INFO-TYPERS · FREE GUIDE

why do ads follow me after I look at something?

Remarketing: build your first visitor list

Why that ad follows you, what advertisers can see, your first list in Google Ads and Meta, how many days and how many people, and how to stop chasing people too hard.

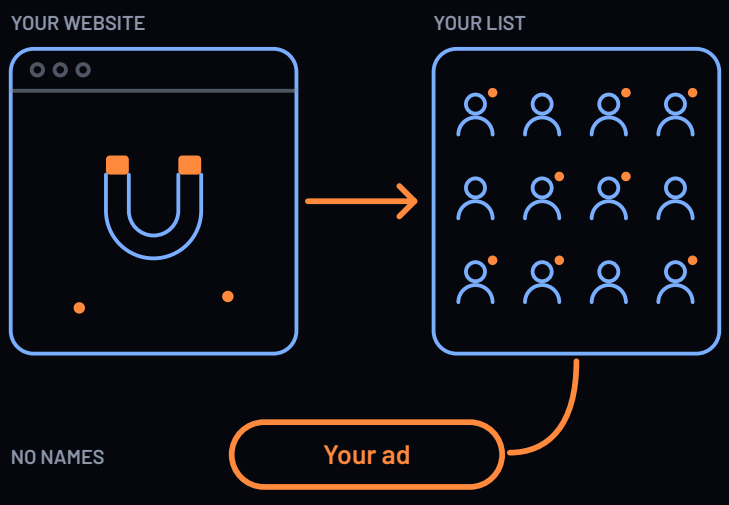
INTERACTIVE VERSION

typersagency.com/en/blog/remarketing-first-visitor-list

TYPERS

THE IDEA IN ONE SENTENCE

Your website is a magnet: visitors land on a list with no names



You put a code on your website: the Google tag or the Meta pixel. When someone visits a page, the code adds them to a list. Later you show your ad to that list while they browse other sites, YouTube or social media. That's why the shoes “follow you”: you visited the shoe page and landed on that store's list.

- The list: Google Ads calls it a segment and Meta calls it a custom audience. Here we just say “list”.
- No names: advertisers see the name of their list and an approximate size. They don't see names, emails or who each person is.
- Two rules: don't chase too hard (remove people who already bought), and if you work in health, lists have separate rules.
- Your task: build your first list with our list builder and copy the recipe into Google Ads and Meta.

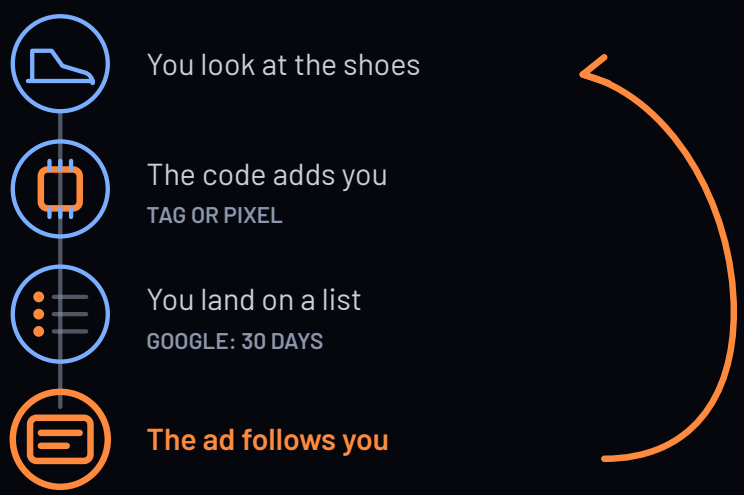
This guide has two sides. If you have a business with a website, it walks you through your first visitor list in Google Ads and Meta. If you're the one being followed, the last step shows you how to control those ads.

The steps and rules come from the official help pages of Google Ads, Meta, Apple and WebKit. The drawings are ours, not screenshots, so your screen may look a little different. The order of the steps and the advice are Typers' own. This guide is not legal advice.

