

wtf is identity resolution?

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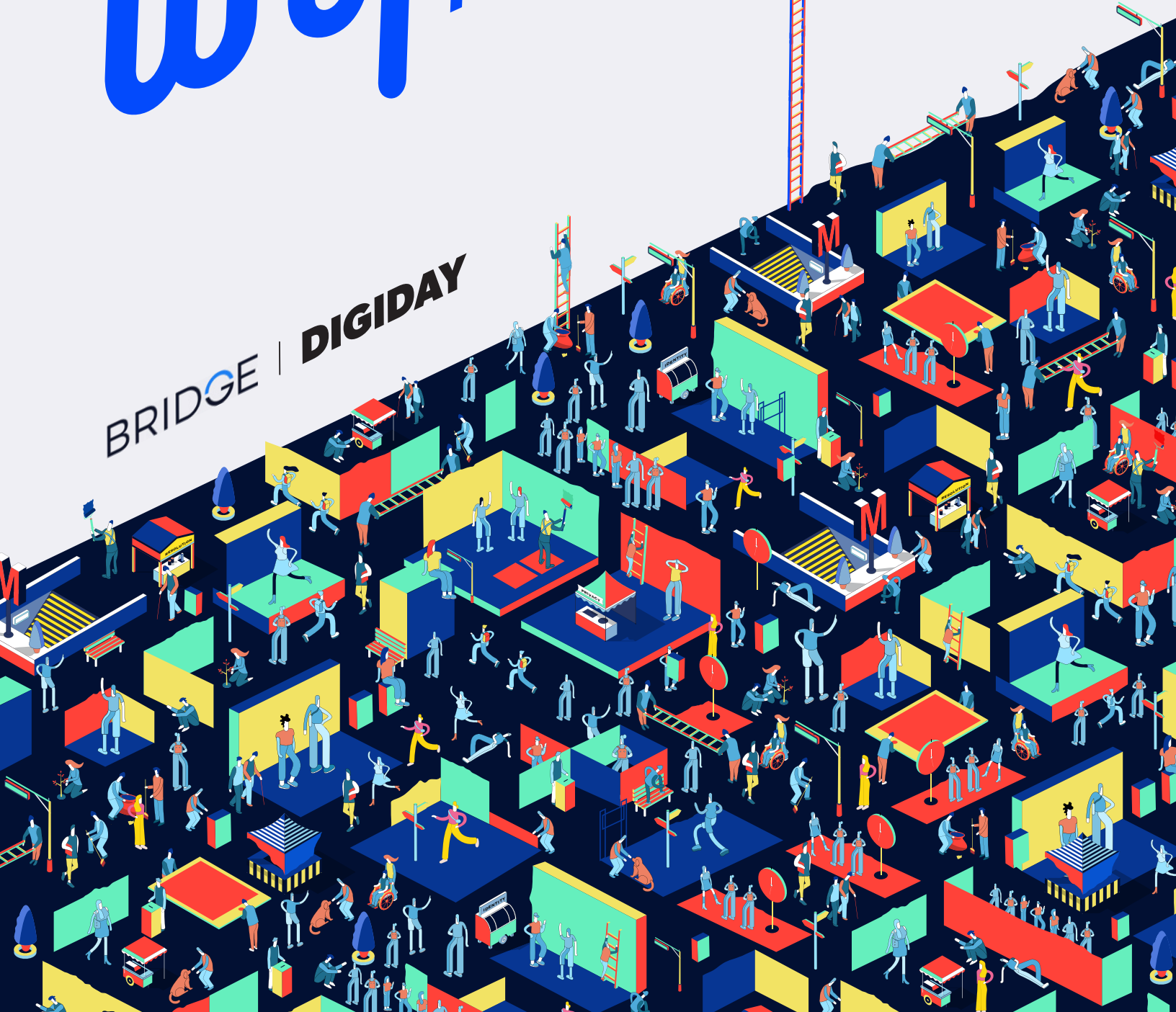


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Introduction

You're a marketer for a new organic baby food brand and you know what demographic you're looking to target: parents, interested in high-quality goods.

You know your target age, gender, location — and through the use of third-party cookies, you have an idea of websites they have visited. But do you know whether the person on that website is the same person who did research on their mobile device or walked past a nearby store or drove past a billboard on their commute? Are you able to discern who they are, down to their name, their address and even the cross-device journey that led them to their purchase, in a privacy-complaint way?

