Cookie Crunch: Time to Comply



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Introduction

- Overview of the "Cookie Law"
- Practical steps to compliance
- Potential consequences of non-compliance
- Summary of next steps for defining your own strategy for compliance
- US perspective



Overview of the "Cookie Law"

The law

- Originates from Article 5.3 of the E-Privacy Directive 2002/58/EC (as amended by the Citizen's Rights Directive 2009/136/EC)
- UK implementation Regulation 6 of the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (as amended in 2011)
- In essence the law requires that you:
 - tell users about the cookies used on your website;
 - explain what the cookies are doing; and
 - obtain consent to store cookies on their device.



Overview of the "Cookie Law"

- Limited exemption
 - "strictly necessary" (essential) cookies to provide the service
- Applicable to other technologies that store and access information on a user's device.
 - Local Shared Objects ("Flash Cookies")
 - Mobile Apps
 - Email
 - "Device" covers personal computers, laptops, mobile phones, iPads and other mobile devices



Practical Steps to Compliance

- Compliance steps consist of four key elements:
 - Audit understanding your existing cookie landscape
 - Transparency what information do you need to provide
 - Consent Models how to gain consent/changes to your technology
 - Ongoing Compliance internal processes to ensure continued compliance
- Underpinning all of this is an ongoing evaluation of what legal compliance looks like



Practical Steps to Compliance – Audit

Audit

- determine the types of cookies/similar technologies in use
- determine what cookies are used for e.g. "strictly necessary", analytics, website functionality, targeted marketing
- determine the privacy impact of cookies/similar technologies
- ensure you have engaged the appropriate individuals, teams, suppliers, etc
- influence your decision on the appropriate solution for your organisation
- "clean up" websites and remove unnecessary cookies

Categorisation

ICC UK Cookie Guide – includes useful descriptions of common cookie uses



Practical Steps to Compliance – Transparency

- Update/add a cookie policy
 - Make the cookie policy prominent
 - Inform users:
 - what cookies are and the way they operate
 - the types/categories of cookies used on the website, the purpose for which they are used, the length of time they are stored on a user's device
 - the effect of accepting or declining cookies
 - how to control and delete cookies using the user's browser; and
 - "strictly necessary" cookies can not be declined
 - Layered notice approach
 - Audit results will aid the production of your cookie policy



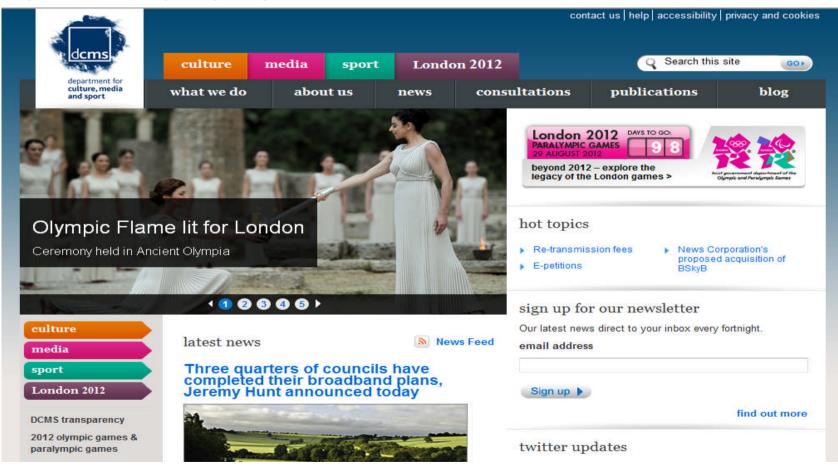
Practical Steps to Compliance – Transparency

- Consider other communications to users
 - Emails
 - Educational videos
 - Interactive tutorials
- Use communications with users to positively present cookies and the benefits of them

