

As the Cookie Crumbles – An Overview of Cookie-less Targeting in Digital Advertising [Working Title]

Supervisor: Alexander Witte <alexander.witte@uni-passau.de>
Date: As of now
Type: Bachelor's Thesis, Master's Thesis
Language: German or English

Motivation:

The digital advertising industry is in a pivotal transition away from traditional third-party cookies towards new methods of consumer addressability to enable personalized advertising. This shift comes amid significant privacy concerns and regulatory measures aimed at enhancing user privacy online. The demise of third-party cookies has catalyzed the development of alternative targeting technologies and strategies that exist outside of the sphere influenced by Google's Privacy Sandbox, such as unified ID solutions, on-device addressability, or first-party data. This thesis will explore these alternative solutions, their technical functionalities, and economic performances, to understand the broader landscape of consumer addressability in digital advertising.

Goal:

The objective of this thesis is to investigate the technologies emerging as alternatives to third-party cookies for consumer addressability in digital advertising. This exploration will highlight how the industry is adapting to privacy-conscious trends, with a particular focus on the technical and economic evaluation of these methods. The goal is to compare these alternatives not only in their technical functionalities and capacities but also through the lens of their viability and performance in the digital advertising market. To this end, the following list of questions provide a starting point:

- How is consumer addressability currently operationalized using third-party cookies? What justifications have major web browser operators provided for the discontinuation of third-party cookie support?
- How do alternative technologies, distinct from Google's Privacy Sandbox, enable marketers to target consumers online? Possible technologies for closer inspection include universal identifiers, on-device solutions, or first-party data strategies.
- How do alternative technologies function compared to third-party cookies? How do they measure up against third party cookies in terms of performance? How do they compare in terms of privacy compliance?
- What are the economic implications of adopting these alternatives for advertisers, publishers, and ad networks?

Suggested References:

- Sivan-Sevilla, I., & Parham, P. T. (2022). Toward (Greater) Consumer Surveillance in a 'Cookie-less' World: A Comparative Analysis of Current and Future Web Tracking Mechanisms.
- Thomas, I. (2021). Planning for a cookie-less future: How browser and mobile privacy changes will impact marketing, targeting and analytics. *Applied Marketing Analytics*, 7(1), 6-16.

- Johnson, G., Runge, J., & Seufert, E. (2022). Privacy-centric digital advertising: Implications for research. *Customer Needs and Solutions*, 9(1-2), 49-54.
- Miller, K. M., & Skiera, B. (2023). Economic consequences of online tracking restrictions: Evidence from cookies. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*.
- Cooper, D. A., Yalcin, T., Nistor, C., Macrini, M., & Pehlivan, E. (2023). Privacy considerations for online advertising: a stakeholder's perspective to programmatic advertising. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 40(2), 235-247.
- Wieringa, J., Kannan, P. K., Ma, X., Reutterer, T., Risselada, H., & Skiera, B. (2021). Data analytics in a privacy-concerned world. *Journal of Business Research*, 122, 915-925.