of Site

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SERPs are an effective site of boycotts

A design approach - Heuristic Prevention Design