

# When your AI assistant also answers to advertisers

A report by Adblock Plus

# Foreword

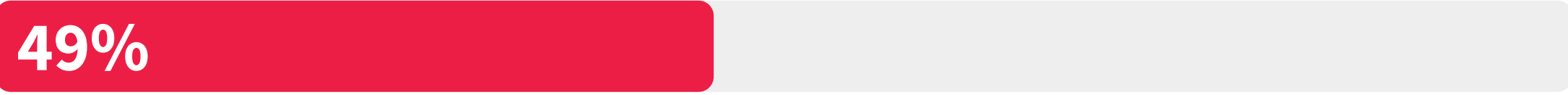
Something changed this year in how the internet pays for itself.

For two decades the bargain was familiar: free services, funded by advertising, delivered on pages where an ad looked like an ad. That bargain has now arrived inside artificial intelligence (AI), and it looks different. Nearly half of internet users already turn to AI to find information and almost a quarter say it is their main source when researching products. While AI assistants are becoming the new way people find information online, the companies behind them have started serving ads. But for the people using these tools every day, this change is a black box: some ads appear, but how they are chosen, how often they are served, and where they send users' data stays hidden.

This report is a first structured look at what that means in practice. We combined consumer research, hands-on testing of ChatGPT and Copilot, and ad-blocking data, alongside the outlook of independent researchers who study advertising in conversational AI.

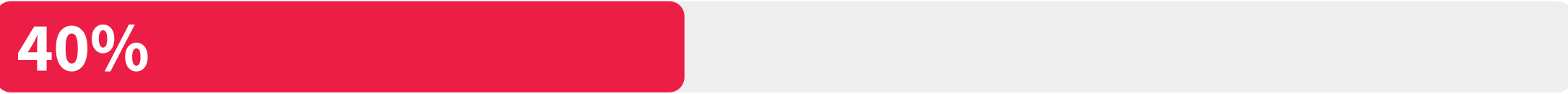
Ads in AI are here. This report is about seeing them clearly.

# AI is becoming the front door to the internet...



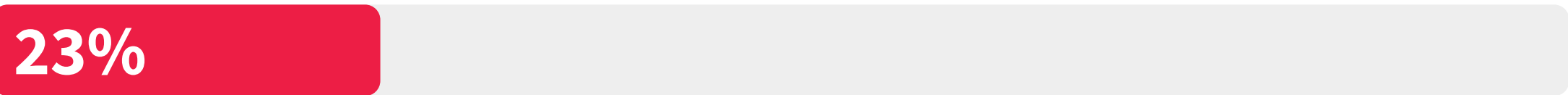
49%

of internet users have used AI to find information in the past month,  
equivalent to around **1.59 billion people**



40%

of internet users used ChatGPT in the past week



23%

of internet users now say AI (e.g. ChatGPT) is their main source when actively  
looking for information about brands, products, or services