Probably not. Actual identity is hard for the modern marketer to pin down.

When marketers lack the necessary knowledge to plug gaps in their existing data, particularly into who their individual customers are, ad spend is wasted, targeting misses the mark and messages are lost. Marketers also have to be confident that technology partners will be considerate of privacy, accuracy, transparency and trust, when accessing and actioning their data.

Gathering granular data is crucial for a marketer's success — but it's about to get more difficult. With the phasing out of browser cookies, marketers have to

find more creative ways to obtain and connect this information. Just this past month, publisher MailOnline began to experiment with alternative ways to specifically target Safari users, due to Apple's restrictive throttling of third-party cookies.

Amid the myriad of privacy concerns plaguing publishers, marketers and users alike, there is a spotlight on identity-based marketing. But without identity resolution, marketers won't be able to connect the dots between the often dizzying amounts of data available to them to gain a clear, privacy-compliant picture of an individual.

In this WTF guide you will find out:

1 Why identity resolution can provide an effective and privacy-compliant method of understanding your customers

2 How to craft and execute a personalized customer journey using newly connected customer insight and data points

3 The key ways in which identity resolution can aid both marketers and publishers alike

4 Why it's important to work with neutral partners who will respect access to valuable data

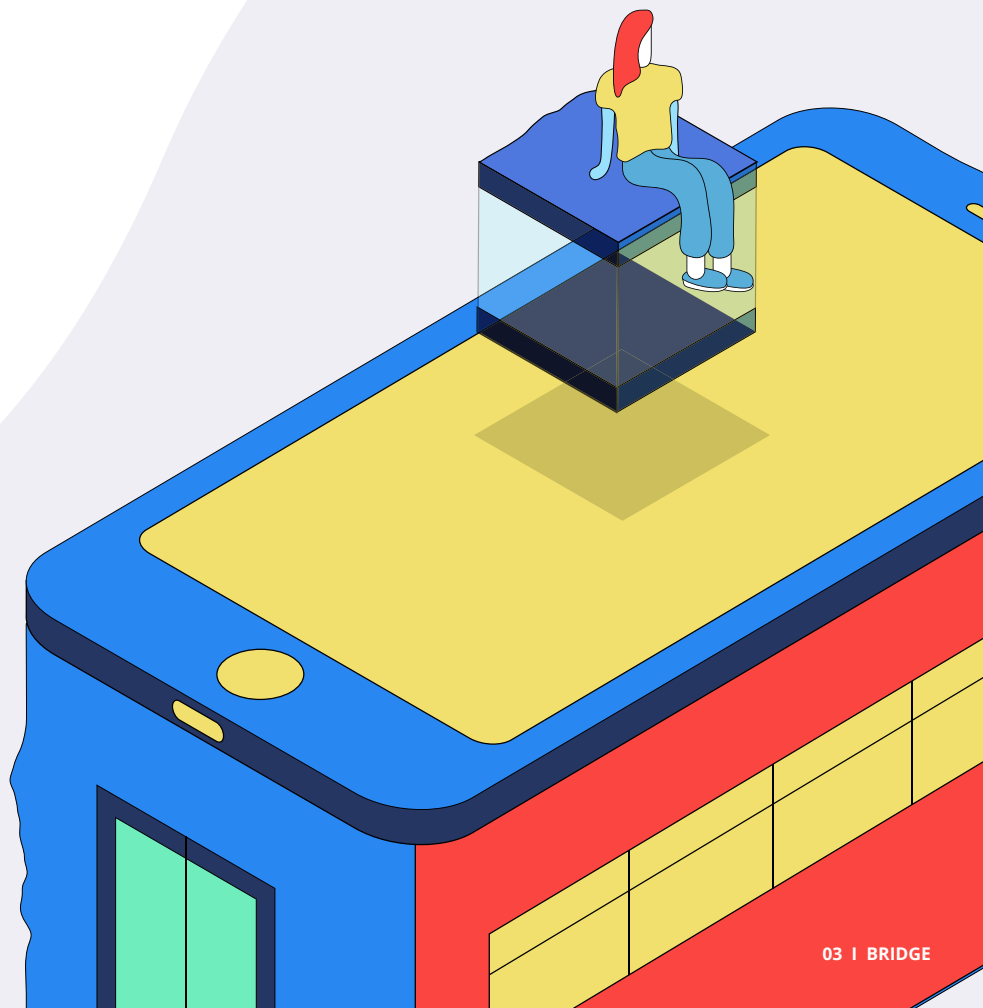
5 How to leverage this technology as a solution for attribution, orchestrated targeting and more

6 Five considerations before you start using identity resolution

What is identity resolution?