STEP 1 OF 10

01

Remarketing in one sentence: why those shoes follow you



That’s why the shoes follow you.

- Remarketing means showing your ad again to people who already visited your website. The shoes follow you because you looked at them and the store added you to a list.
- The store puts a code on its website: the Google tag or the Meta pixel. When someone visits a page with that code, they join the list.
- Then the store shows its ad to that list: on Google, while people browse sites and apps on the Display Network, on Search or on YouTube; on Meta, to people who use Facebook or Instagram.
- On Google, each new visit updates that person's place on the list and restarts their day count.
- Meta gives this example: people who visited your website in the last 30 days but haven't converted yet (they didn't buy or get in touch).

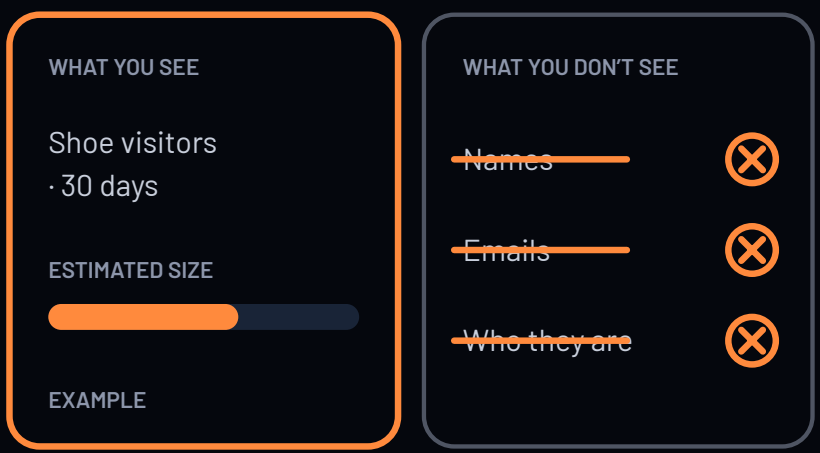
Heads up: In Google Ads the list is a segment (under “Your data segments”). In Meta it's a website custom audience.

COMMON MISTAKE

Thinking remarketing is spying or magic. It's a visitor list that a business builds with a code on its website.

02

What advertisers can see, and what they never see



A size, but no names.

- Meta says so in its official documentation: advertisers aren't told any personal data about the individual people who visit a website.
- What you do see is the name you gave the list and its estimated size. For privacy reasons, Meta sometimes shows "Not available" or "Being created" even when the audience is ready.
- Google bans advertisers from combining data that identifies a person with anonymous, pseudonymous or cookie-based information.
- Google also keeps other advertisers from using your lists without your consent, and asks you not to build segments so narrow that they reach very few users.

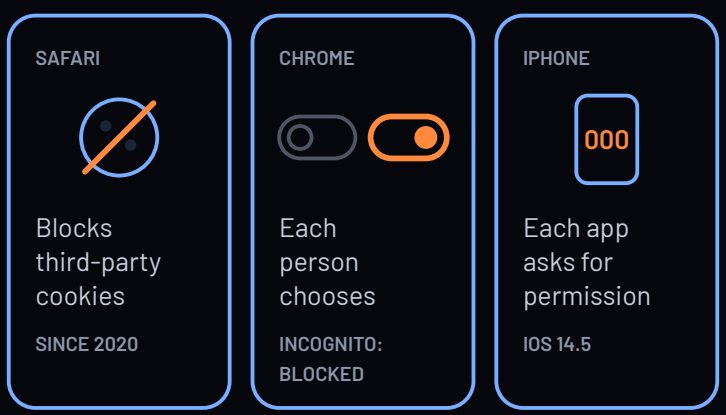
Heads up: In practice you see the list name and a rough number. Example: "Shoe visitors, 30 days". You don't see names, emails or who each person is.

COMMON MISTAKE

Promising your team they'll see who visited the website. The list has no names or contact details.

03

Cookies, Safari and iPhone tracking: what changed



Your list may be smaller.

