

The Procrastinator's Guide to Digital Resilience

Don't leave your brand's digital destiny to the last minute

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The time
to act is
~~tomorrow~~
NOW



The time to act is ~~tomorrow~~ NOW

Right now, the digital media landscape is going through massive transformation. Marketers are being bombarded with headlines that tell them they must adapt or face a world of trouble down the line.



New privacy laws have come into force. Big Tech players are changing the way brands are allowed to track and use consumer data. And, of course, the top story is that third-party cookies are on the way out. (But seriously, were they ever really the best solution anyway?)

While you've been preparing for the death of cookies (you *have* been preparing, haven't you?), you no doubt saw that Google has kicked the can down the road.

Originally forecast for 2022, the deprecation of third-party cookies is now expected sometime in late 2023¹ (if Google doesn't procrastinate again).

And yes, while a collective sigh of relief was heard across the digital marketing world when the news of the delay broke – let's be honest, it caused all our inner procrastinators to do a jig – the truth is that preparing now vs. later is still a far better plan.

Fight your inner
procrastinator –
before it's too late



Fight your inner procrastinator – before it's too late

There are two schools of thought on procrastination. Some people (the proactively minded types) tend to look down on dilly-dalliers. Prolific novelist Janet Dailey is known for saying, “Someday is not a day of the week.”



Others accept that procrastination is a fact of life. Mystery writer Rita Mae Brown famously mused, “If it weren’t for the last minute, nothing would get done.” Some even relish the act, like early 20th century British novelist Marthe Trolly-Curtin who said, “Time you enjoy wasting is not wasted time.”

But here’s the thing. While the third-party cookie ban is delayed, make no mistake – it’s still coming.

Too many brands are making the decision – or the indecision – to wait it out and see what happens with the deprecation of third-party cookies, not to mention Apple’s App Tracking Transparency (ATT) updates and the effects of changes in privacy legislations.

Let’s face it, change is an inevitable part of this business. So while these are the headaches (or... opportunities) of today, who knows what’s around the corner?

We think that’s a recipe for disaster. Instead, you need to face the fact that the media landscape is transforming with or without you, so it’s time to get ready and take control of your digital destiny.

This guide will help you create a roadmap to digital resilience, fight your inner procrastinator, and act now.

Let’s dive in. (Yep, right now. Move it or lose it, people.)

“Never put off until tomorrow
what may be done the day
after tomorrow just as well.”*

MARK TWAIN

American humourist and author



*Don't listen to Mark.

Digital disruption on the horizon

Change comes at you fast – but some brands are a lot slower in adapting to change than others. No matter how well you're managing your digital marketing operations today, it's our firm belief that the true test of digital resilience is your ability to adapt to (potentially) disruptive forces of change.

A cookieless world is coming

The digital media landscape was built on the flow of third-party cookies through the network from publisher to advertiser. But those days are numbered.

Your brand is going to lose visibility into exposure data at the individual level, and the flow of information will ultimately break when Google Chrome blocks third-party cookies. Apple introduced Safari's Intelligent Tracking Prevention (ITP) in 2017 and announced full third-party cookie blocking in March 2020.² When you consider that Chrome and Safari together scoop up 83.7%³ of browser traffic, you can see how challenging this is going to be for marketers, especially when it comes to measuring what actually worked.

Have you got a plan in place for your digital marketing and customer experience efforts in this new world? Let's face it, you're reading this guide, so we'll assume you've still got a few things to figure out.

One way to look at it is to say, "Look, the walled gardens are consolidating power. There's not much we can do. I'm sure it'll work out."

Good luck with that.

Another way to look at it (the way we strongly recommend), is to say "How can we use this extra time to our advantage and make sure our brand is ready for what comes next?"

Take control of what you can

We want to help put the power back on your side by positioning your brand in the best possible way for the unfolding changes and the long-term future of digital media.



We believe there are three keys to building digital resilience and, lucky for you, we happen to know something about them.

- ① **Privacy:** Trust is everything when it comes to building a relationship with your customers. Respect and transparency must be at the forefront of every interaction. At the same time, your practices must comply with all regulations, even as they evolve.
- ② **Identity:** Identity has never been more important than it is in today's changing ecosystem – not just for connecting but for measuring, too. Discover why embracing a first-party data and identity strategy is *the* way forward.
- ③ **Data:** Data about people comes in myriad forms and it changes all the time – which is why solid data strategy and management are foundational to your brand's digital resilience. Understanding your customers and how to reach them is table stakes for (digitally) savvy brands.

Those are the highlights. But we want to go further than just tell you the areas you should pay close attention to.

We want to help you understand what's changing and what's definitely not changing, the kind of activities you should expect when you set out to create a strong foundation for your digital practice, and the steps you need to take ASAP.



“I swing between procrastination and being really thorough, so either way things aren’t getting done quickly.”