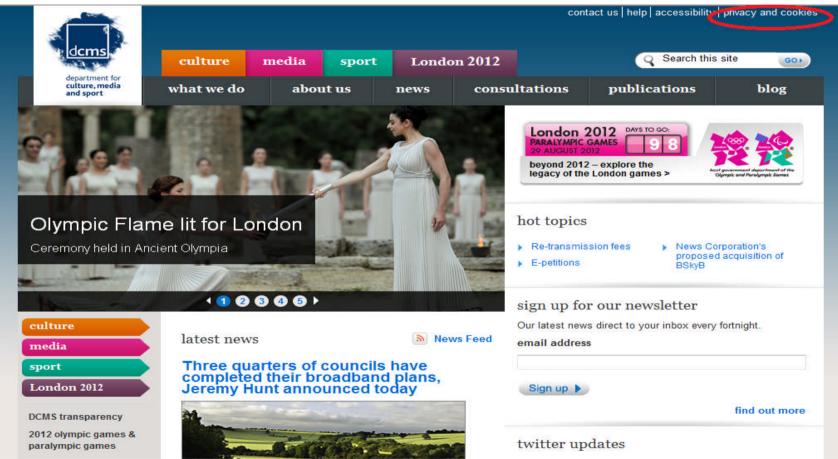


- Consent model should be based on an organisation's risk appetite and the privacy intrusiveness of cookies
- Live examples are showing a sliding scale of consent model development
 - Update cookie policy only
 - Provide notice about cookie use (e.g. pop-up, header bar) with opt-out action required from the user implied consent
 - Provide notice with opt-in action required from the user explicit consent