## AI product discovery

Among people who use AI **for purchasing decisions:**

**33%**

use it to get detailed product information

**31%**

for price comparisons

**30%**

to compare product features

# ... and advertising is becoming one of the business models

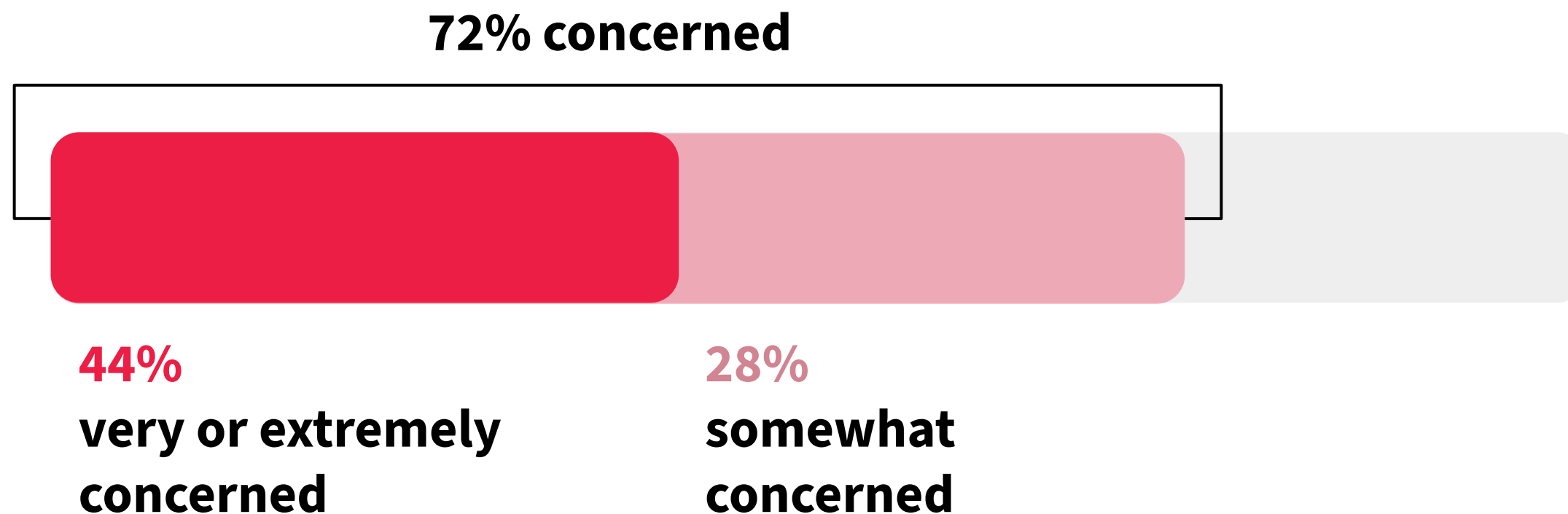
\$7,600,000,000,000

are estimated to be required for scaling AI in the next five years across compute, data centers, and power

|                     | ChatGPT, by OpenAI                                                | Copilot, by Microsoft                                                         | Gemini, by Google                                                            |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Status of ads       | LIVE                                                              | LIVE                                                                          | NOT YET                                                                      |
| Ad revenue reported | \$100m<br>annualized, six weeks after launch                      | nothing published<br>no company breakdown for this segment                    | not applicable<br>no ads in Gemini yet                                       |
| What ads look like  | Static creative with ad disclosure, sitting below the answer text | Individualized message above sponsored content, sitting below the answer text | Focus is AI Mode, but ad formats “would transfer successfully to Gemini app” |

