

Cookie loss just got real*

Act now to put people at the heart of your post-cookie marketing strategy



ACXIOM

*No matter how often Google shifts the deadline.

Introduction:

So long cookies

We've talked about cookie deprecation for years but it's finally here. **Chrome** withdrew cookie support for 1% of its users in January 2024, with a view to extending restrictions to all users from August onwards. (In April 2024, Google scooted the deadline yet again to sometime in 2025.)

For years, third-party cookies formed the backbone of digital advertising – enabling audience targeting and measurement. But cookies were never a perfect solution. The cookie-based landscape relies on information passed between a vast and complex network of intermediaries that sit between the brand and the publisher. And that limits its efficiency.

In fact, the latest **ANA** Programmatic Media Supply Chain Transparency Study reveals one in four ad dollars spent on the open web is wasted.

So why do marketers still use cookies? Simply because they enable personalization, and that provides value for both brands and their customers.

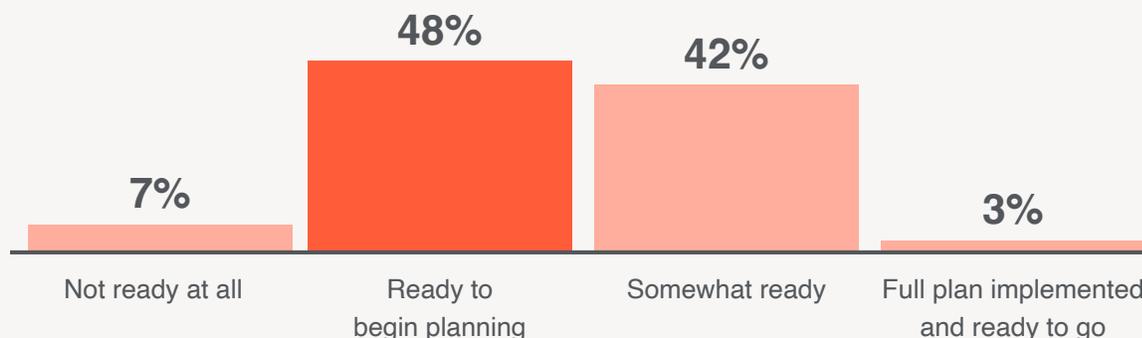
- A **McKinsey report** shows 71% of consumers expect companies to deliver personalized interactions, and 76% get frustrated when they don't.
- Our **CX trends report** shows almost half of consumers are more likely to click on an ad if it contains personalized content, and over half say personalized ads help them find relevant products.

But it's time to let you in on a little secret. **You don't need cookies to enable personalized customer experiences.** Or to measure the results.

We believe that – without cookies – marketers can continue to run personalized ad campaigns while also simplifying their marketing stack and reducing inefficiencies.

We're here to tell you how.

During our **From Cookies to People webinar**, we asked how ready attendees are to market in a world without cookies:



Section 1: Take control with first-party data

Adapting to a cookieless world is fundamentally an identity challenge. By building your own first-party identity graph, and placing it at the foundation of your tech stack, you can take control of identity and the relationship with your customers.

You already know the value of first-party data. In a cookieless world, accumulating deterministic signals, like names, addresses, and email addresses across all online and offline channels will only become more important.

This first-party data can be anchored to a reference graph that contains accurate census-level data about the entire population. This forms the basis of your own private identity graph, which brings together all data sources, including unique proprietary IDs like your brand's loyalty IDs or system IDs. It means you get a unified customer view across all channels, at individual and household levels.

Once your identity graph is in place, you need to make sure the data is accurate and complete. This is simple to achieve through record completion from a trusted source, as well as regular validation to keep up with inevitable changes in your customers' lives.

Your graph can be enriched with third-party data containing demographic and behavioral insights. These will help you understand what your customers are interested in and what they're in the market for, so you can tailor their experiences. You can even find new prospects that resemble your best customers, in the context of your private graph.



