

Consumers To Behavioral Advertisers: We Know You're There

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Internet users aware of online behavioral advertising activity and industry terms

Marketers may find themselves challenged to keep up with the ever-expanding lexicon and targeting capabilities of display advertising, but not everyone needs to be well-versed in the inner workings of behavioral advertising to recognize its presence.

US internet users are becoming aware of online behavioral advertising and are generally well-versed in key terminology, according to research from Harris Interactive.

Over the past three years, US internet users have become increasingly aware of online display ad relevancy—and thus the presence of behavioral advertising.

Users do not believe the majority of online display ads they see are relevant to their needs. But the percentage who find at least a quarter of the display ads they see relevant to them has been growing steadily since 2008.

These same users are also becoming more familiar with the language of display advertising. Though only 30% of US internet users said they were aware of the meaning of the phrase “do not track,” the majority (84%) are aware of the term “internet cookies.” Consumers are also equally likely to recognize the terms “interest-based advertising” (66%) and “tracking” (65%), revealing a high percentage of the US internet population that recognize they are or could be tracked and targeted.

When asked what information US internet users would be willing to share with advertisers, the majority said they were willing to share only non-personally identifiable information like hobbies, interests and demographic information. Users remained unwilling to share sensitive information such as financial data and contact information.

But advertisers and publishers should not mistake the lesser reluctance to share data types already available through data management platforms and aggregates as consumer consent.

More than half (51%) of US internet users would be more inclined to click on ads that recognize the presence of behavioral advertising and offer an opt out and 55% of US internet users said they would do more business with an advertiser or publisher if they gave them the option to opt out.

For advertisers and publishers, transparency with US internet users about online behavioral advertising tactics is both expected—and would seemingly be rewarded—by a growing consumer base increasingly sophisticated in their awareness and understanding of this display advertising practice.

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