“Identity resolution offers a 360-degree view of an individual and the ability to effectively identify a person across multiple devices by recognizing and connecting individual data points,” says Ari Saposh, svp, data and strategic partnerships at BRIDGE. It allows marketers and publishers to form a clear idea of who their customers are on an individual level — and more importantly, how, where and when to best reach them.

But identity resolution isn't just about surfacing or deciphering audiences as a whole. It's the ability to focus on customers as individuals, to bring to life a collection of data points and demographic notes on a screen. Sounds simple, but before you get there it requires a deeper dive into two important and evolving parts of digital marketing today: **attribution and orchestrated targeting.**





Attribution: From piqued interest to purchase

Whether it's return on investment or return on ad spend, having accurate data for attribution metrics is crucial. If a marketer receives flawed information regarding attribution — or worse, makes a blind guess as to where to continue spending budget — it can result in both loss of profits, time and budget to spend on the next campaign.

By using insight into how separate channels and initiatives are performing, marketers can see where to assign advertising dollars for the best — and most cost-effective — return on investment.

Specifically, identity resolution takes that insight beyond looking into the success of a channel as a whole, and

breaks it down to the individual level, focusing on specific users across multiple unique data points.

By identifying these data touch points across multiple platforms, marketers not only get a complete picture of an individual customer — they can also track that specific customer's journey from piqued interest to purchase, identifying which specific campaigns or creative lead to this result.

With this knowledge, they can confidently assign ad spend where it's most needed, segmenting and targeting specific audiences based on the outcomes of these unique customer paths.

Case study: A multi-channel approach to automotive

In this case study from BRIDGE, a luxury auto dealership located in Dallas-Fort Worth wanted to drive business from both current and potential new customers.

By utilizing a multi-channel campaign across email, mobile and desktop display, the dealership was able to reach consumers where they were most likely to respond, targeting an audience determined from a rich database of offline, online and mobile data.

This finely-tuned audience consisted of 70,000 hyper-local individuals, all determined to be in the market for a new car or auto service — and ultimately resulted in 180 direct sales and more than 1,300 service transactions.

Through identity resolution, the dealership could accurately assess their attribution metrics, and ended up driving over \$1.3 million in revenue, targeting a specific subset of both existing and potential customers in the places they frequented most.





