

Cookieless ad targeting requires marketers to understand how consumers use their websites

Article

“We're never going to get back to what [digital advertising] used to be. And the sooner we all embrace that, the easier it will become,” said Colleen Harris, director and product manager at Ansira. And yet, less than half (47%) of marketers worldwide are working on a plan to approach **cookie-free targeting**, according to September 2023 data from HubSpot. With under nine months to go until the death of the third-party cookie, marketers need to make and execute plans quickly.

Without cookies, advertisers can't pinpoint the precise path to purchase a consumer took. As a result, they need to think about who they should serve with ads using past on-site behaviors. “You really have to rethink how you create an audience. It's no longer about just trying to retarget interested people, but how are you now defining interested people and interested shoppers,” said Harris.

Marketers Worldwide Whose Companies Are Working on a Plan to Approach Cookie-Free Targeting, Sep 2023

% of respondents



Source: HubSpot, "2024 State of Marketing & Trends Report," Jan 11, 2024

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Brand websites can identify those interested consumers. “Everybody internally needs to look at your website and say, ‘What do we care about? Where are people clicking? And are the places people clicking the places we actually want them to,’” said Harris.

Marketers can then use Google’s Performance Max to leverage data from events—on-site activities tracked using Google Analytics. Marketers can see everything from product clicks to photo views and target the right consumers. “You’re telling Google in a different way, rather than relying on a third-party cookie, ‘These are the types of shoppers I'm interested in,’” she said.

Marketers should be engaged in this process, rather than just letting **Google’s AI work its magic.** Understanding what is effective within Google Ads allows marketers to replicate it in walled gardens like **Meta** and individual apps. Google offers analytics in order to feed Google Ads, so marketers keep spending money within Google. Use these analytics to your

advantage. “You need to be able to know how you're tracking in all these different publishers. And that has to start at what events really matter.”

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