

Users Are Souring on Ad Tracking

People are fed up with cavalier approaches to data security

ARTICLE | MAY 30, 2018

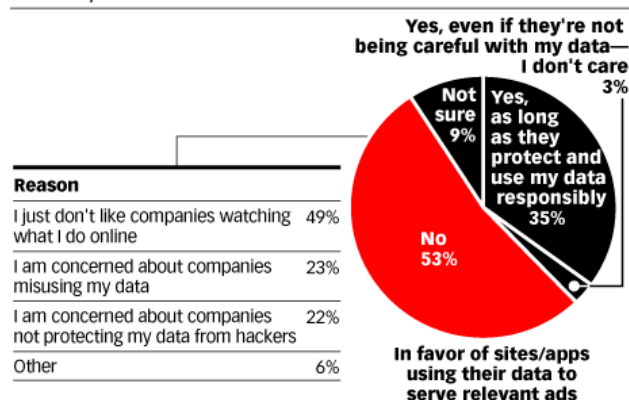
Ross Benes

Stick around any ad industry conference long enough, and you will hear a marketer decry the concerns of data privacy advocates. These marketers will say they are benefiting users by passing around their data without getting consent, arguing that without user data, marketers can't serve hypertargeted ads. Many marketers assume that users will trade their data in exchange for ads that are highly specific to their interests.

The principle behind this assumption may be fading as ad platforms have come under scrutiny for their cavalier approach to data security. Sure, people may be more likely to “engage” with an ad that highlights one of their personal interests. But many folks are not amused by how the ad targeting sausage gets made, now that perpetual news stories about Russian troll farms and data leakage have **propelled the mechanics of ad tech into the spotlight**. In an April survey of 1,051 US adult internet users by **Janrain**, most respondents said they are not in favor of websites or apps using what they learn about them online to target ads.

Primary Reason that US Internet Users Are Against Sites/Apps Using Their Data to Serve Relevant Ads, April 2018

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+

Source: Janrain, "Consumer Attitudes Toward Data Privacy Survey," May 7, 2018

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www.eMarketer.com

Nearly 70% of those polled said they would like to see the US enact a law similar to the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which states that a user's data can only be used if they give a company permission to do so. The provision of the GDPR that respondents most wanted to see applied in the US is an individual's right to ask companies to delete the data they have collected.

Janrain's study isn't the first to show that consumers are irritated with the current state of ad targeting. In a similar poll of 2,204 US adults by **Morning Consult**, 63% of respondents said they aren't willing to give up personal data for targeted advertising in order to keep using a service for free.

And in a February survey of 3,574 US internet users by Axios and SurveyMonkey, 55% of respondents said they are concerned that the government will **not do enough to regulate the way tech companies operate**. Meanwhile, in November 2017, only 40% of those surveyed were concerned about the government not regulating tech enough.

Big tech backlash probably won't prosper in the US like it has in Europe. But companies that rely on unfettered access to user data would be wise to listen to people's complaints, and pay attention to

the data regulations being considered by lawmakers in California, as well as the law Vermont just passed to regulate data brokers.