- Safari blocks all third-party cookies by default, with no exceptions. It has done so since Safari 13.1 and iOS 13.4, in 2020.
- Chrome: in April 2025 Google decided not to launch a new prompt for third-party cookies, and in October 2025 it confirmed that each person keeps choosing in Chrome's settings. They're blocked in Incognito mode.
- iPhone: since iOS 14.5, each app needs your permission (called App Tracking Transparency) to track you or read your advertising identifier. If you say no, that identifier is all zeros. The app works the same either way.
- Meta warns that your website audience may be smaller because it doesn't include events from some iOS 14 users.
- On Meta, only visits from people who use Facebook or Instagram count, and people who declined ads based on their behavior aren't included.

Heads up: Bottom line: your list can be smaller than your real traffic. There's no official figure for how much.

COMMON MISTAKE

Comparing your list size with your website visits and assuming something is broken. A smaller list is normal.

STEP 4 OF 10

04

Before you start: Google tag, Meta pixel and your privacy policy



Code and policy first.

- Google Ads: install the Google tag on your website. Google also asks that its cookies (for example, NID or IDE) are set up correctly.
- Meta: check that your Meta pixel is active. To create website audiences, you accept the Custom Audience terms in Ads Manager.
- Your privacy policy must say four things, according to Google: how you use data to run online ads; that third-party vendors, including Google, show your ads on other sites; that they use cookies or device identifiers to show ads based on past visits; and how to opt out of those cookies.
- Don't put the tag on pages with offers that Google's policies restrict.
- If someone doesn't want personalized ads, the tag can stop collecting their data with the allow_ad_personalization_signals parameter.

Heads up: Your local privacy rules may ask for more. You'll check that in step 9.

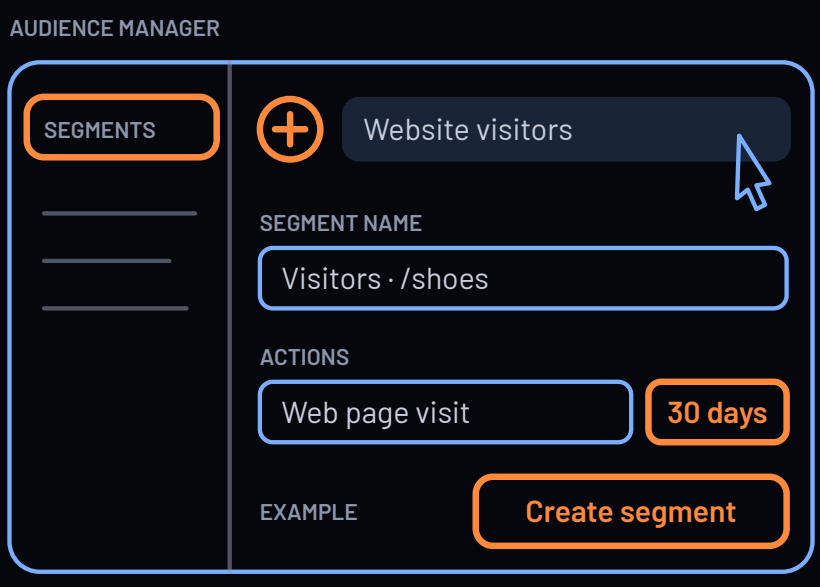
COMMON MISTAKE

Creating the list before installing the code. It stays empty, and remarketing looks broken.

STEP 5 OF 10

05

Your first list in Google Ads: website visitors



- Click the Tools icon, open Shared library and go to Audience manager.
- In the left menu, stay in Segments. Click + and choose Website visitors.
- Type the Segment name and choose an option under Segment members.
- Under Actions, keep "Web page visit" (the default) and enter the days. Use Refine action to limit it to certain pages, and Add action (OR) or Add action (AND) to add more.
- Under Pre-fill options, choose visitors from the previous 30 days or an empty segment. Add a description if you like and click Create segment.