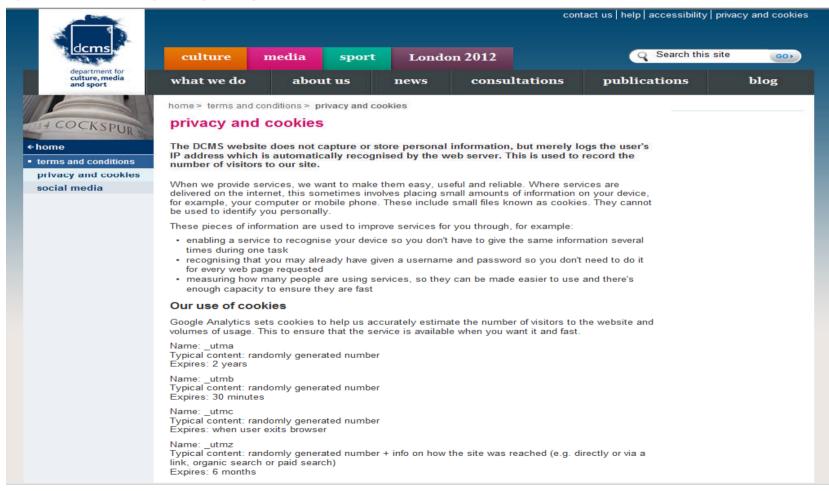


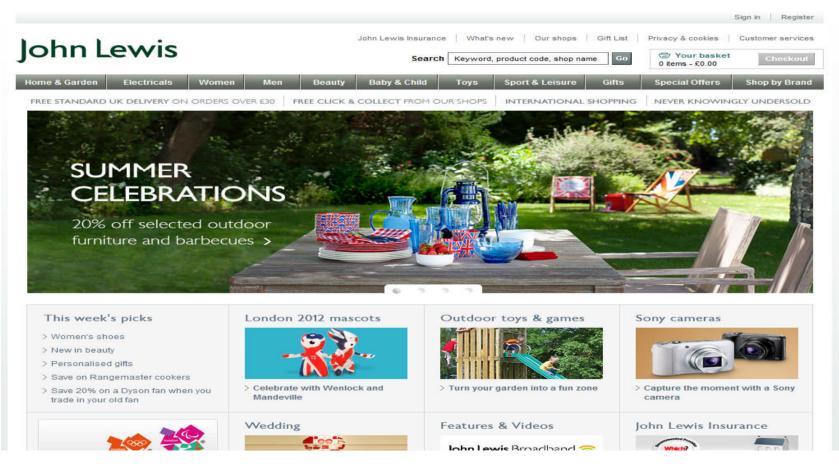




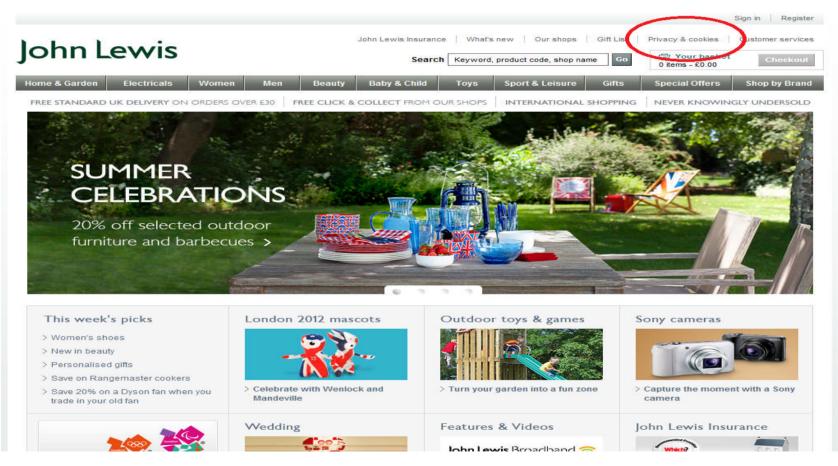






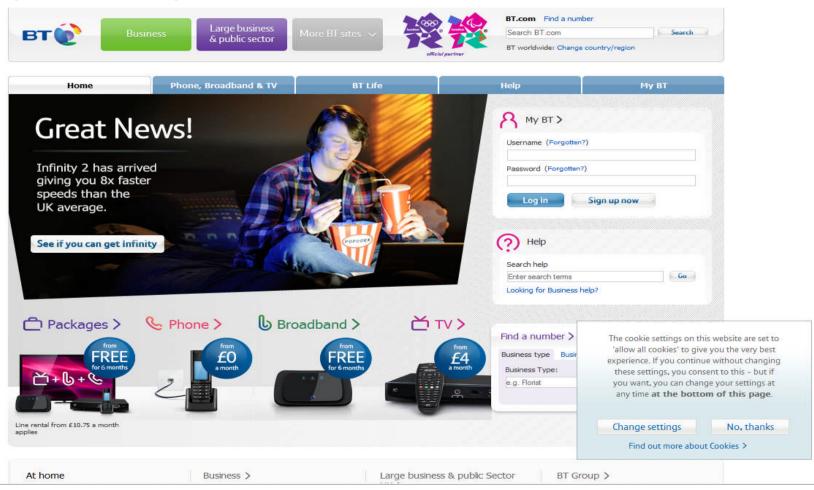


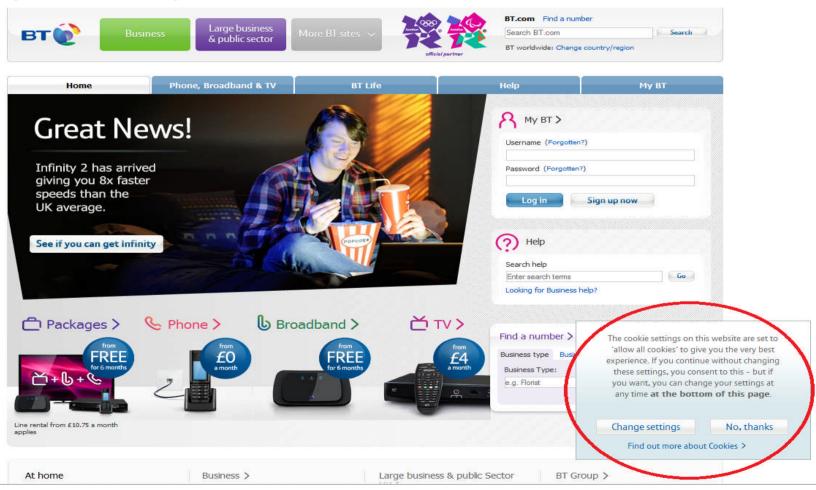