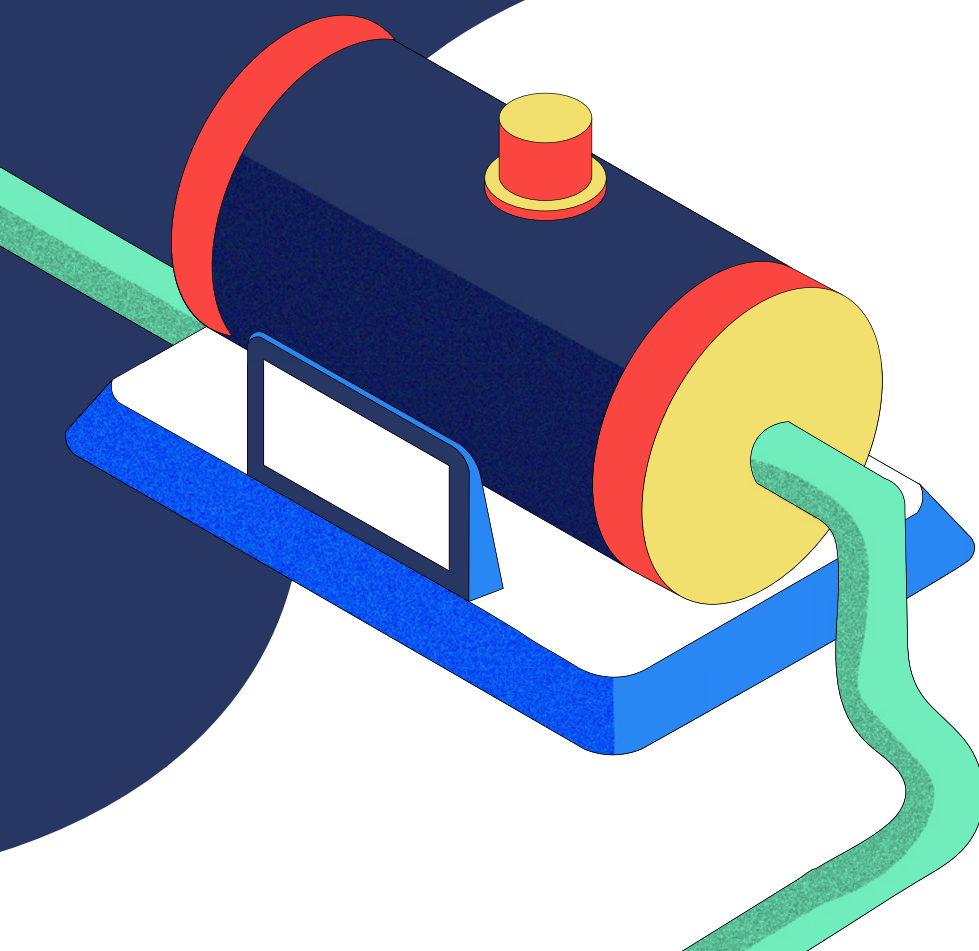
A key difference

It might be easy for a brand to determine if a sale occurred due to a specific ad on a specific website: there's clickthrough data to back it up that's both easily tracked and accurate. But what about the customers who didn't click on that ad, who clicked a second ad — with different messaging, on another website — instead?

Without identity resolution, marketers would have no idea that this second user was the same one who had bypassed the earlier ad. By tracking this data and piecing it together, these individual profiles can emerge,

resulting in smarter ad spend and more accurate attribution.

"That's what identity resolution allows companies to do. Using, for example, cross-device graphs to understand the person's cookies, a person's mobile ad ID, a person's connected TV, a person's social profile. You're able to understand and actually put a good journey in front of the consumer — and actually measure those results in the end," says Saposh at BRIDGE.



Orchestrated targeting

So if identity resolution is used to refine and personalize a customer's path to purchase, where can that path lead? This is where orchestrated targeting begins — the art and ability of tailoring an advertising initiative to an individual customer, built on the basis of data collected from identity resolution.

By tracking a customer's journey through multiple data touchpoints, a marketer can begin to construct a personalized plan to reach them when they're most receptive, with the most effective possible messaging. When done correctly, orchestrated targeting can result in a happy outcome for both retailer and consumer.

Case study: How Nordstrom successfully connected off and online data

In this case study from LiveRamp, luxury retailer Nordstrom wanted to enhance their digital advertising during the holidays through personalization. The challenge was to combine offline and online customer data to focus on potential rather than existing customers.

Nordstrom was able to safely and precisely connect their data across channels to reach this audience using ID resolution. Identity resolution allowed them to recognize and filter out existing customers to focus on new shoppers, and allowed them to test tailored creative to suit these segmented audiences.

The result was a greater understanding of which specific creative and messaging worked for their desired audience, culminating in return on

ad spend increasing by 11 percent for the quarter across video and programmatic display, and a 554 percent raise in site engagement between the best and worst-performing holiday-specific messaging.

However, orchestrated targeting doesn't just benefit digital sales. Through data gleaned by identity resolution, a person can be guided to a physical purchase in store, or be led to online content.

For example, a clothing retailer may wish to target a certain customer in hopes of a successful purchase at a nearby brick-and-mortar store. The retailer would know the city that this prospective customer resides in, in addition to their email address and name. Through identity resolution, this information can be connected

to their unique mobile ad ID — used to anonymously identify a user and obtained by leveraging other data sources — to paint a complete picture of this customer for deeper, more precise marketing.

The orchestrated targeting doesn't just apply to a customer's online activity either. The clothing retailer can even utilize location information to see that this same customer drives past a particular digital billboard every day, at the same time, and can serve an ad specifically to reach him and direct him to the nearest store location.

Without identity resolution, a deliberately targeted initiative on this scale wouldn't be possible. Only once these data touchpoints are connected can this level of orchestrated targeting take place.



The publisher viewpoint

Whether it's targeting customers or readers, identity resolution ultimately achieves the same goal for both brands and publishers — recognizing their audience down to the specific user and understanding the content that resonates most.

