

# Meta is accused of using a secret AppTrackingTransparency workaround

Article

**The news:** Meta is facing a [class action lawsuit](#) for implementing a workaround for Apple's AppTrackingTransparency in its in-app browsers on Facebook and Instagram.

- The proposed lawsuit alleges that Meta injects its own tracking code into its in-app browser, allowing it access to information about what users do on third-party sites down to passwords, history, searches, and individual searches.
- Under Apple's ATT policy, users have to opt in for apps to access that kind of information. But Meta's workaround allowed it to scrape users' data without notifying them.

**A familiar problem:** The lawsuit and revelation that it's been working around ATT is the latest in a long string of privacy mishaps from Meta, both before and after the post-AppTrackingTransparency era, that are eroding advertiser faith in the platform.

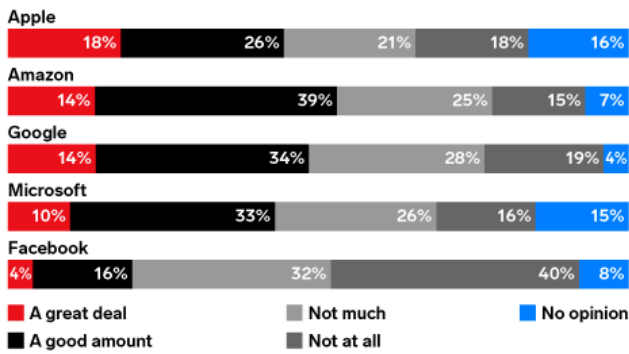
- Meta is one of the companies hardest hit by the ATT change: In February, CFO **David Wehner** said the company expected to lose \$10 billion in revenue this year. That prediction is coming true before our eyes: The company is **reporting** significant dips in ad revenue and is undergoing a major pivot to short-form video to compensate.
- But part of the problem is that Meta's various attempts at a post-ATT attribution solution have crashed and burned.
- Last fall, Meta revealed that an ad bug had produced underreported results for most of the year. In April, a study from North Carolina State University found that Facebook was **incorrectly attributing user interests** 29% of the time.
- More recently, its tracking tool **Facebook Pixel** was revealed to be collecting sensitive user information **from hospitals**, potentially exposing them to costly lawsuits for HIPAA violations —and adding another **class action suit** to Meta's docket.

**The big takeaway:** It's time to stop trying to work around ATT's new normal. Even though the policy has its own monopolistic qualities, regulation is on the side of privacy; regulators are unlikely to threaten ATT or drop their interest in privacy regulation.

- For Meta, it's time to move on. The company has to find a post-ATT solution that can give advertisers the results they need while also kowtowing to the permanent changes in the privacy landscape.

## How Much US Internet Users Trust Companies to Responsibly Handle Their Personal Information and Data on Their Internet Activity, by Company, Nov 2021

% of respondents in each group



Note: ages 18+; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding  
Source: Washington Post and Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University as cited in article, Dec 22, 2021

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