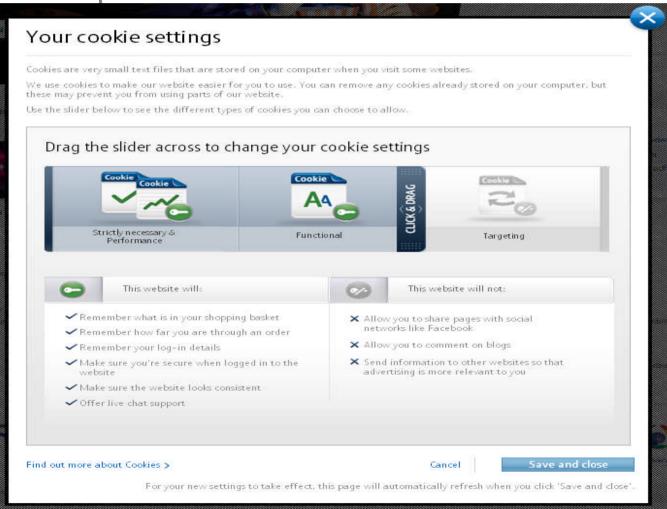


















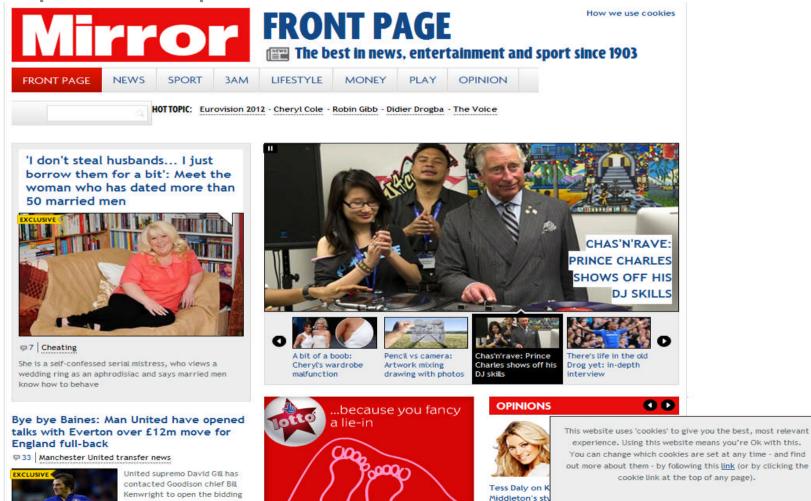








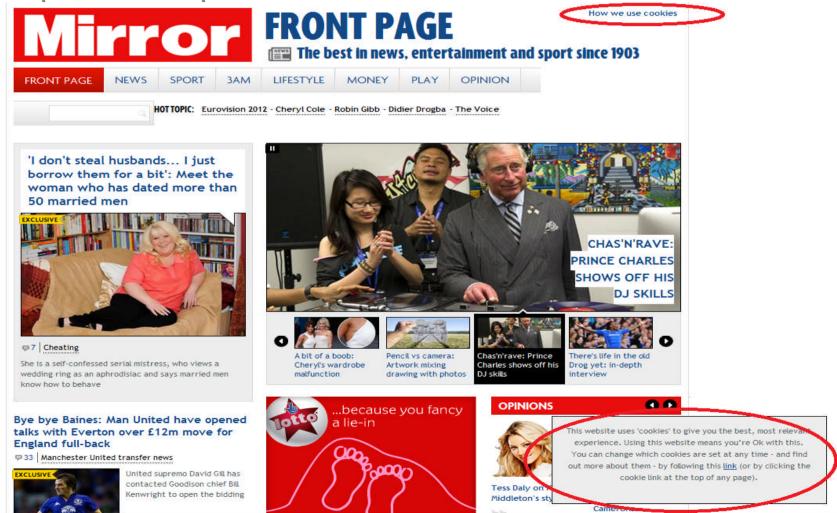
Opt-out notice/implied consent



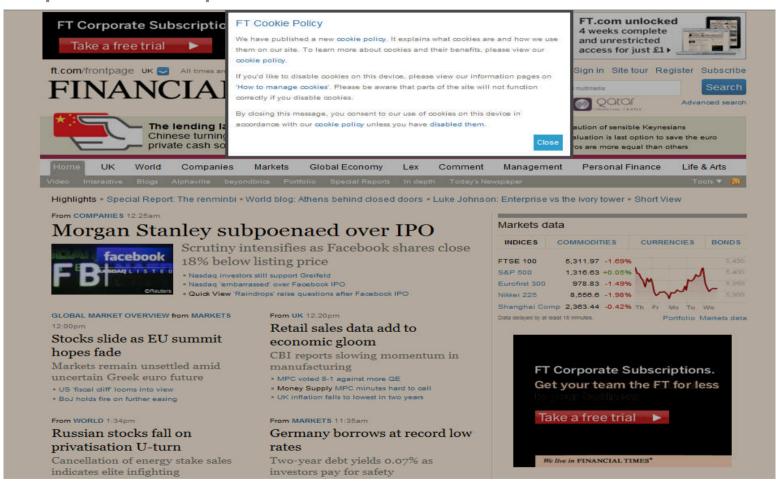
