



Adobe Experience Cloud

Apple Link Tracking Protection Impact on Adobe Analytics and Customer Journey Analytics

In June 2023, Apple announced new tracking protections that would be rolled out in September 2023 and Spring 2024. This document provides details on what Adobe knows about these changes and how they might impact CJA and Analytics customers. In summary, these changes only apply in less common scenarios and Adobe believes they will not apply to the most common use cases for Adobe Analytics and CJA.

What is Apple Link Tracking Protection?

Per Apple's website ([link](#)):

"Some websites add extra information to their URLs in order to track users across other websites. Now this information will be removed from the links users share in Messages and Mail, and the links will still work as expected. This information will also be removed from links in Safari Private Browsing."

What is the timing?

iOS 17 is due to release in September 2023 (as of June 27th). It started developer beta in June 2023.

In what environments is link tracking protection in effect?

According to Apple's announcement it will be in effect when: the device is using iOS 17 or macOS Sonoma and the link is in Mail OR Messages or Safari in private browsing mode. Overall, Adobe expects this changes to apply to a small subset of customers' data, though this will vary according to customer tracking tactics.

What features in Customer Journey Analytics and Analytics will be impacted?

From Apple's announcement, it is not clear what parameters will be impacted. Apple's presentation provided an example where a "click_id" parameter was stripped but "campaign_id" was not. This indicates they are targeting parameters used to record personal identifiers or specific events like a link click. But it also indicates they are not targeting parameters with more general information like campaign or channel.

What features in Customer Journey Analytics and Analytics will be impacted? (cont'd)

Based on this the following could be affected since Apple included user/device ids:

- Cross domain tracking which passes the ECID as a parameter ([appendVisitorIDsto](#))
- Ad Cloud integration - Ad Cloud passes campaign and click information to Analytics (ef_id and s_kwid parameters). It is likely these parameters would be stripped if flagged as identifiers. This would disrupt some user tracking in the integration. Impression based tracking should still work but is already limited to display ads in browsers where third-party cookies are supported (ie Chrome not Safari and not for any Search or Social ads) and impression tracking is possible (ie RTB Display ads not Search/Walled gardens).

Generally, both CJA and Adobe Analytics have features that can be used to refer to query parameters. If those parameters were stripped, then that could impact your data. The following could be the impact:

- Marketing channels. Customers can configure marketing channel rules to refer to query parameters. Adobe's auto setup rules for some classifications such as 'email' and 'display' could potentially be impacted. It is unclear if these parameters would be flagged as being used to track users since they do not involve individual tracking. In CJA, Derived Fields can be used to perform the function of Marketing Channels in Analytics.
- Both Customer Journey Analytics and Analytics provide flexible tools that could reference parameters.
 - In AEP and CJA there are several steps where users could have reports that rely on URL parameters (Edge Data Mapper, Data Distiller, Data Views and Derived Dimensions are very flexible tools that could be configured to refer to URL parameter).
 - In Analytics, processing rules and VISTA rules can be configured in ways that could be impacted.

How can I understand the impact and mitigate it by using Analytics and Customer Journey Analytics?

Customers can use Adobe Analytics or CJA to understand how many visitors are potentially impacted by Apple's Link Tracking. The following questions might help assess the impact:

- *How many visitors are using iOS 17 or macOS Sonoma?* You can use standard reporting in Analysis Workspace to determine what operating system a visitor is using.
- *How many visitors are also using Safari with private browsing?* You can use standard reporting in Analysis Workspace to determine a visitors' browser. Customers would only be impacted if they are using Safari private browsing but unfortunately there is no reliable way to determine if a visitor is using private browsing. Private browsing blocks cookies; therefore, these visitors would be first time visitors.
- *How many visitors are arriving via an email link?* This can be tracked via URL parameter. Many customers incorporate this into their Marketing Channels reporting.
- *How many visitor are using links for messaging?* This is less common but can also be tracked via URL parameter and incorporated into Marketing Channels or other reporting.

Reach out to your Adobe representative with any questions.

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