NYC Digital Safety
Privacy & Security

Ad Settings

Facilitation Guide

Share with learners best practices for managing their ad settings on different sites and platforms.

Overview

This module introduces to learners to best practices and methods for managing their ad settings on social media and other web accounts.

For more information, be sure to watch the Series 2 training videos from NYC Digital Safety.

Outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Describe ad settings
- Determine the benefits of managing ad settings
- Use best practices to manage ad settings

Format + Time Frame

This module provides an information overview of ad settings for different sites and a how-to-guide for various methods and strategies to use for managing ad settings for enhanced privacy online.

This module will take approximately 40 to 50 minutes to complete. You can extend this module by giving attendees time to work through the guided handout during the workshop, or you can combine this module with others for a longer learning experience.

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Materials

- Slide deck
- Facilitation guide
- Handout

Lesson Plan

Activity	Materials	Time Needed
Introduction and welcome Greet learners and review the plan for this module.	Slides 1 and 2	2 minutes
Defining ad settings Provide a brief definition of ad settings and see if anyone has any questions.	Slide 3	3 minutes
Activity: Discussing ads online Open a discussion and ask your learners to share their personal experiences with ads.	Slide 4	5 minutes
How and why online ads work the way they do Explain the different ways that online ads work and define tracking cookies, URL trackers, and other terms. Pause to see if your learners have any additional examples to share.	Slides 5 through 9	10 minutes
Activity: Exploring online experiences and ads [optional]	Slide 10, handout	10 minutes

Have your learners use their handout to consider their online habits and how those might influence the ads they see.		
Ways to manage online ads Review best practices for avoiding online ads.	Slide 11	10 minutes
Wrap up, final tips, and final questions Review the closing thoughts and share the suggested resources. See if anyone has any final questions.	Slides 11 through 14	5 minutes

Considerations

As with location settings and social media settings, people can also have different comfort levels with ad settings. Some people might enjoy more personalized ads, while others might find those less appealing. Encourage your audience to reflect on their personal preferences and to consider the settings that work best for them and their needs in conjunctions with privacy and security best practices and considerations.

Options and Variations

This module can be considered an extension of a module specifically on Targeted Ads and the two can very easily be merged and run together.

This module also pairs particularly well with a module on social media account settings, particularly since most social media account settings have a section on ads.. You might consider combining the two, or hosting a workshop series where both of these topics, and other related topics like location settings, can be covered.

You might also consider leaving time and space for learners to check and begin to update their ad settings, or their overall social media settings, during a workshop, for a more extended and

hands-on experience. If you have less time, you can equip learners with the guided handout so that they can manage their ad settings on their own.

You can also provide this information and content to patrons via a service point by sharing the guided handout with them.

Assessment

The following are some suggested assessment questions that you can use and adapt for your own purposes. These questions can help you assess various things, including knowledge retention, personal views and preferences, and concept application.

You might consider asking these as a pre or post test, or you can have learners answer these as part of an exit survey or a follow-up survey. Keep reading for suggested questions and an answer key with further details and explanations.

Questions for Participants

How do you feel about personalized ads?

- A. Positive - I find them helpful and beneficial
- B. Negative - I find them intrusive and even creepy
- C. Mixed - I have both positive and negative impressions of personalized ads
- D. Unsure - I'm not sure how I feel

Where can you manage ads?

- A. Social media account settings
- B. Web browser account settings
- C. Your phone settings
- D. All of the above

What is something you should not do to manage ads?

- A. Ask apps and sites to not share your information with advertisers
- B. Delete your cookies and browser history

C. Install an ad blocker
D. Click on random things to fool advertisers and prevent targeted ads

Answer Key

How do you feel about personalized ads?

> *Answer: this is an opinion-based question; there are no wrong answers*

> This question is designed to give you insight into your learners and can be used well as a pre-test question to help you better tailor your workshop content for your audience.

Where can you manage ads?

> *Answer: D, all of the above*

> Ads are everywhere online and ad settings can appear in some unexpected places. It's important to check devices like phones, places where you have accounts, and sites you use regularly to see what ad settings exist and to take control over what data advertisers can obtain about you.

What is something you should not do to manage ads?

> *Answer: D, Click on random things to fool advertisers and prevent targeted ads*

> Privacy settings, managing cookies, and using ad blockers are great ways to manage online ads. It is very hard to actually "fool" ads or somehow game the system though, and this isn't considered a feasible or sustainable approach to actually managing your ads and avoiding targeted ones.

Connections to Other Modules

This module connects to many other lessons. The following suggestions provide opportunities for exploration, connection, and potential programming. However, feel free to explore and make connections between other modules not listed here as well!

> 2.1 Targeted Advertising
> 2.1 Cookies

2.1 Algorithms

2.2 Social Media Account Settings

These and other modules can be found at this project's website, nycdigitalsafety.org.

About This Project

These materials were released in October 2022 as part of NYC Digital Safety: Privacy & Security.

NYC Digital Safety: Privacy & Security is a partnership between New York City's three library systems — Brooklyn Public Library, The New York Public Library, and Queens Library — and METRO Library Council. With support from the New York City Office of Technology and Innovation, this project ensures that NYC residents can rely on public libraries for their questions about internet privacy and security.

Visit nycdigitalsafety.org for more information.