



TRKKRecap

## Future-proof Your Display Advertising

TRKKRecaps provide introductions to, and summaries of, key developments in Google digital marketing and cloud technology, and their wider context.

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# Future-proof Your Display Advertising

## Executive Summary

Between the combination of increasing privacy regulation leading to user opt-out from tracking, and changes in browser technology to limit use of third-party cookies, the viability of Display measurement and audiences is under pressure. This will accelerate once Chrome, the largest browser by market share in the UK, deprecates third-party cookies. The ramifications for brands who don't prepare for these changes are two-fold. First, brands won't be able to effectively understand the impact of Display investment with the same level of granularity. Secondly, audiences built out via cookie data, such as for remarketing, will become non-viable. There is no single replacement for third-party cookies. However, Google has built a number of new features into their Google Marketing Platform (GMP) which, if used in combination, can be leveraged to future-proof Display measurement and audiences, allowing brands to continue to leverage Display as a tool for growth and revenue delivery.

- 1 Performance measurement and audience targeting within the Display channel is especially vulnerable to the technical changes introduced by browsers, due to its dependence on third party cookies.
- 2 Chrome's approaching deprecation of third-party cookies will rapidly accelerate this, resulting in a loss of post-impression conversion attribution and first party audience volume (such as for retargeting) if no action is taken.
- 3 A key action is to transition from the current deterministic reporting base, and instead support collation of several different 'seed signals' which in turn can be used by Google AI to model Display performance, power new audience targeting, and continue to optimise Display buying.
- 4 Google continue to introduce new features into its Google Marketing Platform to allow brands to make this transition, but to take advantage of this, brands need to deploy additional products and features.
- 5 It is therefore important to review which features are important to your brand and develop an action plan to roll them out in time. TRKKN can support you to achieve this.

## Introduction & Context

Display advertising has historically largely relied on a technology called third-party cookies to both attribute campaign conversions to advertising exposure and identify certain audiences. While channels such as PPC & social can use post-click tracking to understand what specific advertising is delivering results, the majority of Display sales happen 'post-impression' i.e. with no direct click-link between ad interaction and final outcome. However, between the combination of increasing privacy regulation leading to user opt-out from tracking, and changes in browser technology to limit use of third-party cookies, the viability of post-impression measurement as it stands is under pressure. This will accelerate once Chrome, the largest browser by market share in the UK, deprecates third-party cookies, which it is currently aiming to do early next year.

Chrome will instead introduce a number of new features to support reporting and audience targeting, collectively referred to as the 'Privacy Sandbox'. This is a set of APIs which will allow websites and ad technology to request certain information from Chrome, but they will be restricted in the type and granularity of information they can access, to support user privacy.

The ramification for brands who don't prepare for these changes are two-fold. First, brands won't be able to effectively understand the impact of Display investment with the same level of granularity. While macro measurement such as MMM and incrementality testing can still evaluate the aggregate performance of the channel, and should certainly

be considered part of the tool kit of future Display measurement, modern automated bidding requires detailed data in order to optimise buying. As such, you can expect a significant decrease in channel performance if no action is taken. Secondly, audiences built out via cookie data, such as for remarketing, will become non-viable.

There is no single replacement for third-party cookies. However, Google have built a number of new features into their Google Marketing Platform (GMP) which, if used in combination, can be leveraged to future-proof Display measurement and audiences, allowing brands to continue to leverage Display as tool for growth and revenue delivery. Google's stated goal is to make the user experience within GMP as seamless as possible as cookies deprecate. However, there are new features to enable and best practice to follow to be best prepared to take advantage of these new features. This guide will explain those features and the recommended actions to take.

## 1. Future-proofing Display starts with making sure the right foundations are in place

Third-party cookies support 'deterministic' measurement i.e. the ability to determine that one event (e.g. seeing a specific display banner) and another event (e.g. later visiting your website) were done by the same person.

However, with the decline of deterministic data, modelling and prediction will be required to effectively estimate what events are linked, and therefore what activity is performing strongest. Effective modelling requires sufficient scale and quality of input data ('seed signals') in order to power accurate predictions.

Google offers a number of products which, in combination, act to collect those available signals, and form the basis of future-proofing measurement:

### The Google Tag

This key technology allows Google products to run onsite or in-app, facilitating the collection of requisite information. Its role will become even more important following the deprecation of third-party cookies, as it will facilitate communication between the GMP and the Sandbox APIs. In particular it will facilitate communication with the Attribution Reporting API, allowing Google to understand if the visitor was exposed to your campaign before conversion.

### Enhanced Conversions

This product, which can run via the Google Tag, can capture, hash, and share user emails to Google. In turn, Google will check for ad exposure on its O&O properties, allowing it to assign conversions and support optimisation modelling. On average, Google has seen YouTube campaigns with Enhanced Conversions enabled deliver a 17% higher conversion rate.

### Consent Mode

While predominantly a tool to ensure tag behaviour matches user consent choice, Consent Mode also plays a role in modelling. In its basic setup, it can communicate the percentage of ad clicks which get consented to, allowing Google insight into the 'consented universe' size on your site or app. In its Advanced setup, it can transmit additional general signals for non-consented users, supporting behavioural profiling.

### Floodlight Tags

These tags form a connection to Google's adserving platform, Campaign Manager 360, and transmit information about onsite visitation. Post third-party cookie deprecation, these tags will continue to transmit information related to click-through conversions, providing another signal to power modelling.