# At the same time, users are concerned about ads in AI

## Concerns about AI assistants using conversation data to target advertising, among US adults



## People that block ads are more concerned

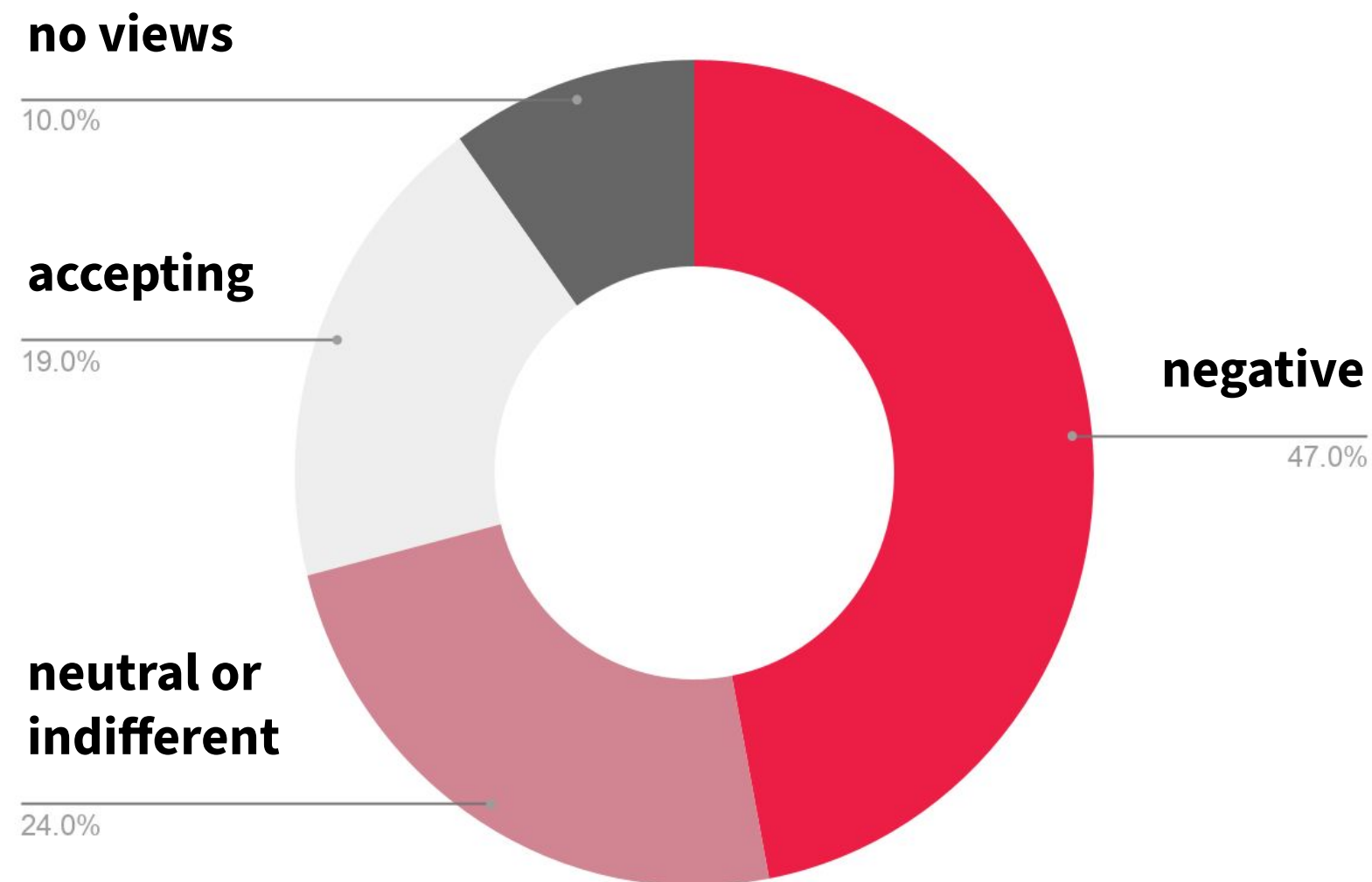
**77%**

of US adults who use an ad blocker are concerned about AI chatbots using their conversation data to target them with ads, compared with

**70%**

of surveyed users who don't block ads

# Ads are starting to appear inside AI assistants – what is your reaction to that?



**17%** Annoyance or intrusion

» “I don't like it. It feels intrusive”

**14%** Resignation or inevitability

» “It was only a matter of time”

**9%** Free versus paid bargain

» “It's a free program, that's fine”

**7%** Trust in answers

» “It feels like it would make the answers less clean”

