

# Apple throws advertisers a bone in iOS 15 SKAdNetwork update

Article

**The news:** Advertisers will soon be able to get data on postbacks, or mobile app install validations, **directly** from Apple's SKAdNetwork rather than having to go through a registered ad network. The changes will go into effect when iOS 15 rolls out in September.

**What's SKAdNetwork again?** SKAdNetwork is Apple's privacy-friendly attribution API for mobile app downloads, and the only solution in the Apple ecosystem for devices that haven't

opted in to the Identifier for Advertisers (IDFA). It attributes mobile app installs to an ad campaign, but unlike the IDFA, doesn't reveal any user- or device-level data. Digital ad giants like Facebook and Google were essentially forced to add SKAdNetwork support when Apple's AppTrackingTransparency (ATT) framework went into effect in late April. Having accurate information on mobile app installs is critical in determining campaign success, and fighting fraud.

**How it works:** In iOS 14, marketers are out of the loop on their mobile app install data. SKAdNetwork only sends postbacks to registered ad networks, which are then sent to an authorized mobile measurement provider. The advertiser running the campaign cannot access the raw postbacks unless they're provided by the ad network—but that's changing in iOS 15.

"There was a lot of criticism and complaints about [the old system] because Google and Facebook were instead putting that postback data through their own attribution algorithms and then reporting only the results," said Nicole Perrin, eMarketer principal analyst at Insider Intelligence. "So that left a question of, what are they actually doing in those algorithms, and do I trust it? Why can't I run my own attribution with my own postback data?"

**Why it matters:** Thus far, SKAdNetwork hasn't been a useful alternative to the IDFA due to the limited amount of accessible information for marketers. The upcoming iOS 15 changes, while still more limited than the pre-ATT state of affairs, are a much-needed aid for advertisers looking to optimize their measurement and attribution as much as possible in the privacy-centric world that Apple is building.