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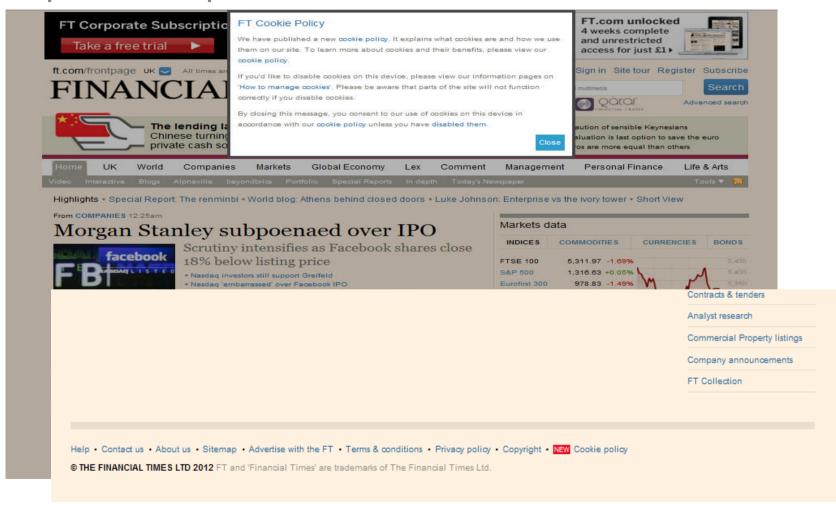
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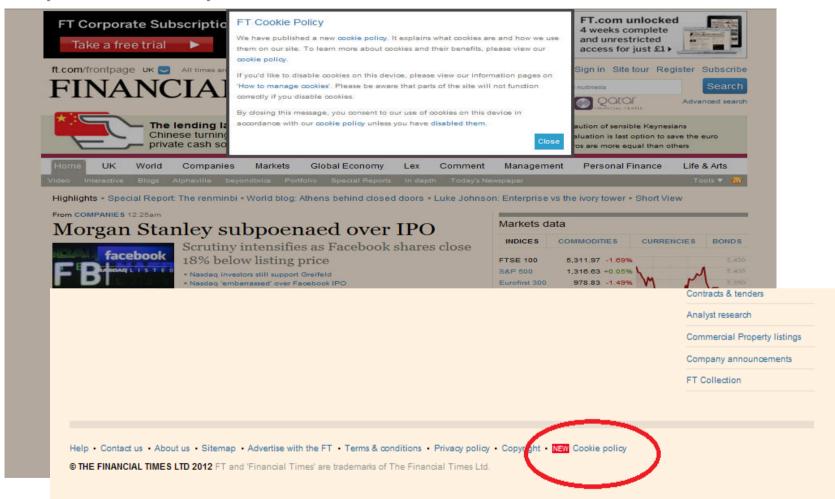
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Opt-in notice/explicit consent