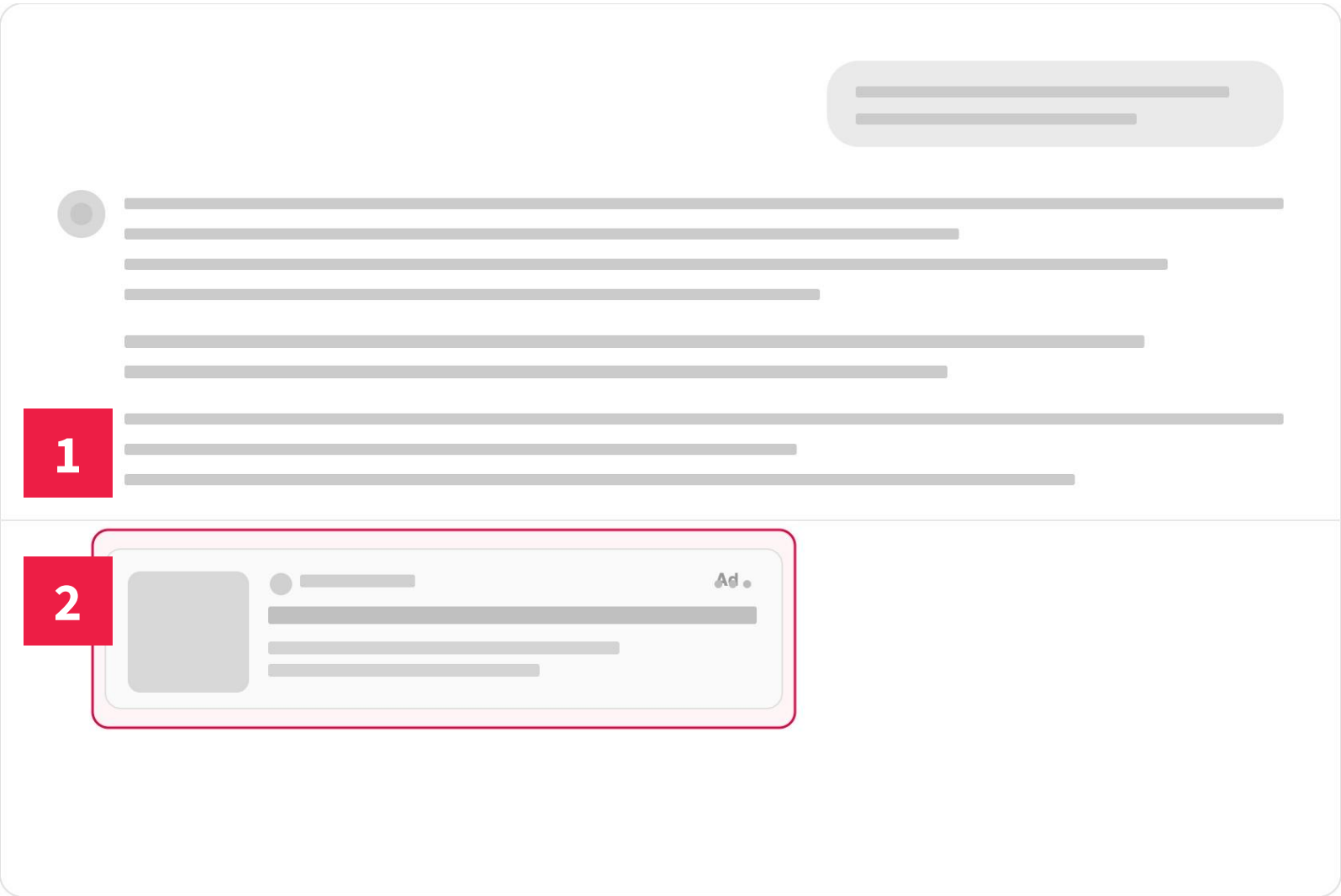
# What ChatGPT and Copilot ads have in common



