3 ways advertisers can prepare for Google's 2024 cookie deprecation deadline, even it if gets pushed back

Article

Advertisers aren't prepared for cookie deprecation. But "staying the course is not really a great option," our analyst Paul Verna said during a recent "Advertising Trends to Watch for 2024" webinar.

"[Google] has been very vague about their [deprecation] timeline … and I will not be shocked if something happens to throw it off track," said Verna. A third of brand, agency, publisher, tech, and data platform representatives worldwide also believe Google's deadline for cookie deprecation will be pushed back again, per ID5.

As a result, the majority of programmatic ad spend is being put toward cookied inventory across verticals, 33Across found in Q3 2023. To prepare, Verna said advertisers should use data diversification, AI tools, and experimentation to steer through the impending changes, ensure relevance, and maintain effectiveness in the post-cookie era.

1. Embrace diversified data

"Invest in building a first-party data strategy, or, more importantly, working with partners that have first-party data," said Brian Mandelbaum, CEO and co-founder of customer data platform Attain. "I think that is a way to remain dominant, and then with that you should prepare for a hybrid future."

Exploring alternative ID solutions could mean cultivating direct relationships with customers; experimenting with consent-based data collection; or leaning on partners, such as publishers.

2. Capitalize on AI-powered tools

"GenAI [generative AI] is starting to power identity resolution and ID-free targeting," Verna said. This tech is supercharging the process of "targeting groups of people based on context, rather than just trying to pinpoint individuals based on identity signals," per Verna.

AI is allowing advertisers to fill in the gaps of customer data to bolster behavioral targeting. "Some experts are talking about using machine learning to recognize customers based on things like the cadence in their word choice," Verna said.

3. Iterate

"Test and learn. Run experiments and A/B tests to understand what the impact of cookie deprecation will be to your business and your strategies," Mandelbaum said.

Foster a culture of trial and error to draw insights and refine your strategies. Google's Privacy Sandbox protocols became available for all Chrome traffic in September, which should prompt advertisers to conduct side-by-side comparisons with familiar cookie-based methods.

Watch the full webinar.

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