FREEMA AGYEMAN

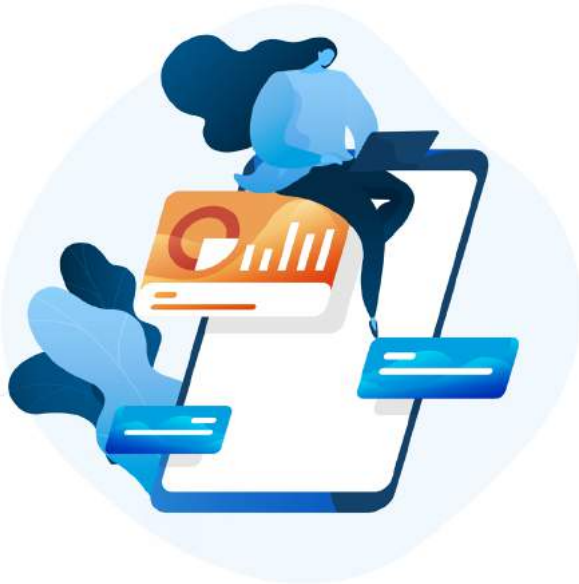
British actress, famous for “Dr. Who”

**It's still about
value exchange**



It's still about value exchange

There is no silver bullet. Whichever tools and technologies your brand uses to create digital experiences for people, ultimately it will always be about the exchange of value – because it always has been.



Bottom line: when people share information, i.e. data, with your brand, they want (and quite frankly deserve) to know what they are getting in return. Is it a better online experience? Is it special offers and discounts? You get the picture.

People, brands and publishers expect a value exchange.

Privacy will continue to be paramount

It's critical that this value exchange continues to take place in a privacy-conscious way, even as privacy laws evolve.

In the United States, new rules will come into force in 2023 with California Privacy Rights Act (CPRA) and the introduction and evolution of other state-level legislation. Meanwhile, changes are happening on a global scale with major milestones like China's August 2021 passage of its own national privacy law. No brand can claim to have achieved digital resilience without having a robust plan for these compliance and data governance issues. This must include data lineage tracing for reporting requests and the ability to “forget” a person if requested.

As we said, when it comes to building relationships with your customers, trust is everything. When you implement identity solutions that respect people's privacy and maintain transparency, the value exchange is protected – and everybody wins.

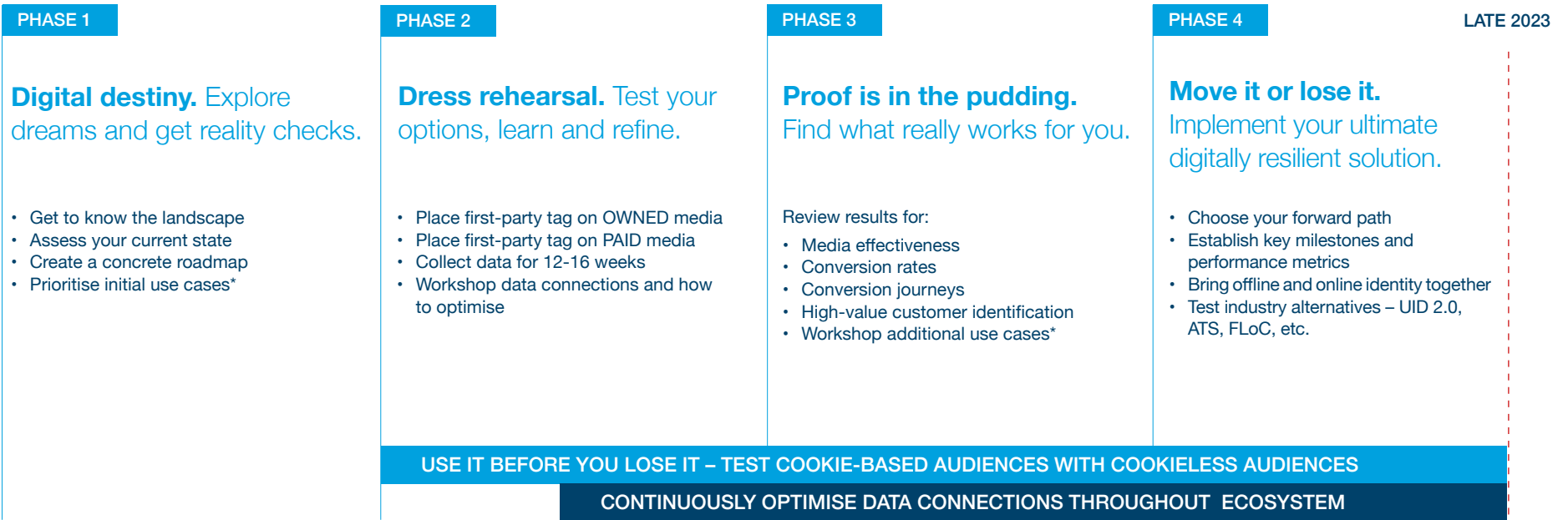


**“You may delay,
but time will not.”**

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Scientist, inventor and one of the founding fathers of the United States

It's not too soon to get started



*Use cases:

PERSONALISATION

- Site visitor personalization
- Reaching non-authenticated users
- Offline data onboarding for digital campaigns
- Ethical collection and usage of behavioural data