"The really interesting play for publishers is that they have and can determine the value that they offer a consumer," says Daniel Chapman, managing director, products and solutions at Havas Group Media in London. "They have the ability to tailor an experience or content that's delivered [to their audience] according to the individual that's giving over their data."

And with so many content channels and publishers vying for precious viewership, it's more necessary than ever for a publication to stand out from the crowd and reach their audience on the right channel at the right time.

"I think from the highest level, any publisher wants to understand what's being consumed by their [audience]," says Saposh. "Now you have to have an app, you have to have a website, you have to have different points of entry — and [publishers] have a difficult time knowing it's the same person."





Marketing synergy

For publishers, this resulting outcome of this technology is twofold: identity resolution not only allows them to discover and deliver the content their audience enjoys most, it offers them the ability to then leverage that information to sell ads best suited for their highly resolved audience.

The result? A publisher creating content that's read, a marketer reaching their exact desired audience, and readers receiving both content and advertisements that are relative to their interests.

Take for example a publisher that caters their content to women aged 25-34. By layering an outside data point where a user confirmed that they are, in fact, within this specific audience subset, the publisher is then able to confidently resolve their identity — and thus confirm to a potential advertiser that their audience is proven to match their desired demographic.

For publishers, it's a mixture of taking care of a subscriber base and offering, and being attractive to advertisers to spend money — so they can drive revenue.

Data and privacy: The benefits of ID resolution

The benefits of identity resolution are clearer attribution, better targeting, greater understanding of an audience on an individual level — but in an age of growing privacy concerns, including the California Consumer Privacy Act that's drawing nearer — it's important to understand the data behind identity resolution.

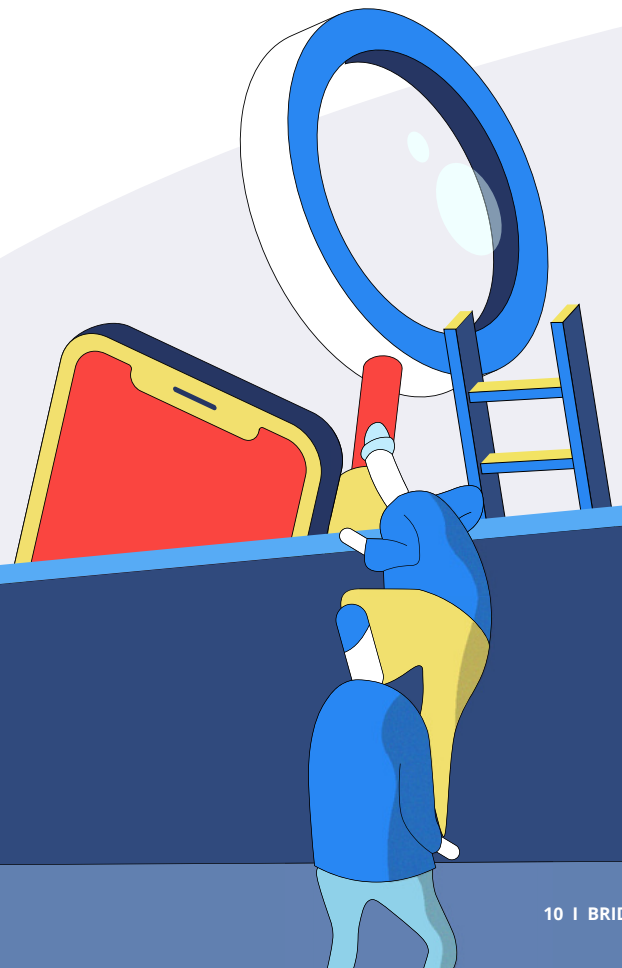
It's been over a year since GDPR kicked off, and some publishers and media buyers alike are still searching for a new normal in the aftermath. However, the new restrictions and laws imposed by GDPR have not been