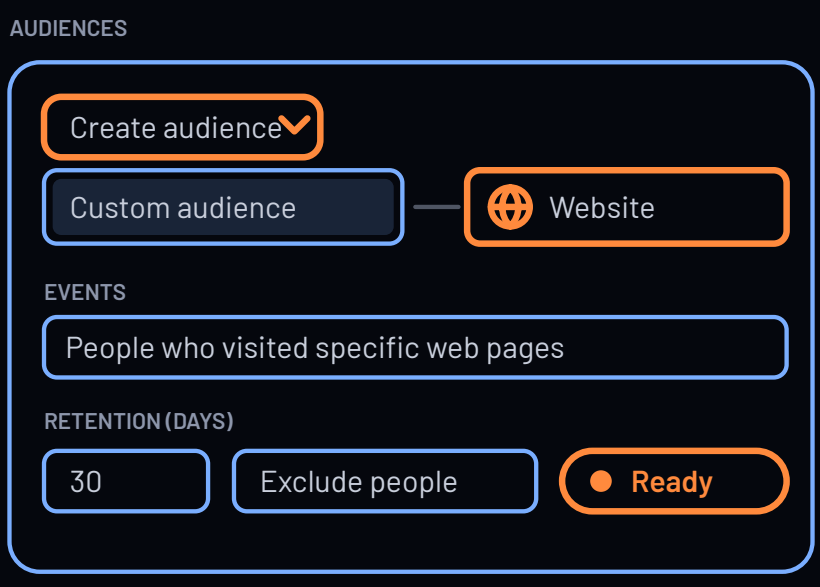
Heads up: A new list can take 48 to 72 hours to fill. If your account looks different, menu names may have changed: follow Google Ads Help.

COMMON MISTAKE

Naming the list "List 1". Three months later, nobody knows which pages or how many days it covers.

06

Your first list in Meta: website custom audience



- Open Audiences and select Create audience > Custom audience. If you've never made one, you'll see Create a custom audience.
- Select Website > Next. Choose whether to include people who meet any or all of the criteria, and pick your pixel as the source.
- Under Events, choose all visitors or "People who visited specific web pages". Enter the Audience retention in days.
- Use Include more people or Exclude people to add rules. Each audience takes up to five.
- Type the name, click Create audience and wait for the status to say Ready before you use it.

Heads up: If you use specific pages, the audience fills from the day you create it: Meta says it doesn't backfill.

COMMON MISTAKE

Using the audience in a campaign before its status says "Ready".

THE LIST BUILDER ON PAPER

Build your first list

Mark your choices and fill in the blanks. Then copy the recipe on the next page.

1 · WHICH PAGES COUNT

- [ ] **The whole site**
  Anyone who visits a page with your tag or pixel.

- [ ] **A category or a page**
  Only people who visited pages with that text in the address.
  ADDRESS _____ (EXAMPLE: /shoes)

- [ ] **The cart or checkout**
  People who reached the cart or checkout. You don't know if they finished.
  ADDRESS _____ (EXAMPLE: /cart)

2 · HOW MANY DAYS

DAYS _____

Google uses 30 by default and the maximum is 540. Match them to your sales cycle.

3 · WHO TO REMOVE

- [ ] **People who already bought**
  ORDER CONFIRMATION PAGE _____ (EXAMPLE: /thank-you)

4 · YOUR BUSINESS

- [ ] **I promote something health-related**
  Google and Meta have separate rules (step 8).

LIST NAME

Visitors · _____ · ____ days

If you remove past buyers, add at the end: · no buyers

Example: Visitors · /shoes · 30 days · no buyers

Do it online: typersagency.com/en/blog/remarketing-first-visitor-list#armador

THE RECIPE ON PAPER

Copy it into Google Ads and Meta

IN GOOGLE ADS

1. If you promote anything health-related, skip these steps. Google doesn't support your own data segments, so you can't use this list for that. You can use Google's predefined audiences, which exclude sensitive signals.
2. Tools > Shared library > Audience manager > Segments > + > Website visitors.
3. Segment name: "_____". Under Segment members, choose an option.
4. For the whole site: actions: "Web page visit" (the default) and ____ days.
5. For a category or the cart: actions: "Web page visit" and ____ days. Click Refine action and keep only pages with "_____" in the address.
6. To remove people who already bought, add an excluded action to the rules: a visit to "_____", your order confirmation page.
7. Pre-fill options: start with visitors from the previous 30 days if you already had the tag, or start with an empty segment.
8. Click Create segment. It can take 48 to 72 hours to fill, and it needs at least 100 active users in the last 30 days to show ads on Display, Search or YouTube.