ACTIVATION

- Addressable audience creation
- Suppression
- Third-party data activation
- Frequency management

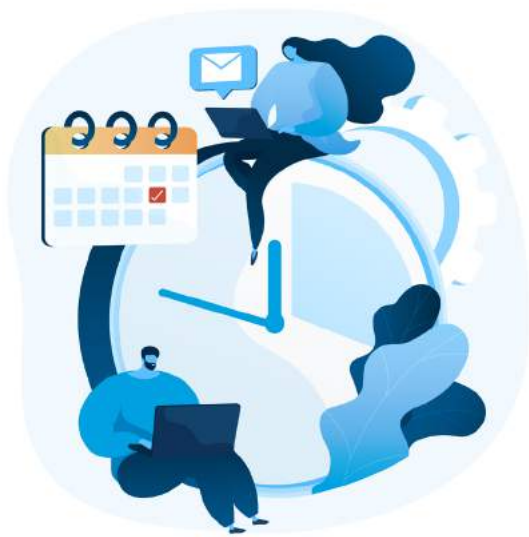
MEASUREMENT

- Multi-touch attribution and closed loop measurement
- Exposure-based campaign measurement
- Predictive modelling
- Modelled audiences



5 steps you can take – right now

When we say take ownership of what you can right now, this is what we mean.



- ① **Assess where you are today.** Before you can chart your path forward, you have to figure out where you stand right now. Take a full audit of your digital footprint today, so you can understand how changes will affect you in future. If you're not sure where to begin, a data partner like Acxiom can help you.
- ② **Chart your course forward.** Once you've taken stock of your current situation, you can plan your roadmap for the future. Be sure to build with flexibility in mind – after all, change is the name of the game here. Use the customisable roadmap included as part of this ebook as your template.
- ③ **Prove the value.** You're going to want to prove to your stakeholders (and to yourself!) that you're on the right path, so make sure you can prove the effectiveness and the value you're creating. Test continually, and create positive feedback loops that close the gap between measurement and iteration. Proving ROI is much easier for marketers today – not least because, as our recent guide explains: [Measurement Has Gone to the Cloud](#).
- ④ **Be transparent.** As a digital marketer, you know how frustrating a lack of transparency can be. So let's practice what we preach and ensure we maximise transparency throughout the value exchange that happens between brands, individuals and publishers.
- ⑤ **Don't wait – act now!** In case we haven't made our point crystal clear, you need to start yesterday.



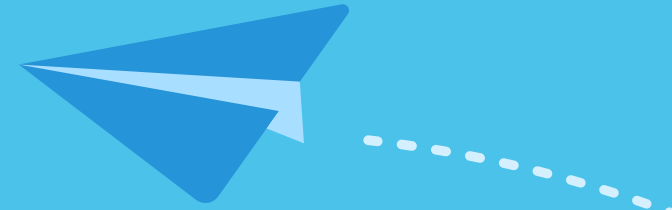
**“Procrastination is
opportunity’s assassin.”**

VICTOR KIAM

American entrepreneur and former NFL team owner



Don't leave your digital destiny to the last minute



Still here? Now it's over to you. The threat of new privacy legislation might seem distant, and Big Tech players like Google have a habit of kicking the can down the road when it comes to third-party cookie deprecation. But those days are numbered. And inevitably more change will always be on the horizon. (You know... as the Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, "The only constant in life is change.")

Our plea to brands, and the marketers who serve them, is to act now. Invest a little time now and you'll save yourself a lot of trouble down the line, trust us.

When change comes, it will be a brand's level of digital resilience that will dictate whether or not they will fail, survive, or thrive.

Just think. One day soon, "Future You" will be ready to deal with whatever Big Tech and the lawmakers throw at you. And you'll have "Past You" to thank – for all your positive, proactive, procrastination-busting work.

It starts today.

Acxiom can help

Our experts can help you make sense of your current situation, the threats on the horizon, and the timelines you should follow when you build a resilient foundation for your digital practice. Ask us to chat today – why put it off?

[Get in touch.](#)

About Acxiom

Acxiom provides data-driven solutions that enable the world's best marketers to better understand their customers to create better experiences and business growth. A leader in customer data management, identity, and the ethical use of data for more than 50 years, Acxiom now helps thousands of clients and partners around the globe work together to create millions of better customer experiences, every day.

Acxiom also offers a full suite of strategy consulting, predictive and marketing analytics, and marketing measurement offerings to support all facets of the data-driven prospect and customer journey. We help brands evolve their data strategy, understand marketing impact, and better know their prospects and customers and predict behaviours.

Visit acxiom.co.uk or email ukenquiries@acxiom.com to get started.

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REFERENCES:

¹ [An Updated Timeline for Privacy Sandbox Milestones](#) | Google Blog | Vinay Goel | June 24, 2021

² [Apple Updates Safari's Anti-tracking Tech With Full Third-Party Cookie Blocking](#) | The Verge | Nick Statt | March 24, 2020

³ [Browser Market Share Worldwide](#) | Statcounter GlobalStats | Aug 2020–Aug 2021