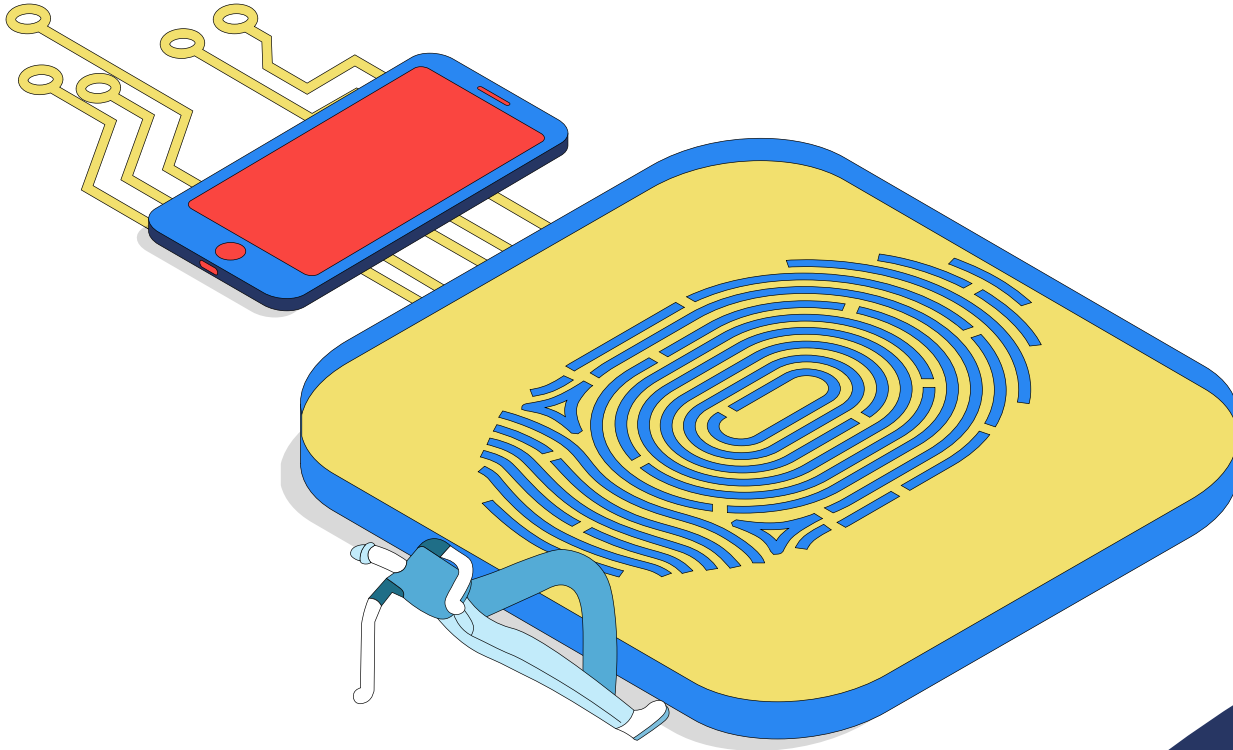
nearly as detrimental to European data collecting and targeting efforts through identity resolution as one might think.

"We found that the targeting that we ran through publisher-based data, as well as some third party data, is that providers actually got better," says Chapman. "We didn't have as much data from a prospecting perspective, but I think our audiences were truer." Projjol Banerjea, founder & CPO at Zeotap, describes looking at identity resolution in the age of privacy concerns through the lens of the four C's: communication, consent, choice and control.

"'Communication' means making it very clear to the consumer as to what the data is going to be utilized for," explains Banerjea. Consent refers to the idea that the consumer is knowingly and willingly agreeing to aspects of data utilization, while choice covers the ability to choose which of those aspects the consumer is opting into.

"The aspect of control is important because even in the context of consent, there needs to be traceability in that the consumer may choose to revoke that consent at any point," says Banerjea. "This needs to be reflected downstream across all the different platforms or channels for that data."





Cookie compliance

As cookies continue to diminish across browsers, traditional means of data collection long favored by marketers may be in trouble. But this concern doesn't necessarily affect the core of identity resolution.

"Fundamentally, cookies are a more inefficient method of resolving identity than the mobile device identifiers such as the Apple identifier or the Google advertising identifier," Banerjee explains.

Specifically, these identifiers are device-centric — making them more consistent for resolving identities than traditional, cookie-based means, which rely on inefficient means of cascading matching.



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Are you ready?

The first step is internal assessment

Are you already collecting data? If so, are those data collection methodologies compliant with current regulations? These are the questions a brand or publisher must first ask themselves — and answer — before utilizing identity resolution, making an internal audit a necessary first step.

Simplicity isn't always better

Identity resolution is more than just linking an email address to a mobile ID. "Today, identity resolution is much more than just those linkages," explains Banerjea. "It's this unified, holistic view of the consumer." As such, it's best to avoid IR partners who have an overly simplistic view of the technology and what it can achieve.

