Ad Settings

In This Module

- What are ad settings? Why do they matter?

- What options exist for managing ads and better controlling your online privacy across platforms, devices, and sites?

- What are the best ways to manage your ad settings for various online accounts and services?

Ad Settings

Ad settings are available on social media sites, web browser, and other places where you have online accounts. They can give you information about the ads you see and give you options for better controlling your ad experiences online

Discussion

What kinds of ads do you see online? Why do you think you see certain kinds of ads?

How Do Online Ads Work?

- Online ads strive to be targeted and personalized
- Ads very often rely on personal data to determine
  - What to advertise
  - Who should receive certain ads, whether groups or individuals
- These are known as **targeted ads**

How Do Online Ads Work?

Ads can use a few different methods to figure out where to appear and who to target. These are some of the more common methods used by online ads:

- **Cookies** are small pieces of data:
  - Websites use cookies to track information about you and your visit
  - Advertisers can use this information to determine if you're interested in a product, for instance

How Do Online Ads Work?

- **URL trackers** are a string of code attached to the end of URL
  - They track your activity after you click a link
  - They operate similarly to cookies
  - You can see these in email newsletters, for example
- Other forms of data generation, including:
  - Your demographic info
  - Your search history
  - Your posts

How Do Online Ads Work?

These tracking methods make note of everything you do on a site:

- What you click
- How you scroll
- How long you spend on a page
- Whether you add something to a shopping cart

What would you add to this list?

Activity

Go to section 2 of your handout and consider how your time online influences your ad experiences

Best Practices for Managing Ads

Here are a few ways to manage the ads you see:

- Clear your cookies and history
- Use incognito mode or private browsing
- Use a private browser (or a VPN)
- Install an ad blocker
- Use privacy settings

Use the checklist in today's handout for advice on how to do these things.

Takeaways

- Ads are, in many ways, what power the internet. Your personal data and information is central to the targeted ad economy and ecosystem
- While targeted ads can show you relevant things, the tracking these ads rely upon can often feel creepy and invasive
- You can take steps to better manage how you are tracked online. Pay attention to the settings in your social media accounts and online accounts, where you can often control your ad experiences

Resources

"Now It's Personal: How Knowing an Ad Is Targeted Changes Its Impact from *Yale Insights* (link)

"How to Control Annoying or Upsetting Ads Online" from *Consumer Reports* (link)

"These Ads Think They Know You," from *The New York Times Privacy Project* (link)

Questions?

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