

Privacy Principles for the Development of User Controls for Behavioral Targeting

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Introduction

This document outlines privacy principles to help guide the development of software tools designed to give users the ability to manage their privacy with respect to online behavioral targeting. These principles were developed by the Center for Democracy & Technology in consultation with its Internet Privacy Working Group (IPWG), a group dedicated to building consensus around balanced solutions to online privacy issues. Comprised of industry and public interest leaders, the group meets to discuss new technologies, pending regulations, and proposed legislation on consumer privacy issues.

Beginning in December 2007, CDT convened IPWG to discuss the privacy implications of online behavioral targeting. The principles set forth below are the product of a series of discussions about how software tools may help consumers control their privacy with respect to behavioral targeting. The principles are designed to assist those creating and implementing such tools. The principles are not meant to be a comprehensive list of privacy protections.

No current definition of “behavioral targeting” has gained wide acceptance. Thus, for the purposes of employing the principles set forth below, the task of interpreting which data collection and usage practices constitute behavioral targeting is left to the developers of the user controls.

In working to adhere to these principles, the developers of user controls should avoid degrading associated user experiences. Developers should not sacrifice a good user experience in order to comply with these principles. Rather, developers should seek to optimize user experiences while creating tools that respect these principles to the greatest extent possible.

Principles

Consistent with maintaining a good user experience, the developers of software tools that give users the ability to manage their privacy with respect to online behavioral targeting should aspire towards supporting the following principles:

- Consumers should be able to readily express their preferences about behavioral targeting – both at a granular level for advanced users and more globally for less sophisticated users – in a way that will be honored by those collecting behavioral data and/or doing the targeting.
- Consumers should be able to have their preferences about behavioral targeting persist until they decide to alter those preferences.
- Consumers should readily and easily be able to find and understand the policies that govern the behavioral tracking and targeting that occurs while they are online.