Google’s Privacy Sandbox ad technology testing begins

Google has announced that the first round of testing is here for its crucial Privacy Sandbox initiative. In this round of testing developers will gain access to Privacy Sandbox’s newest measurement proposals: Topics, FLEDGE and Attribution Reporting. These ad technologies are the replacement for the beleaguered FLoC initiative that was killed off back in January.

What are these technologies again?

- **FLEDGE**, or First Locally Executed Decision over Groups Experiment, calculates ad auction data in the browser itself instead of at the server to help increase privacy by limiting a user’s data flow.
- **Topics** is a technology that helps identify interests for advertising while retaining greater user privacy.
- **Attribution reporting** allows for better measurement on the conversion from ad clicks or views.

Together these technologies are aimed at helping limit the use of personal data while ensuring accuracy in reporting.

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Origin trials. Announced back in 2020, origin trials are a way that developers can test experimental features for a limited time before the public. These trials generally occur on a first-party basis only and on one “origin”. As of today, developers will be able to see and test the code for Topics, FLEDGE, and Attribution Reporting in the Canary version of

Chrome.

After this is iteration is rolled out, testing will then begin in a limited Chrome beta and then to a stable version of Chrome. The origin trials for the above-mentioned Privacy Sandbox technologies are worldwide.

If you are interested in API access, Google has a developer guidance page here to help.

User controls. A nice new addition announced today are updated settings that allow participants to understand and manage their information usage more clearly. This will allow users to manage their interests or turn off trials altogether.

Why we care. Many of these new privacy technologies have been hypothetical until today. It's great to see this next phase of Google's (well needed) new ad technology begin to come to fruition. The feedback and news that will be generated in this stage of testing should help marketers prepare for the realities that we will soon face with Google's initiative.

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