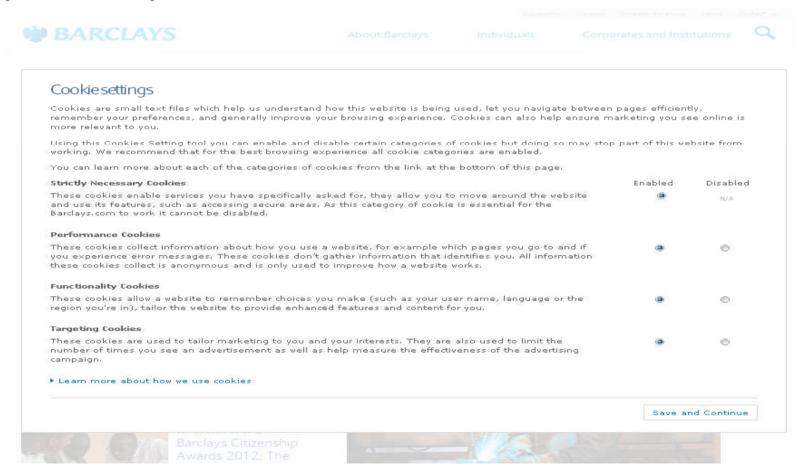


Opt-in notice/explicit consent





Opt-in notice/explicit consent





- Gaining consent shouldn't necessarily be considered a negative experience
 - One time message
 - Users will start to expect this issues of trust with websites that do not comply
 - User control could reflect positively e.g. make part of a privacy centre



Practical Steps to Compliance – Ongoing Compliance

- Compliance is an ongoing process
 - Inform and educate staff internally
 - Procedures to ensure new cookies are assessed before being added to your website
 - Update cookie policy
 - Adapt the consent model
 - Consider how your compliance strategy will work with third parties e.g. partnership sites, suppliers, etc.



Potential Consequences of Non-Compliance

- Monetary penalties
 - Up to £500,000
 - However, requires serious contravention likely to lead to substantial damage or distress.
 - Analytics cookies unlikely to meet threshold
- Investigation
- Public undertakings
- Enforcement notices
- Damage to brand and reputation trust



Next steps for defining your compliance strategy

Easy and quick wins

- Start defining your compliance strategy now!
- Some quick steps can be taken to show the ICO that you aren't ignoring the law
 - 1. Create a time lined project plan
 - 2. Audit
 - 3. Remove cookies that you do not need
 - 4. Amend/add your cookie policy
 - 5. Make the cookie policy prominent
 - 6. Include instructions in the cookie policy about how the user can disable cookies for him/herself

Longer term planning

- 1. Decide on the consent model for your business
- 2. Implement technical and procedural change



US Perspective – Consumer perspective?

- 2001 Harris Interactive Survey:
 - 3% reported carefully reading privacy policies
 - 60%+ reported "little or no time" looking at privacy policies
- 2007 Golden Bear Study by Samuelson Clinic:
 - 1.4% reported reading EULAs
 - 66.2% admit to rarely reading EULAs
- 2009 UK Information Commissioner Survey:
 - 71% did not read, or understand, privacy policies



US Perspective – Government perspective?

 "We all agree that consumers don't read privacy policies – or EULAs, for that matter."

U.S. Federal Trade Commission Chairman Lebowitz (2009)

 "In reality, we have learned that many consumers do not read, let alone understand privacy notices, limiting their ability to make informed choices."

U.S. Federal Trade Commission Report, Dept. of Commerce (2010)

• Privacy policies are in "the smallest type you can imagine . . . [p]roviding too much information defeats the purpose of disclosure, since no one reads it"

U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Roberts (2010)



US Legal Regime – Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

FTC's broad mandate:

 section 5 of the FTC Act grants very broad authority to investigate and protect consumers from "unfair" or "deceptive" acts or practices



- can rely on finding that act or practice *reasonably tends* to cause consumer harm, as opposed to having to prove *actual* consumer harm
- with respect to tracking tools like cookies, FTC is particularly concerned that consumers do not understand the technology at issue and might have their information used in unexpected and intrusive ways

What are the rules?