IN META

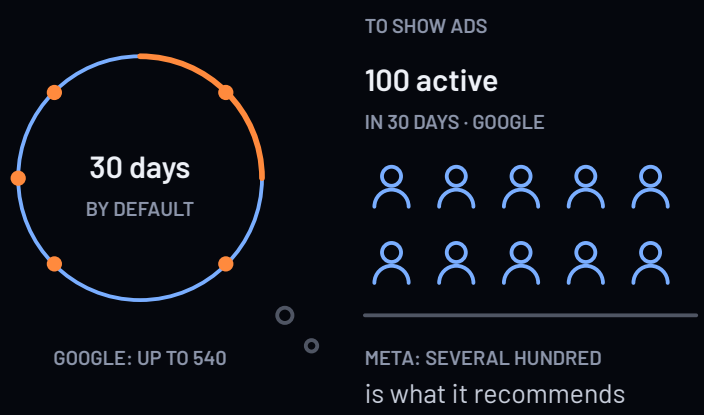
1. Audiences > Create audience > Custom audience > Website > Next.
2. Include people who meet any of the criteria. Source: your pixel.
3. For the whole site: events: "All website visitors".
4. For a category or the cart: events: "People who visited specific web pages", with "_____" in the address.
5. Audience retention in days: ____. If Ads Manager won't accept that number, use the highest one it allows.
6. To remove past buyers: exclude people: "People who visited specific web pages", with "_____" in the address.
7. Name: "_____". Click Create audience and wait until the status says Ready.
8. For a category or the cart: with specific pages, the audience fills from today forward: Meta says it doesn't backfill.
9. Meta gives no exact minimum size. It recommends waiting until you have several hundred people before you use it.
10. Careful with health: Meta doesn't allow audiences that reference specific health conditions (its example: arthritis). If yours does, Meta flags it and you can't use it in campaigns. Don't build lists from pages or names about a health condition.

Option names may look a little different in your account. Follow the official help pages.

STEP 7 OF 10

07

How many days and how many people: duration and minimum size



Match the days to your sales cycle.

- Days on Google: each person stays on the list for 30 days by default, and the maximum is 540. If they come back to your website, their clock restarts. If you change the duration, it also applies to people already on the list.
- Google recommends choosing the days based on your sales cycle: how long someone takes to go from finding you to buying from you.
- Size on Google: the list needs at least 100 active visitors or users in the last 30 days to show ads on the Display Network, Search or YouTube.
- Meta: you enter the retention in days when you create the audience. Meta doesn't publish an exact minimum size. It recommends waiting until you have several hundred people.
- Is your Meta audience too small? Use fewer conditions, choose "All website visitors" or add more days.

Heads up: If a Google segment goes 540 days without being used, Google Ads closes it automatically. You can reopen it. Meta allows up to 500 custom audiences per ad account.

COMMON MISTAKE

Building a list from one low-traffic page with few days. It never gets big enough to show ads.

08

Don't chase too hard: frequency, past buyers and sensitive topics



Don’t chase too hard.