Deterministic versus probabilistic

As the goal of identity resolution is to decisively label individual consumers, it's important to understand if the resolution is being done on the basis of a deterministic or probabilistic match. While deterministic is stronger than probabilistic, probabilistic methods may fit better in certain scenarios, ultimately requiring awareness of these probabilistic assumptions.

Beware of bad actors

In order for identity resolution to transpire, there needs to be a certain amount of trust between marketer and partner. As there's no way for a marketer to cross-reference their provided list of identities and a partner's list produced from that data, brands must be vigilant and stay wary of bad actors who provide fallacious results.

Avoid data decay

Data churns frequently — families move, names change, email addresses can become abandoned and even devices get trashed or updated. In order for identity resolution to be conducted in the most accurate way possible, it is necessary to keep your data refreshed and up to date.

Closing thoughts

Identity resolution can provide marketers of all sizes with a privacy law-compliant solution for driving new business. But before diving right in, it's important to remember these four key points:

1

Fill data-gaps.

Today, more than ever, brands need the ability to strategize, target and measure marketing efforts to quickly adapt to market conditions and consumer choices. Partners must have a rich audience data to fill any gaps and to make your targeting and business approach stronger and more effective.

2

Choose independent partners.

Data partners should be respectful of access to a brand's data. Marketers should prioritize their long-term strategic goals by choosing neutral and independent partners, this will ensure your most valuable asset isn't being siphoned off for other projects or used for competitors.

3

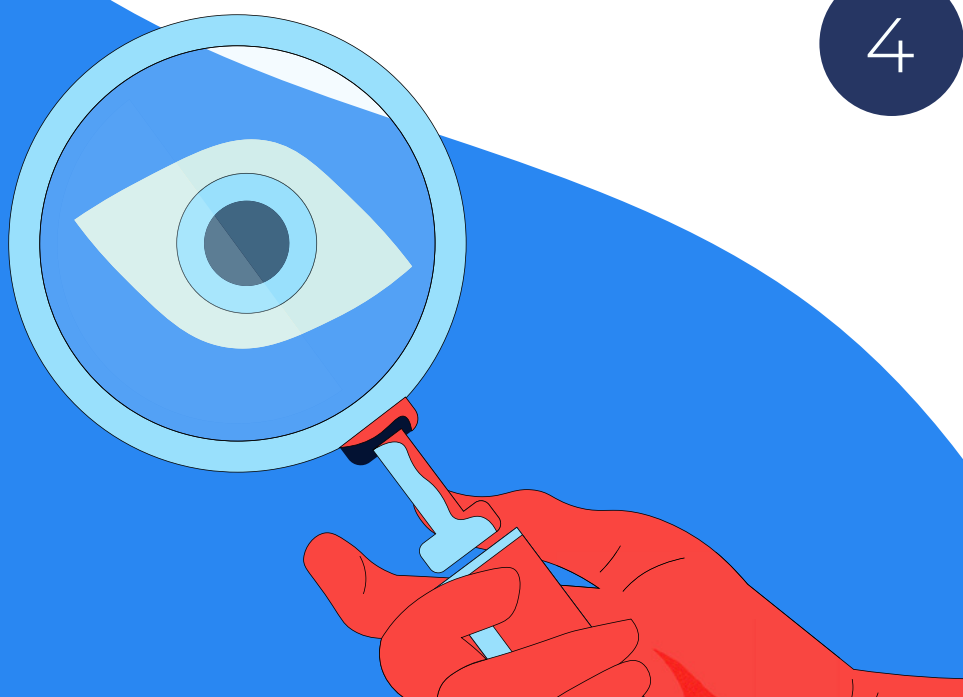
Privacy = respect

It can take ages to build trust with your customer base — and seconds to destroy it all. Be mindful of collecting data in an above-the-board way, and keep those four C's in mind: communication, consent, choice and control.

4

And perhaps most importantly:

If you aren't doing anything, you are already behind. As the impact of diminishing third-party cookie-data and impending privacy laws take hold, having a strong data strategy around identity resolution will not only help you keep up with industry changes, but also get ahead.





Talk to [BRIDGE's experts](#) to make your data better and more actionable, and immediately see the benefits of our people-based insights.

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