

Privacy Sandbox testers raise concerns about latency and signal loss

Article



The news: Early adopters of **Google's Privacy Sandbox** have released highly critical comments about the post-cookie advertising solution, per Ad Age.

Reports on early Privacy Sandbox usage from ad tech firms including **Criteo**, **[Index Exchange](#)**, **[MiQ](#)**, and **[NextRoll](#)** raised significant concerns about signal loss, latency, and adverse impact on publishers.

The chief complaints: The consensus among ad tech partners was that Privacy Sandbox still has a long way to go in addressing industry concerns. But several also said that **poor outcomes were expected given Privacy Sandbox's nascence**, and it is likely to improve over time.

- **Latency:** All four partners cited slow ad loading times on websites, which limited impressions and detracted from the user experience. NextRoll wrote that it “**observed an average bid time response 5x above the upper bound of latency that we aim for in our [third-party cookie]-based bidder.**”
- **Signal loss:** Ad impressions were lower and more limited compared with third-party cookie solutions. NextRoll found that impressions on Privacy Sandbox campaigns accounted for 65% of the impressions that cookie-based solutions generated; Index Exchange similarly saw a 33% decline on CPMs in Sandbox-enabled impressions against those with third-party cookies.
- **Impact on publishers:** Criteo told Ad Age that Google's share of publisher revenues jumped from 23% to 83%, raising concerns about adverse impacts on the publishing industry, which is also being hurt by [Google's AI search features](#). The issues with latency and signal loss have also slowed publisher adoption.
- **Google market share:** Ad partners were also concerned that Privacy Sandbox could expand Google's already massive market share in digital advertising. **However, it is important to note that Google's market share is likely to decrease as post-cookie competitors enter testing phases.**

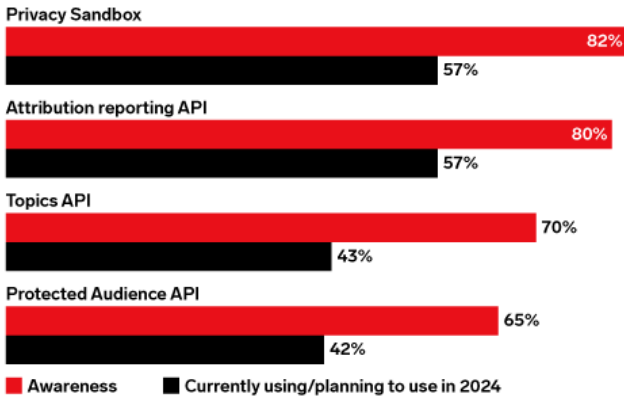
Still early days: All four Privacy Sandbox partners expressed optimism about the initiative in the long term and suggested improvements. As the mid-2025 deadline for the transition away from third-party cookies on Chrome approaches, more publishers are likely to adopt Privacy Sandbox, and Google is still tweaking it in response to [advertiser and regulatory concerns](#).

- “It's not possible to predict publisher performance based on effectiveness of a single buying platform, as publishers typically work with dozens of demand sources,” a **Google representative told EMARKETER** in an email. “In addition, we expect performance numbers to evolve, and they currently don't reflect how the overall ecosystem will perform in a true marketplace. We look forward to the ecosystem continuing to share valuable insights and feature requests for Chrome and the industry.”

- Despite the negative feedback, Privacy Sandbox has had notable successes. **Yahoo** said in May that it was able to run successful prospecting campaigns—a form of targeting that identifies underserved user groups—using Privacy Sandbox. Previously, it was thought that post-cookie solutions would struggle with prospecting campaigns.

Awareness and Usage of Privacy Sandbox and Its APIs Among US Data and Ad Professionals, Feb 2024

% of respondents



Note: n=242
Source: Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) and BWG Strategy, "State of Data 2024," March 14, 2024

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