- Frequency on Google: on Display you can limit how many times the same person sees your ad, by campaign, ad group or ad, or let Google optimize it (the option it recommends). On video, you set the limit by campaign, per day, week or month.
- The path, once the campaign exists: Campaigns > Settings tab > your campaign > Additional settings > Frequency management (Frequency capping for video) > Save.
- Remove people who already bought: on Meta, with Exclude people in the same audience; on Google, with an excluded action in the segment rules. If you want to sell to them again, build a separate list for that.
- Health on Google: if you promote anything health-related, Google doesn't support your own data segments. You can use Google's predefined audiences, which exclude sensitive signals.
- Health on Meta: Meta doesn't allow audiences that reference specific health conditions (its example: arthritis) or financial status (its example: credit score). If an audience does, Meta flags it and you can't use it in campaigns.
- Google has 21 sensitive categories, including health, alcohol, gambling, negative financial status, religious beliefs, political affiliation and sexual orientation.

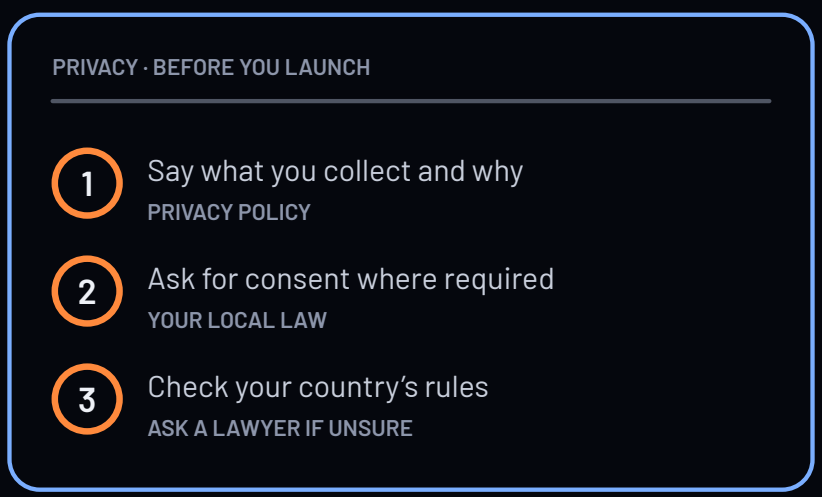
Heads up: Meta's rule looks at what the audience says, not at your type of business: don't build lists from pages or names about a health condition.

COMMON MISTAKE

Showing the same ad to people who already bought.

09

Privacy: what to check before you launch



A checklist, not legal advice.

- Privacy rules change from country to country, so this step is a checklist, not legal advice.
- Be honest in your policy: say what your website collects and why. Cookies and pixels should be in there.
- Ask for consent where the law requires it. Google's EU user consent policy applies to visitors in the European Economic Area, the UK and Switzerland. Other places have their own rules.
- Check your country's rules before you launch. If you're not sure, ask a lawyer.
- Take extra care with sensitive data and minors. Meta limits targeting options when an audience includes people under 18, or older in some countries.

Heads up: Google and Meta have their own rules, and your local law can ask for more. Meeting one doesn't mean you've met the other.

COMMON MISTAKE

Copying another website's privacy policy. It won't describe what your website really does.

WEBSITE CHECKLIST

Is your website ready for remarketing?

Check off what you already have. This isn't legal advice: if you have questions, ask a lawyer.

PRIVACY POLICY · WHAT GOOGLE ASKS FOR

- [ ] It says how you use data to run online ads.
- [ ] It says third-party vendors, including Google, show your ads on other sites.
- [ ] It says those vendors use cookies or device identifiers to show ads based on past visits.
- [ ] It says how to opt out of those cookies, for example in Ads Settings.

