

# Twitter agrees to adopt Do-Not-Track privacy option

Gerry Shih, Reuters

(Reuters) - Twitter will honor requests from users who do not want their online behavior tracked, the company said on Thursday, in contrast with Web companies such as Google Inc ([GOOG.O](#) [1]) and Facebook Inc ([FB.O](#) [2]) whose business models rely heavily on collecting user data.

Twitter said it will officially support "Do Not Track," a standardized privacy initiative that has been heavily promoted by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, online privacy advocates and Mozilla, the non-profit developer of the Firefox Web browser.

Some browsers, including Firefox, Microsoft Corp's ([MSFT.O](#) [3]) Internet Explorer and Apple Inc's ([AAPL.O](#) [4]) Safari, include a "Do Not Track" option that sends a line of code to websites indicating the user does not want to be tracked. But under current regulations, it is up to the website to honor the requests.

Google has said it will implement a "Do Not Track" feature in its Chrome browser later this year.

The "Do Not Track" announcement also coincides with Twitter's recent push to provide a more personalized service. Twitter recommends "tailored suggestions" based on a user's Web surfing history, but does not use the data for any other purpose, the company said on Thursday.

"As always, we are committed to providing you with simple and meaningful choices about the information we collect to improve your Twitter experience," Twitter's Director, Growth and International, Othman Laraki, said in a blog post on Thursday. "For those who don't want to tailor Twitter, we offer ways to turn off this collection."

Twitter's support for the initiative was first announced on Thursday by Ed Felten, the FTC's Chief Technology Officer, during a panel in New York. The microblogging site later confirmed Felten's statement, adding in a Tweet: "We applaud the FTC's leadership on DNT."

Mozilla praised Twitter's move in a blog post and noted that adoption rates for "Do Not Track" have risen steadily, to 8.6 percent of desktop users and 19 percent of mobile users.

"We're excited that Twitter now supports Do Not Track and global user adoption rates continue to increase, which signifies a big step forward for Do Not Track and the Web," Mozilla said.

Twitter's decision to get onboard with "Do Not Track" represents something of a

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Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

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balancing act for the six-year-old company, which has been closely scrutinized on how it can generate enough revenue to justify its multibillion-dollar valuation.

Online tracking through bits of code embedded in websites known as "cookies" underpins the business models for many Internet companies.

Facebook, due to go public on Friday in the largest-ever U.S. IPO, has been valued at \$104 billion, partially by investors who believe it can offer advertisers a platform for highly targeted ads based on perceived user interests. Google similarly generates billions annually by targeting ads based on what a user is searching for.

Major online destinations that have endorsed "Do Not Track" include Yahoo, which said in March it would allow consumers "to express their ad targeting preferences to Yahoo" beginning this summer.

(Editing by [Andre Grenon](#) [5])

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