How to turn off online behavioural advertising? Troubleshooting Checklist

Introduction:

In order to turn off behavioural advertising, advertising companies must register your request.

The current way to do this via the website is to store a small text file within the browser you are using called a 'cookie'. This cookie contains a message that says "turn off this type of advertising!" to the advertising company e.g. in Google's case this is a simple text string that says "OPT_OUT". <u>When the company sees that this 'opt-out cookie' is present they will not collect and use information about your web browsing activity to deliver behavioural advertising.</u>

As long as this 'opt out cookie' is present on the web browser that you are using then you will not receive behavioural advertising by the companies listed on the site (or just the ones you have selected). This document will help you troubleshoot any problems with this process when you've visited the website.

Diagnosing Your Problem

Any problems experienced when opting out using the website are caused by one of two issues. The table below describes the problems and the cause.

Problem	Cause
- A specific company opt-out does not work. - Many opt-outs fail to work. - A company's opt-out appears to work but immediately switches on again as soon as you check your status again.	The opt-out cookie has not been set properly.
You are fully opted out but when you return to the page later you are opted-in again.	The opt-out cookie has been removed from the web browser you are using.

What causes these issues?

Busy Web Connection
Problem: If your web connection is very busy some of these connections cannot be made and therefore the cookies are not set.
Solution: Ensure you (or other people connected to the internet on your network) are not performing large downloads or streaming audio & video when you try and opt-out.

Your web browser is set to remove all cookies at the end of each browsing session

Problem: For your opt-out to be persistent the cookie must stay in your web browser. Some browsers can be set to clear all cookies when they are closed. For example: in situations when you use the privacy mode of your browser. If you have set this to happen in your browser then all the opt-out cookies will be cleared and you will be opted-in again.

Solution: Removing cookies may already give you enough control over your privacy so feel free to keep using this method. Alternatively this can be turned off in your browser preferences – see www.youronlinechoices.com/uk/five-top-tips.

You use an Anti-Adware, Anti-Spyware or Antivirus program that deletes the opt-out cookies

Problem: Some Anti-Adware and Anti-Virus software can falsely detect & delete the opt-out cookies that are set to opt you out of behavioural advertising. When the cookies are deleted then you will be opted back in.

Solution: These tools may already give you enough control over your privacy so feel free to keep using them as an alternative to the website. Alternatively disable the cookie deleting element of the software.

You have cleared your browsers cookies

Problem: All browsers have a privacy feature that allows you to clear your web browsing history from the computer's memory. If you have manually cleared you browser's history then you may have deleted the cookies that are set to stop behavioural advertising.

Solution: You can manage your privacy settings at the web browser level. This will ensure that your privacy is always protected and there is no need to visit www.youronlinechoices.eu.

Internet Explorer 9 is blocked from making connections to a company by Tracking Protection

Problem: Internet Explorer 9 includes a Tracking Protection feature that stops some cookies being set on your browser. This option can be changed by looking at your web browser preferences.

Solution: As it already protects your privacy you may want to keep Tracking Protection on, but if you do want to use the website then simple disable it in your web browser preferences.

Your browser is blocked from making connections to a company's server by a network configuration on a Firewall, Proxy or DNS Server

Problem: There are many pieces of software and hardware between your computer and the web servers that deliver content to your web browser. Many of these can be configured to reject connections to ad companies, which will cause the opt-out site to fail.

Solution: Solving this issue is beyond the scope of this document. Talk to your network administrator if you think this may be an issue or alternatively use an alternative method to manage your cookie preferences, see http://www.youronlinechoices.com/five-top-tips for details.