PRIVACY IN YOUR COUNTRY

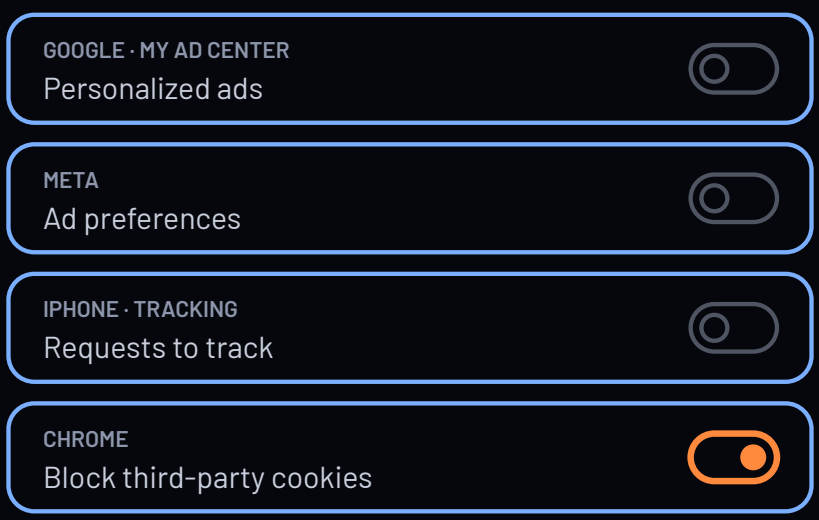
- [ ] Your policy describes what your website really collects and why.
- [ ] You ask for consent wherever your local law requires it.
- [ ] You checked your country's rules, or asked a lawyer.

Do it online: typersagency.com/en/blog/remarketing-first-visitor-list#tu-web

STEP 10 OF 10

10

On the other side of the screen: how to control the ads that follow you



You decide what follows you.

- Google: go to myadcenter.google.com and, next to “Personalized ads”, choose Turn off and confirm. Ads then rely on things like the time of day or your current location.
- Meta: profile picture > Settings & privacy > Settings > Meta Accounts Center > Ad preferences. Under “Customize ads” you can hide advertisers; under “Manage info” you decide whether ads can use your activity with other businesses. If you can't find the path, go to accountscenter.facebook.com.
- iPhone: Settings > Privacy & Security > Tracking. Turn off the permission app by app, or turn off “Allow Apps to Request to Track”.
- Chrome on a computer: More (the three dots) > Settings > Privacy and security > Third-party cookies > Block third-party cookies.

Heads up: Meta points out that changing these preferences doesn't reduce the total number of ads you see.

COMMON MISTAKE

Thinking that turning off personalized ads means no more ads. You'll still see them, just not based on what you visited.

LEARN MORE

Optional: your list from Google Analytics

If you use Google Analytics 4, you can also create audiences there: Admin > Data display > Audiences > New audience. If the property is linked to Google Ads and has personalized advertising turned on, audiences are shared with Google Ads automatically.

Want us to build it with you?

If you got stuck installing the code or you're not sure which list to build first, we'll look at it together.

Get your free diagnosis. We review your remarketing and tell you where to start.

FAQ

Quick answers

Does the store know my name?

No. Meta says advertisers aren't told any personal data about individual visitors. Advertisers see the name of their list and an approximate size, not names, emails or who each person is.

How many people does my list need?

On Google, at least 100 active visitors or users in the last 30 days to show ads on Display, Search or YouTube. Meta doesn't publish an exact figure and recommends waiting until you have several hundred people.

How long does someone stay on the list?

On Google, 30 days by default and up to 540. If the person comes back to your website, the clock re-starts. On Meta, the days you enter under “Audience retention in days” when you create the audience.

Why does my list have fewer people than my traffic?

Safari blocks third-party cookies by default, Chrome lets each person choose, and on iPhone each app needs permission to track. On Meta, only people who use Facebook or Instagram count, and Meta warns that events from some iOS 14 users are missing.

I'm in healthcare. Can I use remarketing?

On Google, if you promote anything health-related, you can't use your own data segments, but you can use Google's predefined audiences. On Meta, you can't build audiences that reference specific health conditions: Meta flags them and you can't use them in campaigns.

How long does the list take to fill?

On Google, 48 to 72 hours, and you can start with visitors from the previous 30 days. On Meta, with specific pages, it fills from the day you create it and doesn't backfill. Wait until it says “Ready”.

What does the law ask for?

It depends on your country. Google asks for four things in your privacy policy, and its EU user consent policy applies to the European Economic Area, the UK and Switzerland. Check your local rules and ask a lawyer if you're not sure.

