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3 ways to prepare for a cookie-less word

What three steps should brands make to prepare for the cookie-less world?

Brands have relied upon third-party cookies to target website visitors and collect behavioural data for marketing purposes since the 1990s (Sobo 2021). However, because third-party cookies entail an intrusive degree of tracking, concerns about their use have grown (Bump 2022). Although some search engines, like Firefox, have blocked their use for

some time (Kan 2019). Google, the world's most popular browser, never endorsed third-party cookies, but allowed them by default (Morrisson 2021, Statista 2019). However, consumer concerns about protecting personal data have increased and it seems eradication of the third-party cookie is an inevitable consequence (DMA 2022, Epstein 2022, WARC 2021). In fact, concern for privacy was cited by Google in their announcement that third party cookies would be banned on Chrome (Bump 2022, Sobo 2021). Although Google has pushed back the deadline on third-party cookies to 2023/2024, big changes are on the horizon (Jain 2021, Bump 2022). With the death of the third-party cookie approaching swiftly, how can brands find their way in this new world?

The consequences of this change include reduced reach and frequency that will impact campaign planning, as well as loss of data insights as precision targeting and retargeting capabilities are reduced (Broderson et al 2020). The power of 'walled gardens' such as Google (Alphabet), Facebook, and Amazon will also likely grow (Sobo 2021). So it is no surprise that, according to a report by GetApp, 41% of marketers reported that inability to track the right data will definitely impact campaign planning (Bump 2022). Brands are scrambling for new ways to secure the detailed insights that power their marketing efforts. So here are three steps that marketers should begin to take to prepare for a cookie-less world.

1.Secure your first party data and gather more. It is essential to prioritise a brand's relationship with its customers. When a brand has proved worthy of consumer trust, consumers are quite inclined to provide first-party data for marketing purposes (DMA 2022). Of course, a brand must always be clear and transparent when asking for personal data. The benefits of running direct-to-user campaigns and building a cadre of loyal customers are clear.

Pros: Brands already control a lot of first party data and direct to customer campaigns are impactful.

Cons: Where consent is given, it can also be taken away. This approach requires a highly satisfactory user experience and investment in building a strong brand.

2.Implement ID solutions. Universal IDs offer a privacy-safe user identity alternative. They are created using first party data and permanent user identifiers such as anonymized emails and phone numbers. (Kryvtsun 2021). The result is an individual identifier that can be tracked across different channels without needing cookies or breaching user privacy (Denysenko 2021).

Pros: It offers a very targeted approach based on personalised data sets that may reassure marketers that they are not losing out.

Cons: It may still be susceptible to privacy violations. Also, ID solutions can be difficult to scale. There are several ID solutions and little common ground.

3.Prepare to take advantage of contextual targeting. This approach allows marketers to advertise on web pages with content that is highly relevant to their ad. Success with interest-based advertising relies upon determining the best pages in your product group. This approach will also allow marketers to take advantage of the power of walled gardens such as Amazon, Facebook and Google, as all offer contextual targeting ad placement. Also, technological development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing has improved this type of targeting, helping marketers reach their intended audience

(Markman 2021, Plomion 2020) .

Pros: Research reveals that 72% of consumers state that ads in context improve message impact (Kendrick 2021). When conversion happens, the brand can collect first party data.

Cons: It is somewhat imprecise and very different from the accuracy of targeting and retargeting strategies. For effective implementation, walled garden platforms may be needed.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to replace third-party cookies. However, if brands are able to put a combination of the above into practice, and test each as they go, they should see results. Agility in this process is key, as well as a strongly ethical approach that rewards the trust of consumers with an excellent customer experience and the knowledge that their data is in the right hands.

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