

PRIVACY

## The future of privacy with Apple's iOS 14 updates

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By **Brian Kroll**

The ongoing Apple iOS 14 updates that began rolling out last fall include a variety of changes related to data privacy. The intention is to provide users with transparency on what data apps are tracking on their devices and how it is being used, giving consumers more control over their personal information online.

With the industry continuing to put consumer privacy initiatives at the forefront with CCPA and GDPR, Apple is following suit with this new initiative.

Where it is at

These new regulations come as consumers are becoming increasingly protective of their online presence, what data is being collected and how it is being shared and monetized.

As big tech continues to find its practices being scrutinized at a federal level, users have become acutely aware that they may want to pay closer attention.

Apple's efforts to align themselves with privacy, security and consumer awareness to date are focused on three main components: data transparency and disclosure, tracking consent, and privacy-centric measurement.

All apps within the Apple App Store are now required to provide App Privacy labels, which details their data collection practices and employ AppTrackingTransparency (ATT), which requests user's consent to track their data and actions across apps and Web sites.

These measures are an effort to enforce Apple's focus on privacy-centric measurement. They are meant to assure users that their preferences will be respected and those that opt-out of tracking will need to be tracked with solutions such as Apple's SKAdNetwork.

It is important to note that these iOS 14 security measures impact everyone across the board. This is not limited to brands that are selling a product or service but instead reaches apps of all types.

As for consumers, they will now become accustomed to seeing the tracking information and opt-in request upon the download of a new app or when updating an app that is already installed. Those settings will remain in place unless changed by the user, which can be done at any time.

This increased transparency magnifies the value exchange for convenience.

Consumers are increasingly aware that ads contribute to their ability to access apps and Web sites for free. They just may not have been privy to the number of details that were being obtained to make this happen.

Ad placements are being bought and sold based on audience insights and can be done at a very granular level due to the amount of data that has been collected.

Users do not necessarily have to acknowledge the ads, but their placement can actually enhance an experience by showing products or services that align with users' searches, online behavior and interest.

In total transparency

By giving the control to the consumers, they may now pay closer attention to what personal information they are willing to provide to have a better online experience.

By opting out, they may see it degrade their time on a site or app. However, for those that opt-in, they will see hyper-relevant content providing increased convenience and personalization. This will likely highlight the value exchange. Providing some personal information can be good and even be more helpful than previously realized.

For brands, customer experience should be a primary focus, more so than ever before.

Advertisers should put an increased emphasis on their messaging to maximize a user's experience and retain their opt-in status.

Rather than look at this as a new mandate to adhere to, it should be seen as an opportunity to provide a better experience to you consumer in exchange for higher quality data. They have signified they are OK with seeing offers personalized to them, this is an opportunity to really make a connection.

Knowing this can also help brands analyze user patterns and personas to improve how they go to market, communicate with consumers and even develop future products or services.

First-party data will become paramount as Apple and others enforce new policies.

How the cookie crumbles

As we continue to head toward a cookie-less future, the clock is ticking. The practice of collecting first-party data should be a top priority to be minimally impacted by the impending changes.

Finding the perceived value exchange for information could take a variety of forms and each brand will need to test what that threshold is for maximum effectiveness.

First-party data is limited to what brands currently know about their customers.

However, these changes will likely push a boost in efforts to incentivize users to share more about themselves.

Encouraging users to create an account, rather than just supplying an email as has been the norm, may require enticing discounts, ongoing promotional codes or giving those users that comply first access to new products.

Customer loyalty programs may also increase in popularity.

By giving a store permission to track where, how, when and what a user purchases, online and offline for promotional opportunities, brands can then access a wealth of first-party data. This will not only show them the profile of their current customers, but also potential customers and how to appeal to those audiences.

THESE ACTIONS by Apple to push increased user privacy and online transparency could be the first of future important steps for building the bridge between personalized content and experiences and consumer view of online privacy.

In the wake of privacy regulations such as GDPR and CCPA, actions by tech companies to promote and ensure user privacy could actually help circumvent the need for additional regulations to be put in place by governments.

No matter what happens next, privacy will continue to be a focus moving forward, and brands need to be prepared.

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