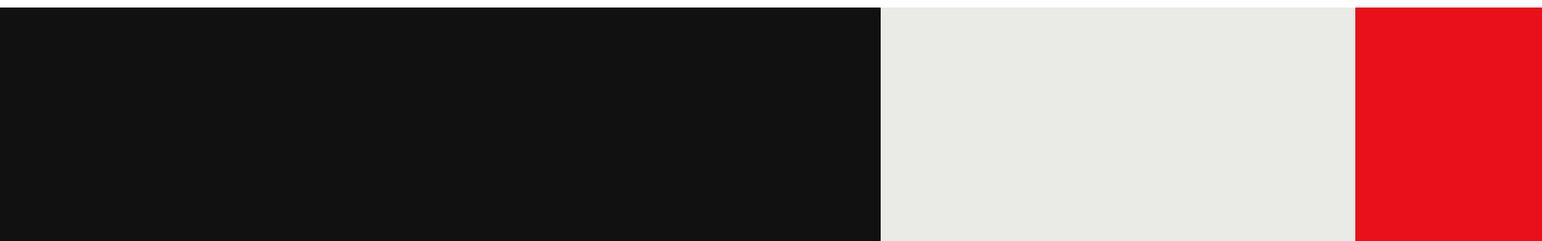


# Google puts Chrome users in control of their ad experience

## Article



**The news:** Google is putting ads in the hands of **Chrome** users with a new hub called **My Ad Center**. Accessible from every ad across Google's ecosystem from search to **YouTube**, the ad center allows users to modify their experience on Chrome in several ways. According to Google, users can:

- Block ads on sensitive topics like weight loss;

- Choose to see fewer ads from irrelevant categories (like muting vacation ads after returning home from a trip) and which to see more of (like holiday or sneaker deals);
- Prevent their YouTube search history from being used to target ads;
- And **even turn off personalized ads completely**. You'll still need an ad blocker if you want a true ad-free experience, though.

**Two birds, one stone:** Google is putting some ad placement power it usually gives to brands in the hands of consumers in the hopes of both improving consumer sentiment toward advertising and helping those ads reach the most relevant audiences.

- Multiple platforms have rolled out [brand safety features](#) that allow advertisers to select what sorts of topics they *don't* want their ads to run next to. Now, Google is encouraging consumers to use similar features.
- Ever seen the same ad multiple times during a single YouTube video, or for days on end scrolling through Twitter? Encouraging users to update which ads they do and don't want to see could also help Google cut down on the [nightmare](#) of ads being shown to the same consumer repeatedly.

**The privacy angle:** Allowing users to choose (at least a little bit) what information of theirs can or can't be used for advertising helps Google address the growing concern about privacy in digital advertising.

- Regulatory scrutiny of digital advertising's use of personal data is picking up. The FTC has [filed suits](#) against ad tech companies, and the White House listed [tech reforms](#) that focus on corporate use of personal information. Private lawsuits against ad tech are also [on the rise](#).
- Google is already focusing on privacy with the [\(ever-delayed\)](#) phasing out of third-party cookies on Chrome. My Ad Center is like a "lite" version of **Apple's AppTrackingTransparency**, the iOS policy that lets users opt out of tracking entirely.

**Let's get real:** Digital privacy just isn't in the mainstream consciousness, and Google knows this. Making this hub accessible from every ad on Google's ecosystem is a victory for transparency, but it's unlikely that a majority or even significant minority of Chrome users will be regularly updating their settings on the Ad Center.

- Don't be fooled by the shiny announcement: Many of these features are [not even new to Chrome](#), but instead are being bundled into one accessible hub.

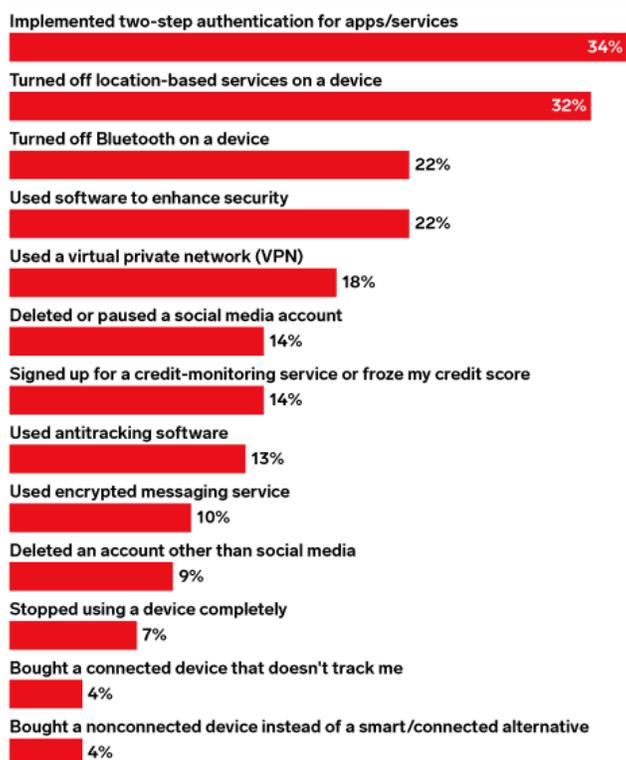
- While the hub might lead to a “better” ad experience, for most the ideal “good” ad experience just doesn’t exist and maybe never will. Consumers simply do not like advertising, and no amount of customization is going to change that.
- It may be an ungenerous reading, but My Ad Center is the perfect prop for Google to show off should it face government criticism for its data privacy policies.

**The big takeaway:** More transparency about personal data is good for both users and advertisers and can help change perceptions around advertising, but it’s unlikely that many users will engage with the new Google features.

- What’s more likely is that the flashy new hub is a sign to advertisers that Google is trying to increase ad effectiveness, and a preemptive argument against potential regulator involvement.

### Actions That US Teens/Adults Have Taken to Address Data Privacy and Security Concerns, Q1 2022

% of respondents



Note: ages 14+; in the past year  
 Source: Deloitte, "2022 Connectivity and Mobile Trends Survey (3rd Edition): Mastering the New Digital Life," Aug 3, 2022

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