Five steps to building your own graph

1. Collect first-party data across all channels; correct and complete it to ensure precision
2. Anchor your data to a census-level reference graph
3. Enrich your data using trusted third-party audience insights
4. Use transactional data to mimic behaviors previously indicated by cookies
5. Build look-alike audiences based on the characteristics of your best customers

Section 2:

Connect directly on the open web

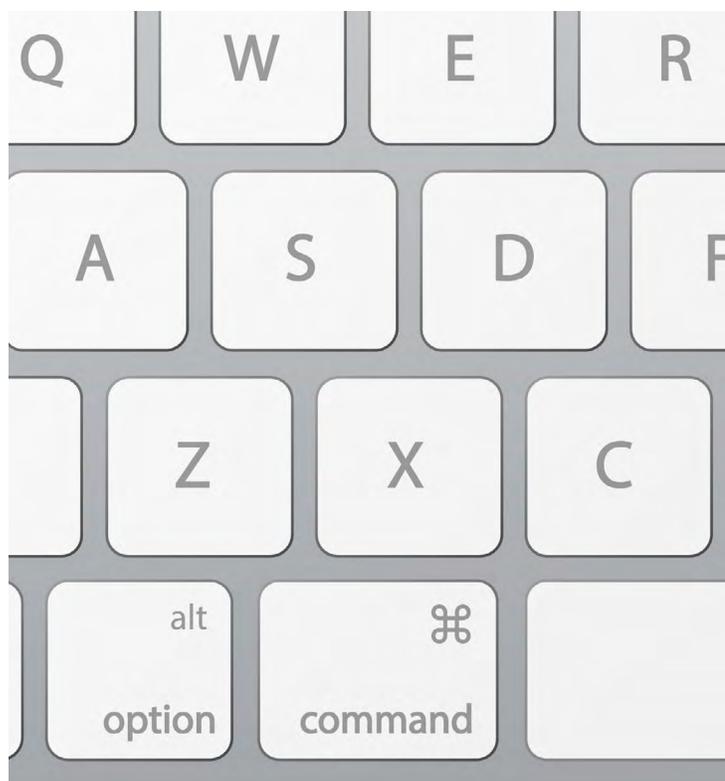
Armed with your first-party identity graph, you can now activate your audiences on the internet. Your approach will be slightly different when you're advertising in walled gardens (more on that later), to when you advertise on the open web (which we'll talk about now).

On the open web, you have the option of working directly with publishers to activate your audiences. However, given the large number of publishers, you'll want to use an ad buying platform (like a DSP) that already has connections to these publishers.

We recommend using emerging alternative 'cookieless' IDs – such as **UID 2.0** (based on hashed email) – to activate your audiences on these DSPs. This method eliminates intermediaries like onboarders, improves efficiency, and minimizes waste. When working with a DSP, we recommend using an inclusion list, as opposed to an exclusion list, so your ads only appear where you want them to, and you avoid 'made for advertising' sites.

Alongside cookieless IDs, we recommend testing Google's Privacy Sandbox, to fill the gaps where cookieless IDs are unavailable or unusable. We believe the Attribution Reporting API is particularly promising to support holistic campaign measurement.

Talking of measurement, one of the great things about the open web is you can get impression-level data back into your first-party graph. This means you can see which ad impressions led to a conversion on your website or in store. Measurement is a little more complex in walled garden environments, so let's head in that direction now.

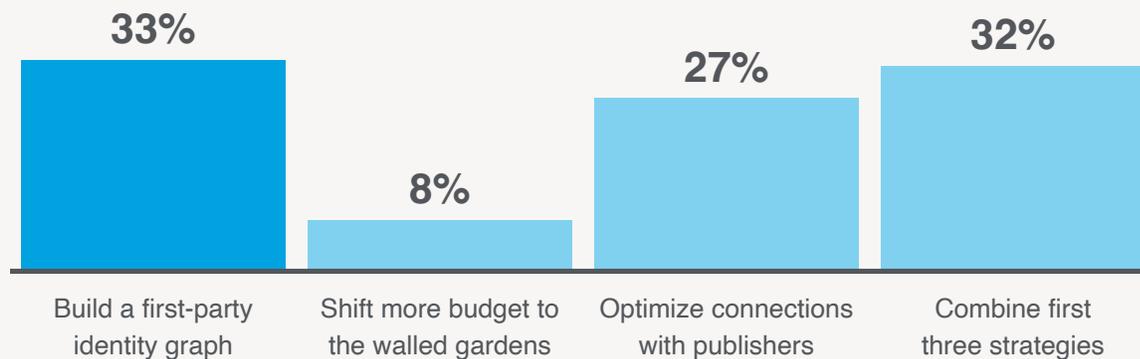


Have a plan for Safari

The focus is currently on Google's Chrome browser. But Apple's Safari browser – which has been cookieless for seven years – is currently used by **almost a third** of internet users in the U.S. We recommend testing brand campaigns on Safari, where inventory is less expensive and ads are likely to reach high-value users.

