GOOGLE TO BRING PRIVACY SANDBOX TO ANDROID THAT LIMITS DATA SHARING FOR ADS

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Google said it would bring its Privacy Sandbox initiative to Android phones, vowing to chart a less "blunt" path than rival Apple Inc., whose push to protect users' personal information has dinged the digital advertising market.

The Alphabet Inc. company, which relies on ads for most of its revenue, said it can protect phone users' data while giving advertisers and appmakers new technology to offer relevant promotions and track outcomes. The proposed tools for the Android mobile operating system would limit appmakers' ability to share a person's information with third parties, and ban data tracking across multiple applications, Anthony Chavez, vice president of product management for Android Security & Privacy, wrote Wednesday in a blog post. Google said it planned a beta launch of the tools by the end of 2022 and "scaled testing" in 2023.

Chavez said in an interview that the best path forward is an approach "that improves user privacy and a healthy mobile app ecosystem. We need to build new technologies that provide user privacy by default while supporting these key advertising capabilities."

Google is trying to balance the rising demands of privacy-conscious consumers and regulators with the financial needs of developers and advertisers. The company is seeking input on the proposal, similar to the way its Privacy Sandbox initiative is slowly developing a new privacy standard for web browsing. The company's first proposal attracted derision from UK regulators and peers, and Google has since suggested that it would serve ads based on topics a web user is interested in that are deleted and replaced after three weeks.

Facebook parent Meta Platforms Inc. has been at loggerheads with Apple over the company's App Tracking Transparency tool, which allows iPhone owners to shut off tracking across all of their apps. Google's YouTube has also seen a relatively small financial hit from the technology, executives have said. In essence, it makes it more difficult for marketers to determine if their ads on iPhones have been successful.

The Privacy Sandbox on Android will enable personalized ads based on recent "topics" of interest, and allow for attribution reporting, which lets marketers know if their ad was effective, Chavez said in the interview.

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