



The Impact of Google's Cookie U-Turn

In what has caused a seismic wave in the global advertising industry in the last 2 weeks, Google announced on July 22, 2024, that it will not deprecate third-party cookies in its Chrome browser as initially planned. Instead, the company will introduce a user-choice model, providing consumers with more control over how their data is used...seems quite obvious in retrospect. This decision, influenced by pressures from the UK's Competition and Markets Authority and others, acknowledges the feedback from both industry and regulatory bodies regarding the original plan to eliminate third-party cookies altogether.

Google's original plan to eliminate third-party cookies was part of its broader Privacy Sandbox initiative aimed at developing standards that would enhance user privacy whilst still enabling effective ad targeting and measurement. But the announcement of this plan went down like a lead balloon, with privacy advocates welcoming it as a step toward a more secure web, but the advertising and marketing industry expressing concerns about potential disruptions to the targeting and measurement models we had long been accustomed to.

Google has now cited the need for additional time to develop and test alternative technologies as the primary reason for the delay and emphasizing that replacing third-party cookies is a complex task that requires extensive collaboration with various industry stakeholders, including advertisers, publishers, and regulators.....more like stating the obvious really!!!

The last few weeks since the decision went global, has seen even more mixed reactions from some viewing this as an admission of failure by Google to some seeing this as an opportunity for advertisers and publishers alike that were slow off the blocks, to fast-track plans to prepare for a cookieless future and adopt other targeting and measurement alternatives including but not limited to a strong focus on the use of clients first party data.

Jon Mew, CEO of IAB UK, emphasizes the need to continue preparing for a cookieless future. He notes that a significant portion of the web cannot be addressed by third-party cookies, urging the industry to pursue other targeting and measurement methods. Similarly, Anthony Katsur, CEO of IAB Tech Lab, views the delay as an opportunity to develop better alternatives that balance privacy and functionality.

So, in conclusion, while Google's decision to delay the deprecation of third-party cookies highlights the complexity of balancing privacy concerns with the needs of our every so thirsty

for more, advertising industry, it also extends the use of a technology that many will view as problematic at best.

Contributed by Kevin Ndinguri

About the AMF

The Advertising Media Forum (AMF) is a collective of media agencies and individuals including media strategists, planners, buyers and consultants through whom 95% of all media expenditure in South Africa is bought. The AMF advises and represents relevant organisations and aims to create open channels of communication and encourage and support transparent policies, strategies and transactions within the industry.

For more information on the AMF, visit www.amf.org.za

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