Section 3: Engage audiences in the garden

During our [From Cookies to People webinar](#), we asked attendees to name their primary strategy to deal with cookie deprecation:



Activating audiences within logged-in environments like Meta, Google, and Amazon doesn't depend on cookies. You can reach your customers at scale, and with precision, without the need for intermediaries, using direct pseudonymized connections from your first-party identity graph to those walled gardens.

The downside of advertising in walled gardens is that it's harder to measure. Unlike the open web, walled gardens are unlikely to feed impression data back to your first-party graph. Instead you can use clean room technology, where aggregated data from the walled garden is intersected with your first-party data, to measure the efficacy of your campaigns.

Test alternative environments of the future

Traditional walled gardens still take the lion's share of [digital ad spend](#). But other environments are expanding rapidly as options for marketers:

- **RMNs:** Ad spend on [retail media networks](#) is expected to exceed \$100B by 2027, due to purchase intent data and the ability to engage consumers in shopping mode.
- **CTV:** ad spend on connected TV – an environment that has never used cookies – is expected to grow [almost 14%](#) this year.

Section 4: Use AI's personalization power

AI gives marketers unprecedented power. It's been used for advanced analytics and customer insights for years and – with rapid advances in deep learning, natural-language processing, and generative AI – it will be central to personalization and measurement in a post-cookie world.

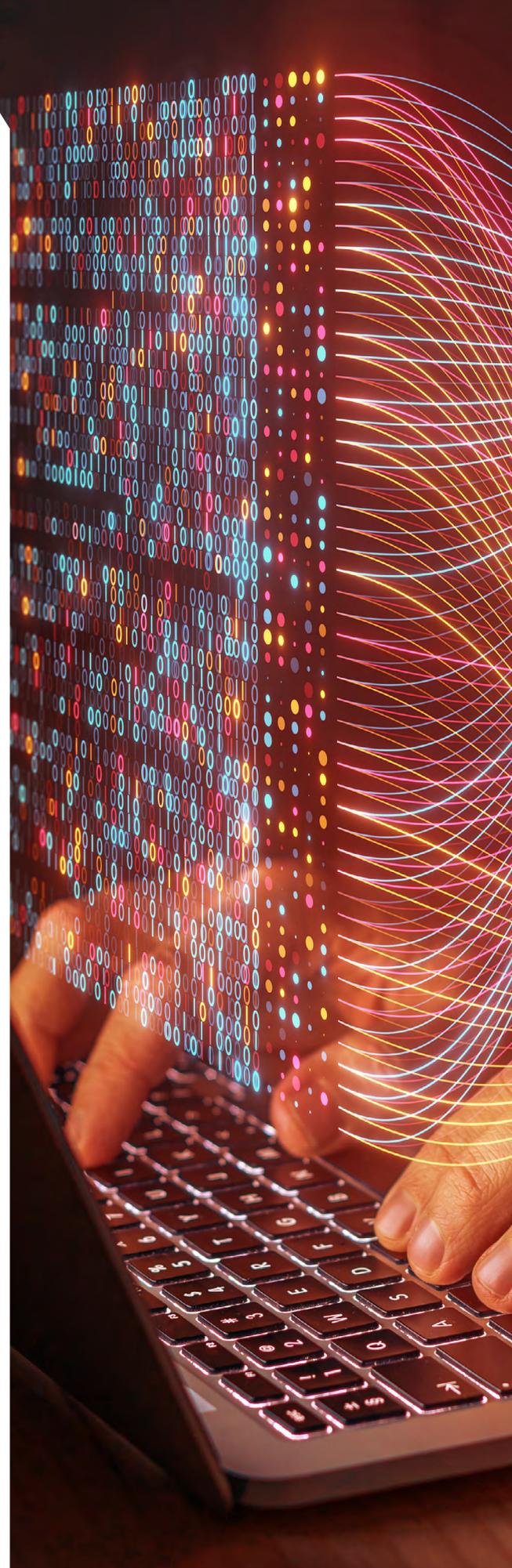
But with great power comes great responsibility (for marketers as well as superheroes). AI raises issues around data security and privacy, and brings risks around bias and discrimination. It can easily cross the line from welcome personalization to intrusion.

