

EBOOK SERIES

# IDENTITY

CRISIS, WHAT CRISIS?

# GOODBYE COOKIES,

# HELLO FUTURE

FUTURE  
FUTURE  
FUTURE

How will programmatic  
audience planning change?

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

In this short ebook you'll find out:

- How programmatic planning works right now, and how that will change when cookies go away
- What the options will be to identify your ideal audience before your campaign begins
- How new data science techniques can support more intelligent planning

# INTRODUCTION

Cookies are going away. And the timeline (no matter how many times it changes) doesn't really matter. What does matter is that marketers need to find a new way to reach audiences. Digital advertising is moving inexorably towards a privacy-first ecosystem where the use of individual identifiers will have no place.

That's what this ebook series is all about.

In the **first ebook**, we gave you an overview of how we got here and a framework for thinking about all the emerging identity solutions.

In the **second**, we showed you what media activation is

likely to look like in this new world of identifiers.

In **part three** we looked at the (current) timeline to the end of cookies to show you what you should be doing right now, what you need to be thinking about in the next 6 months, and looking ahead at some of the 'known unknowns' that we'll find more about as cookies finally start to drift into the sunset.

In this last installment, we shine a spotlight on how programmatic campaign planning will work without cookies there to tie everything together.

**Let's explore.**

## EXPERT INSIGHTS

### Identity crisis?

The world of identity is changing fast. So, what should you be doing right now, what are the solutions that will replace cookies, and how can you make them all work together?

Why not book an **MiQ Unlocked session**, so our experts can take you through it?

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



**MiQ UNLOCKED**

## 01

# HOW PROGRAMMATIC PLANNING WORKS TODAY VS. WHAT'S GOING TO CHANGE

Identity is at the core of digital marketing. It's the USP of programmatic and it's what makes it all possible. As advertisers, we didn't previously know anything about the types of people who saw our ads on billboards, on the sides of buses, in the pages of newspapers. But, now with everyone and everything online, we can examine trends and aggregated data to understand our audiences better.

All this data about consumers can help plan better campaigns by giving us signals about different audience groups. We can see who is more likely to buy our products or engage with our brands. Then we use these signals for planning: where, when and how we want to spend our budgets to reach those people. It creates better spend efficiency and improves our campaign performance against whatever metric we're measuring from day zero, because we're not starting with a spray-and-pray approach.

One key way that advertisers do this is using consumer panel data - effectively using a panel of people and extrapolating their behaviors and attributes



out to get a view on your whole audience segment.

But it has been understood for a few years now that although panels provide a good generalized view into consumer trends, they often sit in silo and therefore don't provide the real-time insights or actionable data that can immediately be turned into an advertising campaign activation. So in the programmatic world, an infrastructure has been built that brings together all of the disconnected signals we get from across the digital ecosystem, and connects them by a common identifier which does provide the real-time, actionable insight we want. ▶

For example, we might have demographic data that has a group - or 'segment' - of people aged 20-25; an interest-based dataset that has a segment of people who like to consume content about video games; and data about people who like to watch Sunday Night Football on TV. But without a common identifier, we can't tie all these attributes together in real-time, and even more importantly, we can't be sure these are also people who visited your website, showed interest in your market category, or already bought your product.

Today, we do that using cookies. And that's because they are easily accessible and until now, have been widely available. And to ensure privacy compliance always sits at the heart of data processing, we first request individual consent, and then hash and remove any personal identifiable information (PII) before we use them.

But if you're an advertiser, you're probably already aware that third party cookies are no longer very popular. How did this happen?



Even though we always remove all personal information from cookies before ingesting them into any system, not all consumers want to be tracked across their internet browsers by companies they aren't directly affiliated with



For this reason, Firefox & Safari already blocked third-party cookies (from companies outside the website being visited) from their browsers in 2018



Chrome is deprecating them by the end of this year (for the same reason)



It's also becoming apparent that they aren't as great for performance as we once thought (when tested head-to-head with emerging alternatives)

So here comes the challenge, how do we change up our industry planning infrastructure when it's historically been built with cookies at the very center of everything?

## 02

## PLANNING WILL LOOK A BIT DIFFERENT

In the cookieless future, planning, much like activation, will rely on two types of data. **Authenticated and anonymous.**

Consumers are getting more used to logging in to all the platforms and websites they use online, whether it's to complete a purchase, consume premium content, or access social media. This gives advertisers and publishers the ability to gather explicit consent from consumers to use their log-in data, which is authenticated. This data is harder to obtain than the data from cookies - but, because it's verified, it's far richer and more powerful. First-party advertiser data (usually gathered in a CRM system) is one of the main sorts of authenticated data and also the most powerful for planning, because it helps us find audiences who are already affiliated to the brand, and therefore more people who look similar to them.

