

TAKE 5:

**WHY DO THEY SAY
COOKIES
DON'T WORK
IN MOBILE?**

 **Apsalar**

Why Do They Say Cookies Don't Work in Mobile?

When the subject of customer data arises, you'll frequently hear the statement "cookies don't work in mobile." This paper is designed to explain why people say that, and the alternative approaches for collecting and interpreting customer behavior on the mobile web and in apps.

Third-Party Cookies and the PC Web

Third-party cookies are the work horses of PC web tracking. A cookie is a small text file placed on your computer when you view content and webpages online. Third-party cookies are frequently used by advertisers to help understand how consumers act after they are exposed to online ads. Often people don't click on an ad when they see it, but do follow up hours or days later and visit the advertiser's site directly.

Third-party cookies help advertisers understand when that happens by passing back non-personally-identifiable information when such a visit occurs. In addition, media companies use third-party cookies to infer interests of web users by analyzing the content and web pages an anonymized user visits online. Lots of visits to an auto site, for example, are a pretty good indicator that someone is in market for a car.

Third-Party Cookies and Mobile

In order to understand how third-party cookies work (and don't work) in mobile, we need to draw a distinction between the mobile web and mobile apps. The mobile web refers to using a browser to visit sites and content on a mobile phone. Mobile apps are separate experiences optimized for the mobile device and screen.

Third-Party Cookies and the Mobile Web

Acceptance of third-party cookies varies by browser, but since Apple's Safari and Google's Chrome are by far the most common browsers, we'll limit our discussion to these. By default, Safari blocks third-party cookies, so activities of Safari users on the mobile web cannot be collected and interpreted unless the consumer turns cookie blocking off in their settings. While click-based conversions can be tracked, activity other than an immediate click cannot.

Google's Chrome does not block third-party cookies by default, so such cookies can be used for tracking on the mobile web. Chrome users have the option of turning on cookie blocking in their settings, though relatively few do.

Because Apple and Safari dominate mobile browsing, and because many consumers are deleting cookies periodically from their Google Android devices, tracking mobile web activity with cookies leaves significant holes in your data.

Third-Party Cookies and Mobile Apps

Mobile apps are downloaded by the user, or come bundled with their phone software. Cookies cannot provide an adequate source of in-app data. Every app is a separate environment on a phone, with little or no data sharing allowed across apps. Further, both Google and Apple have purposely prevented third-party cookie efficacy, preferring that advertisers use a mobile ID instead.

A Better Alternative for Mobile Tracking

Companies that are serious about understanding customer actions on mobile work with a mobile app and web tracking company like Apsalar. These companies are often called app attribution platforms. Most such partners use an SDK that the brand places in their apps to enable tracking regardless of browser or operating system.

By collecting mobile data in this manner and combining it with other first party data sources, brands can create more complete customer profiles to enable more effective marketing.

More Information on Cookies

If you'd like to learn more about cookies, please download our Take 5 entitled, *What's the Difference between First-Party and Third-Party Cookies?*

ABOUT TAKE 5

The Take 5 series is designed to help senior marketers learn more about data-driven customer marketing by creating short educational pieces that can be read and absorbed in less than five minutes. The main content of each Take 5 is 600 words or less to stay focused and brief. The Take 5 series will also be available as a collection – a primer on data driven customer marketing.

Visit
www.Apsalar.com/Resources
for more Take 5 content!

ABOUT APSALAR

Apsalar, the leader in mobile data management, helps direct marketing brands get better marketing effectiveness by providing a mobile data management platform that delivers a true understanding of customer behavior in apps and across other marketing channels.

Apsalar
MOBILE DMP

- APSALAR ATTRIBUTION**
Collect and measure in-app consumer behavior and marketing performance. Measure every in-app action relevant to your business
- APSALAR AUDIENCES**
Unite your first party data from all sources, enrich it with third party data, and build high performance marketing audiences
- APSALAR DATASYNC**
Easily and safely share customer audiences and data with your digital marketing platforms, including analytics, marketing automation, media companies and legacy DMPs

The Apsalar Mobile DMP enables brands to measure marketing effectiveness, enhance, manage, enrich and segment profiles to build audiences, and easily and safely connect to other marketing partners so brands can confidently share their data and audiences.