What if my audience includes minors?

Meta limits targeting options when an audience includes people under 18, or older in some countries. Check your local rules too.

How do I stop an ad from following me?

On Google, turn off personalized ads at myadcenter.google.com. On Meta, go to Ad preferences. On iPhone, go to Settings > Privacy & Security > Tracking. In Chrome, you can block third-party cookies.

GLOSSARY

The words you'll see

Remarketing: Showing your ad again to people who already visited your website, using a list built by a code on your site.

Google tag: Google's code for your website. It adds people who visit a page with the tag to your segments.

Meta pixel: Meta's code for your website. You use it to build website custom audiences.

Segment: Google Ads' name for the list. Yours are under “Your data segments”.

Custom audience: Meta's name for the list. The website version is built with the pixel.

Membership duration: How many days a person stays in a Google segment: 30 by default, up to 540.

Audience retention in days: How many days a person stays in a Meta website audience. You set it when you create the audience.

Pre-fill: On Google, starting the list with visitors from the previous 30 days instead of empty.

GLOSSARY · CONTINUED

Third-party cookie: A small file placed in your browser by a site other than the one you're visiting. Safari blocks them by default; in Chrome, each person chooses.

App Tracking Transparency: The iPhone permission each app needs to track you or read your advertising identifier. It has existed since iOS 14.5.

Advertising identifier: A number on your phone used for advertising. On iPhone, it's all zeros if you don't give permission.

Frequency capping: A limit on how many times the same person sees your ad. On Google it's under “Frequency management”.

Exclude people: A rule in a Meta audience that removes people, for example those who already bought.

Sensitive categories: Topics where Google doesn't support your own segments, such as health, alcohol or gambling. There are 21.

Google's predefined audiences: Audiences built by Google that exclude sensitive signals. You can use them when you promote something in a sensitive category.

My Ad Center: Google's page (myadcenter.google.com) where you turn off personalized ads.

WHAT THIS GUIDE DOESN'T PROMISE

What this guide doesn't promise

- Sales or costs: no official source gives figures for what remarketing costs or earns, so you won't find any here.
- A list with all your visitors: Safari, iPhone permissions and each person's browser choices make it smaller.
- An exact minimum size on Meta: it doesn't publish one. It recommends waiting until you have several hundred people.
- Legal advice: we sum up what Google asks for in your policy and what to check. If you have questions, ask a lawyer.
- This guide sums up the official Google, Meta and Apple help as of October 2026. Menus change, so check the current version before you create your list.

SOURCES

Where each fact comes from

The steps, figures and rules in this guide come from official sources, consulted in October 2026:

Google Ads Help · How segments based on your data work
https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/2472738?hl=en

Google Ads Help · About your data segments
https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/2453998?hl=en

Google Ads Help · Create a website visitors segment
https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/2454064?hl=en

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https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/2549063?hl=en

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Google Ads Help · Use frequency capping
https://support.google.com/google-ads/answer/6034106?hl=en

Google Ads policies · Personalized advertising
https://support.google.com/adspolicy/answer/143465?hl=en

Google · EU user consent policy
https://www.google.com/about/company/user-consent-policy/

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https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/9267572?hl=en

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Facebook · Ad preferences
https://www.facebook.com/help/247395082112892/

WebKit · Tracking Prevention in WebKit
https://webkit.org/tracking-prevention/

WebKit · Full Third-Party Cookie Blocking and More
https://webkit.org/blog/10218/full-third-party-cookie-blocking-and-more/

Apple Developer · User Privacy and Data Use
https://developer.apple.com/app-store/user-privacy-and-data-use/

Apple Support · If an app asks to track your activity
https://support.apple.com/en-us/102420

STUCK BUILDING YOUR LIST?

We review your tag, your pixel and your lists, and tell you where to start. Get your free diagnosis.

GET YOUR FREE DIAGNOSIS

More guides at typersagency.com/en/blog. Follow Info-Typers to learn more.