**1** Labeled element, sitting at the end of a response

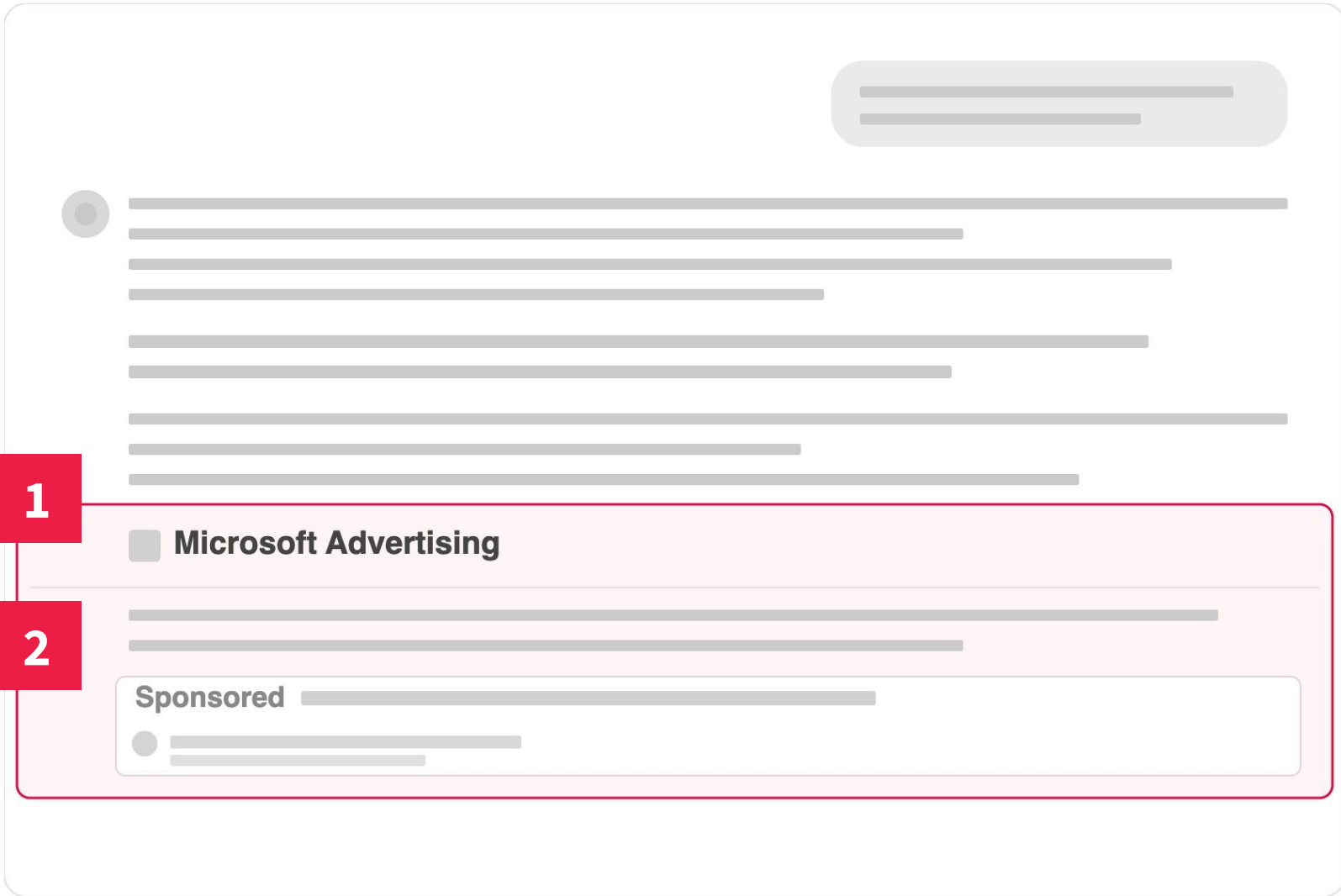
**2** Ad is matched to the prompt context, not to the answer. Sometimes the answer recommends a competitor of the sponsored brand.

# Where ChatGPT and Copilot ads are different



## ChatGPT, by OpenAI

- 1 ChatGPT uses the label “ad.”
- 2 ChatGPT shows a plain ad box.



## Copilot, by Microsoft

- 1 Copilot uses “Microsoft Advertising” and the box below has a “sponsored” label.
- 2 Copilot writes a sentence connected to your prompt first, above the sponsored content.

# How many ads do we block?

## Total ads blocked on ChatGPT

# 25,000,000 ads

between **April 30** and **August 17, 2026**

## Blocked this week on ChatGPT

# 2,767,008 ads

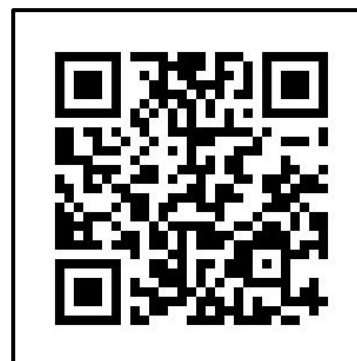
between **August 10** and **August 17, 2026**

*Number of ads blocked by Adblock Plus and AdBlock since counting started on April 30, 2026 (ChatGPT). Figures are approximate, drawn from anonymous, aggregated Adblock Plus and AdBlock filter activity. We never log URLs, page contents, prompts, AI responses, or anything that could identify you. The counter reflects aggregate ad events, not a record of anyone's sessions.*

Every block counted here comes from a public, open-source filter rule. The lists are community-maintained, so anyone can inspect them, suggest changes, or build on them.

We count an ad when one of the public filter rules behind Adblock Plus and AdBlock identifies an ad on a known AI platform (for example, ChatGPT).

