

ADVERTISING

Google Chrome cutting down on cookies: 4 alternatives

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Google is joining Apple and other major companies to present itself as a privacy advocate.

The tech giant revealed at a recent developer conference that it plans to update the Google Chrome browser to provide greater transparency and give users more control over how cookies track users' online activity.

The announcement indicates Google's push to distance itself from controversies about online privacy, [exemplified most visibly by Facebook](#).

How it crumbles

Cookies are packets of information that communicate key user details to the Web sites that they use. They are often used for benign or even beneficial purposes. [Norton](#) gives the following example: "Many online retailers use cookies to keep track of the items in a user's shopping cart as they explore the site."

Cookies also power online tracking that enables advertisers to deliver more targeted advertising.

The changes to Google Chrome, [CNBC reports](#), "will likely have deep implications for how some advertising players target consumers online."

Headlines like this, combined with the increasing wariness of consumers for ads that seem to follow them online, should make advertisers assess how much their campaigns rely on cookies.

However, Google is not initiating the "end of ads."

Even if a majority of users who use Chrome take advantage of settings that clear cookies and reduce other types of tracking, marketers have other advertising options to engage customers, make sales and drive revenue.

Here are four alternatives:

Contextual ads

Contextual advertising delivers ads to users based on the Web pages that they visit. By doing this, the ads connect

directly to users' interests based on the content they view at the time they are viewing it, rather than relying on personal information.

Users are becoming more protective of the information to which companies and other third parties have access.

Businesses that try to capitalize on private details through ads – generally driven by information gleaned from cookies – are already on thin ice, and we can expect changes such as the ones Google is implementing in Chrome to reduce the effectiveness of these campaigns even further.

Contextual ads, on the other hand, feel less like Big Brother is watching you.

The ads connect directly to what they are viewing, which makes users more likely to take notice, build positive feelings with your brand, and buy your goods and services.

Social media advertising

Despite the privacy scandals that Facebook has been dealing with for the last 18 months, Facebook as well as other popular social media platforms remain effective ways to build your brand and market your services to potential customers.

Our clients continue to have great success with Facebook and Instagram advertising.

Moreover, in the appropriate circumstances, LinkedIn can be an effective marketing vehicle.

The key to success with social media advertising is to understand the platform that you are using, including how to use it most effectively to target the right customers for your business.

Ads in apps

More online traffic is mobile, and that changes not only the way users surf the Internet but the ads they see and how they interact with them.

The emergence of apps enables companies to control the content, including the use of ad networks.

Third-party ads are scattershot by nature. They do not know exactly where targeted users are going to go, so they rely on user characteristics – who they are – to try to drive conversions.

Apps have a distinct advantage over browser-based ads. They have data not only on who users are, but what they are doing.

Savvy advertisers who promote their services within an app environment understand this audience, enabling them to tailor ads to prospective consumers based on their activities within the application, instead of general information.

In effect, native ads within apps are a form of niche marketing.

Users launch apps for specific activities on their mobile devices, and ads that align with those activities are at least as likely to be successful as ads in Web browsers.

Google Ads

One of the biggest questions facing Google after its announced Chrome updates is whether or not cookies used by Google itself will be included in the enhanced privacy controls.

A [post on the Google Ads blog](#) announced that the platform is “committing to a new level of ads transparency.”

The Google Ads platform – previously known as Google AdWords – is a major source of revenue for the company. And, as the saying goes, “If you can't beat them, join them.”

It is safe to assume that advertisers who invest in Google Ads will see less churn in their campaign performance than ads delivered through third parties.

After all, even with Google positioning itself as a privacy-forward company, it will not undercut one of its big moneymakers.

ULTIMATELY, EACH ONE of these types of ads allow for targeted campaigns.

Greater targeting is a win-win for privacy-focused consumers and brands seeking a good ROI on ads.



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