

# Trump's new FTC chair puts advertising data in the crosshairs

Article

**The news:** President-elect **Donald Trump** has chosen **Andrew Ferguson** as the new **FTC** chair, signaling tighter data regulations alongside a pro-business stance.

- Ferguson is a current FTC commissioner who was nominated by President Joe Biden in 2023.

- When the FTC [published a report](#) in September criticizing the [digital advertising industry's data practices](#), Ferguson released a statement warning that “massive collection, repackaging, sharing, and retention of our private and intimate details puts Americans at great risk.”
- In a post on X, Ferguson said the FTC “will end Big Tech’s vendetta against competition and free speech.”

**Data under Trump:** Ferguson is expected to be much friendlier to big business and mergers than current FTC chair **Lina Khan**, but his record of criticizing the digital advertising industry increases the likelihood that the agency will follow through on its September call for greater regulation.

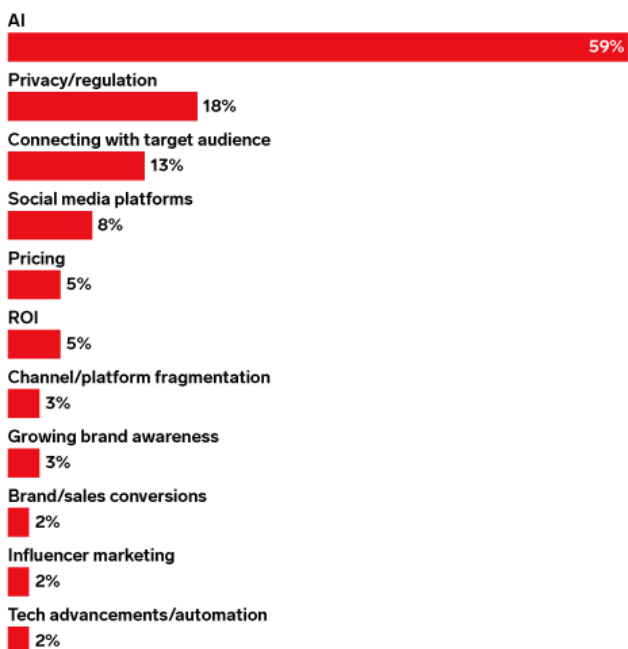
- Ferguson’s criticism of data practices centers on privacy vulnerabilities and indefinite data retention. In September, he raised concerns that long-term storage and a lack of anonymization could make it easier for bad actors and foreign governments to obtain sensitive information about US citizens.
- Under his leadership, those criticisms could evolve into more stringent rules about how long companies can store user information and standardization for anonymizing data.
- There have been multiple instances of improperly obtained and anonymized data spreading throughout the ad ecosystem in 2024: In August, **Capital One** was [sued for improperly disclosing trackers](#) on its website, causing user information to spread across the web into platforms like **Google** and **Facebook**.

Despite Ferguson’s criticisms, **he approves of one aspect of digital advertising: targeted ads.** His September statement said targeted advertising helps connect consumers to the most relevant products in addition to generating revenues and lowering the cost of ad space.

**Our take:** As with many elements of the incoming Trump administration, the FTC’s plans are somewhat unclear. Ferguson’s mixed statements indicate a desire to clamp down on ad industry data collection practices, but the administration’s business-friendly agenda and his support of other ad industry staples could influence those plans.

## Top Concerns for the Future of Marketing and Advertising Among US Advertising Professionals, Dec 2023

% of respondents



Source: Material+ and NewtonX, "The Digital Lead: 2024 Advertising Insights & Tech Trends," April 25, 2024

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