- Guidance, reports, speeches
- Enforcement actions, consent decrees



US Legal Regime – Interpreting the FTC's requirements

Guidance Reports









Low risk

High risk

Expected uses of data	<u>vs.</u>	Unexpected uses of data
First-party uses (eg analytics)	<u>VS.</u>	Third-party uses (eg profiling)
Contextual Ads	<u>VS.</u>	Targeted Ads

- Tracking practices still largely subject to *notice/disclosure* + *opt-out/implied consent*
- Opt-in/explicit consent for "material" retroactive changes to collection or use practices
- Specific practices (e.g., opt-out/implied consent) left to self-regulatory orgs and Congress



US Legal Regime – Interpreting the FTC's requirements

- FTC has left the form and method of <u>opt-out</u> largely to self-regulation
 - Do-Not-Track
 - Network Advertising Initiative (NAI) & Digital Advertising Alliance (DAA)
 - Opt-out/implied consent tools for behavioral advertising
 - Companies instructing users in privacy policies to disable cookies and other tracking tools through the browser settings if desired, or refrain from using website or app
 - Mobile presents some unique tracking issues...
- There has been some proposed legislation, but none passed



US Legal Regime – FTC Enforcement Actions

- Despite lack of specifically enumerated rules and regulations, FTC has commenced dozens of investigations
- And, FTC has secured public consent decrees many quite onerous that are specifically focused on misrepresentations and deception around tracking technologies and cookies



US Legal Regime – FTC Enforcement Actions

- **Sears** (2009) disclosure of "research" software that tracked online behavior was not only insufficient, but buried at end of "lengthy user agreement" filled with legalese.
 - decree required Sears to destroy all data collected through software
- **Chitika** (2011) privacy policy included "opt-out" button, which when clicked stated "You are currently opted out." Opt-out/implied consent cookie functioned properly. . . for 10 days.
 - decree required in-ad hyperlink to 5-year opt-out; website opt-out mechanism;
 and homepage notice and mea culpa
- **Scan Scout (2011)** privacy policy said "You can opt out of receiving a cookie by changing your browser settings to prevent the receipt of cookies," but company used Flash Cookies which were neither blocked nor deleted by such settings
 - decree required fixes, 5-year opt-out, homepage notice, and in-ad notices.



US Legal Regime – FTC Enforcement Actions

- **MySpace** (**May 8, 2012**) privacy policy promised personally identifiable information and non-anonymized browsing activity would not be shared with third-party advertisers, but company gave "Friend ID" to advertisers who could then link cookie-based browsing data to specific individuals. (FTC also found deceptive the privacy policy statement that MySpace complies with EU Safe Harbor provisions.)
 - decree requires fixes, comprehensive privacy program and 20-year of audits
- **??? Google (2012) ???** allegation that Google circumvented Apple Safari browser's settings to permits cookies to be dropped on users contrary to their choices, and which permit third-party ad networks to track users for advertising purposes; Google publicly states that this loophole was "unexpected"
 - existing consent decree (re: Google Buzz, 2011) requires fixes, comprehensive privacy program and 20-year audits
 - potential violation of existing consent decree for misrepresenting its practices could subject company to \$16,000/day fines, which could total \$10 million+



US Legal Regime – Consequences for non-compliance

Consequences of FTC enforcement action:

- Extended disruption to business (documents, discovery, depositions)
- Significant legal fees and costs
- Injunctive remedy (fix policies & practices, go-forward restrictions)
- Consumer redress (could be forced to pay money if ill-gotten profits)
- Public consent decree; harm to reputation
- Violation of consent decree = up to \$16,000 *per day* penalty
- Possible tag along violations for COPPA, CAN-SPAM, etc., which carry monetary fines of up to \$16,000 per violation
- Publicity leads to consumer class actions by plaintiffs' lawyers



Questions?

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