

MARKETER'S MUST SNOOP LESS, ELSE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE ITS PRESENCE FELT



Owing to increasing technology, people more than willing to part with information, the ever increasing uses Smartphones and the burgeoning traffic on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, marketers these days have mountains of consumer data that would be virtually impossible to collect by an independent agency. Marketing is not possible without access to consumer data, it makes the advertising more relevant, potent and audience-specific, but Government watchdogs, consider it to be an intrusion in personal lives and marketers are required to be very judicious in garnering information that has the potential to be misused and cause harm. The White House's Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights states that sites such as search engines, ad networks and social networks that have the ability to build detailed profiles of users must be very careful and practical in allowing how this data is collected and used. The Federal Trade Commission's final privacy framework, released a month after the Consumer Privacy Bill states that data collection should be "consistent with what a consumer might expect; if it is not, they should provide prominent notice and choice." But is this information really bad or dangerous. For all of the government's apprehensions, there have been very few instances of this information being misused or misrepresented. Is it right for the Government to interfere or does that throttle the attempts of the marketers to have access to a very vital part of their advertising campaigns? Today, accessing data has become much easier. Marketers can trace a consumer's journey across the web, through their mobile devices and tablets and gauge everything about the individual. His individual preferences, his goals, his desires, everything about him can be mined from the various sources, making personal data, not merely data but a 'sophisticated piece of weaponry.' For Marketers this information is a virtual goldmine, inasmuch as it can help them target their audience, instead of speeding their money on an imprecise audience. A chief marketing officer at a global company said, "If you look at the difference between spending \$300,000 to buy a 30-second spot on "Dancing with the Stars" vs. spending \$300,000 on very targeted and measurable digital campaigns -- given the proliferation of data and what you know about your customers -- I think you have a much greater shot of doing the latter." Contrary to fears expressed, very few consumers have so far lodged complaints. Moreover, the Digital Advertising Alliance's self-regulatory program to deal with online behavioral advertising has been considerably successful. The self-regulatory program gives the option to users to opt-out of being tracked. It seems that if, there is one sector that could force regulators to act, it is the mobile sector. With increasing uses of Smartphones, the potential to collect data that could cause damage increases. Smartphones contain data from all walks of the person's life, addresses of virtually all his contacts and can even identify at any given time where the user is located at the moment. There are many examples of how the data has been used for questionable purposes. In one case, it was reported that the names of eligible girls was circulated. Till now, there is no legislation for the mobile-app ecosystem but it is apparent that the FTC is giving serious thought to regulate the mobile-app space. The marketing industry has been given a great deal of freedom and the government has put a lot of faith in it not to misplace that trust, by allowing it to self-regulate. All it will take will be a few rotten eggs; some data disaster for the government to take away the special privileges and impose its will. Want to see which jobs are available near you? [Click here](#) to see.