The answer to all of these concerns lies in the data on which AI is trained. In much the same way information from our surroundings gives humans an understanding of the world, and the ability to distinguish right and wrong, good data is necessary to give AI its consciousness.

AI is only as good as the data in the models that train it, and the accuracy, completeness, and reliability of that data will determine whether the intelligence produced is helpful or harmful. Focus on getting the data layer right and you can make sure AI produces respectful, relevant and viable outcomes for your customers.

To ensure you're training marketing AI on good data you need:

- **Data hygiene:** clean, correct, and complete your data on a regular basis to ensure the highest degree of accuracy and relevance.
- **Identity unification:** bring all touch points and signals together into a unified customer view, through the use of a first-party identity graph.
- **Trustworthy sources:** feed your AI models with enough data, from trusted first-, second-, and third-party data sources, to ensure statistical significance and an unbiased truth set.

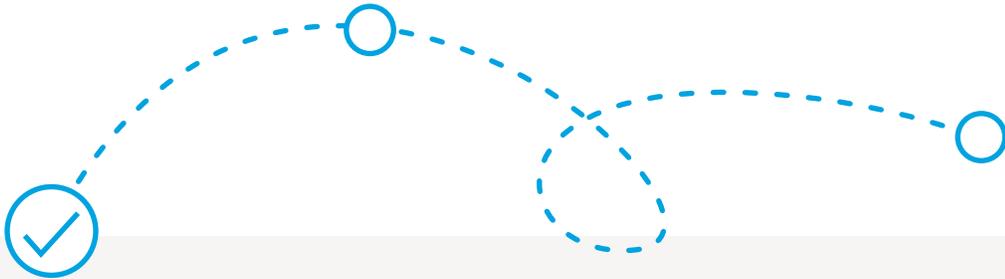


Summary:

Four steps to post-cookie success

Cookie deprecation is finally happening, so the worst thing you can do now is nothing.

There's no single replacement to fill the cookie gap. But starting with a first-party identity graph and then testing a variety of solutions for personalization and measurement is a solid strategy.



These four steps will help guide you to success in a post-cookie world:

1 BUILD A FIRST-PARTY IDENTITY GRAPH

Collect first-party data across all channels, anchor it to a reference graph, ensure it is accurate and complete, and enrich it with trusted third-party insights.

2 ACTIVATE AUDIENCES WHERE THEY ARE

Use your private graph along with cookieless IDs and Google's Privacy Sandbox to activate audiences on the open web, and connect your graph directly with walled gardens to reach your customers there.

3 MEASURE THE RESULTS

Achieve holistic campaign measurement on the open web by combining impression-level data with the Google Sandbox Attribution Reporting API, and use digital clean room technology for walled garden measurement.

4 USE MARKETING AI (WITH A DOSE OF TLC)

Power your Marketing AI with a clean, complete, and reliable data foundation so it can fulfill its potential to personalize customer experiences.

Get in touch to find out how Acxiom can support you on your customer intelligence journey. We can help you create more personalized experiences that will allow you to acquire, retain, and grow customer relationships in the cookieless world.

[Let's talk](#)

About Acxiom

Acxiom® is the global leader in customer intelligence and stands at the forefront of AI-enabled, data-driven marketing. As part of the Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc. (IPG), we specialize in high-performance solutions that boost customer acquisition and retention while fueling growth for the world's biggest brands and agencies. We transform omnichannel marketing strategies and execution using our AI-powered data and identity foundation, cloud-based data management, and martech and analytics services. For over 55 years, our teams across the US, UK, Germany, China, Poland, and Mexico have helped businesses optimize their marketing and advertising investments while prioritizing customer privacy.

**Discover more at [acxiom.com](https://www.acxiom.com),
where marketing is made better.**