

Cookies Aren't Dead Yet



On July 22, 2024, Google announced that they would no longer pursue plans to deprecate cookies on their Chrome browser. Since Google made the announcement to deprecate cookies on Chrome in 2019, they've delayed the launch three times. This announcement, in some ways, feels inevitable. Google's Privacy Sandbox, which sought to pull together technology and standards to provide a way to preserve consumer privacy while still allowing advertisers to provide personalized advertising, has seen declines in publisher and advertiser testing after the latest announced delay, signaling that this initiative wasn't gaining traction hoped.

What does this mean for the cookie?

This means that cookies will remain a viable targeting option on Google's Chrome browser for the immediate future. Chrome represents 53% of US browser market share, with Apple's Safari in a distant second with 32%, so any decision by Google will impact the majority of browser activity in the US (and much more globally – Chrome's market share worldwide is over 65%). However, their days are still numbered. Privacy advocates, regulators, and simply the evolution of the industry means that cookie-based targeting and measurement will still decline and eventually disappear. When cookies were THE way that digital addressability was conducted, the entire ecosystem was built upon their utilization. Now there are entire digital channels like CTV and streaming audio that do not rely on a cookie for targeting or measurement, making the long-term prospect for cookies one of obsolescence in a multi-channel, fragmented landscape.



Was my cookie-less future prep wasted?

Not in the slightest. The industry has come a long way since 2019's announcement by Google to deprecate cookies. Major steps by Apple that are already in place limit the impact of cookies on those browsers and devices. Investments in building up 1P data quality and utilization, broader measurement investment and modeling techniques to understand impact across online and offline media channels, and the enhancement of cookie-less targeting capabilities like device IDs and server-side integrations will all still play a huge role in the future of marketing and media.

What should I be doing now?

It might be strange to answer this with a negative, but DON'T stop investing in cookie-less infrastructure and testing. This may no longer need to be at the top of the prioritization list, but progress still needs to be made. This allows for more time and a more measured approach to digital targeting and measurement evolution instead of forcing a major change on publishers, advertisers, and AdTech companies that may not have been fully prepared. If you need to make hard choices about investments in future capabilities - this simply gives you more flexibility.



Paul DeJarnatt
VP, Head of Digital
paul.dejarnatt@novusmedia.com