

AdTech 2024: A Look Back

A few themes dominated the advertising technology discussion in 2024: the future of cookies, the viability of Meta's proposed pay-or-consent model, the crossover between privacy and antitrust, the children's privacy debate, privacy lawsuits with adtech implications, tech and policy developments, and civil society initiatives.

This infographic follows how adtech law, policy, litigation and enforcement played out in 2024, within the context of a dynamic **regulatory** (🏛️) and **industry** (🏢) landscape for adtech.

MONTH	LANDSCAPE	DEVELOPMENTS
JANUARY		France's data protection authority, the Commission nationale de l'informatique et des libertés , fined Yahoo EMEA 10 million euros for alleged violations of the ePrivacy Directive, after it found visitors to the site had cookies placed on their computers without their consent.
		Spain's data protection authority, the Agencia Española de Protección de Datos , released its newest guidelines for how to treat analytics and cookies.
FEBRUARY		Bavaria's State Office for Data Protection Supervision reported about one-third of the 1,000 websites it examined had cookie banners that did not meet legal standards.
		The U.K. Competition and Markets Authority ordered Google to pause its efforts to eliminate third-party cookies until multiple competition-related concerns are addressed.
MARCH		IAB Tech Lab published a report analyzing potential challenges faced by the advertising industry in adopting Google's Privacy Sandbox. Google responded, noting advertisers' concerns with the initiative.
		The U.K. Information Commissioner's Office opened a call for views from businesses and digital advertising stakeholders on how pay-or-consent subscription models can achieve third-party cookie compliance.
APRIL		Microsoft announced it will incorporate the Google Privacy Sandbox application programming interface within its advertising products.
		The U.K. Competition and Markets Authority published its 2024 first quarter report on Google's efforts to implement the Privacy Sandbox. The report stated Google met all commitments made to the CMA, although further progress was needed to resolve its competition concerns.
MAY		Google pledged to destroy data collected from the incognito Chrome browsing option as part of its settlement of a 2020 privacy class-action lawsuit.
		A study found the majority of Australians prefer privacy over targeted advertising.
JUNE		The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit dismissed a class-action lawsuit against Amazon, which claimed its Alexa served targeted ads to users based on their voices.
		Apple announced Web Eraser, an AI-based privacy feature that aims to allow users to block ads and other parts of websites they do not wish to view.
JULY		The U.S. Federal Trade Commission finalized its order preventing the antivirus company Avast from selling or licensing web browsing data for advertising purposes. The company was fined USD16.5 million over misleading claims that it blocked third-party tracking.
		LinkedIn removed its targeted advertising tool to comply with the EU Digital Services Act provisions prohibiting companies from using sensitive personal data for advertising purposes.
AUGUST		The European Commission notified Meta of alleged Digital Markets Act violations related to the platform's pay-or-consent subscription model for targeted advertising.
		Advertising technology companies continued to raise concerns that Google's Privacy Sandbox remains unprepared for launch.
SEPTEMBER		TikTok revised its advertising standards to limit the ability of advertisers to target users ages 13-17.
		A report by Denmark's Agency for Digitalisation, the Digitaliseringsstyrelsen, revealed 42.2% of websites use unclassified cookies.
OCTOBER		The U.K. Competition and Markets Authority accepted Meta's proposals for handling advertisers' data. Meta previously committed to limiting use of customers' data to prevent it from securing an "unfair advantage."
		NOYB filed a lawsuit against Hamburg's Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information over a ruling that allowed pay-or-consent cookie banners on a magazine's website.
NOVEMBER		Belgium's Data Protection Authority issued a preliminary sanction against Dutch media company Mediahuis for alleged unlawful cookie banners and deceptive design patterns.
		Gov. Gavin Newsom, D-Calif. , vetoed a bill that would have required web browsers to have an opt-out mechanism for online behavioral advertising, following industry group advocacy .
DECEMBER		The Court of Justice of the European Union ruled in favor of NOYB Chairman Max Schrems in his civil complaint against Meta, finding the company violated the EU GDPR's data minimization principle when it processed statements regarding sexual orientation without consent for targeted advertising purposes, even if such statements had been made public.
		Ireland's Data Protection Commission fined LinkedIn 310 million euros for allegedly conducting behavioral analysis and targeted advertising in violation of the U.K. GDPR.
		Google announced the implementation of an advertising data retention policy that limits access to data after 11 years, including information stored in Google's advertising services.
		South Korea's Personal Information Protection Commission issued Meta a KRW21.6232 billion fine, claiming it had violated the Personal Information Protection Act by collecting Facebook users' sensitive personal information for ad-targeting purposes.
		The European Commission fined Meta 798 million euros for embedding Facebook Marketplace within its social network, causing alternative classified ads services to face "unfair trading conditions."
		The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner issued private sector guidance for deploying tracking pixels on websites.
		Meta announced plans to roll out an alternative targeted advertising model for EU Facebook and Instagram users that does not require payment and will serve "less personalized ads."
		The European Commission issued a request for information to Google following a report by the Financial Times of a "secret" advertising partnership with Meta that allegedly violated Google's policies for online advertisements targeted at minors. The Commission reportedly asked lawyers at Google parent company Alphabet to "review and collate data, presentations, internal chats and emails related to the ad campaigns" that served teens personalized ads for Instagram on YouTube.
		South Africa's Information Regulator published guidance assisting responsible parties with compliance to provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act of 2013 when processing personal data. The guidance applies to entities engaging in direct marketing through unsolicited electronic and nonelectronic communications.
		Meta announced plans to restrict advertisers' access to certain categories of user data on its platforms. The plans will limit their access to data by topic, which will include health and wellness, financial services, and politics. The move could limit advertisers' ability to target Meta users based on their online activity.

The IAPP produced a number of original articles and resources on adtech in 2024.

- [Meta's new digs: A deep dive into practical considerations of consent](#)
- [The half-baked future of cookies and other tracking technologies](#)
- [Legal basis and consequences for personalized advertising](#)

- [Data clean rooms: An adtech privacy solution?](#)
- [In an AI-powered world, marketers need a new data strategy](#)
- [Empowering users: A universal interface for digital ad preferences](#)