And that's where anonymous data comes in. Authenticated first-party data is great, but it usually doesn't have enough scale to achieve the results you are looking for. Which is why innovations around contextual and cohort-based data are gathering momentum, presenting strong new opportunities to reach valuable audiences at scale.

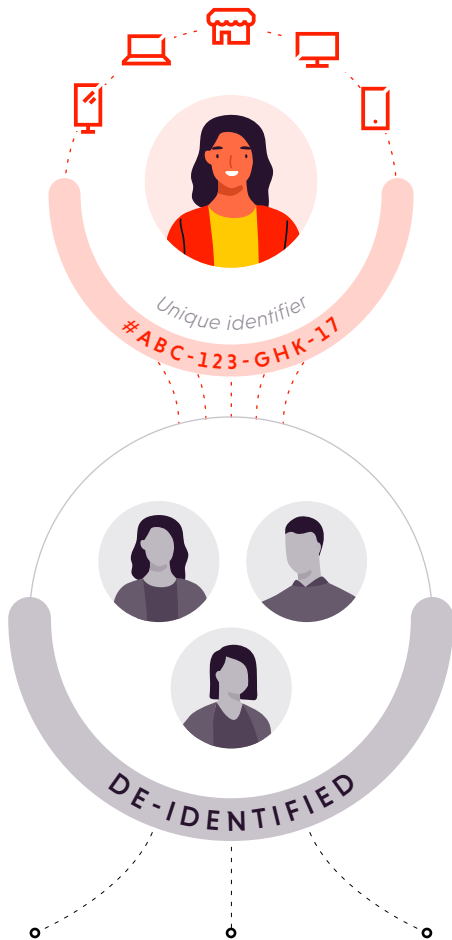
These datasets are focused on groups of users who might all be consuming media in the same context right now (e.g. browser-based interest groups), or might all have displayed similar behaviors in the past or live in the same

area (e.g. via geo-contextual postal code data). Data tied to cohorts is truly anonymous and, as a result can be used at scale, to reach any user in the world without an ad blocker.

While these types of data are not necessarily new, in fact postal or zip code data is one of the oldest forms of data used by marketers (think about how old direct mail campaigns are!) but they've certainly had a 21st century facelift. ▶

# 02

## CONNECT, TARGET, & MEASURE ADDRESSABLE AUDIENCES WITH OR WITHOUT COOKIES



COHORTS & CONTEXTUAL	AD DELIVERY / SUPPLY	MEASUREMENT
Walled gardens	View-ability	Panels
TV viewership	Time of day	Pixels
Geo-contextual	Device type	Cookies
Online contextual	Domain	Clean rooms
Macro data	DSP logs	Verified walk-ins
	SSP logs	Brand studies
	Location	

## USING GEO-CONTEXTUAL DATA AS A BASE FOR PLANNING

Where you live can have really strong indicators of what kind of attributes you have. People tend to choose where they live based on factors like, commuting distance to work or school, local infrastructure like shops, or places of entertainment like bars, restaurants, gyms and cinemas; the similarity of the demographics of the local community to their own; the cost of property in relation to their income, and so on.

Now take the publicly available information about each postcode, such as census data, published directories, subscriptions and tax assessment, and we can get even more granular about the attributes and preferences of the people who live there.

And because your postal code is not an individual identifier, it automatically places you into a 'cohort' - a group of people that can't be distinguished from one another - which is, by design, privacy compliant.

## CONNECTING GEO-CONTEXTUAL DATA TO YOUR SPECIFIC AUDIENCE

Planning will need to connect together authenticated data like a brand's CRM data for accuracy and relevancy, and anonymous data like postal codes for scale, as well as other cookieless datasets like TV viewership behavior for additional insights. But how will they be connected if cookies go away?

This is where the infrastructure of an identity spine comes in. An identity spine or graph takes data from across multiple sources and connects them together to build a persistent persona that is lacking in real identifying details but still is specific enough to let you target the right person. At MiQ, we already added postal codes into our identity spine, to help to add geo-location data to optimize campaigns. Reducing the reliance on any one data source makes it less of a concern when one goes away, ultimately future-proofing through the use of anonymous data. ▶

And once you have an identity spine in place, there are almost endless datasets you could bring into the mix.