**Recommendation:** Review setup and ensure all appropriate foundation products are in place to maximise future signal collection.

## 2. Building on those foundations, prepare to leverage new features in Campaign Manager 360 to maintain scaled performance measurement

CM360 remains Google's solution for both ad-hosting and delivery and measuring cross channel campaign performance. However, several new features have been introduced to future-proof measurement:

### Enhanced Attribution

This feature supports post-click attribution, by appending a unique ID to each click on a display ad. In combination with floodlight tags, it enables Google to understand when a click-based arrival results in a conversion.

For YouTube performance reporting, a similar feature called Auto Tagging is available in Display and Video 360, Google's programmatic buying platform.

### Attribution Reporting API Integration

Campaign Manager will automatically configure ad tags to support the integration with the Sandbox Reporting API, and will receive the resulting post-attribution report, in turn using these as part of the signals that feed into Campaign Manager modelled conversions.

### Tracking Ads

Although already a feature, Tracking Ads will also be updated to work with Attribution Reporting API. Using these to track non-hosted campaign activity (e.g. hosted video activity) will mean that this ad exposure data is also included into the information Google receives back from the Sandbox API.

**Recommendation:** To best take advantage of these features take the following actions:

- 1 Enable Enhanced Attribution and Auto Tagging**
- 2 Disable Unnecessary and Label Essential Floodlight Activities**

Making sure that only data from the most appropriate floodlights is used in modelling will improve quality. Evaluate your floodlight activities and remove those that are no longer relevant to your business. You also have the option of disabling activities for attribution: this way they will not count towards attribution, but you can still build audiences from them. Finally, you will be able to label key conversion floodlights.
- 3 Register Conversion Domains**

Conversion Domains in CM360 is a new tool which tells the Attribution Reporting API which domains to associate as a conversion post-ad exposure. You can either have CM360 do this, via the feature "Automatically infer conversion domains", or manually register up to three conversion domains.

### 3. Finally, utilise the latest audience solutions in Display and Video 360 to maintain scaled delivery for audience targeting

DV360, Google's programmatic buying platform, has multiple features which can be used in combination to support future-proofing and enable ongoing targeting of desirable audiences at scale:

#### Customer Match

Allows the import of email-based audience lists, allowing Google to match them across its own O&O properties. As well as allowing targeting of those users on those properties, this provides one source of signals to power DV360's audience modelling.

#### Optimized Targeting

A replacement for similar audiences, this modelling solution combines the different signals which DV360 receives, including first-party audience lists, to score users and identify those that have a higher propensity to perform.

#### Enhanced Automation

This new feature both aggregates signals across advertisers, supporting macro-optimisation training, and supports integration to the Protected Audience API. This is Sandbox's replacement for Retargeting Audiences and allows you to set higher bids for users who have visited your website.

#### PAIR

This feature integrates a number of Clean Room platforms, such as InfoSum and LiveRamp, into DV360. If you have audiences built in these platforms then you can use PAIR to match them to select publishers, supporting either direct audience targeting, or publisher look alike modelling.

**Recommendation:** Familiarize yourself with these features and test while 3rd party cookies are still available to understand relative reach and performance these solutions can deliver for your audiences.

### It's a lot to take in—but it's doable!

It might seem overwhelming, but it's important to ensure that these recommendations are acted on. Although Chrome cookie deprecation has now been delayed to early 2025 it will take time to work through all the steps required and manage intra-company actions where needed. Additionally, Privacy Sandbox is only one component disrupting traditional Display measurement and audience targeting. Increasing regulations around requirements related to user consent, as well as other browser developments e.g. in Apple's Safari, mean that deterministic volumes are already declining, creating a need for more varied seed data and modelling to plug the gaps.

When determining what actions are required for you, TRKKN recommend evaluating:

- How important is Display advertising and what's the potential impact if you don't act?
- Prioritisation of features to leverage. E.g. if you don't have a large email database then Enhanced Conversions and Customer Match are less relevant.
- Order of activation—which features have dependencies requiring the completion of another activation first?

This will allow creation of a prioritised action plan. TRKKN can support you in the creation and deployment of this plan.

## Summary: Recommended actions to consider when future-proofing Display

Having the unified picture of both site and business performance enables a shift from 'what did users do on our website' to 'how did they complete their journey for our offerings'.

Utilising GA4's various enrichment and ingesting tools creates that holistic view and enables use cases such as:

### Foundations

- ✓ Deploy Google Tag and use this to deploy Floodlights
- ✓ Enable Enhanced Conversions
- ✓ Enable Consent Mode

### Measurement

- ✓ Enable Enhanced Attribution and Auto Tagging
- ✓ Disable unnecessary & label essential Floodlight activities
- ✓ Register Conversion Domains

### Audience

- ✓ Setup Customer Match to import 1PD audiences
- ✓ Enable Optimized Targeting
- ✓ Enable Enhanced Automation

**Disclaimer:** This document does not constitute legal advice. Durable Measurement tools relate to the collection and use of personal data and brands using or considering them are recommended to undertake appropriate legal review, and to have appropriate legal basis and documentation for the use of such data in this manner. OMG Privacy & Ethics can provide consultancy services to support such reviews.

## Who Is TRKKN?

TRKKN is one of the leading Google Marketing Platform Partners and Google Cloud Premier Partner providing full service and expert consulting across the fields of Digital Analytics, Conversion Optimization, Ad Tech, Advanced Analytics & AI, Cloud Engineering and Tech & Data Strategy.