The same rules that detect the ad are what hide it, so each detected ad represents one blocked from view. The counts are approximate by design



The counter is still running  
[adblockplus.org/ai-block-o-meter](https://adblockplus.org/ai-block-o-meter)

Source: Adblock Plus AI block-o-meter

# What's next? We asked leading researchers in the field where advertising in AI answers is heading



**Dr. Florian Schaub**

University of Michigan School of Information

One of the most interesting takeaways from our research is that injecting advertising into chatbot responses fundamentally changes how ad delivery works. On the web, advertisers prepare assets in advance, and targeting selects which one a user sees.

In AI chatbots, targeting still works in similar ways, but those assets are no longer needed. The system only needs a keyword and product matching prompt, for example advertise this cereal brand in chats about fitness or healthy eating, and it can then automatically AI-generate hyper personalized targeted advertising content based on the specific user's characteristics and the chat context. That content can blend seamlessly into the response, and may even make it feel more accurate or helpful, because it now contains direct pointers to specific products.

I'm really curious to see how far these systems will go in using their own inference capabilities to target ads next.

# What's next? We asked leading researchers in the field where advertising in AI answers is heading



**Ines Zelch**

Friedrich Schiller University Jena

In our research we explore the idea that the continued development of large language models could lead to advertising being integrated directly into the answer itself, rather than being placed beside it. That kind of native advertising would be far harder for users to recognise, and it would require a new kind of ad blocker.

The issue is important to us because an early user study showed that many people do not expect advertising in generated texts, often do not notice it, and would therefore be susceptible to influence by advertisers. So far we have injected product or brand advertising into generated texts as a form of product placement, and our trained models detect it well.

However, we have only been able to test the models on artificially generated data rather than on real data. Another advertising scenario, which is even more subtle and harder to evaluate, is to influence users over weeks or months without naming products at all.

# Methodology

**GWI**, July 2026 Pulse Week 2 (Multi-Market). Among internet users. Data points used: used AI to find information in the last month; used ChatGPT in the past week; mainly use AI (e.g. ChatGPT) when looking for more information about brands, products, or services. Purchase-decision figures based on respondents who use AI for purchasing decisions.

**Goldman Sachs**, [Tracking Trillions](#) (May 2026): \$7.6tn capital requirement, 2026–2031

**Reuters**, [OpenAI's US ad pilot exceeds \\$100 million in annualized revenue in six weeks](#) (March 2026): Ad revenue reported for OpenAI

**Alphabet**, [Q1 2026 earnings call](#), April 2026: Gemini monetisation remarks (P. Schindler)

**The Harris Poll**, this survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of eyeo from May 19–21, 2026 among 2,066 US adults ages 18 and older. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within  $\pm 2.7$  percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

**Pollfish**, open-ended survey conducted by Pollfish on behalf of eyeo, June 23, 2026, among 150 US adults. Question: "Ads are starting to appear inside AI assistants like ChatGPT and Copilot. What's your reaction to that?" Responses manually coded into non-exclusive themes.

**eyeo own testing**, individual test sessions conducted by eyeo, August 2026, on ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot (free plans, tested on Chrome), using fresh accounts without conversation history. Qualitative observations from a small number of sessions; not a representative sample. Findings describe what we observed, not frequency or prevalence.

**Adblock Plus AI block-o-meter**, [How many ads has Adblock Plus blocked on AI platforms?](#) Figures approximate, drawn from anonymous, aggregated Adblock Plus and AdBlock filter activity. ChatGPT ads launched in February 2026 and were blocked from the outset; counting began April 30, 2026.

Throughout this report, 'Gemini' refers to the Gemini app and its browser version (gemini.google.com), meaning Google's conversational AI assistant and the comparable product to ChatGPT and Copilot. It does not refer to Google's wider Gemini model family or to Gemini-branded features in other Google products.

For complete methodology, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, or other inquiries, please contact [press@adblockplus.org](mailto:press@adblockplus.org)

# About us

Adblock Plus, from eyeo, is a free browser extension that blocks advertising, third-party tracking requests, and malicious domains using regularly updated, community-maintained filter lists including EasyList and EasyPrivacy. eyeo also develops AdBlock and other ad-filtering and privacy tools used by hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

For more information, visit [adblockplus.org](https://adblockplus.org) or contact [press@adblockplus.org](mailto:press@adblockplus.org).