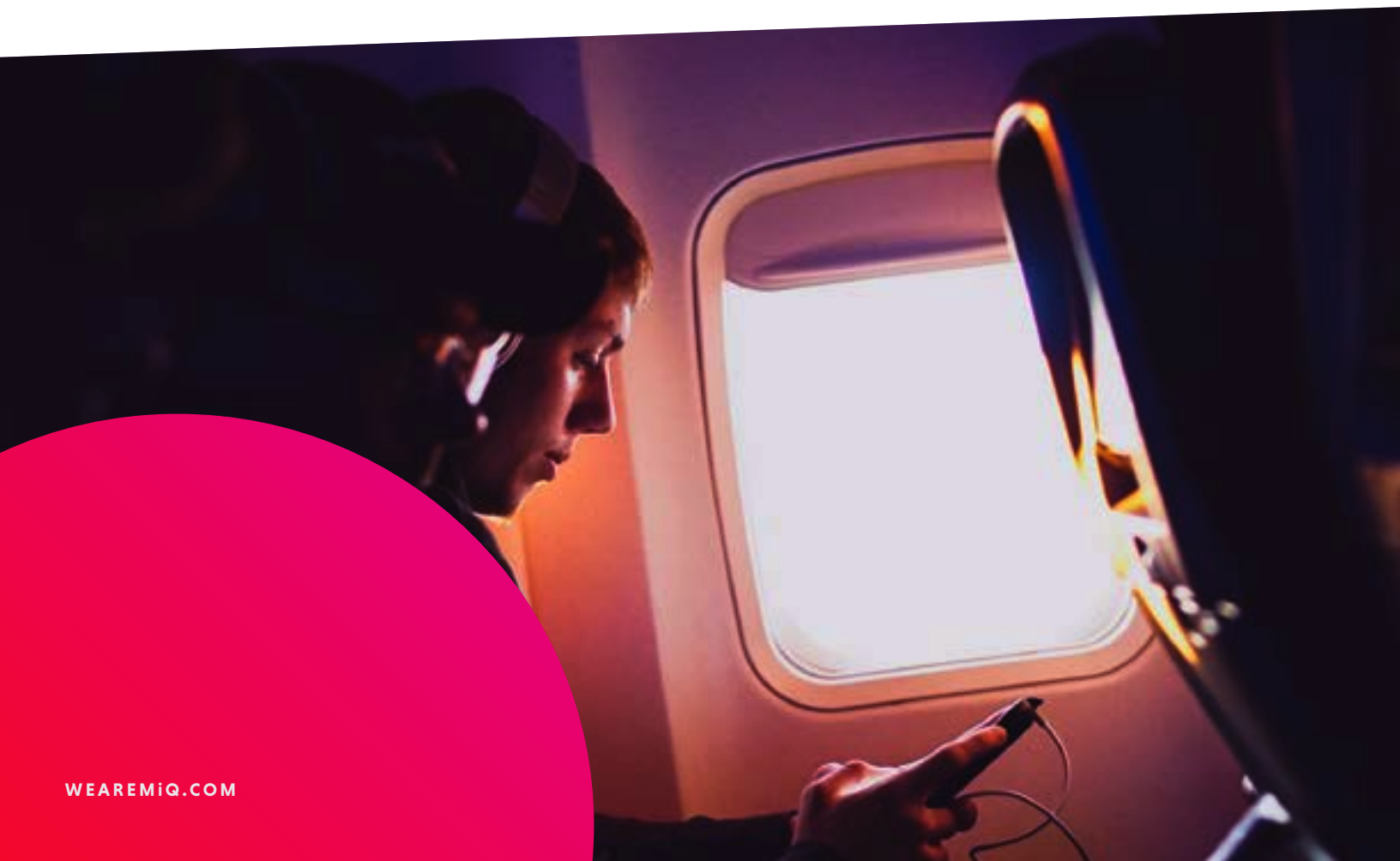
TV viewership data is a great candidate for this. What people watch on TV is a really rich source of planning data. Not only can content preferences tell you a lot about what the people in each TV household are interested in, you can also see which TV ads they've

been exposed to - whether it's your ad, or your competitor's ad which can also have big implications for planning. If they've already seen your ad 20 times on TV, do you really want to hit them another 20 times on their digital devices? Probably not.

And the other reason why TV data will play a big part in the future of planning is that it isn't, and never has been, reliant on

cookies. TV viewership data uses household level identifiers such as IP addresses, which can also be truncated or hashed to map back to a postal or zip code via an identity spine.

So suddenly you have a pretty complete picture of not only the more fixed characteristics of your target audience, but also dynamic characteristics such as ad exposure and content engagement.



## 03

# SMART PLANNING = USING NEW DATA SCIENCE TECHNIQUES

## Choosing the right methodology for building your cohorts

Just to make things more complicated, there are many different data science methodologies for connecting and weighting your authenticated audience data against your aggregated audience cohorts. Each one has its pros and cons, and you need some serious data science expertise to decide which one is best.

## Building lookalikes for better reach

So, to re-cap, we've connected your brand-affinity audience using your CRM, to their audience attributes via zip codes and their media consumption behavior using TV viewership data. You've got a pretty good idea of your target audience. But if you only ever target your exact audience with your ads, how will you ever grow your customer base?

