Europe’s cookie nightmare is crumbling

Instead of having to click accept or reject on a cookie pop-up for every website you visit in Europe, the EU is preparing to enforce rules that will allow users to set their preferences for cookies at the browser level. “People can set their privacy preferences centrally – for example via the browser – and websites must respect them,” says the EU. “This will drastically simplify users’ online experience.”

This key change is part of a new Digital Package of proposals to simplify the EU’s digital rules, and will initially see cookie prompts change to be a simplified yes or no single-click prompt ahead of the “technological solutions” eventually coming to browsers. Websites will be required to respect cookie choices for at least six months, and the EU also wants website owners to not use cookie banners for “harmless uses” like counting website visits, to lessen the amount of pop-ups.

The sheer amount of cookie pop-ups across Europe means people often just click any button to get access to a website, simply because of the annoyance instead of worrying about their privacy. “This is not a real choice made by citizens to protect their phones or computers and to choose what happens to their data,” says the European Commission. “Today’s proposal modernizes the ‘cookies rules’, with the same strong protections for devices, allowing citizens to decide what cookies are placed on their connected devices (e.g. phones or computers) and what happens to their data.”

The EU’s latest proposals will now head to the European Parliament. They’ll need to be approved by the EU’s 27 member states during a process that could take some time yet, but

Europe’s cookie nightmare looks a big step closer to being over.

https://www.theverge.com/news/823788/europe-cookie-prompt-browser-changes-proposal