

GDPR Is Making Users Question How Their Data Is Being Used

Marketers will likely have a more difficult time relying on audience targeting

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Data regulation is forcing users to think critically about digital privacy.

Many marketing tech vendors—including ad retargeters, location data companies, demand-side platforms (DSPs) and data management platforms (DMPs)—don't have a direct relationship with users, so they often obtain user data without ever getting consent.

These vendors could soon be in for a wake-up call since the EU's [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) is likely to lead EU citizens to become more selective about how they share their personal data online.

In a February 2018 survey of 1,050 UK internet users conducted by [The7stars](#), nearly 60% of respondents said GDPR is making them question how much data companies have on them. And about a third of those polled plan to exercise their right to be forgotten after GDPR goes live.

UK Internet Users' Attitudes Toward the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Feb 2018

% of respondents

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
The government needs to make it clear what GDPR is and how it affects me	75%	8%	17%
GDPR is making me question how much data others hold on me	58%	11%	31%
I think GDPR is a positive step in the world of data privacy and protection	58%	9%	33%
I will exercise my right to be forgotten once GDPR comes into force	34%	14%	52%
GDPR will make me trust brands more about how they use my data	32%	26%	41%
I understand what GDPR is and how it affects me	27%	45%	28%
I am confident that my personal data is used in the best possible way by those who have access to it	19%	55%	26%

Note: ages 18+; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: The7stars, Feb 16, 2018

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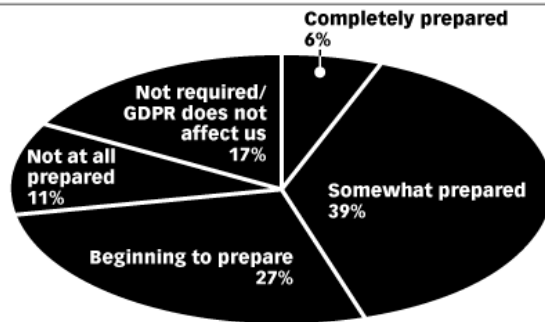
GDPR goes into effect in May and stipulates that data of EU citizens can only be used if they give a company explicit permission. An [article of the GDPR](#) also states that people have the right to have their data erased should they desire.

If users follow through and behave in line with the findings of this survey, marketers will likely have a more difficult time relying on audience targeting to fulfill their campaigns. With GDPR looming, [several DSPs are already planning](#) to place more emphasis on contextual targeting to reduce their reliance on user data. If users opt out of being tracked en masse, marketers will face further pressure to reach people without relying on the ad retargeting that has become the backbone of programmatic advertising.

Companies that are found to be in violation of GDPR face a fine of \$24 million or 4% of annual sales, depending on which figure is higher. Despite the potential for stiff penalties, just [6% of firms are completely prepared for GDPR](#), according to a November 2017 survey of IT professionals in North America by [Erwin](#).

IT Professionals in North America Who Are Prepared for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Nov 2017

% of respondents



Note: all respondents were from organizations with 1,000 or more employees

Source: Erwin, "The State of Data Governance" conducted by UBM, Feb 12, 2018

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What makes GDPR preparation so difficult is that interpretations of the law vary widely, and it is unclear exactly how stringently regulators will enforce it.