That's where lookalike modeling comes in. Again, this is not a new concept, but previously lookalikes have almost always been based around individuals and used cookies, which as we've already seen are not necessarily as accurate as we once thought. ►



## OUR PRODUCT INSIGHT

*At MiQ, we tested and compared not two, not three but **seven** different statistical methodologies for generalized apportionment, to determine the best one for use in our Intelligence Hub as we move away from cookies.*

*Eventually we settled on using a method that was based on distribution, assigning weights that were mapped 1:1 with membership of a characteristic (e.g. purchasing a product, or belonging to a demographic age group) within the postal code.*

*This method when tested both against the other six methods, and against comparable cookie-based datasets, had the best balance of accuracy and ease of implementation for us to automate - and to date we haven't seen anyone else yet using this technique in the way we do.*

*The best part about working at MiQ is that we still have a whole team of analysts with Human Intelligence (HI) backing up our AI that can always use any of the other methods manually on behalf of our clients if required - so we have the best of both worlds.*

◀ **Sharan Biradar, Product Manager, MiQ**



# 03

What is a lookalike? As a statistical concept, entities that share the same characteristics are said to be a lookalike. Characteristics are dependent on the context of the entities you are comparing, but in digital marketing, characteristics that marketers typically look at are of two types -

a) **Fixed characteristics** - these might change over longer periods of time

b) **Dynamic characteristics** - these change rapidly over shorter periods of time

In the realm of geo-contextual targeting and protecting individual identities, lookalikes concepts are applied for postal codes. ▶

## OUR PRODUCT INSIGHT

To find similar postal codes, it was important for us to focus on using cookieless datasets that could provide us with characteristics that would last beyond the demise of cookies. It would be no good to tie everything to a postal code, if all the data you are tying together is still collected using cookies. So, to power lookalikes in the next generation of our Intelligence Hub, we focused on incorporating:

■ Fixed characteristics based on demographic composition of the people living in the postal code, using offline demographic datasets that were not reliant on cookies. This allowed us to evaluate similarity of postcodes based on having the same distribution of age ranges, marital status or ethnicity, for example.

■ Fixed characteristics based on infrastructure in the postcode, such as access to amenities like shops or gyms, universities, schools and stadiums, for example.

■ Dynamic characteristics based on TV viewership habits from our Automatic Content Recognition (ACR) TV feeds. These were readily available to us since our product innovation over the last few years has been focused on Advanced TV, and provide us data around exposure to TV content and ad spots across linear \*and\* OTT viewing as well as across devices and games consoles, all in one feed.

In the future, our Identity Spine will make it fast and easy for us to incorporate more and more cookieless datasets into the Intelligence Hub as they become available to us.

◀ Purva Goyal, Snr Product Manager, MiQ

New and emerging data science techniques allow us to use super-smart neural networks to apply machine learning to the process of identifying lookalikes. A neural network works sort of the same way as a human brain does, although in a more simplistic manner. In the same way that a child learns to write by copying an adult's handwriting, which can be considered our 'source of truth', a neural network can take the original 'source of truth' postal code and attempt to 'copy' the characteristics as closely as possible, and then find other postal codes which match.

At a simple level, the neural network might base this on just two characteristics, such as our example of handwriting which just represents a two color pattern - black lettering on a white page. But in the case of programmatic planning data at the postcode level, there are almost innumerable combinations of data points to be considered. The neural network handles this by replicating as closely as possible, 'layer by layer', the characteristics of the postal code. For example it might start with population, then add age distribution, then ethnicity distribution, then

distribution of corner shops, then number of households that watch Next Top Model, and so on and so forth, considering hundreds and hundreds of characteristics. And it does this at absolute speed.

By using this layering technique, we get a sliding scale of lookalikes with those that are most similar ranking highly, all the way down to lookalikes that are somewhat similar, and we can control the accuracy vs. the scale of the data footprint by expanding or reducing the controls.

IMAGE

IMAGE

# 04 TIMES ARE A-CHANGING. MAKE SURE YOU'RE READY.

The future of programmatic planning is definitely going to look a little different to what we've been used to over the last ten years.

Anyone who says differently is probably kidding themselves. With cookies having been the heart and soul of tying together all the datasets that help us build a profile of our customers, it was inevitable that we would have to find a different way.

But the good news is, that with the right data partnerships, technology, and data science expertise, the future of programmatic planning is bright. All of our early testing at MiQ indicates that authenticated IDs are actually more accurate and

subsequently better performing than cookies, while geo-contextual data provides the richness and scalability you need to find and understand your audience in detail.

In 2022, the wider advertising industry will probably refocus on preparing for the cookieless future after a short hiatus since Chrome pushed back the deadline, but those who have been quietly preparing all along will likely be the businesses to win.

If you want to be one of those businesses, be on the lookout for opportunities to beta-test emerging cookieless planning tools and tie in your first party data. If you start early, you can go into 2023 confident in your strategies, backed up with performance data based on cookieless audience planning.

GET IN TOUCH